

## Optimizing Damar Kurung Culture as an Integrative Thematic Learning Media Based on Gender Education

Fitria Larasati<sup>1\*</sup>, Khakam Ma'ruf<sup>2</sup>  
Yogyakarta State University

**Corresponding Author:** Fitria Larasati [fitrialarasati.2020@student.uny.ac.id](mailto:fitrialarasati.2020@student.uny.ac.id)

---

### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Damar Kurung,  
Education, Gender,  
Learning Media

*Received :* 6 April  
*Revised :* 14 May  
*Accepted:* 27 June

©2023 Larasati, Ma'ruf: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



### ABSTRACT

This research is oriented towards presenting the process of optimizing the application of gender education-based integrative thematic learning media using damar kurung culture. This research refers to literature study and data analysis conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah 6 Manisrenggo. The results obtained are that the integrative thematic learning model has not been applied optimally, even though it should have been implemented in schools that implement the 2013 curriculum. Damar kurung with the theme of gender education is one of the options for utilizing integrative thematic learning media. This research can provide benefits to the next generation in increasing their insight and awareness regarding the existence of local learning media potential with damar kurung media innovation. Damar kurung can also be utilized as a source of information and reference regarding integrative thematic learning media based on gender education. Damar kurung as a cultural wealth in Indonesia should continue to be preserved by the next generation of the nation, namely students and various groups so that Indonesian culture can always be maintained and enjoyed in the future

## INTRODUCTION

Learning is an interactive process that involves the exchange of information within a learning environment among students, teachers, and learning resources. In recent times, learning has undergone significant developments. Present-day learning is aligned with standards aimed at achieving educational objectives. The government endeavors to provide education that encompasses the entirety of Indonesian human resources, cultivating individuals who possess a strong faith in and reverence for God Almighty, exhibit noble character, enjoy physical and mental well-being, possess a stable and independent personality, possess knowledge and skills, and demonstrate responsibility towards society and the nation. These efforts are aimed at attaining national educational goals, which involve the coordination of various components within the national education system, including the curriculum. The 2013 curriculum was introduced by the government as an improvement upon its predecessor, with the aim of enhancing the quality and quantity of Indonesia's human resources. The implementation of the 2013 curriculum revolves around the concept of integrative thematic learning (Solekhawati, 2017).

Integrative thematic learning is a pedagogical approach that combines multiple subjects to foster the development of students' affective, cognitive, and psychomotor skills, aiming to provide meaningful learning experiences through various themes. The term "thematic" signifies that learning is organized around themes that serve as connectors between different subjects. On the other hand, "integrative" refers to the concerted efforts to develop the holistic growth of learners, including their affective, cognitive, and psychomotor aspects. In the implementation of integrative thematic learning, there is an opportunity to achieve integrated learning by integrating various subject matters within a single theme or topic of study (Febrilianti, 2019). Each theme encompasses several competencies derived from interconnected subjects. Therefore, teachers must design learning experiences that promote meaningful engagement for students within the framework of integrative thematic learning. This pedagogical model allows students, both individually and in groups, to actively explore and discover scientific concepts and principles in a holistic, authentic, and meaningful manner (Solekhawati, 2017). In essence, integrative thematic learning not only integrates various competencies from different subjects into thematic units but also integrates attitudes, skills, and knowledge within the learning process, along with the integration of fundamental related concepts.

Based on the researchers' observations, it was found that the implementation of the 2013 curriculum cannot be considered smooth overall. In line with the teachers' statements during the needs analysis interviews, the availability and ownership of integrative thematic learning in teaching and learning activities are limited. The unpreparedness of schools in implementing the 2013 curriculum has resulted in difficulties when executing the program. One of these challenges is the limited procurement of learning media, which hampers optimal learning. In integrative thematic learning, students are expected to actively participate. However, the government's provision of modules and books

integrated with the curriculum alone is not effective and efficient if the media used remain relatively monotonous. Therefore, it is crucial to procure diverse learning media to support students in active science learning, ensuring meaningful and useful learning outcomes. As learning designers in the classroom, teachers should utilize their abilities, competencies, and skills to provide alternative solutions. Equipped with a solid understanding of the subject matter, teachers should discerningly identify and develop media that align with students' characteristics. One idea that can be explored is the combination of conventional and modern digital learning media, creating a more interactive learning experience. This media combination is suitable for advanced learners at the elementary level, as it tends to be more engaging and less monotonous.

