



## Original Article

### The Influence of Dongklak Dance Learning on the Perception of Students at the Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) Regarding Indonesian Culture

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#### Abstract:

Indonesia is known for its social diversity, which includes ethnicities, cultures, religions, and customs. The principle of "Bhineka Tunggal Ika" reflects the spirit of unity in diversity, despite significant differences. Cultural changes in Indonesia are influenced by globalization, which accelerates shifts in traditions, especially among the younger generation, particularly Indonesian children living abroad. These children often struggle to understand Indonesian culture due to limited exposure to cultural education. This study aims to explore how Dongklak Dance learning influences students' perceptions of Indonesian culture at the Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur (SIKL). Dongklak Dance, originating from East Java, embodies values of cooperation, togetherness, and mutual assistance, and is expected to introduce students to the richness of Indonesian culture and strengthen their emotional connection to their cultural identity. The results of the study indicate that Dongklak Dance learning has a positive impact on students' perceptions of Indonesian culture, enhancing their pride and understanding of national traditions.

**Keywords:** Indonesia, social diversity, Indonesian culture, Dongklak Dance.

#### Introduction

Indonesia has social diversity consisting of ethnicities, cultures, religions, customs, and more. The principle used as the foundation of Indonesia's state is "Bhineka Tunggal Ika," which means "Unity in Diversity." This principle reflects that despite differences, unity remains. As a result, Indonesia has various languages, religions, ethnic groups, cultures, customs, and more, forming a united entity (Maulida et al., 2021).

Culture is a way of life that develops and is shared by a group of people, passed down through generations. National culture, according to Ki Hajar Dewantara, is "the



<https://jurnal.usk.ac.id/riwayat>

peak of regional cultures.” This statement refers to the idea of unity being increasingly solidified, where the sense of unity is more strongly felt than the diversity. It is manifested in the form of a unified nation-state, a national economy, national law, and a national language. Indonesian culture has always undergone changes over time. These changes occur due to the society's desire for change, and cultural shifts have accelerated because of globalization's influence on Indonesian culture. Globalization elements have entered uncontrollably, infiltrating national culture, which is the manifestation of local cultures from various regions, from Sabang to Merauke ([Yang in Nahak, 2019](#)).

Indonesian children born abroad face limitations in understanding Indonesian culture. This happens due to the lack of education about Indonesian culture, often because parents are busy working, and their schools do not teach these aspects. Additionally, living abroad can make them less concerned about their homeland. Specifically, children at the Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) face challenges in recognizing and preserving Indonesian culture, including: low understanding and knowledge of Indonesian culture, a lack of national pride, being far from the social environment filled with Indonesian cultural activities, living in a multicultural country with diverse ethnicities and cultures, limited cultural activities, and children not having the opportunity to engage in Indonesian cultural activities intensively. Globalization and technological advances, the SIKL curriculum's focus on academic lessons or exam preparation, and parents' focus on work and daily life contribute to the limited exposure to Indonesian culture for the children.

Learning activities influence students' mindsets, which later impact their attitudes and thoughts. Regarding dance learning, research has shown that traditional dance education positively impacts students' character ([Suparmi, 2023](#)).

In the educational world, cultural preservation, particularly through dance, plays a crucial role in teaching the values of ancestral heritage to younger generations. Understanding and practicing traditional dances help students understand their cultural roots, maintain their unique identities, and feel proud as part of a tradition. Through dance, students can learn values such as respect, patience, cooperation, and togetherness. This art form provides not only theoretical learning but also practical learning that enriches students' character. Dance helps students appreciate the cultural diversity around them. In an increasingly interconnected world, the ability to appreciate cultural differences becomes an essential skill. Dance offers students the opportunity to explore and immerse themselves in various cultures, fostering tolerance and building cross-cultural understanding.

Traditional dances like the Dongklak dance depict the joy of children playing and convey values of cooperation, togetherness, and mutual assistance. Thus, this dance is not only an entertainment medium but also a cultural heritage and a means to convey noble values, identity, and morals. Additionally, research on perception related to this dance is still limited.

