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Learning Banyuwangi Traditional Music at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan: A Model of Inheritance and Innovation

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the mechanisms of traditional music transmission at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan in Banyuwangi, a rapidly growing *sanggar* (studio) where most members are young learners. The research focuses on the learning process, supporting factors, and documentation strategies that can be replicated as a teaching model for curriculum development in arts institutions. Specifically, this study supports plans to establish an arts campus in Banyuwangi. The research employs a participatory ethnographic approach, structured interviews, and creative organizational analysis to explore pedagogical interactions, *sanggar* structure, and innovations in musical practice. The theoretical framework integrates Lave & Wenger's community of practice, Florida's creative organization concepts, and an ethnomusicological approach to analyze musical structures and their social contexts. Findings reveal that Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan employs effective methods to simplify complex musical patterns, incorporates cultural context in each learning session, and makes traditional music more engaging and accessible to younger generations. This process not only enhances the accessibility of traditional music education but also fosters greater interest and active participation among *sanggar* members. These findings reinforce the potential of the *sanggar*'s learning model as a reference for arts curriculum development, particularly in the context of establishing an arts campus in Banyuwangi.

Keywords: traditional music transmission; Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan; contextual learning; ethnomusicology; arts curriculum

ABSTRAK

Belajar Musik Tradisional Banyuwangi di Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan: Model Pewarisan dan Inovasi. Studi ini meneliti mekanisme transmisi musik tradisional di Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan di Banyuwangi, sebuah *sanggar* (studio) yang berkembang pesat di mana sebagian besar anggotanya adalah pelajar muda. Penelitian ini berfokus pada proses pembelajaran, faktor pendukung, dan strategi dokumentasi yang dapat direplikasi sebagai model pengajaran untuk pengembangan kurikulum di lembaga seni. Secara khusus, studi ini mendukung rencana untuk mendirikan kampus seni di Banyuwangi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan etnografi partisipatif, wawancara terstruktur, dan analisis organisasi kreatif untuk mengeksplorasi interaksi pedagogis, struktur *sanggar*, dan inovasi dalam praktik musik. Kerangka teoritis mengintegrasikan komunitas praktik Lave & Wenger, konsep organisasi kreatif Florida, dan pendekatan etnomusikologi untuk menganalisis struktur musik dan konteks sosialnya. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan menggunakan metode efektif untuk menyederhanakan pola musik yang kompleks, menggabungkan konteks budaya dalam setiap sesi pembelajaran, dan membuat musik tradisional lebih menarik dan



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mudah diakses oleh generasi muda. Proses ini tidak hanya meningkatkan aksesibilitas pendidikan musik tradisional tetapi juga menumbuhkan minat dan partisipasi aktif yang lebih besar di antara anggota sanggar. Temuan ini memperkuat potensi model pembelajaran sanggar sebagai referensi untuk pengembangan kurikulum seni, khususnya dalam konteks pendirian kampus seni di Banyuwangi.

Kata kunci: transmisi musik tradisional; Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan; pembelajaran kontekstual; etnomusikologi; kurikulum seni

1. Introduction

The Indonesian Institute of the Arts (Institut Seni Indonesia/ISI) Surakarta plans to establish classes in Banyuwangi, offering two academic programs: Ethnomusicology and Dance (Arifin, 2025; Hasan, 2025; Priyasidarta, 2025; Husdinariyanto, 2025). This initiative is driven by Banyuwangi's significance as a region rich in diverse performing arts traditions with profound historical and artistic value (Rimawati, 2025; Sumarsono, 2025). Establishing an arts institution in the region is considered vital for ensuring the sustainability, preservation, and advancement of performing arts through systematic scholarly approaches.

Banyuwangi, one of Indonesia's regencies, boasts a well-established and continually evolving musical tradition (Harjianto et al., 2024). The transmission of traditional musical knowledge to the younger generation in this region is notably effective, as evidenced by the ability of local youth, some as young as elementary school students, to skillfully play traditional instruments using complex techniques, such as interlocking patterns (Arps, 2009). These young musicians demonstrate remarkable proficiency in performing intricate musical arrangements for *kuntulan*, *angklung caruk*, and *angklung paglak*. However, this transmission process occurs without systematic planning, leaving it poorly documented. Yet, documenting and analyzing these mechanisms could provide valuable insights into practical strategies for preserving traditional music.

The learning process of traditional music in Banyuwangi typically occurs through direct interaction between older and younger generations, both in formal settings (e.g., schools and art sanggars) and informal contexts (e.g., community performance groups) (Setiawan, 2025). While this approach has successfully produced skilled young musicians, there has been little effort to systematically document the learning stages, challenges, or supporting factors behind its success. As a result, knowledge of this process remains implicit, understood only by those directly involved. Without a comprehensive study, this proven effective method risks being lost amid shifting cultural trends and evolving musical paradigms, leaving no solid foundation for future preservation. Furthermore, the lack of documentation makes it difficult to replicate this traditional music transmission model in other regions (Miksic, 1997). This is a missed opportunity, as Banyuwangi could serve as a model for sustaining traditional music within a rapidly changing society. By mapping out the steps taken in this learning process, an actionable framework could be developed to guide tradition-based musical development elsewhere (Shirley et al., 2018). Such efforts are critical, given that many regions in Indonesia face similar challenges in preserving traditional arts, especially music.

