

# Experiential Learning Gambang Kromong as a Bridge Between Generations and Preservation of Critically Reasoned Culture in Higher Education

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## Abstract

This research aims to explore the experiential learning of Gambang Kromong as a bridge between generations and a cultural preservation strategy in higher education, prompted by declining youth interest and limited curriculum integration. Using a participatory case study in the Music Education Program at Jakarta State University, data were gathered from 45 students, two maestros, and two lecturers through observation, interviews, and document analysis. Findings identified ten essential elements of Gambang Kromong requiring preservation and demonstrated the effectiveness of experiential learning in enhancing student engagement, critical understanding, technical skills, and cultural appreciation. The study confirms the role of higher education as a living laboratory for cultural revitalization. The model successfully deconstructed learning hierarchies, fostered cultural empathy, and developed student agency as active cultural actors. Recommendations include sustained curriculum integration, development of digital platforms, educator training, supportive policies, community collaboration, and further research.

**Keywords:** Experiential Learning, Gambang Kromong, Intergenerational Learning, Higher Music Education, Cultural Sustainability

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The preservation of intangible cultural heritage is a pressing global issue, particularly in the context of intensifying globalization. In this context, higher education can play a fundamental role as a mediator in facilitating cultural transfer and preservation. Globalization not only threatens local cultural identity but also triggers the need for the critical involvement of the younger generation in preserving their cultural heritage. Seeing this phenomenon, it is essential to adopt an education strategy that is not only relevant but also sustainable. (Raharjo, 2021; Simatupang et al., 2025)

In Indonesia, one of the cultural heritages that has experienced similar challenges is Gambang Kromong, a form of music that presents elements of Betawi culture. (Arini et al., 2023; Putri & Hartati, 2022; Sukotjo, 2022). Currently, Gambang Kromong is in a state of crisis due to the declining number of artists, especially among the younger generation. This phenomenon poses a risk to the preservation of fossils and the loss of the values contained in the tradition. (Arini et al., 2023; Putri & Hartati, 2022; Suseno & Mulyana,

2023; Wicaksono et al., 2014). Limited access to art education and a lack of integrative efforts in the higher education curriculum make the urgency of preserving Gambang Kromong even more urgent.

Existing research indicates that the use of experiential learning methods can enhance students' understanding and engagement with art and culture. (Mulyaningrum & Ryolita, 2024; Simatupang et al., 2025; Suseno & Mulyana, 2023) Although many studies have focused on learning methodologies in a general context, there is still a neglected side, namely the application of this strategy in specific contexts such as the preservation of the local culture of Gambang Kromong. Previous research has also noted that technology is increasingly being used to introduce and preserve traditional music; however, its implementation in higher education in Indonesia remains minimal. (Mulyaningrum & Ryolita, 2024; Simatupang et al., 2025; Sukotjo, 2022). Therefore, there is significant room to investigate this approach further.

Given the existing literature, no research explicitly examines Gambang Kromong within the framework of learning experiences in higher education. Most studies have placed more emphasis on aspects of music engineering or an overview of ICH, but have not linked the application of experiential learning to the preservation of local culture. This research aims to fill this gap by focusing on how higher education can serve as a bridge between generations in the preservation and enrichment of the Gambang Kromong tradition. (Putri & Hartati, 2022; Suseno & Mulyana, 2023).

The urgency of this research lies in the urgent need to link education with the preservation of local culture. Researchers need to pay more attention to how higher education can serve as a platform to support the regeneration of art actors, especially among the younger generation, as well as to revitalize the endangered Gambang Kromong tradition. Educating the younger generation through a creative and critical approach is a crucial step in ensuring that this cultural heritage is not only learned but also understood and applied in the modern context. Thus, the research questions are: 1) How does the experiential learning process of Gambang Kromong facilitate the dynamics and exchange of knowledge between generations between students and maestros?; 2) How does this direct experience shape students' critical understanding of the concept of "cultural preservation"?; What are the implications of this model for the delivery of socially relevant quality music education in college?

