

Education Revitalization: The Role of the Chinese Calligraphy Club in Local Innovation

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how a Chinese Calligraphy Club in an Indonesian secondary school affects students' multicultural perspectives. Students are given the opportunity to participate in the Chinese calligraph practices, establish a connection with their ancestry culture, and enhance their cultural awareness with the assistance of two teachers who oversee the group. A descriptive case study methodology was utilized in the research project to record the experiences, views, and recollections of both students and teachers over the course of a two-year period. The research presented evidence of the club's advancements achieved using several data-gathering methods. These methods included photographs taken during practices, exhibitions, and contests, as well as interviews with students and reflections from teachers. These highlighted the club's membership growth as well as improvements in students' calligraphy skills and cultural understanding. Additionally, membership of the club increased. One indication of the club's strong influence on education is the fact that its members have a history of success in contests at the regional, national, and international levels. This research demonstrates how the calligraphy club in schools can improve students' cultural awareness, help them develop new abilities, and inspire them to become more involved in their communities. The study provides a comprehensive analysis of the impact that the club has on intercultural education by combining personal experiences with qualitative data obtained from observations. This case study provides insightful thoughts on how educational techniques might be revolutionized across a variety of cultural contexts through the implementation of similar initiatives.

Keywords: Chinese calligraphy; educational innovation; Legacy connections; local context; Multicultural education

Introduction

Learning Chinese calligraphy focuses on artistic expression and mastering the intricate characters through specialized exercises, separate from learning the Chinese language (Mengxiong Zhao, 2023; Wong et al., 2024). Calligraphy training in traditional Chinese language education focuses on developing muscle control and personal expression through watching and imitating expert manuscripts rather than memorizing characters, tones, and stroke commands (Kao, 2006; Landis, 2024; Zhang & Liu, 2016). University programs focus on calligraphy education with an emphasis on cultural perspectives to support liberal education goals, fostering creativity and adaptability (Li, 2022; J. Wang & Virgilio, 2023). Studies show that the self-efficacy of calligraphy students is linked to their ability to think innovatively, emphasizing the influence of calligraphy on creativity (Lee et al., 2023).

Research has extensively highlighted the benefits of incorporating calligraphy into the school curriculum (Lee et al., 2023; Liu, 2022; Mengxiong Zhao, 2023; Shi & Moon, 2023). Improving students' understanding of traditional culture, moral growth, and national spirit raises educational quality and justice (Liu, 2022). Calligraphy offers therapeutic effects, such as lowering anxiety and depression in art students preparing for exams and decreasing aggression in boys (Hsiao et al., 2023). Calligraphy practice can help athletes improve their self-control, positive emotions, and strength, as well as provide benefits in education, therapy, and sports (Yue et al., 2023).

Getting started with calligraphy at a young age can help with many things, such as morals, self-discipline, understanding of other cultures, appreciation of art, and knowledge of Chinese history (Liu, 2022). It is critical to promote traditional values among young people while also contributing to cultural heritage (Mengxiong Zhao, 2023). Combining technology with calligraphy education can pique students' interest, help them better comprehend font features, and improve their humanistic aspects (Luo et al., 2023; Wong et al., 2024). Calligraphic activities, particularly enjoyable calligraphy, have been found to improve children's aggressive behavior and enhance athletes' psychological training by increasing self-control and positive emotions (Shi & Moon, 2023; Yue et al., 2023).

Different aspects of learning Chinese calligraphy have been investigated in research that has been conducted outside of mainland China, Taiwan, Macau, and Hong Kong (Huang & Qiao, 2024; Shih et al., 2008; Weststeijn, 2023). Self-efficacy has been shown to have a favorable impact on inventive behavior, creative thinking, empathy, and flexibility among calligraphy students, as demonstrated by this research. Furthermore, technological advancements such as diffusion models have made it possible to reproduce high-quality calligraphy scripts, imitate well-known calligraphy techniques, and transfer art styles to new letters and symbols (He et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2023; Wong et al., 2024). These advancements have been made possible by the fact that modern technology has made it possible to replicate these techniques, making these advancements possible.

