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THE EFFECT OF THE LOCAL WISDOM-BASED *LASKAR CILIK* DANCE ON PATTERN RECOGNITION SKILLS OF CHILDREN AGED 5–6 YEARS

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the effect of the local wisdom-based *Laskar Cilik Dance* on pattern recognition skills among children aged 5–6 years at Sunan Ampel Kindergarten. The research employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental design with a One-Group Pretest–Posttest Design. The participants consisted of 20 children aged 5–6 years from Group B, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through structured observation using a pattern recognition skills observation sheet that assessed children's ability to identify repetitive movement patterns, follow movement sequences, synchronize movements with rhythm, and understand movement formations. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, normality tests, homogeneity tests, and a paired-sample t-test. The results showed that the mean score of children's pattern recognition skills increased from 7.1 in the pretest to 12.2 in the posttest. The hypothesis testing results indicated a calculated t-value of 15.67 with a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05), demonstrating a statistically significant difference between children's pattern recognition skills before and after the intervention. Therefore, the local wisdom-based *Laskar Cilik Dance* had a significant positive effect on improving pattern recognition skills among children aged 5–6 years at Sunan Ampel Kindergarten.

Keywords: Local Wisdom, *Laskar Cilik Dance*, Pattern Recognition Skills, Cognitive Development, Early Childhood Education

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh kearifan lokal Tari Laskar Cilik terhadap kemampuan pengenalan pola pada anak usia 5–6 tahun di TK Sunan Ampel. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain *pre-experimental One Group Pretest–Posttest Design*. Subjek penelitian berjumlah 20 anak kelompok B usia 5–6 tahun yang dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi terstruktur menggunakan lembar observasi kemampuan pengenalan pola yang mencakup kemampuan mengenali pola gerakan berulang, mengikuti urutan gerakan, menyesuaikan gerakan dengan irama, dan memahami formasi gerak. Data dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif, uji normalitas, uji homogenitas, dan *paired sample t-test*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa rata-rata kemampuan pengenalan pola anak meningkat dari 7,1 pada pretest menjadi 12,2 pada posttest. Hasil uji hipotesis menunjukkan nilai *t hitung* = 15,67 dengan *sig.* = 0,000 (< 0,05), sehingga terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan antara kemampuan pengenalan pola sebelum dan sesudah perlakuan. Dengan demikian, Tari Laskar Cilik berbasis kearifan lokal berpengaruh signifikan terhadap peningkatan kemampuan pengenalan pola pada anak usia 5–6 tahun di TK Sunan Ampel.

Kata kunci: kearifan lokal, Tari Laskar Cilik, pengenalan pola, kemampuan kognitif

Background

Early childhood is recognized as a critical period of development, often referred to as the *golden age*, during which appropriate stimulation is essential to optimize all developmental domains, including cognitive development. One important component of cognitive development is pattern recognition, which enables children to understand regularities, sequences, and relationships among objects and events. Pattern recognition serves as a foundation for logical thinking, problem-solving, and the development of mathematical concepts required in later stages of education (Dhieni et al., 2020).

Despite its importance, observations in several early childhood education settings indicate that children's pattern recognition skills remain relatively low. Many children experience difficulties in identifying movement sequences, rhythmic patterns, and regular arrangements, particularly when learning activities rely heavily on conventional approaches such as worksheets or verbal explanations. Abstract learning experiences that provide limited opportunities for direct engagement often make it challenging for young children to understand pattern-related concepts. According to cognitive development theory, children learn most effectively through concrete, enjoyable, and physically engaging activities that allow them to actively interact with their environment.

One approach that aligns with the developmental characteristics of young children is local wisdom-based learning. Local wisdom represents cultural heritage that embodies traditional values, knowledge, and aesthetic elements that can be integrated into educational practices. The incorporation of local culture into learning activities not only enriches children's cultural experiences but also provides meaningful and contextual learning opportunities closely related to their social environment. Through culturally relevant learning experiences, children

are more likely to engage actively in the learning process and develop a deeper understanding of the concepts being introduced.

