

# **Cultivating Emotional Intelligence through Creative Drama Based on the Rukun Negara Framework among IPG Trainee Teachers**

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## **Abstract**

This article assesses the effectiveness of creative drama, specifically physical acting techniques and devised play, in cultivating emotional intelligence and an appreciation for the values of Rukun Negara among trainee teachers at the Teacher Education Institute (IPG). This study aims to explore how drama activities can help trainee teachers understand the five principles of Rukun Negara in more depth and connect them to real social and educational situations. The objectives include identifying the effects of creative drama on the development of empathy, social awareness, emotional control and moral reasoning of participants. The study employs a qualitative design, utilising the case study method. Data were obtained through observation, interviews and reflection analysis during the “EQ Rukun Negara” workshop, which lasted for three months and involved 26 teacher trainees. Creative drama activities included role-play, improvisation, social simulation, and devised play, which provided opportunities for participants to interpret societal issues and apply national values in the context of staging. Findings showed that creative drama was effective in improving participants’ emotional intelligence, particularly in the aspects of empathy, perspective-taking, ethical communication and emotional control. Teacher trainees also achieved Affective Domain Level 3 (Appreciation) when they not only understood values intellectually, but also expressed them through dramatic actions that reflected respect, social responsibility, and cultural sensitivity. The activities carried out also succeeded in strengthening participants’ understanding of the principles of Rukun Negara through more authentic and meaningful embodied experiences. The study conclusions confirmed that creative drama is a relevant pedagogical approach in teacher training, with great potential to help IPG produce teachers who are empathetic, ethical, and capable of fostering social harmony. Significant implications

were also identified for the Ministry of Education, curriculum developers and educational practitioners in designing training modules based on values and emotional intelligence.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Creative Drama, Rukun Negara, IPG Trainee Teacher

### **Introduction**

The Rukun Negara, Malaysia's national philosophy, was established by the National Consultative Council and officially introduced on August 31, 1970. Its primary aim is to promote unity among the country's diverse population. The principles enshrined in the Rukun Negara are vital for ensuring Malaysia's long-term sustainability, prosperity, and stability. This philosophy serves as a significant reminder of five fundamental values that Malaysians are encouraged to uphold: faith in a higher power, loyalty to the monarch and the nation, respect for the constitution, commitment to the rule of law, and the cultivation of good morals and ethical conduct. These principles function as a guiding framework that enables individuals to make informed decisions and engage in behaviors that foster a cohesive society with a shared sense of national pride. (Mohamed Adil, 2019). The Rukun Negara is an essential component of Malaysia's nation-building framework. It functions as an ideology that shapes the national identity and fosters patriotism within the country. The principles of the Rukun Negara are strategically employed to promote social harmony and facilitate collaboration among Malaysia's diverse populace, particularly in the context of persistent racial tensions (Abd Muis et al., 2012). The incorporation of Rukun Negara into the Malaysian education system is imperative for the cultivation of national cohesion and social equilibrium. Established in 1970, the Rukun Negara has served as a foundational framework guiding the nation's development (Ishak & Sarkowi, 2021). Its overarching aim is to promote unity and harmonious coexistence among the various ethnic groups residing in Malaysia (Beh et al., 2021). Furthermore, the Malaysian government's concerted efforts to enhance the understanding and application of Rukun Negara among its citizens are commendable and warrant recognition (Ishak & Sarkowi, 2021).

The objective of this study is to explore how creative drama can be used to develop emotional intelligence among trainee teachers, in alignment with the principles of Rukun Negara. The study will analyze how trainee teachers interpret issues related to unity, their emotional responses during drama-based activities, and how these activities enhance their empathy, self-awareness, and social harmony. The scope of the study is limited to trainee teachers at the Institute of Teacher Education (IPG) who participated in structured creative drama workshops aimed at integrating emotional intelligence competencies with the national values outlined in the Rukun Negara.

The advancement of digital technology, particularly in social media nowadays, exerts a profound influence on societal thought processes and interpersonal interactions. Social media functions not only as a communication platform but also plays a critical role in shaping public opinion and influencing individuals' comprehension of significant issues, such as national unity and social harmony. This phenomenon becomes increasingly pertinent when examining teacher trainees at the Teacher Education Institute (IPG), who are poised to become future educators and proponents of unity within Malaysian schools. Research by Habibie Ibrahim et al. (2018) suggests that young users are particularly vulnerable to harmful content that may negatively impact their emotional well-being. In this regard, IPG teacher trainees are similarly vulnerable. At the same time, they frequently utilise social media as a

source of information, entertainment, and pedagogical guidance; they are also at risk of encountering material that could undermine their emotional stability, skew their social perceptions, and challenge their professional values as they prepare for their roles as educators.

In this regard, this paper argues that the challenge of social media to trainee teachers' understanding of peace, harmony and national unity is an important issue in the development of teaching professionalism. Both of these components (peace and unity) are core values in the Rukun Negara; thus, they are a priority to be systematically implemented in teacher education. This issue highlights the urgent need to structure teacher training in IPG to foster emotional intelligence, based on the values of the Rukun Negara, as a framework for developing teacher character.

