

Ideology in Dance Learning for the Elementary School Students: Project-Based Evaluation

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Abstract

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This study investigated the ideological dimensions of dance pedagogy within the context of performance-based competency examinations at Dinda Bestari Studio. Adopting a qualitative case study methodology, the research explored how cultural, social, and educational values were transmitted through traditional dance instruction in a non-formal educational setting. Data were gathered through participant observation, in-depth interviews with instructors and students, and the analysis of documented learning activities. The findings indicate that the project-based evaluation functioned as an assessment of skill proficiency that holistically considered students' mastery of basic movements, artistic expression, presentation techniques, and cultural knowledge as interconnected dimensions of dance competence. This evaluation framework demonstrates that dance education within the studio functions as a strategic locus for character building and cultural awareness, thereby challenging the hegemony of formal curricula that frequently marginalise local values. The originality of this study lies in its integration of culturally grounded non-formal educational evaluation with a thematic analysis of ideology and character formation.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Education in the cultural arts is never neutral; it operates strictly within the realm of negotiation between tradition and modernity, and between the local and the global. Identity is a dynamic construct, shaped through social interaction and cultural practices (Daryanti et al., 2025; Hall, 1996). In the context of learning traditional dance, elementary school students often stand at a crossroads between maintaining cultural identity and adapting to new values. Traditional dance functions not merely as a form of artistic expression, but also as a medium for the transmission of a society's cultural values and ideologies. In the multicultural context of Indonesia, dance serves as a crucial instrument within non-formal education, contributing to the formation of national identity, character, and cultural insight (Komalasari et al., 2025; Zhao et al., 2025).

One dance form replete with ideological and symbolic significance is the traditional welcome dance of South Sumatra, which depicts the glory and wisdom of the Sriwijaya Kingdom. Ideology in art education refers to the set of values and meanings implicitly and explicitly instilled during the learning process. In the context of traditional arts education, ideology is not limited solely to teaching materials;

it is also reflected in the structure, methods, and social interactions among educational participants. Education functions as an ideological arena where cultural values and power are negotiated via a hidden curriculum. In performing arts practices such as dance, local ideologies often serve as instruments for the formation of collective identity and cultural legitimacy (Giroux, 2001; Hasan et al., 2025). Furthermore, the integration of culture into instruction can enhance learning outcomes more effectively than conventional methods (Putri, 2022; Ratnaningrum et al., 2025). Accordingly, the Dinda Bestari Studio, in its instruction of elementary school students, implements a community-based education model through the preservation of traditional dance. Specifically, this includes the Tanggai and Gending Sriwijaya dances, which serve as an embodiment of South Sumatran culture.

Problem of the Study

Traditional dance serves as a form of cultural expression that embodies the values, history, and narratives of collective identity. As Kurin (2004) and Asrial et al. (2022) observes regarding dance as intangible cultural heritage, it possesses the capacity to represent and reproduce community identity amidst social change. Similarly, Komalasari et al., (2025) discusses city branding in South Sumatra via the slogan "Explore Your South Sumatra"; this initiative aims to highlight cultural uniqueness and shape the region's image, establishing a distinct and attractive regional identity with cultural performances serving as a primary tourism draw. Within this context, the mission of Dinda Bestari Studio is to implement community-based education that underscores cultural distinctiveness through the study of traditional repertoire. Furthermore, the studio evaluates learning outcomes via cultural performances attended by the community, parents, and government officials; this approach is designed to recognise and celebrate students' educational attainments.

Drawing on Esaki & Nagao (2024) Eisner (2022), who posits that the evaluation of arts education must encompass dimensions of aesthetics, expression, and sensitivity, this study observes that project-based assessments function as evaluative mechanisms requiring learners to execute tasks within a stipulated timeframe. Adopting an educational evaluation framework, this research aims to critically examine the ideologies inherent in traditional dance pedagogy at Dinda Bestari Studio. Specifically, the study investigates the dynamic interplay between local cultural values, pedagogical strategies, and the engagement of primary school students regarding identity formation and character development through traditional performing arts. Consequently, this research seeks to contribute to the formulation of a character education model that is grounded in local culture while remaining pertinent to the contemporary socio-cultural milieu.