In today's digital age, research suggests that integrating technology in higher education is beneficial for the revitalization of traditional music (Simatupang et al., 2025). By leveraging digital media and experiential learning, higher education has the potential to create a better connection between young people and their cultural heritage. For example, research on the use of technology in the learning of Gambang Kromong shows that this combination can increase the attractiveness and relevance of traditional music among students (Mulyaningrum & Ryolita, 2024).

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of experiential learning methodologies into the higher education curriculum to revive and preserve Gambang Kromong. With this approach, it is hoped that it can increase student involvement and strengthen the sense of cultural identity among the younger generation. This research will not only explore its musical techniques but also emphasize the social and historical values contained in it, providing a new perspective on the importance of cultural preservation in the era of globalization.

This research aims to explore how experiential learning can be used as a bridge between generations in the preservation of Gambang Kromong in higher education. The more specific objectives of this study are: (1) Analyzing the important elements of Gambang Kromong that need to be preserved; (2) Evaluating the effectiveness of experiential learning in the context of local cultural teaching; and (3) Identifying ways in which higher

education can contribute to the revitalization of cultural traditions. With the achievement of this goal, it is hoped that this research can provide a more inclusive and effective model of cultural preservation in Indonesia.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

David Kolb, in his theory of experiential learning, introduces a learning cycle comprising four steps: concrete experience, reflection, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. (Adnan, 2023; Chang, 2024; Park, 2022). This approach is particularly relevant in art education, including in the context of preserving the Gambang Kromong culture, where direct involvement and personal reflection are crucial for deepening cultural appreciation. The hands-on experience allows students not only to learn about musical techniques but also to understand the meaning and social context that comes with them. Correspondingly, the theory of embodied pedagogy emphasizes the importance of physical experience in the learning process, which is particularly relevant for the performing arts, as they require the interpretation of the body and emotions. However, there are no specific references that directly support this statement, hence the citation. (Fields et al., 2021; Larson & Flach, 2013) Is untenable.

Within this framework, the concept of "embodied knowledge" further suggests that knowledge is inseparable from the physical and emotional contexts in which learning occurs. (Ehmer, 2021; Fan, 2022; Huang, 2022). Through interactions in studios, trainings, or performances, students experience first-hand knowledge, which sharpens their understanding of the Gambang Kromong tradition. Through communities of practice, as described by Lave and Wenger, learning becomes more contextual, with members interacting and learning from one another in a collaborative environment. (Donkers, 2022; Felege et al., 2022; Luo, 2025). This creates an inclusive learning space where the exchange of experiences between generations can occur, connecting students with more senior maestros and art performers.

Intergenerational learning is a learning process that involves the exchange of knowledge, values, and skills between different generations. (Cheng, 2022; Matějka & Kořán, 2024; Oropilla & Guadaña, 2021; Shih, 2024; Wang, 2022). This approach is dialogical and reciprocal, rather than linear, where each generation plays a significant role in the delivery and preservation of culture. This theory emphasizes the importance of shared experiences, in which the older generation passes on its knowledge to the younger generation, which in turn provides a new and innovative perspective on existing traditions. (Matějka & Kořán, 2024; Ouma, 2022; Singh, 2021; Stephan, 2021). Through cross-generational learning, both the teaching of Gambang Kromong techniques and the values that underlie them can be done more holistically and contextually.

Furthermore, this process supports the preservation of an active and participatory culture. In the context of the preservation of Gambang Kromong, the young generation involved not only serves as successors, but also as innovators who adapt the tradition with contemporary elements, thus making this art relevant in their generation (Oropilla & Guadaña, 2021). In this way, preservation becomes a dynamic process in which culture is not only transmitted but also renewed and reinvented in response to new needs and contexts.

Laurajane Smith, in her work, shows that preservation is not just about preserving artifacts and techniques but also serves as an active, participatory, and adaptive process. (Holloway et al., 2023; Raharjo et al., 2025; Saputra et al., 2024). In this regard, it is important to question the authoritative narratives that often dominate the understanding of how cultural heritage should be preserved. This arises from the recognition that heritage is a social construct that is constantly changing and influenced by the context and needs of the society

at that time. In the context of Gambang Kromong, this approach encourages thinkers to evaluate not only the technique but also the emotions, experiences, and intergenerational interactions involved in the practice of art.