Current conditions indicate that many teachers still rely solely on traditional learning media such as books and student worksheets (LKS) when implementing the 2013 curriculum in their teaching and learning activities. However, it is not always the case that printed media align with the students' learning environment. This situation can pose challenges for students in comprehending the materials they are expected to master. Furthermore, the majority of learners come from middle to lower-class families and receive limited support and assistance in their learning process.

The learning process involves the communication process of transmitting messages and information from one party, the messenger, to another party, the recipient. Teachers and learning resources serve as messengers or conveyors of messages, while students are the recipients. Therefore, teachers should utilize media aids in the learning process. The use of media in the classroom during the learning process is believed to assist teachers in conveying abstract materials and reduce the reliance on verbal communication, which is associated with conventional learning paradigms. In fact, the implementation of the 2013 curriculum with an integrative thematic model has brought about changes to the conventional learning paradigm in various aspects (Prastyawati & Utomo, 2018).

The school environment indicates that teachers still face difficulties in determining models and strategies for integrative thematic learning, which essentially involves combining and integrating theme development with multiple subjects (Ghani & Wijayanti, 2014). Researchers' observations suggest that students require media as a learning tool. Damar kurung emerges as a suitable media type that can be utilized as a learning resource. The selection of damar kurung media is tailored to students' characteristics, enabling them to express their abilities and skills in an enjoyable manner. Damar kurung, a multifunctional medium, can be employed as an integrative thematic learning tool. Moreover, its inclusion is aligned with the developmental stage of junior high school students, who are transitioning from the elementary level (Febrilianti, 2019). Therefore, the focus and scope of this study revolve around "Optimizing the Potential of Damar Kurung as an Integrative Thematic Learning Media Based on Gender Education."

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **Damar Kurung**

The concept behind damar kurung resembles lanterns, but damar kurung incorporates a unique idea that integrates local content. Damar kurung takes the shape of a cube, resembling a birdcage, with its frame constructed from bamboo or wood. Each side of the damar kurung frame is covered with pre-drawn or painted white paper. The images depicted on damar kurung encompass various daily activities, such as market scenes illustrating interactions between sellers and buyers, religious activities like the five daily prayers and Quran recitation, as well as entertainment illustrations showcasing dancing, singing, and playing. Owing to its artistic aesthetic, damar kurung is commonly utilized as a decorative or lighting medium (Azis & Wahyuningsih, 2019).

On each side of the damar kurung, various human subjects engaged in daily activities are depicted. Typically, these subjects are portrayed in a style reminiscent of Javanese puppets, closely tied to Javanese culture. The subjects are painted in a side-by-side or stacked manner, without the use of perspective or boundary lines (Christianna, 2018c). Damar kurung serves as a representation of artwork that showcases the revival of Javanese culture, which is deeply rooted in a rich history. The art of damar kurung has been influenced by Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam (Christianna, 2018b). Historically, damar kurung is closely intertwined with Javanese culture, specifically in the form of traditional ceremonies and community customs that are imbued with religious significance. The customs of the community, particularly those from the Gresik area, are frequently depicted in damar kurung paintings, showcasing cultural practices and traditions that are still upheld by the community, albeit some being rarely found. Additionally, religious symbols with Islamic nuances can also be found in damar kurung, such as hadrah or qasidah performances, the practice of seven-month salvation (*tingkeban*), *padusan* (visiting the graves of relatives during the fasting month), and more (Sandika Wahyu, 2013). It is well-known that the Javanese people in Gresik, representing the coastal area of Java, play a significant role in the preparation and execution of traditional ceremonies, which are considered essential social processions that strengthen the community in the Javanese region. The decoration of damar kurung vividly illustrates the appearance and identity of the Javanese people, as perceived and interpreted by the community. Masmundari, a damar kurung developer, explains that the ceremonies serve to enhance the understanding of one's adaptability among the Javanese people. It provides an opportunity for every Javanese individual to unite themselves in the preparations for the ceremony, facilitating an exchange of information and reinforcing their identity as Javanese (Christianna, 2018c).