Research's State of the Art

Previous scholarship has demonstrated that dance education plays a strategic role in shaping students' cultural competencies, values, and ideologies. Risner (2010) and Sookhanaphibarn et al. (2026), writing in the Arts Education Policy Review, emphasised that dance education is not merely an artistic practice but an ideological arena that shapes identity, social values, and power relations within educational contexts. This perspective is highly relevant to the present study, which conceptualises dance evaluation as a pedagogical practice imbued with values and ideologies, thereby aligning with the research focus on project-based evaluation in a non-formal context. Similarly, research by Kim & Yoon (2022) and Koff (2000) revealed that dance pedagogy grounded in local culture functions as a medium for the transmission of cultural values and collective identity. The study indicates that the structure of movement, symbols, and narratives in traditional dance plays a crucial role in cultivating students' cultural awareness. These findings underpin the present research, which positions the Gending Sriwijaya Dance as a vehicle for the transmission of cultural values through the mechanisms of learning and performance evaluation. Furthermore, Du et al. (2025) and McCarthy-Brown (2014) highlights the importance of a critical pedagogical approach in dance education to ensure that students become not only compliant performers of tradition but also reflective subjects.

This concept aligns with the current study's findings that project-based evaluation possesses the potential to shape the subjectivity of students, both as heirs to tradition and as creative individuals negotiating contemporary cultural realities. Within the Indonesian context, research by Şen Akbulut et al. (2025) demonstrates that art studios, as non-formal educational institutions, play a significant role

in the formation of character, discipline, and an appreciation for local culture. However, their work did not specifically examine project-based evaluation or the ideological dimensions of learning. Therefore, this study complements extant literature by integrating ideology, character, and project-based evaluation systems within traditional dance education. Consequently, this research occupies a novel position by synthesising project-based evaluation in non-formal dance education with an analysis of ideology and character formation based on local culture.

With regard to recent relevant studies, Badaruddin et al. (2025) and Shintawati & Komalasari (2023) examined the Merdeka Curriculum, noting that it develops various learning tools and is implemented through Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the spirit of independent learning. Their study concludes that dance instructional planning using the PjBL model within the Merdeka Curriculum is both effective and flexible. The application of PjBL encourages students to be more active, creative, and innovative, enabling them to develop knowledge and skills in a meaningful way. In this approach, the teacher's role shifts from being merely a provider of information to becoming a facilitator and motivator who guides students toward achieving the expected competencies. Thus, Project-Based Learning aligns well with curriculum development demands that emphasise behavioural changes and competency achievement within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Ideology in arts education denotes the set of values and meanings both implicit and explicit inculcated throughout the learning process. As noted by Apple (2019) and Montroy & Matamala (2025), learning ideology encompasses the systems of beliefs and principles that underpin educational practices. In traditional arts pedagogy, this extends beyond instructional materials to permeate the structure, methods, and social interactions between educational participants. Education thus functions as an ideological arena where cultural values and power dynamics are negotiated, frequently via a 'hidden curriculum'. In performing arts such as dance, local ideologies often serve as instruments for constructing collective identity and asserting cultural legitimacy (Bryl et al., 2023; Patton, 2008).

Gap Study and Objective

Sugiarto (2019) and Widiyanto et al. (2024) argues that the paradigm of community-based arts education is predicated on the conviction that education, functioning as the bedrock of democracy, serves as a response to or rejection of the rigid structures characterising formal institutions. Consequently, community-based arts education centres on reconstructing arts pedagogy as a more inclusive domain. This is realised through explicit community engagement which prioritises the preservation of traditional arts, cultural appreciation, and the creation of arenas for creative expression. However, the practical application of this paradigm demands critical examination, as it necessitates operational alternatives tailored to the specific educational context of Indonesia.

