



ADDRESSING THE INEQUALITY OF THEATER EDUCATION IN TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract. *Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan (LPTK) or The Teacher Training Institutions play an important role in preparing educators at various levels of education, including arts education. However, theater education at LPTK experiences significant disparities compared to music and dance, both in curriculum structure and institutional support. This study explores the inequalities in theater education at LPTK, specifically in Sendratasik Education Study Program at Makassar State University (UNM). Using a descriptive quantitative approach, data were collected through a survey of 147 students, 71 alumni, and 8 lecturers. The results of the study revealed three main challenges: (1) an underdeveloped curriculum, (2) a limited number of lecturers who specialize in theater education, and (3) declining student interest in theater. This study proposes several strategies to address these disparities, including enriching the curriculum with pedagogical-based courses, recruiting more lecturers who specialize in theater education, and increasing student interest through theater festivals and professional collaborations. By addressing this gap, LPTK can create more inclusive and effective theater education, ensuring that prospective theater educators have competencies that are relevant to the dynamic world of education.*

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INTRODUCTION

Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan (LPTK) or The Teacher Training Institutions has a strategic role in preparing prospective teachers to teach at various levels of education. LPTK is the only educational institution that produces students who graduate as teachers with high-level skills and values as professional educators (Rojak & Hasbiyallah, 2022). Meanwhile, *Pendidikan Seni Drama, Tari, dan Musik* (Sendratasik Education) is an LPTK that specifically produces art teachers with competence in the scientific field of Performing Arts Education, including for the field of theater. As an institution responsible for teacher education and training, LPTK not only equips students with teaching competence but also with the ability to innovate and create (Budiono & Dwiprabowo, 2022). Through a specially designed curriculum, LPTK Study Program Education is expected to produce educators who not only master the artistic aspects of theater but are also able to transform this knowledge effectively for their students.

Theater education in schools has an important role in learning arts and culture because it not only develops students' appreciation for performing arts but also trains creativity, communication skills, and cooperation. As part of the arts and culture curriculum, theater arts in the school environment are not just art performances but also a means of reflection and exploration of life (Canevari, 2022), improving body movement skills, cognitive skills, and voice and speaking skills (Saadoun & Al-Shabib, 2023). In addition, theater learning in schools can help students build self-confidence, think critically, and understand various cultural perspectives (Novriadi et al., 2023), thus contributing to the formation of their character and life skills. Theater education in LPTK, such as Sendratasik Education, is closely related to the competence of art teachers in schools because the quality of theater arts learning is highly dependent on the ability and understanding of teachers in teaching it.

Competent art teachers not only master the theoretical and practical aspects of theater but also have the pedagogical skills to deliver material effectively to students. In addition, teachers

need to understand learning methods that are appropriate to student characteristics so that theater learning can be an inspiring and enjoyable experience. Theater education at LPTK plays a role in equipping prospective teachers with the professional, pedagogical, social, and personality competencies needed to create meaningful learning (Bhakti & Maryani, 2017). Thus, improving the quality of theater education at LPTK will have a direct impact on the quality of arts and culture teaching in schools, ensuring that students gain a comprehensive and relevant learning experience with the times.

However, despite its importance, theater education in LPTK often faces significant challenges that hinder its effective implementation. These challenges include inadequate curriculum resources, lack of institutional support, and disparities in theater priorities compared to other performing arts disciplines, such as music and dance, all three of which are part of Pendidikan Sendratasik Study Program (Weltsek, 2019). Compared to other performing arts fields, the number of theater courses available in Sendratasik Education or Performing Arts study programs tends to be fewer (Prusdianto, 2021). This causes students who want to study theater arts to not get equal learning opportunities with students who choose music or dance. In addition, the existing curriculum has not been fully integrated with school needs, especially in the aspects of directing and scriptwriting (Prusdianto, 2018) which should be the main competencies of arts and culture teachers in teaching theater to students.

