



Strengthening Cooperative Values through Karawitan Extracurricular in Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Karawitan, as a traditional Javanese musical art, plays a vital role in character education by fostering cooperative values among secondary school students. This study emerges from the educational need to integrate cultural arts as a contextual medium for character formation aligned with the principles of Pancasila. The research aims to examine how karawitan extracurricular activities contribute to strengthening solidarity, collaboration, and mutual support among students. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving student participants, supervising teachers, and school leaders. Thematic analysis was conducted through data reduction, categorization, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that karawitan practice requires synchronization, interdependence, and non-verbal communication, providing students with authentic experiences of cooperative behavior. Project-based models in the creation and performance of traditional music further enhance students' character development through collaboration, reflection, and shared responsibility. The implications suggest that karawitan serves as a strategic medium for sustainable character education while simultaneously preserving local cultural heritage relevant to contemporary educational needs in secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Character education is the most important component of Indonesia's education system. Character education is a fundamental process for holistically shaping students' personalities, encompassing attitudes, ethics, and behavior (Hendra & Hasanah, 2024). The strengthening of character education in Indonesia is currently known as "character building" (Aditama et al., 2024). The goal is to create a generation that is not only virtuous and morally upright but also resilient and upholds values such as mutual cooperation (Rakhmawati et al., 2025). Classroom learning, in addition to transferring knowledge, also fosters character in a way that is integrated into the teaching and learning process, in

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accordance with the mandate of Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. Although Law No. 20 of 2003 does not explicitly mention the term “character education,” its essence is encompassed within the national educational objectives outlined in Article 3. These objectives aim to shape students into individuals of noble character, who are faithful, God-fearing, creative, independent, and responsible citizens which constitutes the core of character education. In addition to the teaching and learning process in the classroom, character education can be reinforced through extracurricular activities (Yuecheng, 2023).

One extracurricular activity particularly suited to strengthening character is Karawitan (Aditama et al., 2024). Karawitan, an art form rich in philosophical and educational values such as cooperation and discipline, contains elements that strengthen students’ character (Karoso et al., 2023). However, amid the rapid pace of globalization and advances in digital technology, the younger generation’s interest in this traditional art form is gradually waning. They tend to be more drawn to technology-based entertainment. If this trend continues unchecked, Karawitan risks losing its vital role as a medium for cultural preservation and character education (Bagaskara et al., 2023). In fact, in addition to its significant cultural value, karawitan also teaches social skills such as cooperation and collaboration, while enriching students’ multicultural perspectives (Sari et al., 2023). The gap between the ideal of preserving cultural heritage and the reality on the ground is further exacerbated by limited resources and training for educators (Firantinur & Andaryani, 2026). This threatens the survival of karawitan and risks erasing an important aspect of cultural identity for future generations (Jufri et al., 2024).

Previous research has shown that karawitan extracurricular activities embody profound cultural values and can enrich students’ learning experiences (Solihin & Rodiyana, 2024). Karawitan extracurricular activities offer the potential to enhance students’ learning experiences (Linda et al., 2026). Research conducted by Susanto & Rigiati, (2023) indicates that karawitan extracurricular activities can have a positive impact on students’ sense of love for Javanese culture. However, no previous study has specifically examined the strengthening of students’ spirit of mutual cooperation in junior high school through innovative, project-based karawitan extracurricular activities. This study is expected to provide practical contributions to schools and policymakers in designing contextual, effective, and sustainable character education programs (Susanto & Rigiati, 2023).

Theoretically, karawitan is a musical activity performed collectively. Each student has a role and must coordinate the tempo, rhythm, and performance with other group members. Therefore, karawitan conceptually fosters conditions that support cooperation, mutual assistance, unity, responsibility, and mutual aid. However, there is a disconnect with the reality of education. The value of mutual cooperation does not automatically develop simply because students participate in group activities. Mutual cooperation must be evident in actual behavior: do students genuinely help one another, are they willing to share tasks, do they value the abilities of other members, are they responsible for their respective parts, and do they carry these habits into school life beyond karawitan practice?

This has become increasingly relevant in light of the latest educational policies. Since the issuance of Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 10 of 2025, the Graduate Profile framework has encompassed eight dimensions, one of which is collaboration defined, among other things,

through compassion, sharing, and cooperation with various parties. The Ministry of Education and Culture has also emphasized the importance of mutual cooperation in strengthening students' character.