While community-based arts education utilises diverse methodologies, it broadly encompasses educational experiences situated both beyond formal schooling and within schools via external partnerships. In this regard, Li & Huang (2024) and Sugiarto & Rohidi (2021) conceptualises 'community' as collectives bound by local ties, shared culture, ethnicity, religion, needs, or ideologies. Li (2024) and Sugiarto (2019) aligns with O'Connor's assertion that community-based arts education is fluid, diverse, and complex, emphasising the necessity of understanding the specific issues a programme addresses. Thus, the impetus for community-based arts education derives not merely from ethnic or racial homogeneity, but from the shared concerns and thematic issues emerging during its implementation. Within the realm of traditional dance pedagogy, primary school students frequently navigate the tension between maintaining cultural identity and adapting to contemporary values. Traditional dance operates not merely as a mode of artistic expression, but as a vehicle for transmitting cultural values and societal ideologies. In Indonesia's multicultural landscape, dance is a pivotal instrument within non-formal education for cultivating national identity, character, and cultural insight. A prominent example, laden with ideological and symbolic significance, is the Gending Sriwijaya a classical South Sumatran welcoming dance depicting the glory and wisdom of the Sriwijaya Kingdom.

This research focuses on dance education for primary school students facilitated through Project-Based Learning. Specifically, it investigates the educational ideologies reflected in the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases, with a specific focus on project-based assessment. The study aims to identify and analyse the ideologies underpinning dance pedagogy at the Dinda Bestari Studio

and to evaluate the interplay between these ideologies and assessment practices in fostering student creativity, attitudes, and skills.

METHOD

Type and Design

This study employs a qualitative approach utilising a case study design to conduct an in-depth examination of the ideology embedded in traditional dance instruction at Dinda Bestari Studio, Palembang. The case study method was selected to enable the researchers to gain a holistic understanding of the context, significance, and dynamics of arts education within a non-formal environment.

Data and Data Sources

This research draws upon both primary and secondary data collected through various techniques. Primary data were obtained directly via participant observation of the project-based learning process at Dinda Bestari Studio, focusing specifically on traditional dance activities for primary school students in Grades 2 to 6. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two dance instructors and ten students who were selected as key informants. Visual documentation, comprising video recordings and photographs of students' project work, was also utilised to supplement these sources. Secondary data included the studio's archival lesson plans, teachers' reflective notes, and pictorial dance scripts created by the students.

Data validity was ensured through the triangulation of observations, interviews, and document analysis, alongside member checks involving two instructors to verify data interpretation. All data were analysed thematically to identify ideological patterns within the learning process. The scope of this study is limited to a single institution, Dinda Bestari Studio, which possesses specific Palembang cultural characteristics. Consequently, the findings may not be generalisable to different contexts without appropriate adaptation.

Data Collection Technique

This research employs a multi-method approach to data collection, incorporating participatory observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and questionnaires. Participatory observation focused on the transmission of cultural values, pedagogical practices, and student responses to the ideologies conveyed through dance. In-depth interviews were conducted with dance teachers and students, complemented by documentation in the form of photographs, videos, and learning notes. Furthermore, a questionnaire utilising a Likert scale was administered to systematically collect data regarding parental support for children's dance education.

Data Analysis

The data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014), comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The validity of the data was ensured through the triangulation of sources and methods, alongside the validation of findings with subjects via member checking techniques (Alfansyur & Mariyani, 2020). Specifically, member checking was conducted to verify the interpreted data directly with the participants. Finally, the evaluation of learning was grounded in three primary dimensions: the learning process, outcomes, and impact (Patton, 2008).

RESULTS

Evaluation serves as a reflective mechanism enabling instructors to refine pedagogical methods, choreographic approaches, and training structures for enhanced efficacy. Dinda Bestari Studio implements project-based evaluation via public dance performance examinations. As a model of classroom-based assessment prioritising practical application, project assessment constitutes an integral, pedagogical, and meaningful component of the learning framework. The studio affords students the opportunity to demonstrate holistic competencies through these performance examinations, which are executed in full costume before an audience comprising parents and the general public.