The concept of "heritage as performance" underlines that cultural heritage must be understood as a dynamic practice and engaged in a broader cultural context. Through the Gambang Kromong performance, art actors not only express their abilities but also establish social relationships that reflect their identity. This creates a space where new identities and meanings can be constructed, further reinforcing the importance of tradition in people's lives today. (Holloway et al., 2023; Raharjo & Harimuti, 2025).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a participatory intrinsic case study design. (Kemmis et al., 2014) To explore the experiential learning phenomenon of Gambang Kromong in its natural context in depth. This approach was chosen because of its relevance in capturing the complexity and richness of socio-cultural processes in art education. (Bresler, 2021). As an intrinsic case study, the focus is on gaining an in-depth understanding of this specific case—that is, the regional music learning program at the State University of Jakarta—not to generalize, but to gain rich contextual insights. (Stake, 1995). The participatory approach places the researcher (who is also the lecturer in charge of the course) not as a neutral observer, but as a participant-facilitator who is actively involved in designing, facilitating, and reflecting on learning interventions, as well as critically examining them. (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014).

The research context is a regional music-based course in the curriculum of the Music Education Study Program at the State University of Jakarta, which explicitly raises Gambang Kromong as an object of study and practice. The study participants totaled 49 people, divided into three key groups: (1) 45 S1 students who took the course, as recipients of the intervention and the main subjects of perception change; (2) 2 Gambang Kromong maestros/artists who are recognized by the community, acting as sources of authentic knowledge and teaching partners; and (3) 2 lecturers including researchers, as pedagogical designers and facilitators. The purposive selection of maestros and lecturers was carried out based on their track record and active involvement in preserving the Gambang Kromong. (Campbell & Wiggins, 2020).

The intervention is designed based on Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle theory, modified for the arts and cultural context, emphasizing concrete experience, observational reflection, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This model is effective in teaching complex cultural practices. (Aithal & Mishra, 2024; Lund & Näsval, 2021; Pamungkas et al., 2019) (Lund & Näsval, 2021). The core activities are structured into several phases: The Immersion Phase, which includes live workshops and intensive workshops with the maestro, where students learn instrumental techniques, repertoire, and musical philosophy directly from the source. (Schippers & Bartleet, 2020). The Contextualization Phase involves visits to the Betawi artist community to observe the social function of music in its natural setting. (Matsunobu, 2021). The Critical Reflection Phase is conducted through guided reflection sessions following each activity, allowing participants to process their experiences. The Creation Phase is manifested in a group creative project where students create new arrangements or educational media based on Gambang Kromong, testing their understanding while contributing to dynamic regeneration. (Hess, 2019).

To ensure the depth and validity of the data, the study used the triangulation method. (Denzin, 2017). First, Participant Observation is carried out on the entire series of activities. The observation protocol is focused on the dynamics of intergenerational interaction (student-maestro), the process of negotiating meaning, and the manifestation of collaborative learning (Barrett & Bond, 2021). Second, an in-depth Semi-Structured Interview was conducted with representatives of the three participant groups. The interview guidelines are designed to explore perceptions of the effectiveness of intergenerational bridges, the reinterpretation of the concept of preservation, and the development of critical reasoning (Brinkmann, 2020). Third, Document Analysis of process artifacts, including student reflection journals that record their emotional and intellectual journeys, as well as final project documentation videos that record forms of creative expression and musical understanding (Pink, 2022).

Data from all sources were analyzed using the Reflexive Thematic Analysis method, as outlined in the Braun and Clarke model. (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Christou, 2023; Raharjo et al., 2025; Xu, 2020) (2022). This process consists of six phases: (1) thorough familiarization with the data; (2) data-induced initial code generation; (3) search for initial themes that capture patterns of meaning related to research questions; (4) review and refinement of the theme; (5) the definition and naming of the theme; and (6) the production of analytical reports. This reflective approach acknowledges the active role of researchers in generating knowledge, consistent with their participatory stance (Byrne, 2022). The analysis is focused on identifying themes such as "the dismantling of epistemic hierarchies," "the formation of cultural empathy through experience," and "the critical and agentic construction of preservation."