### **Integrative Thematic Learning**

Thematic learning possesses several characteristics, including the following: (1) student-centered approach, (2) direct experiential learning, (3) integration of multiple subjects into a cohesive whole, (4) absence of strict barriers between subjects, (5) flexibility, and (6) learning outcomes that can be tailored to students' interests and needs. Thematic learning offers several advantages, such as creating a enjoyable learning environment that aligns with students' interests and needs, fostering long-lasting and meaningful learning

outcomes, providing experiences and teaching activities that align with students' developmental levels and needs, promoting social skills through collaboration, nurturing critical thinking and problem-solving skills based on the challenges students face, offering real-world activities that connect with students' environment, and encouraging the cultivation of tolerance, effective communication, and openness to others' ideas. Consequently, integrative thematic learning emphasizes active student involvement, enabling them to gain firsthand experiences and develop their ability to explore various areas of knowledge. Additionally, incorporating the "learning by doing" concept is also crucial in the context of integrative thematic learning (Ghani & Wijayanti, 2014).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research utilizes literature studies as its methodology. Literature study involves gathering information from various reading materials, such as journal articles, documents, books, and notes. Additionally, document research is also employed, which involves analyzing information recorded in different forms, including recordings, audio, images, writings, or other forms commonly referred to as document research or content analysis. The objective of this research is to comprehend the symbolic messages conveyed in documents. The research instrument utilized is a document analysis sheet developed based on the theoretical foundation related to integrative thematic learning media that optimizes the potential of damar kurung based on gender education.

The data analysis techniques employed in this research include (1) data collection of research objects that can be clearly assessed and measured, (2) sampling, which simplifies the research process by selecting a subset of observations that represent all types of units with similar themes or characteristics, (3) recording, which involves documenting and describing the content of books, (4) reduction, which involves organizing and sorting data by eliminating irrelevant information, (5) inference, which entails conducting in-depth analysis to uncover the meaning of the data units, (6) narration, which presents important information for research users, enabling them to better understand and make informed decisions based on the research findings.

## **RESULTS**

The findings of this study are based on data collected through literature review and recording techniques. The literature review focused on integrative thematic content, which involves integrating the learning of fundamental components such as spiritual attitudes, social skills, knowledge, and abilities from multiple subjects into a cohesive theme. The implementation of integrative thematic learning can effectively utilize damar kurung as a gender-based educational medium. Damar kurung enables the integration of various subjects into a single theme, specifically gender education. This approach facilitates students' learning of various aspects of the subject simultaneously, utilizing one medium for increased efficiency.

Through the utilization of damar kurung media based on gender education in integrative thematic learning activities, it is expected that students

will actively and enthusiastically engage in their learning process. The data and analysis results indicate that the implementation of integrative thematic learning using damar kurung as a medium for gender education in classes VII and VIII of SMP Muhammadiyah 6 Manisrenggo provides students with new and direct learning experiences. Furthermore, this approach stimulates students to adapt their learning according to their interests and needs. The learning activities prioritize student engagement and encourage them to ask questions driven by their curiosity about damar kurung. The richness of integrated content found in damar kurung, particularly its emphasis on gender education, is a prominent feature that contributes to the learning process.



Figure 1. The Process of Making Damar Kurung  
Source: Privat Documentation

Damar kurung paintings symbolically convey meaning and information, representing the values and image of the Gresik region. These artworks depict the Gresik people as devout religious individuals who possess a deep love for their homeland and cultural traditions, striving for their preservation (Dey Prayogo & Ismail, 2022). Given the potential for meaningful and effective learning experiences, damar kurung holds promise as an integrative thematic learning medium. It facilitates the connectivity between various subjects, particularly within the realm of gender education. This integration spans social, religious, political, and historical education aspects. Furthermore, damar kurung exhibits distinctive characteristics as an art form: (1) it lacks perspective due to the influence of Hindu-Buddhist traditions and special spatial depiction techniques, (2) human subjects vary in size to symbolize social status rather than age, (3) selective coloring techniques are employed, (4) abstract elements are depicted using unique techniques, and (5) despite being static two-dimensional

paintings, they possess technical and philosophical complexities that create a dynamic and aesthetically pleasing impression (Christianna, 2018a). Therefore, damar kurung can serve as a medium for integrated social studies (such as sociology, history, geography, anthropology, economics), religion, language, arts, mathematics, and science, based on a gender education framework. Preserving damar kurung as a cultural treasure in Indonesia relies on the commitment of future generations, particularly students and various groups, to study and maintain local cultural heritage. By doing so, Indonesian culture can be preserved and enjoyed for generations to come.



