

## Culturally Responsive Music Education: Integrating the *Minangkabau* Song '*Batu Tagak*' in Primary School Learning

Delvia Mona <sup>1\*</sup>

Suharto <sup>2</sup>

Syahrul Syah Sinaga <sup>3</sup>

Ardipal <sup>4</sup>

Wadiyo <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,5</sup> Program Studi Doktor Pendidikan Seni, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia.

<sup>4</sup> Program Studi Pendidikan Musik, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia.

\*email:

[delviamona@students.unnes.ac.id](mailto:delviamona@students.unnes.ac.id)

### Keywords:

Music Education,  
Culturally Responsive Teaching,  
*Minangkabau* Songs,  
*Batu Tagak*,  
Cultural Identity,  
Elementary School Education.

*Received:* May 2026

*Accepted:* June 2026

*Published:* June 2026

### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Minangkabau song "Batu Tagak" in elementary school music education from a Culturally Responsive Music Education perspective. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and analysis of the song's sheet music, then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The results show that the musical characteristics of 'Batu Tagak,' which are simple and easy to learn, support its use as an effective learning resource. Exploring the lyrics helps students understand Minangkabau cultural values related to family relationships, the tradition of merantau (migration), attachment to hometown, and cultural symbols represented in the song. Through singing activities, discussions, and reflections, students actively construct cultural meaning by connecting the song's content with their own experiences. This learning also increases student engagement and strengthens their cultural identity as part of the Minangkabau community. The findings indicate that the musical characteristics of the song and students' cultural experiences work together as a pedagogical mechanism that supports Culturally Responsive Music Education practices. This study concludes that 'Batu Tagak' functions not only as a musical learning material but also as a pedagogical medium that links students' social and cultural experiences with the learning process in elementary schools. These findings demonstrate that traditional songs have the potential as a learning resource in Culturally Responsive Music Education practices, as well as a means of preserving local culture through education.



© 2026 Mona, Suharto, Sinaga, Ardipal, Wadiyo Published by Faculty of Education - Universitas Negeri Medan. This is Open Access article under the CC-BY-SA License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24114/paedagogi.v11i2.73462>

## INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in shaping students' knowledge, character, and cultural identity. Amid the currents of globalization, schools are not only places for transferring academic knowledge but also spaces to foster cultural awareness and strengthen the social identity of the younger generation. Therefore, learning needs to provide experiences that connect school knowledge with the social and cultural realities of students so that the learning process becomes more meaningful and relevant (Zalli, 2024). Efforts to preserve local culture through education are becoming increasingly important, especially at the elementary school level when students begin to develop an understanding of their identity and social environment.

In art education, especially music, the connection to cultural context plays an important role. Music is not only a means of aesthetic expression but also represents collective experiences, social values, and the identity of a community. Therefore, music learning in elementary schools should not only focus on mastering technical skills but also provide space for students to understand the cultural meanings embedded within it. Integrating musical and cultural aspects allows for a more contextual learning experience and strengthens the relationship at school and students' social lives (Magraner et al., 2021).

In the context of Indonesia, which has a high level of cultural diversity, integrating local culture into learning becomes increasingly important. This aligns with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes contextual learning, character strengthening, and the development of the Pancasila Student Profile (Rusnaini et al., 2021). In music education, this integration can be realized through the use of local songs and traditional music as sources of learning that are close to students' social and cultural experiences. This approach not only develops musical competence but also shapes character, cultural awareness, and students' identity (Riyadi & Budiman, 2023).

One relevant approach to realizing culture-based learning is Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). This approach places students' culture as an important part of the learning process, making the learning experience more meaningful and inclusive (Haynes, 2021). In the context of music education, CRT encourages teachers to utilize local cultural experiences and musical traditions as learning resources that can strengthen students' connection to the material while also supporting the development of their cultural identity (McKoy & Lind, 2022). However, music learning practices in elementary schools are still often dominated by material that is less connected to the students' cultural backgrounds. As a result, the cultural experiences of students have not been fully utilized as meaningful learning resources. Additionally, the implementation of culturally responsive music education still faces challenges due to the limited pedagogical models capable of systematically integrating students' musical experiences and cultural backgrounds (Bond & Russell, 2019).

One of the regional songs with great potential to be used as a cultural-based music learning resource is the Minangkabau song Batu Tagak. This song contains cultural narratives about the tradition of wandering, longing for mother, and emotional attachment to hometown, which are important aspects of Minangkabau community life (Susilawati et al., 2022). In addition to reflecting the values of family and respect for elders, this song also contains cultural and geographical symbols that represent the collective memory of the Minangkabau community, such as Kelok Sikabu, Gunuang Singgalang, Nagari Balingka, and Batu Tagak, which are part of the local cultural landscape (Asril et al., 2024). In addition to its cultural values, the Batu Tagak song has musical characteristics such as a relatively simple melody movement, a limited pitchrange, and a repeating refrain pattern, making it suitable for the developmental musical abilities of elementary school students. These characteristics make the Batu Tagak song not only a musical work but also a pedagogical medium that has the potential to transmit cultural values and support the creation of contextual and meaningful music learning.

Although various studies show that the use of traditional music can increase students' engagement in the music learning process (Barton & Riddle, 2021), Other research also shows that a music repertoire closely related to students' cultural backgrounds contributes to the development of their cultural understanding and the formation of their identity (Cumberledge & Williams, 2022). However, most of these studies still focus on documenting traditional songs, analyzing musical structures, or exploring cultural values in traditional music works (Bennett, 2023).

