



Strengthening Artistic Competence Through Angklung Performance in the Merdeka Curriculum: A Qualitative Study of PGSD Students

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Abstract

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning through authentic and meaningful experiences that support competency and character development. One learning approach aligned with these objectives is arts-based project learning through angklung performance. This study aimed to explore how angklung performance contributes to strengthening the artistic competence of Elementary School Teacher Education (PGSD) students within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum. A qualitative case study design was employed involving PGSD students at Nusa Putra University, Sukabumi, who participated in a series of angklung performance activities as part of project-based learning. Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, reflective documentation, and field notes. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis supported by source triangulation and member checking to ensure trustworthiness. The findings revealed four major themes: improvement of musical and artistic skills, enhancement of collaborative learning and communication, strengthening of cultural awareness and appreciation of local heritage, and development of responsibility, discipline, and self-confidence. However, participants also encountered challenges related to limited musical backgrounds and restricted rehearsal time. The study demonstrates that angklung performance serves as an effective culturally responsive learning strategy that supports artistic competence development while promoting the values of the Pancasila Student Profile. These findings provide practical implications for integrating traditional arts into teacher education programs within the Merdeka Curriculum framework.

Abstrak

Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka menekankan pembelajaran yang berpusat pada peserta didik melalui pengalaman belajar yang autentik dan bermakna untuk mendukung pengembangan kompetensi serta karakter. Salah satu pendekatan pembelajaran yang sejalan dengan tujuan tersebut adalah pembelajaran berbasis proyek melalui pertunjukan angklung. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi kontribusi pertunjukan angklung dalam memperkuat kompetensi seni mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar (PGSD) dalam konteks Kurikulum Merdeka. Penelitian menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif yang melibatkan mahasiswa PGSD

Article History

Received : 22 April 2026

Accepted : 30 May 2026

Keywords:

Artistic competence, Angklung performance, Merdeka Curriculum, Project-based learning, PGSD students

Kata kunci:

Kompetensi seni, pertunjukan angklung, Kurikulum Merdeka, pembelajaran berbasis proyek, mahasiswa PGSD

Universitas Nusa Putra Sukabumi yang mengikuti rangkaian kegiatan pertunjukan angklung sebagai bagian dari pembelajaran berbasis proyek. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dokumentasi reflektif, dan catatan lapangan. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan analisis tematik yang didukung dengan triangulasi sumber dan member checking untuk menjamin kredibilitas temuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan empat tema utama, yaitu peningkatan keterampilan musikal dan kompetensi seni, penguatan kemampuan kolaborasi dan komunikasi, peningkatan kesadaran budaya serta apresiasi terhadap warisan budaya lokal, serta berkembangnya sikap tanggung jawab, disiplin, dan kepercayaan diri. Meskipun demikian, mahasiswa masih menghadapi kendala berupa keterbatasan latar belakang musik dan waktu latihan yang terbatas. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pertunjukan angklung merupakan strategi pembelajaran berbasis budaya yang efektif untuk memperkuat kompetensi seni sekaligus menginternalisasikan nilai-nilai Profil Pelajar Pancasila. Hasil penelitian ini memberikan implikasi praktis bagi integrasi seni tradisional dalam pendidikan calon guru pada implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka.

Introduction

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum has become one of the most significant educational reforms in Indonesia, emphasizing student-centered learning, flexibility, and the development of competencies needed in the twenty-first century. Through this curriculum, students are encouraged to actively construct knowledge, develop creativity, collaborate with others, and strengthen their character through meaningful learning experiences. One of the flagship programs supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is the *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5)*, which aims to cultivate learners who are independent, collaborative, creative, culturally aware, and capable of contributing positively to society [1]. The success of this curriculum depends not only on educational policies but also on the readiness of teachers to design learning activities that are relevant, contextual, and meaningful for students [2].

Teacher education institutions play an important role in preparing prospective teachers who possess pedagogical competence, creativity, and the ability to implement innovative learning approaches. In the Elementary School Teacher Education (PGSD) program, students are expected not only to master theoretical concepts but also to gain practical experiences that can support their future professional responsibilities. One learning approach that aligns with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum is project-based learning, which encourages students to learn through direct experience, collaboration, reflection, and problem-solving activities [3].

Through project-based learning, students have opportunities to develop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies simultaneously while strengthening their social and communication skills [4].

