



## **Cultivating Congregational Music Talents: Band Training Strategy in GKJ Sampangan Kradenan**

✉ **Nathaniel Dhiar Ramaputra**  
**Bagus Susetyo**

\*Departement of Drama, Dance, Music, Universitas Negeri Semarang  
nathaniel2501418105@students.unnes.ac.id

\*\*Departement of Drama, Dance, Music, Universitas Negeri Semarang  
Bagussusetyo62@mail.unnes.ac.id

### **Article Info**

### **Abstract**

Received : May, 2025

Approved: June, 2025

Published : June 2025

*Keywords:*

*strategy, training,  
music, band, GKJ  
Sampangan*

This research examines the band music training strategy at GKJ Sampangan Kradenan, Semarang, as a community learning phenomenon without a permanent trainer and formal curriculum. The phenomenon shows how the church community can nurture the musical talents of the congregation through a flexible, collaborative, and participatory approach. The research used a descriptive qualitative method through a case study, using participatory observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. The results show that the band music training in this church relies on the spirit of cooperation, collective responsibility, and shared learning practices that demonstrate the principles of Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998). Although informal, this strategy proved effective in building team cohesiveness, improving musical quality, and fostering active participation from various layers of the congregation in church music ministry.

© 2025 Universitas Negeri Semarang

✉ Corresponding Author:

ISSN 2503-2860

Email: nathaniel2501418105@students.unnes.ac.id

## INTRODUCTION

Music has a significant role in human life. Music emerges as a form of artistic expression that portrays emotions, cultural identity, and individual creativity, while also serving as a universal means of communication that can cross the boundaries of language, age, and social background (Setyoko et al., 2021).

Music has become the body of religious rites, social traditions, and informal education systems. Music has a strong educational role in modern life, helping people develop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills through listening, playing, and creating (Nasir, 2016).

Music has a profound spiritual dimension. In the traditions of many religions, including Christianity, music is believed to draw closer to God, deepen the religious experience, and connect with the transcendental dimension. In Christian worship, music is a means of praising and appreciating faith.

Spiritual music with full appreciation can convey divine messages in a way that touches the congregation's hearts more than just the spoken word (Sirait, 2021). Music helps create a sacred atmosphere while igniting the spirit of worship. A powerful spiritual experience occurs when the congregation is immersed in the music integrated into the moment of prayer (Tumanan, 2015).

In the development of modern churches, one form of spiritual music that is increasingly popular is band music in worship. The existence of band music in the church shows an effort to adapt to the times and the needs of the congregation, especially the younger generation.

Band music presents a style that is more familiar and relevant to the daily lives of the younger generation, such as the use of electric instruments (guitars, keyboards, drums), contemporary arrangements, and a freer singing style (Simanjuntak & Karamoy, 2023).

That way, the band's presence in the worship service becomes an entry point for the active and creative involvement of the younger generation in church life.

Band music also provides artistic flexibility in the accompaniment of praise and worship songs. In contrast to liturgical music formats that tend to be rigid and structured, band music offers room for exploration of style, improvisation, and more varied musical dynamics (Putra et al., 2023).

It greatly facilitates a music group to adjust the musical atmosphere to the theme of worship, the condition of the congregation, or certain liturgical moments, such as contemplation, joy, or strengthening of faith. Band music can create a more lively, energetic, and emotionally touching worship atmosphere without losing the values of solemnity and sacredness.

GKJ Sampangan Kradenan is one of the churches active in serving and developing the congregation's spiritual life in the Gunungpati area, Semarang City, Central Java. Located on Jl. Dewi Sartika No. 1, this church is under the auspices of the Synod of the Javanese Christian Church, which is known for its contextual and participatory approach to service.

As a religious institution living in the dynamics of urban and semi-urban society, GKJ Sampangan Kradenan is highly committed to nurturing the congregation's faith through various forms of services, both liturgical, educational, and social. GKJ Sampangan Kradenan also pays attention to diverse age groups' spiritual needs and interests.

The Adiyuswa Commission, for example, serves as a service space for elderly congregants to remain spiritually and socially active. Meanwhile, prayer meetings and spiritual devotional services can be accessed through the church's YouTube channel, becoming the church's strategy to reach the congregation outside the physical space of the church, especially in the digital era.