Within the context of mastering the *Gending Sriwijaya* Dance at Dinda Bestari Studio, project-based evaluation via dance performance serves as a viable pedagogical alternative. It counterbalances the dominance of digital interaction with direct, kinaesthetic, and culturally grounded learning experiences. By actively involving students in rehearsal and performance processes, this approach fosters physical, social, and emotional engagement, contrasting sharply with the passive learning modalities resulting from reliance on digital devices. Consequently, this study reinforces the argument that project-based, culturally grounded arts education functions as a contextual strategy for mitigating digital dependency challenges among primary school students, whilst simultaneously supporting character development and cultural awareness.

The performance examination project yields competency mastery scores that validate student progress over a three-month instructional period. The assessment panel for this examination consisted of Tr, EF, and SH, all of whom serve as instructors at the Dinda Bestari Studio. The assessment criteria encompassed basic movement, the comprehension of movement semantics, expressive performance techniques, and cultural knowledge. Collectively, these indicators determined the participants' level of proficiency. An interview with EF revealed that the studio's instructional process is grounded in creativity. Instructors actively elucidated the philosophy underlying the movements, and students reported that they not only acquired the ability to execute the dance but also grasped its significance as a representation of the cultural identity of Palembang.

The creativity developed by the students has resulted in bolstered confidence, as evidenced by the improved quality of their performances. During various school events, students presented the dances they had mastered, including the *Tanggai* and *Gending Sriwijaya* dances. Beyond practising at the studio during school hours, students also engaged in external learning activities, specifically at the Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II (SMB II) History Museum. This initiative reflects an effort by the studio leadership to broaden student knowledge regarding learning resources and to leverage cultural and historical assets that possess significant educational value.



Figure 1. Primary school students engaging in dance instruction at the SMB II Museum

Figure 1 depicts an innovation in dance pedagogy focusing on self-expression activities within the grounds of the Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin (SMB) II Museum. Based on musical stimuli, this approach facilitates student confidence and encourages the free expression of bodily movement within the performance space. Observations of the students' creative output throughout the learning process indicate a positive influence on their willingness to convey ideas. By granting students the freedom to explore their own physical capabilities, the programme encouraged them to use their imagination to discover new movements in response to the music, thereby building self-confidence. Furthermore, students reported experiencing significant attitudinal changes, including increased discipline and a deeper respect for local culture. These developments culminated in a heightened confidence in displaying their identity within public spaces, as demonstrated during the performance examination project held at Transmart Mall on 20 July 2025.

Table 1. Components of Project-Based Dance Performance Evaluation

Evaluation Component	Indicators	Criteria emphasis
Mastery of Basic Movements	Technical precision, movement semantics, musical synchronisation	30%
Artistic Expression	Internalisation (soulfulness), eye contact, emotional alignment with the theme	25%
Presentation Techniques	Physical flexibility, balance, fluidity of transitions	25%
Cultural Knowledge	Comprehension of the symbolic significance of movements and costumes	20%

Table 1 details the project-based evaluation framework, specifically the dance performance examination used to assess student proficiency. The overall assessment is derived from four key components: Mastery of Basic Movements (30%), which encompasses technique, movement semantics, and synchronisation with the accompanying music; Artistic Expression (25%), involving internalisation, eye contact, and emotional alignment with the dance theme; Presentation Techniques (25%), covering physical flexibility, balance, and the fluidity of transitions between movements; and Cultural Knowledge (20%), which focuses on understanding the symbolic significance of movements and costumes. Broadly, the evaluation of pedagogy at Dinda Bestari Studio indicates success across the dimensions of process, outcomes, and impact. Specifically, the instructional process is characterised by a participatory and communicative approach; the outcomes reflect robust cultural understanding and technical proficiency; and the impact is evidenced by the cultivation of positive attitudes towards local culture among the student body. Consequently, this necessitates parental engagement and support to facilitate extra-curricular education through dance tuition, thereby contributing to the preservation of the arts and the development of children's talents.

