



Preserving the Jaran Kepang Dance Based on Local Wisdom in Early Childhood Education Towards a Golden Indonesia 2045

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Abstract

Preserving the Jaran Kepang Dance as a cultural heritage is important for early childhood education (ECD) based on local wisdom. This can help strengthen cultural identity and national character. The research objectives include preservation strategies, integration of dance into the curriculum, internalization of cultural values, support for the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045, and challenges and solutions in ECD education. The research method used a qualitative and ethnographic approach, with observations and interviews in kindergartens and dance studios. The results showed that the preservation of the Jaran Kepang Dance was successful with simplification of movements and parental involvement, and showed that 80% of participants were able to imitate the basic movements after training. Integration into the ECD curriculum was also successful, with 85% of children mastering the core movements well. Values such as togetherness and discipline can be internalized through play activities. However, challenges such as limited teachers and a lack of teaching aids need to be overcome through the creative use of local materials.

Keywords: Preservation, Dance, Education, Early Childhood Education, Local Wisdom

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INTRODUCTION

Background Indonesia has an extraordinary cultural wealth, including a variety of traditional dances that reflect the values, norms, and identity of the community. One such dance is the Jaran Kepang Dance, which has high aesthetic and cultural value [1],[2],[3]. In the context of early childhood education (AUD), it is important to integrate local wisdom as part of the curriculum to build character and cultural identity from an early age. Through the preservation of traditional dances such as the Jaran Kepang Dance, it is hoped that children can appreciate and preserve their cultural heritage [4],[5]. The Vision of Golden Indonesia 2045 aims to create a young generation that is qualified, has character, and has a strong cultural identity [6],[7],[8],[9],[10]. Therefore, a strategy for preserving culture through education based on local wisdom is very important. The integration of cultural values in AUD education will not only enrich children's learning experiences but also strengthen their sense of pride and appreciation for cultural heritage [11],[12],[13],[14].

- Problem Formulation**
1. What is an effective strategy to preserve the Jaran Kepang Dance as a cultural heritage?
 2. How can the Jaran Kepang Dance be integrated into a local wisdom-based early childhood education curriculum?
 3. What values of the Jaran Kepang Dance can be internalized by early childhood children?
 4. What is the role of learning the Jaran Kepang Dance in supporting the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045?
 5. What are the challenges and solutions in implementing the Jaran Kepang Dance preservation strategy in AUD education?

This research aims to identify and develop effective strategies for preserving the Jaran Kepang Dance and integrating it into the Early Childhood Education curriculum. This is expected to support the development of a young generation with character, creativity, and a strong cultural identity, leading to a Golden Indonesia 2045.

Problem Solving Approach, (1) Challenge Identification: Identifying the main challenges in preserving the Jaran Kepang Dance, such as lack of interest from the younger generation,

modernization, and lack of support from the government and society [15],[16]. (2) Collaboration with Stakeholders: Involving various stakeholders, including the government, society, and artists, to support the preservation of the Jaran Kepang Dance. (3) Learning Innovation: Developing innovations in learning the Jaran Kepang Dance by combining modern elements and digital technology to attract the interest of the younger generation. (4) Jaran Kepang Dance Training: Holding training on the Jaran Kepang Dance for kindergarten and early childhood education teachers in collaboration with dance studios [17],[18].

State-of-the-Art (1) Use of Digital Technology [19]: Utilization of digital technology, such as video tutorials and social media, to promote and teach the Jaran Kepang Dance to the younger generation. (2) Multidisciplinary Approach [20]: Combining aspects of art, history, and anthropology in learning to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Jaran Kepang Dance. (3) Project-Based Learning Model [21]: Implementation of a project-based learning model that actively involves students in exploration and research on local arts and culture.

Novelty (1) Integration in Early Childhood Education [21]: Developing a learning model that integrates the Jaran Kepang Dance into the early childhood education curriculum based on local wisdom, which has not been widely implemented before. (2) Innovative Approach [22]: Using an innovative approach in preserving the Jaran Kepang Dance, such as combining modern elements and digital technology, to attract the interest of the younger generation. (3) **Cross-Sector Collaboration** [23]: Encourage collaboration between various disciplines and stakeholders to create more effective and sustainable conservation strategies. With this approach, it is hoped that the Jaran Kepang Dance can be preserved and integrated into early childhood education, thereby supporting the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045.

Research roadmap 2025-2029 for research entitled Strategy for Preserving Jaran Kepang Dance as a Cultural Heritage in Supporting Early Childhood Education Based on Local Wisdom Towards Golden Indonesia 2045:



Year 1 2025:(1) Collecting data on learning activities for the Jaran Kepang Dance in AUD. (2) Identifying the main challenges in preserving the Jaran Kepang Dance through interviews with cultural actors, teachers, and parents. (3) Collecting data on cultural and aesthetic values in the Jaran Kepang Dance through observation, literature studies, and documentation. (4) Developing networks with local stakeholders to support this project.

Year 2 2026:Learning Model Development (1) Developing a local wisdom-based learning model that integrates the Jaran Kepang Dance into the early childhood education (AUD) curriculum. (2) Conducting training for AUD teachers on how to implement this learning model in the classroom. (3) Developing learning materials, including teacher guides, video tutorials, and other teaching materials.

Year 3 2027:Initial Implementation and Evaluation (1) Implement the learning model in several pilot schools to evaluate its effectiveness. (2) Conduct an initial evaluation of the implementation of the learning model, collect feedback from teachers, students, and parents. (3) Based on the evaluation results, make improvements and adjustments to the learning model and teaching materials.

Year 4 2028:Dissemination and Strengthening (1) Expanding the implementation of the learning model to more schools in a wider area. (2) Collaborating with education agencies, cultural institutions, and other organizations to support the preservation of the Jaran Kepang Dance. (3) Organizing a campaign to increase public awareness about the importance of preserving the Jaran Kepang Dance as a cultural heritage.

Year 5 2029:Final Evaluation and Publication (1) Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the program implementation in all schools involved. (2) Publish research results in national and international journals, and compile a final research report. (3) Develop a sustainable strategy for the preservation of the Jaran Kepang Dance and its integration into AUD education in the future.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach to comprehensively

explore the Jaran Kepang Dance. This approach was chosen because of its ability to explore cultural meanings in depth. This study uses a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach to comprehensively explore the Jaran Kepang Dance. The ethnographic approach was chosen because it can reveal the cultural meanings, values, and social practices contained in the dance in depth and contextually. The research was conducted through direct observation in communities or groups that maintain the Jaran Kepang Dance tradition, such as in Central Java and East Java, where this dance is still actively performed in various traditional and religious events. In addition to observation, researchers also conducted in-depth interviews with cultural figures, dance instructors, and dancers to understand their perspectives on the history, philosophy, and function of dance in community life. The collected data were analyzed thematically to identify cultural patterns, symbols in movements, and local values inherited through the dance. With this approach, the research is able to capture social reality holistically, not only as a spectacle, but also as a medium for education, spirituality, and cultural identity. The research results are expected to contribute to the preservation of local culture and the development of learning materials based on local wisdom, particularly in the context of early childhood education and national character.

Participatory Observation. The researcher was directly involved in dance activities for 6 months in traditional East Javanese dance studios, observing the practice process, rituals, and performances. Data were recorded through field notes, photographs, and videos. Participatory observation was one of the main methods in this study, which was conducted for six months in a number of traditional dance studios in East Java that are still actively maintaining and developing the Jaran Kepang Dance. The researcher was directly involved in various activities related to the dance, from the routine practice process, preparation for the performance, to the implementation of the accompanying traditional rituals.

In-depth Interview. Researchers conducted interviews with 15 key informants consisting of senior dancers, dance masters (dance composers or experts), Javanese cultural figures, and early childhood education (PAUD) teachers who have integrated this dance into their learning. Informants were selected purposively to ensure that the informants had extensive experience and knowledge of the dance. The interviews focused on three main aspects: first, the origins and transformation of the Jaran Kepang Dance over time, including changes in its form, function, and performance context. Second, the philosophical values contained in each movement, costume, musical rhythm, and accompanying rituals, such as symbols of courage, discipline, and spiritual balance. Third, an exploration of the social function of dance in contemporary society, both as a medium of entertainment, a spiritual medium, a cultural identity, and an educational tool.

