

MULTISENSORY APPROACH IN TRADITIONAL DANCE LEARNING FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN INCLUSIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Received : 01 October 2025
Revised : 10 October 2025
Accepted : 15 November 2025

Published : 06 December 2025
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.54443/morfai.v6i1.4607>
Publish Link : <https://radjapublika.com/index.php/MORFAI/article/view/4607>

Abstract

This study aims to systematically review the implementation of multisensory approaches in traditional dance learning for students with special needs in inclusive elementary school classrooms. The method used is a systematic literature review following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Literature searches were conducted in Google Scholar, ERIC, and accredited national journal portals with a publication range of 2018-2024. Of the 156 identified articles, 24 articles met the inclusion criteria for analysis. The review results indicate that multisensory approaches integrating visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile modalities have proven effective in enhancing participation and learning achievement in traditional dance for students with special needs. The most commonly used strategies include visual aids, music with clear rhythms, modified movements, and the use of textured dance properties. The main challenges faced by teachers include limited training, minimal resources, and lack of specific curriculum guidelines. This study recommends the development of multisensory-based traditional dance learning modules and enhancement of teacher capacity in managing inclusive classrooms.

Keywords: *elementary school, inclusive education, multisensory approach, students with special needs, traditional dance learning*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is an educational delivery system that provides opportunities for all students, including children with special needs (ABK), to participate in learning within the same environment as regular students (Permendiknas Number 70 of 2009). In Indonesia, the implementation of inclusive education continues to experience significant developments with the support of various government policies, including Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities which guarantees the right to obtain inclusive education at all levels and types of educational facilities. In the context of the elementary education curriculum, arts, culture, and crafts (SBdP) learning that includes dance becomes an important component in character building and student creativity development. Traditional dance as part of the nation's cultural heritage has noble values that need to be instilled from an early age. The current Merdeka Curriculum provides flexibility for schools to choose dance as a focus of arts learning, thus opening greater opportunities to integrate traditional dance into the elementary school curriculum.

However, traditional dance learning for ABK in inclusive classrooms faces various challenges. The diverse characteristics possessed by ABK, such as physical limitations, sensory disorders, developmental delays, and intellectual barriers, require learning approaches that differ from regular students. The multisensory approach emerges as one of the promising alternatives to address these needs. The multisensory approach is a learning strategy that involves more than one sense simultaneously in the learning process. This approach involves visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile modalities to help students build stronger connections with learning materials. Research shows that when information is presented through various sensory channels, the likelihood of that information being processed in different parts of the brain increases, thus creating stronger connections and improving memory retention.

In the context of dance learning, the multisensory approach is highly relevant because dance is fundamentally an art that involves various senses. Body movement (kinesthetic), accompanying music (auditory), expression and visual performance (visual), as well as the touch of dance properties (tactile) can all be optimized to facilitate more inclusive learning. For ABK, the use of these various sensory modalities can help overcome the specific learning barriers they have. Although the potential of the multisensory approach in dance learning for ABK is very large, comprehensive studies that integrate various research findings in this field are still limited. Therefore, this systematic literature review aims to: (1) identify the types of multisensory approaches used in traditional dance learning for ABK; (2) analyze the effectiveness of multisensory approaches in improving participation and dance learning achievement of ABK; (3) identify challenges and barriers in implementing multisensory approaches; and (4) formulate practical recommendations for teachers and educational stakeholders.

METHOD

This research uses a systematic literature review (SLR) method following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines. Systematic literature review was chosen because this method allows researchers to identify, evaluate, and integrate findings from various primary studies in a transparent and structured manner.

