



## The Contribution of Music Education to Character Development in Elementary Schools

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**Abstract.** *Music education plays a crucial role in supporting the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development of elementary school students. This study aims to analyze the contribution of music learning to students' thinking skills and identify other developmental aspects that can be enhanced through musical activities. This study employed a qualitative literature review, drawing on relevant scientific articles. The findings indicate that music education in elementary schools can foster and shape students' character values. Teachers can discover students' interests and talents. Furthermore, repeated training can foster cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, as well as implement positive activities for students. This finding is in line with (Madina Ameliza, Hakim Ardipal, Miaz Ramalis, 2021) They said that music education, as a branch of arts education, plays a vital role in fostering the holistic development of students. Music enhances the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, and serves as a medium for aesthetic expression and emotional refinement.*

**Keywords:** *Character Development; Elementary School; Holistic Development; Music Education; Students.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a cultural product that encompasses various fields of study, including the arts, particularly music. Music education plays an important role in providing students with knowledge, understanding, and aesthetic competence, which are reflected through elements of expression, appreciation, and harmony. In addition, music education encourages awareness and appreciation of both Indonesian and international cultural diversity, fostering democratic attitudes that enable individuals to live in a civilized and tolerant manner within a pluralistic society (Suhirno Suhirno & Hesti Yunitiara Rizqi, 2024).

In elementary schools, Arts, Culture, and Skills is one of the compulsory subjects, with music education as an integral component. Music education is designed to meet students' developmental needs by providing opportunities for aesthetic experiences and creative expression. These experiences are facilitated through learning with art, learning through art, and learning about art, which support students' holistic development during their formative years (Oktari Siska Tresia, 2023).

Alongside cognitive development, character education has become a central focus of the Independent Curriculum. Character education aims to cultivate positive attitudes, moral values, and appropriate behaviors, emphasizing students' moral, ethical, personal, social, and emotional dimensions. In the context of rapid technological advancement, strengthening students' character requires intentional and sustained educational efforts, as success in life is

influenced not only by hard skills but also by soft skills, including interpersonal competence and moral integrity (Madina Ameliza, Hakim Ardipal, Miaz Ramalis, 2021).

Given the strategic role of music education in shaping students' attitudes, values, and behaviors, it is important to examine its contribution to character development in elementary schools. Understanding this contribution can provide valuable insights for educators in optimizing music education as a medium for character formation within formal education settings.

## **2. THEORITICAL STUDIES**

### **Music Education in Elementary Schools**

Music education is a branch of arts education that focuses on developing students' musical abilities, creativity, and aesthetic sensitivity. Through music education, students are encouraged to express themselves creatively, appreciate artistic works, and understand the cultural contexts of music. Arts education, including music, is not merely oriented toward producing artistic works but also toward nurturing students' creative potential and aesthetic awareness (Oktari Siska Tresia, 2023).

Furthermore, arts education is defined as a process of developing creativity, aesthetic sensitivity, and an understanding of cultural values through various forms of artistic expression, such as music, dance, drama, and visual arts. This process helps students internalize values embedded in artistic activities, which contribute to their personal and social development (Pardede et al., 2025).

(Lestari & Respati, 2021) emphasize that music education serves as a medium for fostering students' creativity in the field of music. Every individual possesses innate artistic potential that requires guidance, practice, and continuous development. Through structured and meaningful music learning experiences, this potential can be optimally cultivated.

### **Character Education**

Character education refers to educational efforts aimed at shaping students' moral values, attitudes, and behaviors. Within the Independent Curriculum framework, character education emphasizes the development of moral integrity, social responsibility, emotional maturity, and ethical awareness. Character formation is essential, as personal success is influenced not only by academic achievement but also by soft skills such as cooperation, empathy, perseverance, and integrity (Madina Ameliza, Hakim Ardipal, Miaz Ramalis, 2021).

Arts education, particularly music education, contributes to character development by fostering values such as discipline, cooperation, empathy, creativity, and respect for cultural

diversity. Through collaborative musical activities and aesthetic appreciation, students learn to work together, respect differences, and develop positive character traits that support their growth as well-rounded individuals (Pardede et al., 2025).

### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive design with a literature review as the main research method. The literature review, as explained by Zed in (Ultavia et al., 2023) There are four steps in library research: preparing the necessary equipment, preparing a list of references, organizing the duration, and reading and writing research materials. Information is collected through the method of searching for sources and constructing them from various sources, such as books, journals, and existing research. The analysis method uses content analysis and descriptive analysis. Library materials found from various references are analyzed critically and in-depth to support infrastructure and responses.