The inequality in theater education is also exacerbated by the limited number of teaching staff who have special qualifications in the field of theater education. The lack of lecturers in the field of theater education to teach special courses in theater concentrations makes the achievement of courses less than optimal (Husna et al., 2022; Sumaryadi, 2006). The reason is that there are no LPTKs that have opened Theater Education study programs (Prusdianto, 2021; Sumaryadi, 2011). This is actually different from its sister study programs, namely Music Education and Dance Education. All LPTKs that disbanded the Sendratasik Education study program then competed to develop it by opening Music Education or Dance Education study programs. The lack of teaching staff who specialize in theater education results in limited curriculum development and minimal research and innovation in theater teaching methods in the academic environment.

In addition to the problems of curriculum and teaching staff, the inequality of theater education at LPTKs in Sendratasik Education is also influenced by the decline in student interest in theater. When compared to interest in other art fields at LPTKs, such as music, dance or visual arts, the number of students who choose to study theater is smaller (Jaeni, 2019). This is influenced by various factors, such as the lack of relevant courses (Prusdianto, 2021), limited competent teaching staff (Syam, 2018; Zhang, 2022), and minimal support for adequate facilities for theater practice (Alvin & Handinoto, 2014; Indri, 2023). This condition further widens the gap between theater education and other arts education fields that tend to develop more in the LPTK environment. If this condition continues to be allowed to continue, the quality of theater education will be disrupted, which will impact the readiness of prospective teachers to provide theater learning in schools. Therefore, addressing these challenges is important to enhance the role of theater in teacher training programs and, by extension, the broader education system.

Compared to other art forms, theater education often suffers from constraints and limited recognition, which impacts curriculum design and pedagogical approaches. Music and dance programs, in many cases, benefit from more established structures and resources, while theater disciplines often rely on community engagement strategies and innovative pedagogies to generate participation (Li & Chen, 2023). This gap in institutional support and resources can undermine the development of robust and effective theater education programs in LPTK. Furthermore, the experiential nature of theater education, which requires active engagement through hands-on, practical learning, adds a layer of complexity to curriculum design and requires substantial operational support, which is often lacking (Blanchet, 2024). Therefore, the need to foster an inclusive framework for theater education in LPTK becomes even more urgent



in order to create an equitable artistic training environment that can equip future teachers with the skills necessary to teach in diverse educational contexts.

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the disparities in theater education in LPTK and to propose feasible solutions to improve the quality of theater teacher training. This study will investigate the current curriculum design, qualifications of teachers, and student interest in theater education in LPTK, with a focus on the Sendratasik Education Study Program at Makassar State University (UNM). It will also examine how institutional support, curriculum integration, and resource allocation contribute to gaps in theater education and will propose practical recommendations to address these issues. By providing a comprehensive analysis of challenges and potential solutions, this study aims to contribute to ongoing efforts to improve theater education in teacher training institutions and to create a more equitable and inclusive educational environment for all students. The findings of this study will be valuable to policymakers, educators, and institutions seeking to enhance the role of theater in teacher training programs, thereby cultivating a more creative, communicative, and empathetic future generation of teachers.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative descriptive approach that aims to understand and analyze the gaps in theater education in LPTK. This approach allows researchers to collect quantitative data that can be measured so that it can provide a clear and objective picture of the factors that cause the gaps (Heumann et al., 2023; Jones & Goldring, 2024). By measuring key variables, this methodology seeks to build a clear and objective picture of the existing gaps, which can guide policy reforms aimed at improving theater education in these teacher training institutions (Nain, 2023). This research was conducted at the Sendratasik Education Study Program, Makassar State University (UNM), which is the focus location in studying the condition of theater education at LPTK. UNM was chosen because it is one of the institutions that have a Sendratasik Study Program that includes theater arts education, which is relevant to analyzing this problem. Through this location, the research can explore in-depth data on curriculum implementation, the role of teaching staff, and student interest in theater.