On the other hand, studies that utilize traditional music as a pedagogical medium in elementary school music education through the perspective of Culturally Responsive Teaching are still relatively limited (Gay, 2018). These limitations are mainly evident in the limited number of studies that integrate musical characteristics, cultural meanings, and students' learning experiences comprehensively in music teaching practices. Additionally, the use of Minangkabau songs in elementary school music education has not been widely studied, especially those exploring the connection between musical elements, cultural representation, and student engagement in learning.

The gap highlights the need for research that views traditional music works not only as cultural objects but also as sources of learning that can support the development of musical competence, cultural literacy, and students' identity in an integrated manner. This study makes a theoretical contribution by expanding the scope of Culturally Responsive Teaching in music education through the use of regional songs as pedagogical media that connect musical experience, cultural understanding, engagement in learning, and the formation of students' identity. Practically, this research offers a model for implementing culture-based music learning that is not only relevant for teachers in the Minangkabau cultural environment

but can also be adapted by elementary school teachers in various cultural contexts through the use of traditional songs that represent local student cultures.

Based on the description, this study aims to analyze the use of the Minangkabau song Batu Tagak as a pedagogical media in elementary school music education through the perspective of Culturally Responsive Teaching. Specifically, this research examines the contribution of the musical characteristics and cultural values of the song Batu Tagak to student engagement, cultural understanding development, and the formation of cultural identity in the music learning process.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This design was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore a phenomenon in depth within a real context and is bound to specific case limitations (Yin, 2018). Case studies are also suitable for understanding the processes, interactions, and meanings that emerge in learning situations comprehensively (Harrison et al., 2017). In this study, the case examined is the use of the Minangkabau song Batu Tagak as a pedagogical media in elementary school music learning through the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach. The case is limited to one class, one teacher, and 20 fifth-grade students at SDN 34 Simpang Haru Padang who participated in four learning sessions.

### Location and Participants of the Study

The research was conducted at SDN 34 Simpang Haru, Padang City, West Sumatra. The research participants consisted of one homeroom teacher and 20 fifth-grade students. The selection of fifth-grade students was based on considerations of the students' cognitive and social development. At around ages 10–11, students are in the concrete operational stage, which allows them to understand the relationships between symbols, social experiences, and cultural representations more systematically (Piaget, 1972). At this level, students also begin to develop awareness of their own identity and social environment, making it appropriate to explore the cultural values contained in the song Batu Tagak.

### Learning Material

The learning material in this study is the Minangkabau song 'Batu Tagak.' This song was chosen because it contains cultural values related to the tradition of merantau (migrating for work), the relationship between children and mothers, and the attachment to one's hometown, which are important aspects of Minangkabau society (Susilawati et al., 2022). In addition, the song lyrics also contain geographical symbols, such as *Kelok Sikabu* and *Gunuang Singgalang*, which represent the local identity and collective memory of the *Minangkabau* community (Asril et al., 2024). These characteristics make Batu Tagak relevant to be used as a learning medium that aligns with the principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching, which is connecting learning material with students' social and cultural experiences.

Table 1. Lyrics, English Translation, and Cultural Meaning in the *Batu Tagak* Song

<i>Batu Tagak</i> Lyrics	English Translation	Cultural Meaning
<b>Bait 1</b>		
<i>Lapeh nan dari Kelok Sikabu</i>	<i>Leaving Kelok Sikabu</i>	Depicts the beginning of the journey leaving one's hometown, which represents the tradition of migrating as an important part of Minangkabau community life.
<i>Dilingkuang buki jo Gunuang Singgalang</i>	<i>Surrounded by hills and Mount Singgalang</i>	Shows the community's attachment to the natural landscape that is part of the Minangkabau people's cultural identity and collective memory.
<i>Balingka jorongnyo tigo</i>	<i>Balingka, with its three hamlets</i>	Representing the social structure and communal life of the Minangkabau community based on <i>nagari</i> and <i>jorong</i> .
<i>Batu Tagak takana juo</i>	<i>Batu Tagak always remains in memory</i>	Depicting the hometown as a cultural space that preserves memories, a sense of belonging, and the cultural identity of the Minangkabau community.
<b>Bait 2</b>		
<i>Mandeh, basabalah Mandeh dahulu</i>	<i>Mother, please be patient for now</i>	Depicts the emotional relationship between a child and mother as well as respect for parents as a core value in Minangkabau culture.
<i>Lai taragak denai nak pulang</i>	<i>I long to return home</i>	Reflecting the longing of a migrant to return to their hometown and gather with family.
<i>Nak basuo ayah jo bundo</i>	<i>To meet my father and mother</i>	Shows the importance of family values and intergenerational bonds

Batu Tagak Lyrics	English Translation	Cultural Meaning
		in <i>Minangkabau</i> society.
<i>Tapi kini sedang sansaro</i>	<i>But for now, I am still facing hardships</i>	Depicts the struggle and sacrifice that are often part of the experience of migrating away from home.
<b>Refrain</b>		
<i>Takana maso denai ka pai</i>	<i>I remember the moment I departed</i>	Reflecting on the event of leaving one's hometown as part of life's journey and the collective memory of the <i>Minangkabau</i> community.
<i>Bundo malapeh denai jo ibo hati</i>	<i>Mother let me go with a sorrowful heart</i>	Showing a mother's sacrifice, love, and sincerity when sending her child off to study abroad.
<i>Basabalah mandeh mananti</i>	<i>Mother patiently waits</i>	Depicts patience, hope, and the emotional bond of the family towards the child's return.
<i>Di Batu Tagak nantikan denai</i>	<i>In Batu Tagak, waiting for my return</i>	It is emphasized that <i>Batu Tagak</i> is positioned as a symbol of the hometown and a cultural space that is always missed and becomes part of the cultural identity of the <i>Minangkabau</i> community.

