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## Integration of Musical Arts to Build Cooperation Skills of Elementary School Students

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to integrate *karawitan* art into Cultural Arts and Crafts (SBDP) subjects as a method to instill cooperation character in students. *Karawitan* art, as a traditional Indonesian musical art that is rich in cultural values, has great potential to shape students' positive character, especially the character of cooperation. Through learning activities that involve *karawitan* ensemble practice, students are invited to practice understanding the role of individuals in a group, listening, and supporting each other in achieving musical harmony. This study used the classroom action research (PTK) method conducted in several learning cycles with elementary school students in Central Java. The results showed that the integration of musical arts in SBDP subjects effectively improved students' cooperation character. Students become more active in participating, able to communicate well, and help each other to achieve common goals. This integration not only enriches cultural arts learning but also provides meaningful experiences for students to understand the importance of cooperation in everyday life.

**Keywords:** integration, musical arts, SBDP, cooperation character, learning

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## INTRODUCTION

Character education is an important part of Indonesia's education curriculum to shape young people who have positive values in social life. One of the essential character aspects in community life is cooperation, which needs to be developed early on through various approaches in the school environment. Cultural Arts and Crafts (SBDP) as a subject in elementary schools has great potential to instill this ability, especially through traditional arts that are rich in social values, such as *karawitan*. *Karawitan* art is a typical Javanese and Balinese ensemble music that requires the involvement of many players with different instruments to achieve beautiful harmony, so the ability to cooperate and be together becomes the core of the learning process of this art (Setiawan, 2019).

Collaboration is a fundamental skill that 21<sup>st</sup> century learners must have to face global challenges. Unfortunately, at the primary school level, the development of this skill is still not maximized. Some studies show that learners often have difficulty working together when completing group tasks. They tend to prioritize individual competition over collaboration (Prasetyo & Wahyuni,

2020). This suggests an urgent need to integrate learning methods that can encourage learners' cooperation more effectively.

The art of *karawitan*, which involves playing gamelan in groups, is one of the potential alternative learning media. Cooperation is a key element in *karawitan* as each player has an important role to play in creating harmony (Sudaryanto, 2018). Through *karawitan*, learners learn to listen, respect the role of friends, and work collectively to achieve a common goal. However, the utilization of musical arts in primary schools has not been widely explored as a medium to improve cooperation skills.

Ki Hajar Dewantara, an Indonesian national education figure, also emphasized the importance of education based on local culture, where musical arts can be an effective medium in shaping the character of togetherness and *gotong royong* (Dewantara, 2009). By introducing *karawitan* art in SBDP learning, students not only learn about Indonesian traditional culture but also gain a deep understanding of how cooperation can create harmony in a group. This is in line with the goal of character education which is expected to produce individuals who are not only intelligent but also have good social attitudes (Sari & Prihadi, 2020).

This idea integrates traditional arts with social skills learning. Musical arts not only preserve local culture but also support learners' character development. In this context, *karawitan* offers holistic learning as it involves cognitive (understanding musical patterns), affective (appreciating diversity), and psychomotor (ability to play musical instruments) aspects. This idea is relevant to answer the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century education, especially in preparing learners who are able to work collaboratively.

The implementation of musical arts integration in the elementary school curriculum still faces challenges, including limited facilities and competent human resources in the field of musical arts. Nevertheless, this integration effort is very relevant to the character education program launched by the government. This study aims to examine how the integration of musical arts in SBDP subjects can instill cooperation skills in elementary school students, as well as explore effective learning methods to be applied in the context of basic education.

This research is important to address two main needs. First, the low cooperation skills of students in elementary schools require effective learning solutions. Secondly, in the midst of globalization, *karawitan* faces challenges in maintaining its existence. By making *karawitan* a part of learning, this research not only improves learners' social skills but also preserves traditional arts that are becoming marginalized (Permendikbud No. 79 of 2014). In addition, this research seeks to connect the preservation of local culture with relevant learning in the present.

