

Revitalizing Indonesian Traditional Music Through Formal Music Education: A Pedagogical Framework for Cultural Sustainability

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ABSTRACT

Traditional Indonesian music faces sustainability challenges amid globalization, requiring revitalization through formal education. This study aims to analyze the role of schools in revitalizing traditional music, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and formulate a sustainable school-based revitalization model. Using a descriptive qualitative design, data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and Focused Group Discussion in three senior high schools in West Bandung Regency that implement traditional music learning, involving arts teachers, principals, and students. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis with triangulation of sources and methods. The findings show two dominant models of traditional music education: instrument-based learning (angklung, gamelan degung, calung) and technology-integrated learning using digital and mobile platforms. These models enhance students' musical skills, cultural appreciation, character development, and sense of national identity, but are constrained by limited teacher competence, inadequate instruments, inconsistent policy and budget support, and the challenge of engaging digital-native students. The study proposes a four-stage sustainable revitalization model introductory, active learning, creative innovation, and dissemination evaluation and concludes that effective revitalization requires systemic and collaborative support from schools, government, arts communities, and society.



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A. INTRODUCTION

Traditional music of the Indonesian archipelago constitutes a fundamental pillar in the construction of Indonesian culture, reflecting values, knowledge systems, and local wisdom transmitted across generations (Firnando & Hadi, 2021; Lestari, 2023). Since the early formation of societies and kingdoms, musical traditions have played central roles in religious rituals, customary ceremonies, communal celebrations, and everyday social life. Diverse forms such as Javanese and Balinese gamelan, Minangkabau talempong, Sundanese angklung, Minahasa kolintang, and the sasando of East Nusa Tenggara represent distinct cultural identities while collectively demonstrating the richness of Indonesia's musical heritage (Yolanda, 2025). Beyond artistic expression, traditional music functions as a repository of social knowledge, worldviews, community structures, and moral values, strengthening social cohesion and marking significant life events, particularly in agrarian societies (Hakim et al., 2024; Lestari, 2023). Consequently, traditional music occupies a crucial position in Indonesia's cultural history.

However, traditional music faces serious challenges from global culture and the modern music industry (Hidayatullah, 2024; Seruyanti et al., 2023). Younger generations increasingly favor international popular music accessed through digital platforms, leading to the marginalization of traditional music in everyday life (Maulana, Sukmayadi, Sunaryo, et al., 2025; Assidiq et al., 2025). Limited representation in mainstream media further weakens young people's knowledge of Indonesian traditional music, signaling a decline in cultural transmission that may threaten the sustainability of Nusantara's musical heritage (Eprilianto, 2022; Listiarini, 2024). Although several repertoires have been recognized by UNESCO as intangible cultural heritage, such recognition does not guarantee continuity, as cultural heritage can only survive through active transmission, practice, and social acceptance, particularly among younger generations.

At the same time, existing studies on Indonesian traditional music tend to address fragmented aspects such as community-based preservation, repertoire documentation, or generic uses of digital media rather than providing an integrated analysis of curriculum, pedagogy, and school ecosystems within formal education. They are often limited to single-site investigations and thus fail to capture the diversity of practices across senior high schools, nor do they systematically examine how the *Kurikulum Merdeka* and digital technologies are jointly operationalized in traditional music learning. Consequently, concise, school-based revitalization models with clearly defined stages, roles, and conditions for sustaining traditional music among younger generations remain underdeveloped

In response to these challenges, formal educational institutions play a strategic role in revitalizing traditional music (Sagala, 2024). Schools serve as social spaces capable of systematically transmitting cultural values and knowledge through structured learning, integrated curricula, and pedagogical approaches aligned with contemporary contexts (Harliani et al., 2025; Salma & Sutikno, 2025). The *Kurikulum Merdeka* strengthens this potential by offering flexibility for regionally responsive music education that emphasizes experiential learning, creativity, reflection, and social impact (Nensin, 2023; Riyadi & Budiman, 2023). Supported by a comprehensive framework encompassing cultural preservation (Sedyawati, 2014), music ecosystem synergy (Irawati, 2025), and digital technology for learning and dissemination (Suwija, 2022; Nurgiansah, 2022), this study positions its novelty in integrating curriculum, ecosystem perspectives, and digital approaches to analyze revitalization efforts, identify challenges, and formulate sustainable strategies for preserving traditional music through formal education, with the specific purpose of developing a school-based revitalization model that effectively sustains Indonesian traditional music among younger generations.

B. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive method with a qualitative approach to examine the revitalization of Nusantara traditional music through music education in secondary schools (Subandi, 2011). A qualitative approach was selected to explore meanings, processes, experiences, and socio-cultural dynamics emerging from traditional music learning practices. Rather than offering surface-level descriptions, the study investigated how pedagogical practices, educational interactions, and internal school mechanisms shape the revitalization of traditional music within formal education. A multi-site study design was adopted to capture the diversity of instructional practices across three senior high schools in West Bandung Regency SMAN 1 Lembang, SMAN 2 Lembang, and SMA Nurul Fikri Boarding School Lembang which were selected due to their implementation of traditional music elements in arts education. Variations in institutional characteristics,

pedagogical approaches, and students' socio-cultural backgrounds enabled a holistic understanding of traditional music revitalization across different educational contexts.

The research subjects included three arts teachers, school principals, and students. The teachers Alien Wariatunnisa, M.Pd. (SMAN 1 Lembang), Maskun, S.Pd. (SMAN 2 Lembang), and Rian Nugraha, S.Pd. (SMA Nurul Fikri Boarding School Lembang) were selected due to their roles as instructional practitioners, curriculum designers, and mediators between students and traditional music content. School principals were involved because of their influence on institutional decision-making and policy support, while students were included to assess the effectiveness and impact of traditional music learning from the learner's perspective. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, documentation studies, and Focus Group Discussions. Observations were conducted repeatedly during classroom instruction to examine teacher student interactions, teaching methods, repertoire selection, use of traditional instruments, student responses, classroom dynamics, and the integration of the Merdeka Curriculum, ensuring data credibility beyond momentary snapshots (Ratnaningtyas, 2022).

In-depth interviews were conducted with five informant groups teachers, principals, students, traditional music maestros, and arts education supervisors to obtain comprehensive perspectives on pedagogical readiness, institutional policies, learner perceptions, repertoire authenticity, curriculum implementation, and regional arts education policies. Documentation analysis encompassed curricula, lesson plans, teaching modules, practice schedules, archival records, and visual materials to corroborate observational and interview data (Creswell, 2015). Focus Group Discussions with music teachers from the three schools elicited collective insights into instructional strategies, constraints, and recommendations for improvement. Data analysis employed thematic analysis through stages of data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, theme refinement, and systematic reporting. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking by confirming findings with key informants.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings on the implementation of traditional music education in three schools, namely SMAN 1 Lembang, SMAN 2 Lembang, and SMA Nurul Fikri Boarding School Lembang. The results are described descriptively and analytically based on data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation, and subsequently discussed by linking empirical findings to the theoretical foundations outlined in the introduction. The presentation of the results and discussion is organized into several subsections that elaborate on the learning models, teacher strategies, the impact of learning on students, implementation challenges, and emerging innovations within the schools. This section concludes with the formulation of a sustainable revitalization model for traditional music based on a synthesis of the findings.

1. Traditional Music Learning Models in Schools

The research conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Lembang, SMA Negeri 2 Lembang, and SMA Nurul Fikri Boarding School Lembang demonstrates that the implementation of traditional music education at the secondary school level exhibits diverse pedagogical models shaped by teacher competence, infrastructural availability, and institutional support. Although each school develops a distinct instructional approach, all position traditional music as a meaningful component of pedagogical practice. These findings align

with the music ecosystem approach proposed by Irawati (2025), which emphasizes that the sustainability of traditional music is highly dependent on the active involvement of all educational stakeholders. The most dominant model identified is the use of traditional musical instruments as the primary learning medium, as it provides direct musical experience and serves as a foundation for strengthening both musical competence and cultural character.

Across the three schools, traditional music instruction employs instruments such as *angklung*, *gamelan degung*, and *calung* as central learning media. Through hands-on practice, students acquire fundamental musical concepts rhythm, tempo, dynamics, and performance patterns by integrating theoretical understanding with kinesthetic, auditory, and physical experience. This model reflects experiential music learning principles that prioritize learning by doing. When students engage in playing traditional instruments, cognitive, psychomotor, and affective dimensions are simultaneously activated, supporting the development and utilization of traditional music in educational contexts (Maulana, Sukmayadi, & Gunara, 2025). Furthermore, this finding reinforces the study by Muhammad Alfian Nur Khair & Hary Murcahyanto, (2025) which reports that direct instrumental practice improves rhythmic accuracy and musical comprehension by up to 85%. Similar improvements were observed in all three schools, as evidenced by students' consistent ensemble performance during classroom observations. Beyond musical outcomes, ensemble-based learning also fosters social values such as cooperation and discipline, corroborating Suwija, (2022) argument regarding the role of traditional music in moral character formation.