Overall, the song *Batu Tagak* represents the core values of *Minangkabau* culture, namely the tradition of wandering, respect for elders, family bonds, and emotional connection to one's hometown. Additionally, the mention of geographic elements such as Kelok Sikabu and Gunung Singgalang shows that space and landscape play a role as part of the collective memory and identity of the *Minangkabau* people.

### BATU TAGAK

$\text{♩} = 68$

Vocal

La peh Nan da ri Ke lok si ka bu

5

Vocal

di ling kuang bu kik jo gu nuang sing ga lang ba ling

8

Vocal

ka jo rong nyo ti go Ba tu ta gak ta ka na ju o

12

Vocal

Man de ba sa ba lah man de da hu

15

Vocal

lu Lai ta ra gak

17

Vocal

de nai nak pu lang nak ba

19

Vocal

suo a yah jo bun do ta pi

21

Vocal

ki ni sa da ng san sa ro Ta ka na ma

24

Vocal

so de nai ka pa i Bun do ma la peh de nai jo i bo ha

28

Vocal

ti ba sa ba lah man de ma nan ti di

Gambar 1. Partitur Lagu Batu Tagak

Note: The Minangkabau song Batu Tagak score used as learning material in this study. The song is presented in a solo vocal form with a moderate tempo ( $\text{♩} = 68$ ) and a 4/4 time signature. Source: researcher's documentation.

Initial analysis of the sheet music indicates that the song Batu Tagak has musical characteristics that support its use in music education at the elementary school level. This song is presented in the form of a solo vocal with a relatively simple melody, predominantly stepwise motion, and a repeating refrain structure. These characteristics make it easier for students to learn the song and understand the cultural message conveyed in its lyrics. Additionally, these features support the implementation of contextual and culturally responsive music learning. Further analysis of the musical characteristics and pedagogical implications of the Batu Tagak song are presented in the results and discussion section.

### Research Procedure

The research was conducted in four learning sessions designed to integrate musical experience with students' cultural understanding. In the first session, the teacher introduced the Batu Tagak song through listening activities, observing the notation, and recognizing the melody. Students were invited to identify parts of the song and understand the general context of the song being studied. In the second session, the activities focused on gradually practicing singing the song. The teacher guided students to understand the lyrics, pronunciation, and melody patterns to sing the song accurately and expressively.

In the third session, the learning process focused on exploring the meaning of lyrics and cultural values through structured class discussions. Students were encouraged to connect the messages found in the songs with their cultural experiences, family life, and social environment. In the fourth session, students reflected on the learning experiences they had gained through discussion activities, presentations, and group performances. This activity aimed to identify students' understanding of cultural values, their engagement during the learning process, and their responses to using traditional songs as a learning media.

### Data Collection Technique

Data is collected through observation, interviews, and documentation as complementary sources of information in qualitative research (Levitt et al., 2018). Observations were conducted throughout the entire learning process to record interactions between teachers and students, the level of student participation, responses to the learning material, and the classroom dynamics that emerged during activities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers to obtain information about the implementation of the lessons, the pedagogical strategies used, and perceptions of using the Batu Tagak song in music education. Documentation such as photos of activities, field notes, song notation, teaching materials, and students' work results were used to complement the research data.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach based on the stages outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021). The first stage involved transcribing the data from observations, interviews, and documentation. Next, the researcher performed open coding to identify meaning units related to student engagement, cultural understanding, cultural identity, and musical experience (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

For example, student statements that demonstrate enthusiasm, active participation, and engagement in singing activities are coded as student engagement. Meanwhile, student responses that relate song lyrics to family experiences, hometown, or Minangkabau cultural values are categorized as cultural understanding. In the next stage, codes with similar meanings are grouped through axial coding to form broader categories. These categories are then analyzed and synthesized into main themes that explain the contribution of musical characteristics and cultural values of the song Batu Tagak in music education. The analysis process is repeated through comparisons between data sources to obtain consistent and in-depth interpretations (Byrne, 2021).

## Research Ethics

Before the research was conducted, the researcher obtained permission from the school and the teachers involved in the study. All participants were involved voluntarily after being given an explanation of the research's purpose and procedures. The identities of the teachers and students were kept confidential by using anonymous data during the analysis process and reporting of the research results. All data collected were used solely for academic and research purposes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Characteristics of the Vocal Presentation of Batu Tagak Song as a Pedagogical Media

Based on the lyrics, translation, and cultural meaning presented in Table 1, the analysis in this section focuses on how the musical characteristics of the song Batu Tagak support its implementation as an educational media in elementary school music learning. An analysis of the sheet music shows that this song has vocal presentation characteristics that align with the developmental musical abilities of elementary school students while also facilitating the delivery of cultural values contained in its lyrics.

The Batu Tagak song is presented in a solo vocal form with a moderate tempo ( $\text{♩} = 68$ ) and a 4/4 time signature. The musical character creates a calm, reflective, and expressive atmosphere, aligning with the theme of longing for mother and hometown, which is the core of the song's narrative. The communicative vocal allows the cultural and emotional messages in the lyrics to be conveyed effectively to the listeners.

Melodically, the Batu Tagak song is dominated by stepwise motion combined with some small leaps and a relatively limited pitch range (ambitus). This musical structure makes the song easy to learn and sing by elementary school students because it does not require complex vocal technique skills. The simplicity of the melody also allows students to focus on the expression of the lyrics and the musical experience they develop during the learning process. Research shows that the use of music in elementary education can support emotional development and student engagement when the material used aligns with their developmental characteristics (Magraner et al., 2021).

The expressive character of the song is clearly visible in the refrain, especially in the series of lyrics: "Takana maso denai ka pai," "Bundo malapeh denai jo ibo hati," "Basabalah mandeh mananti," and "Di Batu Tagak nantikan denai." These lyrics depict memories of leaving one's hometown, a mother's sacrifice, patience in waiting, and hope for returning to Batu Tagak as a symbol of cultural identity. The relationship between the melody and the lyrics creates a reflective and expressive atmosphere, making it easier for students to understand the meaning of longing, love, and attachment to their hometown.