### *Problem Statement*

In the context of formal education, the importance of appreciating the Rukun Negara needs to be emphasised through the teacher training curriculum. Hamid et al. (2021) emphasised that integrating the Rukun Negara principles into the education system is crucial for fostering the values of loyalty, unity, and respect for cultural diversity among students. For IPG trainee teachers, this understanding needs to be strengthened during the training stage, as they will serve as role models for students in terms of behaviour, emotions, and values. Omar et al. (2022) also explained that appreciating the values of the Rukun Negara through civic and community education courses is a practical approach in building national identity. Therefore, for IPG teacher trainees, integrating these values into learning not only builds intellectual understanding but also enhances emotional capabilities, including empathy, communication, self-control and social sensitivity, all of which are important components of emotional intelligence. To ensure that the values of the Rukun Negara are genuinely rooted in teacher training, the support of the leadership of educational institutions is essential. According to Vadiappan et al. (2021), the effectiveness of appreciating national values depends on authoritative instructional leadership. Although the emphasis of the study is focused on schools, the same principles apply to IPG. Lecturers, practicum supervisors, and IPG administrators play a crucial role in creating a learning environment that is not only academically focused but also grounded in national values and the development of professional emotions.

In Malaysia, various educational policies, including the Rukun Tetangga program and unity initiatives, have been implemented to promote community harmony (Beh et al., 2021). However, the effectiveness of these programs is significantly contingent upon the competencies of teacher trainees, who serve as the primary executors of the unity policy within educational settings. Consequently, the integration of Rukun Negara principles into teacher training at Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG), utilising pedagogical approaches such as theatre, educational drama, and social simulations, has the potential to enhance the emotional intelligence of future educators. This enhancement will better prepare them to navigate the social and emotional dynamics present among students. The study underscores the urgent need to cultivate emotional intelligence among IPG teacher trainees through the Rukun Negara value framework. This imperative is driven by the pervasive influence of social media, the challenges to national unity, and the evolving demands of teacher professionalism in contemporary society. Therefore, teacher training programs should not only prioritise

pedagogical knowledge but also emphasise the development of emotional maturity, empathy, self-regulation, and conflict management skills, attributes that can be effectively fostered through an appreciation of the five principles of Rukun Negara.

The Malaysian education system emphasizes fostering a spirit of unity and national identity through the principles of Rukun Negara. Ishak and Sarkowi (2021) note that integrating these principles into the curriculum helps cultivate a deeper understanding of core Malaysian values. This is particularly important for teacher trainees at the Teacher Education Institute (IPG), as they will be key in promoting unity and social harmony in schools. By incorporating Rukun Negara into their training, trainees learn to respect Malaysia's cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. This aligns with Hamid et al. (2021), who assert that values like loyalty to the country and respect for the constitution can be reinforced through a national philosophy-based education. Research indicates that cultivating the Rukun Negara enhances both patriotic awareness and emotional intelligence (EI) among IPG teacher trainees. By understanding core values such as politeness, morality, the rule of law, and constitutional supremacy, trainees can develop empathy, emotional control, and practical communication skills essential for handling complex classroom situations. Experiential teaching methods, particularly drama and performance, have been shown to promote social and emotional maturity. Haneem (2015) demonstrated that drama techniques enhance creativity, problem-solving, and collaborative learning. These techniques help trainees recognise their own emotions and better understand the emotions of others. Additionally, drama education can enhance understanding of academic concepts and develop reflective skills through activities such as historical role-playing, which fosters empathetic and critical analysis. Thus, incorporating drama into training can significantly enhance the emotional intelligence of teacher trainees in navigating human relationships within the school setting.

The integration of the Rukun Negara principles within the teacher training curriculum at IPG, coupled with the utilization of drama as a pedagogical method, has been identified as a significant strategy for enhancing the emotional intelligence of teacher trainees. A comprehensive understanding of national values enables these trainees to cultivate a professional identity that emphasizes unity. Furthermore, the incorporation of dramatic techniques provides an experiential platform for developing critical skills such as empathy, effective communication, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation. Consequently, this synergistic approach is essential for promoting the professionalism of Malaysian educators and for fostering social harmony and a cohesive national identity.

### **Literature Highlights**

Past studies have shown that the collaborative drama approach offers significant advantages in enhancing the learning experience, particularly in improving communication skills, creativity, and social capabilities. Zhang et al. (2019), for example, emphasised the effectiveness of collaborative drama strategies in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Through the use of a mobile system "contextual drama (CD)", the study found that the context-based drama method can increase the use of non-verbal communication, strengthen students' confidence, and provide space for participants to express emotions more authentically. If applied to teacher trainees at the Teacher Education Institute (IPG), this approach has great potential to foster emotional intelligence. Mastery of emotions and non-verbal communication is an important element in teacher competence, especially when

interacting with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. These skills are closely aligned with the principles of Politeness and Ethics in the Rukun Negara, which require every prospective teacher to communicate in a civilised, empathetic, and ethical manner.

