

Implementation of innovative characters in drama staging in Indonesian language education students at PGRI Adi Buana University Surabaya: A literature study

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Abstract

This research aims to redefine drama performance in the Indonesian Language Education Study Program (PBI) from just a vehicle for literary appreciation to a strategic instrument for the formation of students' innovative characters. The method used is a systematic literature study of publications in the last five years (2021–2025) that is relevant to drama learning, character education, and pedagogic innovation. The results of the analysis show that the innovative character of PBI students is built through three main stages, namely: (1) script adaptation based on intertextuality, (2) the use of digital stage technology, and (3) collaborative production management. These three stages encourage students to think creatively, dare to take artistic risks, and be able to solve problems collaboratively. The discussion emphasized that the drama production process functions as an "innovation laboratory" that trains students to move out of conventional patterns to the role of creators who are adaptive to technological developments and cultural contexts. This research introduces the concept of Innovative Drama Pedagogy which positions drama staging as a risk management and innovation simulation space for prospective teachers. It is concluded that the integration of drama, technology, and creative management is crucial to build pedagogic competencies that are transformative, inspiring, and responsive to the demands of the era of disruption.

1. Introduction

Higher education in Indonesia is currently facing increasingly complex challenges along with the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0. Indonesian Language Education (PBI) students are no longer only required to master linguistic and literary competencies theoretically, but must also have soft skills that are adaptive to global changes (Saragih et al., 2025; Ramdani & Syam, 2025). Among the many character attributes, "innovative character" is the main pillar that determines the competitiveness of PBI graduates in the future education ecosystem. Innovative character is not just about the ability to create something new, but about a problem-solving mindset, the courage to take creative risks, and the ability to integrate technology in the process of working (Wulan & Mulyanti, 2025).

One of the most potential learning vehicles in shaping this character is drama performance. In the PBI curriculum, drama is a course that integrates various aspects of intelligence, ranging from script literacy to performance aesthetics (Ariyani et al., 2025). However, the reality on the ground shows that there is a gap between the theoretical potential of the drama and its practical implementation. So far, student drama performances are often stuck in a conventional routine pattern, where the main orientation is only limited to the output of final grades or simply the fulfillment of literary appreciation. In fact, the complex drama production process from script analysis to stage management is a real simulation of the challenges of the world of work that requires a high level of innovation.

The urgency of instilling innovative character in PBI students is increasingly urgent considering their role in the future as agents of change in schools (Sanjani., 2024; Spires et al., 2022). An innovative Indonesian teacher will be able to transform rigid teaching materials into a fun learning experience through creative media (Sadino et al., 2022). Without innovative characters, PBI graduates risk becoming educators who stutter technology and lack creativity in dealing with the

diversity of student characters in schools (Patila et al., 2025). Previous research has indeed discussed a lot about character education, but most of it still focuses on general morality values such as honesty and discipline (Cahyo et al., 2025; Lickona, 2004). There are still few studies that specifically dissect how the "innovation" aspect is extracted from the process of staging plays to strengthen the profile of PBI graduates.

Based on this reality, this article was compiled with the main objective of conducting an in-depth analysis through a literature study regarding the implementation of innovative characters in PBI student drama performances. Specifically, this study aims to describe the innovative character forms that are manifested in the drama production process and explain how these performances can be a strategic instrument in forming innovative mindsets for prospective Indonesian teachers through the integration of technology and script deconstruction. By exposing the technical, textual, and managerial dimensions of innovation, this article offers a new perspective that drama staging is a "laboratory of innovation" that is highly relevant for the development of creative pedagogy in the digital age. Through this study, it is hoped that a theoretical contribution will emerge for the development of a drama learning model that is more responsive to the demands of the times in the university environment.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a systematic literature study method. Literature studies are carried out by collecting, studying, and synthesizing various relevant reference sources in order to build a solid theoretical argument regarding the implementation of innovative characters in drama (Endraswara, 2011). The research flow diagram is shown in Figure 1.