Previous research referenced in this study includes a journal (Saleh, 2022) titled “Students’ Perception of the Traditional Pa’Jaga Lili Dance in Extracurricular Dance Activities at SMA Negeri 7 Luwu,” which investigates students' perceptions of the

Pa'Jaga Lili dance, focusing on the structure of the dance that shapes the perception of its presentation. Another study ([Kelas et al., 2021](#)) titled "Students' Perception of Online Cultural Arts Learning (Offering Dance) during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Class VII at MTs Hasanah Pekanbaru, Riau Province, Academic Year 2020/2021" aimed to explore students' perceptions of online learning of cultural arts (offering dance) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, a thesis (Siti, 2022) titled "Male Students' Perception of Dance Learning at SMPN 3 Way Tuba" aimed to describe male students' perceptions of dance learning at SMPN 3 Way Tuba.

Based on this description, the purpose of this study is to describe how Dongklak dance learning influences students' perceptions of Indonesian culture at the Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur (SIKL). This research aims to positively impact students' perceptions of Indonesian culture.

### Dongklak Dance and Indonesian Culture

Dongklak Dance is a traditional dance originating from East Java, Indonesia, produced by the RAFF Dance Studio. This children's dance depicts the joy of children playing and carries the meaning of cooperation, togetherness, and mutual assistance in life. The learning of this dance is expected to introduce students to the richness of Indonesian culture and strengthen their emotional bond with their cultural identity.

Dance is one example of culture. Indonesian dance is a display of the richness and diversity of ethnic groups and cultures in Indonesia ([Utomo et al., 2020](#)). According to the type of dance, as categorized by folk dance, traditional dance, and contemporary dance, all of these can be found in choreography ([Nahak, 2019](#)).

#### 1. Dance Learning

Learning is an activity between the teacher and the students aimed at achieving learning objectives. Whether the learning objectives are achieved depends on the teacher. The teacher, as one of the components in the learning activity, plays a crucial role in determining the success of the learning objectives.

The learning objectives are very important and beneficial in the teaching and learning process. Learning objectives are an essential element in the educational process, providing direction and expected outcomes from the learning activities. In general, learning objectives encompass improving understanding, developing practical skills, and enhancing problem-solving abilities. Additionally, these objectives also support the development of students' character. Arts education is a form of education that uses art as its medium. When art is positioned as an educational medium, it should serve as a way to teach students to develop their individual, social, and cultural potentials. Therefore, the vision and mission of education using art as a medium should be directed at forming all human potential towards the creation of cultured individuals ([Sinaga et al., 2021](#)).

#### 2. Student Perception of Culture

Perception, in its narrow sense, involves our experiences, but psychologically, this definition is not entirely accurate. A more precise definition of perception is the process of integrating and organizing sensory data (sensory perception) so that we become aware of our surroundings, including being aware of ourselves. Cognitive

perception processes are influenced by individual experience, horizons, and knowledge. Experience and learning processes will shape and structure the objects perceived by the senses, while knowledge and horizons will give meaning to the objects perceived by the individual. Ultimately, individual components play a role in determining the responses in the form of attitudes and behaviors towards the objects present.

Objects can come from the fixation of the human eye, and colored images and line drawings induce similar neural activity. Line drawings contain less information than colored images. Therefore, line drawings are expected to make it easier to investigate the perception of objects. These factors cause individual perceptions to differ from one another and will affect how an individual perceives an object or stimulus, even though the object may be the same. Perceptions can vary greatly between individuals or groups, even if the situation is the same. Differences in perception can be traced to individual differences, including differences in personality ([Nisa et al., 2023](#)).

Cultural perception is formed through social interaction and an ongoing learning process. When students directly experience cultural forms through practice, their understanding and interest in that culture become stronger (Effect et al., 2020). This enables students to internalize the values and norms within the culture, shaping their identities and increasing mutual respect among cultures.

## Methods

This study uses a quantitative research method with a quasi-experimental approach. According to [Sugiyono \(2019:17\)](#), quantitative research is defined as a research method based on the philosophy of positivism, used to study a specific population or sample, where data is collected using research instruments, and data analysis is quantitative/statistical, aiming to test the established hypothesis. The design used is a one-group pretest-posttest. The research subjects consist of 14 students from SIKL who form one experimental group.

The instrument used is a questionnaire to measure perceptions regarding Indonesian culture, developed based on perception indicators. This questionnaire is administered before and after the Dongklak Dance learning session.