Pattern recognition can be effectively developed through movement-based activities, including dance. Traditional dance is one form of local wisdom that has the potential to support children's development through meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences. Local wisdom-based dance learning has been shown to contribute not only to character education but also to cognitive, motor, emotional, and artistic development. Dance activities involve rhythmic movements, structured sequences, body coordination, and repeated movement patterns, all of which are closely related to the development of pattern recognition skills. Furthermore, movement and dance activities have been found to enhance learning motivation, physical development, and social-emotional competencies among young children (Rosala et al., 2021; Sari & Lestari, 2022; Djibran & Pamungkas, 2023).

One form of local wisdom that can be integrated into early childhood learning is the *Laskar Cilik Dance*. This dance consists of simple, repetitive, and structured movements involving hand gestures, footwork, rhythmic patterns, and group formations. Effective dance instruction incorporates movement demonstrations, musical accompaniment, and positive reinforcement, enabling children to actively engage in the learning process while developing various developmental skills. The repetitive and sequential nature of the movements provides opportunities for children to learn concepts of repetition, sequencing, and regularity, which are fundamental elements of pattern recognition.

Through participation in the *Laskar Cilik Dance*, children not only follow musical rhythms but also learn to recognize movement structures, remember sequences, and coordinate their actions with peers within a group formation. Such experiences provide meaningful learning opportunities because children learn through direct bodily engagement and active participation. In addition, dance activities contribute to the development of self-confidence, social interaction skills, and appreciation of local cultural heritage.

The *Laskar Cilik Dance* is inspired by the values of heroism, discipline, courage, and nationalism. Its movements are simple, dynamic, and suitable for young children. The dance is typically performed in groups and incorporates repeated movement patterns such as marching, stepping forward and backward, coordinated hand movements, clapping sequences, and rhythmic foot stomping. These structured and repetitive movement patterns make the dance accessible to young learners while simultaneously promoting coordination, balance, and sequential thinking.

From an educational perspective, the *Laskar Cilik Dance* contains several elements that support pattern recognition development. First, its movement sequences are organized systematically through repetitive patterns that help children understand concepts of order,

repetition, and regularity. Second, the rhythmic musical accompaniment encourages children to synchronize movements with tempo changes, thereby enhancing concentration, motor coordination, and rhythm pattern recognition. Third, the dance promotes character values such as discipline, cooperation, confidence, and responsibility through collaborative group performances. Additionally, integrating the *Laskar Cilik Dance* into classroom learning introduces children to local cultural values in a meaningful and contextual manner.

Preliminary observations conducted at Sunan Ampel Kindergarten revealed that the pattern recognition skills of children aged 5–6 years had not yet developed optimally. Children frequently experienced difficulties in repeating simple movement sequences, imitating clapping patterns, and following rhythmic movements in the correct order. Some children confused movement sequences, stopped in the middle of activities, or performed movements randomly without following a recognizable pattern. They also encountered challenges in distinguishing between fast and slow movement patterns and adapting their movements to changes in musical rhythm. These findings indicate that children's ability to understand, remember, and apply patterns requires further stimulation through developmentally appropriate learning experiences.

Although traditional local dance possesses considerable potential as a contextual and enjoyable learning medium, its application in developing pattern recognition skills in early childhood education remains relatively limited. Previous studies have primarily focused on the role of dance in motor development, creativity, and cultural appreciation, while empirical investigations examining its impact on pattern recognition skills remain scarce. This gap highlights the need for further research exploring the effectiveness of local wisdom-based dance as a strategy for enhancing cognitive development in early childhood.

Therefore, this study investigates the effect of the local wisdom-based *Laskar Cilik Dance* on the pattern recognition skills of children aged 5–6 years at Sunan Ampel Kindergarten. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of culturally responsive learning approaches in supporting early childhood cognitive development and to offer practical recommendations for teachers seeking innovative and contextual learning strategies.

Pattern recognition skills are an important aspect of early childhood cognitive development, as they provide the foundation for logical thinking, problem-solving, and understanding mathematical concepts in later stages of education (Dhieni et al., 2020). Children who are able to recognize patterns can more easily understand relationships, regularities, and sequences of objects or events. However, observations conducted at Sunan Ampel Kindergarten revealed that the pattern recognition skills of children aged 5–6 years still require improvement. Some children experienced difficulties in identifying repetitive movement

patterns, following sequences of activities, and understanding regularities embedded in learning activities. These findings indicate the need for more engaging learning strategies that are appropriate to the developmental characteristics of young children.