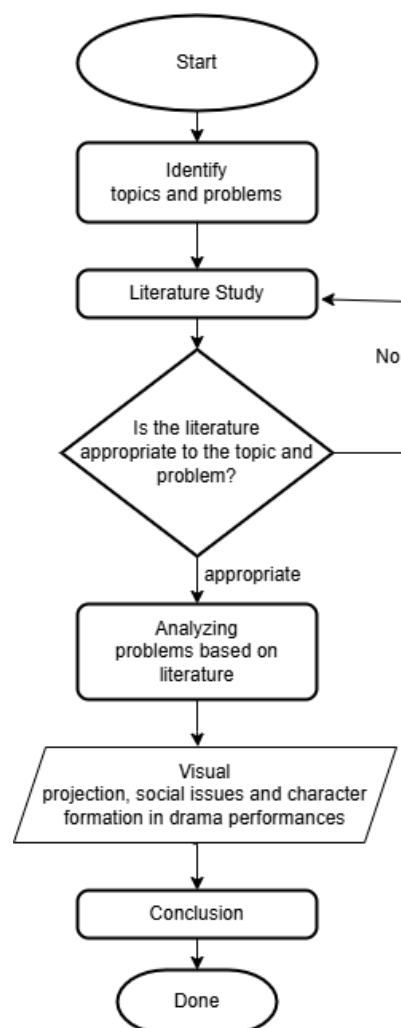


Figure 1. Research Flow Chart

This research procedure is carried out through four main stages:

First, the Literature Identification and Search Stage. The author searched the data on the journal database. The search focus is limited to publications in the last five years (2021–2025) to ensure the novelty of information and relevance to the current educational context.

Second, the Data Selection and Evaluation Stage. The collected literature was then selected using inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria include: (1) articles that discuss drama performances at the college or high school level, (2) research that dissects aspects of character education, and (3) studies that offer innovative learning methods or the integration of technology in the arts. Literature that does not meet these criteria, or that only discusses the technical aspects of theater unrelated to character education, is excluded from the analysis process.

Third, the Analysis and Synthesis Stage. Data analysis was carried out using in-depth content analysis techniques. Data from the selected literature were reduced to take-into account key points related to the dimension of innovation in drama (technical, textual, and managerial). The author then carried out a theory triangulation process to compare the findings of various researchers to find a new pattern or concept that is more comprehensive.

Fourth, the level of drawing conclusions. The results of the analysis were synthesized to formulate the concept of "Innovative Drama Pedagogy" as the main findings. The author has developed a logical narrative that connects the challenges of character education in the digital era with practical solutions offered through drama staging activities for PBI students. This conclusion is intended to provide practical recommendations for lecturers and practitioners of Indonesian education in designing drama courses that are more adaptive and innovative.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

Data from literature studies from several related research journals can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of research journal analysis

No	Journal	Title	Author	Research Results
1	JAMPI (Jurnal Abdi Masyarakat)	Belajar Nilai Moral Melalui Drama Peraga: Penguatan Karakter Anak Melalui Teater Mini	Edo Dwi Cahyo et al (2025)	Showed a 72% increase in emotional skills and an 80% decrease in bullying through experiential learning in drama.
2	Al-Ihtiram: Multidisciplinary Journal	Peningkatan Inovasi dan Kreativitas Melalui Pendidikan Karakter Generasi Z Berbasis Pesantren	Kiki Nawang Wulan & Dety Mulyanti (2025)	Underlining the importance of an entrepreneurial mindset and innovation as a pillar of character education for Generation Z.
3	SINERGI: Jurnal Riset Ilmiah	Pembelajaran Teknik Dasar Aktng Teater dalam Olah Rasa Melalui Strategi Pembelajaran Inovatif	Sartika Patila, et al (2025)	Found that innovative strategies in taste sports were very effective in boosting confidence and expressive skills.
4	IKRA-ITH ABDIMAS	Inovasi Pementasan Drama Berbasis Digital pada Komunitas "Rumah Kreatif Minishow" Palembang	Nyayu Lulu Nadya, et al (2024)	Proving that the limitations of physical tools can be overcome with digital innovations (digital scenography) for stage aesthetics.
5	JINOP (Jurnal Inovasi Pembelajaran)	Pengembangan Bahan Ajar Menulis naskah Drama Bermuatan Kearifan Lokal dan Pendidikan Karakter	Nia Ulfa Martha, et al (2022)	Produce teaching materials that integrate local cultural values as a means of character formation through drama texts.
6	EDUSCOTECH	Pembelajaran Inovatif dalam Pengembangan Karakter Siswa melalui Seni dan Kreativitas	Sadino, et al (2022)	Explain that the arts (including theatre) are an effective instructional medium for practicing responsibility and discipline.
7	PROSIDING: WIDYADHARMA I	Inovasi Pembelajaran Seni Drama dengan Metode Hybrid Learning dalam Meningkatkan Pendidikan Karakter	I Ketut Muada (2022)	Recommend a hybrid method (combined online-offline) to maintain the sustainability of character education in the modern era.