In addition, a study by Abdul Samat et al. (2022) demonstrated that drama, as a pedagogical method, can enrich the learning experience in alternative classrooms, including those in Orang Asli communities. Although the study involved students, the implications for teacher training are clear. It emphasises that drama helps implement more flexible, inclusive, and responsive teaching to participants' emotions. For IPG teacher trainees, the ability to understand the dynamics of students' emotions and adapt teaching strategies is an indicator of emotional intelligence that is in line with the principles of Constitutional Supremacy and the Rule of Law, namely the ability to control oneself, act reasonably, and respect the rights of students from diverse backgrounds. Omar et al. (2022) also emphasised that integrating theatre into the curriculum can strengthen the learning process, mainly when it is used to enhance social skills and foster interest in learning. Through simulations, social conflict acting, and role-playing, IPG teacher trainees can practice managing their own emotions, understanding the perspectives of others, and interacting more effectively. This ability is a key component of EI, and directly supports the principle of Loyalty to King and Nation because teacher professionalism depends on the ability to maintain social harmony in schools. Andrikopoulou and Koutrouba (2019) found that using drama in education enhances civic and emotional awareness through role-playing activities. For IPG teacher trainees, this approach fosters values such as unity, tolerance, and social responsibility, while reinforcing a belief in God and spiritual values that contribute to inner peace and emotional integrity. Ahmad and Ali (2020) stated that drama effectively boosts creativity, confidence, and motivation. In the IPG context, dramatic activities enhance pedagogical skills and improve teachers' ability to manage stress, control emotions, adapt to urgent situations, and communicate effectively, key components of emotional intelligence.

Incorporating drama into the teaching process helps trainee teachers at the Language Teacher Education Institute (IPG) understand and apply the values of the Rukun Negara in their professional development. This approach creates a reflective and engaging learning experience, fostering emotional intelligence through activities that promote empathy, self-control, cooperation, and social awareness. The study highlights that drama effectively cultivates unity, loyalty, respect for cultural diversity, and emotional sensitivity among IPG Bahasa trainee teachers. Role-playing activities enable them to explore various perspectives, enhancing their ability to recognize emotions, manage stress, and resolve conflicts while appreciating social situations within the Rukun Negara framework. Overall, the findings of past studies indicate that the drama creative approach can have a positive impact on the development of personality and emotional competence. When combined with the Rukun Negara value framework, the drama approach can form IPG trainee teachers who are not only pedagogically competent but also emotionally mature, empathetic, wise in controlling conflict and capable of becoming agents of unity in schools. Therefore, there is an urgent need to incorporate the drama approach as a systematic instrument in the emotional intelligence development module for prospective teachers at IPG.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in two intersecting frameworks, Emotional Intelligence Theory and Creative Drama Theory. Emotional Intelligence (EI), conceptualized initially by Salovey and Mayer in 1990 and subsequently elaborated upon by Goleman in 1995, serves as a critical lens through which to examine the development of essential competencies among trainee teachers. These competencies, encompassing self-awareness, empathy, emotional regulation, and social understanding, are fundamental to the practice of teaching professionalism. They significantly shape educators' interpretations of student behaviour, their management of classroom interactions, and the ethical decisions they make in pedagogical contexts. As such, EI is regarded as an integral component of reflective and value-based teaching and learning practices within teacher education.

Creative Drama Theory offers a valuable framework that conceptualizes drama as a process-oriented, experiential form of learning, grounded in imagination, improvisation, and expressive interaction. Scholars such as NAEYC (2020), Pyle (2018), Athiemoolam (2018), and Yildirim (2023) articulate that creative drama facilitates cognitive, social, and emotional development by enabling participants to investigate concepts, assume various roles, and navigate relationships through structured dramatic activities. For preservice teachers, this pedagogical approach fosters the cultivation of empathy, collaborative problem-solving skills, and ethical reasoning in ways that transcend conventional educational practices. Moreover, creative drama allows trainee educators to engage with diverse perspectives, reflect on their emotional responses, and gain insights into social dynamics through embodied learning experiences.

The integration of Emotional Intelligence Theory and Creative Drama Theory establishes a robust conceptual framework for analyzing the ways in which creative drama activities facilitate emotional development while reinforcing the principles articulated in Rukun Negara. According to Nor Hashim (2024) by engaging trainee teachers in scenarios that explore themes of unity, respect, cultural diversity, and civic responsibility, these activities transform abstract values into tangible lived experiences. Evidence from drama education literature Goksel (2021) demonstrates that these embodied learning processes significantly contribute to the formation of professional identities, enhance moral awareness, and develop the emotional competencies essential for effective teaching. Collectively, these theoretical perspectives underscore the potential of creative drama as a value-driven pedagogical tool that promotes the holistic development of educators who are both emotionally intelligent and socially responsible.