Learning activities for early childhood should be implemented through concrete, enjoyable, and hands-on experiences. One approach that can be applied is local wisdom-based learning. The integration of local culture into the learning process not only contributes to the preservation of regional cultural heritage but also serves as an effective means of fostering various aspects of child development, including cognitive abilities (Mulyasa, 2022; Suyadi & Ulfah, 2021). Dance activities that incorporate repetitive movements, rhythm, and structured sequences provide children with meaningful learning experiences that help them understand pattern concepts in a more concrete and engaging manner.

Previous studies have demonstrated that art and movement activities contribute positively to early childhood development in motor, socio-emotional, and cognitive domains (Fitriani et al., 2022; Rahmawati & Wulandari, 2023). However, research specifically examining the use of the local wisdom-based *Laskar Cilik Dance* as a medium for enhancing pattern recognition skills among children aged 5–6 years remains limited. Most existing studies have focused on the development of motor skills, creativity, or cultural appreciation through dance activities. Therefore, a research gap still exists regarding the utilization of local culture-based dance as a strategy for developing pattern recognition skills in early childhood education. Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to investigate the effect of the local wisdom-based *Laskar Cilik Dance* on the pattern recognition skills of children aged 5–6 years at Sunan Ampel Kindergarten. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of local culture-based learning in supporting early childhood cognitive development and to offer an alternative approach for teachers in designing innovative, contextualized, and developmentally appropriate learning activities.

Method

This study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design. This design was selected to examine changes in children's pattern recognition skills before and after the implementation of a local wisdom-based *Laskar Cilik Dance* learning program. Measurements were conducted twice: before the intervention (pretest) and after the intervention (posttest).

The study was conducted at Sunan Ampel Kindergarten during the 2025/2026 academic year. The population consisted of all Group B children aged 5–6 years, totaling 20 participants. The sample was selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) children aged 5–6 years, (2) actively enrolled as students at Sunan Ampel Kindergarten, and

(3) participation in the *Laskar Cilik Dance* learning activities throughout the research period. A total of 20 children met these criteria and were included in the study.

Data were collected through structured observation. The research instrument consisted of an observation checklist designed to assess pattern recognition skills based on four indicators: (1) recognizing repetitive movement patterns, (2) following sequences of dance movements, (3) synchronizing movements with rhythm and counting, and (4) understanding movement formations during dance activities. Each indicator was assessed using a four-point developmental scale consisting of Not Yet Developed (NYD), Beginning to Develop (BD), Developed as Expected (DE), and Very Well Developed (VWD). Prior to data collection, the instrument was reviewed by the academic supervisor and classroom teacher to ensure its content validity and suitability for the research objectives.

The intervention was implemented through several sessions of *Laskar Cilik Dance* learning activities. The instructional activities included introducing dance movement patterns, practicing repeated movement sequences, synchronizing movements with rhythm and musical counts, and performing simple group formations. Throughout the learning process, the teacher provided demonstrations, guidance, and reinforcement to help children understand the regularity and repetition embedded in the dance movements.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to obtain the minimum, maximum, and mean scores of the pretest and posttest results. The normality assumption was tested using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, while homogeneity was examined using Levene’s test. After the data met the assumptions of normality and homogeneity, hypothesis testing was conducted using a paired-sample t-test at a significance level of 0.05 to determine whether there was a significant difference in children's pattern recognition skills before and after the intervention.

The research instrument consisted of an observation checklist designed to assess children's pattern recognition skills. The instrument was developed based on indicators of pattern recognition abilities in early childhood, including: (1) recognizing repetitive movement patterns, (2) following sequences of dance movements, (3) synchronizing movements with rhythm and counting, and (4) understanding movement formations. Prior to its implementation, the instrument underwent a content validity assessment conducted by two experts, namely an early childhood education lecturer and an experienced kindergarten teacher. The validation process aimed to evaluate the relevance of the indicators, the clarity of the observation items, and the alignment of the instrument with the research objectives. The results of the content validation indicated that all indicators were considered relevant and appropriate for use after several minor revisions were made based on the experts’ recommendations.