Previous studies have tended to use the terms "character education," "character values," or a combination of several values at once. For example, a study at Elementary School 2 Balong identified cooperation, mutual assistance, love of culture, independence, responsibility, discipline, and other values. Meanwhile, the study by [Susanto & Rigianti, \(2023\)](#) did explicitly discuss mutual assistance, but in conjunction with discipline and using a case study at Junior High School PGRI Semanu. The forms of mutual assistance identified included working together, helping one another, carrying the gamelan instruments, and synchronizing the rhythms.

The novelty of this study lies in its ability to isolate mutual cooperation as the primary focus, rather than merely treating it as one of several emerging characteristics. For instance, the karawitan extracurricular process reinforces the value of mutual cooperation among students. This represents a shift from the identification of values to an analysis of the process by which those values are reinforced.

Research on the role of the gamelan extracurricular program in reinforcing the value of gotong royong among students at Samigaluh State Junior High School No. 1 has implications for the development of theory, educational practice, social life, and stakeholders involved in the administration of education.

The results of this study have implications for strengthening character education theory, particularly regarding the development of the value of mutual cooperation through extracurricular activities. Karawitan extracurricular activities not only serve as a means of developing artistic skills and preserving local culture but also provide a space for social learning for students. During rehearsals and performances, students are required to cooperate, help one another, respect each member's role, take responsibility for their tasks, and prioritize the group's interests. Thus, this study reinforces the view that character education can take place through direct experiences and cultural activities, not just through classroom learning.

This study also offers the perspective that the value of mutual cooperation can be developed through the practice of local culture. Karawitan, as a collective art form, demonstrates that a group's success depends not only on individual abilities but also on the members' ability to coordinate and work together.

Previously, extracurricular activities were limited to practice sessions in preparation for events and competitions. Therefore, this study designed extracurricular activities that are engaging and have deep meaning in terms of strengthening the spirit of mutual cooperation through project-based learning. It is hoped that this will enhance students' spirit of mutual cooperation in the Karawitan extracurricular activities. Thus, this study offers a new breakthrough on how to create engaging and innovative extracurricular programs by implementing project-based Karawitan activities.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The focus was directed toward Karawitan extracurricular activities at one selected junior high school, chosen purposively due to its active culture-based programs. The research subjects consisted of students participating in

Karawitan, supervising teachers, and school leaders involved in extracurricular policy-making.

The instruments used included semi-structured interview guidelines developed from Van Meter and Van Horn's policy implementation model, observation sheets, and supporting documents such as school archives and activity reports. Data sources were obtained through in-depth interviews, direct observation of karawitan practices, and documentation. To ensure validity and credibility, triangulation of sources and methods was applied, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the phenomenon.

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model (Anidar et al., 2026; Engkizar et al., 2025, 2026; Muhlasin et al., 2026; Sugiyono, 2018; Wahyuni et al., 2025), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. Data reduction was conducted by selecting information relevant to school strategies, karawitan practices, and cooperative behavior among students. Data were presented in the form of narratives, tables, and diagrams to highlight the relationships among variables. Conclusions were drawn through the interpretation of findings, which were reinforced by triangulation and participant verification to ensure accuracy and reliability. The interview guidelines were developed based on Van Meter and van Horn's policy implementation model (Wahyudi et al., 2025), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Factors that strengthen the spirit of mutual cooperation in karawitan activities

No	Factor	Description
1	Collaborative Factors	
	Collaborative Synchronization	The necessity of adjusting tempo, dynamics, and rhythm in coordination with other performers
	Interdependence	The mutual dependence among performers in creating harmonious musical performances
2	Cultural Factors	
	Sense of Togetherness	The philosophy of " <i>rame ing gawe, sepi ing pamrib</i> " (working together selflessly without expecting personal gain)
	Collective Awareness	The understanding that success is achieved through teamwork and collective effort
3	Learning Process Factors	
	Cooperative Learning	A learning system that emphasizes mutual support and collaboration among participants
	Joint Evaluation	Collective reflection and evaluation conducted after practice sessions or performances

The combination of these three data collection techniques allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research focus, with semi-structured interviews serving as the primary method for exploring informants' experiences and perceptions in depth.

The research subjects included: junior high school students participating in traditional music extracurricular activities; teachers supervising traditional music activities; and principals or vice principals involved in determining extracurricular policies.

The research location was selected through purposive sampling at State Junior High School 1 Samigaluh, Kulon Progo, Special Region of Yogyakarta, which has a well-established karawitan extracurricular program to support culture-based activities. This purposive selection of the location allows the researcher to obtain data that is relevant and aligned with the research objectives (Engkizar et al., 2019, 2024; Sugiyono, 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on initial findings in the field, the research results show that although schools have implemented gamelan extracurricular programs, the patterns of these activities still tend to be conventional and have not yet optimally addressed character-building in a contextual, effective, innovative, and sustainable manner.