The data analysis technique uses the paired sample t-test to determine the difference in perceptions before and after the intervention.

The hypothesis tested in this study is the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), which states that there is a significant effect of Dongklak Dance learning on the perceptions of SIKL students regarding Indonesian culture. Conversely, the Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) states that there is no significant effect of Dongklak Dance learning on the perceptions of SIKL students regarding Indonesian culture.

## Results

The author used a Likert scale to measure the questionnaire. According to [Sugiyono\(2019\)](#)The Likert scale is used to measure the attitudes, opinions and perceptions of an individual or group of people about social phenomena.

Table 1. Pretest and Posttest Scores

Student Name	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Student 1	21	27
Student 2	24	31
Student 3	21	27
Student 4	20	23
Student 5	24	27
Student 6	19	29
Student 7	17	24
Student 8	15	31
Student 9	22	27
Student 10	19	27
Student 11	22	25
Student 12	26	27
Student 13	24	27
Student 14	19	27

Table 2, Pre test

No	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	3
2	4	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	3
3	4	1	3	2	1	1	1	2	3	3
4	1	2	3	3	1	2	1	1	3	3
5	4	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2
6	3	3	1	3	1	1	3	2	1	1
7	3	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	3
8	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	4
9	3	1	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	1
10	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
11	4	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	3
12	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	3	3
13	3	2	2	3	1	2	3	3	1	3
14	3	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	3

Table 3, Post Test

No	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
1	3	2	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3
2	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3
3	4	1	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3
4	3	2	3	3	3	2	1	3	3	3
5	4	2	3	3	3	1	1	3	4	3
6	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
7	3	1	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3
8	4	1	4	3	3	3	2	3	4	4
9	3	1	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3
10	3	2	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3
11	4	2	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3
12	3	2	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3
13	3	2	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3
14	3	2	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3

Pre-test score data was obtained before respondents participated in the training, while post-test scores were obtained after respondents participated in the training and completed both theoretical and practical assignments. The data was then analyzed to determine whether there was a difference in the average pre-test and post-test scores.

Pre-test This training was conducted to assess participants' knowledge of Indonesian cultural insights into the Dongklak Dance. Following the initial evaluation, a lecture and question-and-answer session was held to provide in-depth knowledge and insight into the Dongklak Dance and its philosophy. This training was not a one-time event but was conducted continuously twice a week, with each session lasting 30 minutes. This helped students develop a stronger grasp of the dance movements.

Next, the author demonstrated each movement of the Dongklak Dance. This activity not only provided students with hands-on experience in learning the Dongklak Dance but also fostered a sense of patriotism and pride in their culture. After completing the entire series of activities, a post-test was administered to gauge students' understanding of the Dongklak Dance as part of Indonesian culture.

## Conclusion

Indonesia's cultural diversity is a defining characteristic of the nation, encapsulated in the principle of "Bhineka Tunggal Ika," or "Unity in Diversity." This unity persists despite the vast range of ethnicities, cultures, languages, religions, and customs that shape the country. National culture, as emphasized by Ki Hajar Dewantara, is the culmination of regional cultures, highlighting the importance of maintaining a shared national identity while respecting local traditions. However, globalization and its influences have impacted Indonesia's cultural landscape, causing shifts in how traditions are perceived and practiced, especially among younger generations. This shift is particularly evident among Indonesian children living abroad, who face challenges in connecting with their heritage due to limited exposure to Indonesian cultural practices, including traditional arts like dance.

In response to this, the teaching of traditional Indonesian dances, such as the Dongklak Dance, plays a significant role in fostering cultural pride and understanding among students. Dance serves not only as an art form but also as an educational tool to reinforce values like cooperation, mutual assistance, and togetherness, which are central



to Indonesian culture. Studies have shown that learning traditional dance positively impacts students' character, helping them internalize cultural values and enhancing their sense of identity. For children abroad, particularly those at the Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur (SIKL), engaging in dance learning can be an effective way to strengthen their emotional connection to Indonesian culture and cultivate a deeper appreciation for their heritage. The study on Dongklak Dance's influence on students' perceptions underscores the importance of cultural education in maintaining national unity and preserving cultural identity amid the challenges of globalization.

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