The Ethno-Art Approach as a Strategy to Improve the Quality of *Karawitan* Learning

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Abstract. This approach explores the integration of ethno-art methods in *Karawitan* education to address the challenges of sustainability and effectiveness of traditional music teaching in Indonesia. *Karawitan,* a performing art rich in aesthetic and philosophical values, plays a significant role in arts education in Indonesia. However, *Karawitan* teaching faces obstacles, including limited facilities, a lack of systematic teaching materials, and the need for more effective teacher training. This study uses qualitative methods with in-depth analysis of related literature to understand how ethno-art approaches can improve the quality of teaching and learning *Karawitan*. The research focuses on how integrating music theory and practice with ethnographic and anthropological aspects of Karawitan can enrich the learning experience and increase student participation and interest. Through the ethno-art approach, the teaching of *Karawitan* includes the transmission of musical knowledge and provides an in-depth understanding of the historical and cultural values contained therein. Also, the ethno-art approach considers using interactive methods in the classroom, culturally-based curriculum development, and engaging students in out-of-class activities involving local communities and traditions. The results show that the ethno-art approach offers a practical framework to educate students holistically, maintaining and promoting *Karawitan* heritage as an essential Indonesian cultural asset.

Keywords: Ethno-art, *Karawitan*, Classroom Management, Learning Improvement Strategies.

1   Introduction

Karawitan is a traditional performing art that has become Indonesia's cultural heritage [22]. *Karawitan* has consistently played a vital role in arts education in Indonesia through its uniqueness, musical complexity, aesthetic values, and philosophical knowledge embedded in teaching everything from musical techniques to cultural values [39, 41]. In Indonesia's *Karawitan* education, teaching includes academic activities and efforts to preserve cultural heritage [10, 19]. On the other hand, despite its undoubted importance, teaching *Karawitan* faces several significant challenges

that can hinder the effectiveness and sustainability of this practice. One of the main challenges is the availability of adequate facilities and resources to teach *Karawitan* effectively. This is because educational institutions still struggle with a lack of systematic materials, including textbooks, scores, and other teaching materials that can be used to support cohesive and consistent teaching.

Apart from facilities and teaching resources, there must be more human resources, especially in comprehensive teacher training in *Karawitan*. Especially in the era of disruption and the Internet of Things, it is necessary to improve teachers' ability to develop teaching strategies to motivate and increase student participation. Teacher competence is related to effective classroom management. Good practices in classroom management are necessary to maximize learning potential, such as interactive seating arrangements, using various learning media, and assessment techniques that support student development.

Ironically, some areas have declined interest in *Karawitan* learning, creating an urgent need to identify, evaluate, and develop new strategies to increase engagement and interest in *Karawitan.* Therefore, the ethno-art approach emerges as an attractive strategy, where ethno-art focuses on integrating arts teaching and cultural understanding in the curriculum. The ethno-art approach to *Karawitan* teaching combines music theory and practice with ethnographic and anthropological aspects of *Karawitan*. This allows students to gain a more holistic and in-depth understanding of *Karawitan* in terms of musical technique and knowledge of the expression of Javanese historical, social, and cultural values.

Therefore, utilizing the ethno-art approach as a strategy, this research explores how practical teacher training and innovative classroom management can help overcome the challenges in teaching *Karawitan*. The study examines how integrating ethno-art aspects in the curriculum can improve the quality of teaching and learning, motivate students further, and ultimately attract the younger generation's interest in *Karawitan* as a cultural heritage.

To improve the quality of *Karawitan* learning, integrating the ethno-art approach in teacher training and classroom management offers valuable insights into maintaining and developing Javanese traditional music. The ethno-art approach, which incorporates a deep understanding of music's cultural and ethnographic aspects, has provided a new dimension to *Karawitan* teaching that is more inclusive and contextualized. Innovations in developing smaller gamelan models, as Haryono et al. (2017) researched, have brought significant changes in Karawitan education. These more compact gamelan models make the instrument more accessible to teachers and students in various educational settings [7]. From an ethno-art perspective, the physical simplification of the gamelan marks an essential step in making traditional music education more adaptive and responsive to the space and resource constraints often faced in schools. Furthermore, it opens up opportunities for more flexible and interactive teaching approaches, where students can more easily participate in ensemble practice and gain practical experience essential to understanding the complexities of *Karawitan.*