Vocal

42 Ta ka na ma so de nai ka pa i Bun do ma

Vocal

46 la peh de nai jo i bo ha ti ba sa ba lah man

Vocal

49 de ma nan ti di ba tu ta

Vocal

gak nan ti kan de nai

**Gambar 2. Penggalan partitur bagian refrain lagu Batu Tagak.**

*Note: The excerpt from the score shows that the refrain section is dominated by a melody that moves stepwise with some small leaps and musical phrase repetition patterns. The arrangement of the melody and the repetition patterns make it easier for elementary school students to learn the song while also experiencing the emotional and cultural meanings contained in the lyrics.*

The musical characteristics are also reflected in students' responses during the learning process. Observations show that the refrain is the part that is easiest to remember and the most frequently sung back by students. The relationship between simple melodic patterns and the meaning of the lyrics, which are close to family and hometown experiences, helps students understand cultural messages more deeply. Eerola and Vuoskoski (2013) explain that the emotional experiences that arise through music play an important role in building listener engagement and understanding (Eerola & Vuoskoski, 2013).

Although the song Batu Tagak is generally performed by adult singers, research shows that elementary school students are capable of singing it according to their vocal development abilities. Students are not required to reproduce the vocal techniques of professional singers, but rather to understand the melody, articulate the lyrics, and express the meaning of the song within their capacity. This finding is evident from the increase in the number of students able to sing the song accurately, from 9 students at the beginning to 16 students after four learning sessions. This indicates that the artistic complexity of a song is not always a pedagogical obstacle if the musical structure aligns with developmental abilities of the learners. The findings are supported by the teacher's statement as follows:

*"Initially, some students still needed guidance to follow the melody of the song accurately. However, after several practice sessions, they began to feel more confident and found it easier to remember the refrain because the melody was simple and the lyrics were close to their experiences." (Teacher)*

The statement indicates that the vocal presentation of the song Batu Tagak aligns with the musical abilities of elementary school students. The simplicity of the melody and the repetition of the refrain not only make it easier for students to learn the song but also provide space for them to focus on the cultural meaning contained in the lyrics. From a Culturally Responsive Teaching perspective, this condition allows musical experiences to serve as a means to connect students' personal experiences with their cultural heritage (Gay, 2018). In the context of music education, this relationship is one of the main principles of culturally responsive music education practices that place students' cultural experiences as meaningful sources of learning (McKoy & Lind, 2022).

In addition to strengthening emotional expression, repetition of the refrain also has a pedagogical function. Repetition helps reinforce musical memory retention and reduces students' cognitive load, making it easier for them to master the song while also understanding the cultural message contained in the lyrics. (Dunsby, 2014). The findings of this study are in line with Desyandri (2018), which shows that Minangkabau songs contain local wisdom values that can be utilized as a means to develop cultural literacy and shape the character of elementary school students (Desyandri, 2018). Anggraini and Priyanto (2019) also found that Minangkabau songs are effective as a medium to introduce local culture through learning experiences that are close to students' lives (Anggraini & Priyanto, 2019).

However, this study offers a more specific perspective compared to previous research. While earlier studies emphasized the function of traditional songs as a medium for cultural introduction and character education, this research shows that the musical characteristics of the song itself—particularly the gradual melodic movement, limited pitch range (limited ambitus), and refrain repetition—serve as pedagogical mechanisms that facilitate student engagement and cultural understanding simultaneously. Therefore, the

effectiveness of Batu Tagak as a learning media is not only rooted in the cultural proximity students have with the song's content but also in its musical structure, which supports the learning process. Within the framework of Culturally Responsive Teaching, the combination of simple melodies, expressive lyrics, and cultural experiences enables students to develop integrated musical, emotional, and cultural engagement, making learning more meaningful and responsive to students' cultural backgrounds (Gay, 2018).

### Cultural Understanding through Exploration of Batu Tagak Songs

In addition to the musical characteristics described in the previous section, learning the song Batu Tagak also provides space for students to develop an understanding of the cultural values contained within it. Through discussion and reflection activities, students not only learn the Minangkabau song as a music learning material but also connect it to their social experiences and family life. Themes such as the relationship between children and mothers, the tradition of migrating, and attachment to hometowns become starting points for the formation of cultural meaning in the learning process.

In the third learning session, the teacher facilitated a discussion about the overall meaning of the song and the cultural context behind it. Observations showed that most students were able to connect the song's content with the emotional experiences they go through in their daily lives. One student stated:

*"I remember that parents must feel sad when their children have to go far away. If I am far from my mother, I would also feel sad." (Student 7)*

The response indicates that students' understanding does not stop at the literal meaning but develops into an emotional reflection related to personal experiences. In the context of Minangkabau culture, separation among family members often becomes part of the tradition of migrating. Therefore, the Minangkabau song serves as a medium that connects students' individual experiences with cultural values that are alive within the community, making the learning process more meaningful and contextual. This finding aligns with the research by Nasution et al. (2023), which shows that the tradition of migrating in Minangkabau society is closely related to family relationships, attachment to hometowns, and the formation of cultural identity (Nasution et al., 2023).

In addition to understanding family relationships, students also relate the song's content to the experiences of family members who work or live outside the area. One student explained:

*"My uncle works in Jakarta and rarely comes home. This song reminds me of him, who is also far from his hometown." (Student 15)*

The response shows that students not only understand the content of the song but also connect it with social experiences they encounter in their daily lives. The tradition of migrating, which was previously understood as part of local culture, becomes more meaningful when linked to family experiences or the surrounding environment. Thus, the formation of meaning is not only derived from the teacher's explanation but also from students' reflections on their own lives. This finding reinforces the view that Minangkabau music functions not only as an artistic expression but also as a medium that represents cultural identity and the collective memory of the community (Sriwulan et al., 2023).