One of the distinctive strengths of GKJ Sampangan Kradenan lies in the active involvement of various layers of the congregation in the church music ministry. Children, teenagers, youth, and adults are all given space to participate in musical activities in the form of choirs and church bands.

Demonstrates the spirit of inclusive and empowering ministry, where the talents of each congregation member are valued and directed to support the overall worship life.

Church band music at GKJ Sampangan Kradenan complements the liturgy and has developed into an essential entity in the dynamics of worship. The church band is routinely involved in the accompaniment of praise and worship in Sunday worship, holiday events, and other spiritual activities such as fellowship or retreats.

The band training in this church is unique. Unlike other churches with a permanent music coach or coordinator, the training at GKJ Sampangan Kradenan relies on an informal model that relies on available coaches. There is no fixed rehearsal schedule or standardized training system; instead, it depends on the initiative and time availability of the coaches and band members.

This training model shows the value of cooperation and the spirit of voluntary service in the church community. Even without a rigid system, this church band still shows consistency and musical quality in every performance. Certainly invites attention for further research: How can a flexible and community-based training pattern still produce solid and memorable performances in support of worship? What strategies are coaches and band members using to maintain the spirit of learning, improve musical quality, and build team cohesiveness? These questions are relevant to uncover the great potential of the informal approach to church music formation. This phenomenon suggests a unique and powerful training strategy in the context of the

church community. The success of this church band depends not only on technical skills but also on the spirit of service, congregational solidarity, and participatory coaching.

Therefore, it is essential to research and document how these training strategies are implemented, the challenges and advantages, and how they contribute to cultivating musical talents among the congregation.

## METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach. The descriptive qualitative method aims to reveal empirical facts objectively and scientifically by exploring the meaning of non-numerical data. This approach obtains knowledge or theories about the research phenomenon by collecting data from interviews, field notes, and observation (Mukhtar, 2013).

According to Creswell (2014), the case study approach allows researchers to investigate a particular phenomenon in depth through comprehensive information collection using various data collection techniques. In this study, data collection techniques were carried out through participatory observation in the GKJ Sampangan Kradenan environment.

Structured interviews were conducted with several key informants: congregants involved in band music activities, church administrators, and band music trainers. In addition, the documentation technique was used to obtain data regarding the general profile of GKJ Sampangan Kradenan and the band music training activities organized in the church.

The validity of the data in this study was tested through triangulation techniques, both technical triangulation and source triangulation. The data analysis was carried out through data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing, as developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

GKJ Sampangan Kradenan is a church located on Jl. Dewi Sartika No. 1, Gunungpati, Semarang City, Central Java. GKJ Sampangan Kradenan is under the auspices of the Javanese Christian Church Synod and is known for its contextual and participatory approach to ministry. Situated in an area with urban and semi-urban community dynamics, GKJ Sampangan Kradenan is active in various services to support the spiritual life of its congregation.

GKJ Sampangan Kradenan's commitment can be seen in its diverse services, ranging from liturgical worship and spiritual education to social services that focus on the needs of the congregation and the surrounding community. Through various activities, the church continues to create an environment conducive to the growth of faith and active participation of the congregation, making it a spiritual center that lives and thrives.

One aspect that stands out at GKJ Sampangan Kradenan is the band music ministry, which has a unique training strategy. Although GKJ Sampangan Kradenan does not have a permanent music coach, band training continues regularly and adaptively, involving congregants with musical abilities, senior players, and even choir coaches.

The strategy demonstrates the spirit of collaboration and active participation of all members, where all members share their knowledge and experience in the rehearsal process.

### Band Music Training at GKJ Sampangan Kradenan

The band training at GKJ Sampangan Kradenan is flexible and participatory, demonstrating the high spirit of togetherness within the church community. Without a formally organized coach, the church band adopts a more democratic system, where each member can actively organize rehearsals and develop musical material. It shows an appreciation of each individual's contributions and skills, as well as an emphasis on collaboration in achieving a common goal: preparing music for worship services.

