

EMBODYING THE NON-INDIAN BODIES EXPERIENCE IN BHARATANATYAM

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SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

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EXPERIENCE IN BHARATANATYAM

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**FAKULTI MUZIK DAN SENI PERSEMBAHAN****PERAKUAN KEASLIAN PENULISAN**

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i Perakuan pelajar:

Saya, Thareshini A/P P.Rames, D20202095988 dari Fakulti Muzik dan Seni Persembahan dengan ini mengaku bahawa Penulisan Kajian Ilmiah yang bertajuk **Embodying the Non-Indian Bodies Experience in Bharatanatyam** adalah hasil kerja saya sendiri. Saya tidak memplagiat dan apa-apa penggunaan mana-mana hasil kerja yang mengandungi hak cipta telah dilakukan secara urusan yang wajar dan bagi maksud yang dibenarkan dan apa-apa petikan, ekstrak, rujukan atau pengeluaran semula daripada atau kepada mana-mana hasil kerja yang mengandungi hak cipta telah dinyatakan dengan sejelasnya dan secukupnya. Saya dengan ini turut mengakui bahawa hasil penulisan ini terikat dengan Peraturan Akademik, Jabatan Seni Persembahan, Fakulti Muzik dan Seni Persembahan, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris.

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ABSTRACT

The dance style known as *Bharatanatyam* has its origins in cultural heritage and is still practiced, trained, and demonstrated in a variety of forms. Malaysia is usually described as a particularly multicultural and multireligious secular state dominated by Muslims. This study focuses on diverse dancers, their progression in *Bharatanatyam*, and their contributions to completing *Arangetram*. Learning a pure dance based solely on *nritta* is simple for all cultures to learn *Bharatanatyam*. When a person advances to the next level of *Bharatanatyam*, *Arangetram*, it will be challenging for them if they are from another culture. *Padam*, *Varnam*, and *Shabdham*, which are solo expressive dances formed of emotions that invoke *rasa*, would be difficult for non-Indian bodies to do (a taste of spiritual happiness). This research explains how non-Indian bodies embody spirituality or Indian aesthetics in the understanding of *Bharatanatyam*. A qualitative approach will be used in this study whereby data will be gleaned through interviews with informant and observations as well as through explanatory design research. This study findings support the belief that one non-Indian body's perspective on studying sacred art will assist them successfully adapt the spirituality and interpretation to the dance components.



Keywords: Embody, *Bharatanatyam*, Non-Indian Bodies, Spiritual, *Arangetram*





PENJELMAAN PENGALAMAN TUBUH BUKAN INDIA DALAM TARIAN BHARATANATYAM

ABSTRAK

Bharatanatyam adalah bentuk tarian yang berakar umbi dalam tradisi budaya dan terus diamalkan, diajar, dan dipersembahkan dalam pelbagai cara. Malaysia biasanya digambarkan sebagai sebuah negara sekular yang berbilang budaya dan agama yang didominasi oleh orang Islam. Kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada penari yang pelbagai kaum, perkembangan mereka dalam *Bharatanatyam*, dan sumbangan mereka untuk melengkapkan *Arangetram*. Ia dipelajari berdasarkan nritta agak mudah untuk semua budaya mempelajarinya. Apabila seseorang itu mara ke peringkat *Bharatanatyam* seterusnya iaitu, *Arangetram*, ia akan lebih mencabar terutama sekali jika berlainan budaya. *Padam*, *Varnam* dan *Shabdham*, yang merupakan tarian ekspresif solo yang terbentuk daripada emosi dengan menimbulkan rasa, sukar untuk dilakukan oleh tubuh yang bukan berbangsa India (rasa kebahagiaan rohani). Kajian ini membahaskan bagaimana tubuh bukan India merangkumi kerohanian atau estetika budaya India dalam pemahaman *Bharatanatyam*. Pendekatan kualitatif diaplikasikan di mana data diperoleh melalui temu bual bersama informan dan pemerhatian serta mengaplikasikan kajian reka bentuk penerangan. Kajian ini dapat merungkai bahawa perspektif satu tubuh bukan India dalam mengkaji sebuah seni suci yang akan membantu penari seterusnya untuk menyesuaikan kerohanian dan tafsiran kepada komponen tarian, khususnya *Bharatanatyam*.