Document Analysis. Examines ancient manuscripts, archival records, and academic literature to trace the development of dance over time. Analysis, with the components of an interactive data model by Miles Huberman (data collection, data reduction, verification/conclusion drawing, data presentation). The purpose of this analysis is to trace the development of dance over time, from its origins as a spiritual and ritual dance form to its transformation in the context of modern performing arts and education.

Ethnographic approach allows a holistic understanding of how the Jaran Kepang Dance functions as: a local knowledge system, a medium for character education, and a community identity. The ethnographic approach in this study allows researchers to delve into the Jaran Kepang Dance holistically, not merely as a performing art, but as a living and breathing cultural entity in Javanese society, particularly in East Java. Through in-depth cultural immersion, researchers reveal how this dance is integrated into various aspects of social life—from traditional rituals to children's character education.

Data triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from the three data collection techniques to ensure validity. Data analysis used thematic coding to identify cultural patterns relevant to early childhood education. Data triangulation was a crucial step in this study to ensure the validity,

credibility, and reliability of the findings. The triangulation process was conducted by comparing and integrating the results of three primary data collection techniques: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. By combining perspectives from dancers, cultural experts, early childhood education teachers, as well as historical and archival data, researchers were able to test the consistency of information and reduce subjective bias. For example, findings from interviews about the philosophical values in the Jaran Kepang dance movements were confirmed through direct observation during rehearsals and performances, and supported by references in traditional manuscripts. This approach strengthened the internal validity of the study and ensured that interpretations of the dance's cultural meaning were based on its full context. Data analysis was conducted using *thematic coding*, namely identifying, categorizing, and coding data based on recurring patterns. Themes such as cooperation, discipline, creative expression, spirituality, and cultural identity were identified as core values relevant to Early Childhood Education (ECD). Each theme was developed through interview excerpts, observation notes, and document citations to build a strong analytical narrative. The results of the thematic analysis were then used as a basis for formulating practical recommendations on the use of the Jaran Kepang Dance as a fun and educational learning medium for developing children's character and cultural intelligence from an early age.

Data triangulation is a crucial methodological foundation in this study to ensure the validity of the findings through the convergence of evidence from various sources. This process was carried out systematically by integrating three main data sources: (1) 6 months of participatory observation in 5 East Javanese dance studios, (2) in-depth interviews with 20 informants (dancers, dance masters, cultural figures, early childhood education teachers, and parents), and (3) critical analysis of 15 historical documents (ancient manuscripts, archival records, and academic literature). This multi-perspective integration enabled the researcher to construct a comprehensive meaning construction while minimizing interpretation bias.



Triangulation Mechanism. A concrete example is seen in the verification of the philosophical values of the movement "*horse*". The informant's claim in the interview that the circular movement symbolizes the cycle of life was validated through: Direct observation of the rite "*cultural noise*" In Wonokitri Village, where dancers circle the village center. References to the Serat Centhini explain circular symbolism in Javanese cosmology. Video documentation from the 1980s demonstrates the consistency of this movement pattern. This type of triangulation (method, source, and theory) enhances credibility by demonstrating consistency across time and context.

Data-Based Thematic Analysis. The validated data was then analyzed using the Braun & Clarke (2006) thematic coding approach through 6 stages: (1) *Familiarization*: Transcription of 40 hours of interviews and 120 field notes (2) *Initial code generation*: Identified 152 codes such as "*gotong royong training*", "*bowing attitude*"

Theme search: Grouping the codes into 5 core themes: (1) Social cohesion (codes: group work, studio solidarity). (2) Ritual discipline (codes: sacred clapping, strict practice times). (3) Creative expression (codes: movement improvisation, personalized costumes). (4) Spirituality (codes: stage offerings, accompanying mantras). (5) Cultural identity (codes: local pride, resistance to globalization) *Theme review*: Mapping relationships between themes using network diagrams. *Definition of theme*: Compose an analytical narrative with the support of key quotes. *Report production*: Connecting thematic with AUD educational framework.

Pedagogical Implications. Thematic findings resulted in operational recommendations for AUD education: (1) Modules "*Dance and Character*" with structured activities 15 minutes/day. (2) Teacher training based on "*ethno-pedagogy*" which combines dance movements with moral values. (3) *Cultural immersion kit* Contains a braided horse doll, simple gamelan audio, and a picture story book.

The analysis shows that 83% of the core values in the Jaran Kepang Dance align with the Early Childhood Education (AUD) development indicators stipulated in Permendikbud No. 137, particularly the socio-emotional and motoric aspects. Expert validation confirms that this triangulation and thematic approach not only

enriches ethnographic research but also offers an applicable cultural transfer model for early childhood education in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The preservation of the Jaran Kepang Dance is effectively carried out through: simplifying movements for early childhood education (AUD), regular performances in schools, and involving parents in cultural workshops. This study revealed that the preservation of the Jaran Kepang Dance among children requires a structured approach, involving various parties, and based on the educational context and social environment. One key finding indicates that simplifying dance movements is an effective step in facilitating students' understanding and mastery of dance, especially those who are just learning it.

Complex movements full of symbolic meaning are adapted without losing their cultural essence, so they remain authentic but are easier for children to learn. Hartono & Wahyu Lestari (2020) explained that preserving the Jaran Kepang Dance, especially among children, requires a planned and comprehensive approach. This approach cannot be carried out partially but must involve various parties, such as teachers, parents, the arts community, as well as the school environment and surrounding community. The goal is to create a learning environment that is contextual and relevant to children's daily lives. In this case, dance learning is not only focused on the movement aspect, but also on the cultural values and character that are intended to be instilled from an early age. One important finding from the study was the strategy of simplifying dance movements.

This approach makes dance not just an artistic expression, but also a medium for character development, aesthetics, and cultural identity. The authenticity of the Jaran Kepang Dance is maintained, albeit in a simpler, more accessible form for children. This allows children to learn about and love their own culture from an early age in a fun, educational, and meaningful way.



Figure 1. Documentation of Jaran Kepang Dance Practice - Wahyu Lestari, July 2025)

Furthermore, regular school performances have proven to be a strategic tool for introducing and

instilling the cultural values of the Jaran Kepang Dance. Through extracurricular activities or school cultural events, students are not merely passive spectators but also directly involved as artists. This active involvement fosters a sense of ownership of local culture. Schools can also collaborate with local traditional dance studios, which not only enriches the variety of performances but also maintains the dance's authenticity and authenticity through the guidance of experienced artists.

Hartono & Wahyu Lestari (2020) noted that children's active involvement in dance preservation activities, particularly the Jaran Kepang Dance, fosters a sense of belonging to local culture. This involvement occurs not only through dance practice in class but also through various supporting activities, such as performances, competitions, and participation in cultural activities in the community. Through this involvement, children begin to view traditional culture not merely as entertainment, but as part of their own identity, worthy of pride and preservation.

In addition, in the article *Strategies for Cultivating Cultural Literacy and Creativity in Early Childhood* (Hartono et al., 2022), dance learning is said to instill a stronger appreciation of culture when the process extends beyond the classroom to the home environment. Children's understanding of regional movements and songs increases when there is repetition and participation with the

family. This research also supports this finding. *Offerings as a Ritual Performance of Indonesian Dance* (Hartono et al., 2021) stated that cultural education through folk performances such as the Jaran Kepang Dance has high spiritual and social value, and the involvement of families, especially parents, is a medium for intergenerational cultural transmission. Finally, in the article *Kuda Lumping Dance as Learning Media* (Hartono & Restu Lanjari, 2018), it is stated that children show better aesthetic expression when they receive emotional and social support from their surroundings, including from their parents.

From these various references, it can be concluded that cultural workshops involving parents are a form of educational practice that not only strengthens the symbolic and historical understanding of the Jaran Kepang Dance, but also strengthens family ties and supports the sustainable preservation of culture in the home environment. Based on the existing literature review, cultural workshops involving parents have proven to be an effective educational method that not only deepens the symbolic meaning and historical value of the Jaran Kepang Dance, but also strengthens relationships between family members while becoming the foundation for



preserving cultural heritage at the domestic level.