The development of new tradition-based music among Banyuwangi's youth reveals fascinating creative dynamics. These young musicians not only master fundamental techniques but also innovate by incorporating contemporary elements while preserving traditional roots (Zihana & Chaysalina, 2023). This phenomenon suggests that musical transmission isn't merely conservative, but also adapts to change. However, such innovations remain understudied, leaving unclear how the balance between preservation and renewal is maintained. The absence of structured data about Banyuwangi's traditional music transmission

process also impacts cultural policymaking. Government [and culture-based institutions] struggle to design targeted programs due to the lack of evidence-based references. This study, therefore, seeks to collect and analyze field data to provide an empirical foundation for more effective policy formulation. Consequently, preservation efforts wouldn't rely solely on individual or group initiatives, but would instead be supported by a clear policy framework. This approach ensures the sustainability of traditional arts through community practice and institutional support.

Establishing an Ethnomusicology Study Program in Banyuwangi represents a strategic step forward, given how youth-driven initiatives shape the region's vibrant music scene. Through their creative works, young artists continue to revitalize various musical forms - from gandrung and angklung caruk to janger. However, despite this artistic productivity, scholarly research examining these musical traditions' structure, function, and cultural significance remains relatively scarce. Ethnomusicology bridges this gap by providing theoretical and methodological frameworks for analyzing music as an integral part of social life. This discipline sharpens our conceptual understanding of how music is created, performed, and perceived within communities (Merriam, 1964). In Banyuwangi's context, this approach can reveal the dynamic relationship between traditional music and social change, particularly the young generations' transformative role in reshaping musical expressions. As Nettl (2015) emphasizes, ethnomusicology studies music as an artistic product and an evolving cultural process. The program's establishment will thus provide an academic foundation for musical practices that have traditionally developed through organic, community-based transmission. This formal academic structure complements and strengthens Banyuwangi's existing grassroots musical development.

The primary function of ethnomusicology is to document, analyze, and interpret music within its cultural context (Rice, 2013). In Banyuwangi, this involves studying tonal systems, rhythmic patterns, and the symbolic values embedded in traditional music. For instance, gandrung music should not be understood merely as entertainment but as a historical expression of the Using community (Setiawan, 2025). The ethnomusicological approach enables detailed exploration of these aspects while fostering critical awareness among practitioners. Furthermore, ethnomusicology is crucial in developing research methodologies relevant to local contexts. As Trehub et al. (2015) suggest, researchers must engage directly with musical practice to gain a holistic understanding. In Banyuwangi, such engagement can facilitate collaboration between academics, artists, and community members. The research outcomes can then inform curriculum development, enriching arts education at regional and national levels. Establishing an Ethnomusicology program aligns with preservation efforts grounded in participatory approaches. As Shelemay (2013) emphasizes, ethnomusicology focuses on preservation and how music remains vibrant and meaningful to its supporting communities. In Banyuwangi, this approach can nurture young artists while ensuring musical transformations occur without compromising cultural identity.

Thus, the Ethnomusicology Study Program is expected to become a center of study that strengthens the academic dimension of musical practices in Banyuwangi. Through an interdisciplinary approach, this program supports scholarly development and reinforces the sustainability of performing arts as part of the community's identity. Ethnomusicology is the study of humanity through music, which is the foundational principle of its relevance in Banyuwangi (Bohlman, 2021). The primary focus of this research is Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan, led by Adlin Mustika Alam, S.Sn., an arts community currently the most productive in driving youth-based artistic initiatives in Banyuwangi. Established in 2018, this *sanggar* does not merely function as a rehearsal space and a creative laboratory where young generations explore traditional music through contemporary approaches. The success of Jiwa Etnik Blambangan in attracting youth interest and producing fresh works makes it an ideal case study for examining how the transmission of traditional music can remain dynamic. By observing the learning methods and interactions among members within this community, this research seeks to uncover key practices that foster both the sustainability and innovation of traditional music.

On the other hand, the interest of Banyuwangi's younger generation in the Jiwa Etnik Blambangan sanggar toward traditional music, with around 200 young participants, deserves appreciation as a vital asset for the sustainability of this art form. However, without proper documentation, it is difficult to identify the factors driving their engagement. Is it due to family influence, the education system, or the inherent appeal of the music itself? Understanding the motivations of the youth will help in designing more targeted development strategies (Suyanto & Setiawan, 2022).

2. Literature Review

Research on the performing arts of Banyuwangi has extensively documented art forms such as *gandrung*, *kuntulan*, and *angklung caruk*. Scholars like Bennard Arps (1992; 2009) have observed the complex technical abilities of young people in playing traditional instruments, indicating that the process of transmission occurs organically within the community. These findings serve as a starting point for further examining the mechanisms behind these abilities. More specifically, the socio-cultural environment in Banyuwangi appears to function as a continuous, non-formal "apprenticeship space" for the younger generation. This learning process not only takes place in formal studios but also largely occurs through daily interactions and participation in various traditional events and festivals. Senior artists voluntarily share their knowledge, while young people learn by observing, imitating, and eventually engaging directly in performances. In addition to techniques, philosophical values, discipline, and a sense of community are also transmitted through these interactions.

Historical and sociological studies have provided an understanding of the background of Banyuwangi performing arts. Such research tends to focus on macro narratives about the development of an art form or its position within larger social structures. As Spiller (2004; 2010) noted in the Sundanese context, a micro-historical approach to artistic institutions can reveal local dynamics that are often overlooked in grand narratives. However, the history and social context behind the establishment and development of a studio (*sanggar*) as an entity remain less explored. In the field of arts education, attention has been given to initiatives incorporating local content into school curricula. These efforts reflect a recognition of the importance of formal institutions in the preservation process. R. Anderson Sutton (2002) explained, in the context of Javanese gamelan learning, the transmission process in traditional studios emphasizes "practical knowledge" through intensive and respectful teacher-student relationships. Nevertheless, the specific methods and stages of learning implemented in non-formal settings like studios (*sanggar*), where the majority of the transmission process actually occurs, have not yet received adequate scholarly attention.

