



The Role of Dance Education in Shaping Elementary School Students' Character: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of dance education in shaping the character of elementary school students through a literature review approach. The data were collected from scientific articles indexed in Google Scholar and SINTA journals (2020–2026) using a qualitative content analysis method. The findings indicate that dance education plays an important role in developing students' character, including discipline, responsibility, cooperation, empathy, independence, creativity, and social awareness. In addition, dance learning integrates cultural values and local wisdom that strengthen character development in elementary school students. This study concludes that dance education is an effective learning medium in supporting character education based on arts in elementary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Character education is one of the key pillars of primary education, aiming not only to develop students' cognitive achievement but also to shape their attitudes, values, and behaviors in accordance with social and cultural norms. At the elementary school level, children are in a critical stage of moral and social development that significantly influences their long-term personality formation. Therefore, schools play a strategic role in instilling character values in a systematic and sustainable way. In this context, learning is not only focused on academic outcomes but also on character development through meaningful learning activities.

One of the effective approaches to strengthening character education is through arts education, particularly dance education. Dance learning functions not only as a medium for artistic expression but also as a learning platform that integrates character values into its process. Dance activities involve physical, emotional, and social engagement, allowing students to naturally develop discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and self-confidence through direct learning experiences. This is consistent with findings showing that dance learning in elementary schools inherently contains educational values such as religiosity, discipline, independence, and social values that emerge throughout the learning process (Mukhlisin, 2022).

Furthermore, dance education at the elementary level also demonstrates that the practice and interaction among students contribute to the formation of positive attitudes and daily behavioral habits. Dance learning does not only focus on mastering movements but also emphasizes character building through active and collaborative learning experiences (Enjeli et al., 2025). Thus, dance can be viewed as a holistic educational medium that integrates aesthetic development with moral values within a single learning process.

The role of dance education in character formation becomes even more significant when implemented through extracurricular activities. These activities provide students with more flexible opportunities to practice intensively, collaborate in groups, and develop discipline and responsibility. Research indicates that extracurricular regional dance learning effectively fosters values such as cooperation, self-confidence, and positive character development through hands-on practice (Karnilawati et al., 2022). In addition, extracurricular dance activities have been shown to be particularly effective in developing students' discipline through punctuality, rule compliance, and responsibility during training sessions (Lestari & Asriyanti, 2025).

On the other hand, dance education also carries an important cultural dimension in shaping students' identity and cultural awareness. Local culture-based dance learning not only introduces students to cultural heritage but also instills character values embedded within it, such as politeness, cooperation, and patriotism (Nurhidayati, 2021). This is supported by findings that traditional dance contains character values reflected in every movement and serves as an effective medium for character formation in elementary school students (Ramdani et al., 2020). Thus, dance education functions not only as arts

instruction but also as a medium for cultural preservation and national character building.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the positive contribution of dance education to students' character development, comprehensive literature that integrates these findings remains limited. Many studies focus on specific contexts, such as extracurricular activities or particular types of dance, making it necessary to conduct a broader literature review to identify general patterns and the strategic role of dance education in shaping elementary school students' character.

Therefore, this article aims to conduct a literature review on the role of dance education in shaping elementary school students' character. This study is expected to provide a more comprehensive overview of the character values embedded in dance learning, both in intramural and extracurricular contexts, and contribute theoretically to the development of character-based arts education in elementary schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Character Education in Elementary School Context

Character education is a fundamental component of elementary education aimed at shaping students' moral understanding, emotional awareness, and behavioral actions. According to Lickona's theory, character development consists of three interrelated dimensions: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Arisyanto et al., 2018). These dimensions emphasize that students are not only expected to understand moral values cognitively, but also to internalize and apply them in real-life behavior. In the context of elementary school, character education functions as a long-term foundation for developing responsible, ethical, and socially aware individuals.