The researcher's position in this participatory research is dual and reflective. As a teaching lecturer, the researcher has pedagogical authority and responsibility in the classroom. As a research facilitator, the researcher creates a space for equal dialogue and shared learning. To manage the inherent bias of this dual position, the researcher applied the practice of systematic reflexivity. (Finlay, 2021) Through reflective field notes that critically examined the assumptions, emotions, and influence of dual roles on the research process and data interpretation. This flexibility is an integral part of increasing the transparency and rigor of research. (Pillow, 2020).

Given the constructivist paradigm underlying this research, the concepts of validity and reliability are translated as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. (Enworo, 2023; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility is maintained through data triangulation, member checking (confirming interpretation with participants), and peer debriefing (discussing with academic peers) (Creswell & Poth, 2018, 2023). Transferability is achieved by presenting a "thick" description of the context. Dependability and confirmability are ensured through trial audits, which document all methodological and analytical decisions in detail, as well as maintaining openness regarding the researcher's positionality. (Nowell, 2017).

This research adheres to the high standards of ethical principles in qualitative research. Informed Consent is obtained in writing and verbally from all participants, with a thorough explanation of their goals, processes, and rights, including the right to withdraw without consequence. (Miller & Boulton, 2020). Respect for Intellectual and Cultural Property Rights is strictly applied, especially related to the tacit knowledge of the maestro. Pre-research agreements are created to regulate the utilization and attribution of their knowledge, avoiding academic exploitation. (Tuhiwai Smith, 2021). Anonymity is guaranteed for all participants except for the maestros, who explicitly allow their identities to be used in recognition of their scientific authority. (Lahman, 2020). The principles of benefit and sustainability are also maintained by ensuring that research directly benefits

student participants and the artist community, and designing interventions that can be adopted sustainably after the research ends. (Banks, 2019).

#### 4. RESULTS

##### 1. Elements of Gambang Kromong that need to be preserved

Based on the research results, it can be revealed that the most fundamental elements to be preserved are the main instruments of Gambang and Kromong, as well as their authentic construction. The Gambang, a wooden Instrument with special blades, and the Kromong, a set of ten pencon (small gongs) made of bronze or brass, are the defining sonic identities of this genre. Preservation encompasses knowledge of traditional materials, manufacturing techniques, and the tuning of tones, resulting in distinctive sound colors that modern instruments cannot replicate. The next element is the Tone System and Penta-tonic Structure: The five-tone scale or barrel (penta-tonic) that forms the basis of the melody of Gambang Kromong is a critical musical element to be maintained. This tonal system, which generally revolves around the notes C (1), Re (2), E (3), Sol (5), and La (6), reflects cultural synthesis and forms the basis of distinctive harmony and melody. The preservation of this system is crucial to maintain the musicological integrity and authentic musical characteristics (feeling) that are not compromised by the Western diatonic system.



Next are the elements of the repertoire and the structure of traditional songs: The body of the repertoire, including traditional songs such as "Kicir-Kicir," "Jali-Jali," or "Surilang," and their formal structure, must be preserved. This includes chord progression patterns, phraseology, lyrics in Betawi, as well as the historical and social context behind each song. This repertoire is not only a collection of melodies but also a cultural narrative that perpetuates the values, humor, and way of life of the Betawi people. Fourth, Typical Game and Ornamentation Techniques: Specific xylophone and Kromong beating techniques, including punch patterns, dynamics, and distinctive ornamentation or tonal decorations, are intangible elements that are very valuable. These techniques, which can only be transferred through hands-on demonstrations and practical experience, lend the music a sense of "life" and textural complexity. Losing this technical detail will simplify the music to mere notation.

The presentation system and ensemble format are also elements that should be preserved. The form of presentation of Gambang Kromong as an ensemble consisting of a combination of core instruments (Gambang, Kromong, Gong, Drum, Kecrek) and Chinese string instruments (Tehyan, Kongahyan, Sukong) must be maintained. The proportions, roles, and interactions between each of these parts in the ensemble create a unique balance of sound and texture, which is a physical manifestation of the acculturation of Betawi, Chinese, and other local cultures. Sixth, Improvisation and Interaction Conventions: Despite having a fixed structure, Gambang Kromong often leaves room for limited improvisation and spontaneous interaction between players, especially in the singer and melodic instrument sections. These conventions or "unwritten rules" in improvisation

are tacit knowledge that needs to be preserved, as they reflect the creativity of life and contextual musical responses in oral traditions.

