



JULITA JOSEPH & SHAKILA CHE DAHALAN

## Learning Entertainment Arts Cultures Attracts Interest of Indigenous Students in Studying History: A Concept Paper

**ABSTRACT:** This paper aims to explore the conceptual framework of culturally-based entertainment learning towards the interest of “Orang Asli” (Indigenous) students. Learning through cultural arts elements involves activities such as singing, music, dancing, drama, and theater arts. In this study, interest refers to both intrinsic and extrinsic interest in studying History. The methodology used is a literature review, which includes analyzing various academic sources, journals, and books to gain a deep understanding of the topic. The implications suggest that learning through cultural arts elements can increase historical interest among indigenous students by helping them connect with their culture and background. In conclusion, this study emphasizes the importance of integrating cultural arts elements into the school curriculum as an effective tool for nurturing historical interest. It also proposes creative teaching methods based on cultural arts elements to achieve this goal.

**KEY WORD:** Cultural Arts; Entertainment; History Learning; Student Interest; Indigenous People.

**ABSTRAKSI:** “Pembelajaran Seni Budaya Berbentuk Hiburan Menarik Minat Murid Orang Asli untuk Mempelajari Sejarah: Satu Kertas Konsep”. Kertas kerja ini bertujuan untuk menerokai konsep penggunaan unsur seni budaya berbentuk hiburan terhadap minat murid dalam pembelajaran Sejarah. Pembelajaran menggunakan unsur seni budaya berbentuk hiburan dalam kajian ini merujuk kepada proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran yang melibatkan seni nyanyian, muzik, tarian, dan drama teater. Sementara minat dalam kajian ini merujuk kepada minat intrinsik dan ekstrinsik untuk mempelajari mata pelajaran Sejarah. Metodologi kajian ini adalah berdasarkan tinjauan kepustakaan, iaitu melalui analisis pelbagai sumber akademik, jurnal, dan buku yang berkaitan dengan topik tersebut untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang mendalam. Implikasi kajian ini, pembelajaran menggunakan unsur seni budaya berbentuk hiburan dapat meningkatkan minat sejarah dalam kalangan murid Orang Asli kerana pembelajaran ini membantu mereka menghubungkan diri dengan budaya dan latar belakang mereka. Kesimpulannya, kajian ini menekankan kepentingan integrasi unsur seni budaya berbentuk hiburan dalam kurikulum sekolah sebagai alat yang berkesan untuk memupuk minat sejarah serta mencadangkan kaedah pengajaran kreatif yang berasaskan unsur seni budaya untuk mencapai matlamat tersebut.

**KATA KUNCI:** Seni Budaya; Hiburan; Pembelajaran Sejarah; Minat Murid; Orang Asli.

**About the Authors:** Julita Joseph is a Master Student of History Education at the Faculty of Humanities UPSI (Sultan Idris University of Education), Tanjong Malim, 35900 Perak, Malaysia; and Dr. Shakila Che Dahalan is a Lecturer at the History Study Program, Faculty of Humanities UPSI, Tanjong Malim, 35900 Perak, Malaysia. Corresponding e-mails: [julita\\_joseph@yahoo.com](mailto:julita_joseph@yahoo.com) and [shakilacd@fsk.upsi.edu.my](mailto:shakilacd@fsk.upsi.edu.my)

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## INTRODUCTION

Learning, a central topic in psychology, is often described as the modification of behavior through practice and training (Burlakova & Gubanova, 2019). It involves acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, and understanding through communication or experiences provided by educators or the learning environment itself (Nurazijah, Lailla & Rustini, 2023).

In the classroom, this process involves modifying behavior through practice, training, interaction, and communication. Effective teaching and learning processes employ appropriate strategies and approaches to maximize student knowledge and skills. For *Orang Asli* (Indigenous) students, incorporating cultural arts as entertainment into History education is an effective approach that aligns with their cultural background and preferred learning styles.

Using entertainment-based cultural arts in History classes not only deepens students' understanding of cultural heritage, but also increases their interest. Research has shown that integrating entertainment-based cultural arts into History education enhances student engagement, motivation, and understanding by incorporating aesthetic, historical, and cultural frameworks (Wahab, 2015; Belesis, 2023).