This research has the novelty of examining *karawitan* as a learning medium to improve cooperation skills. Most previous studies have only highlighted *karawitan* in the context of cultural preservation or pure art learning. For example, Sudaryanto (2018) discussed *karawitan* to instill disciplinary values, while Prasetyo and Wahyuni (2020) highlighted the application of *karawitan* in learning character values without focusing on cooperation. This research fills this gap by examining

musical arts as a medium for developing cooperation skills through a case study approach in elementary schools. Using a qualitative approach, this research also explores the direct experience of students in learning musical arts, the role of teachers in guiding, and the group dynamics formed during the learning process. The results are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to local culture-based education.

## **METHOD**

This study employs the method of classroom action research (PTK) to integrate musical arts into Cultural Arts and Crafts (SBDP) subjects with the objective of fostering the character of cooperation among students. Classroom action research was chosen as it allows researchers to examine changes in the learning process through a cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection, as outlined by Kemmis and McTaggart (2014). By applying this iterative approach, the study ensures continuous improvement in teaching methods to achieve the desired outcomes.

The research was conducted in an elementary school located in Central Java, Indonesia, which incorporates *karawitan* (traditional Javanese gamelan music) as part of its SBDP curriculum. *Karawitan*, being a communal art form, serves as an ideal medium to instill cooperative values, as it requires students to work together harmoniously to produce a cohesive musical performance. The study focused on a class of 30 fifth-grade students who were randomly selected. These participants represented diverse levels of artistic ability, ranging from students with a strong interest in music to those unfamiliar with or less engaged in musical arts.

The primary aim of this research was to observe the development of students' cooperative behavior during the process of learning music (Johnson & Johnson, 2017). Data collection methods included observations, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to monitor student interactions and group dynamics during musical activities. Interviews provided additional insights into the students' perceptions of cooperation and their experiences during the learning process. Meanwhile, documentation, such as photographs and video recordings, was used to support the observational data by capturing moments of student interaction and collaboration during group activities. To ensure data validity, source and method triangulation techniques were used (Moleong, 2021).

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods. Observational and interview data were categorized to identify patterns and describe changes in students' cooperative attitudes (Miles et al., 2014). The findings highlighted how musical learning activities, particularly those involving *karawitan*, encouraged students to work together more effectively, communicate openly, and support one another in achieving group goals. Visual documentation further corroborated these findings, illustrating students' active participation and mutual assistance in completing musical tasks.

The results of this study underscore the potential of integrating musical arts into the school curriculum to cultivate positive character traits, particularly cooperation (Hallam, 2010). By engaging

in *karawitan* as part of SBDP learning, students not only gained an appreciation for traditional musical arts but also developed essential social skills that are critical for their personal and academic growth. This research contributes to the broader understanding of how traditional arts can be used as a tool for character education in schools.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The *karawitan* extracurricular program at SDN Waru 3 has become one of the flagship activities that aims to preserve traditional Javanese culture. The program not only focuses on technical training to play the gamelan but also instills cultural values and character education in students. As a form of culture-based education, *karawitan* activities support the implementation of national education policies that emphasize the importance of preserving local arts and culture in accordance with Permendikbud No. 79/2014 on Local Content.

This program is implemented to introduce the art of *karawitan* as a Javanese cultural heritage while guiding students in understanding the philosophical meaning contained in gamelan musical instruments. Tilaar's (2012) research confirms that local arts and culture in schools play an important role in shaping the cultural identity of the younger generation. This is also in line with UNESCO's (2010) study, which shows that arts-based education, such as *karawitan*, can develop children's social-emotional abilities, such as self-confidence, discipline, cooperation, and empathy. At SDN Waru 3, this activity has been going on for a long time and is part of the non-formal education routine conducted every Saturday. In its implementation, students are introduced to various gamelan musical instruments, such as *saron*, *gong*, *kendang*, and *bonang*, with a focus on practical training and group harmonization. However, not only musical aspects are emphasized, cultural and moral values, such as respect for musical instruments, courtesy, and cooperation, are also instilled through the learning process (Suyanto, 2022). Although the program has been running for a while, there are still challenges in maintaining students' interest, especially at the high-grade level. This reflects the need for more consistent support, both from teachers and supporting facilities, so that the *karawitan* program can run optimally and continue to be relevant in the midst of changing times.