In addition to instrument-based instruction, the study identifies a second model integrating traditional music learning with digital technology. At SMA Nurul Fikri Boarding School Lembang, digital platforms and mobile learning applications are used to support students' understanding of traditional repertoires, particularly *gamelan degung*, through recorded patterns, performance tutorials, and regional music repositories. This integration enhances learning flexibility and extends learning spaces beyond the classroom, consistent with Rahayu et al. (2022), who emphasize digital innovation as a strategic bridge between traditional music and digital-native learners. Students demonstrate increased engagement and faster mastery of basic instrumental techniques through independent practice using audio-visual materials, reflecting the relevance of technopedagogical approaches (Dhany Yufisa Wibowo, Juju Masunah, & Rita Milyartini, 2025). Moreover, positioning traditional music within familiar digital environments supports cultural utilization and preservation in contemporary contexts (Yolanda, 2025), while illustrating how teachers adapt the principles of the *Merdeka Curriculum* to enhance the effectiveness of traditional music education.

2. Strategies for Traditional Music Learning

Teachers employ a discovery learning approach by encouraging students to independently explore traditional musical instruments before providing theoretical explanations. At SMAN 2 Lembang, for instance, students are given the opportunity to discover *talempong* rhythmic patterns through sound experimentation. By exploring sound sources and playing techniques autonomously, students gain more meaningful musical experiences. This discovery-based approach aligns with the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, which emphasizes active, experience-based learning, and is consistent with constructivist perspectives that position learners as central agents in the construction of meaning. Previous studies indicate that exploratory learning strategies can foster deeper understanding of the characteristics of traditional music. Moreover, this approach opens

opportunities for project-based learning, situating students within creative and collaborative work processes.

At SMAN 1 Lembang and SMA Nurul Fikri Boarding School Lembang, project-based learning is evident in end-of-semester traditional music performances. Students are not only responsible for preparing musical performances but also for designing performance concepts, producing documentation, and reflecting on their creative processes. This model enables active student engagement throughout the entire production cycle and aligns with the learning outcomes of music education in the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, which emphasizes creative processes and community impact (Riyadi & Budiman, 2023). Furthermore, this strategy supports the utilization and development of tradition as articulated by Pramusinta & Ummah (2023), as traditional music is positioned as a cultural form that can be creatively reinterpreted by younger generations without losing its essential values. The following subsection discusses how teachers connect traditional music to students' everyday lives to enhance relevance and meaningful learning.

3. Impacts of Traditional Music Learning

The three schools demonstrate that traditional music education contributes significantly to students' character development. Through ensemble activities, students learn cooperation, as each individual assumes a complementary role within the group. The need to synchronize rhythm, tempo, and dynamics requires discipline, concentration, and adaptability, thereby cultivating values of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and solidarity. Moreover, traditional music repertoires, which are rich in philosophical and spiritual values, provide students with opportunities to engage with the religious and ethical meanings embedded in artistic practice. Consequently, music learning extends beyond technical skill acquisition to the cultivation of students' spiritual sensitivity. These positive outcomes are consistent with Suwija, (2022) theory, which emphasizes the strong influence of traditional music on moral character formation. Within the Indonesian educational context, traditional music functions not merely as artistic content but also as a pedagogical instrument capable of reinforcing national character. Through repertoire comprehension, collective practice, and the internalization of cultural values, students develop cultural identity awareness and a sense of pride as members of the Nusantara community. Thus, traditional music education serves a dual function: enhancing musical competence while shaping the personality and cultural identity of younger generations.

Traditional music learning also enhances students' musical competencies. At SMAN 1 Lembang, students studying *angklung* demonstrate notable improvements in rhythmic ability and ensemble performance. At SMAN 2 Lembang, students are able to identify traditional tuning systems such as *pelog* and *salendro*. At SMA Nurul Fikri, the use of digital technology facilitates faster comprehension of the musical structures of *gamelan* and *tembang Sunda cianjuran*. These findings reinforce the study by Muhammad Alfian Nur Khair and Hary Murcahyanto, (2025) which reports the positive impact of traditional instrument-based learning on students' understanding of rhythm and tempo. In addition, students generally exhibit improved motor skills through intensive practice in playing traditional musical instruments. Furthermore, traditional music education strengthens students' cultural identity. Through direct musical practice, students express pride in regional music and gain an understanding of the historical, aesthetic, and philosophical values embedded in traditional musical forms. As a result, students become more emotionally and intellectually connected to their local cultural heritage, reinforcing traditional music as a vital medium for cultural continuity within contemporary education.