For *Orang Asli* students, this approach is crucial in strengthening cultural identity and fostering interest in learning. In this context, Z. Omer (2022) found that integrating entertainment-based cultural arts into the History curriculum significantly improves student engagement and interest, making learning more appealing and relevant. This is because students are more likely to actively engage when they can directly relate classroom lessons to their own lives and culture (Omer, 2022).

***Objectives of the Study.*** This study aims to explore the conceptual framework of culturally-based entertainment learning towards the interest of *Orang Asli* (Indigenous) students in learning History, based on a literature review.

## METHOD

The methodology used in this study is a literature review aimed at exploring the influence of entertainment cultural arts learning on the interest in History among *Orang Asli* (Indigenous) secondary school students in Perak, Malaysia. This approach involves a comprehensive literature review and data analysis from various databases, such as Scopus, ProQuest, Sage Publications, Science Direct, Springer Link, and Google Scholar (Snyder, 2019).

The selection of articles related to cultural arts learning in the form of entertainment, intrinsic, and extrinsic attraction covers the years 1971 to 2024, indicating that this topic has always been relevant and studied from the past to the present to ensure that the writing is in line with the new curriculum and relevant to the study topic.

The researchers refer to existing literature reviews related to learning issues, studies related to cultural arts and indigenous knowledge learning, studies related to the use of modules in History teaching, approaches and learning methods using cultural arts entertainment modules, and aspects of interest in learning.

## FINDINGS OF LITERATURE REVIEW

*Issues in Orang Asli Students' Learning.* Issues in *Orang Asli* (Indigenous) students' learning are inseparable from the context of the most marginalized group in the education system (Nor *et al.*, 2011; Razak, 2022). The situation worsens when parents lack awareness of the importance of education for their children (Nor, Sukimi & Nor, 2018).

Consequently, learning issues arise, such as low academic performance among *Orang Asli* students, lack of interest, difficulty in mastering facts (Harun *et al.*, 2020; Lialoura, Wahab & Nordin, 2021; Manaf *et al.*, 2021); and high dropout rates (Joon-Woei *et al.*, 2021; Kaviza, 2021).

Additionally, the curriculum cannot be translated according to their knowledge suitability (Rahman *et al.*, 2019; Nordin & Wahab, 2021); leading to a loss of interest in primary education and ultimately low academic achievement.

The main reason often associated with the learning issues of *Orang Asli* students is the difficulty in understanding the standard curriculum, due to the inadequate translation of content according to their knowledge and background. Therefore, internal pressure on students leads to high rates of absenteeism and truancy (Awang *et al.*, 2022). Consequently, their mastery of historical knowledge is not maximized.

This reality is supported by data on low passing rates in the Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM/*Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia*) and incomplete primary education due to a lack of interest in learning (Sawalludin, Jia-Min & Ishar, 2020). The problem of mastering historical content is a common issue faced in History learning by students. The emphasis on rote learning without understanding the relevance of dates and facts limits students' opportunities to understand the context and meaning of History. This situation leads to boredom towards History among *Orang Asli* students.

Additionally, the perception of History as a difficult, non-dynamic, and uninteresting subject can cause students to lose interest in learning History well (Kaviza, 2021). Ultimately, these learning issues result in the loss of interest and motivation of students to learn History.

In addition, *Orang Asli* students lack interest in History, due to the difficulty in understanding the Secondary School History Curriculum as it is not related to their lives. This is because the *Orang Asli* are very close to their culture and surroundings and do not care about the outside world, which they deem meaningless in their lives (Hassan & Ramli, 2020). They are so relaxed and satisfied with their old ways of life, working just enough to continue living.

The environment of their ancestors also indirectly influences the educational goals of the *Orang Asli* community (Nik Halman, Abdullah & Mamat, 2018). The strong cultural and environmental influence within students causes them to lose interest in obtaining an education (Zakari, Majid & Hussin, 2022). This indifferent attitude towards the outside world leads them to be less interested in learning materials that they feel are irrelevant to their lives.

*Orang Asli* students are also passive and inactive during classroom learning sessions. They lack confidence and are very shy to speak up or give their opinions (Rahim, Shuhidan & Husaini, 2022). This situation hinders their mastery of historical knowledge and indirectly affects their interest in following History lessons, particularly, and general school sessions in general.