The findings indicate that parental involvement plays a crucial role in supporting dance learning as an extracurricular activity that contributes to cultural preservation and the development of children's talents. Parents generally perceive dance education not merely as an artistic activity, but as a meaningful medium for transmitting local cultural values, particularly those rooted in Palembang and South Sumatran traditions. Qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews with parents of students at the Dinda Bestari Studio reveal varying forms of support. Most parents expressed strong encouragement for their children's participation in dance learning, emphasizing their responsibility to preserve regional cultural heritage and to instill cultural identity from an early age. These parents viewed dance learning as a constructive space for character building, discipline, and appreciation of traditional arts.



Figure 2. Dance Competency Examination at Dinda Bestari Studio

Other parents demonstrated conditional support, acknowledging the value of dance education while simultaneously stressing the importance of maintaining academic priorities. For this group, participation in dance was considered acceptable as long as it did not interfere with formal schooling. A smaller number of parents expressed reservations, primarily due to concerns that intensive dance practice might reduce the time available for academic learning. Nevertheless, even these parents did not entirely oppose dance education, but rather highlighted the need for balance between artistic and academic development. Overall, the qualitative findings suggest that parental support for dance learning at the Dinda Bestari Studio is predominantly positive and ideologically aligned with efforts to preserve South Sumatran cultural arts. Dance education is perceived as a strategic educational space where cultural preservation, character formation, and talent development intersect, reinforcing its relevance within elementary school learning contexts.

Figure 2 depicts primary school students undertaking a dance competency examination, illustrating a pedagogical innovation centred on art appreciation. In this approach, the dance instructor tasks students with observing and assessing dance works through three distinct channels: firstly, via prepared video screenings; secondly, through specific YouTube links provided by the instructor; and thirdly, through independent selection, granting students the autonomy to choose works of personal interest. Subsequently, students synthesise their critical assessments of these three sources into a written report or project assignment. The objective of this appreciation task is to inculcate positive attitudinal values, thereby creating a meaningful and engaging learning experience that fosters empathy and respect for the creative endeavours of others.



Figure 3. *Cahaya Sriwijaya* dance performed by elementary school students

Figure 3 depicts the *Cahaya Sriwijaya* dance, a work grounded in traditional values resulting from the creative collaboration between elementary school students and their trainers. The study results indicate that the instruction of the *Gending Sriwijaya* Dance at Dinda Bestari Studio possesses a strong ideological dimension, encompassing both cultural symbolism and values implicitly instilled in students. Through observation over eight training sessions, it was evident that the pedagogy focused not only on technical dance skills but also on the transmission of cultural messages, such as reverence for guests, feminine grace, and pride in ancestral heritage. Gentle movements and group formations serve as vehicles for internalising values of politeness, cooperation, and harmony. Based on the data, the ideology of Dinda Bestari Studio represents a form of cultural conservatism that prioritises preservation over innovation, with significant implications for social inequality and the formation of passive subjectivity among elementary school students. A thematic analysis of the field data yielded three primary findings: (1) local cultural ideologies are embedded within the structure of dance movements and narratives; (2) the learning process functions as a medium for transmitting character values, including responsibility, etiquette, and appreciation for culture; and (3) the students demonstrate a process of identity negotiation between the traditional values acquired in the studio and the popular cultural realities they encounter daily.

Table 2. Summary of the Evaluation of *Gending Sriwijaya* Dance Learning

Evaluation Aspects	Indicator	Findings
Process	Participation, interaction, structure	High
Outcomes	Mastery of dance and interpretation	Good
Impact	Attitudes towards culture, character	Positive and reflective

Table 2 presents an evaluation of the pedagogical process for the *Gending Sriwijaya* Dance, encompassing three primary dimensions: process, outcomes, and impact. Participant engagement and interaction levels were rated as high, indicating active involvement in the learning process, whilst the structural implementation of activities was also deemed effective. Regarding learning outcomes, participants demonstrated a commendable level of mastery in executing dance movements and comprehending the intrinsic values of the *Gending Sriwijaya* Dance. Furthermore, the instruction at the Dinda Bestari Studio yielded an impact characterised as positive and reflective, specifically by enhancing cultural appreciation and fostering character traits sensitive to traditional artistic values.