Arts education is considered an important component of holistic learning because it facilitates self-expression, creativity, cultural understanding, and emotional development. In addition to developing artistic abilities, arts-based learning contributes to the formation of character values such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and perseverance [5]. Previous studies have shown that participation in artistic activities can improve students' engagement, confidence, and collaborative skills while fostering appreciation for cultural diversity [6]. Within the context of Indonesian education, traditional arts also function as a medium for preserving local wisdom and strengthening cultural identity among younger generations [7].

One form of traditional art that has strong educational potential is the *angklung*, a traditional bamboo musical instrument originating from West Java and recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity [8]. *Angklung* performance requires each player to be responsible for a specific musical note, making cooperation and coordination essential elements of the performance process. Consequently, students must listen carefully, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively to produce harmonious musical compositions [9]. Through regular practice and performance activities, students can develop musical competence while simultaneously strengthening social skills, discipline, responsibility, and appreciation of local culture [10].

Although various studies have discussed the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, project-based learning, and arts education, research examining the contribution of *angklung* performance to the development of artistic competence among prospective elementary school teachers remains limited [11]. Most studies focus on school students rather than teacher education students who will later become facilitators of learning in elementary schools [12]. Therefore, understanding how *angklung* performance activities support the development of artistic competence and character among PGSD students is important for strengthening the implementation of culturally responsive learning within teacher education programs.



Based on these considerations, this study explores the experiences of PGSD students participating in angklung performance activities within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. The study aims to analyze how participation in angklung performances contributes to the strengthening of artistic competence, collaborative abilities, cultural awareness, and character development among prospective elementary school teachers. The findings are expected to provide insights for integrating traditional arts into teacher education programs while supporting the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum in developing competent, creative, and culturally responsive future educators.

Methods

Data collection was conducted at the Elementary School Teacher Education Program (PGSD), Nusa Putra University, Sukabumi, from February to April 2025. This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the experiences of PGSD students participating in angklung performance activities within the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The study focused on understanding how participation in angklung performances contributed to the development of artistic competence, collaboration, cultural awareness, and character formation among prospective elementary school teachers.

The participants consisted of 25 PGSD students who were actively involved in angklung performance activities as part of project-based learning and the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on predetermined criteria, including active participation in rehearsals and performances, willingness to participate in the study, and completion of all project activities. Prior to data collection, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided consent to participate voluntarily.

Primary data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and documentation. Participant observation was conducted throughout the rehearsal and performance process to record students' engagement, interaction patterns, artistic development, and collaborative behavior. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants to explore their experiences, perceptions, challenges, and learning outcomes during the angklung performance project. Reflective journals written by

students and supporting documents such as photographs, performance schedules, and field notes were also used to enrich the data.

The angklung performance project was implemented over eight weeks. During this period, students participated in introductory workshops on angklung techniques, regular rehearsals, musical arrangement activities, group discussions, and final public performances. The activities were designed to provide students with authentic learning experiences that integrated artistic practice, teamwork, and cultural appreciation. Throughout the project, observations were conducted regularly to document students' progress and participation.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the stages of data familiarization, coding, theme development, theme review, and interpretation. Data credibility was enhanced through source triangulation, member checking, and peer discussion. Triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from observations, interviews, reflective journals, and documentation. Member checking was carried out by confirming interview interpretations with participants to ensure the accuracy and trustworthiness of the findings.

Result and Discussion

1. Artistic Competence Development

As presented in Table 1, most participants demonstrated significant improvement in artistic competence after participating in the angklung performance project. At the beginning of the program, many students experienced difficulties in reading musical notation, maintaining tempo consistency, and coordinating their movements with other performers. However, regular rehearsals and collaborative learning activities enabled students to gradually improve their musical abilities and performance quality.

Interview results revealed that students gained greater confidence in performing traditional music before an audience. Several participants reported that repeated practice sessions helped them understand musical structures and improve concentration during performances. These findings indicate that angklung performance activities provide authentic

learning experiences that facilitate the development of artistic skills through direct participation and reflection.

The findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that practical music learning improves artistic competence, creativity, and musical expression among learners [13]. Participation in ensemble-based musical activities has also been shown to strengthen performance confidence and technical proficiency through repeated collaborative practice [14].