Therefore, to address this issue, History teaching needs to become more engaging, fun, and interactive, which can influence the interest of *Orang Asli* students in studying the History subject. This scenario shows the urgent need to strengthen the approach of learning that is more suitable and relevant to the culture within the context of the lives of *Orang Asli* students.

*Learning Based on Cultural Arts in the Form of Entertainment.* Cultural arts refer to expressions and creations of art rooted in tradition, beliefs, and the values of a particular society, encompassing various forms of artistic activities that reflect the cultural identity and heritage of a specific group of people (Makhmudova, 2022).

According to Nurul Fitriah Patlillah & Ridzuan Hussin (2019), cultural arts are important in nurturing nation-building and also serve as the basis for self-identity and self-esteem for the future of the nation. In addition, cultural arts are also interpreted as a sense of beauty present in the human soul. Among the forms of cultural arts in the form of entertainment intended in this study are singing, dancing, music, and drama, and theater (Patlillah & Hussin, 2019).

Learning based on cultural arts in the form of entertainment in the History subject has been proven to be an effective tool to increase student interest, especially among *Orang Asli* (Indigenous) students. A study by Z. Omer (2022) showed that teaching that integrates elements of cultural arts and local History can strengthen students' cultural identity and improve their understanding of History (Omer, 2022). The integration of cultural arts in the form of entertainment into the History curriculum encourages student involvement and increases their interest in learning, because it is related to their own culture.

The History curriculum needs to be translated and adapted according to the *Orang Asli* perspective from a social, cultural, and environmental aspect related to the *Orang Asli* community (Nordin & Wahab, 2021; Rahman *et al.*, 2021).

A study of Norazira Yusof (2002) found that the national curriculum needs to be integrated with the practices and socio-cultural life of the *Orang Asli* community (Yusof, 2002). This study is in line with a study conducted by Aminuddin Mohamed *et al.* (2019), which suggested that teachers also need to improve their professionalism in the field to meet the needs of *Orang Asli* students (Mohamed *et al.*, 2019). Learning cultural arts in the form of entertainment in this study, such as singing, dancing, music, and drama and theater, is based on Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory in 1990s (*cf* Gardner, 1993; Temi, 2013).

One of the most popular forms of entertainment among the *Orang Asli* community today is singing songs and Music Band (Chan & Saidon, 2021). These activities bring a sense of calm, relaxation, and community gathering. Additionally, the use of songs in education has been shown to be very effective in attracting interest and stimulating intelligence and agility (Albacete-Maza, Fernández-Cano & Callejas, 2023).

Songs can make learning more interesting and unforgettable. A study by N. Kottacheruvu & S. Jampa (2024) supported this idea, showing that singing activities have effectively increased involvement and skills in learning. Furthermore, these studies demonstrate that songs can also increase engagement in History classes, making historical facts more memorable. This creative and interactive approach enhances the teaching and learning process in cultural arts-based learning (Kottacheruvu & Jampa, 2024).

Therefore, in accordance with cultural arts-based entertainment learning, song lyrics will be adapted to the learning topics and taught and sung together in class. Students can use AI (Artificial Intelligence), applications, or their own creativity to adapt the song lyrics and singing. This activity indirectly stimulates students to recall

and remember the message conveyed in the song, sparking interest in studying History.

To further enliven this singing activity, easily portable and lightweight instruments such as wooden guitars, tambourines, jingles, or music produced according to the class environment's creativity can be used. The use of music in History learning has been proven to increase motivation and student interest.

A study by [M.J. Lee & Ruhizan M Yasin \(2020\)](#) showed that students involved in music activities displayed higher levels of interest and motivation in History subjects compared to those who were not involved in these activities. The study findings also demonstrated that teaching methods based on music activities positively impacted children's emotional development ([Lee & Yasin, 2020](#)).

Therefore, teachers should incorporate music teaching methods in the teaching and learning process to support children's emotionally satisfying development ([Abdul et al., 2019](#)). Music has the power to stimulate emotions and student interest, making learning more enjoyable and meaningful.

In addition to songs and music, dance can also be incorporated into teaching and learning. The indigenous people are rich in inherited culture, although they consist of various ethnic groups. However, their background, lifestyle, and beliefs are not much different. One of the indigenous cultures that is very synonymous with them is *Sewang*.