**Figure 1.** *Karawitan* Activity in SD Waru 3

The implementation of *karawitan* activities is held every Saturday, where students gather in the courtyard of SD Waru 3. At this location, various facilities and infrastructure have been provided, such as a complete set of gamelan, blackboard, and stationery used by the teacher to convey basic theory in playing the gamelan. The spacious and comfortable schoolyard provides enough space for students to learn and practice.

This activity is taught directly by teachers from SD Waru 3 who have competence in musical arts. In addition, the school also cooperates with teachers from the school committee who have experience in musical arts. With the support of the school committee, students not only get practical lessons but also insights into the philosophy and cultural values contained in musical arts.

During the rehearsal, students are taught to recognize the various instruments in the gamelan, such as *saron*, *gong*, *kendang*, and *bonang*. They also learn how to play each instrument in harmony so as to create distinctive and beautiful traditional music. This activity not only trains students' musical abilities but also trains their perseverance, cohesiveness, and sense of community. SD Waru 3 students are expected to grow up with a high appreciation for local culture, as well as trained in working together to achieve the best results in traditional art.



**Figure 2.** Training the Students about *Gamelan*

The extracurricular *karawitan* activities that are focused on students are learning *karawitan* music, which is a type of *karawitan* that focuses on the instrumental aspect of gamelan playing. In its implementation, students are introduced to *karawitan* in *pelog* and *slendro* tunings.



**Figure 3.** Students' learning *pelog* and *slendro* tunings

The program instructor does not explain in depth the differences between the two tunings but rather introduces their use by mentioning that the *slendro* tuning consists of notes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, while the *pelog* tuning consists of notes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, along with the gamelan arrangement. The ability that is more developed in students is the skill of playing *gamelan* instruments. The cultivation of Javanese cultural values and manners in this activity is only given if there is an opportunity. According to the *karawitan* extracurricular supervisor, the main focus is on the skill of playing the gamelan. What is considered important is how students are taught to respect these musical instruments, for example, by not stepping over the gamelan, not only for any reason but as a form of respect for musical instruments whose manufacturing process is difficult, as well as an exercise in politeness.

In addition to playing the gamelan, some students at SD Waru 3 are also taught *tembang macapat* to complement and enrich the *karawitan* performance itself. *Tembang macapat* is a type of traditional Javanese poetry sung with gamelan accompaniment, providing a distinctive atmosphere and deepening the meaning of each performance. In extracurricular *karawitan*, not all gamelan instruments are played simultaneously because some students are focused on learning to sing Javanese songs or *tembang macapat*. With this division, students have the opportunity to choose to explore playing instruments or traditional vocal arts.

The material taught in *tembang macapat* consists of *lancaran*, which is a simple rhythmic pattern that is the basis for beginners. One type of *lancaran* that students learn is *lancaran bindri*, which was chosen because it has simple parts so that it is easier for students to understand and practice. This material is given in stages, starting from the introduction of basic notation to group practice. To help students, the teacher provides notation notes that serve as a guide for students when practicing. Teaching materials used by teachers in traditional arts learning are generally compiled based on their personal experience and knowledge or refer to available references to ensure the material presented is relevant and easily understood by students (Aryani, 2019). The notation of the music comes from the teaching materials prepared by the teachers, either made by themselves based on their experience and knowledge or taken from available sourcebooks. The teacher then adjusts the level of difficulty of the material to the student's abilities so that the material can be learned well.



**Figure 4.** Students learning to sing *macapat* songs

In addition, the students are also invited to recognize the history and meaning of the songs they sing so that they not only learn singing techniques but also understand the cultural values contained in the *macapat* songs. Through extracurricular activities based on local culture, students are invited to foster a love and pride for their culture, as well as hone their deep musical and vocal abilities, which support the development of their creativity and self-confidence (Handayani, 2022). Through this activity, students are invited to foster love and pride in their local culture and hone their musical and vocal abilities. Learning *tembang macapat* also fosters confidence in performing in front of their peers, as they practice directly in groups and have the opportunity to perform in school performances. With this program, SDN Waru 3 seeks to maintain traditional Javanese cultural values and foster a generation that loves its own culture.