Figure 1. Explaining the Jaran Kepang Dance Training Process - Wahyu Lestari, May 2025)

Participatory workshops with a family (parent-child) approach in the context of traditional arts have proven successful in transforming cultural learning into a meaningful,



emotional experience. In the case of the Jaran Kepang Dance, this not only teaches dance techniques but also fosters pride in cultural roots and a commitment to preserving them in everyday life. Collaboration between cultural institutions and families through these workshops creates a domino effect: children understand their ancestral heritage, parents revitalize their role as transmitters of traditional values, and the family as a whole becomes an active agent in the chain of community-based cultural preservation.

Previous studies have shown that holding culture-based workshops, particularly those involving parents, constitutes a holistic learning approach (Sujana, 2020). In addition to instilling an understanding of the philosophy and origins of the Jaran Kepang Dance, these activities also serve as a means of strengthening family relationships and a concrete effort to maintain traditions within the household (Hidayah et al., 2019). The integration of parents in cultural workshops such as the Jaran Kepang Dance has a multidimensional impact: the educational aspect is reflected in the exploration of cultural values and history (Purnomo, 2021), while the social aspect is evident in the establishment of family harmony (UNESCO, 2018). Thus, these activities serve as a sustainable strategy for maintaining cultural identity amidst the tide of modernization. Analysis of various sources reveals that parental involvement in traditional arts workshops such as the Jaran Kepang Dance not only transfers symbolic knowledge between generations but also builds collective memory that strengthens family cohesion and ensures the regeneration of cultural actors in the future (Assmann, 2008; Wulandari, 2022).

Collaboration between cultural institutions and families through workshops like this creates a domino effect: children understand their ancestral heritage, parents revitalize their role as transmitters of traditional values, and the family as a whole becomes an active agent in the chain of community-based cultural preservation (Nastiti, 2017).

By combining the three strategies of movement simplification, school performances, and parental involvement, the preservation of the Jaran Kepang Dance can be carried out sustainably. This effort demonstrates that cultural

preservation is not only the responsibility of indigenous communities but also requires synergy between schools, families, and the community. By combining the three strategies of movement simplification, school performances, and parental involvement, the preservation of the Jaran Kepang Dance can be carried out sustainably. Wulandari's (2022) research proves that simplifying complex dance movements to make them easier to learn can increase the interest and participation of the younger generation by up to 40%. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education and Culture's (2020) program shows that school performances play a crucial role as a medium for appreciation and direct practice, while also integrating cultural arts into the educational curriculum.

Research proves that the Jaran Kepang Dance can be adapted for early childhood education through three strategies: (1) simplifying the movements into 5 basic elements (jumping, spinning, stamping, stepping, and imitating horse movements), (2) packaging it in thematic play activities (such as "The Adventures of Kuda Lumping"), and (3) using folk tales as an introduction to learning (Wulandari, 2023).

Recent findings demonstrate the effectiveness of adapting the Jaran Kepang Dance for early childhood education through three key strategies. First, simplifying the movements into five basic elements (jumping, spinning, stamping, stepping, and imitating horse movements) that are suited to the motor skills of preschool children (Wulandari, 2023; Dewi & Santoso, 2022). Second, packaging it in thematic play activities such as "The Adventures of Kuda Lumping" increases learning engagement (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022; Purnomo, 2021). Third, using folklore as an introduction to learning enriches the cultural context (Hidayati, 2020; UNESCO, 2019). An eight-week longitudinal study in Central Java showed that this combination of strategies resulted in an 85% mastery rate of the movements with significant cultural memory retention (Wulandari, 2023).

Early childhood education demonstrates that adapting the Jaran Kepang Dance can be an innovative and effective approach to learning at the preschool level. This approach not only hones children's motor skills but also introduces cultural values in a fun way. Its effectiveness is

demonstrated through the implementation of three complementary strategies. First, the complex dance movements are simplified into five basic movements appropriate for the motor development stage of children aged 4–6 years: jumping, spinning, stomping, regular steps, and imitating horse movements. This simplification allows children to imitate the movements more easily and confidently, while also improving body coordination and balance (Wulandari, 2023; Dewi & Santoso, 2022).

Early childhood education continues to innovate in learning methods that are not only educational, but also fun and culturally relevant. One approach that shows great potential is the adaptation of the Jaran Kepang Dance as a learning medium in early childhood education. This approach successfully combines physical aspects, creativity, and cultural preservation in one integrated activity.

An eight-week longitudinal study in several kindergartens in Central Java demonstrated that the combination of these three strategies increased movement mastery by up to 85%, while strengthening memory retention of traditional cultural values. Thus, the adaptation of the Jaran Kepang Dance has proven to be a holistic learning method that combines physical, cognitive, and cultural aspects in a fun environment for young children. Implementation demonstrated that children were able to master the three core movements (jumping, spinning, and stamping) with a high level of enthusiasm. This approach not only preserves culture but also develops gross motor skills, coordination, and an understanding of local values from an early age.

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Early childhood education continues to innovate in learning methods that are not only educational, but also fun and culturally relevant. One approach that shows great potential is the

adaptation of the Jaran Kepang Dance as a learning medium in early childhood education (PAUD). This approach successfully combines physical aspects, creativity, and cultural preservation in one integrated activity. In addition to being effective in training children's movement coordination and gross motor development, this dance also serves as an engaging means of introducing local cultural heritage from an early age. The success of its implementation is supported by three main interrelated strategies. The first strategy is simplifying the initially complex dance movements into five basic movements appropriate for the abilities of children aged 4–6 years: jumping, spinning, stomping, rhythmic stepping, and imitating horse movements. This adaptation makes it easier for children to understand and imitate the movements, while also increasing their confidence during participation (Wulandari, 2023; Dewi &



Santoso, 2022).

Figure 3. The Training Process of Jaran Kepang Dance - Wahyu Lestari, May 2025)

These movements not only train balance and muscle strength but also stimulate sensorimotor integration, which is crucial for child development. With an approach tailored to children's developmental stages, the Jaran Kepang Dance is no longer simply a traditional dance but rather a relevant and inclusive educational tool. Through a fun learning process, children are not only physically active but also begin to recognize cultural symbols, such as the horse's significance as a symbol of courage and discipline. Thus, this dance adaptation demonstrates that cultural education can be effectively implemented at an



early age, in line with the principle of play-based learning.

The learning process is packaged in the form of thematic play activities, such as "The Adventures of Kuda Lumping," which creates an interactive and enjoyable learning environment. With a playful approach, children not only learn physical movements but also engage emotionally and cognitively, significantly increasing their engagement (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022; Purnomo, 2021).



Figure 4. The Training Process of Jaran Kepang Dance - Wahyu Lestari, May 2025)

The success of this adaptation depends heavily on a commitment to the principle of inclusion, where every child, including those with special needs, is given equal opportunities to participate. Systemic support from various parties is key, ranging from teachers trained in culture-based learning approaches, educational institutions that provide adequate facilities and infrastructure, to the active involvement of local communities such as art studios and traditional artists. This collaboration not only enriches learning content but also strengthens a sense of belonging to local culture from an early age.

The Jaran Kepang dance, a Javanese cultural heritage, offers a rich educational dimension for developing the character of early childhood. This traditional art form not only showcases the beauty of movement and music, but also philosophically embodies noble values relevant to the development of a child's personality. Research by Suryaningsih (2022) in the *Journal of Early Childhood Education* revealed that the values of togetherness, discipline, and creativity in the Jaran Kepang dance can be effectively internalized through learning methods appropriate to the developmental characteristics of early childhood education.

The process of internalizing the value of togetherness can be developed through group role-playing in the context of this traditional dance. Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism emphasizes that social interaction is an important foundation in children's learning processes. When children role-play as dancers, musicians, or members of an audience, they indirectly learn about cooperation, mutual respect, and collective responsibility. Johnson and Johnson (1999) in their research on cooperative learning found that group activities in the performing arts can improve children's social-emotional abilities. In the Jaran Kepang Dance, children must work together to create harmony in movement and music, which naturally teaches the value of togetherness.

The value of creativity in the Jaran Kepang Dance is developed through two main approaches. First, through singing with lyrics containing cultural values. Gardner (1983), in his theory of multiple intelligences, explains that music and movement are highly effective media for stimulating children's creativity. Research by Hapsari (2021) found that the combination of traditional singing and dance movements can enhance imagination and expressive abilities in early childhood. Second, despite its standard movement patterns, the Jaran Kepang Dance still provides space for children to express themselves creatively by interpreting the movements and characters of the characters.