The next element is the socio-cultural function and context of the performance: Gambang Kromong was not created for a stage concert alone, but serves a purpose in marriage rites, circumcision, and the celebration of Betawi society. Understanding and preserving the original context of the performance as a folk entertainment that unites the community is just as important as preserving the notation of the tone, as it gives meaning and purpose to the art. Language and Lyrical Aesthetics are also elements that must be preserved. The lyrics of songs in the Betawi language, rich in metaphors, subtle satire (which often contains humor or social criticism), and reflections on daily life, are linguistic and aesthetic treasures that must be preserved. The preservation of this element preserves not only the musical aspect, but also the richness of the language and the perspective of the people who support it.

No less important are the elements of the Traditional Knowledge Transmission Model. The process of oral and aural learning (through listening), through observation, imitation, and direct practice in the community, is a methodological element that needs to be maintained in value. Although it can be complemented by notation and technology, the essence of teacher-to-pupil transmission, which is full of direct examples and kinesthetic correction, is key to maintaining the authenticity of the musical "feel." Lastly, there is the element of Philosophical Values and Collective Identity. Most importantly, the intangible element that needs to be preserved is the philosophical value of Gambang Kromong as a symbol of acculturation, tolerance, and a flexible Betawi identity. This music embodies the ability to unite diverse elements (archipelago, Chinese, Arabic) in beautiful harmony. Preservation must aim to maintain the message of diversity and cultural richness contained in every Kromong bang and Gambang beat, so that it can continue to be a source of inspiration for the nation's character development.

By preserving these ten elements holistically, both tangible and intangible, it is an effort to protect Gambang Kromong, enabling it to move beyond merely preserving artifacts to comprehensively and dynamically revitalize its cultural ecosystem.

## 2. Th Effectiveness of Experiential Learning

The research results show that the essence of Gambang Kromong learning cannot be separated from a direct approach that stems from the experience of artists and practitioners of the tradition. In contrast to theoretical learning alone, the method tested requires full sensory and motor involvement, where students not only learn notation, but also physically recognize, hold, and play each instrument, such as Gambang, Kromong, and Tehyan, as taught by artists (Balala), as shown in the following image.



The learning process begins with a direct introduction to the instrument, where students are given detailed pictures of the melody positions in the xylophone and kromong. This stage adopts the traditional approach to transmitting knowledge, which involves visual

observation of the instrument as a whole entity before moving on to the technique of playing. This hands-on experience builds the spatial and contextual understanding that is an essential foundation for practical practice to begin.

The essence of learning through this experience is manifested in the stage of memorizing and practicing basic rhythms. Students are invited to first sing rhythm patterns with the solfeggio technique (for example, "1 5 3 5 0 5 3 5") before touching the musical instrument. This method replicates the natural process in the oral tradition, where the artist often memorizes musical patterns through vocalization ("*ngrum*") before instrumental execution, allowing for the internalization of rhythm through both auditory and vocal experiences. The role of the lecturer or instructor in this study serves as a "teaching artist" who demonstrates directly. Lecturers actively engage with Kromong and provide real-world examples. This hands-on demonstration is at the heart of experiential learning, where students learn through observation and imitation of a competent model, a method of knowledge transfer typical of the traditional art world. As shown in the following image.



The collective experience in the ensemble is the culmination of hands-on learning. Students are divided into groups that play different roles: one group sings a song (e.g., "Circumcis"), another group voices the rhythm of solfeggio, and the other group plays an instrument. This dynamic simulates the experience of a real Gambang Kromong rehearsal session, where each player must be sensitive to the other parts and come together in musical unity. This lesson can only be learned through joint practice and collaboration.

