



Traditional Bamboo Music Training for the Elderly: A Geragogi Review in the Mitra Seni Indonesia Community

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Abstract

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Music training through the art community can be used as an alternative forum for meeting the social needs of the elderly amid the limitations of similar programs in Indonesia. This study aims to find out and describe in depth related to Arumba music training for the elderly in the Indonesian Art Partner Community through the perspective of a geragogy approach. The method used is qualitative with a descriptive approach. This research was carried out for five months, starting from August to December 2025. The subjects in this training were eight elderly participants and a trainer who was a member of the Arumba Gemilang group. This training has fulfilled all three goals of geragogy according to Creech and Hallam, namely person-centered, fellow-centered, and matter-centered, although it is implemented unplanned and unintentionally by the trainer. These findings indicate that the principles of geragogy can emerge organically in community-based music training practices, without the need for a formal theoretical design in the first place. This research contributes to enriching the empirical literature on geragogy in the context of non-formal music education for the elderly, especially in the case study of traditional bamboo music in Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is currently entering a new phase in its demographic structure. Based on records from the Central Statistics Agency, the proportion of the elderly population has increased from 9.93 percent in 2020 to 11.93 percent in 2025. Referring to Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 1998 concerning Welfare of the Elderly, a person is classified as elderly after reaching the age of 60 years and above. This accelerating pace of demographic transition carries serious implications, especially since the ever-increasing number of older people demands comprehensive attention, not only to the physical and spiritual dimensions, but also to their social needs.

As they age, the elderly often experience a decline in terms of social interaction, involvement in social activities, and emotional support that can awaken their zest for life (Dodds et al., 2024). Various factors such as retirement, loss of loved ones, limited mobility, and technological obstacles make it difficult for the elderly to keep up with the times. This condition causes many of them to be trapped in loneliness and social isolation that has the potential to become chronic if left untreated. The follow-up impact is not light, ranging from depression, decreased cognitive function, worsening health conditions, anxiety disorders, to the risk of death (Hajek et al., 2025). Therefore, efforts to rebuild the capacity of interaction and social networks for the elderly are very important.

From an academic point of view, music has been consistently studied as an effective means of responding to these problems. Siltainsuu & Peltola (2024) have conducted a systematic search of 141 indexed and peer-reviewed articles on the role of music in the

welfare of the elderly published from January 2010 to December 2022. It was found that music not only plays a role in restoring the physical and cognitive functions of the elderly, but also contributes to social participation and well-being in their social environment.

In the psychosocial realm more specifically, playing or practicing music together has been shown to foster social closeness while reducing loneliness in the elderly (Lan et al., 2026). In line with these two findings, Netshivhambe (2025) states that collective playing of traditional musical instruments, which was initially aimed at overcoming boredom due to loneliness, actually results in significant participation and social support among fellow players when performed in the context of joint performance. Thus, purely scientifically, music provides a new purpose and identity for the elderly because it reopens learning opportunities and expands social networks that can revive their interactions, motivation, and social involvement.

In its application, the gap between scientific evidence and conditions in the field actually seems quite significant. In Indonesia, there are still very limited spaces for the elderly to gather and practice music collectively. Government programs such as posyandu for the elderly and schools for the elderly are available, but the main focus is generally only on physical and spiritual health, while social and artistic and cultural aspects are often overlooked, plus access to these programs is not commensurate with the number of elderly populations.

The art community is present as one of the applied solutions to this problem. Sulu et al. (2024) states that the art community is a space that facilitates individuals to express

themselves through works, while providing opportunities to expand social ties between members through artistic collaboration. In addition, the art community has other advantages in the form of the ability to build social relationships in an organic, inclusive, and sustainable manner, as well as providing new goals and identities for the elderly.

It should be noted that music training for the elderly cannot be equated with music education for children or young adults, considering the physical, cognitive, and social characteristics of the elderly which have their own uniqueness. Therefore, the approach used must also be adjusted specifically, namely through the geragogy approach. Findsen & Formosa (2011) define geragogy as an approach designed to meet the needs of older learners, emphasizing inclusivity, flexibility, and adaptability to the changes that accompany aging.