The teacher directs the students in playing the gamelan by giving signals to the students if there is something wrong in playing the instrument and playing the drum to set the tempo and rhythm of the *karawitan*. The instruments commonly used by students who take part in extra- curricular *karawitan* are instruments that are easy to play such as *saron*, *demung*, *kenong*, *kendhang*, and *gong*. Extra-curricular *karawitan* learning activities are carried out based on more than 10 years of experience. Extracurricular activities start from the planning stage and adjust to the children. In extracurricular activities because those who participate in extras are small, the material given is in the form of *lancaran bindri* easy parts first until students can play the gamelan and memorize the pattern. In implementing extracurricular *karawitan* activities, the teacher explains how to play the gamelan. When the children are tired, they are given time to rest, the important thing is that the children are happy first to learn *karawitan*. By learning *karawitan*, the hope is that tomorrow when they enter junior high school or even high school, they will love their own culture, one of which is *karawitan*.

Swardiman (2022) discusses the importance of authentic assessment in arts education, as well as work by Arsyad (2021) who underlines the role of assessment in developing students' creative skills. The assessment of learning outcomes in the *karawitan* extracurricular program at SD Waru 3 is conducted in a more qualitative manner, relying on observation of learners' activities during the practice of playing the gamelan. This reflects an assessment approach that emphasizes the process and development of students' skills rather than written tests or practical exams.



**Figure 5.** Teacher supervising the students in the *karawitan* class

This approach supports the philosophy of experiential learning, where assessment is based on the extent to which students can apply the skills they learn in a more practical and contextualized context. Assessment in art education is often more flexible and tailored to the needs of learners, given the diversity of abilities and individual developmental processes. Teachers as facilitators have an important role in evaluating student progress based on direct observation during the learning process (Rivai, 2019). The absence of specific, standardized grading standards indicates flexibility in grading, which is tailored to the conditions and needs of each learner. The decision on the grade awarded rests entirely with the extracurricular teacher, who has a more in-depth assessment of the learners' development in *karawitan*. This approach allows assessors to provide more personalized and relevant feedback for each student, based on direct observation of their engagement in learning activities. In the context of arts education, observation-based assessment is particularly relevant because art is a form of expression that cannot always be measured by quantitative methods or standardized tests. This approach is also in line with learning principles that emphasize the development of creativity, cooperation, and appreciation of culture, which are the main objectives of the *karawitan* program itself. Observation-based assessment supports the development of student's character and social competence, as well as building their ability to work in teams, which is one of the expected learning outcomes in this extracurricular activity.

The lack of interest in traditional arts activities can be caused by a lack of understanding of the importance of cultural arts in character-building and self-identity (Handayani, 2020, p. 73). Students who take part in extracurricular *karawitan* are able to accept simple *karawitan* material well, but the interest of students in general for the high grades is still low in *karawitan*. The interest of high-grade learners in extracurricular *karawitan* is minimal. Most learners are less interested because the program is considered unclear in its implementation. The erratic arrival of the teacher or *karawitan* trainer due to his busy schedule makes some learners who were initially interested never follow again. Learners tend to be less enthusiastic about traditional arts programs, especially in higher education, because they are considered less interesting than technology-based activities or modern arts (Wijaya, 2019, p. 66). Extracurricular activities at SD Waru 3 are often the highlight of various school events, ranging from national holiday celebrations and art performances to class farewell events. Every time it is held, the performances of the students playing *karawitan* or singing always attract attention and amaze the audience. These performances not only provide entertainment but also add value to the event. The students have the opportunity to showcase their training, demonstrate their talents and interests, and share their appreciation for traditional Javanese arts and culture.

Performing cultural arts at school allows students to practice their abilities in a real way, which at the same time trains soft skills such as self-confidence, courage, and socialization skills (Suryadi, 2021, p. 58). Extracurricular activities at SDN Waru 3 are often the highlight of various school events, ranging from national holiday celebrations and art performances to class farewell events. Every time it is held, the performances of the students playing *karawitan* or singing always attract attention and



amaze the audience. These performances not only provide entertainment but also add value to the event. The students have the opportunity to showcase their training, demonstrate their talents and interests, and share their appreciation for traditional Javanese arts and culture. These events are highly anticipated moments for the students. They eagerly prepare themselves to perform in front of an audience of schoolmates, parents, and the community. Through this performance opportunity, students can not only hone their musical skills but also train their confidence and courage to perform in public. In addition, they learn the importance of cooperation in groups, perseverance in practicing, and patience in facing challenges in the rehearsal process.