Character education in Indonesia is also strengthened through national education policy that integrates core values such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, honesty, and respect into learning activities (Putri, 2013). These values are implemented not only in classroom instruction but also through school culture and extracurricular activities. As highlighted in previous studies, the implementation of character education is effective when it is consistently embedded in both curricular and non-curricular activities, allowing students to experience values in meaningful and habitual ways (Halidu et al., 2018).

Discipline Character as a Core Value in Student Development

Discipline is one of the most essential character values in shaping students' behavior and learning habits. Discipline is defined as obedience to rules, punctuality in completing tasks, and consistency in following established norms (Pratiwi, 2020). In elementary school settings, discipline is reflected through behaviors such as arriving on time, following instructions, wearing appropriate uniforms, and completing responsibilities properly.

Research indicates that discipline is strongly associated with students' learning success and social behavior development. Students who demonstrate discipline tend to show better self-regulation, higher responsibility, and

improved academic engagement (Elly, 2018). Furthermore, discipline is not only a behavioral outcome but also a habit formed through continuous practice and reinforcement within structured environments such as school activities and extracurricular programs (Hidayatullah et al., 2020).

In dance-based learning environments, discipline becomes even more visible because students must follow rhythm, instructions, group coordination, and time management. This makes dance activities an effective medium for strengthening students' discipline character through repetitive practice and structured routines.

Dance Education as a Medium for Character Formation

Dance education in elementary schools plays a significant role in integrating artistic learning with character development. Traditional dance learning is not only focused on physical movement skills but also involves emotional expression, teamwork, and cultural appreciation. As stated by Sundari and Setyo (2016), dance learning contributes to students' creativity while simultaneously instilling social and moral values.

Previous research shows that extracurricular dance activities can foster multiple character values such as cooperation, empathy, responsibility, confidence, and respect for others (Arisyanto et al., 2018; Daningtyas et al., 2021). Through repeated practice and group performance, students learn to coordinate with peers, respect instructions from instructors, and take responsibility for their roles in performances.

In addition, dance activities require students to maintain discipline in terms of time management, costume preparation, and practice attendance. These structured demands make dance education a practical environment for reinforcing disciplined behavior. Studies also emphasize that traditional dance learning helps students internalize cultural values while developing personal character traits that are applicable in daily life (Ramdani et al., 2020).

Extracurricular Activities and Character Development

Extracurricular activities are recognized as an important platform for character education because they provide flexible learning spaces outside formal classroom instruction. According to Supiani et al. (2020), extracurricular programs aim to develop students' interests, talents, and character through experiential learning.

Dance extracurricular activities, in particular, are effective in shaping discipline and social behavior because they require consistent participation, teamwork, and responsibility. Karista and Ana (2024) highlight that extracurricular engagement helps students develop time discipline, rule compliance, and task responsibility. Similarly, Pratiwi (2020) found that students involved in structured extracurricular programs tend to demonstrate stronger discipline compared to those who do not participate.

Moreover, dance extracurricular activities also provide opportunities for organizational learning, where students may take roles such as costume management, scheduling, and performance coordination. These experiences

contribute to leadership development and responsibility awareness, which are essential components of character formation (Fibrianto & Yuniar, 2020).

Conceptual Framework of Dance Education and Discipline Character

Based on the reviewed theories and studies, dance education can be understood as a holistic learning medium that integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. In elementary school settings, especially through extracurricular programs, dance learning serves as a structured environment for developing discipline character through habituation.

Discipline in dance education is reflected in four main indicators: punctuality, rule obedience, responsibility, and seriousness in participation. These indicators align with findings from previous studies that emphasize consistent behavioral patterns as the foundation of character development (Asriyanti & Fitria, 2023; Hidayatullah et al., 2020).

Thus, dance education is not merely an artistic activity but also a pedagogical tool that contributes significantly to students' character formation, particularly discipline. Through continuous practice, repetition, and social interaction, students gradually internalize discipline as part of their daily behavior both in school and outside the school environment.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a literature review method with a descriptive qualitative approach. This method is applied to examine, analyze, and synthesize various research findings related to the role of dance education in shaping elementary school students' character, particularly values of discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and other character traits developed through extracurricular dance activities. The literature review is conducted to obtain a comprehensive understanding of concepts, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings related to dance education and character development in elementary schools.