Overall data analysis shows that cultural understanding does not develop solely through the delivery of information by teachers, but also through the processes of interpretation and reflection. Through class discussions, students are able to connect themes of family relationships, migration traditions, and attachment to their hometowns with their own experiences. These findings indicate that regional songs serve as a medium that enables active formation of cultural meaning, rather than just passively receiving information.

The results of this study show that the use of local songs not only supports the recognition of local culture but also encourages personal reflection that deepens students' understanding of the meaning contained within them. Therefore, exploring local songs becomes an important part of culture-based music education because it opens a space for dialogue between students' life experiences and the social-cultural context represented in the songs.

The findings of this study indicate that the pedagogical function of Minangkabau songs is not limited to the transmission of cultural knowledge but also facilitates the process of meaning construction through reflection, interpretation, and the connection of students' experiences with the social-cultural context represented in the songs. Unlike previous research that primarily viewed folk songs as a means of cultural

transmission, this study shows that students' interpretive processes of Minangkabau songs serve as a pedagogical mechanism that actively builds cultural understanding. Therefore, Minangkabau songs not only serve as objects of music learning but also as pedagogical media that enable students to actively and contextually develop cultural understanding. This perspective aligns with the study by Barton and Riddle (2021), which emphasizes that culturally responsive music learning can promote deeper meaning-making and student engagement (Barton & Riddle, 2021). In addition, music education that accommodates students' experiences and cultural backgrounds can strengthen the connection between cultural identity and the learning process (Bond & Russell, 2019). In the same context, the use of a music repertoire that is close to students' cultural experiences also contributes to the formation of their cultural identity and their connection to the learning material (Cumberledge & Williams, 2022).

However, this study offers a more specific perspective compared to previous research. While most earlier studies positioned folk songs as a medium for transmitting culture, this research shows that students' process of reflection and interpretation of experiences represented in the songs becomes a pedagogical mechanism that actively builds cultural understanding. Therefore, the exploration of Batu Tagak song not only results in the mastery of cultural knowledge but also allows students to construct cultural meaning of the connection between personal experiences, social environment, and cultural heritage they possess.

### **Student Engagement in Culture-Based Music Learning**

The observation results show that the use of the Batu Tagak song encourages student engagement during the learning process. This participation is evident through their increased involvement in singing activities, discussions about the meaning of the song, and their ability to connect the song's content with their personal experiences in daily life. Over four learning sessions, students demonstrated growing enthusiasm, especially when the material discussed related to family and hometown.

In the initial session, some students still appeared passive and lacked confidence when asked to sing individually or in groups. However, after several practice sessions, they began to show courage to participate in singing activities and class discussions. The increase in active participation was evident from the growing number of students who responded to the teacher's questions about the content and meaning of the song. This condition indicates that learning environments that provide space for students' experiences and knowledge contribute to their increased engagement during the learning process.

The teacher explains:

*"At the beginning of the lesson, some students were still shy to sing and share their opinions. After they understood the meaning of the song and felt connected to its story, they became more active in discussions and when singing together."* (Teacher)

The statement indicates that the closeness between the learning material and students' experiences contributes to increased their participation. When students feel that the content of the song is related to their familiar lives, their motivation to engage in learning becomes higher.

The findings of the observation were reinforced by the statement of one of the students:

*"I prefer to attend this class because the story is similar to my family's experience. So I want to sing and tell stories when the teacher asks."* (Student 9)

The response shows that students not only enjoy musical activities but also interpret learning through their personal experiences.

The statement indicates that learning engagement is not only influenced by musical activities during learning but also by the relevance of the material to the social experiences of students. When they find a connection between the song content and their daily lives, their motivation to participate increases. This finding aligns with research showing that learning engagement improves when students view the learning material as meaningful and related to their experiences (Kahu & Nelson, 2018).

Student participation is also evident when discussing the tradition of migrating and family relationships. Some students voluntarily share experiences of family members who work or live outside their local area. These activities demonstrate that learning occurs through the exchange of experiences, allowing students to actively participate in the knowledge-building process. This phenomenon shows that

contextual learning can create space for students to connect personal experiences with the material being studied, making the learning process more meaningful (Fredricks et al., 2016).

Data analysis shows that student activity is not only reflected in verbal participation but also through emotional responses to the learning material. When discussing themes of longing for their mother and hometown, students demonstrate strong emotional responses and are able to connect the song's content with their personal experiences. These responses enhance the learning process because students are not just receiving information but also interpreting the material based on their own experiences.

Overall, students' participation in culture-based music learning develops through the interaction of their musical, emotional, and social experiences. The Batu Tagak song not only serves as learning material but also as a medium that opens space for participation, dialogue, and reflection during the learning process.

The findings of this study indicate that student engagement is not solely built through musical activities, but through the connection between students' cultural experiences and the meaning represented in the songs. Unlike previous research that emphasized musical activities as the main factor of learning engagement, this study shows that cultural relevance and students' personal experiences serve as pedagogical mechanisms that encourage their active participation in music learning. When students find a connection between the song content and their daily lives, they tend to participate more actively, express opinions, and reflect on their own experiences.

This condition supports the view that learning which utilizes the cultural context of students can enhance their engagement and participation in the learning process (Ladson-Billings, 2014). In addition, learning that provides students with the opportunity to connect personal experiences with learning activities has been proven to improve their level of engagement in the educational process (Kahu & Nelson, 2018). In the context of music education, an approach that accommodates students' cultural experiences and identities also contributes to creating more meaningful and participatory learning. This finding aligns with Song's (2025) research, which shows that music learning activities that affirm cultural identity can enhance students' connection, participation, and learning experiences in music classes (Song, 2025).