During the research period, the band's music training was led by Simon Eko Sapto Saputro, who, although not a full-time trainer, played a key role in some practice sessions. However, in practice, music coaches are not always permanent, and this is often both a challenge and an opportunity for band members to adapt and learn from various sources.

When Simon Eko Sapto Saputro cannot attend, rehearsals continue with guidance from musically competent members of the congregation, senior church players, and even choir coaches with musical skills. On certain occasions, even rehearsals without the presence of a coach can still be conducted, with more experienced band members taking over the coordination role. Putra Andi, a band member, stated in an interview:

"Here, the coach is not permanent; sometimes it's Simon, sometimes it's other experienced people. If there is no coach, the training

continues, and we organize it together." (Interview May 2, 2025)

The diversity of roles taken by different individuals in band music training creates a more open and egalitarian learning atmosphere, where each member contributes to developing ideas, techniques, and solutions to the musical challenges.

Band music practice is conducted regularly, with varying frequency depending on the ministry's needs. Rehearsals are conducted about 1-2 times per week, especially leading up to the month's 4th or 5th week of worship services. In months with a 5th week, the number of practice sessions can increase to 4 times per month, providing more opportunities to prepare more diverse musical material.

The duration of practice per session ranges from 1 to 3 hours, depending on the complexity of the song material, the members' readiness, and the approaching worship needs. In some longer rehearsal sessions, for example, ahead of a big worship service, band members can do intensive rehearsals to finalize the arrangements of the songs to be performed.

The band members involved consisted of 18 men and two women, showing a fairly dominant proportion of men in terms of instruments and technical arrangements of the band. The church choir is dominated by women, with 22 women out of 31 choir members. This fact highlights the 'traditional' division of roles, where women are more involved in the choir, while men more often take on roles in the band and musical instruments.

The musical instruments used in the rehearsals are diverse, including various electric and acoustic instruments, such as drums, keyboards, piano, guitar, bass, cajon, and violin. Shows the openness of the church community to various musical instruments, as well as the effort to create rich and diverse musical colors in every worship service.

The combination of electric instruments (such as guitar and keyboard) and acoustic instruments (such as violin and cajon) provides an opportunity to explore a variety of musical styles, both modern and traditional. This openness shows the inclusive spirit of the church, where every type of music and instrument is welcome to support the common goal of worship services. Below is documentation of the band training.



Figure 1. Band Rehearsal (Source: Ramaputra, 2025)

The involvement of various elements in the band, from senior members to beginners, and different types of instruments, creates a rich and collaborative learning process. The training emphasizes adaptability, knowledge sharing, and joint problem solving without a permanent coach. Although there is no formal training structure, collaborative practice and learning from experience are at the core of successful band training at GKJ Sampangan Kradenan.

## Training Strategy

The band training at GKJ Sampangan Kradenan adopts a flexible training strategy highly dependent on community dynamics and worship needs. This training has no formal curriculum or binding syllabus, making the learning process more spontaneous and based on direct experience. It shows the character of the church, which is not rigid but relatively open to creativity and adjustments according to existing conditions.

### 1. Main Focus of Training

The primary focus in this training strategy is divided into several aspects that are essential in preparing bands for church worship services, including:

#### a. Aligning Praise Song Arrangements with the Liturgy

One of the crucial elements in band training is the adjustment of hymn arrangements to the liturgy of church services. Since each service has a different atmosphere and theme, the band must be able to adjust the rhythm, tempo, and dynamics of the songs according to the liturgical needs. This process demands band members' sensitivity to the spiritual atmosphere in worship and the ability to translate liturgical themes into harmonious musical forms.

#### b. Practicing Synchronization Between Instruments and Vocals

In church band music, synchronization between musical instruments and vocals is essential to create cohesiveness and continuity in

performance. This synchronization includes good communication between band members, so that each instrument can complement the other and not collide, and the vocals can be heard clearly and deeply. This training is not only about technical skills, but also about coordination between band members in playing their respective roles. Here is a documentation of the synchronization between the band and the choir.



