



Integrating Cultural Heritage into the Classroom: The Gambang Semarang as an Educational Resource

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Abstract

This article explores the potential integration of cultural heritage, specifically Gambang Semarang traditional music, into formal education at schools and universities. As a local art form rich in historical and cultural values, Gambang Semarang holds significant potential as an innovative educational resource. This study aims to investigate various strategies for incorporating this traditional music into an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum, providing students with a holistic and relevant learning experience. Employing a qualitative approach, this study delves into the perspectives of teachers, students, and art practitioners regarding the implementation of Gambang Semarang as an educational tool

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage is a vital element in shaping national identity. Indonesia, as a nation with extraordinary cultural diversity, bears a significant responsibility to preserve and integrate these cultural elements into its education system. One concrete example of Indonesia's rich cultural heritage is *Gambang Semarang*, a traditional musical art that symbolizes social cohesion among the coastal communities of Semarang (Diman, 2022; Jamil et al., 2011; Puguh, 2000; Ransome, 2023; Rusdi & Ridwan, 2022; Septiyan, 2016a; Yulizar et al., 2017).

However, in the context of formal education, cultural heritage elements like *Gambang Semarang* often receive insufficient attention. A curriculum that primarily focuses on academic aspects tends to overlook the potential of traditional arts as a rich educational resource. Therefore, efforts are needed to make *Gambang Semarang* a relevant and contextual educational resource. Once popular as a community entertainment, *Gambang Semarang* is now experiencing a decline in interest, especially among younger generations. This decline is attributed to lifestyle changes, the influence of global culture, and a lack of efforts to sustain its legacy (Azizah et al., 2018; Danang Respati Puguh, 2012; Sadtiti, 2016; Santoso, 2020). Yet, *Gambang Semarang* is not only an artistic treasure but also a repository of moral, social, and historical values that can be imparted to students.

Previous studies have shown that integrating traditional arts into education positively impacts students' learning motivation (Daniati et al., 2020; Ricardo & Meilani, 2017; Sedyadiasto et al., n.d.). Research by Paul Evans (Bower, 1990; Evans & McPherson, 2015) Research by Paul Evans (Bower, 1990; Evans & McPherson, 2015) revealed that traditional art-based learning can strengthen students' character values, such as tolerance and collaboration. While several studies have focused on *Gambang Semarang* as a cultural

artifact, researchers such as Dadang Dwi Septian (Azizah et al., 2018; Rachman, 2021; Raharjo, 2021; Septiyan, 2016b; Winarno, 2022) have highlighted that *Gambang Semarang* remains a surviving cultural heritage, albeit in a fragile state, since the 1990s. However, specific research on *Gambang Semarang* as an educational resource is still limited, and this study aims to fill that gap.

The findings of this study are particularly urgent, given the importance of preserving local cultural heritage amidst globalization. By integrating *Gambang Semarang* into education, it is hoped that younger generations will develop a deeper appreciation for local culture while enhancing their understanding of the social values embedded within it. This research aims to: 1) Identify the potential of *Gambang Semarang* as an educational resource; 2) Develop a traditional art-based learning model centered on *Gambang Semarang*; and 3) Evaluate the impact of using *Gambang Semarang* in student learning, particularly regarding cultural awareness and social values.

This study offers a novel approach by developing a learning model based on *Gambang Semarang* that focuses not only on cultural preservation but also on strengthening social cohesion among students. This innovation is highly relevant in the context of multicultural education in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a case study method (Ford, 2020; Gemenne, 2018; Gongora-Svartzman, 2022; Hughes, 2023; Jones et al., 2006). Data were collected through in-depth interviews with *Gambang Semarang* artists from the *Gambang Semarang* community, school principals, cultural arts teachers, and junior high school students from Karangturi National School in Semarang. Observations were conducted during classroom learning processes that utilized