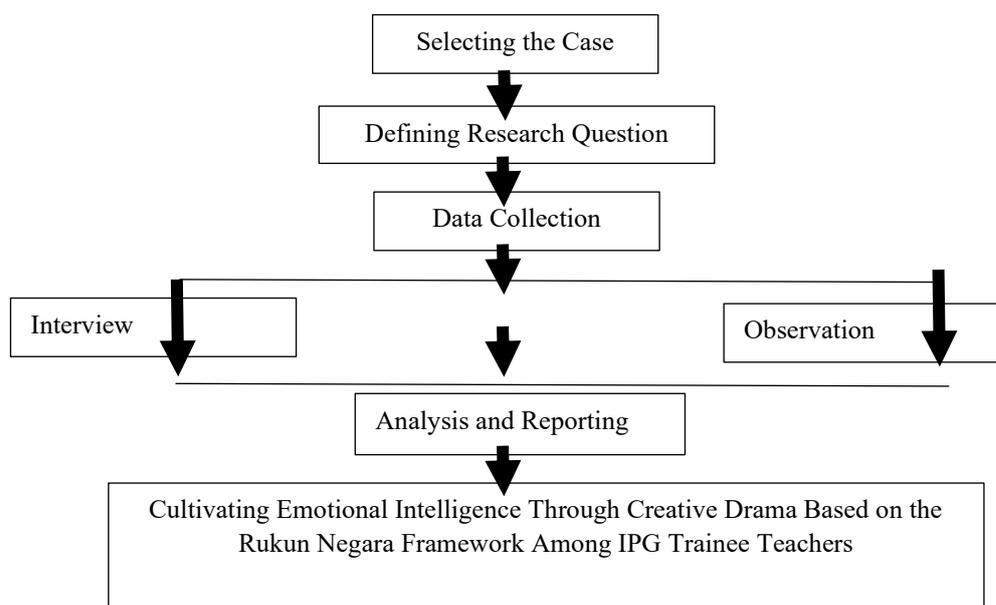
**Research Methodology**

This study was conducted through a collaboration involving lecturers and students from the Department of Educational Theatre, as well as teacher trainees from the Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG) Bahasa in Lembah Pantai, Kuala Lumpur. This personality development workshop, titled "EQ Rukun Negara", aims to foster the emotional intelligence of teacher trainees by promoting an appreciation of the five principles of Rukun Negara and their relevance to everyday educational practices. This program is designed to empower teacher trainees with skills for managing emotions, increasing empathy, and understanding cultural diversity in a pluralistic society. Through creative drama techniques like role-playing, improvisation, and social simulation, trainees can explore societal issues and national values in a reflective

manner. The study aims to investigate how these drama techniques enhance trainees understanding of national unity principles in the Rukun Negara. It focuses on developing affective skills related to values such as politeness, morality, tolerance, and respect. Additionally, the study explores how dramatic experiences can strengthen emotional intelligence among trainee teachers at IPG, fostering self-awareness, emotional management, empathy, and effective communication.

Henceforth, this paper utilises the case study research methodology as a qualitative research approach. To gain a comprehensive understanding of a given scenario, it is essential to conduct a thorough examination and assessment. This approach is advantageous for understanding complex issues within the IPG teacher trainee community, as perceived by a participant in the IPG Bahasa Lembah Pantai, Kuala Lumpur, training program for teachers. The case study methodology is a highly influential research technique that facilitates a comprehensive understanding of specific cases in their real-life contexts. It empowers researchers to delve into intricate topics, collect detailed data, and gain valuable insights into the nuances of the subject matter. The case study approach is instrumental in driving knowledge advancement across numerous fields by employing diverse data collection tools and conducting meticulous analysis (Gerring, 2016). Several major elements and steps involved in the case study research have been applied through the following phases:

Table 1: Research Case Study Methodology Framework.



a. Selecting the Case:

A pilot study was conducted with students and researchers who met with the Teacher Education Institute (IPG) Bahasa, Lembah Pantai, Kuala Lumpur, as representatives of the IPG teacher community, to identify the problem. The findings showed that the IPG Teacher, as a research instrument, need learning outcomes that can foster an understanding of the country's pillars by playing drama and performance in workshops. This study has cited field study data as follows:

Table 2

*Data Collection Methods*

Research Question		Data Collection Method	Data Analysis Method
RQ1	How do creative drama activities support the development of emotional intelligence and strengthen trainee teachers' understanding of the Rukun Negara?	Interview Method Observation Method	Thematic Analysis
Research Question		Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods
RQ2	How do creative drama techniques foster emotional intelligence while enhancing trainee teachers' understanding and appreciation of the principles of national unity within the Rukun Negara?	Interview Method Observation Method	Thematic Analysis

This study examines the use of creative drama as a teaching method to enhance emotional intelligence and understanding of the Rukun Negara among trainee teachers from the Bahasa Department at Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG) Kampus Bahasa, Lembah Pantai, Kuala Lumpur. Over three months, a structured workshop involving 26 students focused on promoting the Rukun Negara through creative drama activities, fostering experiential, value-based learning. The workshop employed spontaneous physical role-play and devised play, allowing participants to dramatize conflict scenarios that reflect the five principles of the Rukun Negara: Belief in God, Loyalty to the King and Country, Supremacy of the Constitution, Rule of Law, and Courtesy and Morality. These activities encouraged participants to analyze interpersonal dynamics, express emotional perspectives, and make ethical decisions, thus supporting the development of their emotional intelligence.

