

Utilizing Choir as a Collaborative Tool to Foster Student Cooperation

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Abstract

This study explores the role of choir activities in fostering character development and cooperative learning among elementary school students at a Christian school in East Nusa Tenggara. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observations, documentation, and informal interviews with students and teachers involved in the choir program. The findings reveal that choir participation significantly enhances students' social and emotional development, musical skills, and personal discipline. Students learn cooperation through group rehearsals, where each individual's voice contributes to the overall harmony, instilling a sense of responsibility and teamwork. Regular practices and public performances help students build confidence, manage emotions, and express themselves creatively. Furthermore, involvement in competitions such as singing competition provides a platform for real-world application of their skills, reinforcing values such as perseverance and collaboration. The choir also serves as an inclusive learning space that supports the growth of various talents and promotes positive peer relationships. The study suggests that choir activities are effective in supporting the holistic development of students and should be integrated more broadly into educational programs to cultivate not only artistic talent but also essential character traits. These findings have implications for the implementation of character-based and culturally responsive education in Indonesian schools.

Keywords: Student Cooperation, Choir, Extracurricular activities, Qualitative studies, Character Education

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi peran kegiatan paduan suara dalam membentuk karakter dan meningkatkan kemampuan kerja sama siswa di salah satu sekolah dasar Kristen di Nusa Tenggara Timur. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, data diperoleh melalui observasi, dokumentasi, dan wawancara informal dengan siswa dan guru yang terlibat dalam kegiatan paduan suara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keterlibatan dalam kegiatan paduan suara secara signifikan berkontribusi terhadap perkembangan sosial dan emosional siswa, keterampilan bermusik, serta kedisiplinan pribadi. Siswa belajar bekerja sama melalui latihan kelompok, di mana setiap suara memiliki peran penting dalam menciptakan harmoni, sehingga menumbuhkan rasa tanggung jawab dan kerja tim. Latihan rutin dan penampilan di depan umum membantu siswa membangun rasa percaya diri, mengelola emosi, dan mengekspresikan diri secara kreatif. Selain itu, keterlibatan dalam kompetisi seperti lomba menyanyi memberikan ruang penerapan nyata dari keterampilan yang mereka miliki, sekaligus memperkuat nilai-nilai seperti ketekunan dan kolaborasi. Paduan suara juga menjadi ruang belajar yang inklusif untuk mendukung pertumbuhan berbagai bakat serta membangun hubungan sosial positif antar peserta didik. Studi ini merekomendasikan agar kegiatan paduan suara diintegrasikan lebih luas dalam program pendidikan sebagai upaya membentuk karakter dan mendukung pembelajaran yang berbasis budaya dan nilai-nilai sosial.

Kata Kunci : Kerjasama Siswa, Paduan Suara, Ekstrakurikuler, Penelitian Kualitatif, Pendidikan Karakter

INTRODUCTION

Art education plays a vital role in the holistic development of elementary school students. It provides a platform for children to express themselves, foster creativity, and refine fine motor skills. According to Purhanudin (2016), beauty as a fundamental aspect of fine arts serves not only an aesthetic purpose but also supports intellectual growth. The objectives of art education in public schools extend beyond artistic skill acquisition; it aims to create a balance between emotional and intellectual intelligence (Purbawati et al., 2024).

Among the various forms of art, music—particularly choral music—has shown significant potential in shaping individual character, cultivating cultural values, and enhancing social-emotional competencies (Ma & Wang, 2025). Music not only influences personal development but also contributes to shaping culture and society. Yuni (2017) asserts that music education enriches students'

emotional and social development while promoting collaboration and an appreciation of cultural diversity.

In line with this, a Christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara has implemented a choir as part of its extracurricular program to strengthen art education among its students. Choir activities are recognized as an effective medium in the arts, offering substantial benefits to student development. Mokoagow et al. (2023) describe choir participation as a highly successful form of social art that fosters unity and shared purpose. A choir is more than a musical ensemble; it is a coordinated vocal group that blends various voice types—soprano, alto, tenor, and bass (SATB)—into a harmonious whole. Through choir participation, students not only learn musical theory and vocal techniques but also develop essential life skills such as teamwork, discipline, and self-confidence.