Specifically, the activities are mostly focused on traditional arts oriented solely toward mastering technical skills such as gamelan playing or dance training without delving into the underlying philosophical values. One teacher stated, *“The children do become skilled at playing the gamelan, but an understanding of the values of unity and harmony within the artistic process itself is often overlooked”* (informant 1).

On the other hand, observations of student behavior reveal signs of a weakening of cooperative practices in their daily lives. Preliminary survey data from 120 students showed that only 38% voluntarily participated in classroom clean up activities, while 65% preferred to complete group assignments individually. This phenomenon reinforces the findings of (Wahyudi et al., 2025). A tangible impact of globalization is the rise of individualism a value orientation that prioritizes the self. This lifestyle subsequently influences various aspects of modern society, including how people interact and make decisions, thereby fundamentally altering mindsets and social behavior.

However, this study also identified strategic potential that has not yet been fully tapped. Existing karawitan extracurricular activities actually hold great potential for strengthening the character trait of mutual cooperation if designed more intentionally. For example, karawitan practice requires coordination and rhythmic harmony, which can serve as a metaphor for community life. Unfortunately, these values are rarely explicitly addressed in the training process. This finding aligns with a study by (Rakhmawati et al., 2025). The process of character development among students in the Scouting program at Ash-Shoheh 1 Vocational High School in Citeureup, Bogor Regency, is supported by the exemplary behavior of the Scout leaders. The consistent attitudes they demonstrate serve as the foundation for fostering discipline, a sense of responsibility, and leadership qualities in the students.

Based on these findings, this study proposes an optimization model through a project-based cultural learning approach. This model transforms the *“kemataraman”* extracurricular program from mere skills training into a laboratory for practicing values. A concrete example is the *“Sinan Budaya”* project, in which students work in groups to research, discuss, and present local wisdom related to mutual cooperation in their respective regions. In this model, extracurricular activities are repurposed from mere routine training focused solely on technical mastery to become a support system for collaborative, values-based projects.

The results of a limited pilot test of this model show significant progress. The observation rubric recorded a 45% increase in the teamwork indicator and a 52% increase in the social concern indicator after participating in the program for one semester. These findings reinforce the research (Pewangi et al., 2024)

on the effectiveness of project-based learning in student character development. In addition to successfully improving cognitive learning outcomes as evidenced by higher group project scores, individual test scores, and the percentage of students achieving scores above 80 (rising from 46.5% to 86%) this study was also effective in instilling character traits in students. Values such as discipline, curiosity, democratic cooperation, responsibility, and honesty also developed throughout the learning process.

Most importantly, this study found that the effectiveness of optimizing the karawitan extracurricular program depends heavily on the school's ability to create a "cultural bridge" between the abstract values of karawitan and students' daily practices. Successful schools are those capable of transforming the value of "*guyub rukun*" into concrete programs, such as "*nyadran*" activities in the school environment or collaborative batik-making projects. These findings reinforce the theory proposed by [Solihin & Rodiyana, \(2024\)](#) regarding the relevance of contemporary Javanese values in the development of soft skills.

Karawitan extracurricular activities follow a systematic pattern

Based on observations of the extracurricular program's implementation, the research findings reveal that these activities follow very clear and systematic stages, as reflected in the structured management of time and participants. Regular sessions held every Tuesday and Thursday serve as both a basic training phase and a selection process for all students from various classes. At this stage, all participants receive the same basic training under the guidance of competent teachers, thereby establishing a foundation of skills that is consistent across the group. This process also serves as an ongoing observation period to identify students who demonstrate higher potential and commitment, who are then developed into core members.

The next phase consists of specialized training held on Sundays, which is exclusively reserved for core members. At this stage, the training material becomes more complex and intensive, with a focus on mastering advanced techniques and preparing for participation in specific events. This clear distinction between regular and specialized activities reflects a well-planned progression system, in which each participant has a transparent development path aligned with their abilities and dedication. This phased approach not only facilitates the monitoring and evaluation process but also creates tiered motivation for participants to continue developing themselves.

The successful implementation of these stages is supported by a well-maintained, consistent schedule, as well as the availability of competent staff. Advisors possess not only technical expertise but also the ability to identify and develop students' potential in a step-by-step manner. With this clear structure, extracurricular activities successfully create a tiered learning ecosystem where every student can grow according to their capacity, while ensuring the availability of high-potential students ready to excel at higher levels.