Upon the completion of each creative drama activity, the trainee teachers facilitated reflective dialogue sessions. These discussions, characterized by open-ended and unstructured questioning, encouraged students to articulate their interpretations of the conflicts presented and to connect the principles of the Rukun Negara to real-world contexts. This process also offered trainee teachers valuable opportunities to enhance their competencies in key emotional intelligence areas, including empathetic listening, emotional regulation, and reflective facilitation. The reflective component of the workshop was further structured through the application of the framework, which guided the trainee teachers in linking drama and creative activities with value-based reasoning. Through this framework, participants examined how national principles inform social conduct, ethical judgment, and collective responsibility. Consequently, the workshop not only enhanced appreciation of the Rukun Negara but also strengthened the trainee teachers' capacity to integrate emotional and moral learning through creative pedagogical methods.

The methodology shows that integrating creative drama into the value framework of the Rukun Negara provides an effective way to enhance emotional intelligence among trainee teachers. This approach facilitates the development of essential emotional competencies

needed for their future professional practices and emphasizes the importance of drama-based education in promoting civic understanding and national unity.

## **Results and Discussion**

### *Creative Drama: Physical Acting and Role-Play*

The findings from the study indicate that the use of creative drama, particularly physical acting and role-play, significantly enhanced the emotional intelligence of the participating trainee teachers while also deepening their understanding of the Rukun Negara principles. These activities required active emotional engagement, interpretation of values, and the enactment of conflict situations centered around themes of national unity, thereby providing meaningful experiential learning opportunities.

In relation to RO1, the trainee teachers demonstrated notable growth in emotional intelligence competencies, particularly in self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation. Through physical acting role-play, participants were required to guide them in dramatizing real-life social conflicts linked to the principles of Belief in God, Loyalty to the King and Country, Supremacy of the Constitution, Rule of Law, and Courtesy and Morality. This process required them to interpret emotional cues, respond empathetically to students' expressions, and model appropriate emotional responses within the dramatized scenarios. The use of physical acting role-play also further deepened this development, as trainee teachers had to articulate inner emotional states, moral dilemmas, and reflective considerations relating to national values. These acting techniques enabled them to internalize the principles while communicating sincerity, conviction, and emotional clarity.

In addressing RO2, creative drama techniques were shown to enhance trainee teachers' understanding and appreciation of the Rukun Negara. Through the dramatization of five themes derived from the national principles, teachers gained a more concrete understanding of how these values operate within social contexts. For example, physical acting exercises allowed them to explore conflicts related to fairness, cultural respect, legal responsibility, and moral decision-making. These activities encouraged personal reflection on how national values guide ethical behavior and promote unity. By engaging in both expressive and reflective forms of performance, the trainee teachers were able to connect abstract civic concepts to their lived experiences, thereby deepening their appreciation of the principles that underpin national cohesion.

The findings demonstrate that the creative drama, constructed through group acting and physical role-play, effectively illuminated conflicts related to national principles, making the values more relatable and facilitating deeper cognitive and affective engagement. Each group's dramatisation, ranging from themes of faith, loyalty, constitutional integrity, legal sovereignty, and moral conduct, demonstrated the capacity of creative drama to translate national values into embodied learning experiences. This dual emphasis on emotional expression and civic understanding underscores the pedagogical potential of creative drama as a meaningful framework for cultivating emotionally intelligent, value-driven educators.

Table 3

*Dramatic Rukun Negara Theme Story Plot structured by Workshop Participants*

Physical acting play role	Rukun Negara Principle	Performative Play	Main Theme
Activity Play 1:	<i>"Kepercayaan kepada Tuhan"</i> (Belief in God)	<p>The physical acting conveys a crucial lesson about respecting diverse religious beliefs. The protagonists reprimand a non-Muslim acquaintance for failing to show courtesy to someone fasting during Ramadan, emphasizing the need for interfaith sensitivity in our multicultural society.</p> <p>Conflicts arise when non-Muslim friends eat in front of students who are fasting. Some encourage others to break their fast, but the Muslim students refuse, following Allah's command. One character advises their friends to respect their devout Muslim peer's commitment to their faith, leading to an apology from the non-Muslim friends. This situation highlights the importance of honoring the fasting practices of Muslim peers as a sign of respect for their faith.</p>	The idea of respecting Muslim partners' fasting activities as a way to show respect for the concept of faith in God
Activity Play 2	<i>Kesetiaan Kepada Raja dan Negara</i> (Loyalty to the King and Country)	This drama highlights the conflict between the characters due to disrespect when the song 'My Country' is played at school. When the country was found to be the character playing around, snubbing each other, this action caused the protagonist's character to rebuke the antagonist's disrespect for the song 'Negara Ku', which symbolises the folk song of loyalty to the King and Country. Eventually, Antagonis' character realised their mistake and promised not to repeat it.	The idea that loyalty to the King and country starts with respecting my national anthem
Activity Play 3	<i>Keluhuran Perlembangan</i> (The Conformity of the Constitution)	This situation created a conflict regarding the appreciation of different cuisines: Hindu (kueh wade), Chinese (chicken dumplings), and Kadazan Dusun (pinasakan). During cultural events at school, some students reacted negatively and refused to eat food prepared by their multi-racial peers. The teacher intervened,	The theme of respecting the multi-racial food menu as the base of the constitution as a symbol of protecting Malaysia's cultural policy.

