

## Intercultural Competence and Multicultural Values in Arts Education: The Eka Cipta Model

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**Abstract:** The swift progression of globalization necessitates that educational institutions actively develop students' intercultural ability to preserve societal harmony. This study seeks to examine the attributes of Arts and Culture education at Eka Cipta Junior High School in Kapuas Hulu, emphasizing the manifestation of multicultural values in teaching practices through an analysis of Intercultural Competence. This study employed a descriptive qualitative methodology to gather data through classroom observations, comprehensive interviews with educators and students, and the examination of curriculum documents and learning modules. The results demonstrate that the Arts and Culture curriculum effectively incorporates local Dayak cultural elements with national and global arts, functioning as a robust platform for multicultural education. The expression of multicultural values is apparent through educational practices that foster artistic collaboration, cross-cultural appreciation, and critical discourse on cultural differences, all of which are essential indications of intercultural competence development. The learning process effectively progressed from simple cultural transmission to active cultural engagement, allowing students to acknowledge, appreciate, and constructively interact with many cultural identities. This research finds that deliberately and successfully organized Arts and Culture education can cultivate students' competences to foster sustained multicultural coexistence in Indonesia's heterogeneous society. This study's findings provide significant insights for policymakers and educators in creating an Arts and Culture curriculum that genuinely embodies and advances global multiculturalism.

**Keyword:** Arts and Culture Education; Intercultural Competence; Multicultural Values; Kapuas Hulu; Junior High School.

## Introduction

The globe is confronting the phenomenon of globalization, which is progressively diminishing geographical and cultural boundaries. In this perspective, diversity is not merely a sociological phenomenon, but also a crucial dimension that necessitates effective management through the educational system. Indonesia, an archipelagic nation abundant in ethnicities, languages, and religions, renders intercultural education a moral and strategic need. The capacity of an individual to engage successfully and suitably with individuals from diverse cultures, referred to as Intercultural Competence, is increasingly recognized as a crucial educational objective, particularly in secondary education.

The epoch of globalization has become essential for intercultural engagement. The necessity for individuals to navigate diversity and foster social cohesion has established Intercultural Competence as a primary objective of 21st-century education (Deardorff, 2015; Sarwari et al., 2024). Intercultural competence encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioral characteristics, extending beyond mere knowledge of different cultures to include the capacity for appropriate and effective interaction in diverse circumstances (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2013; J. Wang et al., 2019). Indonesia, including more than 1,300 ethnic groups, serves as a laboratory for diversity (Sampaleng, 2023). Kapuas Hulu, West Kalimantan, was selected as the study site due to its diverse array of Dayak ethnic groups, rendering it an essential context for the execution of intercultural education at the grassroots level. The acquisition of cultural arts is deemed essential (Putra et al., 2024). Cultural arts, in contrast to solely cognitive disciplines, provide an emotional and practical environment for students to engage with, develop, and cherish the principles embedded in diverse cultural traditions (Rahmah et al., 2025). Consequently, arts and culture education occupies a distinctive and strategic role as the principal means of cultivating Intercultural Competence.

This research theoretically centers on the convergence of three primary concepts: arts and cultural education, multicultural ideals, and intercultural competence. Multicultural values are characterized by attitudes and viewpoints that acknowledge, accept, and embrace cultural variations in society, including aspects of tolerance, egalitarianism, and social justice (Banks, 2014). Intercultural competence, as articulated by Byram (2021) and Bennet (1993), encompasses not only knowledge of different cultures but also includes affective (openness), cognitive (cultural knowledge), and behavioral (interaction skills) dimensions, with cultural arts education acting as a conduit. This is grounded on cultural-based learning theory, which posits that art promotes situated learning, allowing children to acquire intercultural ideals contextually and emotionally, rather than through mechanical memorization.