4. Challenges in Traditional Music Learning

Limited teacher competence emerges as one of the primary challenges in the implementation of traditional music education. Music teachers with formal training in Western music often report a lack of confidence when required to teach traditional music in greater depth. This situation was evident at SMAN 2 Lembang, where the teacher required additional guidance when addressing more complex repertoires. These findings reinforce the argument presented in the introduction that the preservation of traditional music is highly dependent on the quality of the human resources involved. Observations across the three schools further reveal an uneven availability of traditional musical instruments. At SMAN 1 Lembang, instruments such as gamelan and calung are available only in limited quantities, resulting in rotational learning practices. This condition constrains the intensity of practical engagement necessary for students to attain optimal musical experience and underscores the need for stronger regulatory and budgetary support, as articulated in the music ecosystem theory (Irawati, 2025).

At the regional level, policy and budgetary support remain inconsistent. While some schools receive institutional assistance in the form of musical instruments, others rely heavily on individual teacher initiatives or school committee support. Such variability leads to uneven implementation of traditional music instruction and highlights the necessity for more robust advocacy and policy reinforcement. Student interest also constitutes a critical challenge. As digital natives, students tend to be more familiar with contemporary popular music than with traditional musical forms. Consequently, teachers are required to exert considerable effort to render traditional music learning engaging through the integration of digital media and creative pedagogical approaches. This challenge further emphasizes the urgency of pedagogical innovation, as outlined in contemporary theories of cultural learning.

5. Sustainable Revitalization Model for Traditional Music

Based on the research findings and in-depth analysis integrating cultural revitalization theory, the music ecosystem approach, and the principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka, a sustainable revitalization model consisting of four interconnected stages was formulated. The introductory stage emphasizes socialization and education regarding the value of traditional music as a national cultural heritage. Students are introduced to regional musical diversity, musical characteristics, historical contexts, and social functions within communities. This stage fosters cultural awareness by deepening students' understanding of symbolic meanings, philosophical values, and local wisdom embedded in traditional music, enabling them to build emotional connections with their cultural heritage and develop appreciative and preservation-oriented attitudes.

The core of the revitalization model lies in the active learning stage, where students engage directly in practicing traditional music through hands-on experiences. Using both authentic instruments and digital media, students explore sound characteristics, rhythmic patterns, performance techniques, and musical dynamics. This experiential learning transforms theoretical knowledge into concrete and meaningful musical competence while fostering social skills, collaboration, and coordination through group practice. Furthermore, students are encouraged to develop creativity through arrangement, improvisation, and the creation of new works rooted in Nusantara musical traditions. This process requires not only technical understanding of musical structures and traditional instruments but also artistic sensitivity in reinterpreting traditional elements, positioning learning as a dialogic space between tradition and students' creative interpretations.

Traditional music revitalization through school-based learning is a complex endeavor involving curriculum design, teacher competence, infrastructure, and the active involvement of artistic communities. Preservation efforts are effective only when supported by a structured, flexible educational system that adapts to technological developments and the characteristics of younger generations. Schools function as key agents of cultural transmission, with music teachers serving as central facilitators through pedagogical creativity. These findings affirm the relevance of the music ecosystem approach proposed by Irawati, (2025) and Maulana, Sukmayadi, Sunaryo, et al., (2025) which conceptualizes cultural preservation as a collective responsibility rather than solely an institutional task. Consequently, this study contributes significantly to music education and cultural preservation scholarship, demonstrating that traditional music learning not only sustains repertoire but also cultivates character, enhances musical competence, and strengthens students' cultural identity, offering a valuable reference for educators, policymakers, and future researchers in designing innovative and sustainable traditional music education models.

6. Comparison of Teaching Models and Student Learning Outcomes

The results of observations and interviews indicate that each school applies a distinct approach to traditional music instruction. These differences influence students' musical abilities, learning engagement, and understanding of cultural values. To clarify the relationship between teaching models and learning outcomes, Table 1 summarizes the primary instructional approaches implemented in each school and the outcomes observed among students.