*Sewang* is a ritual dance that applies ritual songs, particularly in healing ceremonies and is related to spirits. This dance is still used and has been adapted to modern changes in the form of presentations and casual entertainment, although some indigenous communities have experienced changes in beliefs from a pre-religious lifestyle to a religious lifestyle ([Khairuddin & Hanafiah, 2021](#)).

In the context of the classroom, the indigenous cultural arts of the *Orang Asli*, such as *Sewang*, can be introduced into the classroom to bring their culture into the learning world. For example, in teaching the Independence Day greeting, which depicts the multiracial and

multicultural society of Malaysia, *Orang Asli* students can present the *Sewang* dance as one of the cultures found in Malaysia.

In addition, this dance can be performed when welcoming prominent *Orang Asli* figures, such as the *Orang Asli* Minister, Scholars, and Tok Batin. Then, the event is contextualized with Malay dances as depicted in old films, such as welcoming and accompanying the Sultan as he enters the palace, complete with the grandeur and symbols of Malay kings. This cultural art not only entertains but also helps build students' confidence in showcasing their unique culture.

Furthermore, the elements of drama and theater, which are forms of entertainment arts culture, can be introduced into the classroom. Although the *Orang Asli* have not been heavily involved in staging dramas and theaters, they have been exposed to the digital world, which brings drama and theater through television, including both domestic and foreign films (Hamdan *et al.*, 2019).

At the school level, storytelling performances of *Bah Luj* and *Orang Batak*, for example, have been staged through Reading Theater (Shinichi, 2015). Students' talents can be nurtured and refined during the learning sessions. Drama and theater are widely used but not well integrated into the classroom. The impact of this activity can create interaction and communication among students (Kisida, Goodwin & Bowen, 2020).

Artistic cultural learning is conducted using drama and theater scripts written based on historical events and chronology found in textbooks, which are then performed in class in groups. This activity not only showcases students' talents, but also helps develop social skills, self-confidence, group cooperation, and opinion exchange, which can attract students' interest in experiencing and understanding History. All of this knowledge, creativity, and *Orang Asli* culture can be utilized in education to encourage the *Orang Asli* to accept new knowledge.

In conclusion, learning based on the concept of arts and culture, which applies elements of singing, music, dance, drama, and theater,

is necessary to enhance historical knowledge and attract the interest of *Orang Asli* students. This learning approach is in line with Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences in 1990s (Gardner, 1993; Temi, 2013).

Therefore, studies like this need to be continued to strengthen the teaching and learning of History among *Orang Asli* students. The use of entertainment-based cultural learning requires educators to design, provide, and implement teaching according to the environment of *Orang Asli* students to maintain their culture. Additionally, this approach can indirectly foster interest and a sense of enjoyment that can attract students to study History.

*Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences.* The diagram 1 show illustrates Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, introduced in 1993, which identifies nine distinct types of intelligence is visual-spatial, logical-mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, verbal-linguistic, kinesthetic, musical, naturalistic, and existential. Initially, the theory consisted of seven intelligences, but in 1999, two more intelligences were added to the theory (cf Gardner, 1993; Temi, 2013; Rumjaun & Narod, 2020). These intelligences can be developed through education through activities that are in line with them (Gardner, 1993). See again the diagram 1.

The opinion put forward by Howard Gardner (1993) suggested that a person's intelligence can be enhanced through education and training. In this study, four of these intelligences are applied to engage Indigenous students in learning history is interpersonal, verbal-linguistic, kinesthetic, and musical (Gardner, 1993).

Interpersonal and verbal-linguistic intelligences are integrated through drama activities, enabling students to communicate and interact actively in the learning process. Drama also enhances students' ability to convey information effectively. Kinesthetic intelligence is utilized through dance, allowing students to express themselves physically.