Although very rare, Chinese calligraphy has been researched in Indonesia to examine its cultural, psychological, and aesthetic dimensions (Julina et al., 2023). Chinese calligraphy has the benefits of reducing stress, improving concentration, practicing focusing, and enhancing cultural values (Anggraini & Wisnubrata, 2018). In addition, research has revealed that calligraphic exercises enhance the self-control, emotional management, and well-being of students (Julina et al., 2023). The aesthetics of traditional calligraphy have been examined in relation to modern society's impact, with an emphasis on preserving ancient aesthetics through innovative exhibition designs and persistence training (Priatmo, 2024). Analyzing the

challenges Indonesian students face when learning Chinese characters has helped explain the differences between Chinese and Indonesian writing systems (Alindra & Romy, 2022).

The use of Chinese calligraphy as a medium for studying the culture of the target language in Indonesia has received little attention, despite its numerous advantages. To bridge the divide, the Chinese Calligraphy Club was created at a high school in Indonesia, allowing students to actively participate in Chinese traditions. The study investigates how intercultural education affects club activities and outcomes, focusing on facilitators' experiences over a two-year period. Students get a better grasp of Chinese culture and connect with their ancestral roots thanks to the club's assistance in refining their calligraphy skills.

Methods

This study explores how Chinese calligraphy students' perceptions of Chinese culture and art, as well as their personal growth, are influenced by their instructors' direction using a descriptive case study methodology. This analysis aims to clarify the relevance of Chinese calligraphy in academia and culture by examining the facilitator's and club members' experiences.

The study was conducted at Indonesia's SMA Gembala Baik, a secondary school, during a two-year period. Because of the longer length, researchers were able to see how students' participation in the Chinese Calligraphy Club affected their attitudes and abilities over time.

This study's main objective is to assess how well facilitator support activities work during the student training process. The beneficial effects of calligraphy education on the development of creative writing abilities, cultural awareness, and the impact of calligraphy on students' psychological and character development are then highlighted.

The primary participants in this study are high school students who engage in extracurricular activities and instructors who support learning. There are two facilitators instead of one, and the maximum enrollment for each semester is between 35 and 27 students. This shift occurs when students finish school and cease participating in activities.

This study used themes to provide a comprehensive summary of statistics about the expansion of calligraphy extracurricular programs. The first step is to summarize student interview results. The student's accomplishments and learning outcomes are shown in the third phase. The fourth phase is to evaluate the secondary researcher as a critical friend and the lead investigator as a facilitator.

The following materials were used in the data collection process for this study: (1) group interview guides; (2) a report on the Chinese language education and teaching program written by the second researcher; (3) training materials created and chosen by the facilitator; and (4) a mobile phone camera for taking pictures.

Data from interviews are categorized using thematic groupings. To recollect learning experiences and gauge students' academic progress, photos that capture students' learning outcomes and processes are utilized. For the primary data analysis, educational resources and reports were used to collect corroborating data.

This study makes use of a variety of data sources, including documents, interviews, and observations, to increase the accuracy and dependability of the findings. In addition, the study looks at moral dilemmas, protects participants' privacy, and gets informed permission. The purpose of this research is to develop a thorough understanding of the advantages of teaching Chinese calligraphy using a comprehensive methodology in a multicultural classroom.

Results and Discussion

For about two years, Chinese calligraphy has been a part of the extracurricular activities at SMA Gembala Baik, having been introduced during the 2022–2023 school year. During the second year of implementation, the number of participants in the training has improved significantly. The activity attracted 35 students who were enthusiastic about starting intensive practices during its first year. In the second semester, a few grade XII students prepared for the graduation exam, resulting in a decrease in the number of participants. First semester students only had one instructor, the study's second author. During the middle of the second semester, the first author joined us, and we continued to mentor the students from the first cohort jointly. The second year sees an increase in students' enthusiasm towards extracurricular activities, requiring them to be divided into two classes. In the beginner class, the first author was responsible for leading 20 new students, while the second author was responsible for leading 26 returning participants in the continuing class. Following the graduation of grade XII students in the second semester and the attendance of participants who dropped out of the beginner class, the class was then rejoined. The two teachers continue to train 33 students collaboratively.

