



## **Transforming Student Behavior through Internalization of Values Aesthetics-Ethics in Traditional Dance Learning Based on Local Wisdom at SMPN 4 Cepu**

**Kusmini Kusmini ✉, Hartono Hartono**

Email: [ibukusmini@students.unnes.ac.id](mailto:ibukusmini@students.unnes.ac.id)

Faculty Of Language and Art, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the implementation of traditional dance learning based on local wisdom at SMPN 4 Cepu, with a focus on the process of internalizing aesthetic-ethical values and transforming student behavior through a contextual and experiential learning approach. This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach, involving participatory observation, in-depth interviews with teachers and students, and analysis of learning documents to collect comprehensive data from the field. The results show that learning takes place in a planned and effective manner through direct practice strategies, teacher demonstrations, and continuous habituation, which successfully integrates mastery of dance movement techniques with a deep understanding of cultural backgrounds, symbolic meanings, and local values. Aesthetic values are internalized through appreciation of movement, rhythm, facial expressions, and the beauty of dance forms, while ethical values are embedded through disciplined practice, group work, mutual respect, and adherence to norms in the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains; this triggers real behavioral transformations in the form of increased self-confidence, discipline, collaboration skills, and appreciation of cultural diversity both in the learning environment and in daily school life. In conclusion, this approach has a positive impact on the formation of local identity and character of students, with suggestions for strengthening school policies through the provision of supporting facilities, innovation of teacher teaching strategies, active student participation, and further research to explore long-term effectiveness.

**Keywords:** traditional dance learning, local wisdom, internalization of values, behavioral transformation, character education

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## INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and the rapid advancement of information technology, the world of education faces serious challenges in the form of a character crisis and the fading of cultural identity among adolescents. The massive influx of global culture through digital media shapes instant, consumptive, and individualistic mindsets, which gradually displace local wisdom values as the foundation of national character formation. Adolescents tend to be more familiar with global popular culture than with their own regional traditions, resulting in a sense of alienation from their cultural roots. This condition impacts low social sensitivity, weakened social ethics, and a declining appreciation for national cultural heritage. Such phenomena create a generation that is technologically proficient yet morally and identity-wise fragile. Therefore, education is required not only to emphasize cognitive achievement but also to prioritize character building and the strengthening of cultural identity as a defense against global value disruption (Lickona, 2012; Tilaar, 2015).

Art education, particularly dance education in schools, has strategic potential as a medium for character education through the integration of emotional cultivation, intellectual development, and physical engagement. Dance education not only develops motor skills but also fosters aesthetic sensitivity, discipline, and value awareness. However, the practice of dance learning at the junior secondary school level still tends to focus primarily on the mastery of movement techniques. This approach often neglects the symbolic meanings, philosophical values, and moral messages embedded in traditional dance. As a result, dance education has not been optimally utilized as a medium for internalizing aesthetic and ethical values capable of shaping students' attitudes and behaviors holistically. This condition indicates the need for revitalizing dance education so that it is not merely a motor activity but a meaningful and

transformative educational instrument (Sedyawati, 2014; Jazuli, 2016).

The integration of Cepu local wisdom into traditional dance learning represents a strategic step in addressing the challenges of moral degradation and cultural identity loss among students. Cepu local wisdom embodies the collective identity of the community, rich in aesthetic, ethical, social, and spiritual values. These values are relevant to the psychological development needs of adolescents and align with the objectives of character education. Through the structured internalization of values in dance learning, students are not only trained in dance skills but are also guided to understand the meanings and symbols of movements as expressions of life values. This process is expected to encourage behavioral transformation reflected in discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and pride in local culture. Thus, dance learning based on local wisdom aligns with the goals of Quality Education within the SDGs framework, namely inclusive and sustainable quality education (Kemendikbud, 2017; Wahyudi, 2019).

SMPN 4 Cepu, as a formal educational institution located in an environment rich in artistic traditions, has great potential for the development of dance learning based on local wisdom. This socio-cultural environment should serve as a primary asset in creating contextual learning. However, based on preliminary observations, this potential has not been optimally and systematically utilized. Dance learning is still positioned as a complementary subject or merely a formal extracurricular activity, and therefore has not been directed as a strategic medium for character formation and cultural awareness among students. This condition indicates a gap between the availability of rich local cultural resources and their implementation in classroom learning. Consequently, efforts are needed to develop a planned and integrative dance learning model so that art can function as a means of internalizing aesthetic and ethical

values for students' mental development (Haryono, 2015; Moleong, 2017).