Table 1. Comparison of Traditional Music Teaching Models in Three Schools
(Source: Wisnugraha, 2025)

School	Primary Teaching Model	Learning Media	Observed Student Outcomes
SMAN 1 Lembang	Ensemble-based practical learning	Angklung, gamelan degung	Improvement in rhythmic ability and ensemble coordination; students perform rhythmic patterns collectively
SMAN 2 Lembang	Discovery learning through instrument exploration	Calung and rhythmic instruments	Students are able to identify rhythm patterns and tone systems such as <i>degung</i> and <i>salendro</i> .
SMA Nurul Fikri Boarding School	Technology-integrated learning	Video tutorials, traditional music applications, audio recordings	Faster understanding of traditional musical structures; students practice independently

The table indicates that instructional models have a direct relationship with students' learning outcomes. Ensemble-based practice implemented at SMAN 1 Lembang strengthens students' rhythmic skills and musical coordination through collective performance of different instrumental parts. At SMAN 2 Lembang, the discovery learning approach enables students to explore sound and independently identify rhythmic structures and traditional tuning patterns, leading to a deeper conceptual understanding of traditional music. Meanwhile, SMA Nurul Fikri Boarding School integrates digital technology through video tutorials and traditional music applications, allowing students to practice beyond classroom hours and facilitating faster comprehension of gamelan *degung* and Sundanese musical structures while encouraging greater independent

learning. To clarify the comparison of learning outcomes between schools, the research findings can also be presented in the following simple figures.

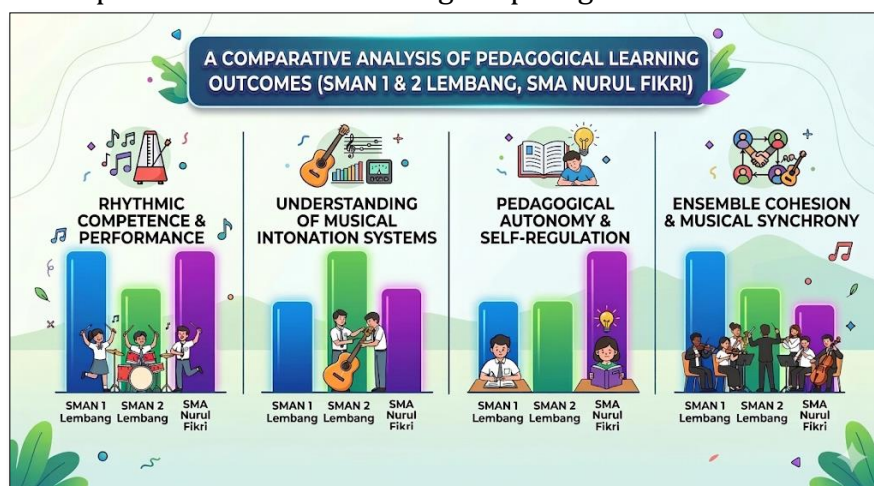


Figure 1. Comparison of the Impact of Traditional Music Learning (Source: Wisnugraha, 2025)

The comparative data reveal that each instructional approach produces distinct strengths. Ensemble-based learning generates strong improvements in rhythmic stability and collaborative ensemble performance. Discovery learning contributes significantly to conceptual understanding, particularly in recognizing rhythmic patterns and traditional tuning systems. In contrast, the integration of digital technology primarily enhances students' independent learning and accelerates their comprehension of musical materials. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of traditional music education is influenced not only by the content being taught but also by the pedagogical strategies employed by teachers. Instructional models that combine direct musical practice, exploratory learning, and technological support appear to provide more comprehensive learning experiences for students. Such an integrated pedagogical approach strengthens both musical competence and cultural understanding among learners.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study demonstrates that traditional music education in schools is essential for safeguarding national cultural heritage. In three schools in Lembang, traditional music learning was found to enhance students' musical abilities, character development, cultural appreciation, and sense of Indonesian identity through the integration of traditional instruments, digital technology, and the involvement of master artists, resulting in meaningful and contextually relevant musical experiences. The novelty of this research lies in its integration of music pedagogy, cultural preservation, and digital innovation, positioning schools as cultural ecosystems that revitalize the social function of traditional music. The proposed sustainable revitalization model comprises five stages: introduction, active learning, creative innovation, dissemination, and evaluation for sustainability. For music teachers, this study provides practical guidance to strengthen professional competence by combining digital technology with traditional instrumental practice; for schools, it underscores the importance of institutional support, including the provision of instruments, arts funding, and collaboration with arts communities; and for policymakers, it highlights the urgency of strengthening local content regulations, continuous teacher training, and the development of specific competency standards for traditional music education. Ultimately, the revitalization of traditional music is not solely

the responsibility of teachers or schools, but a collective endeavor involving government, arts communities, and society at large.

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