The implementation of the choir program at the school serves multiple purposes. It enhances musical aptitude while cultivating cooperation among students. Since each choir member assumes a distinct vocal role, collaboration is crucial. Success in choral singing requires listening attentively, respecting others, and working toward a collective artistic goal. Rehearsals and performances provide students with opportunities to experience commitment, hard work, and mutual support in real-life contexts (Moisseinen, 2024).

Meaningful learning occurs when students are actively engaged—cognitively, emotionally, and physically (Komisia, Tukan, & Leba, 2022; Yudho, 2019). Choir activities exemplify active learning by immersing students in rich, interactive experiences. Extracurricular activities such as school choirs are vital in nurturing students' potential outside formal classroom settings (Cahyani & Dharmawanputra, 2024). These activities not only develop talents and interests but also shape personality and build social character.

Furthermore, the broader benefits of extracurricular programs, including the reinforcement of character values, improvement of school quality, and enhancement of institutional achievement (Cahyani & Dharmawanputra, 2024). Participation in choir activities requires synchronized group effort, demanding effective communication, shared commitment, and interpersonal harmony. Rosita and Leonard (2015) note that cooperation is a fundamental aspect of learning—both inside and outside the classroom. However, fostering genuine teamwork is not without challenges. Differences in perspectives, attitudes, and social behaviors can hinder group cohesion. Thus, successful group work demands perseverance, open-mindedness, and shared responsibility.

Despite the recognition of music education's value in promoting emotional intelligence and social skills, there is a notable research gap in understanding how choir-based extracurricular activities specifically influence cooperative behavior and social character development among elementary students. Existing literature often generalizes the benefits of music education without analyzing the unique dynamics of choral collaboration—especially in the context of Christian elementary schools in underrepresented regions such as East Nusa Tenggara. This study seeks to address that gap by exploring the social and educational impact of choir participation within this specific setting.

This study aims to examine how participation in choir activities contributes to the development of students' cooperation, communication, and social interaction skills. It explores how practicing and performing as a group can foster a sense of unity and mutual respect. Additionally, it seeks to understand how students learn discipline and responsibility through their commitment to group activities. Therefore, this article presents a detailed account of the implementation of choir extracurricular activities at a Christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara, particularly focusing on their integration within the broader learning process. The learning process is fundamentally a dynamic interaction between teachers and students, where communication and mutual support are essential in achieving educational goals.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design to explore how choir activities contribute to the development of cooperative character among students at a Christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara. A qualitative approach is appropriate for this study as it allows for an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences, perceptions, and interactions of students and educators within the specific context of choir-based extracurricular activities (Rizaldy, 2024).

Data Collection

The data in this study was collected through: interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with several informants to obtain data. The interview with the teacher aims to understand their views on the choir conducted on the character of student cooperation. Interviews, with students providing a first-hand look at the choir performed and its impact on their characters. The interview with the principal was designed to reveal whether or not building student cooperation through choir had a positive impact on the character of the students in a christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara. Observation was made to directly observe the choir and the character of student cooperation after participating in choir group activities. The observation aims to record student responses, and to assess the extent of the impact of choir formation on the character of student cooperation. Documentation is used to collect additional data in the form of images during choir activities (Azzahra, Ali, Riyadi, Ayfi, & Widiawati, 2023).

The instrument in this study uses observation sheets and interviews regarding the formation of student cooperation characters through choir activities. Observation tools are measured from the character of student cooperation. Meanwhile, the interview format contains several questions, including: 1) how students feel after participating in the choir, 2) what they learned after participating in choir activities.

Data Analysis

The data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which consists of four interconnected stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the first stage, data were gathered through interviews, observations, and documentation. The second stage, data reduction, involved selecting and organizing the relevant information by filtering out unnecessary or redundant data. This process was conducted continuously throughout the research. The third stage, data display, involved presenting the data in narrative descriptions, thematic charts, and matrices to identify emerging patterns and relationships. Finally, the fourth stage focused on drawing and verifying conclusions by systematically interpreting the data to understand the role of choir activities in building students' cooperative character.

The results of the data analysis were interpreted to explore how students developed cooperation through their participation in the school choir. This interpretation focused on the social and emotional aspects of student interaction—such as communication, group harmony, mutual respect, and commitment—which emerged from the collaborative nature of choir rehearsals and performances. These findings offer insight into how choir activities can serve as a practical and impactful medium for character education, particularly in fostering cooperation within the unique setting of a Christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara.