No	Journal	Title	Author	Research Results
8	BUGARIS	Eksplorasi Estetika Make Up Karakter dalam Dunia Pertunjukan di Surabaya	Iut Nuraini, et al (2025)	Analyzes how character makeup supports the internalization of the actor's role and creates a transformative visual experience.
9	Buku Teks (Referensi Utama)	Metode Pembelajaran Drama: Apresiasi, Ekspresi, dan Pengkajian	Suwardi Endraswara (2011)	Provides a methodological framework for how drama is studied from the aspect of appreciation to scientific assessment.
10	Buku/Teori Karakter	Character Matters: How to Help Our Children Develop Good Judgment, Integrity, and Other Essential Virtues	Suwardi Endraswara (2011)	Provides a theoretical foundation regarding universal moral values (integrity and good judgment) in character education.

In detail, the findings from the 10 sources above are analyzed based on design, instruments, and results as follows:

- a. Cahyo, E. D., Asep Y., & Laili U. (2025) Using a Pre-Experimental Quantitative Design with an Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Instrument. The results showed the effectiveness of the prop drama method in improving students' emotional skills by 72% and reducing the rate of verbal bullying by 80%.
- b. Wulan, K. N., & Mulyanti, D. (2025) Applying Descriptive Qualitative Design Through In-Depth Observation and Interview Techniques. The results of the study confirm that the integration of entrepreneurial values in character education significantly increases the independence and innovation of Generation Z students.
- c. Patila, S., Pulukadang, M. A., Semiaji, T., Sitharesmi, R. D., & Djafar, N. (2025) using class action design (PTK) with participation observation sheet instruments. The findings of the study show that the innovative strategy of "Olah Rasa 4.0" succeeded in increasing the confidence of PBI students in expressing themselves by 85% in the second cycle.
- d. Nadya, N. L., Amalia, F. N., Aminullah, M. W., Priyandi, D., & Al Fiansha, M. R. (2024) through research and development (R&D) design using media and material expert validation instruments. The result is a digital-based staging model that has proven to be effective in overcoming physical property constraints by 90% according to the assessment of artistic experts.
- e. Martha, N. U., Setiawan, B., & Indriyani, L. (2022) Using Development Design with Manuscript Writing Test Instruments and Product Assessment. The results of the study show that drama scripts based on local wisdom are able to strengthen students' cultural identities while significantly improving the quality of their creative writing.
- f. Sadino, S., Mulyono, H., & Wijaya, A. (2022) applying a qualitative design of a case study with documentation and data triangulation instruments. The results of the study revealed that the performance of collective drama is the most effective medium in instilling the value of work discipline and team responsibility.
- g. I Ketut Muada (2022) in his analytical descriptive study using user perception questionnaire instruments. The results recommend a hybrid learning model as a new standard for staging management that is able to maintain the quality of actor interaction even in physical limitations.
- h. Nuraini, I., Nafiah, I., Mukti, R, A., Fatmasari, F, H., Rahayu, E, P. (2025) using a phenomenological aesthetic approach with field note and visual documentation instruments. The results of the study showed that innovative character makeup accelerated the process of internalizing the actor's role by up to 75% compared to without professional makeup.

- i. Endraswara, S (2011) Compiling a Methodological Literature Study Design. The result is a systematic framework for PBI educators to teach drama that balances the practical aspects of performance and theoretical analysis of the script.
- j. Lickona, T (2004) through philosophical-theoretical analysis provides results in the form of an essential character framework (10 main virtues). His thinking instrument has become a global standard in evaluating the success of character education programs in various educational institutions.