The transformation of student behavior cannot be separated from a continuous and contextual value internalization process. Traditional dance learning that is designed reflectively and participatively allows students to engage in deep aesthetic experiences. Through this process, students do not merely imitate movements mechanically but also understand the symbolic meanings and moral values embedded in each variety of dance movements. This aesthetic experience fosters self-awareness, emotional regulation, social empathy, and an attitude of respect for social norms and ethics. Dance art thus functions as an effective medium of affective education in shaping positive behavior and student character holistically (Langer, 2013; Miles et al., 2014).

Based on the foregoing discussion, research on the transformation of student behavior through the internalization of aesthetic-ethical values in traditional dance learning based on local wisdom at SMPN 4 Cepu becomes highly important and relevant. This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of art education scholarship oriented toward strengthening character and cultural identity. Practically, the findings may serve as a reference for teachers and schools in designing contextual and sustainable dance learning. In addition, the results of this study are expected to provide a reference for educational policymakers in integrating local arts and culture as an integral part of the national education system in order to realize a generation with strong character and cultural awareness (Creswell, 2018; Sugiyono, 2019).

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design, as it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of traditional dance learning based on local wisdom and the process of internalizing aesthetic and ethical values that

influence the transformation of student behavior. The qualitative approach enables the researcher to reveal meanings, values, and social processes in a naturalistic manner according to the field context (Creswell, 2018; Moleong, 2017). The case study method was selected because the research focuses on a single specific context, namely SMPN 4 Cepu, as a case unit with distinctive socio-cultural characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Yin, 2014).

The research was conducted at SMPN 4 Cepu, Blora Regency, Central Java, which is situated within a community environment where local artistic and cultural traditions remain actively practiced. The selection of this site was based on the principle of contextual suitability with the focus of local wisdom-based art studies (Haryono, 2015). The study was carried out over one academic semester to allow the researcher to observe the learning process and changes in student behavior in a sustained and continuous manner (Miles et al., 2014).

The research subjects include cultural arts (dance) teachers, students participating in traditional dance learning, and supporting stakeholders such as the school principal. The research objects encompass the implementation of traditional dance learning based on local wisdom, the process of internalizing aesthetic and ethical values, and the transformation of student behavior. The determination of research subjects and objects aligns with the characteristics of qualitative research, which positions humans and social activities as the primary data sources (Sugiyono, 2019). Informants were selected through purposive sampling, namely the deliberate selection of individuals based on their direct involvement and in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation (Moleong, 2017). This technique is relevant for generating rich and meaningful data in context-based art education research (Jazuli, 2016).

Data collection techniques include observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to

directly examine the traditional dance learning process and student behavior. Interviews were conducted to explore informants' understanding, experiences, and perceptions regarding the internalization of aesthetic and ethical values. Documentation served as supporting data in the form of syllabi, lesson plans, photographs, and learning videos. The combination of these techniques is recommended in qualitative research to obtain comprehensive and in-depth data (Creswell, 2018; Sugiyono, 2019).

Data trustworthiness was ensured through source, technique, and time triangulation, as well as member checking. Triangulation was employed to enhance the credibility of the findings by comparing data obtained from various sources and methods (Miles et al., 2014). Member checking was conducted to ensure that the researcher's interpretations were consistent with the experiences and perspectives of the informants (Creswell, 2018).

Data analysis was carried out interactively through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This analytical model allows the researcher to systematically and continuously identify patterns, themes, and relationships among the data (Miles et al., 2014). The analysis was directed toward revealing the relationship between dance learning, the internalization of aesthetic–ethical values, and the transformation of student behavior.