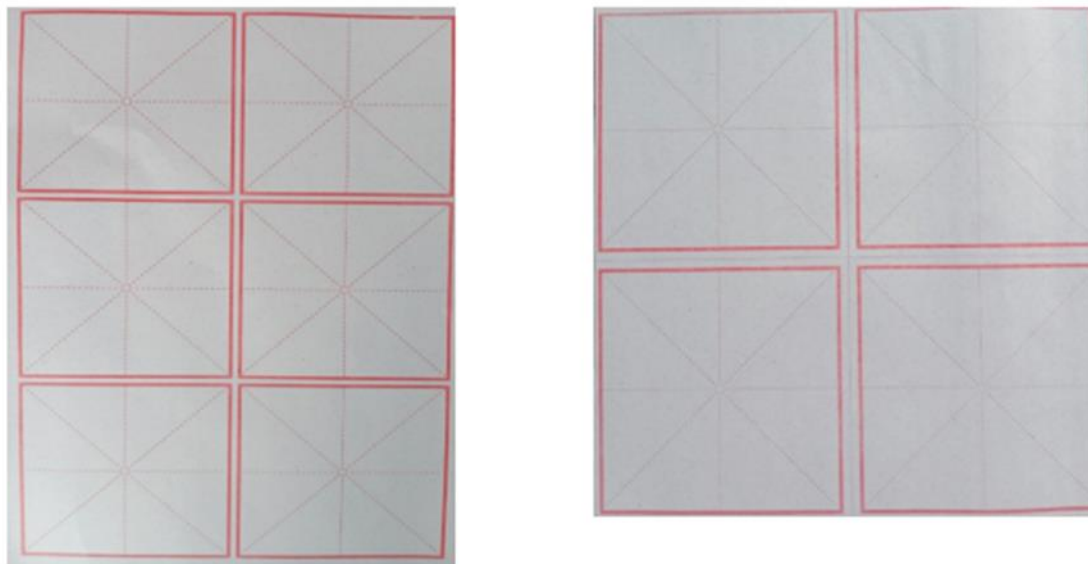


Figure 1. Mizige Enam Karakter dan Empat Karakter

Along with the growing needs of students, changes have been made to training lessons and methods. First-semester students use paper made from newspaper material, which doesn't have any lines. The school approved the first writer's proposal to print Mizege pattern paper (Figure 1) during the middle of the second semester, still in the first year. Mizege means a box with lines that look like the Chinese character for 'Mi' (rice, 米). Mizege paper is produced on A4 newsprint, and every sheet has six boxes measuring 9x9 cm with the Mi lines inside. At the same time, a set of five large brushes was purchased for students who would participate in competitions that required them to write bigger characters. Furthermore, for the competition, we purchased plain Chinese Xian paper from online stores.

Various new tools and materials were purchased by the school to meet the students' needs for this extracurricular activity. The types of paper are added to include plain newsprint measuring 60x85 cm, brown book cover paper measuring 120x175 cm, red paper measuring 105x73 cm, and Mizege pattern paper for four characters on paper measuring 25x25 cm. The

students' writing mats were also updated to use black velvet carpets instead of old newspapers. The growing number of participants has necessitated an increase in the number of standard brushes for practice.

Students also had their names stamped. This stamp is known as Mingzhang in Chinese. The Mingzhang was made at the local stamp workshop. Mingzhang's carving is based on the Zhuanshu (seal script) style. Chinese calligraphy acknowledges the creator of the artwork by using the names Hanzi and Mingzhang in Chinese. If desired, the artwork could have stamps labeled Yinzhang that are carved with idioms from classic Chinese literature or Huazhang that are engraved with religious symbols such as Daoism and Confucianism. Two teachers purchased multiple sets of both Yinzhang and Huazhang stamps. These stamps (Figure 2) are meant to be used as decorative elements in students' artworks.