Purposive sampling was the main method of participant selection used to gather targeted insights on the current status of theater education at LPTK. Purposive sampling is a non-random sampling technique that selects participants based on certain characteristics or experiences relevant to the study's focus (Gupta et al., 2013; Mastoridis & Kladiadis, 2010). Participants in this study were specifically selected from groups such as students, alumni, and lecturers involved in theater education at UNM. The sample used was 147 students currently enrolled in the Theater Education Program at UNM, 71 alumni, and 8 lecturers from the study program. This sample size allows for a variety of opinions and experiences so that this study includes the perspectives of those directly involved in the education system, as well as those who have transitioned into the workforce. This sample was designed to provide a holistic view of the various issues affecting theater education at LPTK, including the experiences of current students and the insights of those who have completed their studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the data collection and analysis process, the following are the study's results, which describe the main findings related to the inequality in theater education at LPTK and the factors that influence it. These results will provide a clearer picture of the aspects that need to be improved and the steps that must be taken to overcome inequality.

The Lagging of Theater Education in the Curriculum

Based on the results of the analysis of accreditation documents (Padalia et al., 2021) and curriculum documents (Sumiani et al., 2021) owned by the UNM Sendratasik Education Study Program, it was found that the field of study of theater education is far behind the other two fields of performing arts education, namely dance education and music education. This disparity



occurs not only in terms of curriculum development but also in terms of the number of courses, provision of teaching resources, and readiness of graduates in the field of theater education.

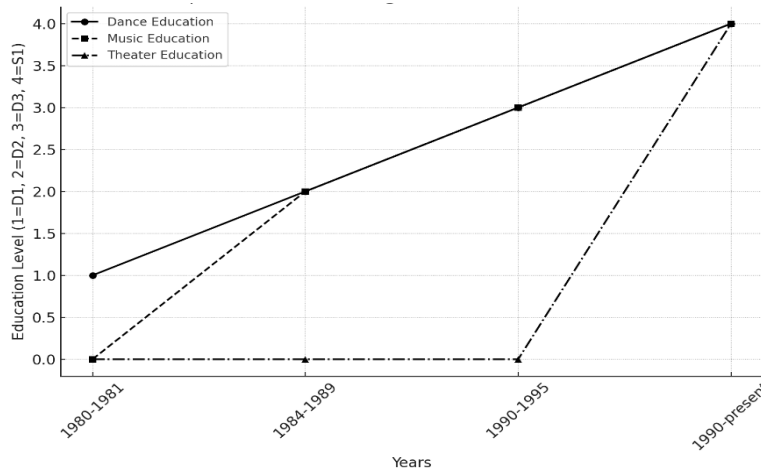


Figure 1. Development of Study Programs in Sendorasik Education

The lag is even clearer if we look at the history of each development, as seen in Figure 1. Development of Study Programs in Sendorasik Education. The field of dance education has developed significantly since 1980-1981, starting from the D-1 Dance Education Program, which then increased to the D-2 Dance Education Program (1984-1989), until finally developing into the D-3 Dance Education Program (1990-1995). A similar pattern also occurs in the field of music arts, which began to develop in 1984-1989 as the D-2 Music Education Program, then increased to the D-3 Music Education Program (1990-1995).

On the other hand, the field of Theater Education has never had a stand-alone study program in developing performing arts education at UNM. Only on July 11, 1996, these three fields of art—theater, dance, and music—were merged into one in the Sendorasik Education Study Program, based on the Establishment Decree Number 248/DIKTI/Kep/1996. Although in terms of name, it appears that the three fields of art have equal standing in this study program, in reality, in terms of quantity and distribution of courses, the field of theater arts is significantly lagging behind the other two fields.

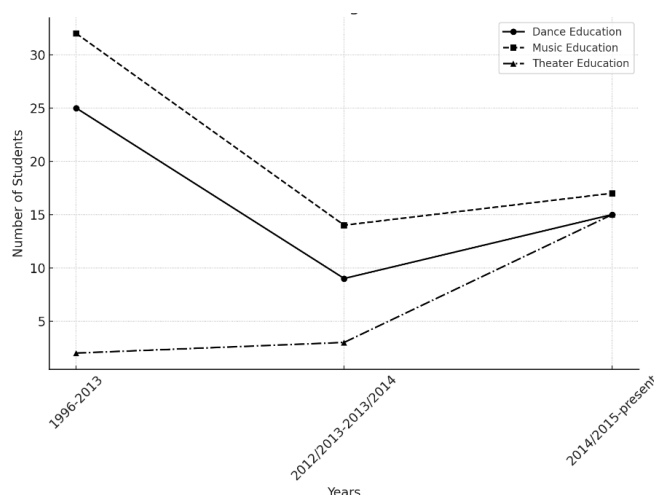


Figure 2. Comparison of the Number of Courses in the Sendorasik Education Curriculum