		<p>stressing the importance of respecting diverse cultures to uphold Malaysia's multicultural values.</p> <p>Ultimately, the students apologized and promised to change their behavior in a multiracial society.</p>	
	<p><i>Kedaulatan Undang-Undang</i> (Sovereignty of Law)</p>	<p>This drama highlights the conflict surrounding the issue of improperly disposing of garbage in public areas. It was found that antagonistic characters had been busy dumping rubbish everywhere without disposing of it in the provided bin. Their actions eventually invite conflict when the Police character catches them and needs to be fined. In the end, they were forced to pay fines for violating the laws provided by the government.</p>	<p>The idea that the usefulness of the law is based on how clean it is</p>
Physical acting play role	Rukun Negara Principle	Performative Play	Main Theme
Activity Play 4	<p><i>Kesopanan dan Kesusilaan.</i> (Courtesy and Courtesy.)</p>	<p>This drama explores the conflict arising from disrespectful behavior towards the teacher in the classroom. The antagonist frequently exhibits a lack of manners, leading to disruptions during the teacher's instruction. In response to this discourteous conduct, the protagonist advises the antagonist that their actions are not only irritating to the teacher but also inappropriate. The conflict escalates until the school administration intervenes, reprimanding the antagonist, which serves as the climax of the narrative. Ultimately, all characters exhibiting rudeness towards the teacher come to regret their behavior, highlighting the consequences of disrespect in an educational setting.</p>	<p>The main idea of "Respecting Teachers" is that moral ideals are based on being kind and honest.</p>

Through the implementation of creative drama through physical acting activities, the results have successfully supported the development of emotional intelligence among IPG trainee teachers, in addition to strengthening their understanding of the principles of the Rukun Negara. Analysis of the five performative action had developed by the participants shows that the trainee teachers have reached the affective level of domain A5, namely the application of values (behaviors), having a value system that controls their behaviors. Thus, behaviors is comprehensive, consistent, predictable, and, most importantly, reflects the characteristics of

the trainee teacher. Teaching objectives are related to the adjustment of students' general lives (personal, social, and emotional). Thus, the creative drama process offers meaningful learning opportunities for trainee teachers to practice components of emotional intelligence, such as perspective-taking, empathy, and reflective reasoning, while engaging in activities.

In the story development activity, teacher trainees interacted with each other to reexamine community conflict issues and interpret them in light of the principles of the Rukun Negara. This process required teacher trainees to foster emotional awareness and help fellow participants understand value-based responses to community situations. The resulting story themes of respecting the practice of fasting (Belief in God), respecting the National Anthem (Loyalty to King and Country), recognizing ethnic food diversity (Supremacy of the Constitution), practicing cleanliness (Rule of Law), and respecting teachers (Courtesy and Morality) reflect how creative drama successfully translated national values in a concrete and meaningful way. Through this process, teacher trainees were able to strengthen their ability to guide emotional interpretation, moral reasoning, and value appreciation.

Observations of physical actions have shown that they play an important role in expressing emotions related to issues of respect, responsibility, moral behaviour, and social harmony. Through physical acting, the research team has guided them to explore national values face-to-face and experientially, thus fostering awareness of positive behaviours that support the Malaysian identity. This process also requires trainee teachers to apply emotional intelligence skills such as emotion regulation, empathetic communication and value-based dialogue. In short, the study's results demonstrate that creative drama is a practical approach to teaching and learning in fostering emotional intelligence among IPG trainee teachers. Through story-building, acting, and value reflection sessions, trainee teachers not only strengthen their understanding of the Rukun Negara but also improve their ability to integrate emotional, cognitive, and moral components into educational practices. This finding confirms that creative drama based on national values has the potential to produce teachers who are highly personable, authoritative and capable of strengthening the harmony of Malaysian society.

#### *Creative Drama: Devised Play*

The study's findings showed that the use of devised play techniques in creative drama had a significant impact on the development of emotional intelligence in IPG trainee teachers, as well as strengthening their understanding of the principles of Rukun Negara. The devised play activity, involving Year Four and Year Five students through the use of puppets, provided an authentic learning space that required trainee teachers to apply empathy, effective communication, and reflective skills, important components of emotional intelligence.