A thorough understanding of the literature enables researchers to address contemporary issues and provide relevant solutions supported by previous research. Consequently, the literature review method ensures the accuracy and validity of findings while generating recommendations that align with current academic and practical contexts.

### **4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

A total of 35 studies published between 2017 and 2025 met the inclusion criteria for this review. These studies were conducted in Indonesia. The research used a descriptive qualitative design (n=33), followed by case study methods (n=1), and RnD (n=1). The samples used in previous studies were grades IV, V, and VI.

The main characteristics and findings of this literature review are selected and summarized in Table 1. As shown, the reviewed studies discuss the impact of music education on the character development of students in elementary schools. For example, (Siti Haru (Siti Harumatus Afiffah et al., 2022) using children's songs applied to students to develop religious, nationalistic, independent, cooperative, and integrity values. Then, (Agustin Tri, 2024) Introducing national songs can be an effective tool in shaping students' character, including a sense of love for their homeland, national pride, and appreciation for the nation's culture and history. Furthermore (Maulana & Sukmayadi, 2025) utilizing Song Maker media as a music creation strategy, which results in the implementation of this strategy not only improving students' musical skills, but also strengthening students' cognitive, social, and emotional abilities.

**Table 1.** Summary of selected studies on the contribution of music education to character development in elementary schools.

Author & Year	Country	Method/Design	Sample	Strategy Focus	Key Findings
(Agustin Tri, 2024)	Indonesia	Kualitatif Deskriptif	Students grade IV	Anthem National	Introducing national songs can be an effective tool in shaping students' character, including a sense of love for the homeland, national pride, and appreciation for the nation's culture and history.
(Maulana & Sukmayadi, 2025)	Indonesia	Kualitatif Deskriptif	30 Students grade IV and V	Media Song Maker	This strategy not only improves students' musical skills, but also strengthens their cognitive, social, and emotional abilities.
(Jatikusumo et al., 2025)	Indonesia	Kualitatif Deskriptif	25 Students grade IV	Karawitan Art	Learning the art of karawitan can strengthen the character values of discipline and responsibility through positive habits such as orderliness in arranging musical instruments, keeping the study room clean, respecting rules, and group cooperation in practice.
(Madina Ameliza, Hakim Ardipal, Miaz Ramalis, 2021)	Indonesia	Kualitatif Deskriptif	Students grade V	Learning the art of music	The values that emerge in learning are 14 character values consisting of religious values, discipline, tolerance, love of reading, honesty, creativity, responsibility, independence, curiosity, democracy, hard work, respect for achievement, social care, and friendship/communicativeness.

(Agustri et al., Indonesia 2025)	Kualitatif Deskriptif	1 Grade IV, CARITA 3 Grade V, Show 1 Grade VI.	Music learning in the CARITA performance includes the character of discipline and responsibility in students both during the activity process and during the performance.
(Alfito et al., Indonesia 2025)	Kualitatif Deskriptif	Grade V Rebana Art Students.	Disciplinary values such as time discipline, worship discipline, discipline in obeying rules and study discipline began to be applied in these activities.

### RQ1: What strategies are used in music education in elementary schools?

Of the 15 included studies, several strategy categories were identified. The most common strategies were using musical instruments, singing, and apps (13 studies). The use of children's songs and national songs was reported in five studies.

**Table 2.** Strategies implemented in the reviewed studies.

Strategy Type	Example Study
Playing musical instruments, singing, applications	Jatikusumo et al. (2025, Indonesia) character of discipline and responsibility, group cooperation in training.
Children's and national songs	Agustin et al. (2024, Indonesia) love of the homeland, national pride, and appreciation for culture.

### RQ2: What is the impact of music education on the development of students' character?

The majority of studies found that character development occurred in students. Practical activities involving playing musical instruments increased motivation, creativity, musicality, and student participation. Furthermore, singing children's songs and national songs fostered patriotism and national defense, as well as an appreciation for local culture.

**Table 3.** Reported impacts of music education.

Strategy Type	Reported Effects	Example Study
Playing musical instruments, singing, applications	Motivation, creativity, and musicality, as well as participation.	Jatikusumo et al. (2025); Alfito et al. (2025).
Children's and national songs	Love for the homeland and defending the country, appreciation of local culture.	Agustin et al. (2024); Afifah et al. (2022).