Results and Discussion

Results

4.1 Pretest and Posttest Observation Results

This study was conducted at Sunan Ampel Kindergarten and involved 20 children aged 5–6 years from Group B as research participants. The research was carried out in three main stages: the assessment of children's initial pattern recognition skills (*pretest*), the implementation of the intervention through *Laskar Cilik Dance*-based learning activities, and the assessment of children's pattern recognition skills after the intervention (*posttest*).

The pretest was administered to determine the children's initial level of pattern recognition skills before participating in the *Laskar Cilik Dance* learning activities. Following the pretest, the children received a series of learning sessions incorporating the local wisdom-based *Laskar Cilik Dance*, which emphasized repetitive movement patterns, movement sequences, rhythmic synchronization, and group formations. Upon completion of the intervention, a posttest was conducted using the same observation instrument to measure changes in children's pattern recognition skills.

The results of the observations indicated an improvement in children's pattern recognition skills after participation in the *Laskar Cilik Dance* learning activities. A detailed presentation of the pretest and posttest results is provided in the following sections.



Figure 1. *Laskar Cilik Dance* Performance

The intervention was implemented over several learning sessions using *Laskar Cilik Dance* movements that were gradually introduced in accordance with the developmental characteristics of young children. During the learning process, children were encouraged to recognize repetitive movement patterns, follow musical rhythms, perform simple formation changes, and remember movement sequences carried out in groups. These activities were designed to provide concrete learning experiences, enabling children to develop a better understanding of pattern concepts through enjoyable and engaging activities.

Data were collected through observations of children's pattern recognition skills before and after the implementation of the *Laskar Cilik Dance* learning program. The assessments were conducted using an observation instrument developed based on indicators of pattern recognition skills, including the ability to recognize repetitive movement patterns, follow movement sequences, synchronize movements with rhythm and counting, and understand movement formations.

Table 1 presents the pretest and posttest scores of children's pattern recognition skills before and after participation in the *Laskar Cilik Dance* learning activities.

Table 1. Pretest and Posttest Scores of Children's Pattern Recognition Skills

No	Student Initial Name	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
1	Wild	6	11	5
2	Wir	7	12	5
3	Alf	8	13	5
4	Fal	7	12	5
5	And	6	11	5
6	Sms	8	13	5
7	Bgs	7	12	5
8	Athr	8	14	6
9	Sjd	6	11	5
10	Dni	7	12	5
11	Nda	8	13	5
12	Cls	7	12	5
13	Snm	6	11	5
14	Wnd	7	12	5
15	Hld	8	14	6
16	Rna	7	12	5
17	Ayd	6	11	5
18	Sin	7	12	5
19	Alm	8	13	5
20	Srn	7	12	5

Based on Table 1, the results demonstrate children's pattern recognition skills before and after the implementation of the *Laskar Cilik Dance* learning program. The pretest scores represent the children's initial ability to recognize movement patterns prior to the intervention, whereas the posttest scores reflect their abilities after participating in the dance-based learning activities.

The observation results indicate that all participants showed improvement in their pattern recognition skills following the intervention. Pretest scores ranged from 6 to 8, while posttest scores increased to a range of 11 to 14. The relatively consistent score improvements across participants suggest that the intervention produced a uniform enhancement of pattern recognition skills among the children.

These findings indicate that dance activities incorporating repetitive movements, rhythmic patterns, and structured formations help children understand pattern concepts more concretely than learning experiences that rely primarily on verbal explanations. Through active

engagement in movement sequences and rhythmic activities, children were able to identify regularities, remember movement orders, and apply pattern concepts in meaningful contexts.

Furthermore, all children experienced score increases following the intervention, with gain scores ranging from 5 to 6 points. This consistent improvement suggests that participation in the local wisdom-based *Laskar Cilik Dance* learning activities contributed positively to the development of pattern recognition skills among children aged 5–6 years.