The application of peer tutoring techniques enriches the learning experience. In small groups with rotating roles, students who have mastered the material become tutors for their peers. This dynamic deconstructs the traditional one-way learning hierarchy, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and cultivating a supportive learning environment. The results of observations and interviews show that this strategy increases activeness, confidence, knowledge retention, and student involvement. Direct, auditory, and social practice experiences create learning memories that are more ingrained than passive methods, such as simply reading scores or listening to lectures. More than just technical skills, this hands-on experience builds an authentic musical feel. Students report that they begin to understand the nuances, articulations, and "spirit" of Gambang Kromong music only after they themselves have tried to play it and felt its difficulty and uniqueness. This kinesthetic understanding is a critical aspect that can only be achieved through practice, not discourse. From a cultural preservation perspective, this hands-on learning model is effective in bridging the generational gap. Students are no longer passive spectators, but active participants who experience for themselves the complexity and beauty of tradition. This personal experience then fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility to continue the tradition, transforming students from passive recipients into potential cultural actors.

Based on the description of the research results above, it is emphasized that the effectiveness of Gambang Kromong learning is highly dependent on the integration of direct learning from the spirit and methods of its traditional artists. The combination of physical demonstration, collective practice, and internalization through sensory experience is not only a pedagogical strategy but a recreation of the natural ecosystem of cultural transmission itself. Therefore, to achieve the goal of critically reasoned preservation, higher education must embrace and institutionalize these principles of direct experiential learning into the formal curriculum.

### **3. The contribution of higher education in revitalizing Gambang Kromong as a cultural tradition**

Based on the data from the research results, it is explained that the role and methods of higher education, in this case the State University of Jakarta in revitalizing the art of Gambang Kromong are as follows, As a higher education institution located in the heart of Betawi culture, the State University of Jakarta assumes a strategic role and academic responsibility to revitalize Gambang Kromong. This revitalization is realized not through a passive curatorial approach, but through the active integration of the arts into the formal curriculum of the Music Education Study Program. Thus, the State University of Jakarta transformed the lecture hall into a living laboratory where traditions are taught, studied, and revived by the younger generation of aspiring music educators.

The concrete step of revitalization is to develop and implement an innovative pedagogical model explicitly designed for the teaching of traditional music. This model intelligently combines two approaches: the solfeggio technique of Western music education, which focuses on sharpening tone and rhythm, with a peer tutor learning system that simulates the natural dynamics of learning within a community of traditional artists. This combination bridges the gap between the formal notation system and the oral tradition of Gambang Kromong. The revitalization process begins with the deconstruction of the one-way learning hierarchy. The lecturer does not act as the sole source of knowledge, but as a facilitator who demonstrates the technique directly (as seen in the picture of the lecturer playing Kromong) and then empowers students who have mastered the material to become tutors for their peers. This peer tutoring method fosters a collaborative learning ecosystem, replicating the spirit of cooperation and respect, which is an intrinsic value in Betawi society.

The State University of Jakarta revitalizes by applying gradual and systematic learning methods that make complex materials accessible. The steps begin with visual and physical recognition of the instrument, followed by memorization of the core rhythm through solfeggio vocalization, the use of finger coding as a visual cue system, and ensemble practice with songs such as "Kicir-Kicir." This scaffolding ensures that students, who may be unfamiliar with traditional music, can build competence gradually with increased confidence.

Revitalization is also carried out through an embodied learning approach, also known as physical experience-based learning. Students do not just learn the theory of the pentatonic scale; they experience it firsthand by singing solfeggio, feeling the vibration of the Xylophone blade when struck, and coordinating hand movements according to the cue code. This sensorimotor experience is the key to understanding the "feel" of authentic Gambang Kromong music, something that cannot be fully captured in text. More than just preserving the old form, the State University of Jakarta encourages adaptive and creative revitalization. By equipping students as prospective teachers with practical and attractive teaching methodologies, the university is preparing new regeneration agents. The graduates are expected not only to become passive players but also to become cultural transformers

who can teach and adapt Gambang Kromong in the broader context of school education, thereby ensuring its sustainability in the ever-changing cultural landscape.