Implementing the teaching of the Jaran Kepang Dance values for Early Childhood Education (ECE) requires a fun and contextual approach. In accordance with the principles of early childhood education, the internalization of values must be carried out through play and direct experience. Teachers or educators can design activities that integrate elements of the Jaran Kepang Dance with children's daily activities. For example, transforming dance movements into physical games, inserting cultural values through storytelling before dance practice, or inviting children to make simple dance props. This approach aligns with the findings of Pramling and Pramling Samuelsson (2011) that learning is most effective for ECE when conducted in the context of meaningful play.

Group role-playing helps children understand the value of togetherness. By acting as dancers or musicians, children learn to work together, respect the roles of their peers, and achieve common goals. Songs with lyrics embodying cultural values make it easier for children to remember moral messages. The melody and repetition of lyrics about cooperation or discipline make learning more engaging. The practice of repetitive movements in the Jaran Kepang Dance fosters discipline and perseverance. Children learn to follow the rules of the movements consistently, while also honing creativity through self-expression. Internalization of Jaran Kepang Dance Values in Early Childhood Through Role-Play, Songs, and Repetitive Movements. The Jaran Kepang Dance, as a traditional Javanese art, has proven effective in instilling character values in early childhood. Research by Suryaningsih (2022) in the *Journal of Early Childhood Education* shows that there are three main methods that can be used to internalize the noble values of this dance: group role-playing, cultural songs, and repetitive movement practices.

First, group role-playing has been shown to help children deeply understand the value of togetherness. According to research by Johnson and Johnson (1999) in their book "Learning Together and Alone," when children play the roles of dancers or musicians in a group, they naturally learn to cooperate and respect each other's roles. Vygotsky (1978) in "Mind in Society" also emphasized that social interaction in group activities like this helps children develop important social skills. Recent research by Hapsari (2021) found that children involved in traditional dance role-playing showed significant improvements in collaboration and empathy compared to a control group. Second, the use of songs with lyrics containing cultural values has been shown to be effective in instilling moral messages. Gardner (1983), in his theory of Multiple Intelligences, explained that music is a powerful medium for early childhood learning. Research by Pramling and Pramling Samuelsson (2011) showed that melodies and repetition of lyrics about values such as cooperation or discipline make the learning process more engaging and memorable for children. In the context of the Jaran Kepang Dance, the traditional

songs that accompany the dance serve not only as musical accompaniment but also as a medium for conveying noble Javanese cultural values. Third, the practice of repetitive movements in the Jaran Kepang Dance has the dual benefit of cultivating discipline while developing creativity. Montessori (1949) in "The Absorbent Mind" emphasized the importance of repetition in early childhood learning. Research by Lestari (2020) specifically observed that repetitive movements in traditional dance can improve children's ability to follow rules and develop perseverance. Furthermore, despite its structured movements, the Jaran Kepang Dance still provides space for children to express themselves creatively, as found in Hapsari's research (2021).

Implementing these three methods in early childhood education settings requires an appropriate approach. Research by Suryaningsih (2022) suggests that role-playing activities be designed in stages, starting with simple roles before progressing to more complex levels. For cultural songs, Pramling and Pramling Samuelsson (2011) recommend using songs with simple lyrics but containing a clear moral message. Meanwhile, in the practice of repetitive movements, Lestari (2020) emphasizes the importance of appreciating children's efforts, even if they are not perfect, to build intrinsic motivation. From a neuroscience perspective, Posner et al. (2008) found in their research that the combination of movement, music, and social interaction, as found in the Jaran Kepang Dance, can stimulate optimal brain development in children. These activities develop not only the motoric areas but also the social-emotional and cognitive areas of the brain. Overall, internalizing the values of the Jaran Kepang Dance through these three methods offers a holistic educational approach for early childhood. As shown in various studies, this approach is not only effective in instilling character values, but also in preserving cultural heritage while developing various aspects of child development in a balanced manner.

According to Suryaningsih (2022), the lyrics in the Jaran Kepang Dance music are effective because they align with the characteristics of Early Childhood Education (AUD) who learn through play and direct experience. Thus, the Jaran



Kepang Dance not only preserves culture but also serves as a medium for character formation in children from an early age. According to Suryaningsih's (2022) research, the lyrics in the Jaran Kepang Dance music are highly effective because they are tailored to the needs of AUD who tend to learn concretely through play activities. Through direct experience, children not only appreciate traditional art but also internalize cultural values. Thus, the Jaran Kepang Dance plays a dual role as a means of preserving local heritage as well as a tool for character development in early childhood. The interaction between movement, music, and the meaning of the lyrics creates a holistic and enjoyable learning process for AUD.

The role of lyrics in the Jaran Kepang Dance as a learning medium for developing the character of early childhood children. According to Suryaningsih's (2022) research published in the *Journal of Early Childhood Education*, the lyrics or poetry accompanying the Jaran Kepang Dance music are highly effective in the learning process of early childhood children because they align with the characteristics of early childhood children who learn naturally through play and direct experience. This finding aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) theory on the importance of contextual learning and scaffolding in child development.

Suryaningsih (2022) explains that the lyrics in the Jaran Kepang Dance have several pedagogical advantages. First, the rhymed and rhythmic structure of the lyrics makes it easier for children to remember the moral values contained within. This is supported by research by Pramling and Pramling Samuelsson (2011), which shows that rhythmic linguistic patterns are more easily absorbed by the memory of young children. Second, traditional Javanese lyrics in the Jaran Kepang Dance typically use metaphors and stories familiar to children, making it easier to understand abstract concepts such as togetherness and discipline.

Sair Jaran Kepang (example of traditional lyrics)

Jaranan jaranan jaranan buto
The rider became a motorcycle rider
Reaching for the sky does not feel
The horses are galloping
Walking does not feel good

Carried away to heaven

Recent research by Hapsari (2021) corroborates Suryaningsih's findings by showing that the combination of dance, music, and poetry creates an ideal multisensory experience for early childhood learning. In her study, Hapsari found that children learning through this approach showed a 40% increase in their understanding of moral values compared to conventional methods. Furthermore, Suryaningsih (2022) emphasized that the effectiveness of poetry in the Jaran Kepang Dance is inseparable from its cultural aspects. According to her, poetry serves as a bridge between traditional values and children's contemporary contexts. This opinion is reinforced by Gardner (1983), who stated that traditional arts are an ideal medium for developing children's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.

A practical implementation of these findings, as explained by Suryaningsih (2022), is to integrate the Jaran Kepang Dance lyrics into children's play activities. For example, teachers can create games that involve reciting the lyrics while performing simple movements, or invite children to create variations of the lyrics with the same values but in a contemporary context. Thus, as Suryaningsih (2022) concluded, the Jaran Kepang Dance, through its lyrics, not only functions as a means of cultural preservation but also as an effective medium for character formation from an early age. These findings provide a strong foundation for educators to further utilize traditional arts in the character development of early childhood education.



Figure 5 Children dancing while singing song lyrics
(Wahyu Lestari: June 2025)

Internalization of Jaran Kepang Dance Values in Early Childhood, based on various research and

theoretical studies, it can be concluded that Jaran Kepang Dance is an effective medium for internalizing noble values in early childhood. Suryaningsih's (2022) research proves that the values of togetherness, discipline, and creativity in this traditional Javanese dance can be optimally absorbed by AUD through three main approaches. First, group role-playing that develops the value of togetherness, as emphasized by Johnson and Johnson (1999) about the importance of cooperative learning. Second, *sair* or traditional songs that contain moral messages, in accordance with Gardner's (1983) findings on musical intelligence in children. Third, repetition of dance movements that train discipline, in line with Montessori's (1949) principles on habit formation.

This internalization process is successful due to several key factors. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning through traditional arts such as the Jaran Kepang Dance aligns with a child's zone of proximal development. Research by Hapsari (2021) adds that the combination of movement, music, and storytelling in this dance creates an ideal multisensory learning experience for children with AUD. Furthermore, Lestari (2020) found that a play-while-learning approach in traditional arts increases children's intrinsic motivation to absorb moral values.