Based on the data presented in Figure 2 Comparison of the Number of Courses in the Sendorasik Education Curriculum, during the 17-year period 1996-2013, the number of courses provided for the theater field was very limited. Students who took the theater major only received three main courses: Basics of Theater, Dramaturgy, and Drama Practice. The small number of courses available shows that theater education is still very basic and has not been able to form prospective theater educators with broad expertise. As a result, the Sendorasik

Education Study Program graduates who want to become theater arts teachers only have a limited understanding of basic theater theory without gaining more complex skills such as directing, artistic direction, and scriptwriting.

Furthermore, this condition also impacts the quality of the theater arts educators produce. The alumni of the Sendratasik Education Study Program from 1996-2013 mostly do not have adequate competence in theater education. With only three main courses as the basis for learning, graduates of this program experience limitations in developing innovations in theater learning in schools. They also have limited access to more varied teaching methods, such as educational theater, performance analysis, or media use in theater learning. This inequality widens the gap between theater education and the other two fields of performing arts education, creating a domino effect on the sustainability of theater arts in schools.

In response to this lag, in 2014, the Sendratasik Education Study Program developed a more inclusive curriculum for the field of theater arts. In this curriculum update, the number of courses related to theater education increased from 3 courses to 13 courses, with a broader scope of material. The courses added to the 2014 curriculum include Dramatic Arts Knowledge, Basics of Theater, Nusantara Theater, Dramaturgy, Writing Plays, Directing, Acting Practice, Theater Artistic Direction, Radio/TV Drama, Educational Theater I, Theater Performance Analysis, Theater Proposal Seminar and Educational Theater II.

The addition of this course marks the efforts of the Sendratasik Education Study Program to equalize theater education with dance and music education in the curriculum. With a total of 15 courses, the distribution of the theater curriculum is almost equal to that of dance (15 courses) and music (17 courses). One of the most important innovations in this curriculum update is including a directing course as a special interest in theater. Directing is one of the core competencies required in theater arts education because it is directly related to the management of performances and theater teaching methods in schools. With this course, students who are interested in theater can gain greater skills in the aspects of production and delivery of theater material to students.

In addition, the Theater Artistic Arrangement course is an important addition to the new curriculum because it helps students understand the technical aspects of theater performances, such as stage design, lighting, and sound systems. The presence of the Radio/TV Drama course shows that the theater education curriculum is starting to accommodate the development of technology and media in the performing arts so that students have broader insights in implementing theater education on various platforms.

Although there has been development in the curriculum, the inequality that has persisted for the previous 17 years still significantly impacts graduates' competence. Therefore, although the curriculum has improved, a more sustainable strategy is still needed to ensure that the Sendratasik Education Study Program graduates have sufficient pedagogical and professional skills in teaching theater arts in schools.

Qualifications of Lecturers in Theater Education

One of the main problems in Theater Education at LPTK is the limited number of teaching staff who have an academic background in Theater Education. Ideally, teaching staff in this field have a Master of Arts Education or Master of Education qualification specializing in theater arts. However, until 2013, the available teaching staff came from disciplines that were less relevant to theater arts education, such as Master of Humanities Study Program for Performing Arts Studies (focusing on general art analysis), Master of Education Study Program for Social Sciences (not having a specific focus on performing arts) and Master of Arts Study Program for Art Creation (with a main specialization in dance or music).