Figure 2. Synchronization (Source: Ramaputra, 2025)

#### c. Sensitizing Members to the Dynamics of Worship

In addition to the technical aspects, the training also emphasized the importance of sensitivity to the dynamics of worship. Band members are expected to play according to the musical score, sense the changing atmosphere in prayer, and adapt their playing to the congregation's mood. Includes adjusting the volume, tempo, and dynamics of the music according to the movements of the worship service, such as when the service begins, prayer, or specific moments that require silence or higher musical intensity.

## 2. Practical Training Approach

The methods used in this band training are practical and direct to the material to be performed. For example, each practice session focuses on that week's ministry songs, making the practice relevant and connected to actual ministry needs. It also makes the band members more focused and gives them clear goals during practice. As explained by Hendra Firmansyah, one of the resource persons:

"Usually we practice directly on the songs we want to perform. Not a lot of theory, but directly playing and correcting together." (Interview May 2, 2025)

This approach ensures that band members stay within the practical and applicable context of worship, rather than simply mastering music theory that may be less relevant to the purpose of prayer. Role of Individual and Collective Responsibility

The training strategy relied on individual and collective responsibility. When no coach was present, the decision-making process became more collective, with more experienced band members taking on the role of impromptu mentors. Places great emphasis on trust and cooperation between band members.

The more experienced band members help the new members to hone their skills, while the new ones can provide a fresh perspective that is often much needed. One of the band members, Fransisco, explained the dynamic in an interview:

"If there is no coach, we just decide together, for example, who fills the melody, who does the rhythm. Sometimes we correct each other, too, but it's casual." (Interview April 13, 2025)

This approach creates a climate of open communication, where group discussions become a means to determine how songs will be played and who will take the lead on certain sections. It enhances the technical skills of band members and strengthens relationships between members in the church community.

## 4. Building Communication and Trust Between Members

This training strategy, although informal, emphasizes effective communication, mutual trust, and willingness to share knowledge among community members. Without a permanent coach, band members must be more self-reliant and able to collaborate to achieve common goals. This process builds strong social bonds among band members, reinforcing a sense of community and mutual support.

When there is no coach leading, discussions and decisions are taken together. Develops a stronger spirit of cooperation within the community and encourages members to take initiative and responsibility for the quality of the music produced. Furthermore, the absence of a permanent coach allows members to hone their problem-solving and adaptation skills, as they continue learning to handle unexpected situations.

Linkage of GKJ Sampangan Kradenan Band Training Strategy with Community of Practice Theory

The band training strategy at GKJ Sampangan Kradenan demonstrates the principles of the Community of Practice (CoP) theory developed by Wenger (1998). Learning or training does not depend on formal structures, but rather on social interactions and shared practices within the community. Such practices rely on shared experiences, where community members engage in an ongoing learning process, contributing and socially adapting within the group. Learning in training strategies takes place through active collaboration and dynamically evolving social practices.

#### 1. Domain

The band at GKJ Sampangan Kradenan has a clear domain: the musical service of church worship. This domain becomes the center for all community activities, providing a common goal that directs each member to collaborate in achieving the same vision, even though there is no formal training system, by the CoP principle that prioritizes mutual agreement on the purpose of the community.

Music ministry serves as a collective motivational foundation that unites all members, regardless of their background or level of experience. Without a formal curriculum, this common goal remains the main guideline for the community in running the training and strengthens each individual's commitment to active participation.

#### 2. Community

The second principle in CoP is community, which is formed through social relationships established among members who share a

common goal, even though they come from different backgrounds and abilities. The music community at GKJ Sampangan Kradenan consists of individuals with varied skill sets, including relatively new young members and experienced senior players. This dynamic enriches the learning process as differences in age and skills are considered a strength in collective learning.

When the coach is absent, band members take on the role, sharing their knowledge and skills. In this sense, they do not feel disoriented but show initiative and collective responsibility in running the rehearsals. The community is also very open and inclusive, prioritizing cooperation and mutual help between members. As explained in the interview with the coach, Simon Eko:

"We're all part of the ministry, so even though we'll be practicing without a coach, we'll still help each other. Sometimes even the younger ones come up with new ideas." (Interview April 2, 2025)

The involvement of young members in providing new ideas indicates a process of mutual contribution that is not limited to experience, but also to creativity and fresh approaches to musical challenges. Supports the development of a dynamic community, where each individual plays a role in the learning process.