The internalization of noble values through the Jaran Kepang Dance in early childhood is successful due to several key, complementary factors. Based on Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), learning through traditional arts such as the Jaran Kepang Dance has the advantage of being within the range of abilities that children can achieve with the guidance of adults or more capable peers. In the context of this traditional dance, children not only learn physical movements but also absorb the cultural values contained within them through a natural scaffolding process. Recent research by Suryaningsih (2023) supports these findings by showing that social interactions in dance groups create an optimal learning environment for early childhood to understand abstract concepts such as cooperation and discipline.

Another important factor is the multisensory aspect of the Jaran Kepang Dance. As demonstrated in Hapsari's (2021) research, the combination of movement, music, and folklore in

this dance creates a learning experience that engages multiple senses simultaneously. This multisensory approach aligns with the holistic and concrete learning characteristics of Early Childhood Education (AUD). Gardner (2011), in developing his theory of multiple intelligences, emphasized that simultaneous stimulation of multiple senses can strengthen memory traces and conceptual understanding in children. In the Jaran Kepang Dance practice, children not only hear music and lyrics but also feel their own body movements and see the visualization of the story through dance movements, thus creating a more meaningful learning experience. Intrinsic motivation is also a determining factor in the successful internalization of these values. Lestari's (2020) research found that a play-while-learning approach to traditional arts significantly increases children's active engagement in the learning process. Montessori (2012), in her educational principles, emphasized that activities involving children's natural movement and play are more effective in instilling values than direct instructional methods. In the context of the Jaran Kepang Dance, the elements of play and imagination contained in the folklore that accompanies the dance create a fun learning atmosphere without pressure, so that children are more open to absorbing the moral values taught.

Local cultural factors also play a significant role in this internalization process. According to research by Damayanti (2022), learning based on a culture familiar to children is more easily accepted because it aligns with their existing cognitive schema. The Jaran Kepang dance, as a Javanese cultural heritage, embodies values that are already part of the social environment in which children grow up, making the internalization process more natural. Bruner (1996), in his theory of culture and education, asserts that learning related to a child's cultural context is more meaningful and long-lasting in memory.

Furthermore, repetition plays a crucial role in the Jaran Kepang Dance. Research by Wijaya (2021) shows that repetitive movement patterns in traditional dances help strengthen memory traces and form habits in early childhood. Skinner's (1953) behaviorist principles on the importance of reinforcement through repetition are relevant in



this context, as repeated dance movements help internalize the values they contain.

Finally, positive emotional factors that emerge during the dance learning process also contribute to successful internalization. Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory suggests that positive emotions can broaden thinking patterns and build lasting psychological resources. The enjoyable experience of dancing with friends creates a strong emotional memory associated with the positive values taught through the dance. Considering these key factors, it's understandable why the Jaran Kepang Dance is an effective medium for internalizing noble values in early childhood. This holistic, contextual, and enjoyable approach offers a character education model that is appropriate to the developmental stage of early childhood while preserving local cultural heritage.

The pedagogical implications of these findings are significant. As suggested by Pramling and Pramling Samuelsson (2011), educators need to design dance activities that are integrated with everyday play activities. Suryaningsih (2022) recommends modifying the movements and lyrics to suit the contemporary context, without losing the essence of the cultural values contained within. Thus, the Jaran Kepang Dance serves not only as a cultural heritage but also as a relevant character education medium for early childhood. This traditional arts approach offers a holistic solution that simultaneously integrates motoric, cognitive, socio-emotional, and moral development. These findings open up opportunities for the development of other local wisdom-based learning models that are appropriate to the characteristics and needs of early childhood.

3.4 The Role of Jaran Kepang Dance Learning in Supporting the Vision of Golden Indonesia 2045.

The study related to the learning of Jaran Kepang Dance in AUD contributes to the Vision of Golden Indonesia 2045 by: forming a character of love for local culture from an early age, developing social competence through collaboration in dancing, and training creativity as the basis for 21st century skills. The implementation of the program shows the active participation of children in cultural arts activities.

Real Implementation of Jaran Kepang Dance in PAUD Central Java for Golden Indonesia 2045, the results of the research study that, Central Java consistently implements Jaran Kepang Dance learning in PAUD as a concrete effort to support the Vision of Golden Indonesia 2045. Data from the Provincial Education Office in 2023 recorded that 423 PAUDs in 35 districts/cities have integrated this traditional dance in the learning curriculum. Boyolali Regency is one of the pioneers with the "Jaranan Cilik" program involving 78 PAUDs, where 85% of students are able to mention at least 3 cultural values in the dance. Surakarta City regularly holds the Jaran Kepang Children's Festival which is attended by 120 PAUDs every year, with an assessment system that emphasizes aspects of cultural appreciation.

Based on various field studies, Central Java has made the Jaran Kepang Dance an effective medium in preparing the golden generation of 2045 through early childhood education. Facts show that by 2023, as many as 423 PAUD institutions throughout the province had officially incorporated this traditional art into their learning curriculum. Boyolali Regency emerged as a pilot area with the flagship initiative "Jaranan Cilik" which was successfully implemented in 78 PAUDs, with an impressive achievement where 85% of children participating in the program were able to identify at least three cultural values contained in the dance.

Surakarta City also holds the annual Jaran Kepang Children's Festival, consistently attended by 120 early childhood education (PAUD) schools. This cultural event is specifically designed with a comprehensive assessment system that emphasizes not only dance technique but also the appreciation and appreciation of local wisdom. Data from the Central Java Provincial Education Office in 2023 revealed that such programs have had a significant impact on developing children's character from an early age. The implementation of the Jaran Kepang Dance in Central Java's PAUDs is not merely an ordinary extracurricular activity but has become a systematic movement integrated with the vision of human resource development. Various indicators show that this approach through traditional arts has succeeded in instilling the noble values of Javanese culture while developing children's social skills. This

success is evident in the increasing enthusiasm of students year after year, as well as the full support of various stakeholders at the regional level. Through these structured programs, the city has demonstrated its commitment to preserving cultural heritage and utilizing it as a medium for character education.

Learning the Jaran Kepang Dance in early childhood education (PAUD) not only serves to preserve tradition but also serves as a valuable investment in developing a golden generation of Indonesia with strong character and cultural insight. In developing social competencies, Semarang State Kindergarten reported a 78% increase in children's cooperation skills after participating in the "Dancing Together" program for 6 months. Klaten Regency implemented the innovative "Pair Dance" model in 45 PAUDs, which successfully reduced egocentric behavior by 65%. Observations at Pekalongan Regency PAUDs showed that children who regularly practice dance have three times more positive interactions with their peers. To hone creativity, Semarang Regency held a "Jaran Kepang Movement Creation" competition that resulted in 32 new movement variations that are safe for early childhood education (AUD), while PAUDs in Magelang developed a "Dance and Story" module that encourages children to create narratives to accompany the movements.

The Impact of Jaran Kepang Dance Learning on the Social Development and Creativity of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) in Central Java, by referring to various innovations in Jaran Kepang Dance learning in Central Java, has shown real results in the development of children's social competence. Pembina State Kindergarten Semarang recorded a significant progress of 78% in children's cooperation skills after implementing the "Dancing Together" program for one semester. Klaten Regency successfully developed a "Pair Dance" model that was implemented in 45 PAUDs, with encouraging results in the form of a 65% decrease in egocentric behavior in students. Similar findings were also seen in PAUD Pekalongan Regency, where children who regularly practice dance showed a frequency of positive interactions that was three times higher than before participating in the program.

In the area of creativity development, Semarang Regency held a "Jaran Kepang Movement Creation" competition that successfully collected 32 new movement innovations tailored to the abilities of early childhood. Meanwhile, a PAUD in Magelang created a breakthrough through the "Dance and Story" module that combines elements of movement with storytelling skills, encouraging children to create creative narratives to accompany the dance. These various programs not only improve fine and gross motor skills but also train divergent and collaborative thinking skills in students. The implementation of the Jaran Kepang Dance in various regions of Central Java proves the effectiveness of traditional art as a holistic learning medium. This approach successfully integrates character development, social skills, and creativity in one package of fun activities for children. Field data shows that learning methods through traditional dance are more easily accepted by children because they are concrete and involve all the senses, while maintaining elements of local culture rich in noble values.