The students' enthusiasm is heightened when they have the opportunity to perform *karawitan* in events outside of school, for example, in events organized by the education office or at cultural celebrations in the village. On these occasions, the children can interact with the wider community and bring the good name of the school. Their performances at events organized by the relevant agencies, such as the commemoration of National Education Day and village events to commemorate certain cultural days, gave them the opportunity to learn more about the culture. Their participation in these events not only makes the school proud but also supports the preservation of traditional culture at the local level.



**Figure 6.** Students presenting a *karawitan* performance at the Sragen District Education and Culture Office

With these activities, students learn to appreciate and preserve the richness of their own culture while building mental toughness to face future challenges. The support of the school and the community in every performance gives a great boost to the children, making them even more motivated to continue honing their talents and preserving cultural arts through *karawitan*.

Extracurricular *karawitan* is one of the Javanese culture-based education programs that SDN Waru 3 continues to maintain. It is hoped that students' interest in this extracurricular *karawitan* will increase, especially for high grades, so that they can get maximum learning results. The *karawitan* activity is also carried out by the teacher regularly, which is held every Saturday as a means of

entertainment and learning for the teacher. Through this activity, the teachers can increase their understanding and knowledge of *karawitan* which will then be transmitted to students because not all students participate in *karawitan* extracurricular activities. Traditional arts- based education such as *karawitan* not only teaches the skills of playing musical instruments, but also instills noble values such as patience, responsibility, and cooperation. This is the basis for strengthening student character through a local culture, which is full of life philosophy (Wibowo, 2019, p. 56).

Musical arts education not only serves as a means of cultural preservation, but also as a medium for student character building through habituation of the values of cooperation, discipline, and responsibility. Assessment in musical learning programs should focus on the practical process, mastery of gamelan playing skills, and active participation in group activities. This provides room for a more authentic and contextual assessment in accordance with the nature of the art itself" (Pramono, 2020, p. 87). Musical arts, in its implementation, can foster students to form the character of students who are responsible, fair leadership, respectful, polite, helpful, and cooperative. The *karawitan* art contains moral teachings that come from Javanese culture. Moral teachings or character education in musical arts cover a variety of things, including the nine pillars of character education that have been mandated by the law. The nine characters are the love of God and all His creations, independence and responsibility, honesty or trustworthiness, respect and courtesy, helpfulness and mutual cooperation, confidence and smart workers, leadership and justice, kindness, and humility, as well as tolerance, peace, and unity. For the *karawitan* program, various Javanese ethics and cultural wisdom values can be learned from the history, purpose, and function of the various materials presented.

*Karawitan* serves as a medium for local culture-based character learning. The philosophy of harmony in gamelan playing reflects the values of cooperation and tolerance that are very relevant to student character building in the modern era" (Suryani, 2021, p. 87). The results of the implementation of the culture-based character education program through *karawitan* found that students were quite interested in various activities that conveyed Javanese culture. This interest is realized through the activeness of students in participating in activities so as to produce proud achievements, especially in the field of Javanese culture, such as *macapat* and *karawitan*. Through this culture-based education program, there are differences in the characteristics of students in this school with other schools. Learners in this school have more knowledge and skills of Javanese culture as well as good manners in socializing, especially with elders.

## CONCLUSION

The integration of *karawitan* art into Cultural Arts and Crafts (SBDP) subjects has proven effective in fostering the character of cooperation among elementary school students by providing them with direct experiences in working together through playing traditional Javanese and Balinese musical ensembles, where they learn the importance of individual roles, effective communication, and mutual respect in achieving shared goals; over three learning cycles, students showed significant improvements

in teamwork, group communication, role awareness, and active contribution to achieving musical harmony, while also developing a deeper understanding and appreciation of local culture, demonstrating that arts education, particularly traditional arts, not only enhances students' artistic skills but also plays a vital role in building positive character traits and preserving cultural heritage.

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