## **Discussion**

### **RQ1: What strategies are used in music education in elementary schools?**

This study's analysis shows that the implementation of musical instrument playing strategies is widely used in elementary schools. This strategy can train and develop students' talents in playing musical instruments. In line with this, according to (Sd et al., 2023) said that the function of music arts education is to develop talent where, every student has extraordinary potential in the field of music arts. Music arts education is emphasized to provide continuous cultivation so that effective efforts are needed to grow student talents. Based on Rusdi's opinion, it can be concluded that playing musical instruments in students is one way for teachers to discover and explore students' talents and interests, especially in the field of music, which we know that not all students are smart in academics, it is hoped that in this way teachers and students can collaborate in honing and training students in the process of finding their identity.

The second strategy frequently used in elementary school music education is singing. As we know, music isn't just about instruments; it also encompasses songs, including lyrics and vocal techniques. Songs are deeply embedded in society, from children to adults. With the development of social media, especially TikTok, children often sing along to viral songs. However, in this context, we'll discuss singing children's songs that can be implemented in elementary school from elementary to high school. This opinion is reinforced by Tyasrinestu in (Siti Harumatus Afiffah et al., 2022) stated that the characteristics of children's songs must consider things related to children's songs, including: (a) The melody is easy to remember and interesting to sing even without words; (b) The rhythm of the song is firm and easy to remember; (c) The lyrics are in harmony with the melody line, (d) The message and feeling of the lyrics match the character of the music, (e) The lyrics can be for entertainment, games or patriotic, but are usually not taught in writing, and (f) The ambition is fun to sing by all children's voices. So, children's songs are one of the media that are suitable for the formation of children's character because the songs are easy for children to understand with a pleasant impression.

In addition to children's songs, there are also Indonesian national songs. Teachers as the pillars of the nation's future are expected to get used to introducing various national songs, not only during the flag ceremony held every Monday, but also in the learning process so that students do not forget their own nation. This opinion is in line with Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 24 of 2009, the national anthem of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, hereinafter referred to as the national anthem, is Indonesia Raya. According to

Article 59 paragraph 2, the national anthem can be heard and sung: (a) as a statement of national feeling; (b) in a series of educational and teaching programs; (c) in other official events organized by organizations, political parties, and other community groups; (d) in international science, technology and arts events or competitions. According to (Ayyasy, 2021) He stated that students should also learn national songs, but many students show little interest in them. Teachers also rarely teach them. One factor contributing to the lack of motivation is that students find them uninteresting. Consequently, the lack of national song instruction leads to a lack of recognition and interest in national music.

### **RQ2: What is the impact of music education on the development of students' character?**

In the 15 studies reviewed, the contribution of music education to student development resulted in positive impacts not only on the cognitive/knowledge aspects of students. This opinion is supported by (Suci, 2023) said that the learning of music arts in elementary schools, the material and context must be adapted to the needs and development of age, emotional maturity and provide a balance of the right brain with the left brain, a balance between emotional, intellectual and spiritual intelligence. The music studied can be related to the greatness of God as the creator of humans and nature, introducing sounds that come from nature or artificial sounds, natural beauty, natural events, compassion, advice, national defense, love of the homeland, and provide experiences to understand social and cultural relationships.

Then (Maulana & Sukmayadi, 2025) He stated that music can be a powerful medium for self-expression and communication with others. Through musical activities, students can learn about cooperation, discipline, and responsibility. Furthermore, music can improve listening and concentration skills, which are crucial in the learning process.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

This study concludes that music education in elementary schools can foster and shape students' character values. Teachers can discover students' interests and talents. Repeated training can foster cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development, and implement positive activities for students.

This study answers the question by confirming that engaging and enjoyable learning strategies or media in music education can increase student motivation, creativity, and active participation in the learning process. However, several articles describe challenges and obstacles in implementing musical instrument playing activities, including the lack of adequate musical instruments and the availability of musical instruments in some elementary schools.

These findings imply that implementing project-based music education can improve students' musical skills if supported by adequate facilities.

Practically, teachers are advised to utilize technology-based media or song-making software such as Musescore and Guitar Pro to make learning more engaging and effective. Schools and relevant agencies are expected to provide training in using song-making software so that it can be implemented effectively with students.

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