Despite positive progress, the program's implementation still faces several challenges. Only 38% of early childhood education centers (PAUD) in Central Java have certified dance teachers, and only 15% of inclusive PAUDs are able to adapt movements for children with special needs. To address this, various regional innovations have emerged, such as the "Jaran Kepang Mini Dance" in Wonosobo, which uses small props, and collaboration with a local studio in Salatiga for weekly teacher training. The Central Java Education Office also launched the "Jateng Cilik Ngangsu Kawruh" program (2022-2024), which has trained 1,200 PAUD teachers and distributed 450 packages of simple dance equipment. The results were seen in the pilot PAUD in Demak, where 88% of children demonstrated cultural respect, 75% improved social skills, and 62% were more creative in completing daily tasks. Through these systematic efforts, Central Java demonstrated its commitment to making the Jaran Kepang Dance a strategic medium for developing a golden generation of character, collaborative, and innovative children.

The Role of Jaran Kepang Dance Learning in Supporting the Vision of Golden Indonesia



2045, that Jaran Kepang Dance learning activities in Early Childhood (AUD) have a strategic role in supporting the achievement of the Vision of Golden Indonesia 2045, which aims to create a superior, character-based, and globally competitive generation. Research by Kurniawan (2023) in the Journal of Education and Culture shows that introducing traditional arts from an early age can form a strong foundation of character, while preserving cultural heritage as a national identity. Jaran Kepang Dance, as part of Javanese local wisdom, not only teaches aesthetic movements but also instills the values of togetherness, discipline, and quality creativity that are in line with the profile of Pancasila Students to be achieved within the framework of national education (Kemendikbud, 2021).

Learning the Jaran Kepang Dance for preschoolers is a strategic means of realizing the Golden Indonesia 2045 Vision by developing a generation with character and competitiveness. Kurniawan's (2023) study proves that traditional arts such as the Jaran Kepang Dance can build strong character while preserving cultural identity. As a Javanese cultural heritage, this dance teaches the values of togetherness, discipline, and creativity, which align with the Pancasila Student Profile (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021). Through its aesthetic movements and philosophical values, the Jaran Kepang Dance is an effective medium for instilling the foundation of character from an early age.

Figure 5. The Training Process of Jaran Kepang Dance - Wahyu Lestari, May 2025)

Figure 6. The Training Process of Jaran Kepang Dance - Wahyu Lestari, May 2025)

The Contribution of Jaran Kepang Dance Learning in Realizing the Golden Generation of 2045 It is inevitable that Jaran Kepang Dance learning activities for Early Childhood (AUD) have important significance in the framework of realizing the Vision of Golden Indonesia 2045 which aims to create a generation of quality, integrity, and able to compete in the international arena. A study conducted by Hadiana (2023) in the Journal of Educational Sciences revealed that traditional arts activities such as the Jaran Kepang Dance can foster a love of local culture while



forming a strong personality from an early age. This dance art does not only train body movements, but also becomes an effective medium for instilling noble values such as mutual cooperation, responsibility, and innovation - fundamental aspects that are in line with the concept of Freedom to Learn initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2022).

Recent research by Dewi (2023) shows that the implementation of the Jaran Kepang Dance in early childhood education has a multidimensional impact. First, from a cultural perspective, this activity successfully increased children's awareness of the richness of Nusantara traditions by 65% based on observations at 15 PAUDs in Central Java. Second, in the socio-emotional realm, there was a 72% increase in teamwork skills after participating in the dance program for six months. Third, in the cognitive aspect, children showed significant development in creativity in solving simple problems.

According to child education expert Prof. Suryanto (2023), the Jaran Kepang Dance contains five main elements of character education: (1) discipline through regular practice, (2) cooperation in coordinating movements, (3) creativity in self-expression, (4) mental resilience through mastering difficult movements, and (5) respect for ancestral heritage. These five elements comprehensively support the formation of the Pancasila Student Profile which is the main goal of national education. The implementation of this program in various regions has shown encouraging results. Data from the East Java Provincial Education Office (2023) noted that 82% of PAUDs that integrated the Jaran Kepang Dance

into their curriculum reported an increase in children's enthusiasm for learning. In addition, 76% of parents stated that their children became more confident and able to work together with their peers after participating in this traditional dance activity.

From a long-term perspective, cultivating traditional arts from an early age will create a generation that not only masters science and technology but also possesses strong cultural roots. As emphasized in the 2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan, strengthening character education through local wisdom is a key strategy for preparing superior human resources in the era of globalization. Thus, the Jaran Kepang Dance is not merely an artistic activity, but a valuable investment in realizing the ideals of Golden Indonesia 2045.

First, fostering a love of local culture from an early age. Learning the Jaran Kepang Dance fosters pride and love for local culture in children, which is an important foundation for facing the challenges of globalization. According to Suharto (2022) in his book (*Culture-Based Character Education*), children who are actively involved in traditional arts tend to have a greater appreciation for diversity and cultural resilience. This aligns with the findings of Pratiwi (2023) who conducted a study in early childhood education (PAUD) in Central Java, where children who regularly practiced the Jaran Kepang Dance demonstrated a higher level of appreciation for regional arts compared to the control group. The "Dance Enters PAUD" program initiated by the Yogyakarta Education Office (2023) also demonstrated that early cultural exposure can mitigate the impact of cultural identity erosion due to global influences.

Second, developing Social Competence Through Collaboration. The Jaran Kepang Dance teaches children to work together in groups, both as dancers and musicians. Research by Rohmani (2023) in (*the Journal of Early Childhood Education*) found that collaborative activities in traditional performing arts improve communication skills, empathy, and conflict resolution in AUD. This is reinforced by Bandura's (1986) theory on social learning, which emphasizes that social interactions in group activities help children internalize positive values. The implementation of a dance program at TK

Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta (2023) showed that children's participation in the Jaran Kepang Dance not only improves motor skills but also strengthens social bonds between peers. *Strengthening Social Competence Through a Collaborative Approach*. The Jaran Kepang Dance creates a social interaction space where children learn to coordinate as dancers, musicians, and active audiences. Rohmani's (2023) study in the *Journal of Early Childhood Education* proved that participation in traditional performing arts significantly honed the abilities of AUD in: (1) nonverbal communication through movement and expression, (2) empathy by understanding the roles of group members, and (3) negotiation when resolving differences of opinion during practice. These findings are in line with Bandura's (1986) social learning theory which states that observational learning in a group context accelerates the internalization of values such as tolerance and responsibility. Empirical evidence from the implementation of the program at the Pembina State Kindergarten in Yogyakarta (2023) revealed that children involved in the Jaran Kepang Dance not only showed increased synchronization of movement (motor aspects), but also formed peer bonds through activities such as sharing dance props and correcting each other's movements. This process shows how traditional arts function as a social laboratory for AUD to practice life skills in a natural and enjoyable way.

Third, foster creativity as a foundation for 21st-century skills. Creativity is a key competency in navigating the era of technological disruption. According to Amabile (2018) (*in The Creativity Context*), arts activities such as dance stimulate divergent thinking, the ability to generate innovative solutions. The Jaran Kepang dance, with its flexible movements and adaptive storytelling, provides space for children to explore. Research by Sari (2023) in an inclusive early childhood education (PAUD) in East Java showed that children involved in traditional dance creativity scored higher on simple problem-solving tests. The "Kreasi Tari Anak" (Children's Dance Creation) program, initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2023), also recorded a significant increase in creative thinking skills in early childhood education (AUD) after six months of



training. These three factors emphasize the importance of fostering creativity as a foundation for future skills. In the dynamic digital era, creativity is an essential competency. Amabile's (2018) research in *The Creativity Context* revealed that performing arts such as dance effectively stimulate divergent thinking—the ability to generate diverse, original ideas. The Jaran Kepang dance, with its dynamic movement patterns and open-ended storyline, encourages early childhood education (ECE) to experiment with various movements. Sari's (2023) findings in an inclusive early childhood education (PAUD) in East Java demonstrated that participation in traditional dance improved children's problem-solving skills by 23%. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology's "Children's Dance Creation" program (2023) reinforced this finding, demonstrating significant improvements in fluency and flexibility of thinking after dance-based interventions.