Figure 2. Damar Kurung Creation Results  
Source: Privat Documentation

## **DISCUSSION**

Indonesia is renowned for its cultural richness, which gives rise to a plethora of local wisdom. One such cultural masterpiece is the craft art known as damar kurung. However, it has been reported that the significance of damar kurung has been marginalized over time. Yet, within this cultural art form, there lies vast potential for utilization. Damar kurung art is not merely an ordinary display; upon closer examination, a myriad of functions can be discovered. Furthermore, due to its profound historical value, damar kurung can serve as a valuable learning medium. It encompasses a multitude of essential elements and integrates with various scientific aspects. Thus, damar kurung, with its uniqueness, can be viewed from diverse perspectives and is particularly relevant as an integrative thematic learning medium. Additionally, by incorporating technology, damar kurung can be made more contemporary and appealing. Therefore, there is a need to explore innovative ways to present damar kurung as a means of learning, fostering novelty and creativity. Moreover, the theme of damar kurung can be further developed while upholding the values of virtue and wisdom. The chosen theme of gender education reflects the growing awareness and understanding of gender-related education, which holds great meaning and usefulness in everyday life. Similarly, the theme of gender education can also be applied to various other forms of learning media.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the conducted research, it can be concluded that there is indeed potential for implementing integrative thematic learning media in line with the 2013 curriculum. However, there is still limited utilization of creativity in designing the learning process. Therefore, the researchers discovered that by optimizing the integrative thematic local learning media through damar kurung based on gender education, a more interactive and meaningful learning ecosystem was realized. With the use of a single medium, namely damar kurung based on gender education, integration of multiple subjects was achieved. The relevant subjects that can be incorporated using this medium include integrated social studies (sociology, history, geography, anthropology, economics), religion, language, arts, mathematics, and science. Recognizing the potential of damar kurung, it is the responsibility of Indonesian people, particularly the younger generation, to cherish and preserve the historical and philosophical value of Indonesian culture, which is a legacy inherited from our predecessors.

### **FURTHER STUDY**

This research focuses on exploring the potential optimization of damar kurung as an integrative thematic learning medium based on gender education. However, it is important to note that the scope of studies involving damar kurung can be broader and more diverse. Further research, discoveries, and creations can be conducted to expand its development. Additionally, it is worth exploring the integration of damar kurung within the framework of integrative thematic learning, which is a part of the competencies outlined in the 2013 curriculum. It is also crucial to enrich the repertoire of scientific topics. Gender education is just one example, as there are numerous other topics or themes that hold potential as educational materials.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I am grateful to Allah SWT for His mercy and grace, which has provided me with ideas and facilitated the completion of this article. I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my loved ones for their continuous encouragement and support throughout this endeavor. Additionally, I extend my gratitude to my colleagues for their valuable suggestions and contributions to this article. Last but not least, I would like to thank the participants who willingly assisted me in the development and writing of this article.

## REFERENCES

- Azis, F., & Wahyuningsih, N. (2019). Damar Kurung Hasil Akulturasi Kebudayaan Masyarakat Gresik. *Gelar: Jurnal Seni Budaya*, 16(2), 150. <https://doi.org/10.33153/glr.v16i2.2486>
- Christianna, A. (2018a). *ENG The Aesthetic of Damar Kurung Painting*. <http://repository.petra.ac.id/18176/>
- Christianna, A. (2018b). The Representation Of Javanese Women In Damar Kurung Painting - Gresik. *Mudra Jurnal Seni Budaya*, 33(3), 295. <https://doi.org/10.31091/mudra.v33i3.376>
- Christianna, A. (2018c). the Role of Damar Kurung Lantern As a Time Signal. *Sosioteknologi*, 17(1), 65–73.
- Dey Prayogo, M., & Ismail, H. (2022). Damar Kurung Sebagai Representasi Nilai dan Citra Masyarakat Gresik. *Jurnal Representamen*, 8(2), 112–123. <https://doi.org/10.30996/representamen.v8i2.7419>
- Febrianti, D. (2019). Model Pembelajaran Tematik Integratif pada Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti. *Repositori IAIN Kudus*, 9-38.
- Ghani, A. R. A., & Wijayanti, A. T. (2014). *Generasi Penerus Bangsa Yang Berkarakter Dan Berakhlak Mulia*. 18–20.
- Prastyawati, P., & Utomo, E. (2018). *Pengembangan Media Pembelajaran Tematik Integratif Berbasis Logicco Picolo*.
- Sandika Wahyu, R. (2013). Damar Kurung (Makna Lukisan Damar Kurung Sebagai Kesenian Masyarakat Gresik). *AntroUnairDotNet*, 2(1), 114–123.
- Solekhawati. (2017). Penerapan Pembelajaran Tematik-Integratif di Abad 21. 1-6.