Figure 2. Mingzhang, Yinzhang, dan Huazhang

In the initial year of learning, Ou Yangxun's Kaiti (official script) was the primary focus, while Yang Zhenqing's Kaiti was introduced in the second year. These two official script styles have different patterns. The students who are willing to take on challenges also practice Lishu (clerical script) exclusively to create products for display in the exhibition. The Chao Qian inscription Lishu was chosen for students because this style is easy to practice and contains many Chinese characters.

The process of providing instructions and guidance during the first year was dominated by teachers. Returning students can now serve as peer mentors for students in the beginner class. Returning students share their strategies for practicing and help their fellow beginners. To succeed in Chinese calligraphy, it is crucial to have persistence, guidance, and sharing strategies. Students' mastery of the principal's techniques allows them to explore and develop their personal strengths in creating this art. Peer support makes the learning environment more interactive and dynamic.

During the week of the school anniversary event, students participated in the calligraphy exhibition. Students were able to display their artworks even though they had limited resources and skills in creating artwork for the first year. Their experiences led to the second year's exhibition going smoothly. The challenge of finding concepts and themes, exploring

idioms to present, making products, and preparing the exhibition room wasn't as difficult as it was last year.

Besides the exhibition, students are also very enthusiastic about taking part in in the competition. Participating in the competition necessitates that students put in extra effort and spend extra time training outside of their extracurricular activities. Many of these participants acknowledge that they have gained additional skills and increased their engagement in Chinese calligraphy. Some students were fortunate enough to win a spot in the competition they participated in.

The SMA Gembala Baik Calligraphy Club has made strides. These progressive aspects are indicated by the increase in membership, the transformation of learning classes into practical communities in the school environment, and the diversification of participants' abilities. Not only do teachers provide instruction in the learning process, but students also voluntarily share writing strategies with each other and produce quality work.

Table 1. Summary of Students' Interview

When Just Started the Practice	After Practicing of One Year
Sulit...terutama (mengatur) posisi tangan supaya bisa (menulis). <i>[Difficult, specifically positioning hands so I can write easily.]</i>	(Bisa) mengatur tekanan (bulu) kuas dan cara memegang kuas yang benar. <i>[I could just adjust the pressure of the bristles on the brush and the correct way to hold it.]</i>
Ada egh.. perasaan tidak suka dengan tulisan sendiri, merasa (tulisan itu) jelek. <i>[I have the feelings of disliking my own writing, feeling that my writing is bad.]</i> (Menulis dengan) tebal tipis itu sulit dan tangan suka tremor (maksudnya gemeteran). <i>[Controlling the thin thick of the character is difficult, and my hand shaking.]</i>	Mulai bisa melihat kesalahan dan mencoba lagi. <i>[Begin to observe the error and attempt again.]</i> Bisa atasi tremor dan mulai bisa dikontrol tangannya. <i>[Now, I can overcome the tremor and began to be able to control my hand movement.]</i>
Belum tahu cara baca karakter yang akan ditulis. Tidak tahu ada besar-kecil (goresan) dan lancip-tumpul ujungnya (garis). <i>[I don't know how to indicate the strokes to be written. I don't know that there are different sizes and edges of the strokes.]</i>	Sekarang bisa lebih jelas melihat dan kontrol supaya tidak terlalu besar, tidak terlalu tebal. <i>[Now I can see and control it more clearly so that it is not too big, not too thick.]</i>
Waktu memulai memang sulit, tapi lama kelamaan lebih bisa. <i>[At the beginning it is difficult, but over time it becomes better.]</i>	Memang (perlu) sabar dan tenang, lalu posisi duduk itu juga menentukan. <i>[Indeed, it is necessary to be patient and calm, then the sitting position also determines.]</i>
(Tangan) kaku dan (sulit) kontrol cepat lambat. <i>[My hands feel stiff, and I am having difficulty to control writing in fast and slow phases.]</i>	Makin banyak menulis (makin) jadi rapi dan lebih baik gitu. <i>[The more I write, the neater and better it becomes.]</i>