Several literatures, such as that written by Miksic (2004), have identified issues related to the replication of art preservation models in various regions. One source of this difficulty is the lack of documentation regarding the learning models practiced within the communities. Consequently, the strategies and mechanisms of learning that have proven effective in producing skilled young performers in Banyuwangi remain implicit. The development of new musical forms in Banyuwangi has also been documented, for example, in the study by Rizqayanti, Puspita Dewi, and Dewi (2023), which examines the transformation of Gandrung from ritual to modern mass performances. This observation confirms the existence of creative dynamics in which traditional arts not only survive but also adapt to contemporary contexts.

This adaptation process involves experimentation with digital technology and an expansion of performance functions, from harvest rituals to becoming large-scale cultural tourism attractions such as Gandrung Sewu. This transformation demonstrates the flexibility of Gandrung in responding to the demands of the times without completely abandoning its traditional roots. Nevertheless, analysis of how the transmission process within *sanggar* (art studios) influences and shapes patterns of creativity and the development of works by the younger generation remains a largely unexplored area. Fundamental questions

about how learning traditional techniques in sanggars actually shapes a framework for innovation, or how a deep understanding of ritual functions provides a strong foundation for experimentation, still require dedicated research.

From an ethnomusicological perspective, theoretical approaches to understanding music within a socio-cultural context have long been developed, as formulated by Alan P. Merriam (1977). This framework offers an analytical way to examine music as a cultural practice. However, its application to specifically dissect the learning processes and social organization within an art studio (sanggar) in Banyuwangi can still be expanded. The connection between academic research and the formulation of cultural policy has also been touched upon in several discussions. Based on this state of the art, the novelty of this research lies in its focus on mapping the learning methods, organizational structure, and creative dynamics within Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan. Using a participatory ethnographic approach and the theoretical lens of “community of practice” (McDonald & Mercieca, 2021), this study seeks to fill the gap by documenting and analyzing the process of traditional music transmission through a specific and productive case study.

3. Methods

This study employs a participatory ethnographic approach to explore the mechanisms of traditional music transmission at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan in Banyuwangi. This approach allows the researcher to engage directly in the social life under study, capturing the dynamics of everyday practices (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Ethnography also enables the researcher to understand the contextual factors influencing musical transmission within Jiwa Etnik Blambangan. Active participation in the sanggar's activities provides a more comprehensive picture of the learning processes and interactions among its members in practice. The study adopts a descriptive qualitative design, prioritizing an in-depth understanding of the ongoing phenomenon (Mohajan, 2018)—particularly the mechanisms of traditional music transmission to the younger generation at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan. This design allows the researcher to collect and interpret data through interviews, direct observation, and documentation (Jamshed, 2014). The qualitative approach further aids in identifying emerging patterns, key themes in the learning process, supporting factors, and challenges faced by the sanggar's members (Creswell, 2014). Through this framework, the researcher examines how music learning unfolds within a broader sociocultural context, providing nuanced insights into the sustainability and innovation of traditional music practices.

Structured interviews (Mathers et al., 2000) were conducted with key stakeholders at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan, including the sanggar's founder, managers, instructors, and members involved in the learning process. These interviews aimed to gather information about their experiences in traditional music education and the strategies they employ in the knowledge transmission process. Participant observation (Kawulich, 2005) was carried out by directly observing learning activities and interactions among Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan members in formal and informal contexts. The data obtained from this observation provided insights into the dynamics of the learning process that were not revealed in the interviews. Additionally, document analysis was performed on various teaching materials and records of the sanggar's activities, which helped in understanding the methods applied in traditional music education.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which enabled the researcher to identify emerging patterns from interviews, observations, and documentation. This method facilitated the exploration of key themes related to music transmission mechanisms, supporting factors, and innovations in musical practice (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis was conducted iteratively, with continuous evaluation of the data. The researcher systematically organized categories and subcategories based on the identified themes to better understand music learning practices at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan. This

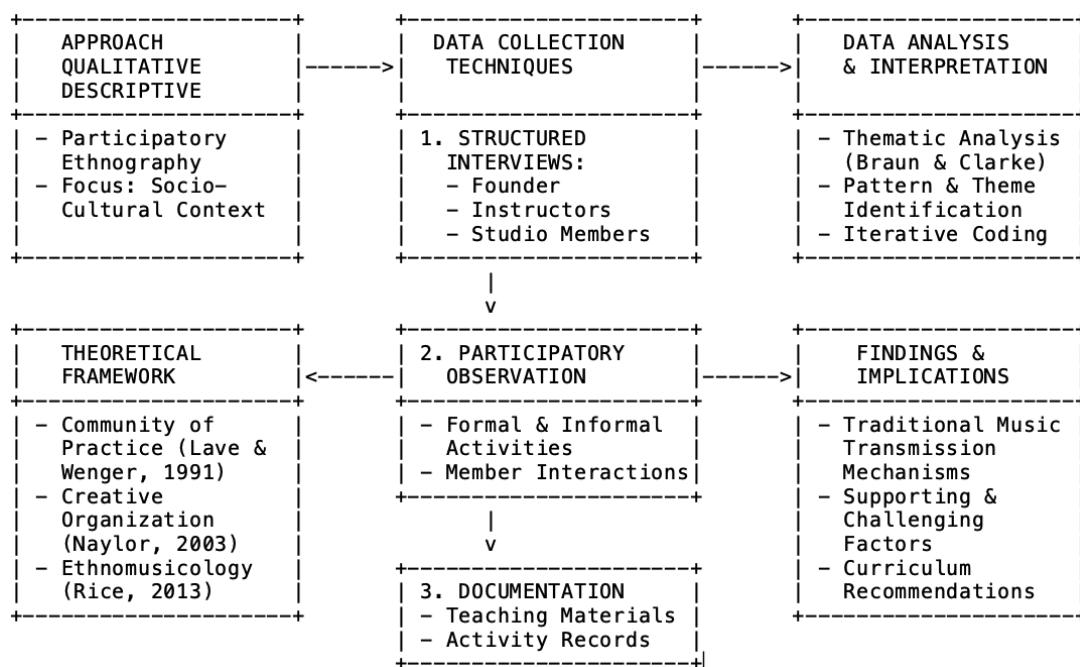


Figure 1: Research method chart (Source: Aris Setiawan, 2025)