Revitalization efforts at the State University of Jakarta have a strong social dimension, as they create a community of practice on campus. Through group activities and peer tutoring, a learning network is established among students who support one another, fostering a collaborative environment. This mini community reflects and, at the same time, revitalizes the social function of Gambang Kromong as a unifier, diverting it from just a performance to a tool for building cohesion and collaboration among the younger generation. The approach to revitalizing the State University of Jakarta as a higher education institution is also critical and reflective. Learning does not stop at the technical ability to play the instrument. Through reflection and discussion embedded in the process, students are encouraged to understand the acculturation values (Betawi, Chinese, Islamic) contained in the music. Thus, the revitalization carried out is not blind preservation, but an effort to foster a deep appreciation and contextual understanding of cultural heritage.

Institutionally, the State University of Jakarta revitalizes Gambang Kromong by making it an object of scientific research and development, as reflected in this manuscript. By documenting, analyzing, and publicizing its learning methods, the university elevates the discussion of preserving traditional arts to a higher academic realm, making a scholarly contribution to national arts and culture education policies.

Thus, Universitas Negeri Jakarta has carried out the role of revitalizing Gambang Kromong through an integrated tridharma model: education (through innovative curricula and pedagogy), research (through the development and study of methods), and community service (by producing prospective teachers who will spread the tradition). In this way, the State University of Jakarta not only saves the Gambang Kromong from extinction but also reactivates its value as a source of inspiration and relevant cultural identity for current and future generations.

#### 4.DISCUSSION

Higher education, in this case, the State University of Jakarta, plays a vital role in preserving culture and developing local identity. With an experiential learning model, the college should not be seen as a static museum, but rather as a dynamic living space where heritage, including the Kromong Gambang Gambang, is dismantled, discussed, and directed for its future. This concept aligns with Benedetti's view that education should be interdisciplinary and address future challenges through an innovative, adaptive, and experiential approach grounded in real-life experiences. (Benedetti et al., 2021). With this approach, students are not only the successors of traditions but also agents of change who can innovate and adapt cultural heritage in the modern context.

Quality higher education needs to integrate three main elements: Skillful Practice, Critical Thinking, and Social Responsibility. To produce competent musicians, schools need to provide skills training that focuses on musical practice, balanced with the development of critical reasoning related to musical culture. This contributes to a better understanding of the social, political, and historical context of the traditions studied. (Akçay et al., 2024). In addition, social responsibility should be an integral part of higher education, encouraging students to commit to community sustainability and environmental stewardship. This provides a way to build a strong social network between students and the arts and culture community.

This research reinforces the finding that an experiential learning approach based on the direct experience of the artist is not only practical for the transfer of musical skills but also fundamentally changes the dynamics of learning to be more dialogical and collaborative. The elimination of the rigid lecturer-student-artist hierarchy in the Gambang Kromong

learning process results in what is referred to as "epistemological pluralism." (Hess, 2019), Where knowledge no longer flows in one direction from the academy, but is sourced from and exchanged between students, maestros, and lecturers equally. These findings align with Manifold's research on community arts education, which confirms that the most transformative learning occurs when the classroom serves as a meeting place for diverse and legitimate ways of knowing. (Manifold, 2022).

The effectiveness of using solfeggio techniques and finger codes as intermediaries to understand the Gambang Kromong pentatonic system shows the importance of multimodal learning modalities. This process integrates auditory (singing solfeggio), visual (instrument drawings and finger codes), and kinesthetic (playing the instrument) modalities to access complex knowledge. This approach is supported by Barrett's research, which found that multimodal integration in music education not only improves technical understanding but also deepens students' emotional and cognitive connection to the material being studied. (Barrett & Bond, 2021).

The study's results revealed that the peer tutoring strategy, when applied successfully, effectively replicates the "community of practice" naturally found in oral traditions. Students who have mastered the material act as tutors for their peers, creating a cycle of reciprocal learning and support. This aligns with Kenny's research on the regeneration of traditional Irish music, which found that sustainable regeneration depends on the creation of a community of practice where new members progressively transition from peripheral participation to full participation through peer and expert guidance. (Kenny, 2020).