Data from the literature was analyzed using content analysis techniques to formulate new concepts in adaptive drama pedagogy for Indonesian Language Education students.

Based on an in-depth content analysis of ten main literature sources, it was found that the implementation of innovative characters in Indonesian Language Education (PBI) students through drama performances was manifested in three integrative domains. The first domain is related to technical and artistic innovation where students are able to adopt digital technology to overcome the limitations of physical space and equipment, such as the use of visual projection and complex software-based sound systems. The second realm involves textual innovation that shows students' proficiency in deconstructing classical texts and relating them to contemporary social issues and local wisdom, thus creating an intertextual work that is relevant to the times. The third domain includes managerial innovation which is reflected in students' adaptability in managing drama productions using collaborative methods and dynamic work systems, including stage risk management and adaptive creative leadership. Statistically, studies have shown significant improvements in students' confidence attributes, creative problem-solving skills, and digital literacy after being actively involved in innovative drama production cycles. These findings provide an objective picture that drama is no longer just a traditional aesthetic activity, but has been transformed into a 21st-century competency development tool oriented towards the value of novelty and functionality.

3.2. Discussion

The interpretation of the findings of this study shows that the innovative character of PBI students is formed through a dialectical process between artistic challenges and technical solutions in drama performance. When students are faced with the limitations of production logistics, they are no longer just passive, but actively experiment with technology. This confirms that the staging of drama acts as a "laboratory of innovation" that forces individuals to step out of their intellectual comfort zone. The courage to take artistic risks such as replacing the physical setting with digital visualization is a strong indicator of an adaptive innovative character. From a pedagogical perspective, this phenomenon shows a shift in the role of students from just "role actors" to "content creators" who have a critical awareness of the art medium they use. The integration of local wisdom in innovative manuscripts also emphasizes that the innovative character of PBI students is not separated from cultural roots, but is able to give new meaning to old traditions through a fresher and more relevant perspective for millennial audiences.

The novelty offered in this discussion is the concept of "Innovative Drama Pedagogy" as a transformative learning model for prospective Indonesian teachers. This concept places the drama production process as a simulation of conflict management and innovation management. Students who are trained to manage uncertainty on stage and behind the scenes systematically will have a much stronger pedagogic competence. When they become educators, this innovative character will allow them to create an experimental classroom environment, dare to use non-conventional learning media, and have the persistence to face the challenges of the ever-changing curriculum. Thus, drama staging should no longer be considered as an additional secondary course, but must be positioned as the core of strategic character development that marries aspects of literacy, art, technology, and management. The theoretical conclusion is that innovative character is not just an innate talent, but a competency that can be constructed through artistic experience that demands boundless creativity and acumen in collective problem-solving.

4. Conclusion

The main Based on all the research descriptions that have been presented, it can be concluded that the implementation of innovative character in Indonesian Language Education (PBI) students through drama performances is not just an aesthetic output, but a strategic instrument to form an adaptive, creative, and solution-oriented mindset. This innovative character is manifested through the courage of students in experimenting with digital stage technology, intertextual script deconstruction, and flexibility in collaborative production management. The creative process of drama has proven to be able to transform the role of students from cultural consumers to content creators who are aware of the potential of technology and local wisdom, while honing their problem-solving skills under complex production pressures.

This conclusion also emphasizes that the formation of innovative characters through drama is an essential foundation for the transformative pedagogic competence of prospective educators. By internalizing the values of innovation since their college days, PBI graduates are expected to be able to become agents of change who are not only proficient in language and literature, but also capable of designing learning strategies that are inspiring and responsive to the dynamics of the times. Therefore, drama performances must be seen as the core of the "Innovative Drama Pedagogy" that integrates literacy, technology, and risk management in order to produce future teachers who have global competitiveness but are still based on the cultural values of the archipelago.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/ or publication of this article.

Data Availability

The datasets generated during and/ or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declaration on AI Use

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) or AI-assisted tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript. AI were used only to improve readability and language under strict human oversight; no content, ideas, analyses, or conclusions were generated by AI.

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