The lack of teaching staff with expertise in theater arts pedagogy directly impacts the limitations of the teaching methods applied. Theater education at LPTK requires artistic expertise in performing arts and a deep understanding of educational theory, teaching methods, and effective pedagogical approaches in teaching theater to students. However, because the available teaching staff mostly come from dance and music backgrounds, theater arts teaching



tends to focus more on the practical aspects of performance. In contrast, the pedagogical aspects are less considered.

In addition to the problem of linearity of teaching staff knowledge, the number of teaching staff who are truly experts in Theater Education is also very limited, as shown in [Figure 3](#) Comparison of Lecturer Qualifications. For many years, the number of theater teaching staff has been much less than that of dance and music teaching staff. From 1996 to 2014, there was not a single permanent lecturer who specialized in theater education. Only in 2015 was there one lecturer in theater arts, which means that for almost two decades, students who took theater majors did not have teachers who truly focused on this field.

Although the number of theater education lecturers has increased in recent years (with the number of lecturers increasing to three people since 2022), this number is still much smaller than lecturers in dance and music education. This gap in the number of lecturers has caused several negative impacts, including minimal influence on curriculum development; because the number of lecturers is small, their contribution to curriculum design is often less prioritized. As a result, until 2013, there were only three courses related to theater arts, much fewer than those in dance and music.

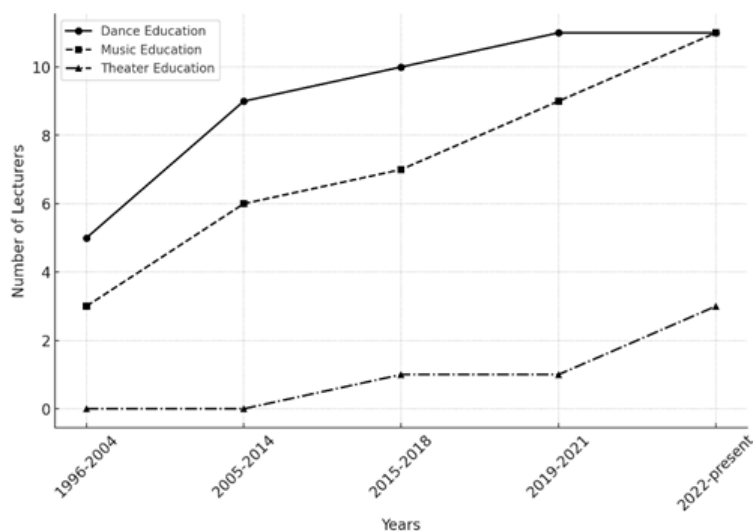


Figure 3. Comparison of Lecturer Qualifications

The small number of theater education lecturers often makes students who take theater majors feel that they do not receive the same academic support as students who take dance and music majors. The lack of lecturers with theater specialization also impacts the lack of research, seminars, and workshops focusing on developing theater education. Lecturers with specialized knowledge in directing, scriptwriting, or performance theory are essential to delivering a comprehensive curriculum that includes artistic and pedagogical competencies ([Nain, 2023](#); [Russo, 2003](#)). Lecturer expertise ensures effective curriculum content delivery and inspires students to engage deeply with theater methodology, creating a learning environment that emphasizes creativity and critical thinking ([Christensen, 2013](#); [Papalois et al., 2022](#)).

This study also found that the lack of qualified theater education lecturers hurts the development of the theater curriculum itself. Lecturers with diverse theater backgrounds are essential for curriculum innovation, as they bring unique perspectives that enrich the teaching and learning process. For example, faculty with expertise in contemporary theater practices can introduce students to modern performance techniques and methodologies, ensuring that theater education remains relevant and reflects current trends in the field ([García & Manuel, 2014](#); [Perry & Oldfield, 2013](#)). Without such expertise, curricula become static and fail to keep pace with the ever-evolving nature of the theater industry.

Furthermore, a lack of qualified faculty often results in limited student engagement and a lack of depth in learning outcomes. When there are fewer faculty with expertise in theater education, students may not receive the guidance and direction they need to develop their

artistic and pedagogical skills (Bhattarai et al., 2013; Setlur et al., 2021). This lack of expertise also contributes to a lack of innovation in curricula, undermining the quality of theater education and limiting the opportunities available to students (Kam et al., 2022; Westwood et al., 2023).

