



## **Integrating Sundanese Cultural Values into Dance Education: An Experiential Learning Approach in Higher Education**

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### **Abstract**

In the face of globalization threatening local cultural preservation, integrating Sundanese cultural values into higher education dance curricula has become urgent. This study analyzes the application of experiential learning as a pedagogical strategy to revitalize Sundanese traditional dance. This approach teaches technical skills and allows students to experience and internalize the dance's philosophical and cultural meanings through active participation, reflective observation, and experimentation. The findings indicate that experiential learning effectively strengthens cultural identity and pride in heritage. The pedagogical implications highlight the need for curriculum design incorporating local wisdom, collaborative projects with cultural practitioners, and the integration of digital media to expand accessibility. Thus, experiential learning is proposed as a transformative pathway to ensure the sustainability and relevance of Sundanese cultural values in higher education.

**Keywords:** Sundanese Culture; Traditional Dance Education; Experiential Learning; Higher Education; Cultural Preservation

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## INTRODUCTION

Local culture is essential to national identity and the continuity of traditional values. In Indonesia, Sundanese culture encompasses philosophy, aesthetics, etiquette, and local wisdom such as *silih asah, silih asih, silih asuh* (mutual learning, caring, and nurturing). Sundanese traditional dance is a performing art form and a medium for expressing and transmitting cultural values across generations. However, globalization and modernization have shifted preferences toward popular culture, leading many students and young people to lack a deep understanding or appreciation of traditional dance conceptually and practically. In higher education, this challenge becomes more complex, as learning is expected to develop technical skills and cultivate a profound comprehension of the cultural meanings embedded in traditional dance.

Several studies have examined the aesthetic and cultural values within Sundanese dance. Research on *Sundanese classical dance as a representation of aesthetic values and noble culture in West Java* highlighted how classical forms such as Keurseus and Sulintang embody ethics, etiquette, and noble identity ([Tandfonline, 2025](#)). Another study on *Sulintang Dance* emphasized how costumes, movements, and symbols reflect social class and cultural norms of Sundanese aristocracy ([ISVS, 2023](#)). Similarly, semiotic research on *Benjang Helaran* revealed the role of *wiraga* (body), *wirasa* (emotion), and *wirama* (rhythm) as a system of cultural signs linking performance with spirituality and harmony ([ResearchGate, 2024](#)). While these studies highlight aesthetic and cultural dimensions, they have not fully explored pedagogical models for cultural transmission in higher education.

Although studies on Sundanese dance exist, few have systematically applied *experiential learning* in higher education.

Traditional pedagogies focus on technical mastery, neglecting opportunities for students to engage in cultural reflection and application. The gap is significant because experiential learning has the potential to enhance cultural appreciation, strengthen identity, and ensure the sustainability of traditional heritage among university students.

Recent studies have begun to explore experiential learning in arts education. For example, research on *movement-based experiential learning in dance* identified key factors that facilitate or hinder student engagement ([Tandfonline, 2024](#)). Similarly, Payne and Costas (2020) examined *creative dance as experiential learning* and found cognitive, physical, and emotional development benefits in primary education ([Sage Journals, 2020](#)). However, most research remains context-specific, focusing on basic education or community-based learning, with limited attention to higher education and cultural preservation.

This study contributes novelty in three aspects: 1) It explicitly integrates Sundanese cultural values into dance pedagogy through an experiential learning framework, moving beyond technical and aesthetic dimensions; 2) It situates the integration in higher education, where students from diverse cultural backgrounds can engage critically and experientially with Sundanese traditions; 3) It proposes concrete pedagogical implications, such as curriculum design, collaboration with cultural practitioners, and the use of digital media, bridging tradition with modern educational needs.

Based on the identified gaps, this study aims to: 1) Analyze how Sundanese cultural values can be integrated into dance education using an experiential learning approach in higher education; 2) Evaluate the potential impact of such integration on students' cultural understanding, appreciation of Sundanese



traditional dance, and identity formation; 3) Formulate pedagogical recommendations for higher education curricula to ensure cultural sustainability through experiential learning.