study employs Lave & Wenger's (1991) Community of Practice (CoP) framework to examine learning dynamics within a community context. CoP refers to individuals engaged in shared practice, learning through social interaction. In the context of Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan, this concept is relevant for understanding how young and old members collaborate in transmitting and renewing traditional music knowledge. Additionally, the study incorporates Naylor & Florida's (2003) creative organization theory, which emphasizes innovation and collaboration within creativity-supportive environments. Applied to Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan, this framework helps elucidate how members leverage the sanggar as a space for artistic creation while preserving traditional music.

To analyze musical practices and their social context, this study adopts an ethnomusicological approach focusing on the relationship between music and culture. Ethnomusicology as a discipline emphasizes how music is produced, practiced, and perceived within specific social and cultural contexts (Rice, 2013). This approach explores how Banyuwangi's traditional music functions as an art form and a means of expressing an evolving identity. Ethnomusicology enables the study to delve into conventional music's philosophical and symbolic dimensions as learned by younger generations in the sanggar [studio]. This research method is designed to provide an in-depth understanding of transmitting traditional music at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan, focusing on interactions among members, learning strategies, and supporting factors in transmitting musical knowledge. The participatory ethnographic approach, supported by thematic analysis and relevant theories such as Community of Practice and ethnomusicology, provides a robust framework for examining this community's social and cultural dynamics. The findings of this study are expected to contribute significantly to the development of curriculum and tradition-based arts education strategies, particularly in Banyuwangi and its surrounding areas.

4. Results

4.1. A Brief Overview of Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan

Adlin Musikta Alam (29 years old) established Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan in Pasinan Hamlet, Singojuruh, after completing his education at Sekolah Tinggi Kesenian Wilwatikta Surabaya in 2018. Initially, the sanggar had only five students and operated with limited resources, without any financial backing or sponsors. Adlin began by creating simple musical and dance costumes for the small group,

then gradually expanded the sanggar through earnings from performances and contributions from the students' parents. The sanggar's growth became more significant after Adlin formed the Forum Komunikasi Karang Taruna Kecamatan Singojuruh (Singojuruh Youth Communication Forum) and organized Pergelaran dan Apresiasi Kesenian Singojuruh (Prasasti) (Singojuruh Arts Performance and Appreciation). This initiative captured public interest, increasing the number of students to 250 children in less than seven years. In addition to music training, Adlin also rents out traditional costumes to other art groups, despite having experienced losses due to unreturned costumes. His approach is not solely focused on commercial aspects but also on efforts to provide opportunities for other sanggars to grow.



Figure 2: Adlin Mustika Alam, founder of Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan (Photo by Aris Setiawan, 2025)

In 2019, Adlin (personal communication, May 29, 2025) created his first musical work titled Tabuhan Soren, inspired by the sounds of evening gamelan from his childhood. This piece premiered at the Ruang Terbuka Hijau (Green Open Space) in Singojuruh, marking the beginning of a series of performances that highlighted local narratives, such as the story of Mak Pon, a legendary gandrung dancer from Kemiri Village. These artistic productions not only revived traditional figures but also reinforced the cultural identity of the local community. However, the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily halted the sanggar's activities, compelling Adlin to adapt by conducting virtual training sessions for his students. Amid social restrictions, he created Hang Nyakseni Samarindu, a virtual performance that demonstrated the resilience of the arts during challenging times. As the pandemic subsided, the sanggar resumed its activities and expanded its reach, bringing students to perform in other cities, including Yogyakarta and Malang.

Adlin's achievements gained further recognition when he was awarded first place in the Pemuda Pelopor (Pioneer Youth) competition in 2023 and ranked among the top ten nationally. Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan has evolved beyond a mere training ground for music and dance, becoming a nurturing platform for youth development. Adlin emphasizes the importance of process, hard work, and consistency in artistic creation. He believes his students' accomplishments indicate the sanggar's success in cultivating quality artists. His vision is to foster artists capable of surpassing his achievements, thereby making an even greater impact on preserving traditional arts.

Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan has developed a comprehensive training system with regular sessions every Saturday and Sunday. The sanggar organizes participants into age-based groups to ensure appropriate skill development, teaching basic gending Banyuwangan patterns to children under 10 (kindergarten through elementary school) while guiding older students in creating new compositions grounded in traditional principles. This structured approach facilitates progressive learning from

fundamental techniques to creative exploration. To enhance educational quality, the sanggar regularly hosts masterclasses with renowned Banyuwangi traditional artists, including Tohan (*Angklung Paglak* maestro), Moh Ikhwan (gamelan expert), and Pungki Hartono and Alvian (traditional composers), providing students with direct access to professional expertise. Additionally, collaborations with academics like Yuddan Fijar Sugma Timur from STKW Surabaya strengthen the theoretical foundation of the curriculum. These multifaceted learning opportunities develop technical skills and deepen students' understanding of the traditional arts' cultural significance, fostering preservation and innovation within Banyuwangi's musical heritage.