This study suggests several strategies to address the shortage of qualified theater educators. First, creating mentorship programs can help foster a culture of collaboration and professional growth, ensuring that lecturers are well-supported and can continue developing their skills (Chan et al., 2015; Oakeshott et al., 2010). Collaborating with theater companies and organizations can also provide study programs with opportunities to engage in real-world arts practices, enriching their teaching with hands-on experiences (Saleh et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2014). These strategies can help build more resilient and qualified lecturers who can provide high-quality theater education to future teachers.

Inequality of Theater Student Interests

Although in 2014, there was a curriculum change to equalize the distribution of courses in the UNM Sendratasik Education Study Program, the number of theater enthusiasts in this study program has experienced a significant decline every year, as seen in Figure 4 Interests of Sendratasik Education Students. Based on the data, it is known that from 2014 to 2020, the number of students who chose theater was much less than that who chose dance and music. In fact, in 2019 and 2020, only 3 students chose theater as an interest.

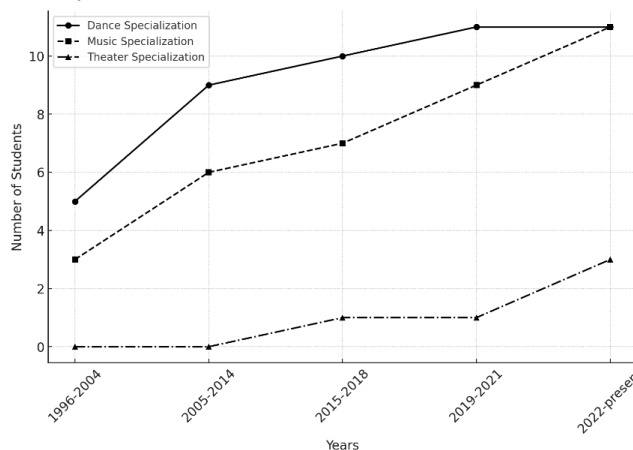


Figure 4. Interests of Sendratasik Education Students

The decrease in the number of students choosing theater as their main interest indicates that although the quantity of theater education courses has increased, the attractiveness of theater learning is still not strong enough to attract students. Interviews were conducted to understand further why students are reluctant to choose the theater interest. Interviews were conducted with lecturers teaching theater courses and students who had taken theater interest courses. Based on the results of the interviews, several main responses were found. Students feel that the theater learning is much more complex than other interests. Theater art requires collective work involving many people. Hence, coordination in creating a performance is more difficult than dancing or music, which can be done individually or in small groups.

Unlike dance and music, which can be learned and performed in a shorter time, theater requires a lot of practice, especially in directing, scriptwriting, and stage design. This makes students feel that theater is more burdensome for them than other interests, so they prefer interests that are more practical and easier to do. The material taught in theater learning is still not in line with the needs of art teachers in schools, so students do not see a direct connection between what they learn on campus and what they will later teach in school. The lack of simpler and more practical teaching methods is a major obstacle in attracting students to choose theater as an interest. This inequality is also clearly visible in the selection of aspects of art taught in schools by alumni of the Arts Education LPTK, as depicted in Figure 5 Aspects of Art Chosen to be Taught by Arts Education Alumni.