Kata kunci: *Embodiment*, *Bharatanatyam*, Tubuh Bukan India, Kerohanian, *Arangetram*



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASWARA Akademi Seni Budaya dan Warisan Kebangsaan

ASK Akademi Seni Kebangsaan

ADC ASK Dance Company

TOFA Temple of Fine Arts

UPSI Sultan Idris Education University

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Dance is a central practice in Hinduism across a variety of contexts, mythological narratives, and time periods. Gods such as Shiva and Krishna are dancers, and humans also dance, often embodying these gods as part of bhakti, or devotion. Dance is a rich area for exploring the ways categories are created and negotiated: classical and folk, local and global, male and female, and text and practice. Hinduism is strongly associated with Indian "classical" dance. However, in an Islam-dominated and multi-cultural society, Indian dance becomes more secular, focusing on aesthetics rather than religion, and adapting its style to the context. Bharatanatyam is recognized as a sacred art form. The purpose of all ancient Indian arts is to evoke rasa (a taste of spiritual happiness) in both the artist and the audience. While performing and studying this old dance form, I personally felt a mystical strength. By repeating stories of the gods, the great Hindu epics, and myths, the natya part obviously encourages devotional feelings and religious reflection.

Malaysia is widely portrayed as a distinctively multicultural and multireligious secular state with a Muslim majority. A truly multicultural community, on the other hand, would be one in which each component ethnic group is equally privileged, or in which all residents are equal without regard to ethnicity. In Malaysia, however, each individual is classified according to state-defined broad ethnic categories, which are



subsequently used as the foundation for policy and are an indelible element of life, education, language, and political discourse. Furthermore, there is a clear and legal distinction between the indigenous the Malay majority and the Orang Asli in the peninsula, Sabah, and Sarawak and the immigrant minorities, the Chinese, Indians, and 'the others.' Each legally recognized ethnicity is far from homogeneous. Malays are made up of Minang, Bugis, Javanese, and other ethnic groups; Chinese comprise Hokkien, Cantonese, and Hakka; and Indians include Tamils, Sikhs, Telugus, Ceylonese, and Malayalees.

Malaysia can witness a wide range of various civilizations' dance and learning through the backdrop of the culture. Cultural dance is very significant since it is our way of informing others about what they need to know about our culture. It is also the means by which others can respect, learn about, and value our traditions and customs.

Allow other civilizations to convey the story behind their dances. Is it possible to learn a sacred art like Bharatanatyam in a place where Malays predominate? The conveyance of Bharatanatyam body knowledge to various pupils, as well as the inclusion of non-Indian bodies on stage, allow the dance form to cross ethnic, religious, and cultural boundaries. The engagement and active participation of Chandrabhanu (Zamin Harun) and Ramli Ibrahim in Bharatanatyam revealed the presence of non-Indian bodies. Their pioneering efforts serve as a paradigm for other dancers to emulate.

According to Hindu tradition, the name of the dance form was derived by combining two words, 'Bharata' and 'Natyam,' where 'Natyam' means dance in Sanskrit. 'Bharata' is an approach consisting of 'bha', 'ra', and 'ta,' which respectively mean 'bhava' (emotion and feelings), 'raga' (melody), and tala (tempo) ("Cultural India," n.d.). Thus,





the term typically refers to a dance form in which bhava, raga, and tala are conveyed. The theoretical foundations of this dance form, also known as Sadir, can be traced back to ancient Indian theatrologist and musicologist Bharata Muni's Sanskrit Hindu work on the performing arts, 'Natya Shastra.' According to mythology, Lord Brahma revealed Bharatanatyam to the sage Bharata, who thereafter codified it in Natya Shastra ("Cultural India," n.d.). The book, which consists of thousands of poems divided into chapters, divides dance into two distinct forms: 'nrita,' which is pure dance composed of delicacy of hand motions and gestures, and 'nritya,' which is solo expressive dance composed of expressions.

Though the period from the 1920s to the immediate post-war years appears to have provided a solid basis for the development and spread of many Indian cultural forms, information about Bharatanatyam first became visible in Malaya in the 1950s (Prema, 2011). V. K. Sivadas and Gopal Shetty' started their classes in the 1950s, followed by Usha-Prema Dance School, Padmini Dance Group, and Tanjai Kamalaa Indira Dance School in the 1960s. V. K. Sivadas and Gopal Shetty taught many Indian classical dance teachers in Malaysia. Krishen Jit (1998 as cited in Premalatha 2011) "Post-Independent Malaya witnessed the earliest large-scale transmission of Indian classical dance to non-Indian audiences." Sivadas and Gopal Shetty were pioneers in this historic movement. Sivadas and Gopal Shetty were instrumental in introducing and popularizing the Bharatanatyam dance form in Malaysia. They have both struggled greatly throughout the process. Their efforts began to bear fruit as the number of pupils learning to dance increased, and their distinctive and original compositions piqued the



interest of the state, public, and media. Their efforts were bolstered further when the Temple of Fine Arts¹ (TOFA) was established in the early 1980s.