Initial observations at Eka Cipta Junior High School in Kapuas Hulu revealed that the Arts and Culture curriculum has formally incorporated local traditional components into musical and dance performances, alongside national and contemporary arts. Educators and pupils will execute a traditional Dayak performance during the school

program parts and at the invitation of the Kapuas Hulu District Government in April and May 2025. Educators have included traditional Dayak musical and dance art forms into music ensemble instruction, utilizing dance motions in accordance with the national cultural arts curriculum. Nonetheless, classroom pedagogical implementation often emphasizes technical transmission, concentrating on the substance taught rather than on how that content can influence students' intercultural attitudes and competencies. Educators are struggling to design activities that can directly assess or stimulate aspects of Intercultural Competence, such as decentering or cultural reflection.

Most prior research on arts and culture education in Indonesia, especially at the secondary school level, primarily concentrates on two key characteristics. Numerous research have examined the content analysis of the cultural arts education curriculum about the incorporation of intercultural values (Ambarwangi & Suharto, 2013; Sutjipto, 2017). These studies predominantly emphasize the degree to which multicultural ideals are manifested in curriculum documents and instructional resources, although seldom investigate actual classroom learning practices. Secondly, more research has concentrated on quantitatively assessing students' intercultural ability (Hanley & Chankseliani, 2025; Kartika et al., 2024). This method frequently merely delineates students' degrees of Intercultural Competence, without thoroughly examining the processes, tactics, and attributes of arts and culture education that can promote the enhancement of Intercultural Competence in a multicultural educational setting.

Currently, research focusing on the attributes of art and cultural education in multicultural schools, particularly through the lens of Intercultural Competence as a reflection of multicultural values, remains scarce, especially in local contexts like SMP Eka Cipta Kapuas Hulu, which boasts a rich Dayak ethnic heritage. This research introduces originality by employing Intercultural Competence as the principal analytical framework to investigate learning behaviors, moving beyond a mere examination of curriculum content. Through a descriptive qualitative methodology concentrating on particular ethnic relationships in Kapuas Hulu, distinctive empirical material is presented that has not been thoroughly examined previously. This research aims to produce specific findings, namely a cultural arts learning model grounded in Intercultural Competence that effectively promotes the expression of intercultural values among students at Eka Cipta Junior High School. This model will consist of ideas and activities that amalgamate the rich local cultural history of the Dayak people with the framework of global intercultural competence. The importance of this research stems from the critical necessity to cultivate Intercultural Competence as a soft skill in the younger generation, in light of escalating identity polarization. This project aims to delineate the attributes of effective learning, offering a reproducible framework for promoting social cohesion through cultural arts education, essential for Indonesia's national stability.

## Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative methodology. The qualitative methodology was selected to attain a comprehensive understanding of the processes, significance, and attributes of cultural arts learning that transpires organically (Creswell, 2009). The employed research design is a Single Intrinsic Case Study. SMP Eka Cipta Kapuas Hulu was chosen as the singular case to comprehensively elucidate the attributes of arts and culture education and the expression of multicultural values through an examination of Intercultural Competence within a defined geographical and cultural framework (Burkholder et al., 2022; Yin, 2018). The research site and participants were deliberately chosen, primarily due to the multi-ethnic context of the Kapuas Hulu region, which is pertinent to the themes of Intercultural Competence and Multicultural Values. Additionally, the subjects were selected from among arts and culture educators, students, and curriculum personnel. Data collection was conducted utilizing three methodologies for method triangulation: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The data gathering method is presented in the following table:

**Table 1.** Data Collection Methods

| No | Data Collection Methods         | Objective and Concentration of Collected Data                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Limited Participant Observation | Observing the learning process, student interactions during collaborative art activities, the utilization of culture-based teaching resources, and the expression of Intercultural Competence (openness, cross-cultural communication skills) in the classroom. |
| 2  | In-Depth Interviews             | To investigate educators' comprehension and pedagogical approaches about Intercultural Competence, alongside students' perspectives of diversity and their experiences in valuing various cultural arts. The interviews were done in a semi-structured format.  |
| 3  | Document Analysis               | Evaluating official documents, including the Merdeka Curriculum, Lesson Plans/ modules, and student artwork, to formally ascertain the incorporation of intercultural ideals and Intercultural Competencies.                                                    |