## LITERATUR REVIEW

Sundanese traditional dance is deeply rooted in cultural values, aesthetics, and social identity. A study titled *Sundanese classical dance as a representation of aesthetic values and noble culture in West Java* revealed that classical dances such as Keurseus and Sulintang represent ethics, etiquette, and noble identity through refined movement, harmony, and symbolic expression ([Tandfonline, 2025](#)). Similarly, research on *Sulintang Dance* emphasized that costumes, gestures, and accessories signify social class and norms of aristocratic Sundanese culture ([ISVS, 2023](#)). Another semiotic analysis of *Benjang Helaran* highlighted the dimensions of *wiraga* (physical expression), *wirasa* (emotional resonance), and *wirama* (rhythm), which serve as cultural signs reflecting spirituality and community harmony ([ResearchGate, 2024](#)).

Experiential learning has been recognized as a practical pedagogical framework in arts education. Payne and Costas (2020) demonstrated that *creative dance* as experiential learning in primary schools enhances cognitive, emotional, and social development, showing its potential beyond technical mastery ([Sage Journals, 2020](#)). Another study explored *creative movement as experiential learning*, emphasizing how embodied experiences and reflection foster more profound understanding and critical thinking in dance practice ([Sage Journals, 2025](#)). Meanwhile, studies on Sundanese dance training models, such as those implemented at the Kusuma Art Studio in Bekasi, show attempts to combine cultural preservation with technical instruction, although not yet fully framed within

experiential learning theory ([Atlantis Press, 2021](#)).

Recent research highlights the role of digital media in supporting dance education. Multimedia-based learning tools such as videos, digital modules, and recordings have proven effective in enhancing student engagement and understanding of cultural values in dance ([ERIC, 2024](#)). Moreover, online dance learning platforms are increasingly used, as seen in studies on virtual dance classes, which show that digital tools can maintain learning quality when combined with feedback and reflective practice ([PMC, 2023](#)). These findings suggest that digital innovation can complement experiential learning, especially in higher education contexts where students are highly familiar with technology.

The literature review identifies several research gaps. First, while studies explore Sundanese dance from aesthetic and cultural perspectives, few explicitly apply experiential learning in higher education settings. Second, limited empirical evidence exists on how integrating Sundanese cultural values through experiential learning affects students' identity formation, appreciation of traditional dance, and moral reflection. Third, although digital media is increasingly used, it has not been systematically integrated with experiential learning frameworks. Lastly, few studies provide concrete curricular recommendations for universities to combine local cultural wisdom with modern pedagogical methods.

## METHODS

This study employs a conceptual literature-based approach using the integrative review method, which allows for synthesizing diverse scholarly findings on dance pedagogy, cultural preservation, and the application of experiential learning in higher education. This strategy was

chosen because the study aims to analyze and conceptualize the integration of Sundanese cultural values into dance education rather than collect primary field data.

The data consist of secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles (particularly open-access works published within the last five years), academic books, research reports, and relevant academic documents addressing Sundanese culture, traditional dance, experiential learning, and higher education. Data were collected through a systematic literature search across academic databases such as DOAJ, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Taylor & Francis Online, Sage Journals, and other reputable sources. The main search keywords included: *Sundanese culture, traditional dance education, experiential learning, higher education, and cultural preservation*. A structured search protocol was used as the main instrument to screen and select literature relevant to the research objectives.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: 1) Inclusion: Articles published between 2020 and 2025, in English or Indonesian, open-access, peer-reviewed, and directly relevant to Sundanese traditional dance, experiential learning, arts education, or cultural sustainability; Exclusion: Non-peer-reviewed sources, literature unrelated to Sundanese cultural or dance education, and opinion-based writings lacking academic rigor.