RESULT

In the world of education, cooperative skills are an important thing that must be done with learning that involves students in learning activities in the classroom so that students are able and dare to express their opinions without hesitation. According to Johnson, cooperation skills are forming groups, managing group activities, maintaining effective interactions, building concepts, and developing information (Rochaniningsih & Masruri, 2015). Mu'minah said that the skills that must

be possessed by students include communication, collaboration or cooperation, critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Jatiningsih et al., 2023). This skill is very important for students to have to be a provision for students in carrying out their daily lives, one of which is to build student cooperation through choirs at a christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara.

With this collaboration, students are expected to be able to understand a learning material in the classroom and students can have good interaction skills, one of which is by building student cooperation through choirs in a christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara. According to Ningrum, cooperation will be carried out by several students in completing group assignments together with a sense of responsibility (Wati et al., 2020). Cooperation is also able to improve the end result of a given task, helping students develop social and communication skills. Fauziddin emphasized that cooperation is one of the attitudes between students and other students to carry out activities so that they work well together (Wati et al., 2020). This motivates students to learn, collaborate, with each other and create a more positive learning environment. According to Gaol & Sitepu, motivation serves to encourage students to be active in learning activities. Students with high learning motivation will be able to understand the material easily, so that their learning achievement increases (Cahya et al., 2023). Learning motivation is related to students' interests. Interest in learning is an important motivation for students to be actively involved in learning activities, one of which is motivation in building student cooperation through choirs at a christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara.

Building cooperation in each group member has the same responsibility for the results to be achieved for a given task, one of which is to form a choir group in a christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara. Therefore, each member will help each other, have motivation for the success of the group, so that each individual will have the same opportunity to contribute to the success of the group. An assessment system is also carried out for groups and each group will receive an award if the group is able to show the required achievements.

Taking into account the social and cultural context in a christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara, this study aims to explore how choir formation can be used as an effective means to build student cooperation through choir. Through this research, it is hoped that the best methods and practices that support the development of cooperation in the school environment can be identified. Cooperation can be developed through artistic processing, such as singing and dancing. This activity aims to develop self-expression through music and movement media, as well as develop a sense of beauty, develop imagination and initiative. This process helps them to become more independent and develop into individuals who are able to take initiative, face challenges, and achieve their own goals.

The results of building student cooperation through choirs in a christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara can be seen in improving students' musical skills, increasing confidence when performing in public, and establishing closer relationships between students, teachers, and parents, all of which contribute to a more harmonious learning environment. Based on the implementation of activities to build student cooperation through choirs at a christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara, the following results have been obtained

Planning stage

Conducting observations and interviews in the first week of assignment. This observation and interview aims to identify obstacles or problems faced by teachers and students in the daily learning process, especially in art learning in schools. Observations made on grade V students in the art learning process, getting results, students have difficulty understanding the material taught because the teacher who provides the material is a homeroom teacher whose educational background is not an art teacher. Based on the results of an interview from one of the teachers, Mrs. Katarina Dolu as a subject teacher said that, when there was a cultural arts subject, she had difficulties in providing material because she was not a music art teacher but a general subject teacher.

After completing the observation and interview stages, students will have discussions with the school and field supervisors to formulate a music art learning plan, including efforts to build student cooperation through choirs at a Christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara.



Figure 1 FKKS

Implementation Stage

The stages of choir implementation are divided into several stages which include Practice. In the rehearsal process, choir participants perform vocal exercises both individually and together. The exercise materials applied in the choir training process are adapted to the needs of the students, among others; breathing techniques in singing, with diaphragmatic breathing being the best to control airflow and produce a strong sound. In addition, a resonance technique that serves to expand and beautify the voice to sound melodious and charming, which is very beneficial for students at a christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara who are involved in choirs. Clear articulation or pronunciation is also important, as it ensures that each word sounds good, which can be improved through a variety of artistic activities to improve vocal and expressive skills. There is also the intonation technique, this is important in the formation of a choir to achieve good harmony, starting with training students to recognize notes through basic scales. Then Phrasing, which is the rule of cutting musical sentences into shorter but cohesive parts, is also an important aspect of music learning. Finally, expression in music includes the expression of thoughts and feelings that include the nuances of the tempo, dynamics, and sound color of the song, which are important elements in presenting the musical work as a whole.