Swamiji's proposal to build the TOFA was thoroughly debated. Following careful consideration and approval, the TOFA was formally established in 1981. The TOFA (TOFA), a cultural sanctuary, has been at the forefront of raising awareness and appreciation for Indian classical dance in the country. The nine TOFA centers in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Johor Bahru, Malacca, Singapore, Perth, Chennai, Coimbatore, and New Jersey are dedicated to using the arts as a vehicle for creative and spiritual exploration. Another dance institution that has earned a reputation locally as well as internationally is the Sutra Dance Theatre², under the artistic direction of Ramli Ibrahim.

The Akademi Seni Kebangsaan (ASK), or National Arts Academy, was founded in 1994 by the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Tourism. This was Malaysia's first higher education institution dedicated only to delivering full-time arts training leading to diplomas in dance, theater, music, writing, and, since 2002, cinematography. The Bachelor programme was established in January 2008, following the implementation and approval of Act 653, which changed the name of the institution to Akademi Seni Budaya dan Warisan Kebangsaan (National Academy of Arts, Culture, and Heritage), which had previously been known by the acronym ASWARA³.

¹ TOFA was formally established in 1981 and founded by Swami Shantanand Saraswathi.

² Sutra Dance Theatre, founded in 1983 by Ramli Ibrahim, has trained a generation of Malaysian dancers and taken original Malaysian works to national and international audiences, promoting the cultural diversity and vibrancy of Malaysian dance.

³ ASWARA refers to Akademi Seni Budaya dan Warisan Kebangsaan.



1.2 Background

Imran Syafiq Mohd Affandi, who was born in Kuala Lumpur, received a Diploma in Dance in 2012 and was recognized as the Best Dance Graduate that year. He then went on to get a Bachelor of Dance (Performance) with First Class Honors and was recognized as Valedictorian that year. He has given numerous performances in all significant Malaysian festivals, including those by the ASWARA dance faculty, the full-length contemporary production A Streetcar named Desire at KLPAC, Anak Malaysia by Dua Space Dance Theatre, Gema Zafana by Yayasan Warisan Johor, Blossom Arts Festival, Seksyen by Station for DamansaraPAC Arts Festival, and Carmen, Don Quixote, La Bayadere, and Don Quixote by Dance.



Bachelor of Dance from ASWARA with a Bharatanatyam major. She has been trained in ballet since she was a small child, and in 2017 she earned her Certification in Ballet Teaching Studies from the Royal Academy of Dance. She has performed and led workshops at WE Dance in the West Kowloon Cultural District of Hong Kong and the Asia Pacific Dance Festival 2019 in Hawaii as Malaysia's representative. In December 2019, she performed a solo work called "Bayu Tenggara: Bharatanatyam & Chinese Classical" with the theme "INTERWEAVE" for a dance showcase at the Shantanand Festival of Arts at the TOFA in Kuala Lumpur. More recently, in January 2021, she debuted her digital solo, "Ubi Bene Ibi Petria," which was supported by CENDANA's Create Now Funding.





In detail, both Imran Syafiq and Kimberly are Bachelor of Dance graduates from Faculty of Dance ASWARA trained under multicultural syllabus of dance such as Malay Dance (Classical and Folk), Chinese dance (Folk dance), Indian Dance (Classical Bharatanatyam), Ballet and Contemporary as well. ASWARA offers two specializations: Bachelor of Dance with Honors (Performance) and Bachelor of Dance with Honors (General) (Choreography). The program's goal is to produce graduates who are proficient in a variety of Malaysian, Asian, and Western dance techniques. In general, students will concentrate on a single topic. The primary aim of this program is to produce international professional dancers and choreographers who are knowledgeable in practical and theoretical. The module in performance and choreography is implemented as follows: For the presentation module, students will select one of the following dances: Malay, Indian, Chinese, Sabah/Sarawak, Ballet, Contemporary, Martial Arts, and others. When it comes to the choreography module, students are required to create two works: a work that incorporates traditional elements, an independent work, and a work that incorporates contemporary elements. Each piece lasts between 10 and 12 minutes.

Moreover, ASWARA first provides a Diploma in Dance programme, which incorporates both practical and theoretical learning concepts such as cultural diversity, creating works, and thinking in dance. The learning syllabus is based on the fundamentals of traditional Malaysian dance techniques and covers the country's major ethnic dances. Western dance techniques such as Ballet and Contemporary are now part of the main subjects to be studied in order to produce competitive dancers. Additionally, theoretical subjects like Performance Theory, Dance History, and Anatomy and Injury can aid students in developing their critical and creative thinking abilities in order to





ensure that they are able to think, discuss, and evaluate a performance. The goal of this programme is to produce quality dancers by placing a thorough emphasis on every dance taught in terms of understanding technique, style, and taste. ASWARA teaches Bharatanatyam at the bachelor and diploma levels. Students will study Bharatanatyam utilizing the TOFA' syllabus up until the final year each year. Mrs. Baizura focuses on teaching Bharatanatyam to diploma students and Mr. Yunus to bachelor students. As stated before, they learn Bharatanatyam under the guidance of Shri Shankar Kandasamy and Shrimathi Vasuki Sivanesan from The TOFA Kuala Lumpur.