In line with RO1, trainee teachers enhanced their emotional intelligence by guiding the participants to understand issues related to national values. Before the intervention, the teacher trainees were only able to memorize the principles of the Rukun Negara without showing the performative action on Rukun Negara subtext. However, through guidance in the workshop, participants were able to interpret, give examples, and formulate the meaning of the principles orally. This progress showed that trainee teachers were effective in managing emotional interactions, encouraging creative cognitive responses, and fostering value thinking among them. Their ability to facilitate spontaneous dialogue in devised play activities could further strengthen emotional awareness and perspective-taking skills.

In relation to RO2, the findings show that the devised play technique successfully increased the appreciation of teacher trainees towards national principles through a creative process that involved the interpretation of themes and the collaborative production of meaning. As a research instrument, teacher trainees who were involved in spontaneous dialogue were able to interpret and formulate five issues of national values presented in the devised play activity as follows:

Table 4

*Formulate five issues of national values structured by Workshop Participants*

Practice	Rukun Negara Principle	Explanation
Respecting the practice of fasting	Courtesy and Morality	Respecting the worship practices of others shows good manners, courtesy, and helps maintain harmony in society.
Respecting the National Anthem	Loyalty to the King and Country	Standing tall and respecting the national anthem symbolizes love and loyalty to the nation.
Appreciating the diversity of ethnic foods	Belief in God	Appreciating the variety of food and cultural diversity reflects gratitude and awareness of God's blessings.
Maintaining cleanliness	The Supremacy of the Constitution	Maintaining cleanliness shows a responsible attitude and supports values that contribute to society's well-being.
Respecting teachers	The Rule of Law	Respecting teachers means following rules and discipline, similar to how citizens obey the laws of the country.

Through the devised play workshop process, teacher trainees had the opportunity to observe how social conflicts can be understood and addressed through the application of national values and elements of emotional Intelligence. In their role as participants, teacher trainees presented solutions to the issues presented and indirectly assessed how the values of the Rukun Negara were applied in daily situations. This experience honed skills such as self-awareness, empathy, and emotional management, which are the core of emotional Intelligence. Through drama activities, teacher trainees learned to respect cultural and religious differences (Courtesy and Morality, Belief in God) while understanding the importance of maintaining social harmony. These drama activities increased their emotional sensitivity to the views and experiences of others. Interaction during the scenes also required them to act according to rules, norms, and group structures, in line with the values of Constitutional Supremacy and the Rule of Law, thus strengthening self-control and social responsibility skills in emotional Intelligence.

When teacher trainees propose solutions to national issues, they demonstrate loyalty to the King and Nation by cultivating awareness of national identity and the importance of unity. Their ability to analyse issues, voice opinions ethically, and formulate solutions indicates an increase in decision-making skills, a key component of emotional intelligence. Overall, the study findings demonstrate that devised play is a practical and creative drama approach for strengthening the emotional intelligence of IPG teacher trainees. Through shared interpretation, spontaneous dialogue, and puppet narratives, teacher trainees can integrate cognitive, affective, and moral aspects more deeply. This experience not only helps them

understand how the principles of the Rukun Negara translate into action but also shapes educators who are more empathetic, reflective, and centred on national values.

Table 5

*Formulate Solution Ideas Based on Rukun Negara Values structured by Workshop Participants*

Devised Play	Interpretation of Issues (EQ Focus)	Solution Ideas Based on Rukun Negara Values
Devised Play 1	Participants interpreted the issue of lack of respect for teachers as a failure in empathy, emotional awareness, and social responsibility. They highlighted that respecting teacher begins with understanding their emotional burden and contributions to the country.	The devised play showed characters practising active listening, controlling emotions, and expressing appreciation for teachers. These align with the values of Courtesy and Morality and Belief in God.
Devised Play 2	Participants interpreted conflicts between students and teachers as arising from poor communication, lack of emotional control, and failure to appreciate teaching diversity.	The devised play demonstrated conflict resolution strategies, respectful dialogue, and responsible decision-making. These reflect the values of Rule of Law and Supremacy of the Constitution.
Devised Play 3	Participants interpreted the issue of respecting teachers as linked to self-management, empathy development, and recognising teachers as nation builders shaping national identity.	The devised play featured characters showing positive behaviour, honouring teachers as builders of the nation, and expressing loyalty and respect consistent with Loyalty to the King and Country.

Table 5 illustrates how the three devised play activities carried out by the workshop participants effectively highlighted the ability of trainee teachers to interpret social issues related to respect for national teachers, as well as to generate solution ideas that align with the values of the Rukun Negara and emotional intelligence. Each devised play activity demonstrates how trainee teachers utilise dramatic elements, physical actions, and emotional expressions to connect the issue with national values and relevant EQ skills.