Gambang Semarang as a teaching medium. In addition, document analysis was performed on curriculum materials, teaching resources related to cultural arts, written works about *Gambang Semarang*, social cohesion, multiculturalism, and local wisdom. Data analysis was conducted simultaneously through three main activities: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Crowley, 2019; Joseph, 2019; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Skillman et al., 2019)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the integration of *Gambang Semarang* into the learning process is implemented through several steps:

1. Development of Learning Modules

The learning modules serve as systematically and structurally designed teaching materials to help students learn independently. These modules contain learning materials, exercises, formative tests, and feedback aimed at ensuring students understood the concepts being taught (Anwar et al., 2023; Arofah et al., 2023; Fadly, 2022; Mulyatiningsih, 2015; Saragih, 2021; Yusuf & Christianna, 2020). At Karangturi Junior High School, cultural arts teachers developed music learning modules by combining Western music theory concepts with *Gambang Semarang* music. This integration was applied through practical activities such as playing traditional *Gambang Semarang* instruments, which included the *Gambang*, *Kenong*, *Kecrek*, *Gong*, *Kendang*, *Kempul*, *Saron*, and *Demung*. Students also learned to sing traditional songs such as *Gambang Semarang*, *Gado-Gado Semarang*, and *Semarang Kota Atlas*.

In developing the learning modules, the teachers adhered to the following principles: 1) Designing learning processes that considered students' developmental stages and current achievement levels to

meet their diverse needs and characteristics, making learning meaningful and enjoyable; 2) Planning and delivering learning experiences to foster lifelong learning skills; 3) Supporting the holistic development of students' competencies and character; 4) Ensuring relevance by designing learning activities that reflected students' context, environment, and culture, and involving parents and the community as partners; 5) Focusing on sustainable, future-oriented learning. The module development process followed structured procedures, including: 1) Identifying learning objectives derived from learning outcomes grouped within a material scope, where one module could cover multiple objectives; 2) Conducting initial assessments to identify students' prior competency levels; 3) Determining assessment techniques and instruments, along with success indicators aligned with the learning objectives; 4) Specifying the time period or required instructional hours; 5) Developing formative assessment techniques and instruments based on learning activities; 6) Creating a sequence of learning activities from start to finish, ensuring alignment with learning objectives; 7) Preparing supplementary materials such as worksheets, learning materials, and media tailored to students' readiness, interests, and profiles; 8) Including assessment instruments such as checklists, rubrics, or observation sheets as needed.

The integration of basic music theory concepts with *Gambang Semarang* elements was formalized through the preparation of lesson plans, which were included as appendices in the module.

2. Application of Experiential Learning Method

The experiential learning method emphasizes direct experiences and active student involvement in the learning process. This approach focuses on learning through hands-on experiences and enhancing understanding through reflection, rather than relying solely on theoretical materials (Buchori, 2018; Louis, 2020; Parno, 2021; Sainda, 2023). The implementation of the experiential learning method in cultural arts education at Karangturi Junior High School was integrated into the module development process. Each step of the teaching and learning activities directly incorporated practical experience with *Gambang Semarang* instruments. Students



Figure 2

Students are practicing *Gambang Semarang* music using the peer tutoring method. were encouraged to play not just one type of instrument but multiple ones to enable them to express the essence of *Gambang Semarang* holistically, as illustrated in the following photograph.

According to Andreas, after all students were able to play the *Gambang Semarang* musical instruments during several sessions before the end of the semester, they were prepared to accompany the *Gambang Semarang* dance in collaboration with the extracurricular dance instructor at Karangturi Junior High School. This collaboration represented a tangible result of the cultural arts learning process utilizing the experiential learning method. Furthermore, Andreas explained that this collaborative performance was



Figure 1

The students of Karangturi Junior High School in Semarang are playing *Gambang Semarang* musical instruments together while singing the song *Gambang Semarang*.

intended as preparation for one of the events in the annual student art performance.