As a branch of non-formal education, geragogy provides space for the elderly to continue to develop their potential in the midst of age limitations (Hestyan et al., 2025). Empirically, Formosa (2021) proved that this approach is effective in overcoming social isolation, cognitive impairment, and age discrimination, as well as strengthening mental states and preventing dementia through post-retirement active learning (Hosnjak et al., 2020). Creech & Hallam (2015) formulated three main goals of geragogy, namely *person-centered*, *fellow-centered*, and *matter-centered*, which are important benchmarks in assessing the quality of learning practices for the elderly.

Some previous studies have touched on similar topics, but still leave a gap for further study. Hakim et al. (2023) has researched arumba learning at the Awisada Bamboo Music Studio and found an increase in

musical competence, social behavior, and technical skills, but has not touched on the elderly aspect or special learning approaches. In addition, Deswita (2018) has studied angklung training for elderly mothers at the Soka Gakkai Medan Foundation and found that there are motor and psychological benefits for the elderly, but has not analyzed the training process with the theory of elderly learning explicitly. Meanwhile, Nurhidayat (2012) who researched the learning of the Siter Lyre in elderly women at the Pangripta Cipta Art Studio found the need for intensive and slow-tempo repetition methods due to memory limitations, but has not linked the findings to a complete geragogy framework.

All three show that traditional music learning for the elderly requires methodological adjustments, but none have specifically used a comprehensive geological framework, leaving relevant research opportunities.

From various art communities in Jakarta, the researcher found one community whose members are mostly elderly, namely Mitra Seni Indonesia (MSI), which was established on August 9, 2007 and routinely organizes music training such as choir, group vocals, karawitan, kolintang, angklung, and arumba. One of his fostered groups, Arumba Gemilang, consists of eight elderly participants who train regularly every week with a coach. This condition makes it a very relevant subject to study regarding how the principles of geragogy are applied in the practice of music training in real life.

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Based on the description above, meeting the social needs of the elderly through community-based music training requires a learning approach that is in line with the characteristics of the elderly, namely geragogy. Meanwhile, previous research has not specifically examined this suitability in the context of music training, especially traditional bamboo music in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to explore and describe in depth the implementation of Arumba music training for the elderly in the Indonesian Art Partner Community using a geragogy review. As a result, this research is expected to enrich the theoretical treasures of geragogy in elderly music training, as well as provide practical benefits for academics, trainers, participants, and the arts community in developing and evaluating the effectiveness of community-based music training programs for the elderly.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to explain in depth how Arumba music training for the elderly in the Mitra Seni Indonesia Community is reviewed from a geragogy approach. The research was carried out for five months, from August to December 2025, at the home of one of the participants located in Bali Village No. 12, South Cipete, Cilandak, South Jakarta.

Data collection is carried out through three main techniques, namely observation, interviews, and literature studies that function as primary data sources, as well as documentation as secondary data (Sugiyono, 2017). The observation took place directly and openly, with a total of eight observation sessions each lasting at least two hours.

This observation process refers to the framework of training stages proposed by Dessler (2017). Meanwhile, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the trainer and the participants to obtain more detailed information about the individual's experiences and perspectives. Literature studies are used to collect supporting data related to the concept of geragogy and its application in Arumba music training, which is sourced from scientific articles, books, and various relevant research. The documentation acts as a complement to primary data, in the form of images, videos, and audio recordings that enrich the understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

All the collected data were then analyzed using an interactive analysis model from Miles et al. (2014), which includes three streams of activities. First, data reduction is carried out by selecting, focusing, and simplifying raw information from field records, in order to eliminate parts that are not relevant to the focus of the research. Second, the presentation of data is carried out through the organization of information into a systematic and easily digestible descriptive narrative. Third, conclusions are drawn in stages, starting from the process of collecting data in the field, then continuing to be reviewed and deepened throughout the research, until complete and in-depth findings are obtained on the formulation of the proposed problem.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Arumba music training for the elderly at the Indonesian Art Partner Community (MSI) is organized through a fostered group called Arumba Gemilang. This group consists of eight elderly participants aged 60 years and above along with one coach, namely Mochamad Burhan. Arumba training has been officially used as one of the music arts training programs at MSI since 2015. The majority of the members in this group are angklung training participants in the same community, so most of the participants have had a social closeness to each other since the beginning of the group's formation, although there are also a number of new participants who have never been involved in MSI activities before but are able to adapt gradually to the dynamics of the group that has been formed.