3.5 Challenges and Solutions in Implementing Jaran Kepang Dance Preservation Strategies in Early Childhood Education

The main challenges due to the limitations of teachers in mastering dance movements, the short attention span of AUD, and the lack of props, require the use of creative properties from local materials. In detail, some of the challenges in efforts to preserve the Jaran Kepang dance in AUD education are: First, the limited ability of teachers to master dance movements, the short duration of children's attention or endurance, and the lack of availability of props. Second, the lack of teacher training for dance movements so that teacher abilities are not optimal, low concentration of children, and limited learning support facilities. Third, most teachers experience difficulties in implementing the Jaran Kepang Dance in AUD due to the lack of understanding of dance movements, the characteristics of AUD which are easily distracted. Fourth, limited teacher competency, in general, the low level of concentration of early childhood children.

Efforts to preserve the Jaran Kepang Dance in Early Childhood Education (AUD) face various multidimensional challenges, especially related to the limited competence of teachers in mastering dance movements which is often caused by a lack

of special training, so that many educators only rely on basic knowledge without a deep understanding of the techniques and philosophy of this traditional dance. On the other hand, the characteristics of AUD who have a short attention span and are easily distracted require a creative and interactive learning approach, while the limited availability of props that suit the needs of children further complicates the process of introducing the dance. The challenges are further complicated by the limited learning support facilities such as original dance properties, appropriate accompanying music, and adequate space for movement, coupled with the low concentration of early childhood children who require special game-based teaching methods.

Another fundamental problem is the lack of integration between the Early Childhood Education curriculum and local traditional arts content, so that the Jaran Kepang Dance is often taught incidentally without a sustainable program, not to mention the minimal collaboration between educational institutions and dance studios or cultural preservation communities that could actually be strategic partners in developing teacher capacity. All of these challenges are interrelated and create a vicious circle that if not immediately addressed will threaten the sustainability of the preservation of the Jaran Kepang Dance through formal education, so a comprehensive solution is needed that touches on aspects of improving teacher competency, developing innovative learning media, adapting teaching methods to the characteristics of Early Childhood Education, and building strategic networks with stakeholders in the cultural field.

The following are solutions in implementing the Jaran Kepang dance preservation strategy in Early Childhood Education (AUD) education for each of these challenges, which are arranged systematically and practically as follows. The solution to the first challenge related to the limitations of teachers, the duration of children's attention, & the lack of teaching aids, is needed: (1) teacher training: holding collaborative workshops with Jaran Kepang artists or traditional dance trainers to improve mastery of the movements. (2) Interactive learning: dividing dance sessions into short

sections (5-10 minutes) interspersed with games or songs to suit the concentration of Early Childhood Education (AUD). (3) Creative properties: utilizing local materials (cloth, wood, or weaving) to make simple teaching aids that are safe and attractive to children.

Analysis of Solutions for Implementing Strategies for Preserving the Jaran Kepang Dance in Early Childhood Education. Efforts to preserve the Jaran Kepang Dance in Early Childhood Education (ECD) require systematic solutions to address the various challenges. Based on research by Pratiwi (2022) in the *Journal of Arts and Culture Education*, a collaborative approach between educators and traditional artists has proven effective in improving teacher competency. The first solution, namely teacher training through collaborative workshops with Jaran Kepang artists, aligns with the findings of Suryanto (2021) who emphasized the importance of involving dance masters in ECD teacher training. For example, dance studios in Central Java, such as the Kridha Mardawa Dance Studio (Central Java Cultural Office, 2023), have successfully trained ECD teachers through capacity building programs, enabling them to teach basic dance movements with correct techniques.

To address the short attention span of AUD, a second solution is interactive learning with short 5-10 minute sessions interspersed with games, supported by Santrock's (2019) child development theory. Febriana's (2020) research in the *Early Childhood Education Journal* shows that the chunking method (breaking down material) can increase child engagement by 40%. A real-life example is implemented at the Pembina State Kindergarten in Yogyakarta (2023), where teachers insert simple dance movements into the "Simon Says" game or rhythmic clapping, so children don't get bored easily.

The third solution, utilizing local materials for creative props, reinforces UNESCO's (2021) findings on education for sustainable development. A case study at Alam Nurul Islam Kindergarten in Solo (Wulandari, 2023), demonstrated that props made from recycled wood and scraps of fabric not only stimulate children's creativity but also teach the value of recycling. This approach also addresses the

problem of limited teaching aids, as outlined in the Ministry of Education and Culture's (2022) report on the limited budget for arts facilities in early childhood education. Implementing these three solutions requires multi-stakeholder synergy. As proposed by Damayanti (2023), collaboration between the Education Office, the Culture Office, and the arts community can create a sustainable preservation model. With a combination of teacher training, adaptive pedagogical methods, and media innovation, the Jaran Kepang Dance will not only become part of the curriculum but also part of the formation of cultural identity from an early age.

Solutions to the second challenge related to the lack of teacher training, low concentration, and limited resources are needed: (1) Continuous mentoring: establishing mentoring between trained teachers and novice teachers to share teaching techniques. (2) Storytelling methods: integrating dance movements with stories or fairy tales to maintain children's interest. (3) Utilization of technology: using video tutorials of basic dance movements as visual guides for teachers and students.

Preserving the Jaran Kepang Dance in the context of early childhood education (ECE) in Central Java is a strategic step to strengthen cultural identity from an early age, while also providing innovative solutions to various challenges in learning traditional arts. As a form of artistic expression rich in local meaning and values, the Jaran Kepang Dance has great potential to be developed as a fun educational medium for children. However, its implementation in ECE settings is often hampered by limited teacher competency, limited teaching aids, and the characteristics of children who have short attention spans. To overcome these obstacles, a contextual, participatory approach based on local wisdom is needed.

One of the main challenges is the low capacity of teachers to teach traditional dance. Many early childhood education (PAUD) educators lack adequate training in local arts and culture. Therefore, the Central Java Education and Culture Office (2022) recommended implementing a community-based mentoring program as an effective solution. In Boyolali Regency, a collaborative initiative between PAUD



institutions and the Kridha Budaya Dance Studio has proven successful. Through regular mentoring by local artists, PAUD teachers receive hands-on training in introducing the basic movements of the Jaran Kepang Dance. An evaluation by the Boyolali Education Office (2023) showed a 40% increase in teaching competency within three months, demonstrating that partnerships between schools and cultural communities can serve as effective learning bridges.

Besides teacher competence, another challenge is the developmental characteristics of early childhood, who tend to be active, easily bored, and require engaging learning media. To address this, TK Negeri Pembina Semarang (2023) designed a creative learning method entitled "Storytelling Dance." In this method, narratives from Javanese legends such as Loro Jonggrang are adapted into a series of simplified Jaran Kepang movements, so that children not only dance but also engage in a storyline containing moral and cultural values. This approach has been proven to increase children's interest in traditional dance by up to 60%, according to teacher observations in the field.

Limited facilities and costs are also real obstacles, especially in rural areas. However, innovations emerge through the use of local materials rich in cultural significance. An action study by the PGPAUD program at Sebelas Maret University (2023) in Sukoharjo Regency showed that dance props made from woven bamboo and used lurik cloth not only reduced costs by up to 70% but also served as a learning tool that instilled cultural awareness from an early age. Children not only learned to dance but also learned about typical Central Javanese materials and their meanings.

On the other hand, the use of digital technology also supports the preservation of this culture. The Central Java Communication and Information Agency (Kominfo) launched the "Joglo Tari" platform in 2023, which provides short video tutorials for children's Jaran Kepang, with movements tailored to their motor skills. This platform has been accessed by 85% of early childhood education institutions in urban areas, demonstrating the significant potential of digitalization in expanding the reach of cultural learning.

A 2023 UNS Research Team analysis of 15 districts/cities found that this integrated approach increased teacher competency by 45%, child participation by 65%, and institutional independence in providing teaching aids by 80%. These findings reinforce the Central Java Cultural Council's (2023) recommendation that traditional dance preservation be integrated into the local content curriculum for Early Childhood Education (PAUD) using an adaptive *tut wuri handayani* approach, enabling children to grow in a culturally respectful, creative, and sustainable environment.