Then, research by Puguh et al. (2020) explored innovative ways to integrate Ki Nartosabdho's works, which focus on environmental themes, into the *Karawitan*

curriculum. This approach enriches the curriculum with musical aspects and instills ecological awareness as a tool for cross-curricular education [20]. From an ethno-art perspective, integrating environmental themes in *Karawitan* learning allows students to understand how their musical traditions relate to social issues. Such integration becomes interesting in the context of developing significant cultural and ecological sensitivities. Applying ethno-art in *Karawitan* education encourages transmissivity and transformational development [20]. Using narrative and storytelling methods to explore the origins and evolution of *Karawitan* music explores the use of technology to simulate and visualize musical elements that are difficult to access. Technology in *Karawitan* education can help illustrate abstract and complex concepts in music, such as rhythmic patterns or melodic structures, that may be difficult to understand through traditional audio approaches alone [4, 24].

The study by Sulistyono et al. (2023) on Wayang Wahyu is an exciting example of how performing arts can be translated into an effective communicative tool in education. Wayang Wahyu, which integrates biblical stories in a Wayang format, manifests creative and profound cultural adaptation [34]. This integration enriches students' learning experience by presenting educational material in an engaging and familiar format to teach religious and cultural values through a medium deeply rooted in Indonesian tradition [1, 10]. This approach illustrates how traditional arts can be adapted to educate about contemporary and universal issues while maintaining cultural relevance.

From a music-theoretical perspective, Setiawan's (2022) study on the development and distribution of slendro tuning and balungan concepts in *Jawatimuran Karawitan* underlines the importance of a deep understanding of music theory in *Karawitan* teaching. The study suggests that *Karawitan* teachers must have extensive knowledge of local music theory to teach effectively, providing students with a better understanding of the musical complexities of the tradition [29]. An emphasis on music theory helps students learn how to play an instrument and why certain music is played in a certain way, enhancing their appreciation of the subtlety and complexity of *Karawitan* music.

Furthermore, the link between music and neuroscience, as explored by Wardani et al. (2023), offers a new perspective on how musical instruments affect brain activity. Their finding that karawitan music has specific effects on the brain paves the way for further research into how traditional music's rhythm, melody, and structure can stimulate cognitive processes [26, 27]. This knowledge is crucial in designing learning methods musically. In practice, it has been shown that *Karawitan* curricula can be designed to utilize music's ability to improve memory, attention, and other executive functions while providing a cultural context [38].

Research by Hanif and Maruti (2024) revealed that *Karawitan* music serves as entertainment and plays a vital role in building community resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the importance of music in education and social communication. The global pandemic has prompted communities to seek new ways of maintaining social cohesion and mental resilience, and *Karawitan* has emerged as a vital means to this end [6]. From an ethno-art perspective, *Karawitan* is a cultural practice supporting communal identity and social resilience. The integration of music

in crisis management reveals how this tradition can be adapted to serve as a reminder of cultural heritage and as an active tool in supporting community well-being [9].

Widodo et al. (2021) describe the Kupingan method in music training as a teaching approach that adapts to students' specific needs and backgrounds, recognizing the importance of education sensitive to cultural and individual contexts. The Kupingan method, which emphasizes learning through listening and imitation rather than written musical notation, allows students to absorb musical nuances more intuitively and directly, which is characteristic of many non-Western musical traditions [40]. This approach is particularly relevant in multicultural contexts, where students come from various cultural backgrounds with varying degrees of familiarity with traditional musical structures. In an ethno-art context, using the Kupingan method demonstrates recognition of the value of direct experience and observation in music learning to place students' experiences and perceptions at the center of the learning process.

Overall, the strategy to improve the quality of *Karawitan* learning through teacher training and classroom management using an ethno-art perspective covers various aspects ranging from musical instrument development, creative curriculum integration, and in-depth theoretical understanding to the application of neuroscience approaches in music. Combining these innovative approaches educates students in musical skills and prepares them to understand and appreciate broader cultural values. This concerted effort demonstrates a progressive trajectory in traditional music education in preserving and enriching cultural heritage through education.