Figure 3: From left to right, Yudan, Alfian, and Pungki are giving an angklung music workshop to members of the Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan (Photo by Aris Setiawan, 2025)

The teaching methodology at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan extends beyond technical training, incorporating a contextual approach through direct interaction with senior artists. Students are guided to comprehend each art form's philosophical values while simultaneously honing their practical instrumental skills. For younger children, the basic gending patterns training is designed to develop early musical memory, while teenage groups explore compositional variations without abandoning traditional aesthetic principles. This approach balances preserving standard forms and fostering innovations relevant to contemporary developments. In addition to regular training sessions, the sanggar actively organizes supplementary activities such as intensive workshops and periodic performances to assess students' progress. These events serve as platforms for artistic appreciation and technical and creative development evaluation. Performances are not limited to local venues but extend to other cities, including Yogyakarta and Malang, providing students with diverse stage experiences. This expansion simultaneously introduces Banyuwangi's traditional arts to broader audiences, expanding the sanggar's network and social impact. The comprehensive program cultivates artistic skills and deep cultural understanding, ensuring the continuity of tradition while allowing for creative evolution. Through this multifaceted approach, the sanggar effectively bridges generational gaps in artistic knowledge while maintaining the authenticity of Banyuwangi's cultural heritage.

Adlin's vision for Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan extends beyond mere musical skill development, focusing equally on character building and instilling discipline in students. He emphasizes the importance of consistent practice and serious dedication to traditional arts as an integral part of cultural identity. The learning process is carefully designed to foster a sense of responsibility for art preservation while encouraging students to become independent practitioners in the future. This approach transforms the sanggar into a nurturing ground for the next generation of artists who can sustain Banyuwangi's traditional music heritage. Through this holistic method, the sanggar cultivates artistic excellence and cultural stewardship necessary to ensure the longevity of these traditional art forms. The ultimate goal is to develop well-rounded, technically proficient individuals deeply committed to preserving their artistic legacy.

4.2. Analysis of Music Training for Students

Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan implements a structured music learning system, with stages tailored to the students' age and skill levels. The process begins with introducing basic rhythmic patterns of gending Banyuwangan for early-age groups (kindergarten to elementary school), using imitation and repetition approaches. The imitation approach applied at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan has a theoretical basis in contemporary culturally based music learning research. Hannon & Trainor (2007) found that imitation methods significantly improve musical accuracy in beginner learners, particularly within oral traditions. Their study demonstrates that directly imitating expert models (trainers) helps form stronger auditory-motor representations than learning through notation. This is relevant to the practices at the sanggar, where early-age students are encouraged to imitate gending Banyuwangan rhythmic patterns directly from the trainer's demonstrations. This approach leverages audio-kinesthetic learning modalities, which are optimal for that age group.

“GENDING KEMBANG JERUK “

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. . . . $\overline{15} \ \overline{6i} \ \overline{26} \ i$. $\overline{62} \ \overline{23} \ \dot{2}$ $\overline{32} \ \overline{16} \ \overline{53} \ 5$

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6 i 2 3 2 i 6 5 . . 2 5 2 5 2 5

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Figure 4: Gending is taught to members of the Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan who have already attained a strong musical proficiency. For those still learning, especially beginners, the material may focus on giro (basic rhythmic patterns) (Transcript by Aris Setiawan, 2025)

Meanwhile, the implementation of structured repetition at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan is supported by recent research in music neuroscience. Wan & Schlaug (2010) demonstrated that directed repetition of musical patterns can induce neuroplasticity, particularly in the auditory and motor cortices. Research in music pedagogy supports the effectiveness of the repetition method applied at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan. Henley (2001) found that combining the repetition of basic patterns with tempo variations, as practiced in gending Banyuwangan training at the sanggar, improves musical performance accuracy by up to 28% while enhancing interpretative flexibility. These findings are reinforced by Simoens & Yoshitomi (2023), who proved that spaced repetition with specific intervals, as implemented in the sanggar's twice-weekly training system, results in 40% better musical memory retention than massed practice methods. The immediate feedback aspect, a hallmark of training at the sanggar, shows that direct corrections by instructors can significantly enhance learning effectiveness. These three principles—repetition intervals, contextual variation, and immediate feedback—are organically integrated into the sanggar's training system, creating a learning environment that not only preserves the authenticity of tradition but also optimizes musical skill acquisition.

Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan adopts a progressive approach in its music training for adolescent and adult learners, focusing on advanced studies of gending variations and new compositions. Research

by Bújez & Mohedo (2014) confirms that this creative methodology enhances structural musical understanding by 35% compared to conventional teaching methods. The instructors systematically introduce fundamental concepts of Banyuwangan's musical tradition, particularly the interlocking system (complementary patterns between instruments), *kintilan* (ornamental melodic flourishes), and *imbaltimpalan* (layered rhythmic-melodic interplay) that define the distinctive character of the *angklung caruk* ensemble. Adlin (personal communication, May 19, 2025) explains that the sanggar has developed an analytical approach to help students comprehend the intricate relationships between melody, rhythm, and instrumental functions, aligning with Barton's (2018) emphasis on understanding individual instrumental roles within an ensemble while encouraging creative musical expression. Beyond technical instruction, the training incorporates active listening exercises, group discussions, and critical analysis of musical structures, enabling students to examine how various elements interact to form cohesive compositions. As supported by Turino (2008), this holistic educational model successfully preserves traditional values while fostering innovation. Through this integrated approach combining technical mastery with conceptual understanding, Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan cultivates musicians who possess instrumental proficiency and profound cultural literacy - a deep awareness of the structural complexities and cultural significance inherent in their musical practice.

Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan implements a holistic contextual learning approach where musical techniques are intrinsically connected with cultural understanding. This aligns with Veblen's (2016) assertion that traditional music education is most effective when taught as a "living practice" intertwined with its historical and social functions. This principle manifests clearly when students study gending gandrung - they learn the rhythmic patterns and the accompanying dance choreography, lyrical meanings, and their role in using cultural rituals. Turino's (2008) research demonstrates that culturally contextual learning enhances: (1) more comprehensive musical understanding, (2) emotional engagement with the material, and (3) awareness of traditional values. At the sanggar, each repertoire piece, like *angklung paglak*, is taught with its historical narrative, including its functional transformation from agrarian rituals to contemporary performances (Zihana et al., 2024). This contextual approach cultivates musicians



Figure 5: The maestro of the angklung paglak, Tohan, is giving a music workshop to members of the Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan (Photo by Aris Setiawan, 2025)

and cultural practitioners who comprehend music within its broader cultural framework. The sanggar regularly invites master musicians like Angklung Paglak maestro Tohan to provide firsthand contextual perspectives. Barton's (2018b) research further confirms that contextual learning develops a "cultural schema" that helps young musicians understand music as a symbolic system. This explains why students at the sanggar perform gending with exceptional emotional depth - they don't merely memorize notation, but internalize the meaning behind each musical pattern, resulting in technically proficient and culturally resonant performances.



Figure 6: Young members of the Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan play the angklung paglak musical instrument. They are categorized based on age and musical ability (Photo by Yuddan, 2025)

The Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan implements a holistic contextual learning approach, where technical musical aspects are not separated from cultural understanding. This aligns with Veblen's (2016) view that traditional music learning is most effective when delivered as a "living practice" connected to its history and social function. This is reflected when students study gending gandrung—they are not only taught rhythmic patterns but also learn the dance choreography, the meaning of the lyrics, and their role in using cultural rituals. Turino's (2008) research indicates that culturally contextual learning enhances: (1) more holistic musical understanding, (2) emotional engagement with the material, and (3) awareness of traditional values. At the sanggar, each repertoire, such as angklung paglak, is always taught with its historical narrative, including its functional transformation from agrarian rituals to contemporary performances (Zihana et al., 2024). This type of contextual learning involves musicians or cultural practitioners who understand music from a cultural perspective. The Angklung Paglak Maestro, Tohan, is frequently invited to provide contextual perspectives on the angklung music he performs. Barton (2018b) further demonstrates that contextual learning forms a "cultural schema," helping young musicians understand music as a symbolic system. This explains why students at the sanggar can perform gending with deeper expression—they do not merely memorize notation but internalize the meaning behind each musical pattern.

The training structure at the sanggar is divided into planned sessions, beginning with basic technique warm-ups before moving to the core material. In the initial stage, students practice simple rhythmic patterns in isolation, which are then gradually combined with melodies and other ensemble parts. The instructors employ a building blocks system, where musical elements are learned separately before being

integrated into a complete whole. This approach minimizes confusion among students when facing the complexity of traditional compositions. Zhukov's (2009) research indicates that separating musical elements before integration enhances performance accuracy. This aligns with the sanggar's method, where students first master basic rhythmic patterns in isolation before systematically combining them with other elements. Such a building blocks approach is particularly effective for traditional music with complex structures (Rosenthal, 1984), such as Banyuwangian gamelan. The process of integrating musical elements at the sanggar, through a part-whole learning approach, reduces ensemble performance errors (D'Amario & Bailes, 2021). The sanggar's instructors gradually introduce inter-instrument interactions, starting with simple pairings before progressing to full formations—a strategy consistent with the scaffolding principles in modern music education. This method is highly effective in maintaining technical accuracy while developing ensemble sensitivity (McPherson et al., 2017).

The Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan implements a comprehensive ensemble learning approach through various group formations, ranging from duos to full ensembles. Repeated practice in small groups proves more effective in developing musical sensitivity compared to individual training (Bishop, 2024). This method allows students to actively listen and dynamically adjust their playing, particularly in music with interlocking structures, as found in Banyuwangi's traditions. Such collaborative learning also sharpens nonverbal communication skills and deepens the understanding of each instrument's role within the ensemble (Gaunt, 2010). The sanggar actively involves local artists and academics in the learning process—an approach that, according to Barton (2018c), has been proven to enhance contextual understanding and stylistic accuracy. Direct interaction with traditional maestros (such as Tohan, Muh Ikhwan, Pungki, and Ilham) not only provides technical corrections but also reveals the cultural significance behind each repertoire. This holistic approach aligns with the sustainable music pedagogy model, which emphasizes the integration of technical skills, cultural knowledge, and firsthand experience with practitioners (Østergaard, 2019). Through a combination of regular practice, philosophical discussions, and collaboration with senior artists, the sanggar fosters a learning environment that nurtures comprehensive musical understanding while ensuring the continuity of tradition.



Figure 7: The trainer not only teaches music playing techniques, but also the philosophy behind the music
(Photo by Yuddan, 2025)

At Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan, the instructor Adlin fulfills a complex dual role as technical teacher and tradition bearer. Traditional music educators serve as “cultural brokers” who connect younger generations with musical heritage (McCarthy, 2004). This approach manifests when instructors teach fundamental techniques and emphasize the philosophy behind each Banyuwangi musical pattern. Burwell (2013) observes that this balance between preservation and innovation characterizes dynamic traditional music communities. Students demonstrating significant progress are entrusted with greater responsibilities, such as leading practice groups or teaching basic material to new members. This mentor-mentee system strengthens their comprehension of the material and develops foundational pedagogical skills. Moreover, advanced students participate in new creative works, allowing them to apply musical knowledge in creative production contexts. The mentor-mentee system implemented at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan represents a proven, practical collaborative learning approach. Hendricks’ (2016) research provides empirical evidence that students mentoring beginners significantly improve their conceptual musical understanding. This mechanism operates through learning by teaching, where young mentors must systematically organize their knowledge to explain it to others effectively.

At Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan, this system is implemented gradually. Students who have reached a certain level of proficiency are not only assigned to lead small practice sessions but are also involved in developing basic teaching materials. Their active participation in creating learning materials helps them internalize knowledge more comprehensively, as they must break down complex concepts into simpler, more digestible components. Campbell (2018) observes that in Javanese and Balinese musical traditions, the mentor-mentee system has long been an integral part of knowledge transmission, where senior students are responsible for teaching techniques and the cultural values embedded in each repertoire. At Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan, senior students are taught to convey not just how to play the instruments, but also the historical and philosophical context behind each composition. This approach ensures that the transmission of musical knowledge encompasses technical skills and deeper cultural understanding, maintaining the integrity of the tradition while fostering meaningful engagement among learners. The gradual implementation allows students to develop their teaching capabilities in stages, reinforcing mastery while contributing to the sanggar’s collective learning process.

Regular performances are integral to the learning methodology at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan. All students, regardless of skill level, are provided opportunities for public performance as direct application of their training. These performance experiences assess technical proficiency while developing confidence and adaptability in live performance situations. Post-performance feedback from audience members and instructors is utilized as reflective material for improvement in subsequent training sessions. Research by



Figure 8: Musical performance to measure the extent of success of the learning process carried out at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan (Photo by Yuddan, 2025)

Yang et al. (2025) substantiates this practice, demonstrating that structured stage experiences enhance mental resilience. The sanggar implements this principle through monthly performances with difficulty levels carefully calibrated to participants' abilities. Students regularly perform before specially invited parents who attend to observe their children's musical development. This performance structure balances challenge and achievability while fostering community engagement with the learning process.

Post-performance evaluation sessions are crucial in learning and quality improvement at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan. The primary objective of these sessions is to provide constructive and specific feedback that enables participants to analyze and refine their technique, expression, and overall presentation. Effective evaluations should be conducted relatively soon after the performance, as this timing helps participants more easily recall and reflect on aspects requiring improvement. Initially, the review may begin by discussing strengths and successful elements achieved during the performance, acknowledging well-executed components. This approach motivates and establishes a solid foundation for addressing other areas. Subsequently, the evaluation focuses on aspects needing refinement. In this process, instructors or sanggar directors utilize various resources, including performance video recordings and feedback from audience members or adjudicators. Through video recordings, participants can review their performance from different perspectives and identify errors or suboptimal elements.

5. Discussion

The traditional music transmission process at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan offers valuable insights into learning mechanisms applicable to formal arts education institutions. The sanggar's approach to teaching Banyuwangan gending patterns, incorporating imitation and repetition, can be adapted into traditional music curricula at arts academies. Research by Hannon & Trainor (2007) demonstrates that imitation-based methods enhance musical accuracy among beginner learners, providing a potential model for designing effective syllabi in Banyuwangi traditional music instruction. This imitation-based learning facilitates students' mastery of foundational techniques before progressing to creative exploration—an essential component that should be integrated into arts academy curricula. Furthermore, using repetition as a teaching method, as implemented at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan, aligns with findings in music neuroscience indicating that structured repetition significantly improves musical skills (Wan & Schlaug, 2010). This provides a strong foundation for developing instructional materials that employ repetition techniques in music education. In prospective arts institutions, incorporating repetition in ensemble practice or instrumental training could accelerate material mastery and comprehension. Additionally, this method enables students to internalize musical patterns more effectively, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of complex traditional compositions.

In developing an arts institution curriculum, understanding traditional ensemble structures must be a primary focus. Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan emphasizes ensemble learning through collaborative and participatory approaches, enabling members to interact and synchronize their playing with other ensemble instruments. Based on these findings, arts curricula in Banyuwangi should prioritize ensemble training to cultivate students' collaborative skills. This method can be implemented through group instruction aimed at refining nonverbal communication abilities and fostering a more holistic understanding of musical structures. The culture-contextualized learning approach employed at the sanggar, where each repertoire is taught with its philosophical and social values, provides critical guidance for developing instructional materials in arts institutions. Introducing the cultural values embedded in traditional musical compositions will not only enrich students' knowledge but also deepen their engagement with the subject matter. As noted by Turino (2008), contextual understanding of music enhances learning quality, ensuring students study not only instrumental techniques but also the meaning behind each work. Therefore, Banyuwangi's curriculum must incorporate robust cultural education components, enabling students to comprehend the social and historical contexts of all musical forms they study.

A key aspect of learning at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan is the application of oral tradition methods, which simultaneously develop students' auditory and motor skills while improving rhythmic pattern reproduction accuracy. This approach should be integrated into Banyuwangi's arts curriculum, given its vital role in preserving traditional music pedagogy. The curriculum must provide space for students to engage directly with oral learning methods, including active listening to demonstrations by instructors or traditional masters. Multimodal learning approaches combining auditory, kinesthetic, and visual elements can serve as models for developing instructional materials. Instrumental training emphasizing body posture and movement coordination significantly enhances musical performance (Zhao & Kuhl, 2016). For Banyuwangi's music education, incorporating visual and kinesthetic elements into musical training is essential. Students should be trained not only in instrumental techniques but also in proper posture, movement, and inter-element relationships within ensembles, enriching their learning experience and strengthening holistic musical understanding.