Thus, the effectiveness of the Batu Tagak song as a learning medium is not only in the musical activities carried out during the learning process but also in its ability to connect life experiences, cultural identity, and students' social interactions. From a culture-based music learning perspective, this connection enables the formation of more active, reflective, and meaningful participation.

### Strengthening Cultural Identity through Batu Tagak Songs

The research results show that learning using the Batu Tagak song not only helps students understand Minangkabau cultural elements but also supports the process of strengthening cultural identity. After participating in a series of learning activities, students began to demonstrate an understanding that the values represented in the song, such as family relationships, the tradition of migrating, and attachment to their hometown, are part of social and cultural experiences close to their lives.

The process of strengthening that identity becomes apparent when students are able to connect the song's content with their personal experiences or stories they have obtained from their family environment. During the class discussion, some students showed pride in their local culture after understanding the meaning contained in the song lyrics. One student expressed:

*"I just found out that the story in this song is indeed part of Minangkabau culture. So I feel that regional songs are important to learn." (Student 12)*

The statement indicates that learning not only results in an understanding of the song's content but also encourages the emergence of awareness about the importance of cultural heritage as part of students' identity. When they begin to recognize cultural elements close to their daily lives, the learning process contributes to the development of a sense of ownership of the traditions passed down within their social environment (Banks, 2008).

Similar responses are also seen in other students who connect the song Batu Tagak with their family experiences. One student explained:

*"My grandfather often told stories about Minang people who go abroad to seek their fortune. After learning this song, I understand better why those stories are important." (Student 14)*

The quotation indicates that learning helps students understand the relationship between family experiences and the living cultural heritage within society. Songs not only serve as musical learning material but also as a medium that connects personal experiences with cultural values passed down through generations. From a music education perspective, musical experiences can become a space for individuals to build and reflect on their cultural identity (Davis, 2005). The teacher also observes changes in students' attitudes toward local culture after the learning activities take place. The teacher explains:

*"After the lesson, the students appeared more interested when discussing Minangkabau culture. They started connecting the song's content with family stories and experiences they are familiar with in their surroundings."  
(Teacher)*

The statement indicates that learning based on local songs provides space for students to reflect on the relationship between their personal experiences, social environment, and cultural identity. When elements of local culture are not only studied as knowledge but also connected to meaningful experiences, students tend to show a stronger attachment to their cultural heritage.

The overall data analysis shows that identity strengthening develops through the processes of recognition, reflection, and interpretation of cultural experiences represented in songs. Through activities such as singing, lyric discussions, and sharing experiences, students gain the opportunity to understand Minangkabau traditions not as an abstract concept but as part of their lived life. This process allows for the formation of identity awareness built through musical experiences and social interactions (Paananen, 2021).

In addition to representing the values of kinship and the tradition of migrating, the song Batu Tagak also contains geographic landscapes and cultural symbols that hold significant meaning for the Minangkabau community. The mention of Kelok Sikabu, located at the foot of Gunung Singgalang, a hill surrounding the area (dilingkuang bukik), and Nagari Balingka, which is represented in the lyrics through the phrase balingka jorongnyo tigo, symbolizing the social structure and territorial organization of Nagari Balingka consisting of three jorongs, as well as Batu Tagak as a historic site and folk legend, form a cultural space representation that strengthens students' connection to their identity and cultural heritage. The presence of these geographic elements and cultural symbols not only introduces students to their social and cultural environment but also helps them develop a sense of ownership of the cultural space represented in the song.

The findings of this study indicate that music learning based on regional songs not only contributes to an increased understanding of cultural values but also supports the development of students' self-awareness as part of the broader Minangkabau social and cultural community. Through singing activities, discussions, and reflections during the learning process, students have the opportunity to recognize the connections between Minangkabau traditions and their own lives. This process allows for the formation of an understanding that the values learned are not just knowledge but are part of a cultural identity that is continuously built through experience and social interaction.

This finding reinforces the argument that culture-based education plays an important role in helping students develop awareness, a sense of belonging, and appreciation for local heritage amidst ongoing social changes. Unlike previous studies that generally viewed traditional songs as a means of cultural transmission, this research shows that musical experiences, personal reflection, and connections with family experiences serve as pedagogical mechanisms that support the strengthening of students' cultural identity. In this context, the Batu Tagak song not only functions as a musical learning material but also as a cultural medium that enables students to build their cultural identity through contextual and meaningful learning experiences.

### **Pedagogical Implications for Culturally Responsive Music Education in Elementary Schools**

The overall analysis of the findings shows that the use of Batu Tagak songs in music education contributes beyond just mastering musical skills. The simple melody characteristics make it easier for elementary school students to learn the song, while the cultural content contained in the lyrics provides a context close to their social and cultural experiences. This condition allows the learning process to be more meaningful because students not only learn musical elements but also connect them with their existing experiences and knowledge.

Based on the findings in the previous section, integrating traditional songs into elementary school music education supports the development of cultural understanding, increases student engagement, and strengthens their cultural identity. These three aspects are interconnected and create a comprehensive

learning experience. Understanding the values contained in the songs encourages student involvement in the learning process, while that engagement provides space for deeper reflection on their identity and cultural experiences.

In the context of elementary school music education, learning becomes more effective when the materials used are related to the students' cultural backgrounds. This perspective aligns with the principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching, which considers students' cultural experiences as an important resource in the learning process (Gay, 2018). The research results indicate that the song Batu Tagak provides a space for students to connect their family experiences, the tradition of migrating, and their attachment to their hometown with the musical activities they engage in during class. This connection allows students to participate actively while also developing a deeper understanding of their culture.

