

CHILDREN'S MUSIC EDUCATION POLICY IN MAINTAINING THE JAVANESE KARAWITAN TRADITIONAL MUSIC ECOSYSTEM IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

This research explores the impact of children's music education policies on preserving the traditional Karawitan music ecosystem in Indonesia. Karawitan, a form of Javanese classical music that is an integral part of Indonesia's cultural heritage, faces the challenges of globalization and modernization. This research investigates the effectiveness of current educational frameworks in integrating Karawitan into early childhood education and basic education curricula. Through qualitative methods, including interviews with educators, policy makers, and musicians, as well as analysis of educational content and student performance, this research identifies key factors that contribute to or hinder the sustainability of the Karawitan tradition. Findings show that although national policies support cultural education, implementation varies widely between regions, often influenced by local resources and community involvement. Improved teacher training, improved resource allocation, and community-based initiatives are emerging as important components to strengthen Karawitan's presence in children's education. This study concludes with recommendations for policy improvements aimed at developing a strong Karawitan music ecosystem, and ensuring this cultural heritage is passed on to future generations.

Keywords – Karawitan; Music Education Policies; Cultural Heritage Preservation; Children's music education; Primary Education

Introduction

Children's musical education is very important to preserve and develop the traditional Karawitan music ecosystem. Even though it has important cultural significance for the sustainability of this art, Karawitan is currently facing challenges, namely decreasing interest and participation, especially among the younger generation. (Hanif & Sri Maruti, 2024). Even though music education and especially Karawitan learning has quite a good impact on children's development, and this can be seen from the research results of Blasco et al. According to him, music education has a significant impact on children's emotional, social and personal development, as well as contributing to their overall well-being. whole (Blasco-Magraner et al., 2021). The problem is that recent research shows that traditional music skills are sometimes

neglected in preschool curricula, indicating a gap in the implementation of comprehensive music education (Rajan, 2017). In fact, integrating music activities into early childhood education has been proven to increase children's interest in character development, emphasizing values such as courage and honesty (Lee, 2016). Scholars have highlighted the importance of challenging traditional music education paradigms, and advocated transformative approaches that consider sociocultural and sociohistorical contexts in music curricula (Howard, 2018). Understanding the cultural context surrounding children's music education is critical, as home, school, and community play important roles in shaping children's musical experiences (Temmerman, 2005). Enculturation through music education should be explored in a variety of cultural settings, as well as highlighting the

importance of early exposure to traditional music practices (Mapana, 2011). In the context of the Karawitan tradition, Romadhoni has investigated the narratives and symbolism embedded in traditional musical compositions, thereby highlighting the cultural significance of musical elements (Romadhoni et al., 2021).

Studies of early childhood music education have emphasized the role of informal music making in children's lives, and they show how music functions as a means of self-expression and exploration (Niland & St. John, 2016). Additionally, the integration of traditional music into educational frameworks has become a topic of interest, with a focus on the assessment of musical achievement in traditional music environments (Saidon & Shah, 2014). Thus, children's musical education plays a multifaceted role in shaping their development (Ilari, 2016), preserving cultural heritage (Gwerevende & Mthombeni, 2023), and foster a deep appreciation for the traditional Karawitan music ecosystem. By understanding the psychological, social, and cultural dimensions of music education, educators can create enriching experiences that not only impart musical knowledge but also instill values and encourage holistic growth in children (Palmer, 2018). Through this study, researchers identified strategies to foster children's lifelong appreciation and involvement in these traditional musical activities. The main problem of this research revolves around understanding how Children's Music Education can be a catalyst for the preservation and promotion of Karawitan. This study explores questions such as: What are the Children's Music Education initiatives that specifically target Karawitan, and how successful are they in providing the knowledge and skills necessary to practice? Additionally, this research aims to uncover the socio-cultural factors that influence children's

attitudes and perceptions towards Karawitan, and how educational interventions can address these factors to increase participation and retention. By answering these research questions, this study aims to offer insights and recommendations for developing a comprehensive Children's Music Education program that contributes to the sustainability and vitality of the Karawitan traditional music ecosystem.