3. Strengthening of Social Values

Based on the data analysis, the integration of *Gambang Semarang* art into the cultural arts learning process at Karangturi Junior High School in Semarang proved to be highly effective in instilling values of cooperation, tolerance, and togetherness among students. This can be observed during the teaching and learning activities in the classroom. For example, when the teacher was explaining and demonstrating how to play the *Bonang* instrument to a student using the prepared sheet music, the other students, ready with their *Gong*, *Gambang*, *Kendang*, *Saron*, and *Peking* instruments, listened attentively and focused closely, as they would take their turn playing the *Bonang* after the rotation. Similarly, when the teacher was explaining and demonstrating how to play the *Gambang* instrument to a student, the other students listened and paid close attention to the teacher's instructions. From this description, the value of tolerance was clearly observed among the students, as they showed respect for one another. Tolerance in learning refers to the ability to

appreciate and accept differences between individuals, whether in terms of background, beliefs, or viewpoints. In the context of education, fostering tolerance is crucial to creating an inclusive, safe, and supportive learning environment. Through education that emphasizes tolerance, students can learn to respect one another, collaborate, and develop the positive character traits necessary for living in a diverse society (Au, 2017; Indrawan. Irjus et al., 2019; Setyono & Widodo, 2019; Slobodová Nováková et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, the process of instilling the value of cooperation among students was evident in the cultural arts lessons integrating *Gambang Semarang*. This was seen when students played *Gambang Semarang* instruments together with the repertoire prepared by the teacher, each student playing the instrument they had been trained on during the lessons. Another instance of cooperation was when students worked together to prepare the instruments such as *Bonang*, *Gambang*, *Saron*, *Demung*, and *Kendang* before the lesson began. Cooperation is essential as it can enhance academic skills and create a positive learning environment. By working together, students can support one another, reduce negative competition, and build strong relationships with each other (Purwaningsih). In addition, successful cooperation involves indicators like building and maintaining friendships (Tedjasaputra, 2005). The effective cooperation between the teacher, school leaders, staff, and students greatly contributed to the success of integrating *Gambang Semarang* into the cultural arts learning process at Karangturi Junior High School.

Furthermore, the spirit of togetherness among the students could be seen during the preparation and the collaborative performance between the *Gambang Semarang* music team, which was the result of the music learning process led

by the music teacher, and the dance team, guided by the dance teacher. This collaborative effort was part of the extracurricular *Gambang Semarang* dance lessons at Karangturi Junior High School.

CONCLUSION

This comprehensive review has illuminated the strategic role of music as an instrument for enhancing social coherence within organisations and communities. By examining the psychological effects of music, its influence on organisational culture, decision-making processes, and social dynamics, as well as its role in fostering inclusivity and diversity, strategic communication, and branding, we have gained valuable insights into its transformative potential. The findings underscore the multifaceted impact of music on human psychology and behaviour, highlighting its ability to evoke emotions, stimulate creativity, and strengthen social bonds. Through shared musical experiences, organisations can create inclusive environments that foster collaboration, boost employee morale, and cultivate stronger stakeholder relationships. Furthermore, the strategic integration of music into leadership development and strategic planning processes can enhance organisational effectiveness and promote innovation. By leveraging music as a strategic communication and branding tool, organisations can convey their values, inspire emotional connections, and strengthen relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

Overall, this review contributes to understanding how music can be strategically leveraged to foster social coherence, promote inclusivity, and strengthen strategic positioning within organisations and communities. By incorporating music into various facets of organisational life, stakeholders can create environments that inspire creativity, promote collaboration, and drive innovation, ultimately enhancing their ability to adapt to change and achieve strategic goals in a dynamic and competitive environment. This research

synthesis underscores music's transformative potential as a strategic instrument for enhancing social coherence and fostering collaboration within diverse organisational and community contexts. By recognising the multifaceted role of music and integrating it strategically into various aspects of organisational life, stakeholders can harness its power to create inclusive environments, strengthen social bonds, and drive collective action towards shared goals. As organisations and communities navigate the complexities of an ever-changing world, music stands out as a timeless and universal tool for fostering unity, promoting diversity, and enhancing social cohesion.

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