The employed data analysis technique is an interactive and continuous model throughout the study process. The data collection process is segmented into several stages: data reduction, which entails the selection, concentration, simplification, and abstraction of raw data derived from field notes, interview transcripts, and documents; subsequently, the data is refined by emphasizing learning characteristics, teaching strategies, and indicators of Intercultural Competence; data presentation occurs through narratives, matrix tables, or organized charts to aid in the synthesis of findings

categorized by the components of Intercultural Competence (affective, cognitive, and behavioral) as exhibited in arts and culture education; finally, conclusions are drawn and verified to ensure their credibility and relevance within the context of Eka Cipta Junior High School.

## **Results And Discussion**

### **Investigative Results**

Eka Cipta Junior High School is situated in the Tengkawang Plantation, Tua' Abang Village, Semitau District, Kapuas Hulu Regency, West Kalimantan. This school, overseen by PT. Paramitra Internusa Pratama, has received an A rating for the 2024-2029 accreditation term. According to the Master Education Data Residue on the official website of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, SMP Eka Cipta comprises 224 pupils and 13 educators and educational staff. The community group located along the upper reaches of the Seberuang River and the West Kalimantan Provincial Road, which connects Semitau District with Kapuas Hulu Regency, is the Dayak Seberuang. Furthermore, the settlements of the Dayak Seberuang group are geographically interspersed with those of the Dayak Suaid and Dayak Kantu' groups (Dayakologi, 2008). The Dayak Seberuang, based on their origins, are one of 61 familial affiliates of the Dayak Ot Danum group (Lontaan, 1975).

#### *Attributes of Arts and Culture Education at SMP Eka Cipta Kapuas Hulu*

Field observations identified the characteristics of arts and culture education as influenced by instructors' and students' management of local and national cultural integration, interactive learning methodologies, engagement with the surrounding environment, and the promotion of an inclusive classroom environment. The following are explanations concerning local and national cultural integration: Teaching materials in traditional music and dance encompass not only a singular local Dayak ethnic group but also emphasize practical learning that integrates traditional art games and the distinct identities of other Dayak ethnic groups, like Kayan and Kanayatn. Educators employ participatory learning methods, including discussion techniques, group presentations, and experiential practice. This was immediately noticed when students from Eka Cipta Junior High School conducted a P5 project to exhibit the varied Dayak ethnic arts present in West Kalimantan. Educators employ the surrounding environment as a pedagogical method to facilitate a full comprehension of the cultural knowledge pertaining to West Kalimantan. Educators use local artists as resource individuals to showcase diverse forms of music and dance from the local environment and region. Educators foster an inclusive classroom environment by implementing both theoretical and practical learning activities in cultural arts. Educators develop group presentations on musical practices that integrate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of pupils, cultivating an understanding for differences and promoting mutual respect and openness towards their inherent uniqueness.

Ongky (2025), the art and cultural educator, elucidates the qualities of art and culture learning at SMP Eka Cipta Kapuas Hulu, stating,

*"I am attempting a breakthrough based on my educational experiences and musical competencies acquired during college." Incorporating cultural diversity in the amalgamation of ethnic music, I utilized the dau', gong, and bedug to exemplify the musical instruments of the Dayak Kanayatn. I invited Sape' Kenyah and Dua Ting artistes to introduce the instruments to the students. This breakthrough presents numerous hurdles, since a pluralistic classroom environment necessitates discourse and diverse viewpoints; but, when achieved, students will be more receptive to engaging in profound communication with their peers".*

**Image 1.** Interview with the Arts and Culture Educator at Eka Cipta Junior High School in Kapuas Hulu



<sup>1</sup>Zakarias Aria Widyatama Putra, 2025

The perspective of this arts and culture educator aligns with a student's assertion: *"Studying arts and culture with Mr. Ongky broadened our understanding of previously unfamiliar art forms and provided us with direct experience in playing musical instruments such as the bedug, which we may not have encountered in our local environment"*. The researcher noted this support while the students played Dayak Kanayatn musical instruments; they demonstrated proficiency and derived enjoyment from the sounds of other traditional cultural instruments previously unfamiliar to them.