Since this study is based on secondary literature, the unit of analysis is key concepts: Sundanese cultural values in dance, experiential learning strategies, and their pedagogical implications in higher education. The study employed thematic analysis and conceptual synthesis. Thematic analysis grouped literature into four main categories: (1) Sundanese cultural values in dance, (2) experiential learning in arts education, (3) curriculum integration strategies, and (4) challenges and opportunities for cultural

sustainability. Conceptual synthesis was then used to formulate an integrative framework for applying experiential learning effectively in Sundanese dance education at the university level..

## RESULTS

The literature synthesis reveals that Sundanese traditional dance is not merely a performing art but also a medium for transmitting cultural values and philosophical meaning. Studies on classical Sundanese dances such as Keurseus and Sulintang highlight how aesthetics and ethics in movement reflect etiquette, politeness, and noble identity within Sundanese society ([Tandfonline, 2025](#)). Similarly, semiotic research on *Benjang Helaran* demonstrates the role of *wiraga* (body), *wirasa* (emotion), and *wirama* (rhythm) as cultural signs that link performance with spirituality and social harmony ([ResearchGate, 2024](#)). These findings indicate that Sundanese dance movements are imbued with symbolic values that need to be internalized in educational practice, rather than treated merely as technical skills.

The literature also underscores the relevance of *experiential learning* as a pedagogical framework in dance education. Based on Kolb's theory (1984), the cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation supports deeper learning in the arts. Payne and Costas (2020) found that *creative dance* as experiential learning contributed significantly to children's cognitive, emotional, and social development in primary education ([Sage Journals, 2020](#)). In higher education, this model can be adapted to help students acquire technical mastery and reflect on the cultural and philosophical meanings behind Sundanese dance practices.



Recent studies highlight the potential of digital media in broadening access to dance education. Research on multimedia-based dance learning demonstrates that videos, digital modules, and recordings enhance engagement and comprehension of cultural values in dance (ERIC, 2024). Similarly, studies on online dance learning confirm that digital platforms can maintain quality when supported with adequate feedback and reflective activities (PMC, 2023). For higher education, integrating digital tools with experiential learning allows Sundanese dance learning to be more interactive, accessible, and aligned with students' digital literacy.

The findings suggest several pedagogical implications for higher education: 1) **Curriculum Design:** Dance curricula should integrate Sundanese cultural values beyond technical training, embedding philosophical elements such as *silih asah*, *silih asih*, *silih asuh* as pedagogical foundations; 2) **Educators' Role:** Lecturers must act not only as instructors of dance techniques but also as facilitators who guide students in reflecting upon and internalizing cultural meanings; 3) **Collaboration with Cultural Practitioners:** Engaging local artists and communities in the teaching process strengthens students' cultural immersion and authentic learning experiences; 4) **Technology Integration:** Digital media and online platforms can complement experiential learning, supporting accessibility and sustaining cultural transmission in modern contexts.

Despite its potential, implementing experiential learning in Sundanese dance education faces challenges. First, many educators in higher education may lack training in experiential learning pedagogy, requiring professional development and institutional support. Second, limited facilities, studio spaces, and funding can hinder effective implementation. Third, most existing research focuses on elementary education or community-

based training, leaving a gap in empirical studies within higher education. Therefore, this study emphasizes that applying experiential learning to Sundanese dance education is an innovative pedagogical strategy and a critical approach for cultural sustainability in the face of globalization.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the literature synthesis show that integrating Sundanese cultural values in dance learning through *experiential learning* has significant potential to strengthen students' cultural identities. These findings align with Kolb's (1984) theory, which emphasizes four stages of experiential learning: concrete experience, reflection, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. By applying this framework, students not only play the role of recipients of the material but also as active actors who experience, reflect, and internalize the meaning behind dance movements. This differs from conventional learning models focusing on technique and movement reproduction alone.