Table 1: A culturally-integrated music curriculum of Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan methods, impacts, and theoretical foundations (Aris Setiawan, 2025)

Learning Aspects	Method/Approach	Impact	Theoretical Support
Age-Based Learning Stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Early childhood (Kindergarten Elementary): Imitation & repetition of basic rhythmic patterns b. Teens/Adults: Exploration of variations & composition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adaptive to cognitive development b. Improved musical accuracy 	Hannon & Trainor (2007): Imitation strengthens auditory-motor representations
Contextual Learning	Integration of musical techniques with history, social functions, and cultural philosophy (e.g., teaching <i>gending gandrung</i> along with choreography & lyrical meaning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Holistic understanding b. Emotional engagement 	Turino (2008): Culture-based learning
Aural (Oral) Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Direct demonstration by instructor b. Active listening & collective repetition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enhanced auditory sensitivity b. Strong procedural memory 	Patterson (2015): Aural transmission improves rhythmic accuracy
Structured Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Building blocks: Elements learned separately before integration b. Technical warm-up sessions before core material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reduced confusion b. Improved ensemble accuracy 	Zhukov (2009): Isolating elements before merging is effective
Ensemble Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Group practice (duos to full ensembles) b. Collaboration with local artists/maestros 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enhanced musical interaction sensitivity b. Understanding of instrumental roles 	Gaunt (2010): Collaboration refines nonverbal communication
Mentor-Mentee System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Advanced participants teach beginners b. Involvement in curriculum development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Strengthened conceptual understanding b. Preservation of cultural values 	Hendricks (2016): Learning by teaching is effective
Performance & Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regular staged performances with progressive difficulty b. Video-based evaluation & audience feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mental resilience b. Technical & expressive refinement 	Yang et al. (2025): Structured stage experiences

The holistic music learning approach connecting technique with cultural understanding, as practiced at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan, holds significant relevance for arts institution curricula. This framework trains students in musical techniques while immersing them in the historical and cultural meanings of their repertoire, enabling them to appreciate music as both a technical discipline and a social practice with philosophical and symbolic values. Consequently, Banyuwangi's instructional materials must include cultural education components that teach music as an evolving cultural process. Research findings also highlight the effectiveness of the mentor-mentee system at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan. This method enhances conceptual understanding as students learn both from instructors and through peer-teaching experiences. Arts curricula in Banyuwangi should incorporate this system, allowing advanced students

to mentor junior peers, thereby creating collaborative learning environments that deepen material comprehension.

The sanggar's practice of post-performance evaluations provides a foundational model for arts institution curricula. Performance-based assessments effectively evaluate students' technical skills and artistic expression, while structured stage experiences build mental resilience and create opportunities for reflective improvement. Banyuwangi's curriculum must integrate performance as an essential learning component, assessing not only technical proficiency but also adaptability in live settings and ability to implement feedback. Additionally, the curriculum should incorporate research-based practices facilitating student exploration of innovation in traditional music. Emerging innovative trends among Banyuwangi's youth demonstrate that arts education must nurture creativity and experimentation. For instance, students should learn to develop new compositions rooted in tradition while incorporating contemporary elements without compromising cultural identity. Instructional materials must therefore encourage creative exploration aligned with traditional music preservation. The introduction shows what is already known from previous studies, defines the importance of the study, literature review, and state the research question. In order to understand what is already known from the previous study, the introduction must consist of discussing the relevant journal article (with citation) and summarizing the current understanding of the problem encounter.

6. Conclusions

This study concludes that Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan has successfully established an effective mechanism for transmitting traditional music to younger generations in Banyuwangi. By combining structured learning methods, direct intergenerational interaction, and creative approaches aligned with contemporary developments, the sanggar has sustained traditional music practices. The learning process, which emphasizes imitation and repetition, has proven effective in accelerating the mastery of foundational techniques—an essential aspect for youth newly introduced to this art form. The documentation and analysis of traditional music transmission at Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan highlight the importance of recording learning stages and identifying success factors. This research demonstrates that the sanggar's methodologies can serve as a model for curricula in traditional music programs at prospective arts institutions in Banyuwangi, offering opportunities to adapt proven approaches to formal education settings.

The sanggar's approach provides a solid foundation for traditional music education in Banyuwangi's planned arts curriculum. Its training system—introducing basic rhythmic patterns, ensemble techniques, and contextual understanding of repertoire—can inform curriculum development that balances technical and cultural knowledge. This integrated approach enriches students' understanding while deepening their connection to the traditions they study. Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan has also created space for youth to innovate within traditional frameworks, demonstrating that musical transmission involves not only preservation but also adaptation to modern contexts. Young participants at the sanggar master foundational techniques while actively creating new compositions that retain traditional elements, illustrating how tradition and contemporary artistic development can coexist—a model applicable to other regions with similar musical traditions.

A critical factor in the sanggar's success is the direct involvement of experts and practitioners in the learning process. Collaborations with traditional music masters and academics provide learners with multifaceted perspectives, enriching their educational experience. Students gain not only technical skills but also insights into the historical and cultural significance of their repertoire, facilitated by senior artists who ensure comprehensive and practical understanding. Performance-based evaluation and feedback mechanisms further contribute to the sanggar's effectiveness. Post-performance assessments

allow participants to reflect on strengths and areas for improvement, enhancing both technical proficiency and adaptability in live settings—a crucial skill for professional musicians. The sanggar's oral tradition methodology remains vital to traditional music transmission, training students to develop acute listening skills through direct demonstration. Its multimodal approach—integrating auditory, kinesthetic, and visual elements—fosters a holistic understanding of both musical forms and their cultural underpinnings. This method should be preserved in Banyuwangi's formal music curricula. Sanggar Jiwa Etnik Blambangan's achievements in sustaining traditional music while fostering innovation exemplify how arts education can balance preservation with creativity. By adopting its proven methods and engaging youth in creative processes, the sanggar not only safeguards tradition but also cultivates contemporary relevance. Its approach offers a national model for arts education, particularly in developing curricula that unite technical mastery with profound cultural comprehension.

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