In an interview, the dance instructor, Erk, elaborated on the instructional approach: "Our pedagogical process is conducted in stages, commencing with the introduction of basic movements and make-up, and extending to dance philosophy. Participants displayed great enthusiasm, particularly when exploring the meaning behind each movement. We also prioritise group interaction to facilitate peer-to-peer learning." Synthesising the interview data and assessment results, the evaluation indicates that the *Gending Sriwijaya* dance programme was effective. This is evidenced by robust instructor-student interactions, student mastery of movement and semantic meaning, and a demonstrable positive shift in students' attitudes towards culture resulting from their training at the Dinda Bestari Studio.

DISCUSSIONS

Ideology within arts education denotes a set of values and meanings that are implicitly and explicitly inculcated throughout the learning process. In the context of traditional arts pedagogy, ideology extends beyond mere instructional materials; it is also reflected in the structure, methods, and social interactions amongst educational agents. Education functions as an ideological arena wherein cultural values and power dynamics are negotiated via a 'hidden curriculum' (Giroux, 2001). In performing arts disciplines such as dance, local ideologies frequently serve as instruments for the formation of collective identity and the establishment of cultural legitimacy. Similarly, traditional arts education often embodies conservative ideologies, manifested through an emphasis on conformity to historical standards (Bourdieu, 1986). Consequently, this research reveals that the pedagogical process at Dinda Bestari Studio operates not merely as a mechanism for the transmission of artistic skills, but also as a form of ideological mediation that influences the trajectory of student creativity.

Ideology in art education, as proposed by Giroux (2001), operates through a 'hidden curriculum' that shapes values, attitudes, and power relations within the learning process. The findings of this study indicate that dance pedagogy at the Dinda Bestari Studio constitutes precisely such an ideological arena, where local Palembang cultural values are negotiated and reproduced through training structures, teaching methods, and patterns of interaction between instructors and students. The emphasis placed on discipline, adherence to codified movement standards, and respect for tradition reflects a conservative ideology, as conceptualised by Bourdieu (1986) and Huang et al. (2025). This perspective regards traditional arts as symbolic heritage that must maintain its legitimacy and authenticity. However, this conservative stance does not entirely inhibit student creativity. Instead, within the context of the Dinda Bestari Studio, it operates as a normative framework that channels creativity, ensuring it remains anchored in local cultural identity. Consequently, the dance

learning process facilitates not only the transfer of technical skills but also the formation of cultural awareness and collective identity, thereby allowing creativity to evolve within parameters aligned with inherited traditional values.

The creative foundation employed by the studio serves a dual purpose: to assess learning outcomes achieved during instructional activities and to cultivate student confidence in public performance. Students engage in the learning process with enthusiasm and discipline, an approach that fosters the development of creative individuals. Dimas et al. (2024) characterises the development of creativity as an enhancement of aesthetic awareness, controlled movement, and creation through shaping. Furthermore, Hidayatullah (2010) defines creative character as a rational quality of thought that approaches a need, task, or idea from a novel perspective, encompassing both imagination and the capacity to conceive compelling ideas.

The Dinda Bestari Studio subscribes to a pedagogical ideology grounded in the preservation of South Sumatran culture, employing an authoritarian-traditionalist approach. This ideology prioritises fidelity to the codified movements of traditional South Sumatran dance specifically those derived from the Palembang Darussalam court traditions and artistic reconstructions commemorating the c Kingdom as a mechanism for preserving ancestral heritage. The instructor is positioned as the absolute central figure, holding exclusive authority over knowledge and aesthetics, whilst the learner is required to replicate movements with precision, precluding personal interpretation. This dynamic mirrors Freire's (2018) characterisation of the teacher as a singular authority immune to critique. Such hierarchy is reinforced through the instruction of fundamental movements, such as the Sembah (a gesture of homage to honoured guests), and an evaluation system that assesses creative output exclusively upon its conformity to historical standards.