Comparison with previous research shows that integrating local cultural values in art learning can increase student engagement and strengthen cultural appreciation. Studies of Sundanese classical dance (Keurseus and Sulintang) and *Benjang Helaran*'s semiotics indicate that each dance movement contains social, spiritual, and moral symbolism. However, these studies are still limited to aesthetics and cultural values, without offering an applicable pedagogical model. This is where the novelty of this research lies, which proposes *experiential learning* as a pedagogical approach that allows students to understand Sundanese culture not only cognitively, but also through reflective and practical experiences.

In addition, integrating digital media in Sundanese dance learning provides innovative opportunities. The use of dance recordings, movement analysis videos, and online learning platforms can expand access while maintaining the relevance of learning to the characteristics of the digital generation. This is consistent with recent findings in arts education that show that technology can enhance the learning experience, as long as it remains grounded in the cultural values being taught. Thus, experiential learning-based Sundanese dance learning can be positioned as a hybrid model that combines local wisdom with technological innovation.

However, the implementation of this model is not free from challenges. First, the readiness of dance lecturers or instructors to understand and apply *experiential learning* is still an important issue. Intensive training and collaboration with local cultural practitioners are necessary to implement this model consistently. Second, the availability of facilities, practice spaces, and policy support for higher education institutions needs to be strengthened so that they do not become obstacles. Third, empirical research at the university level is still limited, so further trials are needed to measure the real impact of this model on cultural understanding, student identity, and the preservation of Sundanese dance. Thus, this discussion emphasizes that experiential learning is an innovative learning strategy and a strategic instrument in preserving local culture in the global era. This article provides a conceptual contribution to the development of dance pedagogy and practical recommendations for universities to make Sundanese culture an integral part of art education.

The results of this study also provide important implications for higher education policy. First, integrating Sundanese cultural values in dance learning through experiential learning can be the basis for preparing a

curriculum based on local culture that is more contextual and relevant to the needs of the times. This is in line with efforts to strengthen national identity while facing the challenges of globalization, which tends to homogenize cultures. Second, universities must develop training and mentoring programs for dance lecturers to be competent in implementing *experiential learning*. A qualified pedagogical capacity will ensure that this approach does not stop at the theoretical level, but is applied consistently in the learning process.

Third, university art education policies should encourage collaboration between academic institutions, local artists, and cultural communities. This collaboration strengthens the relevance of learning and ensures the sustainability of cultural preservation through direct community involvement. Finally, support in funding, provision of practice facilities, and digital technology must be a policy priority. With supportive policies, experiential learning-based Sundanese dance learning can become a globally competitive art education model firmly rooted in local cultural identity.

## CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes that integrating Sundanese cultural values in dance learning through *an experiential learning approach* is an effective strategy to strengthen students' cultural identity while maintaining cultural heritage sustainability in the globalization era. Through concrete experiences, reflection, conceptualization, and active experimentation, students learn dance techniques and internalize the philosophical and moral values of the Sundanese dance movement. The contribution of this research is conceptual and practical. Conceptually, this research expands the understanding of how *experiential learning* can be



a relevant pedagogical model for local culture-based arts education. This study recommends that universities design more contextual curricula, involve cultural communities, and utilize digital media as an innovative means of learning dance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Culture-Based Curriculum Design:** Universities must formulate a dance arts curriculum emphasizing local cultural values as a core learning process.
2. **Lecturer and Instructor Training:** An ongoing training program is needed so that educators can consistently implement experiential learning.
3. **Collaboration with Cultural Communities:** Partnerships between academic institutions, local artists, and the community should be strengthened to enrich students' learning experiences.
4. **Utilization of Digital Media:** Digital technologies such as video documentation, online learning platforms, and interactive simulations must be optimized to support *experiential learning practices*.
5. **Advanced Empirical Research:** Field-based studies are needed to measure the impact of *experiential learning* implementation on Sundanese dance learning, especially in increasing cultural appreciation and student identity formation.

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