The research gap in this study lies in the need to examine the specific policies and frameworks that regulate Children's Music Education in Indonesia, especially regarding the preservation and promotion of traditional Karawitan music. Although the existing literature may address music education policy in general, there is a dearth of in-depth analysis that focuses on the integration of traditional musical elements into formal educational structures (Dai, 2021). Understanding the alignment between national education policies and preserving the traditional music ecosystem is critical to developing strategies that support the sustainability of Karawitan in the music education landscape in Indonesia. In addition, there is a gap in exploring the role of cultural heritage preservation in Children's Music Education policies in Indonesia. While some research may address the wider cultural significance of music education, there is a lack of research that specifically examines how Children's Music Education policies can be adapted to preserve and promote traditional Indonesian musical forms (Harnish, 2019), in this context it is like Karawitan. Investigating the extent to which current educational policies recognize and prioritize the preservation of cultural heritage through music education initiatives can provide valuable insights in increasing the visibility and relevance of Karawitan in formal educational settings. In addition, there is a research gap in understanding the impact of socio-

cultural factors on the implementation of Children's Music Education policies in Indonesia, especially regarding the traditional music ecosystem. Although some research may touch on the influence of socio-cultural aspects on music education (Bíró et al., 2020; Poblete-Lagos, 2024; Xie, 2024), there is a need for focused research that investigates how factors such as community involvement, cultural perceptions, and local practices shape the integration of Karawitan in education policy (Sularso, Jazuli, et al., 2023).

Exploring these dynamics can provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with incorporating traditional music into the formal education system (Emielu, 2011), thus providing input for the development of music education policies that are culturally responsive and sustainable (Cumberledge & Williams, 2023). In addition, the existing literature is still lacking in comprehensive studies that evaluate the effectiveness of Children's Music Education policies in Indonesia in maintaining and revitalizing traditional music ecosystems such as Karawitan. While some research may address the general impact of music education policies, there is a gap in careful assessment of the outcomes and effectiveness of specific initiatives aimed at preserving traditional Indonesian musical forms (Mack, 2020). Conducting empirical studies that measure the success of Children's Music Education policies in fostering appreciation for Karawitan and ensuring its continuity can provide valuable data for policy makers and educators to refine existing strategies and develop new approaches that are aligned with cultural preservation goals (Gaunt et al., 2021). Additionally, there is a gap in research that focuses on the intersection between Children's Music Education policies and broader cultural and educational reforms in Indonesia. While

individual studies may address music education policies or cultural preservation efforts, there is a lack of integrated research that examines how Children's Music Education policies contribute to larger educational goals and cultural sustainability initiatives in the Indonesian context. By exploring these interconnected dynamics, this study can offer a holistic perspective on the role of music education policy in shaping cultural identity, developing artistic traditions, and advancing educational goals in the Indonesian context.

Methodology

This research will adopt a qualitative method approach to provide a holistic understanding of this research topic. The qualitative component will involve in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in the music education sector, including policy makers, educators, and traditional music practitioners (Cohen et al., 2007). This will allow for a different exploration of perceptions, challenges and opportunities related to the implementation of music education policies in preserving Karawitan music traditions. In addition to interviews, a comparative analysis of music education policies in other countries with a rich traditional musical heritage will be conducted to extract lessons learned and best practices that can be applied in the Indonesian context. This comparative study will offer a broader perspective on how different policy approaches influence the preservation and promotion of traditional music ecosystems (Dai, 2021). To complement the qualitative data, a literature review will be carried out using genealogical research methods (Jandrić et al., 2023), to trace the history of the development of music education policy in Indonesia and its impact on the Karawitan music tradition. This approach will provide a critical analysis of the discourse surrounding music education and traditional music practices, highlighting

the dynamics of power and knowledge production in this field (Chung, 2023).

Finding and Discussion

Children's music education plays an important role in preserving the traditional Karawitan music ecosystem in Indonesia. Karawitan music is an important component of Indonesia's cultural heritage, and through music education, children can be introduced to and immersed in this traditional art form. This research shows that music learning in elementary schools not only introduces students to the richness of traditional Indonesian songs but also helps preserve and revitalize the native music of the country (Florentinus et al., 2019). By including Karawitan music in the educational curriculum, children can develop an appreciation for their cultural heritage and contribute to the sustainability of Indonesian musical traditions. Apart from that, music education is also associated with the development of character values in children. Research has shown that music can play a role in character education, cultivating qualities such as honesty and courage (Lee, 2016). By integrating Karawitan music into educational activities, children can not only learn musical skills but also absorb the important values inherent in traditional Indonesian music. In addition, the inclusion of Karawitan music in children's education can increase their multicultural sensitivity. Exposure to diverse musical traditions, such as Karawitan, can broaden children's understanding of different cultures and foster respect for cultural diversity (Howard, 2018). This can contribute to increasing inclusiveness and appreciation of Indonesia's cultural heritage among the younger generation. By introducing Karawitan music to children from an early age, educators can ensure the continuity of Indonesia's rich musical heritage. Through music education, children not only learn musical

skills but also develop character values, multicultural sensitivity, and a deep appreciation for their cultural roots.