Beneath the claim of cultural preservation, this ideology implicitly reproduces feudal values, including absolute obedience, the elitisation of the arts, and the restriction of creativity. Dance education is viewed not as a medium for self-exploration, but as a unidirectional transmission of ancestral values. As Gamble & Johnson (2025) and Hardiman (2009) observes, learning encompasses not only the dimension of technical knowledge which is indeed a determining factor in the development of productive forces but also the dimension of moral awareness regarding practice, which dictates the structure of interaction. Consequently, although the studio succeeds in producing technically proficient dancers, students often lack the agency to develop a contemporary movement language or to critique the meanings underpinning tradition. Furthermore, this ideology fosters social exclusivity through high costs and an emphasis on cultural purity as the prerequisite for creative development.

Studies concerning context-based learning and assessment have been widely discussed in the *Journal of Profesi Pendidikan Dasar*. Research by Montroy and Matamala (2025) demonstrates that project-based learning in primary education can enhance student engagement and facilitate the holistic integration of skills, attitudes, and knowledge. Furthermore, evaluation based on both product and process is considered more pertinent for measuring actual student competencies than conventional written examinations. These findings are particularly relevant to the present study, which posits dance performance as a valid form of skill proficiency assessment within non-formal education. As noted by Abeles (1994), evaluation is designed to encourage creativity, self-expression, and the construction of personal meaning for students.

Furthermore, Badaruddin et al. (2025) emphasises that education grounded in local culture plays a pivotal role in shaping the character of primary school students, particularly in fostering values such as responsibility, discipline, and an appreciation for regional culture. Pedagogical approaches utilising local wisdom are viewed as effective mechanisms for internalising values without resorting to indoctrination. This perspective corroborates the findings of the current study, suggesting that instruction in the *Gending Sriwijaya* Dance at the Dinda Bestari Studio is not merely oriented towards technical proficiency, but also serves as a vehicle for transmitting ideological values and character traits rooted in local culture. Drawing upon Eisner (2002) and Konstantinidou (2025), it is argued that

evaluation in arts education ought to be narrative, descriptive, and qualitative in nature, rather than exclusively quantitative. This perspective underscores the capacity of art studios to function as effective alternative educational spaces for character formation and the fostering of cultural identity awareness among primary school students.

Consequently, both cited studies reinforce the premise of this research: that project-based assessment rooted in local culture constitutes a relevant and contextual educational approach within both formal and non-formal sectors. The integration of performative assessment, cultural values, and character formation represents a significant contribution of this study to the development of dance pedagogy models in primary education. In the contemporary context, providing tangible experiences in talent development is essential for equipping children with specialised skills. This is particularly pertinent given the prevalence of technological influences, notably mobile phone dependency, which can detrimentally affect children's learning processes. Research by Andrianie et al. (2025), investigating childhood dependence on digital devices, indicates that excessive technological exposure can impede active engagement in educational activities. This finding is highly relevant to the present study, as it underscores the challenges faced by primary education in the digital age, particularly regarding the maintenance of student focus, discipline, and engagement.

The dance competency examination, functioning as a project-based evaluation of learning outcomes, is designed to serve as a medium for artistic appreciation. The objective of such appreciation is to cultivate and shape individual character, instilling attitudinal values such as honesty, responsibility, empathy, and respect for others. This process commences with observation and progresses through appreciation, understanding, and response, culminating in judgment. According to Rondhi (2017), art appreciation is the process of assessing or valuing a work of art, undertaken by an audience or connoisseur to derive an aesthetic experience. Such activities educate children to value the creative output of others and train them to exercise tolerance and mutual respect, thereby fostering the capacity for harmonious social living. With regard to the creative process, Hadi (2003) delineates three distinct stages through which a choreographer or dance creator proceeds: exploration, improvisation, and composition. Within the context of dance education at the studio, students are encouraged to generate original works grounded in their own ideas and imagination, whilst simultaneously drawing upon the traditional arts of South Sumatra. In this dynamic, the teacher functions as a facilitator, offering strategic guidance throughout the creative process whilst maintaining the responsibility to monitor and support the individual development of each student.