The values of mutual cooperation evident in the karawitan extracurricular activity

Based on observations and interviews with gamelan instructor Mr. Feriariyanto (September 18, 2025) and two active students, Santosa and Niken Salindri (September 30, 2025), it was revealed that gamelan extracurricular activities naturally foster a spirit of cooperation through several unique mechanisms.

Question for Mr. Feriariyanto: "*How does karawitan teach students the value of mutual cooperation?*"

Answer: *“In karawitan, there is no room for individualism. A piece of music can only be beautiful when all the instruments complement one another. The saron, demung, kenong, and gong must come together like a family. If one player is selfish and wants to stand out on their own, the entire musical composition will be ruined. This is the perfect analogy for gotong royong we must be willing to harmonize ourselves for a common goal.”*

Question for Santosa: *“What has been your most memorable experience in karawitan related to cooperation?”*

Answer: *“When we were preparing for the performance last month, there was one part where I had to wait until exactly the 16th beat before coming in. At first, I was always late, but my friends patiently waited and gave me cues. Finally, we succeeded after practicing together for two weeks. This taught me about patience and mutual support.”*

Question for Niken Salindri: *“What values of cooperation from karawitan can be applied in everyday life?”*

Answer: *“I’ve learned that in a karawitan group, we have to be sensitive to our friends’ situations. If someone is sick or has a problem, we automatically divide up their roles. Now in class, I’m more attentive when a friend is having trouble understanding the lesson, and I immediately offer to help.”*

These findings reveal four indicators of the development of a spirit of mutual cooperation through karawitan. First, synchronization as a tangible form of cooperation in karawitan teaches that harmony is achieved only when each individual is willing to adjust their tempo, dynamics, and rhythm to the group. This process cultivates the ability to empathize and prioritize the common good. Second, interdependence that fosters a sense of mutual reliance

As Mr. Feriariyanto explained, each instrument has a specific role that complements the others. This creates an awareness that success is the result of teamwork, not individual achievement. Third, nonverbal communication that hones social sensitivity.

Santosa’s experience demonstrates how karawitan cultivates sensitivity through visual and auditory cues, which are then carried over into everyday social interactions. Fourth, Organic Solidarity in Facing Challenges. Niken’s story about the redistribution of roles when a member is ill reflects the growth of authentic solidarity not out of compulsion but out of collective awareness.

Essential Connection: Karawitan and gotong royong share the same cultural DNA; both are part of the Javanese ancestral heritage that teaches harmony through togetherness. Karawitan serves as an effective medium because the values of gotong royong are not taught theoretically but are experienced firsthand through ensemble music practice. Every time students practice karawitan, they are actually practicing to become part of a close-knit and harmonious community, where individual success is determined by one’s ability to contribute to the group’s harmony. As previous findings have shown, karawitan is also beneficial for enhancing a person’s emotional intelligence. This is believed to be the case because the nature of karawitan performance requires musicians to listen to one another. This practice automatically fosters greater awareness and tolerance (Pambudi et al., 2024).

These findings reinforce the theory that character education is most effective when integrated into contextual cultural activities, where noble values are not merely taught but “lived out” through real-life experiences. This is consistent with the findings of (Lestari & Achdiani, 2024): instilling discipline in the study of gamelan music also trains students to take responsibility for their respective roles in musical performances. Students are taught to focus on their tasks, not to rely on others, and to understand that the success of a gamelan performance depends on good cooperation among group members.

These values are useful not only in the world of the arts but also in their future social and academic lives.

Strengthening the Character Value of Mutual Cooperation Through the Implementation of an Innovative, Project-Based Karawitan Extracurricular Program

This karawitan extracurricular program is designed as a simple collaborative project that can be carried out over three weeks with two sessions per week, tailored to the real-world conditions of a typical school with limited time and facilities. In the first week, activities focused on forming small, heterogeneous groups in which each student was assigned a specific role such as coordinator, simple notation writer, tempo keeper, and instrument player accompanied by brainstorming sessions to create a short musical piece themed around togetherness. The second week consisted of intensive practice sessions that emphasized the direct application of the values of mutual cooperation through patiently waiting for one's turn, listening to one another, and solving problems together, including sessions where groups shared their challenges to foster empathy and communication skills. The highlight of the third week was a mini-performance where each group presented their work to a limited audience, followed by a reflection session to internalize the character-building lessons they had experienced, with the evaluation focusing on aspects of teamwork and the collaborative process. In addition, creative documentation was produced for sharing on social media to raise awareness and ensure the project's sustainability. Through this realistic and measurable design, students not only learn the art of karawitan but also directly experience the practice of mutual cooperation in a meaningful context, in line with the school's actual resources and time constraints.