Skill Development

Instructors can significantly enhance students' learning outcomes by closely guiding and following them in their practices. When we, as their teachers, guide students, they can demonstrate the proper way to hold and control the brush, as well as write the characters' strokes. In Chinese calligraphy, these two basic techniques aid in developing artistic ability and accuracy in replicating models of classical works. The practice schedule is limited to once per week. It's not uncommon for it to be lost during holidays. The schedule does not prevent students from making progress in mastering the skills. The students appreciated the lessons and confirmed a significant improvement in their calligraphy skills. Table 1 provides examples of students' expressions.

Students were interviewed in Indonesia. We have taken note of their language expressions and translated them into English below the original text. Some words are accompanied by the opinions of students in parentheses. The message's unclear meaning requires additions to clarify it. By comparing their messages, we were able to determine the development of students' learning outcomes. Through guided intensive training, students can understand the significance of learning from mistakes. They are practicing more diligently and striving to achieve the best results with patience. Finding strategies and ways to overcome weaknesses in the writing practice process is also a sign of developing learning outcomes.

The students' excitement and improvement are correlated with the artworks they created for the exhibition discussed in the later section of this paper. Participating in an exhibition is a way to receive recognition for their efforts. Furthermore, it serves as a means of promoting self-efficacy by sharing what they have accomplished with the public. Nonetheless, it also promotes the appreciation of the culture of the target language they are learning right now..

Exhibition of Works

Students are preparing for an exhibition of their calligraphy works in the classroom atmosphere depicted in Figure 3. This exhibition focuses on cooperation and collaboration among students, not just individual knowledge and skills. Each student is responsible for contributing to the design and arrangement of the displayed work, which creates an atmosphere where they can learn together and support one another.



Figure 3. Preparing for the Exhibition

The photo shows students in school uniforms cutting paper and writing calligraphy. Their seriousness and focus on their respective tasks were evident. A group of students stood around their desks, discussing and working together to finish their projects. The classroom atmosphere is awash with activity, which reflects the students' enthusiasm for preparing their work.

This activity aims to create a fan-shaped writing medium for students to showcase their calligraphy artworks. The students are taught basic calligraphy techniques and learn how to utilize their skills in a creative project. Cutting paper and arranging writing artistically on it demands precision, patience, and good cooperation among students.

This activity also improves technical skills in calligraphy and offers valuable experience in teamwork. By learning how to communicate, divide tasks, and unite their ideas, students can create work that is both harmonious and engaging. By designing and implementing aesthetic and functional designs in this activity, students can develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The exhibition presents the results of student training and showcases the art of calligraphy to the broader community. By displaying their artworks, students can share the knowledge and skills they have learned and encourage others to appreciate and learn about calligraphy.

Figure 3 also shows the students' commitment to working hard and collaborating to produce beautiful and meaningful works. Participation in this activity not only enhances their technical and artistic abilities but also fosters confidence and pride in their accomplishments. These exercises and exhibitions give students satisfaction and joy while learning and working together.

Figure 4 depicts the atmosphere of a room filled with Chinese calligraphy artworks made by students. Students showcase their abilities in writing Chinese characters using brushes and ink in the exhibition, which is part of the second annual event. Students decorated the exhibition room with typical Chinese ornaments like red lanterns, which enhanced this event's cultural nuances and aesthetic beauty. In the center of the room, a variety of calligraphy works are displayed in different sizes and writing styles.



Figure 4. Calligraphy Exhibition Room

The works showcase the students' creativity and dedication to learning and mastering Chinese calligraphy. Students not only concentrate on writing the correct character but also

express beauty in every stroke of their brush. Groups of students are observed occupied at their desks, exhibiting their work to visitors and actively sharing ideas and writing techniques. The collaborative environment created by this supports their learning and skill development.