Both are now in Ask Dance Company (also known as ASWARA dance company) as the principal dancers. Imran joined the ASK Dance Company (ADC) and has given numerous performances with it. Imran won the consolation prize in the 17th Solo Classical Ballet Competition in 2014, and in 2017 he finished his Bharatanatyam Arangetram. This exhibits his enormous flexibility and range. He has given performances abroad in countries like Papua New Guinea, Japan, Indonesia, Australia, Singapore, the United States, India, Cambodia, and Korea (as a Malaysian delegate in Asian Frontier Forum). He was appointed Director of ADC in 2016 and is in charge of the organization's primary outreach initiative, Building Bridges, Get Malaysia Dancing, Connecting Communities, and Forging Traditions. He has led more than 40 dance seminars and masterclasses on Malaysian dances with the company. On the other hand, Kimberly instructs ballet at Malaysian Dance Centre under the direction of ASK Dance Company and is a certified Progressing Ballet Technique trainer. She is presently the Vice-Director and full-time dancer for the ASK Dance Company in Kuala Lumpur.





ADC is a professional dance company. They specialize in training, workshops, master classes, performances, choreography, and collaborative projects in traditional and contemporary dance genres. Through its repertory and the ethnicity of its members, ASK Dance Company has become a shining example of Malaysia's pluralism in dance. The company wants to be a one-of-a-kind force with a distinct Malaysian identity, providing employment, experience, and a career path for exceptional dancers and choreographers. Furthermore, ADC aspires to play a big role in breaking down barriers and bringing this to the forefront of national/international consciousness.

The performance of the Bharatanatyam Arangetram by Imran Syafiq bin Mohd Affandi (Imran) and Kimberly Yap Choy Hoong (Kimberly), which is the graduation performance that signals the transition from novice student to the arrival of the accomplished performer, has thus taken on added significance, based on this paragraph.

The performance of these ASWARA graduates, a Malay Muslim and a Chinese, is the best example of what is vital in contemporary Malaysia. They represent the performativity of the alternative Malaysian, which transcends hybridity and government-imposed identities. The dancers did not invent a new style, but their interpretation of Bharatanatyam, their embodiment of the form, and the arduous process resulted in a profound degree of intercultural performance through text and content re-interpretation. This type of performance will become the most powerful place for dialogue about dance in Malaysia because it honors a deep understanding among cultures, religions, and people.

The entire research methodology, which comprises a number of minor subtopics like the research background, problem statement, research questions, research



objectives, conceptual framework, research importance, research scope, and conclusions, is discussed and presented in this study. Through the study's context or directly, this research analyses the study in greater detail. The problem statement, which justifies this study's conduct based on the issues it raises, and the objectives, which outline the questions this investigation will attempt to address, will be discussed next. In addition, this study embraces the research methodology that guide this study throughout the research process and offers the appropriate conceptual framework for concluding this inquiry so that it does not stray from its intended direction.

1.3 Definition and Terminology

1.3.1 Embody

Embodiment is to show anything in visible bodily form, such as a person on stage, or to express something abstract in physical form: to be a representation or example of (something). From a performance standpoint, it is important to understand how emotionally, mentally, and neurobiological⁴ involved individuals may get with things that cause physical movement. Experiences of body and mind being one are referred to as embodiment. It encompasses the physical body, the energy body, and the body that is "intelligent, intellectual, and creative," in the terms of Thomas Hanna. Embodiment is a sensation that may be felt, a method to comprehend oneself, a way to make sense of one's

⁴ Neurobiological means a field of study in the life sciences that examines the anatomy, operation, and pathology of the nervous system.



surroundings. It is an integrated condition of consciousness. The physiological, political, spiritual, and emotional contexts of Bharatanatyam dances are displayed within their iterations, making them an example of embodied cultural memory.

1.3.2 Non-Indian Bodies

A person who is not an Indian native or resident. Bodies means to share one's thoughts, feelings, and intentions with others by expressing them externally. Our perception of ourselves and how we view our bodies are significantly influenced by the culture we are exposed to. Non-Indian Bodies is a non-native Indian who employs their body that symbolize their own lifestyle and culture. However, they lack awareness of Indian culture, particularly when it comes to performing dances that depict Hindu gods and traditions.