Meanwhile, musical intelligence is applied through the use of songs and musical instruments, fostering interest and motivation in

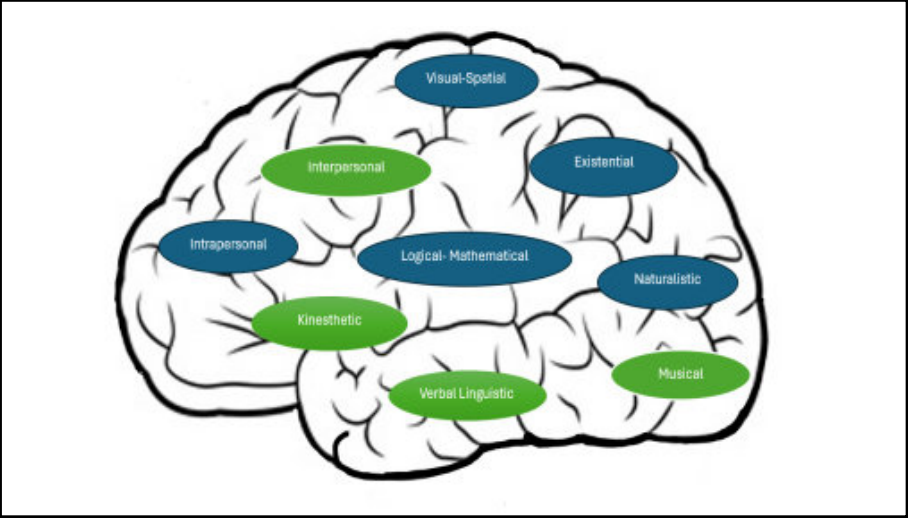


Diagram 1:  
Nine Human Intelligences Theory by [Howard Gardner \(1993\)](#)

learning. The methodology of this study follows a literature review approach, analyzing existing research to explore how these intelligences can influence students' interest in studying history.

By leveraging these intelligences, it is hoped that Indigenous students will become more engaged and motivated to learn history through methods that align with their natural cognitive strengths. This approach emphasizes the importance of adapting teaching strategies to suit diverse learning preferences, enhancing both participation and understanding.

*Aspects of Interest in Learning.* Interest refers to an individual's inclination towards a particular activity or subject that results in engagement, enjoyment, and deep thinking, which influences attitudes and cognition ([Renninger & Hidi, 2022](#)). In the context of education, interest plays a crucial role in shaping motivation, academic achievement, and emotional well-being.

Here, [X. Feng, J.L. Wang & D.H. Rost \(2023\)](#) study showed that students' interest in specific subjects is closely related to their academic achievement. This is because students with high interest

tend to actively engage in learning, maintain focus for longer periods, and exhibit greater effort to understand the learning material (Feng, Wang & Rost, 2023).

Therefore, understanding the concept of interest and the factors that influence it is essential for designing effective teaching strategies. The elements of interest examined in this study are intrinsic and extrinsic interests based on the SDT (Self-Determination Theory), which was pioneered by E.L. Deci & R.M. Ryan in 1985 and revised in 2000. According to this theory, there are two aspects of interest that are conceived by motivation, namely intrinsic and extrinsic interests (cf Deci & Ryan, 1985 and 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2002; Ryan, 2023).

*Intrinsic Interest.* Based on the Self-Determination Theory, intrinsic interest is conceived as being driven by internal factors that arise from the satisfaction and enjoyment derived from the activity itself (Ryan, 2023). The intended interest in this study refers to the feeling that arises from the internal factors of the cultural arts itself, which is capable of bringing the students' cultural environment into the classroom indirectly, stimulating students to actively engage in learning activities.

These feelings include enthusiasm, excitement, lack of boredom, lack of fatigue, enjoyment of cultural arts activities, and relaxation in understanding the learning topic. Teaching using the arts and culture approach includes singing, dancing, drama, theater, music, and crafts. Learning in the classroom becomes more meaningful when it can bring students to actively engage in various activities conducted (Silawane, Abas & Tuharea, 2023). The feelings of enthusiasm and excitement arise when students find the historical content taught to be relevant and meaningful to them.

Through arts and culture learning, such as singing and dancing, students can experience emotional connections with the historical events studied. Songs that reflect historical stories can revive past events, while traditional dances provide opportunities for students to experience culture and traditions inherited. Studies show that when

students are actively involved in activities that involve elements of arts and culture, they are more likely to feel enthusiastic and excited, which subsequently increases their interest in the History subject.