Several students in the upper right corner of the image (Figure 4) seem to be conversing with teachers or visitors, illustrating the significance of the characters they composed. They can use this as an opportunity to improve their Mandarin language skills while also promoting their artwork. On the right side of the display board, some works have been neatly arranged and some use brightly colored paper to enhance the visual appeal. The writings include both simple characters and complex phrases and sentences, indicating a range of students' proficiency levels.

The exhibition portrays the students' dedication and growth in learning Chinese calligraphy. It underscores the significance of maintaining and recognizing China's cultural heritage in the context of education. Students' artistic skills are not only cultivated in this exhibition, but they also gain a greater appreciation for the beauty and meaning of every Chinese character they write.

Get involved and win the competition

Figure 5 depicts a group of students involved in a Chinese calligraphy competition. They are holding their respective works, which they have completed as part of the competition process. These students have demonstrated remarkable skills and confidence in calligraphy artwork in this local competition sponsored by the Confucius Institute of Tanjungpura Pontianak University.

Calligraphy requires a lot of practice and precision, as each stroke and detail of the character must be created with precision. These students have acquired basic calligraphy skills, including solid hand muscle control, rhythmic stroke regulation, and aesthetic character placement. This skill combines technical abilities and a mastery of the artistic aspects of calligraphy, which often reflect an individual's personality and expression.



Figure 5. Calligraphy Competition Participants

The value of the calligraphy work is enhanced by documentation in the form of photos taken after it is finished. This is evidence of their participation in the competition and a record of their achievements. A high level of pride and confidence can be seen when one holds their work in public, resulting from their hard practice and dedication to learning calligraphy.

The Confucius Institute at Tanjungpura University Pontianak organized a competition where students showcased their talents. Thus, calligraphy is a meaningful way to preserve Chinese culture through competition. The competition aims to foster an appreciation for traditional arts and enhance cultural connections between China and Indonesia.

This photo shows the outcomes of the students' intensive learning and commitment to mastering Chinese calligraphy. Participating in these competitions not only improves technical skills but also builds confidence, offers valuable competition experience, and encourages Chinese art and culture among the younger generation.

Figure 6 depicts a student holding her hard-earned calligraphy work that won a local-level calligraphy competition organized by the Confucius Institute of Tanjungpura University Pontianak. This student has demonstrated extraordinary dedication in practicing and impressive achievements in calligraphy. This student's success in this competition is a testament to her consistency and stability in his development, as she won a national calligraphy competition last year.

The student's success in calligraphy comes not only from his perseverance and commitment to practicing but also from his persistence and commitment. This student has improved her writing skills and paid attention to detail in every character she writes through an intensive and continuous practice process. The firm and precise strokes in the resulting work show a solid grasp of basic calligraphy techniques.

These students have made significant progress, but one skill that needs improvement is their ability to artistically style characters. Creating a more symmetrical, neat, and artistic arrangement will enhance the aesthetic value of all produced works. A harmonious overall composition is achieved through balanced character placement and consistent spacing between characters.

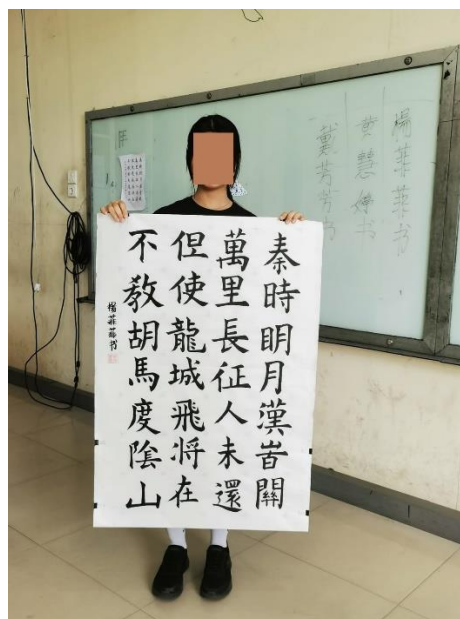


Figure 6. Winner of One of the Competitions

The success of this competition not only affirms her calligraphy skills but boosts her self-assurance and motivation to keep improving their abilities. The expectation is that this achievement will inspire other students. She is encouraging them to practice and refine their skills in calligraphy, as well as promoting the preservation of Chinese culture in Indonesia.