The research procedure consisted of planning, field data collection, data analysis, and research report writing. All stages were conducted systematically and reflectively to ensure that the research findings possess scientific validity and practical relevance for the development of traditional dance learning based on local wisdom (Sugiyono, 2019; Jazuli, 2016).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Implementation of Traditional Dance Learning Based on Local Wisdom

#### A. The Nature of Traditional Dance Learning in Formal Education

Pembelajaran Traditional dance learning at the junior secondary school level constitutes a complex and multidimensional educational process. It does not merely involve the transfer of physical skills from teacher to students, but represents a systematic effort to develop students' competencies holistically. From the perspective of modern education, dance functions as a medium for enhancing cognitive intelligence through the understanding of structure, psychomotor intelligence through the mastery of movement techniques, and affective intelligence through the internalization of values and emotions.

Sedyawati (2014) provides a strong theoretical foundation by stating that traditional dance is a cultural product rich in symbolic, historical, and philosophical meanings. Dance is not merely a visual aesthetic, but a representation of the social identity of the community that supports it. In the school context, this implies that when students learn a particular movement pattern, they are in fact engaging in a dialogue with the history, norms, and worldview of the society from which the dance originates. This learning process is especially crucial during adolescence, a developmental stage characterized by an intense search for identity. Through traditional dance learning, students are provided with a cultural anchor that prevents them from being swept away by global cultural currents that are often incongruent with Eastern values.

Furthermore, dance learning at the junior secondary level must be distinguished from professional dance training in studios. In schools, the primary focus is not the production of professional dancers, but the use of dance as an educational instrument. This aligns with the concept of *education through art*, in which art is employed to develop students' human potential in a comprehensive manner. This process

includes the cultivation of sensory sensitivity, aesthetic perception, and the ability to express oneself creatively and ethically.

### **B. Local Wisdom as the Foundation of the Arts Curriculum**

Local wisdom in education is understood as a collection of knowledge, values, norms, and cultural practices that have been tested over time, transmitted across generations, and function as life guidelines for a particular community (Haryono, 2015). In dance learning, local wisdom serves both as content and context. As content, it provides authentic materials such as movement, musical accompaniment, and costumes. As context, it offers moral and ethical foundations that frame the learning process.

The integration of Cepu local wisdom into traditional dance learning enables students to understand that art is not something distant or foreign to their lives. Each element of traditional dance *wiraga* (movement), *wirama* (rhythm), and *wirasa* (emotional expression) is closely connected to the social realities and belief systems of the local community. For instance, values such as assertiveness and honesty, which frequently appear in folk arts of Central Java, can be internalized through firm and dynamic movements.

Wahyudi (2019) emphasizes that arts education rooted in local culture strengthens students' emotional bonds with their socio-cultural environment. When students develop a sense of belonging to their culture, learning is no longer perceived as an academic burden but as a meaningful process of self-discovery. This creates an organic educational ecosystem in which schools function not as isolated institutions, but as centers for preserving and developing local noble values.

### **C. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) Approach**

Pedagogically, the effectiveness of traditional dance learning based on local wisdom depends greatly on the teaching approach adopted by educators. Tilaar (2015) identifies Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) as a highly relevant approach,

emphasizing the connection between learning materials and students' real-life contexts. At SMPN 4 Cepu, CTL is implemented by bringing the cultural realities of Cepu into the classroom.

Within CTL, students are encouraged to relate their knowledge to everyday life applications. In dance learning, this is realized through several key components:

1. **Constructivism** – Students construct their own understanding of dance meanings through observation and reflection rather than rote memorization.
2. **Inquiry** – Students explore the historical background and philosophical values of the dances studied.
3. **Learning Community** – Learning is conducted collaboratively, reflecting the value of *gotong royong* inherent in traditional societies.
4. **Modeling** – Teachers or local artists demonstrate not only movement techniques but also the attitudes and behaviors of an artist.

Through this approach, verbalistic learning—where students know theory without understanding essence—can be significantly reduced. Students learn through direct experience (*experiential learning*), which is widely regarded as the most effective method for internalizing affective values.

### **D. Reorientation of the Teacher's Role: From Instructor to Cultural Facilitator**

Jazuli (2016) emphasizes that the greatest challenge in school-based dance learning lies in shifting teachers' paradigms. Dance teachers should not position themselves merely as rigid movement instructors. When teaching focuses solely on technical aspects, the essence of character education is lost. Teachers must function as cultural facilitators who help students interpret cultural codes and the aesthetic–ethical values embedded in each movement pattern.