2   Method

This study used qualitative research methods. The qualitative approach was chosen for its ability to understand the complexity of social and cultural phenomena through in-depth data collection and text analysis [5, 32]. This study focuses on analyzing theories and literature to gain a broader understanding of how the ethno-art approach can be integrated with *Karawitan* teaching and its impact on improving the quality of education. Thus, this study draws on literature exploration involving the collection and analysis of secondary sources, including books, journal articles, theses, dissertations, and relevant online materials. This approach aims to build a comprehensive understanding of ethno-art approaches in musical education by considering the various perspectives and interpretations that have been put forward from several sources.

Data for this study were collected through systematic searches of academic databases such as JSTOR and Google Scholar that provide access to scholarly publications in ethnomusicology, music education, anthropology, and related disciplines. Keywords such as 'Ethno-art,' 'Karawitan,' 'traditional music education,' 'ethnomusicology,' and 'qualitative approaches in music' were used to ensure the literature search covered all relevant areas. In addition, literature related to educational theories and pedagogy was incorporated to strengthen the theoretical analysis.

Furthermore, the data collected was analyzed using the content analysis method to identify, codify, and categorize emerging patterns or themes [14, 32]. This analysis involved critically examining the texts to understand how ethno-art is articulated and applied in musical education. In addition, comparative analysis across the literature was conducted to assess consistency and variation in understanding and application of ethno-art concepts in *Karawitan* teaching practice.

3   Results and Discussion

3.1   Integration of Formal Art Education and Ethnoart

An ethno-art approach that considers the cultural context of Karawitan teaching provides opportunities for deepening the ethnomusicological aspects essential for understanding and appreciating the richness of art [35]. In terms of the history of *Karawitan,* culture-based curriculum development has been carried out by several arts institutions in Indonesia, especially those in Java. It integrates elements of Western music and Western educational approaches such as those introduced by SD Humardani while still maintaining and strengthening the traditional aspects of Karawitan [13], which includes teaching about the history, theory, and practical application of Karawitan in a broader cultural context [11, 37].

In addition, teacher training is conducted with more emphasis on the cultural context. Through teacher training, learning *Karawitan* with an ethno-art approach can emphasize the importance of cultural understanding in music teaching, combining theory and practice that helps teachers manage the classroom in a way that enriches students' learning experience with a deep knowledge of *Karawitan* traditions [13, 22]. It is linked to a diversified learning approach through gamelan notation that facilitates efficient learning and allows for more traditional learning methods [10, 25]. Students will gain in-depth understanding and hands-on experience in musical performance involving a balance between technical teaching and creative exploration.

3.2   Ethno-art in Dynamic and Interactive Classroom Management

In the context of *Karawitan* teaching, the ethno-art approach has opened up significant opportunities to integrate deep cultural nuances with modern teaching techniques, creating a multiperspective educational method [8]. Dynamic and interactive classroom management is expected to emphasize that the learning process transfers knowledge and brings to life the rich cultural values behind traditional Indonesian music. The need for an interactive classroom setting that focuses on discussion, ensemble practice, and performance allows students to be actively involved in the learning process [17, 33, 36]. In this setting, students become active participants who contribute to forming collective knowledge to explore and interpret *Karawitan* further. Furthermore, evaluation is conducted to deepen students' learning experience. A practical evaluation mechanism allows teachers to gain insight into each individual's progress and the effectiveness of the teaching methodology applied.

Out-of-class activity settings are also necessary, such as engaging with local gamelan communities and collaborative projects that strengthen students' practical skills in the cultural context of *Karawitan.* Participation in learning provides opportunities for students to collaborate with artists and practitioners from different disciplines to expand professional networks and introduce them to new perspectives that can inform and inspire students' artistic practice [6, 28, 29, 42]. Combining interactive classes, in-depth evaluations, and out-of-class activities creates a holistic and immersive learning environment in educational institutions that adopt an ethno-art approach in *Karawitan.* Musical education that adopts an ethno-art approach offers more than just music teaching; it provides an immersive education rooted in an appreciation of a rich cultural heritage while embracing and integrating contemporary practices and perspectives [16, 31]. Ethno-art reflects a commitment to nurturing and promoting the art of *Karawitan* as an essential part of Indonesia's cultural heritage, which is relevant and resonant even in a dynamic global context.