The phenomenon of growing a sense of ownership and cultural responsibility in students through direct experience is an indicator of the success of the "cultural apprenticeships" learning model. This model, as elaborated by Campbell, allows learners not only to learn techniques but also to internalize the values, ethics, and identities inherent in a cultural practice. The direct kinesthetic experience in playing Xylophone and Kromong is the entrance to understanding the acculturation philosophy that is at the core of the cultural heritage. (Campbell & Wiggins, 2020).

The role of the State University of Jakarta as a living laboratory for cultural revitalization demonstrates a shift in the paradigm of higher education from "cultural preservation" to "cultural sustainability." This concept, echoed by (Schippers & Bartleet, 2020), Emphasizes the active role of educational institutions in creating an ecosystem where cultural heritage is not only protected, but also given space to evolve, adapt, and remain relevant for new generations. The integration of formal curriculum with the knowledge of local maestros is a concrete practice of culturally sustainable education.

The process of critical reflection embedded in experiential learning has proven crucial in transforming preservation from a passive action to "critical heritage practice." Students do not just accept heritage as a dead package, but are invited to reflect on the socio-historical context, identity politics, and the future of traditions. This approach is supported by Smith's thinking in Critical Heritage Studies, which argues that inheritance is a process in the present that always involves critical choice, negotiation, and creation of meaning. (Smith, 2021).

This study identified that intangible elements, such as improvisational conventions and the tacit knowledge of ornamentation, are the most vulnerable yet most decisive aspects of preservation. These findings reinforce Matsunobu's study of traditional Japanese music, which suggests that the survival of a tradition depends more on the transmission of "embodied knowledge" and subtle aesthetic sensitivity, rather than simply preserving its repertoire or physical instruments. (Matsunobu, 2021).

The combination of innovative pedagogy (solfeggio, peer tutoring) and the involvement of the maestro in this study successfully bridged the "epistemic gap" between academic-formal knowledge and traditional-local knowledge. According to López's research on

music education in Mexico, bridging is key to decolonizing the curriculum and granting equal epistemic authority to local knowledge that is often marginalized in the higher education system. (López, 2022).

The success of this model in awakening student agency as future cultural transformers demonstrates the potential of higher education as a "site of cultural reproduction and innovation." This concept was initiated by Hess, who recognized that music education must extend beyond the mere reproduction of skills to become a field where learners can critically engage with the past, understand the complexities of the present, and creatively envision the future of their cultural practices. (Hess, 2019).

Collectively, the findings of this study contribute to the global discourse on "musical sustainability in higher education". As outlined in the framework of "Ecology of Music" by Schippers (2020) and Schippers & Bartleet, the survival of traditional music depends on healthy interactions between various factors, including learning systems, institutional policies, and community dynamics. The case study at UNJ demonstrates how higher education can proactively design pedagogical interventions that not only preserve Gambang Kromong music but also ensure its meaningful survival in Indonesia's ever-changing cultural landscape by engaging the younger generation as critical heirs and innovators.

## 6.CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the experiential learning model in learning Gambang Kromong in higher education has successfully functioned as a dynamic intergenerational bridge and as a vehicle for cultural preservation, incorporating critical reasoning. Through a participatory approach involving students, maestros, and lecturers, traditional learning hierarchies are successfully deconstructed into equal collaboration, where knowledge exchange occurs in a multidirectional manner. Direct experience not only improves musical technical understanding but also develops cultural empathy, a sense of ownership, and agency in students as proactive cultural actors. This model also facilitates a critical understanding of the socio-historical context of Gambang Kromong, shifting preservation from mere artifact preservation to revitalization that is adaptive and relevant to contemporary contexts. Thus, higher education can act as a living laboratory that not only preserves intangible cultural heritage but also empowers the younger generation to become cultural innovators and transformers.

## 7.RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, several things are recommended: the integration of experiential learning models based on local culture into the permanent curriculum by involving maestros; the development of digital platforms to document and disseminate traditional knowledge; training of participatory learning methods for educators; the formulation of policies to support cultural revitalization; strengthening partnerships with the artist community for joint programs; as well as further research to test the effectiveness of this model in the context of other cultures.

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proves a meaningful collaboration between institutions, communities, and the younger generation.

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