Figure 2 Choir practice

Evaluation stage

After the learning process is implemented, the evaluation stage is carried out to assess the extent to which the learning objectives have been achieved, as well as to identify the impact and benefits of the learning that has been implemented. The abilities of each student are different so it

takes time to train students who have difficulties in understanding choir formation, training students in aiming for notes, scales and harmony in songs.

Choir exercises involve collaboration between members to create harmony, thus training students to support each other. Cooperation is seen when each voice group supports each other to create this harmony. They listen to each other so that when a friend goes wrong, they immediately help fix it. This is in line with What is delivered by (Maryana Devi & Wahyu Pusari, 2017) that cooperation is an activity carried out by a certain group that has the same goals or interests as other members at the same time and is closely related to each other.

The formation of a choir in a school setting, particularly in a Christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara, plays a vital role not only in fostering students' musical skills but also in shaping their character and social competencies. Choir activities serve as an engaging and meaningful medium for students to express themselves musically while participating in a collective creative effort. As students learn to harmonize with others, they also build important life skills that transcend the music classroom. This collaborative form of music-making becomes a multidimensional educational tool, impacting cognitive, emotional, and social development.

One of the most prominent values taught through choir participation is cooperation and collaboration. Choir singing inherently requires students to work together to achieve harmony, both musically and interpersonally. Every voice, whether soprano, alto, tenor, or bass, plays a specific role in shaping the overall sound. Students must learn to listen to one another, blend their voices, and make adjustments to maintain unity. This group effort encourages them to recognize the value of each individual's contribution and nurtures a sense of mutual respect. Through this process, students experience firsthand how teamwork is essential to achieve common goals—a lesson that carries significant implications beyond music, extending into academic group work, sports, and community life. The ability to collaborate effectively is crucial in shaping well-rounded individuals who can thrive in various social and professional settings.

Alongside collaboration, discipline and responsibility are also essential aspects developed through choir activities. Choir rehearsals are typically conducted on a regular schedule, requiring consistent attendance, punctuality, and active participation. Students are held accountable not only to themselves but also to their peers and conductor. This routine instills in them a strong sense of discipline as they learn to balance their commitments and follow instructions diligently. Moreover, they understand that the success of the group depends on their personal responsibility—each missed rehearsal or lack of preparation can affect the entire performance. These experiences foster important life skills such as time management, commitment, and accountability, which are transferable to academic responsibilities and future work environments.

Beyond the technical and social aspects, choir participation contributes significantly to students' emotional and social development. Music, particularly singing, provides a channel for emotional expression that can be both therapeutic and empowering. In the choir, students are not only singing notes and rhythms; they are conveying feelings and messages through lyrics, tone, and performance. This expressive outlet helps them process and articulate emotions in a healthy and constructive way. Additionally, the experience of performing alongside peers helps develop empathy, as students must be sensitive to the emotional nuances of the songs and the group dynamic. When combined with choreography—where students learn to express themselves through movement—choir becomes a holistic form of emotional engagement, allowing children to connect with both their inner selves and the audience.



Figure 3 Singing and choreography technique training

The choir also serves as a platform to enhance musical abilities, particularly in the context of elementary education where foundational skills are still being formed. Students are introduced to various vocal techniques, including breath control, diction, articulation, and pitch accuracy. They are also exposed to basic musical concepts such as scales, rhythm, tempo, and dynamics. These elements not only improve their vocal performance but also deepen their understanding of musical structure and literacy. For instance, scale training sessions help students internalize pitch relationships and develop their ear for harmony. These foundational skills form a crucial part of the broader music education curriculum and can ignite a lifelong appreciation for music.



Figure 4 Scale Training

Furthermore, participation in choirs often involves staging and public performance, which are instrumental in developing self-confidence. A notable example from East Nusa Tenggara is the participation of 30 students from seven different schools in the O2SN (Olimpiade Olahraga Siswa Nasional) choir competition. While their performance may not have reached optimal artistic quality, the experience itself was a significant achievement. Stepping onto a stage and performing in front of an audience helps students confront and overcome stage fright, develop a sense of presence, and build resilience. These public performance experiences are especially empowering for young learners, as they promote self-assurance, effective communication, and the courage to take risks—qualities that are beneficial in academic presentations, leadership roles, and social interactions.