The solution to the third challenge is related to the lack of understanding of teachers & AUD is easily distracted, the need for: (1) Modification of movements: simplifying dance movements into basic steps that are easy for AUD to follow (e.g. clapping, simple body turns). (2) Routine habits: incorporating dance elements into daily activities (e.g. moving to the rhythm of music before class). (3) Stimulating environment: creating a cultural corner in the classroom with pictures or dance costumes to build children's interest.

Analysis of Solutions for the Implementation of the Jaran Kepang Dance for Early Childhood Education (AUD) in Central Java: Addressing Teachers' Lack of Understanding and Children's Concentration. The implementation of the Jaran Kepang Dance in Early Childhood Education (AUD) institutions in Central Java faces serious challenges related to teachers' lack of understanding of traditional dance and the characteristics of AUD who are easily distracted. Based on research by the Central Java Provincial Education and Culture Office (2022), 68% of PAUD teachers in this region admitted to having difficulty teaching the Jaran Kepang Dance due to the complexity of the movements and limited training. To address this, several evidence-based solutions have been proven effective in various regions in Central Java.

First, modifying dance movements into basic steps is a strategy that has been successfully implemented in Semarang Regency. Research conducted by Lestari et al. (2021) from Semarang State University showed that simplifying movements, such as replacing complex jumping movements with rhythmic handclaps or simple body turns, increased children's ability to follow

the dance by 45%. This approach aligns with Santrock's (2019) theory of early childhood motor development, which emphasizes the importance of movement according to the child's developmental stage. At Pertiwi Kindergarten, Semarang, this modification was implemented by dividing the Jaran Kepang Dance into five core movements taught in stages. The result was that 75% of students were able to master the movement sequence after one month (Pertiwi Kindergarten Teacher Observations, 2023).

Second, routine habits through the integration of dance elements into daily activities have been proven effective in improving children's concentration. An action study conducted by the PGPAUD Sebelas Maret University (2022) in Surakarta found that activities such as "moving to the rhythm of gamelan before studying" for 5-10 minutes every morning can improve children's focus by 30%. This practice is supported by Sugiyanto's (2020) findings in the *Early Childhood Education Journal*, which stated that habituating rhythmic movement can train children's muscle memory. In Klaten Regency, the "One Movement Before Study" program initiated by the local Education Office (2023) was successfully adopted by 60% of PAUDs, with significant results in increasing children's participation in dance activities.

Third, creating a stimulating environment through a cultural corner in the classroom has shown a positive impact on children's interest. Wulandari's (2023) research in 10 early childhood education centers (PAUD) in Yogyakarta City (DIY) and Central Java revealed that classes with a "cultural corner" containing dance props (miniature costumes, movement pictures, simple musical instruments) experienced a 50% increase in children's interest in the Jaran Kepang Dance compared to classes without visual stimulation. This finding is reinforced by Vygotsky's (1978) environmental learning theory, which emphasizes the role of the environment in fostering learning interest. A concrete example is seen in Purworejo State Kindergarten 2, which collaborated with a local dance studio to create the "Jaran Kepang Corner," resulting in children spontaneously trying out the dance movements during free time (Interview with the Kindergarten Principal, 2023). Integrated Implementation in Central Java: The

Central Java Cultural Office, through the "Dance Enters PAUD" program (2023), has integrated these three solutions into the official teacher training guide. Monitoring data shows that PAUDs that implement: 1. Movement modification + routine habituation: improve children's movement mastery. 2. Habituation + stimulating environment: increase children's interest. 3. A combination of the three: achieve effectiveness in learning outcomes.

The solution to the fourth challenge related to limited teacher competency & low AUD concentration requires: (1) Independent training: teachers can utilize digital platforms (youtube, e-course) to learn dance movements independently. (2) Multisensory learning: combining dance with music, color (colorful props), and touch (textured props) to engage children's senses. (3) Collaboration with the community: inviting local dance studios for demonstrations or joint activities at school. The following is a discussion that integrates solutions to the challenges of limited teacher competency and low AUD concentration, including names, years, and sources to support the argument:

First, independent teacher training can be conducted through the use of digital platforms such as YouTube and e-courses. According to research conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek, 2022) in its report "Utilization of Technology in Developing Early Childhood Education Teacher Competencies," teachers in remote areas were able to improve their arts and culture teaching skills through online video tutorials. Platforms like YouTube offer free access to demonstrations of Jaran Kepang dance movements that can be studied repeatedly, enabling teachers to independently understand the rhythm, movement patterns, and expressions. Furthermore, Semarang State University (2021) in its study on E-Learning for Early Childhood Education Teachers showed that 78% of teachers felt more confident teaching traditional arts after participating in short video-based microlearning.

Second, to address children's short attention spans, a multisensory learning approach is highly effective. This method engages more than one sense simultaneously, such as hearing, sight, and



touch, thereby engaging children's interest and extending their focus. Santrock (2020) explains in his book, *Child Development*, that multisensory stimulation improves memory retention and increases children's emotional engagement in learning.

Third, collaboration with local cultural communities is key to strengthening learning. Dewi (2021), a researcher from the Faculty of Education, Yogyakarta State University, in her study on Partnerships between Schools and Cultural Communities, found that the presence of local artists in schools not only improves the quality of learning but also positively impacts children's cultural appreciation.

An Innovative Solution for Strengthening Teacher Competence and Culture-Based Early Childhood Learning. The combination of three main approaches—self-paced training based on a digital platform, multisensory learning methods that engage the senses of sight, hearing, and kinesthetics, and strategic partnerships with local communities—presents a breakthrough in addressing the challenge of increasing the capacity of early childhood educators while accommodating the learning needs of early childhood. The integration of these three elements creates a complementary learning ecosystem: the digital platform allows teachers flexible access to training materials, the multisensory approach facilitates understanding of early childhood with its diverse learning styles, while collaboration with art studios and cultural figures ensures the transfer of authentic traditional knowledge.

In general, periodic evaluations are necessary: Monitoring teacher and child development through observation notes to adjust strategies. Play Approach: Using the concept of learning through play by transforming dance movements into games (e.g., "follow the leader" accompanied by music). In essence, several of the solutions described require creativity, collaboration, and adaptation to the Early Childhood Education context.

CONCLUSION

Preserving the Jaran Kepang Dance among preschoolers requires a holistic strategy: simplifying the movements, conducting school performances, and engaging with parents in cultural workshops. This approach facilitates children's understanding while maintaining cultural authenticity. Collaboration between schools, families, and communities is key to sustainability, as recommended by UNESCO and the Ministry of Education and Culture, as evidenced by the "Dance for All" program in Central Java.

Adapting the Jaran Kepang Dance into early childhood education through simplified movements, thematic games, and folklore has been proven effective in increasing movement mastery by up to 85% and fostering cultural understanding. This approach supports children's motor, cognitive, and socio-emotional development. Collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community, along with inclusive modules, is key to sustaining holistic and relevant cultural preservation in early childhood education units.

The values of the Jaran Kepang Dance, such as togetherness, discipline, and creativity, can be internalized by young children through group role-playing, culturally valuable songs, and repetitive movement practices. This approach aligns with children's developmental characteristics, supports character formation, and preserves culture in a holistic, contextual, and enjoyable way.

Teaching the Jaran Kepang Dance in early childhood education (PAUD) supports the Golden Indonesia 2045 Vision by fostering a love of culture, enhancing social competence, and honing creativity. The program in Central Java has been proven to enhance cooperation, cultural appreciation, and innovation in children. Collaboration between institutions, teachers, and communities is key to successfully preserving culture and fostering a quality and competitive generation.

Preserving the Jaran Kepang Dance in early childhood education (PAUD) faces challenges such as limited teacher competency and low child concentration. Solutions include independent training through digital platforms, multisensory learning involving music, color, and

touch, and collaboration with local studios. This approach enhances teacher understanding, engages children, and strengthens community engagement, making cultural preservation effective and sustainable in early childhood education.

Papers not prepared in accordance with these guidelines and manuscripts with number of mistakes will have to be pre-rejected by the Editor. Received articles will be reviewed by our peer reviewer and will be edited by the Editor. This journal applies online submission. Authors must submit by registering and uploading the manuscript in the website.

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