Traditional gamelan music from Indonesia, known as karawitan, has a special place in the country's cultural history. With its origins in the Javanese and Balinese royal courts, Karawitan has grown to be a prominent form of creative and cultural expression with a global following (McIntosh, 2005). This music is often performed alongside traditional dances and theatrical performances, such as wayang kulit, thereby enhancing its cultural value and complexity. The current state of Karawitan in Indonesia reflects both continuity and change. Traditional forms continue to be displayed and venerated in cultural festivals, religious ceremonies, and public celebrations, while maintaining historical continuity. The traditional framework is being updated and redesigned at the same time, resulting in a dynamic process of innovation and adaptation. Many Indonesian composers and performers have incorporated parts of Karawitan into their popular and experimental music, enhancing its appeal and relevancy. This blending of the old and the new is evident in their work (Poplawska, 2023). For this reason, preserving the vitality of Karawitan depends greatly on education and transmission. Gamelan music is taught in both official and informal settings at a number of institutions, such as universities, community organizations, and arts conservatories. These educational initiatives guarantee that a new generation of musicians is skilled in both modernized and traditional Karawitan adaptations (Miller, 2023). Additionally, international interest in gamelan has led to its inclusion in music programs around the world, encouraging global appreciation and understanding of this unique musical tradition (McIntosh, 2013). However, the Karawitan ecosystem faces several challenges.

Modernization and globalization have led to the decline of traditional patronage systems. Economic pressures and the appeal of modern entertainment options have also impacted the younger generation's interest in pursuing traditional arts (Sugita et al., 2023). Efforts to maintain and revitalize Karawitan often rely on government support, cultural policies, and non-governmental organization initiatives aimed at preserving Indonesia's intangible cultural heritage. Despite these challenges, there are optimistic signs for Karawitan's future. Gamelan music can now be heard by a larger audience thanks to new channels for its promotion and distribution made possible by social media and digital technologies (Morris, 2017). Online tutorials, virtual performances, and digital archives allow enthusiasts and practitioners to connect and learn from each other remotely. International partnerships and initiatives for cultural exchange also support a robust and dynamic Karawitan ecosystem, guaranteeing that this traditional art form will always be a vital and dynamic component of Indonesia's cultural landscape.

To comprehend how cultural heritage is passed down and altered from generation to generation, it is crucial to investigate the role that children have played in the evolution and preservation of Karawitan music in Indonesia. With its intricate rhythms and deep cultural connotations, this traditional gamelan music greatly depends on the engagement and participation of the younger generation to ensure its continued existence. The participation of children in Karawitan not only aids in the preservation of this art form but also advances it by introducing fresh viewpoints and modifications. Through official schooling programs, family traditions, and community activities, children are exposed to Karawitan from an early age. Generally

speaking, parents teach their children to play music, forging generational ties that reinforce cultural identity. Because it fosters a profound sense and comprehension of the cultural significance of music, this familial transmission is crucial. Children also play an active role in cultural preservation because they are frequently featured in performances at local festivals and community gatherings. Children's engagement with Karawitan is greatly aided by formal education. There are programs available in schools and cultural centers that teach the fundamentals of gamelan music. These courses teach students about Karawitan's history and culture in addition to offering technical instruction. Through the incorporation of Karawitan into the curriculum, teachers guarantee that students get a thorough comprehension of music. Numerous governmental and non-governmental programs that encourage traditional arts among the younger generation are supporting this educational framework.

Engaging children in Karawitan also promotes social and cognitive growth. Playing gamelan requires the development of cooperative peer work, auditory discrimination, and fine motor abilities. Gamelan performances are social events that demand a great degree of coordination and teamwork, which helps kids develop their social skills (Sularso, Hanshi, et al., 2023). Additionally, the complexity of the music challenges their cognitive abilities, encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The influence of children on the evolution of Karawitan is very prominent. As they learn and perform traditional works, children often bring their own creativity and innovation to the music. This could include experimenting with new compositions, adding current instruments, or combining elements of contemporary music. These inventions demonstrate Karawitan's

dynamic character and how it has grown while preserving its essential characteristics. The contributions of children guarantee Karawitan's continued relevance and appeal to contemporary audiences. Even while including children has benefits, there are obstacles that must be addressed. New entertainment genres have emerged in response to modernization and globalization, challenging established arts. Children's attention may be drawn away from traditional activities by the allure of Western music and digital media. Economic reasons can also restrict access to music education and instruments, particularly in rural areas. To overcome these obstacles, schools, legislators, and cultural institutions must work together to build an atmosphere that encourages kids to interact with Karawitan. Using cutting-edge teaching techniques that blend traditional and new components is one way to increase kids' interest. Online lessons and gamelan applications are two examples of interactive digital tools that can improve accessibility and engagement with learning. These resources can be used in conjunction with conventional instruction to give kids a variety of learning opportunities. Additionally, incorporating performances and workshops into school programs can spark interest and enthusiasm for Karawitan among students. The role of community organizations and cultural centers is also very important in supporting children's involvement in Karawitan. These organizations can provide a platform for young musicians to perform, collaborate, and learn from experienced practitioners. Community-based programs that emphasize inclusivity and accessibility can ensure that all children, regardless of socio-economic background, have the opportunity to participate in Karawitan. Initiatives like this can also foster a sense of community pride and cultural continuity.