Devised Play Activity 1 reveals that trainee teachers perceive the issue of a lack of respect for teachers as a failure of empathy and emotional awareness. They recognise that respect for teachers starts with understanding the burden of work and emotions that educators bear. Through the performance they designed, the characters are shown learning to listen actively, control emotions and express respect. The proposed solutions align with the values of Politeness and Morality, as well as a Belief in God, because teachers are regarded as individuals who guide people towards truth and moral values. EQ elements, such as empathy, self-awareness, and emotional regulation, are clearly fostered through this performance.

Devised Play 2 activity highlights conflicts between students and teachers as a result of communication and emotional control failures. The trainee teacher interprets that the issue of disrespect for teachers can also arise when students do not understand the diversity of teaching styles or the cultural backgrounds of teachers. Through devised play, participants display solutions in the form of polite dialogue, apologetic actions, self-reflection and more responsible decisions. This activity closely aligns with the principles of the Rule of Law and Constitutional Supremacy, which obligate every citizen to respect social structures and

legitimate authorities. Additionally, it helps develop emotional intelligence (EQ) skills such as social awareness, conflict resolution, and ethical decision-making.

Devised Play 3 activity focuses on the role of teachers as shapers of national identity. The trainee teacher interprets that respecting teacher is the basis of the values of Politeness and Morality, and reflects Loyalty to the King and the Country, because teachers play an important role in instilling national identity. In the performance, the characters advise the audience on the importance of appreciating and respecting teachers throughout life. This dramatic action fosters moral appreciation, emotional sincerity and the ability to recognise leadership structures in society, which are important components of emotional intelligence.

Overall, the findings in Table 4 demonstrate that the trainee teachers successfully developed their understanding of the Level 3 Affective Domain: Appreciation. They not only understood the values cognitively, but also expressed those values through body language, intonation, dialogue, and emotional reactions in devised play. This demonstration shows that they truly embodied the country's values. The values of respecting teachers, appreciating authority, acting ethically, and maintaining social relationships were practised in real life, in line with the five principles of the Rukun Negara. Additionally, all activities demonstrated an increase in EQ components, including empathy, social awareness, emotional control, and problem-solving skills. The devised play approach clearly provided an active, reflective, and experiential learning space, allowing participants to connect national values with real social situations in greater depth.

In summary, this study confirms that devised play functions as a creative drama approach that not only effectively fosters understanding of the Rukun Negara values but also enhances emotional intelligence among trainee teachers. Through body language, dialogue improvisation, and scene design, trainee teachers have the opportunity to interpret the issue of disrespect for national teachers and find solutions that are centred on the values of Politeness and Morality, Belief in God, the Rule of Law, and other relevant national principles. This embodied experience helps them connect national principles with real social action, while honing empathy, social awareness, emotional control and conflict resolution skills. The devised play approach has proven to be a suitable pedagogical strategy in the creative drama project, supporting the efforts of Cultivating Emotional Intelligence Through Creative Drama Based on the Rukun Negara Framework Among IPG Trainee Teachers.

### **Conclusion**

The creative drama activity in this study demonstrated its effectiveness as a pedagogical framework that integrates physical acting techniques and devised play to foster appreciation for the values of Rukun Negara among trainee teachers at IPG Bahasa, Lembah Pantai, Kuala Lumpur. Through a drama creative learning approach, participants were able to connect the five principles of Rukun Negara as performance themes, thereby strengthening their understanding and appreciation of these values in real-life contexts. The results of this drama creative approach had coined that trainee teachers not only understand the fundamental values of nationhood but also develop emotional and social awareness that is essential for forming a national identity. The study findings also showed that the 29 trainee teachers involved have achieved a deeper level of appreciation for the diversity of cultures, religions and ethnicities in Malaysia through the application of the principles of Rukun Negara. Values

such as loyalty to the country, respect for the Constitution, and good moral practice become more meaningful when expressed through creative drama experiences. This process not only supports the development of values but also enhances important components of emotional intelligence, such as empathy, emotional regulation, social awareness, and ethical decision-making skills.

This study provides substantial theoretical and contextual contributions to the existing body of knowledge concerning teacher education, emotional intelligence, and values-based pedagogy. Theoretically, it advances the discourse on emotional intelligence by integrating creative drama as an experiential learning framework rooted in the Rukun Negara. This framework illustrates how national philosophy can function not only as civic content but also as a transformative structure for affective and performative learning. By establishing a connection between drama-based pedagogy and the development of the affective domain, this research enhances our understanding of how emotional intelligence, moral reasoning, and value internalization can be concurrently cultivated through embodied learning experiences. Contextually, the study offers empirical evidence pertaining to the Malaysian teacher education setting, particularly at Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG), which remains a largely underexplored area in the fields of drama and emotional intelligence research. It emphasizes the relevance of creative drama as a culturally responsive pedagogical approach capable of bolstering national unity, fostering social harmony, and enhancing the emotional competence of trainee teachers. Therefore, the findings provide both practical and conceptual insights for policymakers, curriculum developers, and teacher educators. These insights are instrumental in the design of training modules that integrate national values, emotional intelligence, and innovative pedagogical strategies, thereby promoting holistic teacher development within the multicultural context of Malaysia.

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