These findings align with Risner's (2010) perspective that dance education functions not merely as a mechanism for developing technical skills, but also as an ideological space that shapes values, identities, and students' social positioning within a broader cultural context. In the case of Dinda Bestari Studio, the collaborative creation of the *Cahaya Sriwijaya* dance demonstrates that dance learning serves as a medium for transmitting traditional values that remain relevant to local cultural identity. As argued by Risner (2010), meaningful dance education should foster cultural awareness whilst providing a reflective space for students to comprehend their position within both tradition and contemporary change. As Mollo (2024) observes, effective parental support is a prerequisite for the establishment of a conducive teaching and learning environment. This support is driven largely by an awareness of the value of local culture and the developmental benefits it affords children. Furthermore, the dance competency examination garnered parental endorsement as it enables the measurement of student success through artistic performance, thereby serving as a focal point for the recognition of student achievement.

A study by Virgiandini and Muthmainnah (2025) emphasises that parental social support and students' self-efficacy play a pivotal role in fostering learning independence among primary school students. These findings corroborate the results of the present study, particularly the survey data regarding parental support for arts education as a vehicle for cultural preservation in South Sumatra. The predominantly high level of parental support reinforces the effectiveness of the pedagogical

approach at Dinda Bestari Studio, specifically within the framework of project-based evaluation via dance performance. Parental encouragement not only facilitates students' sustained participation in training and performance activities but also strengthens their self-efficacy in demonstrating dance competencies independently. Consequently, these findings support Virgiandini and Muthmainnah's (2025) argument that external factors, notably parental support, significantly influence learning outcomes and competency evaluation. In the context of non-formal dance education, such support further contributes to character formation, learning autonomy, and the development of cultural awareness among primary school students.

However, the results also indicate that the dominance of cultural conservatism in the teaching of the *Gending Sriwijaya* dance tends to position students as compliant subjects who adhere closely to codified conventions. Consequently, creativity and innovation are channelled towards conformity with traditional standards rather than critical exploration. This condition reinforces Risner's (2010) argument that, without critical and reflective pedagogical approaches, dance education may reproduce social inequality and passive subjectivity. Therefore, although the pedagogy at Dinda Bestari Studio is effective in transmitting character values and supporting cultural preservation, it requires a more dialogical approach. This would ensure that elementary school students become not only inheritors of tradition but also creative subjects capable of negotiating traditional cultural values alongside the popular cultural realities of their everyday lives.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the learning of the *Gending Sriwijaya* Dance at Dinda Bestari Studio functions not only as a process of technical skill development but also as an ideological practice embedded within a project-based evaluation system in non-formal education. The dance competency examination conducted through performance-based projects functions as a holistic form of evaluation that captures students' technical mastery, expressive abilities, presentation skills, and understanding of cultural meaning as an integrated learning experience. These components reflect the integration of technical, aesthetic, and cultural dimensions within dance education. Furthermore, the findings indicate that this project-based evaluation model operates as a medium for transmitting cultural, social, and educational values, positioning the studio as a strategic space for character formation and cultural awareness among elementary school students. By situating traditional dance performances as evaluative projects, the learning process challenges the dominance of formal curricula that frequently marginalise local values. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of non-formal, culture-based evaluation practices with ideological and character analysis, highlighting the relevance of traditional dance education in addressing contemporary educational challenges whilst preserving local cultural identity. This study is limited by its focus on a single non-formal institution with specific cultural characteristics, which may restrict the transferability of the findings to other educational contexts. Additionally, the qualitative nature of the study emphasises depth of interpretation rather than broad generalisation, and parental perspectives were explored within a relatively small participant group. Future research is therefore recommended to involve multiple dance institutions, diverse cultural settings, and longitudinal designs to further examine the ideological impact of project-based dance learning on students' identity formation and educational development. The findings of this study imply that project-based dance learning can function as an effective pedagogical strategy for embedding cultural ideology, character education, and identity formation in elementary school students. It is therefore suggested that educators and cultural institutions integrate culturally grounded, performance-based projects into learning programmes and strengthen collaboration with parents and local communities to sustain arts preservation.

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