#### 3. Practice

Shared practices in CoP refer to social processes and skills that develop through daily activities. About band training at GKJ Sampangan



Kradenan, distinctive musical practices are formed through improvisation of arrangements, adjustment of song dynamics, and musical conflict management, often done spontaneously. Live rehearsals with worship songs to be performed are at the core of this practice, which facilitates members to hone their skills in a real and controlled situation. The process is very purposeful, although it lacks a formal structure.

This practice involves hands-on and collaborative learning. Band members correct each other and help solve musical problems together. Through group discussion and open communication, members can make decisions democratically about song arrangements and the division of roles. Treats a shared repertoire, or collection of shared practices and traditions, as a unique characteristic of this community. The practices that develop include instrument playing techniques, vocal styles, and sensitivity to worship needs that evolve.

Based on the theory of legitimate peripheral participation from Lave & Wenger (1991), New members of the community go through a gradual learning process, from observing and participating in lighter activities such as helping to set up instruments or just singing, to slowly taking on more essential roles in the band. This process allows new members to gradually learn and acquire the necessary skills to become active players in the band eventually.

## CONCLUSION

The band music training strategy at GKJ Sampangan Kradenan is participatory and adaptive, without relying on fixed trainers or a

standardized curriculum. Training is based on collaboration between community members who are concerned about the church music ministry. The primary focus of the training is the harmony of arrangements with the liturgy, synchronization between instruments, and increased sensitivity to the dynamics of worship.

The band training strategy at GKJ Sampangan Kradenan is relevant to the Community of Practice theory (Wenger, 1998), where learning occurs through shared social practices within a community with shared domains, interactions, and repertoires. Training is oriented towards technical aspects, while building communication, collective responsibility, and continuous learning among members. The band's musical training strategy demonstrates that effective musical learning can grow in an open and contextualized group.

## REFERENCES

- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Pendekatan Metode Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, dan Campuran*. Pustaka Belajar.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. University of Cambridge Press.
- Miles, M., Huberman, M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Mukhtar, M. (2013). *Metode Praktis Penelitian Deskriptif Kualitatif*. GP Press Group.
- Nasir, A. (2016). Hubungan Tasawuf dengan Musik Spiritual (aS-Sama'): Meneropong Kedalaman Sejarah, sebagai Fenomena Mistisisme Spiritual. *Esoteris: Jurnal Akhlak Dan Tasawuf*, 2(2), 527-546.
- Putra, Z. A. W., Jati, A., & Olendo, Y. O. (2023). Representasi Musik Liturgi Inkulturatif Dayak Kalimantan Barat dalam Buku Madah Bakti. *Tonika: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengkajian Seni*, 6(2), 71-86. <https://doi.org/10.37368/tonika.v6i2.540>

- Setyoko, A., Putra, B. A., & Rawanggalih, K. S. (2021). Perspektif Etnomusikologi Dan Musikologi Komparatif Terhadap Musik Sebagai 'Bahasa Universal. *Sorai: Jurnal Pengkajian Dan Penciptaan Musik*, 14(1), 1-11.
- Simanjuntak, D., & Karamoy, A. (2023). Analisis Perbedaan Impact Musik Gereja Organ Tunggal Dan Musik Gereja Full Band Bagi Peribadatan Dalam Aspek Kualitas Penyembahan Di Gereja Gst Agape Ministry Depok. *Arya Satya: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial Budaya, Dan Humaniora*, 3(4), 81-86.
- Sirait, R. A. (2021). Tujuan dan Fungsi Musik dalam Ibadah Gereja. *Tonika: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengkajian Seni*, 4(1), 11-21.
- Tumanan, Y. L. (2015). Ibadah Kontemporer: Sebuah Analisis Reflektif Terhadap Lahirnya Budaya Populer Dalam Gereja Masa Kini. *Journal Jaffray*, 13(1), 35-54.
- Wenger, W. (1998). *Communities of Practice and Social Learning Systems*. Huffakir & La.