The picture shows how the student is committed, perseverant, and enthusiastic about mastering calligraphy. By continuing to practice and improve her weaknesses, she can achieve more in the future. As a role model for younger generations, she can inspire them to love and preserve traditional arts and culture.

Discussion

In a globalized world, it is crucial to have a deep understanding of different cultures and to recognize and respect their distinctions (Carolina, 2019; Entringer et al., 2021). The cultural dimensions theory developed by Geert Hofstede is essential for comprehending the influence of cultural values on behavior and attitudes (Hofstede, 2001; Su, 2022). Hofstede (2011) posits that cultural elements, such as individualism against collectivism and long-term versus short-term orientation, play a significant role in shaping intercultural interactions and individuals' perceptions of the world. Through the study of Chinese calligraphy, students at SMA Gembala Baik can immerse themselves in the fundamental cultural principles of collectivism, respect for tradition, and the significance of harmony and patience. Engaging with the value of target language helps students develop empathy and a broader perspective, making them more adept at navigating multicultural environments (Bagiyan et al., 2021).

In cultural studies, the notion of agency, as examined by Anthony Giddens in his structuration theory, highlights the ability of individuals to act autonomously and make decisions while considering the limitations imposed by social institutions (Lamsal, 2012; van Rooyen, 2013). Within the Chinese calligraphy curriculum, students demonstrate agency by actively choosing to acquire and excel in an artistic discipline that establishes a connection to their cultural legacy. Stuart Hall's research on cultural identity sheds light on how individuals form their identities through cultural activities (Cummins, 2019; Jacobson et al., 1997; Williams & Chrisman, 2020). Hall argues that identity is not static but rather constantly influenced by cultural encounters and customs (Hall, 2020; Jacobson et al., 1997). Engaging in calligraphy at SMA Gembala Baik enables students to establish and confirm their identities as both Indonesians and carriers of Chinese cultural heritage.

Indonesian students benefit from calligraphy education because it allows them to develop a genuine appreciation for the distinctive allure of Chinese culture, cultivating a more profound understanding and admiration for its artistic, cultural, and historical significance (J. Wang & Virgilio, 2023). Incorporating calligraphy into international education can function as a conduit for cultural interchange, fostering reciprocal comprehension and admiration between China and other nations, such as Indonesia (Li, 2022; Y. Wang, 2023). Chinese Indonesians have played a crucial role in Indonesian society, making significant contributions to its cultural and economic advancement. The calligraphy program at SMA Gembala Baik exemplifies the interactive connection between cultures, fostering intercultural communication and comprehension. For the China-Indonesia connection, the acquisition and application of Chinese calligraphy are important. It promotes the understanding and knowledge of different cultures, facilitates the exchange of cultural ideas on a global scale, and boosts tourism and cultural heritage. By incorporating calligraphy into their educational and cultural systems, both countries can improve their reciprocal comprehension and admiration, thereby enhancing their bilateral relationship.

The calligraphy program offers a platform for students of Chinese heritage to explore and reconcile their dual identities (Ninawati et al., 2020). Benedict Anderson's concept of

imagined communities is relevant because it explains how communities are socially produced through the use of shared activities and symbols (Hamilton, 2008). Through the practice of Chinese calligraphy, students establish a connection with the broader conceptual community of Chinese culture while also reinforcing their position within the Indonesian national identity. This dichotomy exemplifies the dynamic characteristic of identity, as described by Zygmunt Bauman in his research on liquid modernity, where identities are constantly negotiated and reconfigured in reaction to evolving social circumstances (Beilharz, 2018; Best, 2017).