1.3.3 Bharatanatyam

Bharatanatyam is a type of classical Indian dance that focuses on using the body to express the divine or spiritual aspects. Arangetram is a graduation performance that follows the Margam (route) structure traditionally. It depicts the dancer's consciousness at various levels. The words for "raised stage" and "climbing" in Tamil, a language of south India, respectively, are "aranga" and "etram." Arangetram is a test for both the instructor and the student since both the teacher's knowledge and the student's skill are evaluated by the general





public. As a result, the Arangetram is only performed when the Guru considers the Sishya is being talented and capable enough to do so. Salangai translates to "the jingles" and "the prayers to God" in Tamil. The Salangai are not intended to be worn by the Sishya until this ceremony has been completed. This idea has now evolved a little, and the Salangai poojai is now done after a few lessons in dancing. And after thorough preparation, the Arangetram is carried out. Basic adavus, the seven repertoire, and rasa theory are the few lessons that must be learned and mastered before graduating.

1.3.4 Performance

An action that a person or group takes to entertain an audience (such as singing a song or acting in a play). It frequently interprets the music, which is frequently uniquely composed, or it may convey a drama utilizing illusion, costumes, and setting. The total of all the components that go into dancing makes up the performance. What they are seeing is you performing.

1.4 Problem Statement

Bharatanatyam is a dance that is completely dedicated to the Hindu God and Goddess. ASWARA has been teaching the fundamentals of Bharatanatyam, such as Jathiswaram and Alarippu. This repertoire, which is centered solely on rhythm, brings forth the unique charm of pure dance. Being a pure dance repertoire, it doesn't require non-Indian people to try to adapt to its spirituality. The dancing students at this level are unconcerned with the context, culture, and traditions from which Bharatanatyam had





originated because the learning is merely accepted as a kinesthetic challenge. Preparing for the Arangetram, on the other hand, demanded a completely different degree of dedication. Gonzales and TOFA planned to rewrite the scripts on the Arangetram of Yunus and Baizura so that there would be no mention of the Hindu God and Goddess. Unfortunately, there was not time to work on fresh texts, so they both performed from the existing repertoire. According to Gonzales (2013) “How will they respond to these texts?”.

Imran and Kimberly's Arangetram also has no changes in the lyrics, thus they perform as it ever was. The learning method demanded that the dancers be thoroughly engaged in the world of Indian dance and culture, and seek to embody it. The challenge here is how non-Indian bodies interpret the text when it follows Sanskrit and Hindu mythology stories. It is challenging for non-Indians to comprehend the stories because for Indians, who live similarly to the stories and utilize them as guide, it is simpler. They must follow the sequence and visualize the character as a deity or goddess. Furthermore, as non-Indian bodies, the adaptation of spiritual qualities throughout Bharatanatyam. It takes time to get used to the authentic Indian accents and scents of the prayer items. Additionally, becoming vegetarian and overcoming challenges with halal cuisine as well as adjusting to Indian society without being constrained by one's own religious beliefs require some time for non-Indians. This research would like to focus on non-Indian Bharatanatyam instructors who have the potential to impart the text and spiritual aspects to their students in this study. Furthermore, how do individuals with non-Indian bodies interpret Bharatanatyam dance components?





Overall, non-Indian bodies have no difficulty learning pure dances like as Alarippu and Jathiswaram which is about nritya form, and they only need to do the basic movement. Non-Indian bodies would struggle with Padam, Varnam, and Shabdham, which are solo expressive dances made of expressions and evoke rasa (a taste of spiritual happiness).

1.5 Research Questions

A research question is a specific inquiry to which the research aims to respond. It is at the heart of systematic study and aids in clearly defining a path for the research process. The first stage in any research project is usually to formulate a research question. They provide the road map to proceed and identify and focus on the research gaps. The study's questions are discussed to serve as a guide or a platform on which scholars can analyze the goals and issues of their research. Among the issues raised are:

1.5.1 What is the development of multi-ethnic Bharatanatyam dancers in Malaysia?

The emergence and involvement of multiethnic Bharatanatyam dancers in Malaysia are acknowledged in the first research question. It has become more focused to examine closely at the evolution of two non-Indian bodies of mixed ethnic.

1.5.2 How do non-Indian bodies adapt to Bharatanatyam's spiritual aspects?

The salutation that you say before and after a Bharatanatyam dance, which indicates that you are thanking God and Mother Nature, is quite different to this dance form from



others, so this research question is useful to understand non-Indians' adaptation to spiritual aspects.