Descriptive Results of Pretest and Posttest

Children's pattern recognition skills were assessed before (pretest) and after (posttest) the implementation of the local wisdom-based *Laskar Cilik Dance* learning activities. The descriptive analysis indicated an improvement in pattern recognition skills following the intervention.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Children's Pattern Recognition Skills

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Pretest	20	5	9	7.10	1.12
Posttest	20	10	14	12.20	1.15

As shown in Table 1, the mean score of children's pattern recognition skills increased from 7.10 in the pretest to 12.20 in the posttest. Furthermore, the minimum score increased from 5 to 10, while the maximum score increased from 9 to 14. These findings indicate a substantial improvement in pattern recognition skills after children participated in the *Laskar Cilik Dance* activities.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Prior to hypothesis testing, the data met the assumptions of normality and homogeneity. A paired-sample t-test was then conducted to examine differences in pattern recognition skills before and after the intervention.

Table 3. Paired-Sample t-Test Results

Variable	Mean Difference	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest–Posttest	5.10	15.67	0.000

Based on Table 2, the calculated t-value was 15.67 with a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05). These results indicate a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. Therefore, the local wisdom-based *Laskar Cilik Dance* learning program had a significant effect on the pattern recognition skills of children aged 5–6 years at Sunan Ampel Kindergarten.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the local wisdom-based *Laskar Cilik Dance* learning program positively influenced the pattern recognition skills of children aged 5–6 years. The increase in the mean score from 7.10 to 12.20 suggests that children became more capable of recognizing repetitive movement patterns, following movement sequences, synchronizing movements with rhythm, and understanding dance formations. These findings indicate that dance activities can serve as an effective learning medium for stimulating children's cognitive development, particularly in the area of pattern recognition.

From a theoretical perspective, the results support the view that pattern recognition skills develop through concrete experiences involving the observation of regularity, repetition, and sequence (Papic et al., 2020). During the *Laskar Cilik Dance* activities, children not only observed movement patterns but also practiced movement sequences repeatedly in accordance with specific rhythms. Such experiences enabled children to construct a more meaningful understanding of pattern concepts than would be possible through verbal instruction alone.

The findings are also consistent with the study of Rittle-Johnson et al. (2021), which reported that pattern recognition skills contribute significantly to the development of logical reasoning and early mathematical abilities. Through dance activities, children learned to identify regularities, predict subsequent movement sequences, and connect individual movements within a systematic series. These processes represent forms of logical thinking practice that support cognitive development during early childhood.

Furthermore, the results support the findings of Nasution and Lubis (2025), who reported that movement and dance activities can enhance children's cognitive development through tasks involving attention, memory, coordination, and the ability to follow instructions. In the present study, improvements in pattern recognition skills occurred because the *Laskar Cilik Dance* incorporates repetitive movements, rhythmic counting, and formation patterns that children must understand and perform sequentially. These elements provide learning experiences that directly stimulate the indicators of pattern recognition skills.

From the perspective of local wisdom, the findings suggest that local cultural heritage can be utilized as an effective learning resource for early childhood education. This result supports the study of Prastika et al. (2026), which found that local wisdom-based learning increases children's engagement because the learning materials are closely connected to their social and cultural environments. The implementation of the *Laskar Cilik Dance* not only improved pattern recognition skills but also introduced children to local cultural values from an early age.

Despite these positive findings, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study involved a relatively small sample of 20 children from a single early childhood education institution, limiting the generalizability of the results. Second, the use of a one-group pretest–posttest design without a control group makes it difficult to attribute improvements exclusively to the intervention. Therefore, future studies are recommended to involve larger samples and employ experimental designs with control groups to provide stronger empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of local wisdom-based dance learning in enhancing children's pattern recognition skills.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the local wisdom-based *Laskar Cilik Dance* learning program had a significant effect on the pattern recognition skills of children aged 5–6 years at Sunan Ampel Kindergarten. The results revealed an increase in the mean pattern recognition score from 7.10 in the pretest to 12.20 in the posttest. Hypothesis testing using a paired-sample t-test yielded a t-value of 15.67 with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant difference in children's pattern recognition skills before and after the intervention. These findings suggest that the *Laskar Cilik Dance* can serve as an effective learning alternative for helping children recognize movement patterns, sequences, rhythms, and formations through contextual learning experiences rooted in local cultural wisdom.

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