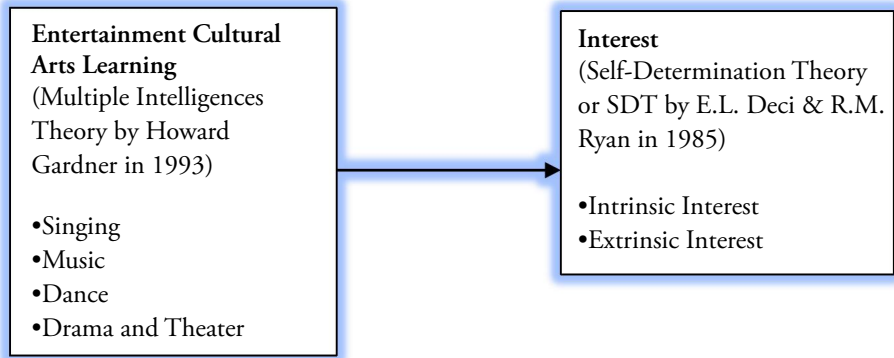
Learning History in the form of facts and requiring memorization often causes students to feel bored and tired (Kaviza, 2021). However, integrating arts and culture, such as singing, music, dancing, drama, and theater, into History teaching can overcome this problem. For example, through drama and theater, students can portray historical figures and relive important events, allowing them to experience the events directly.

Music, with its catchy melodies and lyrics, can make historical facts easier to remember and understand. These activities not only eliminate boredom and fatigue but also help students appreciate and understand History in a more creative and interactive way. Additionally, this approach provides a relaxed learning environment for students, free from pressure, which subsequently increases their interest in the History subject.

***Extrinsic Interest.*** Extrinsic interest, based on Self-Determination Theory, refers to external factors that drive an individual to focus, be more determined, and be motivated in maintaining interest in doing something (Ryan, 2023). In other words, these factors stimulate a person's interest in participating in activities and their outcomes, which are rewarded or punished. Intended extrinsic interests include awards, encouragement, prizes, and praise, which can attract students to study History.

Awards can be in the form of certificates, early recess privileges, or weekly or monthly active student displays. Encouragement can be given through motivational words, while prizes can be given in the form of reference books, writing tools, student files, food, and drinks. Praise can also be given through positive words such as “you can do it”; “keep trying”; “good job”; “congratulations”; and so on. Students who are highly committed can be given appropriate rewards.

However, punishment should also be implemented if students continue to show negative attitudes. Positive punishments can be in



**Diagram 2:**  
Conceptual Framework Proposal

the form of unprepared schoolwork, where teachers can ask students to prepare it in class at the teacher's table. In short, these extrinsic interest factors should be implemented positively, sparking their interest in studying History.

**Conceptual Framework Proposal.** Diagram 2 presents the proposed conceptual framework for this study, which is based on a literature review. The review focuses on entertainment cultural arts learning and its connection to students' interest in History. The framework illustrates the relationship between entertainment cultural arts learning and students' interest. Entertainment cultural arts learning encompasses singing, music, dance, drama, and theater, and is informed by [Howard Gardner's \(1993\)](#) Multiple Intelligences Theory. This theory emphasizes that humans possess different forms of intelligence. Through cultural arts learning, students can develop intelligences such as musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, and verbal linguistic ([Gardner, 1993](#)).

On the other hand, interest is linked to [E.L. Deci & R.M. Ryan \(1985\)](#)' Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic interest. Intrinsic interest refers to the internal motivation to engage in an activity due to interest and enjoyment, while extrinsic interest is driven by external factors like rewards or recognition ([Deci & Ryan, 1985](#)). Overall, this framework demonstrates how cultural arts learning, specifically

through entertainment, can cultivate students' interest, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, by offering them opportunities to develop various intelligences while studying History (White, 2004).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study of learning using elements of cultural arts in the form of entertainment is able to attract interest in learning History. The teaching approach that combines elements of cultural arts can make History learning more interesting and meaningful.

Therefore, understanding the relationship between learning using the cultural arts approach and interest in History is important in the development of inclusive and relevant education for *Orang Asli* (Indigenous) students.

As a suggestion, the use of relevant cultural arts-based entertainment modules as an approach to learning can be used to help increase the knowledge and interest of *Orang Asli* students in learning History.

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### *Orang Asli Students and Learning History in Malaysia*

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The study of learning using elements of cultural arts in the form of entertainment is able to attract interest in learning History. The teaching approach that combines elements of cultural arts can make History learning more interesting and meaningful.