The musical backgrounds of the participants are very heterogeneous. Some participants have previous musical experience, such as playing the piano, participating in drum band extracurriculars, joining choirs, or having attended angklung training at MSI, so they have a basic understanding of notation and music theory. Others have no musical background at all and have to learn everything from the start.

This diversity of backgrounds has a real influence on the training process, especially in terms of the speed of understanding the song material and the ability to read notation between participants. Interestingly, the main motivation underlying the participation of the majority of participants in this training consistently is not the achievement of musical competence, but the desire to remain able to socialize and fill free time after entering retirement.



Figure 1. Collaborative appearance
(Source: Indrayanti, 2024)

The coach, who is familiarly called Abah Burhan, has a role that cannot be separated from the success of this training. In addition to playing the role of the initiator of arumba music itself, Abah Burhan showed high dedication and integrity in training, even at his age when he was no longer young. His patience in delivering teaching, his openness in receiving questions and suggestions from participants, and his personality that is easily familiar and not rigid in socializing consistently are reflected throughout the observation process and confirmed through interviews with participants.

The wide relationship that the coach has in the field of bamboo music performances, especially with Saung Angklung Udjo, is also used to open up performance opportunities for the ensemble he trains. This indirectly contributes to increasing the motivation of participants to continue practicing.

Training Design

The process of arumba music training for the elderly in the Arumba Gemilang group was analyzed based on five stages of training proposed by Dessler (2017), namely needs analysis, training program design, material design, training implementation, and evaluation.

1. Needs Analysis

At this stage, the researcher found that this process was not carried out in a structured or written manner by the trainer, but rather took place through direct observation of the background and needs of each participant. A significant finding at this stage is that the main foundation of the training is not the achievement of certain musical abilities, but the fulfillment of the social needs of elderly participants who have mostly retired or no longer have regular activities. Thus, the standard of musical skills that are commonly used as a reference in music training in general is readjusted to the specific characteristics and needs of elderly participants, without ruling out the desire of participants to remain skilled in playing Arumba instruments.

The trainer's sensitivity to this need is also reflected in his efforts to design a training atmosphere that is not only oriented to the effectiveness of material delivery, but also to creating comfort and a sense of family, both between the trainer and the participant and between the participants themselves. The initial identification of abilities was carried out in two simple ways, namely asking participants to follow the rhythmic pattern exemplified directly by the trainer, and having participants play scales with numerical notation guides, each of which aims to assess rhythmic sensitivity and notation reading ability as the basis for determining the appropriate instrument for each participant. In addition to these technical abilities, the trainer also pays attention to the physical condition of the participants, especially motor skills, considering that there are certain instruments that require alternating coordination of both hands with complex variations in tone and tempo.

2. Training Program Design

At this stage, the researcher found that this process was also not carried out in writing

or based on standard guidelines, but was adjusted adaptively to the situation and condition of the participants in each meeting session. The determination of instruments for each participant is based on the ability to read numerical notation and the motor condition of each individual, where participants with good notation reading ability and adequate motor condition are placed on melodic or variation instruments, while participants who are not used to reading notation are placed on accompanying instruments with more repetitive and easy to learn through habituation. This placement is flexible and can be adjusted again if there is a change in the ability of the participant concerned.

Name of Instrument	Number of Instruments	Number of Players
<i>Yangklung Toel</i>	2 pieces	2 people
Carumba variasi	2 pieces	2 people
Carumba pengiring	2 pieces	3 people
Bass Lodong	1 piece	1 person
Total	7 instruments	8 people

Table 1. Composition of instrument divisions

The learning media used in this training consists of audio recordings and number notation scores. Audio recordings are used to play songs that have been arranged into

arumba format before being studied directly, it aims to introduce the melody and character of the song auditory to the participants. The number notation score was chosen by the coach because it was considered easier for elderly participants to understand compared to block notation which requires a deeper understanding of music. The chord writing is broken down into single notation for the accompaniment instrument to make it easier to read while playing.