### *Intercultural Competence as an Expression of Multicultural Values*

The examination of the attributes of arts and culture education informed the researcher's understanding and viewpoint on Intercultural Competence as an embodiment of intercultural principles. The relationship between the attributes of arts and culture education at SMP Eka Cipta Kapuas Hulu and intercultural competency, together with its expressions in multicultural ideals, is demonstrated through four dimensions: 1) Intercultural knowledge; 2) tolerance and inquiry; 3) intercultural communication competencies; and 4) the application of multicultural principles.

The first item indicates that pupils at Eka Cipta Hulu Middle School exhibit fundamental awareness of the presence and distinctiveness of cultures beyond their own cultural background. The Curriculum Staff at SMP Eka Cipta stated, *"During the local performing arts event at the school, students exhibited enthusiasm in sourcing traditional attire from various Dayak groups ... this affirms that the arts and culture education aligns with the mission of SMP Eka Cipta Tengkwang, which aims to foster a safe, comfortable, and inclusive environment for all members and to facilitate optimal potential development"*.

The subsequent point pertains to tolerance and interest. Interviews revealed that students are interested in exploring the culture and arts of many Dayak ethnic groups, including the Kayan and Kanayatn. The supporting data for Image 2 pertains to the Kanayatn music performance produced and executed by students from Eka Cipta Junior High School in Kapuas Hulu:

**Image 2.** Traditional Music Presentation by Eka Cipta Junior High School, Kapuas Hulu



<sup>1</sup>Youtube Smpekatijpta Tengkwang: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QOxLpJE2PA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QOxLpJE2PA)

Students exhibit appreciation for diversity. The exhibited regard is neither submissive nor reverential; instead, it satisfies their eagerness to engage, indicating that pupils can appreciate the diversity of Dayak Kanayatn traditional music as an integral aspect of their identity.

The third item elucidates intercultural communication abilities, indicating that in cross-cultural group activities, students can collaborate, engage in discourse, and articulate ideas without bias. The research team's examination of the cultural arts learning process in a seventh-grade class demonstrates the integration of pupils from various Dayak ethnic backgrounds, including Seberuang, Suaid, and Kantu'. The students collaborated on a unified music presentation project, transcending ethnic origins, and managed to work together without conflicts arising from prejudices or egos related to their backgrounds.

The elucidation of the fourth element pertains to the implementation of intercultural principles, exemplified by artistic endeavors like the P5 Project inside the Merdeka Curriculum. These activities are showcased at art exhibitions and regional or national music performances, conducted collaboratively by students irrespective of their backgrounds. The fourth point represents the attainment of the third point's indicator, specifically the execution of Intercultural Competence, which empowers pupils to apply multicultural ideals at SMP Eka Cipta Kapuas Hulu. The elucidation of the fourth point aligns with the assertion of the Arts and Culture Education instructor, Ongky (2025), who stated: *"Previously, I lacked comprehension of the concept of multiculturalism; however, when correlated, the implementation of multicultural values will coincide with the innovations I have achieved"*. This delineates the art and culture educational framework of Eka Cipta Junior High School.

## **Discussion**

The cultural arts education at Eka Cipta Junior High School in Hulu Kapuas has demonstrated efficacy in fostering Intercultural Competence. Through the integration of diverse artistic aspects from numerous cultures and ethnic groups, students acquire artistic techniques while also grasping the significance of diversity and multicultural values. Arts education in schools can enhance students' intercultural competence (Fleming, 2023), foster tolerance and cultural awareness (Hulsbosch, 2010), and develop social and cultural competence while promoting harmony among students from diverse backgrounds (Z. Wang, 2025).