The data sources in this study are Indonesian-language scientific articles obtained from the Google Scholar database. The article search process was carried out using several keywords, such as *dance education*, *elementary school character education*, *extracurricular dance activities*, *student discipline character*, *traditional dance learning*, and *character building through arts education*. The selected articles are those that are relevant to the research topic and published in scientific journals.

The inclusion criteria in this study are: (1) articles written in Indonesian or English, (2) articles discussing dance education or arts learning in elementary schools, (3) articles focusing on character development (especially discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and social behavior), (4) full-text available articles, and (5) articles published between 2018 and 2026. Meanwhile, articles that are not relevant to the research topic, not focused on elementary education, or not published in scientific journals were excluded from the analysis process.

The data analysis technique used is qualitative content analysis, which includes identifying main themes, comparing research findings, and grouping results based on the study focus, namely: (1) the role of dance education in

character formation, (2) forms of character developed through dance activities, and (3) the impact of extracurricular dance activities on students' behavior and discipline. The analyzed data are then presented descriptively to explain the contribution of dance education to the development of elementary school students' character based on previous research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This literature review aims to identify and analyze previous studies relevant to the role of arts education in developing character among elementary school students. The reviewed literature includes various studies focusing on both dance and music education, implemented in intramural and extracurricular learning activities. These studies consistently indicate that arts education not only serves as a medium for developing artistic skills, but also plays an important role in fostering character values such as discipline, cooperation, responsibility, creativity, and social care among students. Based on a search conducted through Google Scholar, ten relevant scholarly articles were selected and analyzed to examine patterns, similarities, and contributions of each study to the research topic. The findings of this literature review are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Literature Review Findings on the Role of Arts Education in Developing Character among Elementary School Students

No	Researcher & Year	Journal / Source	Main Research Findings
1	Lestari & Asriyanti (2022)	Journal of Elementary Education	Extracurricular dance activities help develop students' discipline character, including punctuality, responsibility, obedience, and seriousness in participation.
2	Nurhidayati (2021)	Universitas Negeri Semarang	Local wisdom-based dance learning strengthens students' character education by instilling cultural values that support moral development in elementary school students.
3	Ramdani, Restian & Cahyaningtiyas (2020)	Muhammadiyah University of Malang	Traditional dance learning integrates character education such as cooperation, empathy, independence, politeness, and mutual help among students.
4	Maharani, Efendi & Oktira (2022)	Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Sumatera Barat	Music arts education contributes to character building by fostering cultural values, creativity, and moral awareness, although teacher competence and

			implementation remain challenges.
5	Nabila (2022)	Journal of Dance Education (SINTA 4)	Practice Rehearsal Pairs strategy improves students' confidence, cooperation, and active participation in dance learning activities.
6	Sunarti, Sukadari & Antini (2021)	Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta	Extracurricular Nawung Sekar dance instills religious values, discipline, hard work, independence, creativity, social care, and responsibility through habituation and guidance.
7	Karnilawati et al. (2022)	Universitas Negeri Padang	Regional dance extracurricular activities develop students' interest and character values such as teamwork and cultural awareness through group-based learning.
8	Dewi (2022)	AR-RIAYAH Journal	Kejei dance contains educational values such as religiosity, discipline, tolerance, and communication, which are embedded in dance movements.
9	Mukhlisin (2022)	Journal of Elementary Education	Dance learning in elementary schools embeds religious, discipline, independence, and social values during the teaching and learning process.
10	Enjeli et al. (2025)	Universitas Palangka Raya	Dance learning improves student engagement, though limited facilities remain a challenge; results show improvement in participation and learning outcomes.