Figure 5 Choir staging from the a Christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara

Through this process, building student cooperation through choir at a christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara not only focuses on the technical aspects of singing, but also on the development of students' character and soft skills, which are crucial for their future. The formation of a choir among students at a christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara is not only about creating beautiful musical performances, but also a rich process of learning and self-development. Through choirs, students can build vocal skills, cooperation, discipline, and strengthen their character.

DISCUSSION

The values cultivated through choir extracurricular activities extend beyond the practice room and are reflected in students' daily lives. The success of this program is supported by several key factors: strong support from the school administration, the dedication of choir coaches, and the high enthusiasm demonstrated by the students. According to Mr. ETM, the principal of the Christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara, the choir program plays a vital role in developing students' character, particularly in the area of cooperation. He emphasized that in a choir, every student—regardless of their vocal group—must work collaboratively to achieve a harmonious performance. This process teaches students to appreciate the contributions of others, a value that is fundamental in both musical and social settings. This finding aligns with Oktari and Desyandri (2023), who argue that group-based activities enable students to learn teamwork and respect for diversity.

The involvement of the 7th cohort of the Teaching Campus (Kampus Mengajar) program proved instrumental in initiating and facilitating choir formation at the school. Prior to their involvement, students had limited exposure to music education due to a shortage of specialized music teachers; instead, arts education was typically limited to dance and visual arts led by homeroom teachers. The Teaching Campus program filled this gap by introducing structured choir training as a form of arts education that emphasizes collaboration. The program included learning basic vocal techniques, proper singing methods, and understanding musical scales. It also prepared students to participate in broader events such as the O2SN (National Student Art and Sports Festival) in Group 2 Bajawa, where choir competitions are among the featured activities. This involvement not only boosted students' musical interest but also fostered cooperation and teamwork.

Insights from teachers further support the choir's positive influence on student cooperation. In interviews, teachers were asked: (1) how they evaluate students' ability to cooperate through choir, and (2) what their expectations are from such activities. The responses were overwhelmingly positive. Teachers assessed cooperation by observing how students collaborated in groups, divided tasks, and resolved conflicts during choir rehearsals. They noted improvements in students' ability to communicate, take initiative, share responsibilities, and solve problems collectively. Teachers also

expressed hope that choir activities would continue to enhance students' discipline, self-confidence, and social communication skills—key components of cooperative character.

From the training process, it was observed that students showed notable progress in mastering basic vocal techniques such as intonation, articulation, and phrasing. These techniques are essential for clear and expressive singing. As Mawin et al. (2024) point out, improper vocal technique can hinder both the singer's expression and the audience's understanding of the lyrics. While some students excelled quickly, others required more time and support, especially in mastering pitch, scale accuracy, and vocal harmony. This variability highlights the importance of sustained practice and individualized guidance in choir training.

Challenges that emerged during the coaching sessions—such as technical difficulties, student confidence, or coordination issues—were addressed through regular mentoring and reflective discussions with the accompanying teachers and school staff. Collaborative problem-solving ensured that both pedagogical and logistical issues were tackled effectively. The success of the choir program was ultimately reflected in students' participation in performances and competitions, as well as their ability to grasp foundational musical concepts and demonstrate improved collaboration.

Despite its contributions, this study acknowledges several limitations. First, the sample size was relatively small, involving only 20 students and 1 teacher, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Second, the research was conducted over a period of just four months, which is insufficient to measure long-term character development. Third, the instruments used—primarily observation and interviews—may not have fully captured the complex and nuanced aspects of cooperative character, as these tools have limitations in measuring deeper behavioral and emotional traits.

CONCLUSION

Choir activities play a significant role in fostering a collaborative and supportive learning environment. Through shared experiences in practicing and performing, students learn to appreciate differences, communicate effectively, and work together to achieve common goals. The choir also provides a creative outlet that allows students to express themselves, thereby enhancing their self-confidence. Moreover, the structured nature of choir practice instills important character values such as discipline, responsibility, and commitment. Beyond serving as a platform for developing musical talent, the choir becomes a powerful medium for promoting cooperation, strengthening social bonds, and nurturing a sense of community among students, teachers, and parents. At a Christian elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara, the choir has proven to contribute positively to students' personal and social development, making it a meaningful part of their educational journey. The implications of this study suggest that integrating structured art-based group activities, such as choir, into the school curriculum can be an effective strategy to support character education, particularly in cultivating cooperation and social-emotional learning among elementary school students.

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