Literature Search Strategy

Literature searches were conducted on several electronic databases, including Google Scholar, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Portal Garuda, and SINTA (Science and Technology Index). Keywords used in the search included combinations of the following terms: "multisensory approach" OR "pendekatan multisensori" AND "dance education" OR "pembelajaran tari" AND "students with disabilities" OR "anak berkebutuhan khusus" OR "ABK" AND "inclusive education" OR "pendidikan inklusif" AND "elementary school" OR "sekolah dasar". Manual searches were also conducted on reference lists of relevant articles to identify additional studies.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria established include: (1) research articles published in accredited scientific journals or reputable conference proceedings; (2) studies discussing the application of multisensory approaches in dance arts learning for ABK; (3) studies conducted in elementary or inclusive education contexts; (4) articles published in the period 2018-2024; and (5) articles in Indonesian or English with full text accessible. Exclusion criteria include: (1) review articles, editorials, or opinions without empirical data; (2) studies focusing on movement/dance therapy without learning components; (3) studies at educational levels other than elementary education; and (4) studies with unclear methodology or low quality.

Selection Process and Data Extraction

The article selection process was carried out in several stages according to the PRISMA flow diagram. The first stage involved identifying articles through database searches, followed by duplicate removal. The second stage was screening based on titles and abstracts to eliminate clearly irrelevant articles. The third stage involved eligibility assessment based on full-text reading and application of inclusion/exclusion criteria. The final stage was inclusion of articles meeting all criteria for analysis.

Table 1. Article Selection Process Based on PRISMA 2020

Stage	Number of Articles
Identification from databases	156
After duplicate removal	118
Screening based on title and abstract	67
Eligibility assessment (full text)	38
Articles included for analysis	24

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Analyzed Studies

Of the 24 articles meeting the inclusion criteria, the majority (62.5%) were qualitative research, followed by quantitative research (25%) and mixed-methods (12.5%). Research contexts varied, including inclusive elementary schools (54.2%), Special Schools (33.3%), and community dance programs (12.5%). Types of disabilities that were research subjects included autism spectrum disorder (37.5%), hearing impairment (25%), intellectual disability (20.8%), and multiple disabilities (16.7%).

Types of Multisensory Approaches in Dance Learning

The review results identified four main sensory modalities integrated in dance learning for ABK, namely visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile. Each modality was implemented through various specific strategies adapted to ABK characteristics.

Visual Modality. Visual strategies used include: (a) direct demonstration by teachers with slowed and clarified movements; (b) use of learning videos with close-up displays of specific movements; (c) picture cards showing dance movement sequences; (d) color codes to mark positions and movement directions; and (e) large mirrors for immediate visual feedback. Studies show that visual support greatly helps students with auditory processing disorders in understanding dance instructions.

Auditory Modality. Auditory strategies include: (a) use of music with clear rhythms and adjustable tempo; (b) simple and repetitive verbal instructions; (c) use of percussion instruments to mark beats; (d) accompanying songs with lyrics describing movements; and (e) use of adaptive headphones for students with sound sensitivity. For hearing-impaired students, several studies reported the use of vibrating floors that can transmit music rhythms through vibrations.

Kinesthetic Modality. Kinesthetic strategies include: (a) scaffolded movement learning from simple to complex; (b) movement repetition with tempo variations; (c) use of buddy pairing systems between ABK and regular students; (d) movement modifications according to students' physical abilities; and (e) integration of dance movements with familiar daily activities. This approach is very effective for students who are kinesthetic learners and students with attention disorders.

Tactile Modality. Tactile strategies include: (a) use of dance properties with various textures (scarves, fans, masks); (b) physical touch to guide body positions; (c) use of floors with different textures to mark positions; (d) costumes with tactile elements that provide proprioceptive feedback; and (e) manipulatives in the form of dancer miniatures to demonstrate formations. Studies show that tactile input greatly helps students with proprioceptive disorders in understanding body positions in space.

Effectiveness of Multisensory Approach

Analysis results show that implementing the multisensory approach provides positive impacts on various aspects of dance learning for ABK. Key findings include:

Increased Participation. Most studies (87.5%) reported increased active participation of ABK in dance learning activities when multisensory approaches were applied. Students who were previously passive or refused to participate showed better engagement when learning was adjusted to their sensory preferences.