1.5.3 How do the other bodies interpret the Bharatanatyam dance components?

The third research question focus on how dancers interpret between the period they are training for Arangetram despite the fact that Bharatanatyam are very different from other forms of classical dance.

1.6 Research Objectives

In general, research objectives define what we expect a project to accomplish.

Typically, research objectives are defined in lay terms and are aimed at both the client and this research. The objective of this study was to embody the non-Indian bodies experience in Bharatanatyam. The following is a detailed description of the objectives of the study:

1.6.1 To identify multi-ethnic Bharatanatyam dancers' development in Malaysia.

This study will identify the growth of multi-ethnic dancers in Malaysia since Bharatanatyam was introduced in TOFA and ASWARA.

1.6.2 To classify non-Indian bodies adaptation of spiritual aspects in Bharatanatyam.

This research classifies non - Indian bodies adaptation of Bharatanatyam's spiritual aspects, which is similar to understanding or implementing Indian aesthetics through the Bharatanatyam repertoire.

1.6.3 To analyze the interpretations of Bharatanatyam dance components.

The aim of this objective is to analyze non - Indian bodies interpreting of the dance components of Bharatanatyam repertoires.

1.7 Research Scope

This study required some limits that cover the scope of the study, where these constraints are used as a platform for researchers to do research so that it is not overly extensive and only focuses on subjects relevant to the title and your term. Besides that, this study will carry out the main purposes of these non-Indian bodies experiencing aspects through the Bharatanatyam. The method and research methodology outcomes will be conducted, which will directly emphasize the objectives and research questions of this study. This restriction study has been implemented to assist in such study by launching and gathering accurate data.

In order for the results of this study to be relevant to the needs of the research questions, this research will not only conduct in-depth research on the subject but will also limit the study case. Ramli Ibrahim is an example of a non-Indian performer of



Bharatanatyam in Malaysia. Many non-Indian bodies have been influenced by him, and Joseph Gonzales and the TOFA' management have included a Bharatanatyam course in the dance programmed. This activity has assisted many students in learning Bharatanatyam, as the popular names we may learn from Joseph Gonzales are Yunus and Baizura. In this study, I would like to set some boundaries by interviewing Imran and Kimberly.

According to Preeti Bala Sharma (2013) "A Bharatanatyam performance is more than just the culmination of years of training; it is also more than just a token of a long-gone tradition that has become mythology. It is an interpretation in visual form of all Indian arts, including music and rhythm, writing, poetry, sculpture, and painting. It is a reflection of the universe in the form of various emotional states. It is the last act of worship." Rather than obtaining all of the facts, this research will collect data about spiritual aspects of Bharatanatyam in this study. ("Hindu philosophy, n.d.") as cited in Anand 2014, the spiritual significance of Bharatanatyam is the Atma (individual soul) seeking unity with the Paramatma (universal soul). Thus, "this attitude is an impersonal delight characteristic of the adept's contemplation of the Supreme Being, a bliss that is entirely devoid of personal feeling." Thus, Bharatanatyam's spirituality is based on Hindu philosophy, which interprets the Vedas, and rasa-theory, which analyzes psychological aspects and societal advantages, is the fundamental philosophical belief of all performing arts. Thus, the religious-philosophical foundation of Bharatanatyam, a derived form of Natya, an Indian classical performing art.

This research believes that by interpreting the dance components and delivering to the approaching non-Indian bodies, the respondent will be able to communicate more about their experience in the chosen region. This research only relates dance components with





the higher level which is Arangetram that was done by both Imran and Kimberly. The dancer should exhibit a good standard of Araimandi (half seated position), Hasthas (hand gestures), Abhinaya (facial expressions), Rekha (ability to cover the stage), Confidence; a pleasing smile throughout, stamina to make it all look effortless and Life; Energy. All of these dancing elements will be interviewed with both of them and will remain within the scope of this research.

Furthermore, all of the data have solely detailed the non-Indian bodies' evolution and journey in learning Bharatanatyam. Furthermore, the writer noted in one comment that they had only finally started to adapt to the changes by learning about the dance and their surroundings. Sometimes feelings and experiences are too complex to express in a single statement; it is a process of accepting changes in their lives. Describing one's emotions in person and sharing stories of transitioning into a new life can inspire future generations. The study has only classified Bharatanatyam adaptation and interpretation as related to a non-Indian body. The chosen individuals from various religions will be the only ones emphasized in this study since they are shining in this generation and have done their Arangetram together. They both have shared many thoughts and adapting this dance together itself they gain more experience.