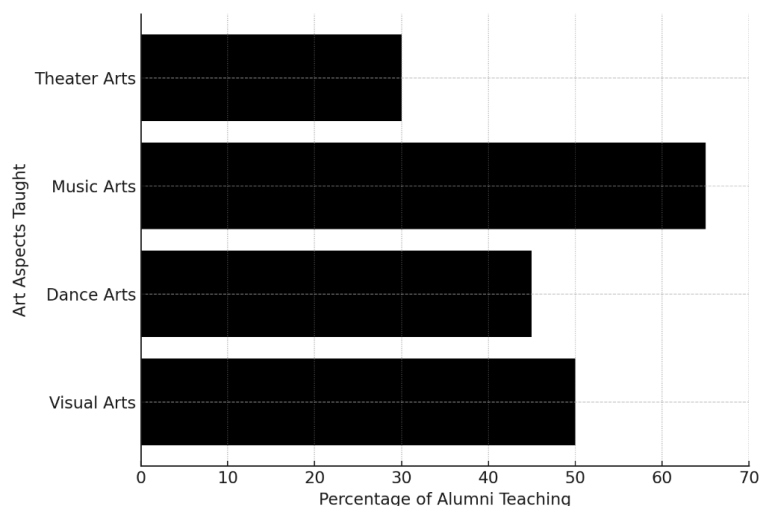


Figure 5. Aspects of Art Chosen to be Taught by Arts Education Alumni

The data shows a significant imbalance in the choice of arts disciplines taught by alumni of Arts Education LPTK. Based on 71 alumni respondents, only 22 alumni (around 31%) chose to teach theater arts. This figure is much lower than that of music arts, chosen by 46 alumni (around 65%), and fine arts, chosen by 34 alumni (around 48%). Meanwhile, dance arts also showed a higher figure, with 30 alumni (around 42%) teaching it. This imbalance reflects an imbalance of interest or opportunities in the field of theater arts.

Several factors contribute to this trend, such as the limited representation of theater courses in the curriculum, which significantly decreases student interest. When theater is underrepresented in the curriculum and does not have the same level of institutional support as music or dance, students may not be exposed to the various opportunities and experiences offered by theater education (Davis et al., 2015; Salas et al., 2013). The lack of practical, hands-on learning experiences also contributes to this lack of engagement, as students may not see the relevance of theater education to their personal or professional lives (Bhattarai et al., 2013; Krishnamoorthy & Britton, 2022). To address this issue, it is important to design curricula incorporating modern pedagogical practices, experiential learning opportunities, and clear pathways to employment.

LPTK needs to increase the appeal of theater interests by adjusting theater learning to be more relevant to school needs. Students and alumni feel theater teaching is still too complex and difficult to apply in schools. Simpler learning methods are needed, such as exploration-based educational theater, storytelling, and creative games, which are more appropriate to school learning conditions. The theater curriculum must also adjust the performance script with stories and language that are more relevant to school students. Students need to be taught how to develop learning materials that are light and interactive and prioritize student creativity so that they can apply this method when teaching in schools. One of the obstacles in teaching theater in schools is the lack of facilities such as auditoriums, lighting, or sound systems. Therefore, students must be trained to utilize classrooms or simple tools available in schools to continue theater learning even with limited facilities.

Recommendations for Overcoming Inequality

A series of strategic steps are needed to overcome inequality in theater education in LPTK, focusing on three main aspects: curriculum improvement, lecturer development, and increasing student interest in theater interests. The inequality that has occurred for years has impacted not only the small number of students interested in studying theater education but also the quality of graduates who will later become school art teachers. Therefore, the proposed solution must be comprehensive, from improving the curriculum to be more relevant and increasing the capacity of lecturers to strategies that can attract more students to choose theater interests.

The theater education curriculum at LPTK Pendidikan Sendratasik needs to be updated to better suit the needs of the world of education, especially in the context of teaching arts and culture in schools. Since the 2014 curriculum revision, the number of theater courses has indeed increased, but there is still an imbalance compared to dance and music interests. Students who choose theater as their interest still have difficulty implementing theater learning in schools because most courses focus more on performing arts, not the pedagogical aspects needed by arts and culture teachers. Therefore, it is necessary to add more specific courses to support theater teaching skills, such as "Directing for Education" and "School Theater Script Development." The "Directing for Education" course aims to equip students with theater directing skills that can be applied in a school environment, especially in conditions of limited resources and limited time for practice. Meanwhile, "School Theater Script Development" is designed so that students can understand how to compose a theater script that is appropriate to the level of student understanding, uses simpler language, and raises themes that are close to students' daily lives.