This finding indicates that traditional songs not only serve as a source of musical learning material but also as a pedagogical medium that connects students' cultural experiences with the formal learning process. The musical characteristics of the song—particularly the gradual melodic movement, a relatively limited pitch range, and the repetition of refrains—facilitate student engagement while supporting the process of cultural meaning-making. Therefore, the musical structure and cultural content of the song work together as an integrated pedagogical mechanism that links students' cultural experiences with a culturally responsive music learning process.

This research also shows that integrating traditional songs into elementary school music education has the potential to support the preservation of local culture through formal education channels. When students not only learn the songs as musical works but also understand the cultural meanings embedded within them, the learning process also contributes to passing down culture to the younger generation. In this context, schools serve not only as places for developing academic skills but also as spaces to strengthen students' connection to their cultural heritage (Banks, 2008).

In the context of education in Indonesia, this finding is also relevant to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which encourages contextual learning and the utilization of learning resources close to students' experiences. The use of the Batu Tagak song demonstrates that local culture can be integrated into music learning activities to create more meaningful experiences while also supporting the development of students' character and cultural awareness.

Thus, the use of Batu Tagak songs in elementary school music education demonstrates that culturally responsive music education can be an effective means to integrate the development of musical skills, cultural understanding, student engagement, and the reinforcement of cultural identity into a unified learning experience. This research finding expands previous studies that generally view traditional songs as a medium for transmitting culture by showing that students' musical characteristics and cultural experiences work together as a pedagogical mechanism that connects music learning with students' social and cultural experiences in the practice of Culturally Responsive Music Education. From this perspective, traditional songs are not only a material for music learning but also a learning resource that enables students to build more meaningful relationships with their own culture while supporting the preservation of local culture through formal education.

## CONCLUSION

This research shows that the Minangkabau song Batu Tagak has significant potential as a learning resource in culturally responsive elementary school music education. The song's simple and easy-to-learn musical characteristics support the development of students' vocal skills, while the cultural content contained in the lyrics provides a learning context that is close to their social and cultural experiences.

The research results show that the use of the Batu Tagak song not only helps students understand Minangkabau cultural values but also increases their engagement in learning and strengthens their cultural identity. Through activities such as singing, lyric discussions, and reflections on experiences represented in the song, students have the opportunity to connect personal experiences with the culture they are familiar with in daily life. This process allows for a deeper cultural understanding while also reinforcing their awareness of being part of the Minangkabau social and cultural community.

The findings of this study indicate that traditional songs not only serve as musical learning material but also as a pedagogical medium that connects students' social and cultural experiences with the learning process in elementary schools. Furthermore, this research shows that the musical characteristics of the songs and students' cultural experiences work together as a pedagogical mechanism that supports Culturally Responsive Music Education practices. Therefore, music education can be an effective means to integrate

musical skills, cultural understanding, student engagement, and the strengthening of cultural identity into a comprehensive learning experience.

This research implies that elementary school teachers can utilize regional songs as a contextual and meaningful learning resource to support music education while also strengthening the preservation of local culture through education. Future studies can explore the application of similar approaches to regional songs from various areas in Indonesia or at different educational levels to broaden the understanding of Culturally Responsive Music Education practices within the Indonesian educational context.

## REFERENCES

- Anggraini, V., & Priyanto, A. (2019). Peningkatan Kemampuan Pengenalan Sejarah Budaya Minangkabau Melalui Lagu Kreasi Minangkabau Bagi Anak Usia Dini. *Kaganga Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah Dan Riset Sosial-Humaniora*, 2(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.31539/Kaganga.V2i1.703>
- Asril, A., Sastra, A. I., Prasetya, H. B., Syafniati, S., & Arnailis, A. (2024). Music Gamad: Experiencing The Legacy Of Portuguese Music In Indonesia Roots. *Research Journal In Advanced Humanities*, 5(4). <https://doi.org/10.58256/M4y3h424>
- Banks, J. A. (2008). Diversity, Group Identity, And Citizenship Education In A Global Age. *Educational Researcher*, 37(3), 129–139. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x08317501>
- Barton, G., & Riddle, S. (2021). Culturally Responsive And Meaningful Music Education: Multimodality, Meaning-Making, And Communication In Diverse Learning Contexts. *Research Studies In Music Education*, 44(2), 345–362. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103x211009323>
- Bennett, C. (2023). A Grounded Theory Of Culturally Responsible Music Teaching. *Journal Of Research In Music Education*, 71(2), 229–259. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00224294231165681>
- Bond, V. L., & Russell, J. A. (2019). Music Teacher Educator Perceptions Of And Engagement With Culturally Responsive Education. *Bulletin Of The Council For Research In Music Education*, 221, 7–28. <https://doi.org/10.5406/Bulcoursmusedu.221.0007>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). Conceptual And Design Thinking For Thematic Analysis. *Qualitative Psychology*, 9(1), 3–26. <https://doi.org/10.1037/Qup0000196>
- Byrne, D. (2021). A Worked Example Of Braun And Clarke's Approach To Reflexive Thematic Analysis. *Quality & Quantity*, 56(3), 1391–1412. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S11135-021-01182-Y>
- Cumberledge, J. P., & Williams, M. L. (2022). Representation In Music: College Students' Perceptions Of Ensemble Repertoire. *Research Studies In Music Education*, 45(2), 344–361. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103x211066844>
- Davis, R. A. (2005). Music Education And Cultural Identity. *Educational Philosophy And Theory*, 37(1), 47–63. <https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1469-5812.2005.00097.X>
- Desyandri, D. (2018). Nilai-Nilai Kearifan Lokal Untuk Menumbuhkembangkan Literasi Budaya Di Sekolah Dasar. *Sekolah Dasar Kajian Teori Dan Praktik Pendidikan*, 27(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.17977/Um009v27i12018p001>
- Dunsby, J. (2014). On Repeat: How Music Plays The Mind. By Elizabeth Hellmuth Margulis. *Music And Letters*, 95(3), 497–499. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ML/Gcu055>
- Eerola, T., & Vuoskoski, J. K. (2013). A Review Of Music And Emotion Studies: Approaches, Emotion Models, And Stimuli. *Music Perception An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 30(3), 307–340. <https://doi.org/10.1525/Mp.2012.30.3.307>
- Fredricks, J. A., Filsecker, M., & Lawson, M. A. (2016). Student Engagement, Context, And Adjustment: Addressing Definitional, Measurement, And Methodological Issues. *Learning And Instruction*, 43, 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.Learninstruc.2016.02.002>
- Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally Responsive Teaching Theory, Research, And Practice, Third Edition* (3rd Ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R. C., & Mills, J. (2017). Case Study Research: Foundations And Methodological Orientations. *Researchonline At James Cook University (James Cook University)*. <https://doi.org/10.17169/Fqs-18.1.2655>
- Haynes, B. (2021). *Becoming Culturally Responsive: A Guide For Music Educators*. <https://doi.org/10.18297/Etd/3750>
- Kahu, E., & Nelson, K. (2018). Student Engagement In The Educational Interface: Understanding The Mechanisms Of Student Success. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 37(1), 58–71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1344197>

- Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 2.0: A.K.A. The Remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 74–84. <https://doi.org/10.17763/Haer.84.1.P2rj131485484751>
- Levitt, H. M., Bamberg, M., Creswell, J. W., Frost, D. M., Josselson, R., & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2018). Journal Article Reporting Standards For Qualitative Primary, Qualitative Meta-Analytic, And Mixed Methods Research In Psychology: The APA Publications And Communications Board Task Force Report. *American Psychologist*, 73(1), 26–46. <https://doi.org/10.1037/Amp0000151>
- Magraner, J. S. B., Valero, G. B., Marín-Liébaná, P., & Moret-Tatay, C. (2021). Effects Of The Educational Use Of Music On 3- To 12-Year-Old Children's Emotional Development: A Systematic Review. *International Journal Of Environmental Research And Public Health*, 18(7), 3668–3668. <https://doi.org/10.3390/Ijerp18073668>
- Mckoy, C. L., & Lind, V. R. (2022). *Culturally Responsive Teaching In Music Education*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003208136>
- Nasution, I., Pardi, P., Manugerén, M., Hidayati, H., Pratiwy, D., & Wulan, S. (2023). Minangkabaunese Tradition Of Out-Migration (Merantau) In Indonesia: Hamka's Novels On Reality. *World Journal Of English Language*, 13(6), 119–119. <https://doi.org/10.5430/Wjel.V13n6p119>
- Paananen, P. (2021). Musical Backgrounds And Musical Identity Development In Pre-Service Music Education And Primary Education Students: A Narrative Study. *Music Education Research*, 24(1), 111–123. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2021.2017421>
- Piaget, J. (1972). Intellectual Evolution From Adolescence To Adulthood. *Human Development*, 15(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000271225>
- Riyadi, L., & Budiman, N. (2023). Capaian Pembelajaran Seni Musik Pada Kurikulum Merdeka Sebagai Wujud Merdeka Belajar. *Musikolastika Jurnal Pertunjukan Dan Pendidikan Musik*, 5(1), 40–50. <https://doi.org/10.24036/Musikolastika.V5i1.104>
- Rusnaini, R., Raharjo, R., Suryaningsih, A., & Noventari, W. (2021). Intensifikasi Profil Pelajar Pancasila Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Ketahanan Pribadi Siswa. *Jurnal Ketahanan Nasional*, 27(2), 230–230. <https://doi.org/10.22146/Jkn.67613>
- Song, C. (2025). Examining Cultural Identity In Secondary Music Classrooms: Perceptions Of Teachers And Students. *Update Applications Of Research In Music Education*, 44(1), 18–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/87551233241289948>
- Sriwulan, W., Irwan, I., Kasman, S., Hendri, Y., & Erizal, E. (2023). Minang Women's Music In Matrilineal Kinship: Revealing The Boundaries Of Ethics And Performance Aesthetics. *Harmonia Journal Of Arts Research And Education*, 23(2), 387–395. <https://doi.org/10.15294/Harmonia.V23i2.38229>
- Susilawati, T., Marlina, M., & Desyandri, D. (2022). Implementasi Kebudayaan Daerah Lokal Minangkabau Di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Pajar (Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran)*, 6(1), 119–119. <https://doi.org/10.33578/Pjr.V6i1.8427>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research And Applications Design And Methods*. [http://bvbr.bib-bvb.de:8991/F?Func=Service&Doc\\_Library=BVB01&Local\\_Base=BVB01&Doc\\_Number=029878778&Sequence=000001&Line\\_Number=0001&Func\\_Code=DB\\_RECO RDS&Service\\_Type=MEDIA](http://bvbr.bib-bvb.de:8991/F?Func=Service&Doc_Library=BVB01&Local_Base=BVB01&Doc_Number=029878778&Sequence=000001&Line_Number=0001&Func_Code=DB_RECO RDS&Service_Type=MEDIA)
- Zalli, E. (2024). Globalization And Education: Exploring The Exchange Of Ideas, Values, And Traditions In Promoting Cultural Understanding And Global Citizenship. *Interdisciplinary Journal Of Research And Development*, 11, 55–55. <https://doi.org/10.56345/Ijrdv11n1s109>