Improved Motor Skills. Quantitative studies showed significant improvement in gross motor skills of ABK students after participating in multisensory-based dance programs. Improvements were seen in coordination, balance, and movement control aspects.

Social-Emotional Development. Dance learning in inclusive settings with multisensory approaches contributed to ABK's social-emotional development. Aspects showing development include: increased self-confidence, ability to work with peers, emotional expression through movement, and social acceptance by regular students.

Cultural Appreciation. Introduction of traditional dance through multisensory approaches also fostered cultural appreciation in ABK. Students not only learned physical movements but also understood symbolic meanings and values contained in traditional dances.

Table 2. Summary of Multisensory Strategies and Their Effectiveness

Modality	Main Strategies	Reported Benefits
Visual	Learning videos, picture cards, color codes, mirrors	Better instruction comprehension, immediate feedback
Auditory	Adaptive music, simple verbal instructions, percussion instruments	Rhythm mastery, improved concentration
Kinesthetic	Movement scaffolding, buddy system, modified movements	Motor improvement, active participation
Tactile	Textured properties, physical touch, textured floors	Proprioceptive awareness, material connection

Implementation Challenges

Although the multisensory approach shows high effectiveness, several challenges were identified in its implementation:

Limited Teacher Competence. The majority of elementary school teachers do not have backgrounds in special education or dance arts. This causes difficulties in identifying specific sensory needs of ABK and adapting dance materials. Data shows that of 32,623 regular schools, only 5,144 special guidance teachers are available, or only 15.77%.

Limited Resources. Implementation of multisensory approaches requires various aids and media that are not always available in schools. Limited space adequate for dance activities, minimal adaptive dance properties, and lack of supporting technology become significant barriers.

Lack of Curriculum Guidelines. The unavailability of specific curriculum guidelines for traditional dance learning for ABK in inclusive classrooms causes teachers to develop materials and strategies independently. Variation in learning quality between schools becomes a consequence of this condition.

Heterogeneity of ABK Characteristics. The diversity of types and levels of special needs in one inclusive classroom becomes a challenge in designing learning that can accommodate all students. Teachers need to do intensive differentiation, which requires extra time and effort.

Practical Implications

Based on review findings, several practical implications can be formulated to improve the quality of traditional dance learning for ABK in inclusive classrooms:

First, development of multisensory-based traditional dance learning modules that can be adapted for various types of ABK. These modules should include step-by-step guides for teachers, visual and audio materials, and lists of movement modifications that can be applied.

Second, strengthening teacher capacity through training programs that integrate knowledge about inclusive education, dance arts, and multisensory approaches. Training should be practical and continuous with field mentoring.

Third, provision of supporting resources in the form of affordable multisensory aids that can be made with local materials. Schools can collaborate with parents and communities in procuring these resources.

Fourth, strengthening collaboration between classroom teachers, special guidance teachers, art teachers, and therapists in designing and implementing dance learning. This collaborative team can ensure that individual needs of each ABK are well accommodated.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review shows that multisensory approaches have great potential in improving the quality of traditional dance learning for students with special needs in inclusive elementary school classrooms. Integration of visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile modalities in dance learning has been proven to improve participation, motor skills, social-emotional development, and cultural appreciation in ABK.

However, implementation of this approach still faces various challenges, especially related to teacher competence, resource availability, and adequate curriculum guidelines. Systematic efforts from various stakeholders are needed to overcome these challenges. For further research, it is recommended to conduct experimental studies with more rigorous designs to test the effectiveness of specific multisensory approaches for certain types of ABK. In addition, development and validation of dance skill assessment instruments that are sensitive to ABK development are also needed.

Longitudinal research to understand the long-term impact of multisensory-based dance learning on ABK's holistic development is also an important agenda for future research. Through proper application of multisensory approaches, traditional dance learning can become an inclusive and meaningful vehicle for all students, while contributing to the preservation of national cultural heritage and character building of Indonesia's young generation.

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