Cultural inheritance and preservation encompass the transfer of cultural values, traditions, and practices from one generation to the next. The concept of cultural capital, as proposed by Pierre Bourdieu, is crucial for comprehending this phenomenon (Davies & Rizk, 2018; Glaubitz, 2021). Bourdieu argues that cultural capital, which includes knowledge, skills, and cultural competences, plays a vital role in both social mobility and the development of one's identity (Glaubitz, 2021; Robbins, 2005). The calligraphy program at SMA Gembala Baik helps students acquire cultural capital related to Chinese heritage, enriching their understanding and appreciation of their cultural roots. The calligraphy program at SMA Gembala Baik enables students to gain cultural capital pertaining to Chinese heritage, enhancing their comprehension and admiration of their cultural origins. This process is also in accordance with Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory, which highlights the significance of cultural practices in safeguarding and conveying communal memory and identity (Assmann, 2003; Zhdanov, 2023).

The Chinese calligraphy program's effectiveness at SMA Gembala Baik has several ramifications for educational practices in mixed communities. The text highlights the significance of integrating cultural education into school curricula to encourage cross-cultural comprehension and admiration, as advocated by Paulo Freire in his pedagogy of the oppressed. This pedagogy emphasizes the empowering role of education in students' development of critical consciousness (Guilherme, 2017; Mayo, 2022). In addition, the program emphasizes the potential of extracurricular activities in empowering students and allowing them to explore their identities, as discussed by Henry Giroux in his work on critical pedagogy, which advocates for education as a means of liberation (Ichikawa, 2022; Kruszelnicki, 2023).

The Chinese Calligraphy program at SMA Gembala Baik provides unique insights into the processes of cross-cultural comprehension, the development of identity, and the preservation of culture. This analysis demonstrates how educational initiatives can promote cultural appreciation, enhance intercultural relationships, and empower students by drawing on the theories of Hofstede, Giddens, Hall, Said, Bhabha, Anderson, Bauman, Bourdieu, Assmann, Freire, and Giroux. These discoveries provide a blueprint for other educational institutions aiming to foster cultural comprehension and safeguard a legacy in an interconnected world.

Conclusion, Implication, and Recommendation

The inclusion of Chinese calligraphy as an extracurricular activity at SMA Gembala Baik has had a significant impact on the students' cultural education and skill development. During a span of more than two years, the program has observed a noticeable increase in both the number of students and their level of excitement. This is exemplified by the fact that the students have had to be divided into different classes based on their competence levels. The students not only improved their technical proficiency in calligraphy, but they also demonstrated exceptional commitment and enthusiasm by actively participating in exhibits and contests. The peer mentorship concept has cultivated a nurturing learning environment,

augmenting both individual and collective advancement. This effort has effectively enhanced students' educational experience by integrating artistic expression with cultural appreciation.

The Chinese Calligraphy program's success at SMA Gembala Baik suggests that integrating cultural arts into school curricula can greatly improve students' involvement and educational achievements. This case study showcases the potential advantages of extracurricular activities that focus on traditional arts, cultivating a more profound understanding and admiration for cultural heritage among students. The program has fostered a collaborative and participatory learning environment that has enhanced not only technical abilities but also promoted teamwork, patience, and tenacity. Furthermore, the program's influence extends beyond skill learning; it fosters cultural interaction and comprehension, which are critical in today's interconnected world. Schools can use this example as a model to incorporate comparable programs, improving comprehensive education and cultural proficiency.

In order to further capitalize on the achievements of the Chinese Calligraphy program, it is advisable for SMA Gembala Baik and comparable institutions to consistently broaden and improve their extracurricular options. Enhancing the frequency and duration of practice sessions may enhance students' proficiency and pleasure in calligraphy. In addition, increasing the number of options for pupils to engage in competitions and exhibitions will enhance their ability to receive acknowledgment and bolster their self-assurance in their abilities. Schools can additionally contemplate incorporating diverse cultural arts into their extracurricular programs to provide a more extensive array of experiences. Finally, continuous support and professional growth for educators are crucial to upholding exemplary teaching and adjusting to the changing requirements of pupils. By implementing this approach, educational institutions may sustain and foster a diverse, all-encompassing, and captivating educational atmosphere.

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