In addition to curriculum improvement, lecturer development is an equally important aspect of overcoming the inequality of theater education at LPTK Pendidikan Sendratasik. One of the biggest obstacles faced for years is the small number of lecturers with an academic background in theater education. Most lecturers who teach theater courses come from the fields of dance or music, so their teaching approach is still more oriented toward performing arts than the pedagogical aspects of theater arts. To overcome this problem, improving the qualifications of lecturers needs to be a priority. One step that can be taken is to collaborate with professional theater practitioners. Collaboration with local theater communities or arts groups can open up opportunities for students to gain first-hand experience from artists already experienced in their fields. Programs such as guest lectures, directing workshops, or internships in theater communities can effectively increase students' insight into theater arts. In addition, collaboration with practitioners also allows for the development of more innovative learning methods based on direct experience so that students not only get theory in class but can also be involved in real theater productions.

The last aspect that needs serious attention is increasing student interest in theater. The data presented shows that the number of students choosing theater has declined since 2014. In fact, in 2019 and 2020, only three students chose theater as their main major. This condition shows that although the number of theater courses has increased, the appeal of theater is still not strong enough to attract students. One of the main factors causing low student interest is the assumption that job prospects as theater teachers in schools are more limited compared to dance and music. To overcome this, universities need to socialize career opportunities for theater arts education graduates, for example, by emphasizing that graduates can work as arts and culture teachers in schools, theater instructors in arts communities, or even get involved in the creative industry as scriptwriters and directors.

Increasing student exposure to the theater world can also be an effective solution to increase interest in theater. Universities can organize activities such as campus theater festivals, theater competitions between students, or collaborative projects with schools to hold theater performances involving students. With more opportunities to get involved in theater productions, students will be more confident and motivated to explore theater interests. In addition, involvement in various theater activities can also expand students' professional networks, which can ultimately help them build a career in the world of performing arts and theater education. Overall, addressing the gap in theater education at LPTK requires an integrated approach, including curriculum improvement, improving the quality of lecturers, and strategies to attract more students interested in theater. By updating the curriculum to be more relevant to the needs of the educational world, increasing the number of lecturers who are competent in theater pedagogy, and providing more opportunities for students to participate in the world of theater, theater education can develop more optimally. If these steps can be implemented well, theater education will not only be on par with other arts fields such as dance and music. However, it will also be able to produce graduates ready to contribute to arts and culture learning in schools and the performing arts industry in Indonesia.



CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study highlights the inequality in theater education in LPTK, especially in the Sendratasik Education Study Program at Makassar State University (UNM). The results show that theater education still experiences various challenges that hinder its development compared to other performing arts fields such as music and dance. The three main factors that contribute to this inequality are the limitations of the curriculum, the small number of lecturers who specialize in theater education, and the low interest of students in theater specialization. In terms of curriculum, the number of theater courses is much smaller than music and dance, causing students interested in this field to not receive equivalent learning. Although the 2014 curriculum revision has increased the number of theater courses, the pedagogical aspect of theater learning is still not strong enough to prepare competent prospective arts and culture teachers. In addition, the lack of lecturers with an academic background in theater education further exacerbates this condition. Students who specialize in theater do not receive adequate guidance, which ultimately impacts their learning quality and readiness to teach in schools. Student interest in theater also continues to decline, caused by factors such as the complexity of learning, limited career prospects, and lack of support for facilities and mentoring programs. If this condition continues, theater education will be increasingly left behind and unable to provide optimal contributions to arts and culture learning in schools.

To overcome this imbalance, strategic steps are needed that include three main aspects: improving the curriculum, increasing the number and quality of lecturers, and efforts to increase student interest in theater interests. The theater education curriculum needs to be more directed at the pedagogical aspect so that graduates have more applicable skills in teaching in schools. Recruitment of lecturers with a theater education background also needs to be increased to strengthen the quality of learning. In addition, universities must encourage various initiatives, such as campus theater festivals, competitions, and internship programs, to attract student interest and provide a broader learning experience in theater. With the implementation of the right strategy, theater education at LPTK can develop more in balance with other performing arts fields, producing competent graduates who are ready to contribute to the world of arts and culture education. Collaborative efforts between universities, theater practitioners, and policymakers are also key to creating a more inclusive and sustainable theater education ecosystem.

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