The targets set in this training tend to be short-term and performance-oriented. When there is a performance agenda in the near future, the training target becomes more planned, while in the period without a performance agenda, the training target is more focused on maintaining and strengthening the material of the songs that have been studied beforehand.

3. Material Design

At the material design stage, the selection of songs is measured based on the difficulty level of the material and the overall ability of the participants by involving a discussion process between the trainer and the participant about the songs to be learned. One of the songs that became the main focus during the observation period was "Pakarena", a regional song from Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi Province that describes gratitude and the relationship between the inhabitants of the earth and the inhabitants of the sky.

This song was chosen by the participants from several proposals given by the coach, in order to prepare a collaborative performance between arumba music and traditional dance at MSI's internal event. The coach then arranged the song into five parts of the instrument, namely *yangklung toel* as the main melody and variation, *carumba variation* as a melody variation, *accompaniment carumba* one

and two as variations and chord fillers, and *bass lodong* as a thickener of chords and low note variations, with a level of difficulty that is always readjusted if it is considered too difficult for the participants.

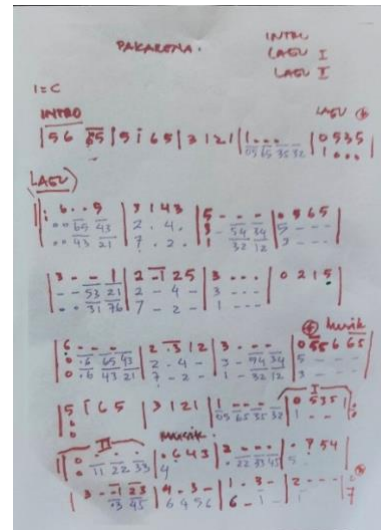


Figure 2. Song notation Pakarena
(Documentation: Aera Altaf, 2026)

4. Training Implementation

At the stage of implementing the training, it was found that this process took place based on the principle of strong kinship. Before the training session started, there was a meal routine accompanied by small talk between participants and trainers while waiting for the presence of all members. Then after that, it was continued with the activity of compiling instruments to the training area together as a form of informal collaboration between participants.



Figure 3. Meal together before training
(Documentation: Aera Altaf, 2025)

The opening of the training session was carried out casually without a standard formal procedure, starting with a greeting, then the coach asked the participants to recall the previous material by replaying the song material that had been learned in the previous meeting. Coaches often provide motivation by reminding them of upcoming performance agendas. In observation, these steps are consistently able to increase the enthusiasm of participants and open up a space for discussion about technical and non-technical aspects of performance preparation.

The demonstration method is the most commonly used method. The coach directly practices the playing pattern of each instrument repeatedly until the participant understands what the coach intended. The coach's patience in this process was especially appreciated by the participants conveyed in the interview.



Figure 4. Demonstration Method
(Documentation: Aera Altaf, 2025)

The *drill* method is applied after participants capture the material that has been demonstrated through independent repetition until participants memorize and fluently. Meanwhile, the coach went around to correct the other participants in turn. If repeated mistakes are found in certain participants, the coach will provide individual re-guidance before returning to invite all participants to play together again.



Figure 5. Drill Method
(Documentation: Aera Altaf, 2025)

The discussion method is used both in the opening session to build motivation, and in the main session to discuss the right game techniques when participants experience difficulties. This method uses a two-way communication pattern that allows participants to proactively convey their problems before they are even aware of them by the trainer, so this method also serves as a

means of evaluation for the trainer in making the next arrangement.



Figure 6. Discussion Method
(Documentation: Aera Altaf, 2025)

Training on the musical elements in the Paarena song shows a consistent pattern of technical adaptation to the characteristics of the elderly. Pitch accuracy is trained in a different way between melodic instruments and accompaniment instruments, namely through the reading of complete notation for melodic instruments and the breakdown of chord notation into single notes for accompaniment instruments accompanied by additional verbal guidance considering that participants often forget to play the variation part because they focus too much on the main melody.