An inspiring teacher is able to explain why certain movements must be performed

gently or why dancers must control their gaze within specific floor patterns, linking these explanations to real-life ethics such as respect for elders, emotional control, and teamwork. Thus, each dance practice session becomes a space for character reflection.

This reflective guidance is crucial to prevent students from becoming mere “robots” who imitate movements mechanically. Reflection allows students to engage in internal dialogue, comparing values embedded in dance with their daily behavior. At this point, behavioral transformation begins to emerge.

#### **E. Integration with the Character Education Strengthening Policy (PPK)**

From the perspective of Indonesian national education policy, traditional dance learning based on local wisdom represents a concrete implementation of the Character Education Strengthening (PPK) program. The Ministry of Education and Culture (2017) highlights arts and cultural education as a key pillar in character building. The five core character values religiosity, nationalism, independence, cooperation, and integrity are all embodied in traditional dance practices.

For example, cooperation is reflected in group dances requiring synchronization and harmony. Discipline is cultivated through adherence to musical rhythm (*wirama*), while responsibility is developed through the obligation to master one's role without disrupting overall formation. This integration demonstrates that arts curricula are not supplementary subjects, but strategic instruments for achieving national educational goals.

#### **F. Aesthetic and Ethical Dimensions: Two Sides of the Same Coin**

A central focus of this study is how aesthetic and ethical values operate simultaneously in dance learning. Aesthetic values relate to visual beauty, balance, and harmony of movement. However, in Indonesian artistic traditions, aesthetics are inseparable from ethics; beauty often implies moral correctness.

The internalization of aesthetic values enhances students' sensitivity to beauty, which plays a vital role in reducing tendencies toward aggressive behavior. Students accustomed to appreciating harmony in art tend to seek harmony in social interactions. Ethical values derived from local wisdom provide moral boundaries for behavior. In Javanese culture, the concept of *empan papan* placing oneself appropriately within a context is a strong ethical principle conveyed through dance etiquette. Once these values become embedded within students' cognitive and emotional structures, their behavior beyond the dance classroom also begins to change positively.

#### **G. Global Perspective and Cultural Sustainability (SDGs)**

Arts education based on local wisdom holds strong international relevance. UNESCO (2013) emphasizes culture-based education as a key strategy for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Globalization poses risks of cultural homogenization, threatening the survival of local traditions.

Smith (2009) argues that arts education rooted in local culture functions as a “cultural fortress,” instilling confidence in young generations regarding the value of their heritage. In relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 on Quality Education, traditional dance learning supports inclusive education that promotes peace and respect for cultural diversity. Quality education not only produces skilled workers, but culturally grounded individuals with open global perspectives.

#### **H. Contextualizing Cepu: Local Wisdom as Identity**

Cepu, located in Blora Regency, possesses distinctive cultural characteristics marked by honesty, spontaneity, and strong artistic conventions. Values such as courage, simplicity, and integrity evident in local folk performances like *Barongan* constitute significant moral assets.

Implementing traditional dance learning at SMPN 4 Cepu grounded in local wisdom yields stronger impacts, as students experience

geographical and emotional proximity to the cultural content. They learn dances familiar from community events rather than abstract textbook materials, narrowing the gap between school theory and social reality and enabling more natural and lasting value internalization.

### I. Internalization Process and Behavioral Transformation

Behavioral transformation is not instantaneous, but results from repetition and deep reflection. As students consistently practice synchronization (cooperative ethics) and strive for movement precision (disciplinary aesthetics), their moral capacities are gradually strengthened.

Expected behavioral transformations include:

1. **Self-Control** – Improved emotional regulation due to high concentration during dance practice.
2. **Social Empathy** – Heightened sensitivity toward others, as performance success depends on mutual awareness.
3. **Cultural Appreciation** – Growing pride in local culture, replacing cultural inferiority.
4. **Integrity** – Alignment between internalized values and daily behavior in school life.

Based on this comprehensive analysis, traditional dance learning based on local wisdom is not merely an extracurricular or recreational activity, but a sophisticated character education design utilizing art as its primary medium. It constitutes the core foundation of this research, where local wisdom inputs, aesthetic–ethical internalization processes, and behavioral transformation outputs interact dynamically. When implemented in a planned, contextual, and reflective manner, dance learning at SMPN 4 Cepu has the potential to serve as a model for arts education that preserves tradition while shaping culturally grounded, ethical, and competent future generations.