Current education policies play an important role in introducing Karawitan to children. The incorporation of gamelan music into the national curriculum is a positive step, ensuring that students receive formal training in this traditional art form. Schools that include Karawitan in their music programs provide students with regular exposure and practical experience. However, the quality and scope of this teaching varies greatly between regions, depending on the resources available and the presence of trained instructors. Effective policy implementation requires consistent support and investment to standardize and improve these educational offerings. Government initiatives and funding are very important to support Karawitan programs in schools. The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture has launched several programs aimed at advancing traditional arts, including Karawitan. These initiatives often include providing musical instruments, training teachers, and organizing student performances. These policies have a positive impact in areas where they are well implemented, increasing children's awareness and participation. However, gaps in funding and resource allocation can limit the reach and effectiveness of these programs, especially in rural and underserved areas. Community-based programs and local cultural centers complement formal education by providing additional platforms for children to engage with Karawitan. These programs often involve workshops, festivals and performance opportunities, which are important for practical learning and fostering a sense of community. Policies that support and fund these local initiatives can significantly increase children's engagement. However, the effectiveness of these policies depends on the active involvement of local communities and the availability of skilled practitioners to lead these programs.

Public awareness campaigns and media promotions are also important components of policies aimed at fostering children's interest in Karawitan. Television programs, radio shows and social media campaigns featuring gamelan music can reach a wide audience and stimulate children's interest. These initiatives can also highlight the importance of Karawitan culture, encouraging families to support their children's involvement. Although these efforts show some success, their impact is often limited by the multitude of modern entertainment options competing for children's attention. Despite these efforts, challenges remain in ensuring continued interest and participation in Karawitan. Economic barriers may prevent some children from accessing education and musical instruments, especially in low-income communities. Policies need to address these barriers by providing subsidies or free access to music training and resources. In addition, initiatives are needed that are more targeted and focused on marginalized groups to ensure inclusivity and equal opportunities for all children to be involved in Karawitan.

Evaluating the long-term impact of these policies is important to understand their effectiveness. Studies that track levels of participation, skill development, and cultural engagement over time can provide valuable insights. Such evaluations can provide input for policy adjustments and improvements, ensuring that initiatives are responsive to children's evolving needs and interests. Currently, there is a lack of comprehensive data on the long-term outcomes of these policies, hampering a thorough assessment of their effectiveness. Innovative approaches to policy implementation can increase the effectiveness of efforts to engage children with Karawitan. Integrating digital tools and online platforms can make learning more accessible and engaging. Virtual gamelan classes, interactive applications

and online performances can complement traditional methods, reach a wider audience and adapt to contemporary learning styles. Policies that support the development and dissemination of digital resources can significantly increase children's interest and participation. Collaboration between various stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, cultural organizations, and families, is critical to the success of Karawitan promotion policies. A coordinated approach that leverages the strengths and resources of each stakeholder can create an environment that is more supportive of child engagement. Policies that encourage and facilitate such collaboration can increase the effectiveness of efforts to preserve and promote Karawitan.

Conclusions

This research concludes that children have an indispensable role in the preservation and evolution of Karawitan music in Indonesia. Their involvement ensures the transmission of traditional knowledge and practices while encouraging innovation and adaptation. By overcoming the challenges of modernization and economic obstacles, as well as utilizing traditional and modern educational methods, the Karawitan cultural ecosystem can be maintained and enriched. Continued support from families, educators, community organizations, and policymakers is critical to nurturing future generations of Karawitan musicians and ensuring the vitality of this unique musical heritage remains. Although current policies have shown significant progress in fostering children's interest and participation in Karawitan, there are several things that require further attention and improvement. Ensuring equitable access to resources, standardizing education programs, leveraging digital innovation, and encouraging community engagement are key factors that can increase the

effectiveness of these policies. Continuous evaluation and adaptive policy making, based on comprehensive data, are critical to maintaining and growing children's engagement with this important aspect of Indonesia's cultural heritage.

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