The findings presented in Table 1 summarize ten selected studies that examine the role of arts education in developing character among elementary school students. Overall, the reviewed literature shows a consistent pattern that arts education particularly dance and music learning contribute significantly to character formation in students. Various studies highlight that dance-based learning activities, both in classroom and extracurricular settings, are effective in fostering essential character values such as discipline, responsibility,

cooperation, independence, tolerance, and social awareness. In addition, several studies emphasize that integrating local wisdom and traditional cultural elements into dance learning further strengthens students' moral and cultural identity.

The table also shows that different instructional approaches, such as extracurricular dance programs, traditional dance learning, and specific teaching strategies like Practice Rehearsal Pairs, play an important role in enhancing students' engagement and active participation. Furthermore, music education is also identified as a medium that supports creativity and moral development, although some studies note challenges related to teacher competence and learning implementation. Overall, these studies indicate that arts education is not only focused on developing artistic skills, but also serves as an effective medium for holistic character development in elementary education.

The findings from the literature review indicate that arts education plays a significant role in shaping character development among elementary school students. Across the reviewed studies, dance and music education consistently emerge as effective learning media for instilling core character values such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, independence, tolerance, creativity, and social awareness. This demonstrates that arts education is not only an aesthetic or skill-based subject, but also an important pedagogical approach for holistic student development.

Specifically, dance learning both in classroom instruction and extracurricular activities provides structured opportunities for students to practice positive behaviors in real contexts. Activities such as movement practice, group performances, and following instructor guidance naturally encourage students to develop discipline and responsibility. In addition, collaborative dance activities foster teamwork, empathy, and communication skills, which are essential components of social character development in elementary education (Ramdani, Restian, & Cahyaningtiyas, 2020).

Another important finding is the integration of local wisdom and traditional culture in dance learning. The reviewed studies show that culturally based dance instruction strengthens students' moral values and identity, while also increasing their appreciation of cultural heritage. This integration allows students to internalize character values in a more meaningful and contextual way. This is supported by Nurhidayati (2021), who found that local wisdom-based dance learning contributes significantly to strengthening character education in elementary school students.

Various instructional strategies such as extracurricular programs and cooperative learning approaches also contribute to improving students' engagement and confidence. These strategies enable students to learn actively, practice repeatedly, and receive peer feedback, thereby enhancing both skill mastery and character development. This is consistent with Lestari and Asriyanti (2022), who reported that extracurricular dance activities effectively develop students' discipline through habituation, punctuality, responsibility, and active participation.

However, several studies also highlight challenges in implementing arts-based character education, including limited facilities, inadequate learning resources, and differences in teacher competence in integrating character values into arts instruction. Despite these challenges, the overall literature confirms that arts education remains a powerful and multidimensional approach in elementary education, as it supports not only cognitive and psychomotor development but also the affective and moral dimensions of students.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that arts education, particularly dance learning, plays a significant role in developing the character of elementary school students. The reviewed studies consistently show that dance activities contribute to the formation of discipline, responsibility, cooperation, empathy, independence, creativity, and social awareness. These character values are developed through structured learning activities, habituation processes, and the integration of cultural and local wisdom values in dance education.

In addition, dance learning in both curricular and extracurricular contexts provides meaningful learning experiences that support students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development. Therefore, arts education should not only be seen as an aesthetic subject but also as an important medium for character education in elementary schools.

It is recommended that teachers integrate character education more explicitly into dance learning activities by using appropriate learning strategies, such as collaborative learning, performance-based activities, and contextual approaches based on local culture. Schools are also encouraged to provide adequate facilities and support systems to optimize the implementation of arts education.

FURTHER STUDY

This study has limitations because it only uses a literature review approach that relies on secondary data from previous studies. In addition, this research does not involve direct field observations, so the findings do not fully represent the real conditions of dance learning in elementary schools in depth.

Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct empirical studies in elementary schools involving students and teachers directly. Future studies may use quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approaches to examine more deeply the impact of dance learning on students' character development in real classroom contexts.

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