Educators are pivotal in fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment. The varied array of materials, interactive pedagogical approaches, and educators' receptiveness to student feedback foster mutual respect and tolerance among students. Educators, through their expertise, can establish inclusive learning environments, implement cultural integration strategies, and tackle systemic challenges (Judijanto, 2025); inclusive relationships between educators and students form the basis for collaborative learning and social justice (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bao, 2025).

Despite the predominantly favorable disposition of learners, problems persisted, including cultural stereotypes and varied levels of interest in specific cultural arts. Educators tackled this issue using a compelling strategy, fostering open dialogue, and presenting real-life examples that underscore the significance of recognizing diversity. Arts education through strategies such as multicultural art integration, community-based projects, and cross-cultural exchanges can mitigate stereotypes and enhance dialogue among learners (Bayode, 2023); inclusive arts education strategies, encompassing culturally responsive pedagogy and community-based arts initiatives, can confront cultural biases and stereotypes (Satchanawakul & Liangrueanrom, 2025). The integration of multicultural, value-oriented arts and culture education enhances students' social competency, especially in communication, empathy, and teamwork.

Students develop greater openness to variety, enhance their ability to collaborate within multinational teams, and cultivate a feeling of pride in the cultural richness of their surroundings. Art education, when integrated with reflective practice, markedly improves social skills including empathy and teamwork (Rezaei et al., 2023). This research validates the significance of cultural arts education that emphasizes multicultural values and intercultural competence. The methodology employed in Eka Cipta Junior High School in Hulu Kapuas exemplifies exemplary practices that can be reproduced in other educational institutions, especially in culturally diverse regions.

## **Conclusion**

This study verifies that cultural arts education at Eka Cipta Junior High School in Kapuas Hulu, West Kalimantan, is crucial in cultivating intercultural competence within a multicultural secondary education setting. By integrating local and national cultures into educational materials, employing participatory learning methods, utilizing the surrounding environment as a learning resource, and fostering an inclusive classroom atmosphere, students have demonstrated the ability to construct knowledge, cultivate tolerance, enhance cross-cultural communication skills, and apply multicultural values in school life. The research findings indicate that studying cultural arts expands students' understanding of ethnic diversity and promotes the development of the four primary dimensions of Intercultural Competence: intercultural knowledge, mutual respect and curiosity, cross-cultural communication skills, and the application of multicultural values. These examples exemplify a tangible framework for intercultural education that addresses the requirements of Indonesia's diverse society. The intercultural competence-based arts and culture learning model proposed in this study can be reproduced in other schools to enhance social cohesion and preserve national stability in the context of globalization. This discovery underscores the necessity and significance of enhancing soft skills in Intercultural Competence through arts and cultural education as a proactive measure against identity polarization and social discord in a diverse society. Consequently, arts and culture education have the capacity to serve as a fundamental pillar in cultivating a new generation that is adaptable, inclusive, and proficient in engaging with global cultural diversity, while simultaneously reinforcing Indonesia's national identity on the worldwide platform.

This research presents various developmental concepts that may serve as a reference for future inquiries and applications. Initially, more research can broaden the emphasis on creating a cultural arts learning model grounded in Intercultural Competence across diverse ethnic and geographical contexts in Indonesia and other multicultural nations, to achieve a more robust generalization of the model. Secondly, investigating the incorporation of digital technology in arts and culture education is valuable, given the capacity of digital media to enhance cross-cultural experiences and broaden access to diverse traditional and contemporary art forms. Moreover, comprehensive investigation into teacher competency training and development for managing

multicultural art and culture education is essential to enhance educators' preparedness for addressing diversity difficulties in the classroom. Research may also focus on longitudinal research to investigate the enduring effects of intercultural competence produced through arts and culture education on students' social conduct within society. Ultimately, interdisciplinary collaboration among art education, anthropology, and information technology can enhance innovations in educational models, ensuring that art and cultural education functions not merely as a conduit for knowledge transfer but also as a catalyst for social transformation in fostering a harmonious and inclusive global society.

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