Overall, this research has used reference sources through the related matter of the non-Indian bodies in Bharatanatyam and their progression as a correlation with this research's study. During this study, this research has managed the time constraints in interviewing the informants. Furthermore, consider Imran and Kimberly since they are currently engaged in their own company, offering Bharatanatyam sessions to non-dance programmer students. They have improved their talent by performing not only Arangetram but also other repertory and continuing to advance. This research believes



it would be far more beneficial to interview active and successful people rather than the same old people. This research limited their findings by gathering information on the spiritual aspect, rasa theory, Arangetram dance components, and a list of non-Indian bodies in Bharatanatyam. Moreover, this study has focused on these two interviewees to collect data in this research.

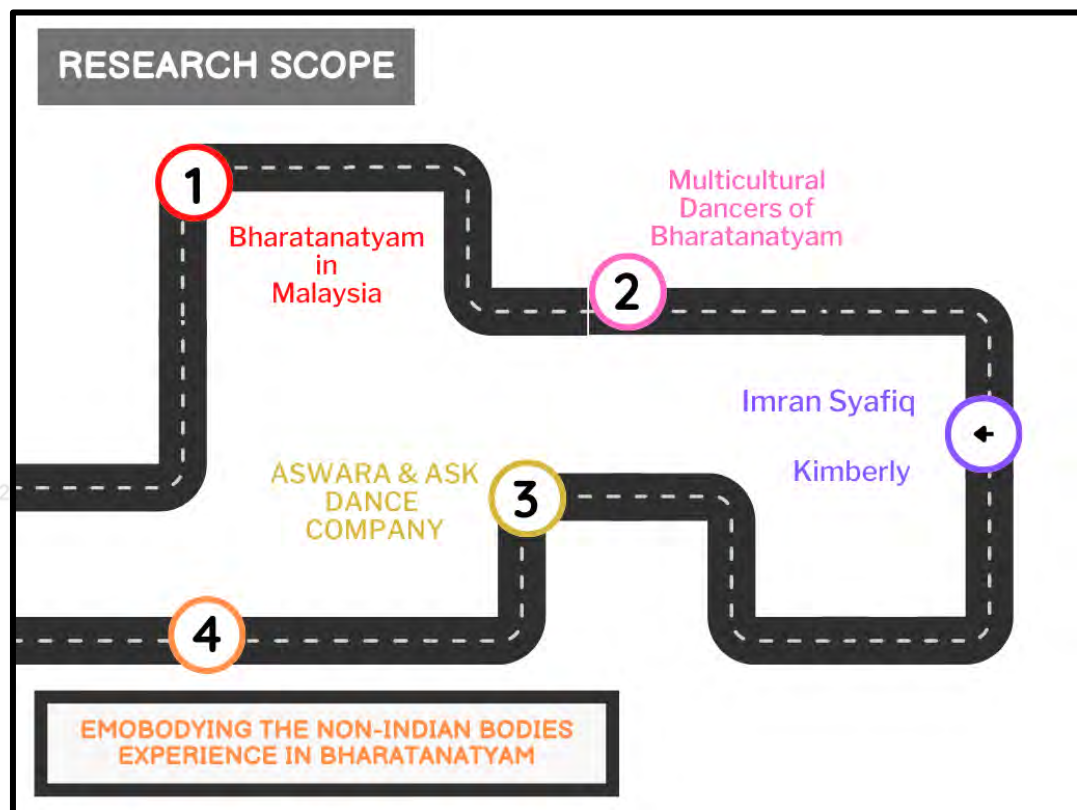


Diagram 1.1: The concentrated on two different diverse bodies



1.8 Importance of Research

Research can find answers to things that are unknown, filling gaps in knowledge and changing the way that healthcare professionals work. This study can help multiethnic persons overcome society's prejudice towards learning Bharatanatyam and progress to the next level, Arangetram. Experiencing new things is distinct from believing in or accepting traditions. This study will help many non-Indians who desire to learn Bharatanatyam and adapt it for educational purposes. Sharing one's expertise has drawn the Bharatanatyam course in Malaysia's Dance Department. As a result, many people have completed the Arangetram level of Bharatanatyam. Gonzales has written about numerous Malaysian dancers and choreographers. One of the written is about Yunus and Baizura, who share the same religion, but in this study, this research chose various religions so that this research could evaluate them more thoroughly.

This study is very important to this research because throughout this study case, sharing experiences brings a sense of pride, this sort of social sharing comes most naturally to most learners. There are numerous methods for encouraging social sharing and gaining knowledge from it. Shared experiences have a variety of good effects on our emotional well-being and sense of togetherness. According to one study, shared activities, even with complete strangers, are more intense than doing anything alone. This study will clarify the feelings of a person learning a traditional dance from another culture and overcoming the difficulties to complete it effectively. Aside from the old non-Indian bodies, it is time to reveal the present and active individual who is adamant about developing in Bharatanatyam. Learning the dance form of a culture you're not familiar with can be key when it comes to truly understanding that culture. You're





learning about their language, values and approach to their environment through something as accessible as dancing. Both interviewees will benefit future generations by fulfilling the other's dream of finishing Arangetram rather than simply mastering the pure dance repertory of Bharatanatyam.