Analysis of the relationship between the Karawitan Extracurricular Activity and the values of Pancasila and character education

Based on this study, we found that the karawitan extracurricular program as a component of local wisdom developed through a project-based approach is closely linked to the values of Pancasila and character education. This activity is not merely about learning traditional music; rather, it serves as an effective platform for instilling the nation's noble values in the students of Samigaluh State Junior High School 1. As stated by [Firantinur & Andaryani, \(2026\)](#), the integration of local wisdom into learning is expected to make a positive contribution to the development of the Pancasila student profile that is, students who possess a deep understanding of local wisdom, appreciate and apply the values of Pancasila in their daily lives, and possess a strong character aligned with the ideals of the Indonesian nation.

In practice, karawitan teaches the value of belief in God through a deep appreciation of the meaning behind each piece of music performed. Students learn that behind the beauty of music lie spiritual values worthy of gratitude. As seen when students composed a piece with the theme "Gratitude for Friendship," they not only practiced musical techniques but also learned to appreciate the gift of friendship they possess.

Humanistic values are reflected in the way students respect one another during the rehearsal process. Each player understands that every instrument plays a vital role, just as in society, where everyone has equal value. Empathy develops as they adjust the tempo and dynamics of their performance to accommodate their fellow group members. No one feels superior, because success can only be achieved together.

What is most fascinating is how karawitan serves as a true reflection of Indonesia's unity. Various musical instruments, each with distinct sounds and

characteristics, come together to create beautiful harmony. This is a perfect analogy for Indonesia, which is composed of diverse ethnic groups, religions, and cultures yet remains united. Students experience firsthand how diversity actually enriches the final result when managed well.

The processes of deliberation and democracy are alive in every karawitan activity. When creating a new piece, all group members are invited to discuss and determine the creative direction. Decisions are made collectively, not by a single person. The leadership that emerges is collaborative, where a coordinator is chosen based on the ability to unite rather than to command.

Social justice is realized through an equitable distribution of roles and equal opportunities for all students to thrive (Sulistiyawati & Putro, 2024). In the context of character education, this project-based karawitan program has proven effective in strengthening all the pillars of character that we aim to build. Religious values grow through a deep appreciation of the meaning embedded in each musical piece. A sense of nationalism is fostered by preserving the nation's cultural heritage. The ability to collaborate and work together forms the core of every learning process. Independence develops as each student must master their assigned part thoroughly, while integrity is built through commitment to the schedule and responsibility for their respective tasks.

One student, Davina, succinctly summarized her experience: "Karawitan teaches us that beauty arises from diversity united as one, just as Indonesia is made up of various ethnic groups yet remains one." This simple statement illustrates how abstract values such as unity and diversity can be understood concretely through the experience of making music.

The findings of this study reinforce the importance of karawitan not only as a traditional art form but also as an effective medium for character education. Through an innovative project-based approach, karawitan has successfully become a living laboratory where students not only learn about music but, more importantly, learn about life values that align with the Indonesian national identity.

This activity demonstrates that effective character education does not have to rely on lectures or abstract theories but can be achieved through enjoyable and meaningful real-life experiences. Karawitan, with all its cultural richness, provides a strong foundation for shaping a younger generation that is not only musically skilled but also possesses strong character in line with the values of Pancasila.

CONCLUSION

Project-based karawitan extracurricular activities proved effective in strengthening cooperative character among junior high school students. Through the implementation of three main projects collaborative gending creation, joint performances, and creative documentation students not only enhanced their musical skills but also practiced values of solidarity, responsibility, and empathy in real contexts. These activities fostered a meaningful and collaborative learning environment where cooperative values naturally emerged through teamwork and mutual respect. Moreover, karawitan was found to align with the principles of Pancasila and served as an effective medium of character education rooted in local wisdom. This model successfully cultivated a sustainable culture of cooperation within the school environment while simultaneously promoting appreciation for traditional arts, making it a viable strategy for other schools to adopt in strengthening character education and preserving national culture.

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Author contribution

Ahmad Ridhwan: data curation, writing-original draft preparation and editing, conceptualization, **Marzuki:** methodology, validation, visualization, **Yayuk Hidayah:** supervision, software.

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