The accuracy of rhythmic patterns was trained through live demonstrations and the provision of audio recordings through online conversation groups, considering that not all participants could read rhythmic notation well. Harmonies are practiced by breaking chords and distributing them to several players on *the accompanying carumba* instrument and *the lodong bus*. A strategy that at the same time gives the coach the flexibility to add chord variations without adding to the burden of difficulty for the participants.

The determination of the tempo is adjusted to the ability of the participants, if the

original tempo of the song is felt to be too fast, then the coach will lower the tempo to match the abilities of all participants. The aspects of musical dynamics and expression tend not to be the main focus in this training. This is because mastery of memorization and fluency of songs is still a more urgent priority for the majority of participants.

Individual mentoring sessions are given in turn with flexible time allocation to adjust the difficulty level of the material and the ability of each participant to absorb the corrections of the material given. When one participant is receiving intensive guidance from a coach, the other participant fills the time with independent exercises or helping each other who is having difficulties. This kind of interaction pattern has proven to be effective in maintaining the overall smoothness and productivity of training.



Figure 7. Individual mentoring
(Documentation: Aera Altaf, 2025)

In the interview, participants described that they felt a family atmosphere during the training. Participants also consider the training day not just a routine, but a moment that is awaited to gather and share stories. One of the participants mentioned that the relationship between the coach and the participant felt like a brother and sister relationship, so that when the coach gave a reprimand for repeated mistakes, the participants did not feel offended and accepted it as a normal part of the learning

process. Mutual respect is also seen in training habits, for example when participants quickly follow the coach's instructions to refocus after being distracted beforehand. In addition, the coach also obeys the wishes of the participants, when the majority of participants feel that the practice is enough, then the coach will ask the participants to play once again together before the training is completed.

5. Evaluation

In contrast to the conventional evaluation model that is usually carried out at the end of the program, the evaluation in this training takes place continuously throughout the training process. The coach gives feedback directly once he finds a mistake, either through verbal explanations or re-demonstrations. Participants welcome this method because they can immediately identify and correct the shortcomings they get. Evaluation was also carried out after the performance, where participants actively asked for the coach's assessment, then discussed together about aspects that needed to be improved and those that had been successfully achieved.

Constraint and Challenges

This research reveals that there are obstacles and challenges found during observation or interviews. One of the obstacles that is often faced is the inconsistency of participant attendance. Even though it only involves one person, the impact is quite felt because the participant plays an important role as a *bass player* who functions to thicken the chords and provide variation in the low notes. Changing players in this group is not easy, it is due to personnel limitations and other administrative procedures. As a temporary solution, the coach and the participants agreed to rearrange the placement of players on other instruments to cover the vacancy of the role.

In addition, there was also the biggest challenge mentioned by the coach in the interview, namely the decline in participants' memory due to the age factor. If a participant is not present in a meeting, he or she is likely to forget and need to be retaught or request additional demonstrations when returning to practice. To overcome this, the trainer documents the results of the exercise in the form of a video recording, so that participants can play and repeat it independently at home.

Geragogy Review

Based on the definition put forward by Findsen & Formosa (2011), geragogy is a learning approach that is specifically designed to meet the needs of older learners, with an emphasis on the aspects of inclusivity, flexibility, and adaptability to accommodate the various changes that accompany aging. Based on this definition, it can be said that the training of Arumba music for the elderly in the Indonesian Art Partner Community has applied the principles of geragogy, although this takes place without the awareness and explicit theoretical planning of the trainer. To examine more deeply how this approach is manifested in practice, it will be discussed based on the three goals of geragogy formulated by Creech & Hallam (2015), namely *person-centered*, *fellow-centered*, and *matter-centered*.

1. Person-centered

Aim to ensure the relevance of the activities and learning materials for each participant by linking them to previous experiences, providing empathic support to vulnerable participants, and building a "travel buddy" relationship between the trainer and the participant. In this training, this is seen when the coach adjusts the arrangement of the song to the participant's ability and is willing to change it if it is too difficult. Before

determining the distribution of the instruments, the coach always tests the participants' basic skills such as reading number notation and playing rhythm patterns, as well as taking into account their physical and motor conditions. The placement of instruments is dynamic and can change as the participants' abilities develop.