This research is essential for future generations who are afraid of society's bias against learning a religious skill. Rather of using it for religious motives, learn it for educational ones and benefit yourself. Everyone has the right to study and enjoy the sensation of taking Bharatanatyam classes. Furthermore, as the next generation, this research will learn about the evolution of Bharatanatyam dance as it is still well maintained today, despite its long existence of time altering, cultural heritage battles, and even religious belief. Through this study, can utilize this subject as a reference and guide to the future generation on how previous generations overcame challenges and succeeded. Finally, everyone will learn about the spiritual side of Bharatanatyam, thus it is not necessary to believe in the tradition, but rather to learn and gain knowledge. This research will be extremely useful in assisting other non-Indian bodies to experience Bharatanatyam and adapt to its spiritual qualities.

Furthermore, this study will be useful for students in Arts Schools in Malaysia's five states: KL, Perak, Selangor, Sabah, and Sarawak. Those pupils will be motivated to learn more about Bharatanatyam rather than simply mastering in pure dance repertoire only. Furthermore, all of the findings have solely described the non-Indian bodies' evolution and journey into learning. Many students have expressed tension about learning Bharatanatyam owing to its difficulty, however this study may guide or inspire them to learn more about this dance. This research will assist you in achieving



new goals and embracing the unknown like these interviewees. This research may be able to encourage oneself to do new things and attain success in this profession by following idols such as Ramli Ibrahim.

Additionally, this research will benefit all Art School students, Dance Department members, and individuals who want to learn this sacred art. Both interviewees will serve as role models for the future generation in understanding the distinction between adjusting and believing in traditions. Learning to dance as an art form and for educational objectives, rather than analysis is fundamental and failing to learn it. Sharing experiences might inspire people to push above their limits and discover more than they ever envisioned. This research will assist all non-Indian bodies in graduating in Bharatanatyam without fear of bias.

Overall, this chapter covers all of the sections and fills in the gaps by collecting data from non-Indian bodies' experiences with Bharatanatyam. All of the sections have been defined in accordance with the research's primary principles. This study is on two non-Indian bodies and their journey through Bharatanatyam. Instead of always concentrating just on Ramli Ibrahim, it is time to recognize upcoming Bharatanatyam achievers who are working hard to expand their repertoires in their own company. This study demonstrates how these two were inspired to complete Arangetram and set a better example for future generations. The Arangetram experience involves perseverance, diligence, and focus exhibited from the dancer and support given from the audience. All of these experiences will be clarified in this study, which will assist many non-Indian bodies in and out of Malaysia's dance department which include Art school.

1.9 Chapter Organization

Chapter 1

This study discusses and presents chapter 1 on the research background, problem statement, research questions, research objectives, conceptual framework, research importance, research scope, and conclusions. Overall, chapter one covers the introduction to this study and benchmarks for achieving the research study's goal.

Chapter 2

This research has findings on the following major subtopics: Bharatanatyam in Malaysia, Indian Aesthetic in Bharatanatyam, Spiritual Aspects, Embodying Non-Indian Bodies, and Arangetram, which are discussed in Chapter 2. Overall, chapter 2 pertains on the gathering of secondary data.

Chapter 3

The third chapter focuses on the research design and methodology used in this study. The qualitative method that was used in this research methodology is described along with how it works. The research methodology that has been selected is meant to assist the reader in comprehending why your research should matter to them after reading the paper. This study employs a conceptual framework to examine how non-Indian bodies embody the rasa or Indian aesthetic.

Chapter 4

The spirituality involved in Bharatanatyam is discussed in the present chapter. This chapter highlights important spirituality and the adaptation of non-Indian bodies to it. At the same time, in the fourth chapter, two alternative perspectives or views of each non-Indian body adaption were shown. This chapter also addresses the spiritually rich performances in their Arangetram performance.

Chapter 5

In this chapter, the dancing components of Bharatanatyam that set it apart from other traditional dance forms are discussed. This chapter emphasizes the dancing element of Bharatanatyam as well as the interpretation of the two non-Indian bodies. On the other side, it also tells how they felt about employing the method during the constrained period of their journey to Arangetram. In accordance with the dancing components, the chapter also discusses their Arangetram repertoire.

Chapter 6

The research presents the findings, summaries, and suggestions for the study that had been reviewed at in this chapter. The writing will include a chapter introduction and conclusion, as well as an implication and a recommendation for more research.