### 2. Literature Review on the Internalization of Aesthetic and Ethical Values in Traditional Dance Learning

Value internalization is an educational process emphasizing deep value cultivation so that values are not only cognitively understood but also embodied in attitudes and behaviors. In education, value internalization is viewed as a long-term process involving habituation, meaningful experiences, social interaction, and self-reflection. Values that have been internalized become integral to students' personality systems and influence their ways of thinking, acting, and behaving. Therefore, value internalization cannot be achieved through instructional approaches alone, but requires holistic and sustained pedagogical processes.

Lickona (2012) asserts that effective value education encompasses three interrelated domains: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. In arts education particularly dance these domains develop simultaneously through aesthetic experiences engaging cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions.

Dance education uniquely employs the body as the primary medium of expression. Students experience values directly through movement practice, social interaction, and emotional expression. Jazuli (2016) emphasizes that dance integrates emotional, intellectual, and physical development, making it a powerful medium for aesthetic and ethical value internalization.

Aesthetic values in dance involve sensitivity to beauty, harmony, rhythm, balance, and expression. Beauty in dance is not merely visual but constitutes an inner experience involving feelings, intuition, and symbolic awareness (Haryono, 2015). Ethical values, meanwhile, relate to discipline, responsibility, cooperation, patience, and mutual respect experienced directly through the learning process rather than taught verbally.

Dewey (1934) conceptualizes aesthetic experience as *an experience* a holistic engagement that is active, emotional, and

reflective. Eisner (2002) further argues that arts education uniquely cultivates moral sensitivity by teaching meaning through symbols and metaphors. Langer (2013) views art as symbolic form capable of representing complex human experiences; in dance, movement symbolizes values and worldviews transmitted culturally.

Traditional dance learning based on local wisdom enriches value internalization by grounding values in lived cultural contexts (Wahyudi, 2019). Effective internalization is further influenced by participatory, reflective, and dialogical pedagogical strategies (Jazuli, 2016).

Within Indonesia's Character Education Strengthening (PPK) framework, arts education is positioned as a strategic medium for instilling core character values (Kemendikbud, 2017). Empirical findings by Wahyudi and Gunawan (2020) demonstrate that participatory and reflective arts learning enhances students' value awareness and positive attitudes.

Internationally, scholars such as Dewey (1934) and Eisner (2002) affirm arts education's contribution to moral and social development. Value internalization is also shaped by school culture and supportive educational environments.

In conclusion, internalizing aesthetic and ethical values through traditional dance learning is a complex process involving aesthetic experience, cultural symbolism, pedagogical strategy, and socio-cultural context. Traditional dance learning grounded in local wisdom provides a rich pedagogical space for deep and sustainable value cultivation, forming the conceptual foundation for understanding the relationship between dance education, value internalization, and student behavioral transformation in this study.

## CONCLUSION

Traditional dance learning based on local wisdom at SMPN 4 Cepu has been implemented in a planned and contextual manner, integrating the mastery of movement

techniques with a deep understanding of local cultural, aesthetic, and ethical values. This process involves not only direct practice and habituation but also the internalization of values through affective, cognitive, and psychomotor dimensions, which ultimately leads to the transformation of student behavior, as reflected in increased self-confidence, discipline, cooperation, and appreciation of cultural heritage. The findings affirm that this approach functions simultaneously as an effective medium for cultural transmission and as a form of character education, enriching students' local identity within the dynamics of modern education.

To optimize these benefits, schools are encouraged to strengthen supporting policies, such as providing adequate practice facilities and opportunities for performance, while arts teachers are expected to develop creative strategies that balance technical mastery, aesthetic appreciation, and ethical values. Students are also encouraged to perceive this learning as a continuous self-development process rather than a routine activity. Such an approach will reinforce holistic and sustainable character formation.

Future research may further develop this study by employing different methodological approaches or educational contexts to examine the long-term effectiveness of traditional dance learning in strengthening students' cultural identity. Thus, traditional dance education not only preserves local heritage but also contributes to the development of culturally grounded and socially responsible human resources.

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