This practice is in line with the findings of Nurhidayat (2012), that learning traditional music for the elderly must be adjusted to their characteristics. The selection of songs was also carried out in a participatory manner through joint discussions. When participants encounter difficulties, the coach provides multi-level support ranging from verbal encouragement to intensive individualized guidance. The equal relationship in question is even manifested like a brother-sister relationship, where reprimands for mistakes are accepted freely without causing offense.

2. *Fellow-centered*

It is aimed at building positive interpersonal relationships, designing inclusive activities for all participants by understanding their musical, social, and emotional needs, supporting a fun learning process so that learning takes place effectively, and creating a calm atmosphere so that participants can explore their musical skills optimally. Positive relationships are clearly illustrated by communication and mutual help between participants when the trainer focuses on individual guidance.

Participants also admitted that the training day was a long-awaited moment to gather and share news. The coach also indirectly understands the musical needs of the participants through the initial identification of abilities before determining the instruments and arrangements with the aim of creating inclusive and equitable

activities. However, the researcher sees an opportunity for improvement, namely the lack of systematic recording of the abilities of each participant that can help the trainer monitor progress more continuously.

In general, the social and emotional needs of the participants have been met through the main goal of the training, which is to provide space for the elderly to remain active and productive in retirement. A strong family atmosphere does have the potential to slightly reduce the technical focus of learning, but it is balanced by the independence of participants who support each other who have difficulties when the coach is focusing on one individual, so that the effectiveness of the training is maintained.

3. *Matter-centered*

Focuses on how the coach helps participants overcome difficulties, respond to feedback, set goals, give constructive suggestions, and understand the individual characteristics of the participants. In this training, the trainer's commitment can be seen from his willingness to re-demonstrate the material over and over again until the participants really understand—not just give verbal instructions. The coach also does not force the participants to continue practicing if the majority feels that it is enough, and always considers the participants' suggestions through open discussions.

The target setting in this training is a target of two, namely short-term targets oriented to a certain performance agenda, and long-term targets in the form of video recording documentation as a form of appreciation for participants' achievements. Coach support is also realized through providing assessments and constructive suggestions after participants perform, for future improvements.

Findings and Implications

The researchers found that the three goals of geragogy, namely *person-centered*, *fellow-centered*, and *matter-centered*, were substantially fulfilled in arumba training for the elderly in the Indonesian Art Partner Community even though the implementation took place intuitively and unplanned. Trainers have no formal knowledge of the theory of adult learning, and do not design programs based on a specific jigsaw framework. However, the practice she runs consistently reflects those principles driven by her experience, sensitivity, and professional instincts to the needs of elderly participants.

These findings reinforce the view of Hestyan et al. (2025) that art-based learning communities can be an effective means for the elderly to continue to develop in the midst of age limitations. This condition also opens up an interesting academic discussion space, namely that good learning practices for the elderly do not always have to be born from the design of a formal curriculum, but can grow from field experience and the sensitivity of facilitators.

However, this study also identifies several aspects that can be improved to optimize the application of geragogy, including written program planning which covers all stages from needs analysis to evaluation and systematic recording of the development of each participant's abilities. Thus, the trainer will have a more measurable guide to evaluate the progress of the participants and facilitate the preparation of the material on an ongoing basis.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions, arumba music training for the elderly in the

Indonesian Art Partners Community has applied a geragogy approach through real practice in the form of adjusting materials and instruments to the abilities of each participant, building positive interpersonal relationships and an inclusive family atmosphere, and the commitment of the trainer in responding to the needs and difficulties of the participants in a sustainable manner. This answers the formulation of the research problem, namely how arumba music training for the elderly in the Mita Seni Indonesia community is seen through the perspective of a geragogy approach and describes in depth the implementation of arumba music training for the elderly in the Indonesian Art Partner Community using a geragogy review. From an academic point of view, this research is expected to enrich the study of traditional bamboo music training and make it a relevant case study in the scope of music education for the elderly.

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