Table 1. Development of Artistic Competence among PGSD Students

Indicator	Before Project	After Project
Understanding of musical notation	Limited	Good
Rhythm and tempo accuracy	Moderate	Improved
Performance confidence	Low	High
Coordination in ensemble playing	Moderate	Improved
Musical expression	Limited	Good

Source: Primary Data, 2025

2. Collaborative Learning Experience

The findings demonstrate that angklung performance activities significantly strengthened students' collaborative skills. Since each student was responsible for specific musical notes, successful performances depended on effective communication and cooperation among all members. Observational data showed that students actively discussed rehearsal schedules, coordinated performance arrangements, and assisted peers who experienced difficulties during practice sessions.

Interview data further revealed that students developed a stronger sense of collective responsibility throughout the project. They recognized that the success of the performance depended not only on individual competence but also on the contribution of every group

member. Consequently, students became more aware of the importance of teamwork and mutual support in achieving shared goals.

These findings support previous studies emphasizing that project-based learning encourages communication, collaboration, and shared responsibility among participants [15]. Collaborative artistic activities provide opportunities for learners to negotiate ideas, solve problems collectively, and strengthen interpersonal relationships within educational settings [16].

Table 2. Collaborative Skills Developed through Angklung Performance

Collaborative Aspect Findings	
Communication	Improved interaction among students
Teamwork	Strong cooperation during rehearsals
Mutual Support	Students assisted peers during practice
Responsibility	Increased commitment to assigned roles
Problem Solving	Collaborative solutions to performance challenges

Source: Primary Data, 2025

3. Cultural Awareness and Appreciation of Local Heritage

Participation in angklung performances enhanced students' appreciation of Indonesian cultural heritage. Many participants initially viewed angklung merely as a traditional musical instrument. However, after completing the project, students demonstrated a deeper understanding of its historical significance and educational value.

Students expressed pride in performing traditional music and recognized the importance of preserving local cultural traditions. Several participants stated that they intended to introduce traditional arts in their future classrooms as a way of promoting cultural awareness among elementary school students.

The findings indicate that traditional arts can function as an effective medium for strengthening cultural identity and preserving local wisdom [17]. Integrating cultural heritage into educational practice encourages students to develop appreciation for diversity while fostering a sense of belonging to their cultural community [18].

Table 3. Cultural Awareness Outcomes

Indicator	Findings
Understanding of angklung heritage	Increased
Appreciation of local culture	Improved
Cultural pride	Strengthened
Motivation to preserve traditional arts	High
Intention to integrate culture into teaching	Increased

Source: Primary Data, 2025

4. Character Development and Implementation Challenges

The findings further indicate that angklung performance activities contributed to character development among PGSD students. Participants demonstrated greater discipline through regular attendance at rehearsals and stronger responsibility in preparing assigned musical parts. Students also reported increased confidence after successfully performing before an audience.

Despite these positive outcomes, several challenges emerged during implementation. The most common difficulty involved limited musical experience among participants. Many students required additional time to understand notation systems and ensemble coordination. Furthermore, academic schedules often reduced the amount of rehearsal time available, making performance preparation more demanding.

The improvement of discipline, responsibility, and self-confidence observed in this study supports the objectives of character education and the Pancasila Student Profile framework [19]. Previous studies have similarly reported that arts-based learning activities contribute to personal growth, perseverance, emotional development, and social competence among students [20].

Table 4. Character Development and Challenges Identified

Aspect	Findings
Discipline	Improved rehearsal attendance
Responsibility	Increased task commitment
Self-confidence	Improved performance readiness
Time management	Better organization of activities
Challenges	Limited rehearsal time and musical background

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Conclusion

The results of this study showed that angklung performance activities contributed significantly to strengthening the artistic competence of PGSD students within the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition to improving musical skills, students developed collaboration, cultural awareness, discipline, responsibility, and self-confidence through project-based learning experiences. Therefore, PGSD programs should utilize angklung performance as a culturally responsive learning activity that supports artistic competence development and the achievement of the Pancasila Student Profile objectives.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Head of the Elementary School Teacher Education (PGSD) Program and the Rector of Nusa Putra University, Sukabumi, for their support and permission to conduct this research. The authors also extend their appreciation to all PGSD students who voluntarily participated in the angklung



performance project and contributed valuable insights throughout the research process. Special thanks are addressed to the lecturers, instructors, and all parties involved in facilitating the implementation of the angklung activities and data collection. Their cooperation, encouragement, and support were invaluable in the completion of this study.

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