In addition to learning management, *Karawitan* teaching needs to be institutionalized in schools. Institutionalization impacts the strategy of improving the quality of learning through teacher training and classroom management [23]. In this transition, Western musical notation has facilitated standardization in the teaching of gamelan music, which promotes the teaching and learning process but often reduces authenticity and flexibility in musical expression [18]. Teacher training is crucial in combining rigid teaching methods with the flexibility of more authentic musical expression. Teachers should be trained to teach *cengkok* as a flexible tool, not a rigid rule. Thus, it encourages students to understand that variety and personalization in performance are essential to the gamelan tradition. Classroom management must also allow students to explore beyond standard material and experiment with *cengkok* in various musical contexts. Integrating observations of teachers' performances outside the classroom into the official curriculum can help students appreciate and understand the importance of flexibility in musical practice. Criticism of overly standardized approaches, as demonstrated through certain styles of *Karawitan* [30], points out the need for a more flexible curriculum that not only focuses on notation reproduction but also on developing creativity and a deeper understanding of gamelan music. Therefore, education policy should revise curricula and provide continuous teacher training by emphasizing teaching methods that combine academic rigor with expressive freedom. It aims to ensure that gamelan music education results in a centralization of technique and a deep understanding and appreciation of flexibility and creativity in the Javanese musical tradition.

3.3   Integration of Ethno-art through Collective Awareness, Local Knowledge, and Emic-ethical Approach

Improving the quality of *Karawitan* learning through applying the ethno-art paradigm, which is rooted in ethnoscience and utilizes concepts such as collective consciousness, local knowledge, and ethics [12]. In this context, collective consciousness refers to how performers collectively understand and interpret musical elements based on intersubjective experiences. This is relevant in *Karawitan* learning

as it facilitates a deep understanding of how compositions and performances are perceived and valued collectively within a community [3, 15]. Local knowledge of *Karawitan,* which includes a deep understanding of repertoire, styles, and techniques specific to a community, is essential to maintain and develop [6]. In *Karawitan* education, integrating local knowledge into the curriculum enriches students' learning experiences and ensures the sustainability of traditional musical practices.

The Emic-ethical concept, derived from linguistics, also plays a role in understanding how local terms and concepts (EMICS) can be explained and interpreted into a broader framework (ethics) for a more universal understanding [2]. In *Karawitan* education, this can mean adapting local terms in teaching and articulating them in a language accessible to people outside the community, enabling cross-cultural exchange of knowledge and understanding. For example, in the study of 'mrabot,' a composition in Surakarta-style *Karawitan*, applying these concepts can help students not only learn its musical structure but also understand how the composition contains and exudes relevant cultural values, as well as how they as musical performers can explore and communicate those essences to a broader audience. Thus, the ethno-art paradigm provides a valuable framework for deepening the teaching and learning of *Karawitan* and promoting awareness and appreciation of its cultural richness.

4   Conclusion

The application of ethno-art offers a holistic approach combining musical, cultural, and ethnographic aspects to enhance students' technical understanding of Karawitan and deepen their appreciation of the historical and cultural value of *Karawitan*. As one of the main components in the ethno-art paradigm, collective consciousness has shown the importance of shared understanding and collective interpretation in *Karawitan* teaching. This underscores *Karawitan* learning, an individual and communal process where students learn to understand and interpret music in the broader context of local communities and traditions. This helps students become part of a living and breathing heritage that reflects the community's history and values. Furthermore, local knowledge also plays a vital role in the ethno-art approach by emphasizing the importance of integrating knowledge and techniques specific to a particular community into the *Karawitan* education curriculum. Thus, ethno-art can help students gain more authentic expertise connected to local cultural roots and traditions.

The Emic-ethical concepts of linguistics also provide insight into how local terms and concepts can be explained and interpreted within a broader framework to facilitate general understanding. In *Karawitan* learning, local terms and concepts are taught in isolation and translated and discussed in a language accessible to those not from the local community. This approach enables the cross-cultural exchange of knowledge and understanding and broadens the reach and impact of *Karawitan* education. Therefore, the ethno-art approach is an effective strategy for overcoming some challenges faced in teaching *Karawitan* and can significantly improve the

quality of traditional arts education. Furthermore, this approach must be expanded and better integrated with *Karawitan* curricula and learning practices across Indonesia to ensure that this cultural heritage continues progressing and being cherished by future generations.

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