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Strengthening Prospective Makeup Artists' Capacity through Local Heritage-Based Experiential Learning in Semarangan Bridal Makeup

Maria Krisnawati[1]*, Muh. Ibnan Syarif[1], Muh Fakhrihun Naam[2], Khoirotun Nuriyah[3], Syakir Syakir[1]
[1]Art Education, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia
[2]Home Economics Education, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia
[3]Fashion Design, Institute of Social Sciences, Selcuk University, Selçuklu, Turkey

ABSTRACT

The strengthening of prospective makeup artists through experiential learning grounded in local cultural heritage in the learning of Semarangan bridal makeup was described. The activity was conducted with 50 students from the Beauty Education Program in the 6th semester enrolled in the Javanese Bridal Makeup subject. The program was conducted in three meetings of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, active experimentation, and final reflection. Data were collected through a pre-test and post-test, an observation sheet, a makeup practice rubric, a cultural awareness questionnaire, a student response questionnaire, a written reflection, a short interview, and a portfolio. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using means and percentages, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The results showed that students' knowledge increased from average pre-test to average post-test in practical skills, cultural awareness, response to learning, relevance to the prospective makeup artist profession, and portfolio. While common beauty education approaches mainly emphasize technical mastery, this study positioned Semarangan bridal makeup as a local heritage learning resource through experiential learning. Local cultural heritage-based experiential learning could be an initial empowerment strategy to strengthen the knowledge, practical skills, cultural awareness, self-confidence, and vocational readiness of prospective makeup artists.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Keywords:
capacity strengthening; experiential learning; bridal makeup; semarangan bridal makeup

Correspondent Author:
Maria Krisnawati

Email:
mariakrisnawati@students.unnes.ac.id

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INTRODUCTION

Bridal makeup is an important part of vocational beauty education due to the combination of technical skills, aesthetic sensitivity, professional attitude, and cultural understanding (Josua et al., 2025; Lestari & Saripah, 2020). It revealed that bridal makeup training is not only focused on technical skills but also on developing cultural understanding as a basis for professionalism among prospective makeup artists (Cindiyana et al., 2026). Students as prospective makeup artists are not only required to have skills in makeup, hair styling, wardrobe selection, and accessorizing, but also to understand the cultural character of each bridal style they learn. In this context, bridal makeup learning plays a strategic role in developing work competency and preserving local cultural heritage (Arlinawati & Daryusti, 2025; Lestari & Saripah, 2020).

One of the local bridal makeup styles that is important to be introduced to Prospective Makeup Artists is Semarangan bridal makeup. Semarangan bridal makeup has unique visual and cultural value

because it developed in Semarang society, which is urban, open, and multicultural (Putranto, 2026). The character of Semarang bridal makeup reflects the combination of Javanese, Chinese, Arabic, and Malay cultural elements, representing the history of cultural encounters and the local identity of Semarang society (Amaruli et al., 2021; Mutimmatul et al., 2022). Therefore, Semarangan bridal makeup cannot be understood solely as a form of traditional makeup but also as a local cultural heritage with historical, aesthetic, and social values (Krisnawati et al., 2024). Semarangan bridal makeup was selected as a research context due to its strong local characteristics while being less popular than many other bridal makeup styles. The multicultural uniqueness contextualizes the study of local cultural heritage integration into the vocational learning of prospective makeup artists.

However, students' introduction to Semarangan bridal makeup is relatively limited. In bridal makeup training, students become more familiar with popular bridal styles, including Solo, Yogyakarta, Sundanese, and modern styles. Based on the initial identification of this program, most students knew little about Semarangan bridal makeup. The condition revealed that Semarangan bridal makeup has not received sufficient learning space, including historical context, visual character, makeup techniques, wardrobe, accessories, and cultural significance.

The limitations are an important issue because the preservation of local bridal makeup cannot be achieved solely through visual documentation or cultural narratives (Hendra, 2023; Nagara & Nurhajati, 2022). In the beauty education program, preservation could be carried out through the learning process, which enables students to directly identify, understand, practice, reflect on, and document local bridal makeup (Hung et al., 2021; Zabulis et al., 2023). In this way, students not only obtain knowledge about Semarangan bridal makeup but also experience the cultural inheritance process through vocational practice.

The Semarangan bridal makeup learning requires an approach that aligns with the characteristics of practical skills. Learning that focuses solely on theoretical explanations or brief demonstrations is insufficient to fully develop students' competence (Adhikari, 2024; Rosario, 2025). Students need to be involved in concrete learning experiences, from observing visual examples, discussing cultural elements, understanding makeup concepts, conducting guided practice, receiving feedback, and preparing a portfolio (Wilson, 2022). These processes are important for students in relating cultural knowledge with technical skills as prospective makeup artists.

The experiential learning approach is relevant to Semarangan bridal makeup learning because it centers experience in the learning process (Lusiana et al., 2025). Through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation, students receive learning opportunities through experiencing, observing, understanding, attempting, and reflecting processes (Cheng et al., 2019; Tegeh et al., 2020). In the context of bridal makeup, this approach helps students understand Semarangan bridal makeup not only as a visual object but also as a cultural practice that demands technical precision, aesthetic sensitivity, and an understanding of local values.

Furthermore, experiential learning could be positioned as an empowering strategy for Prospective Makeup Artists (Ihsani et al., 2025; Sarah et al., 2026). In this study, empowerment is defined as strengthening students' capacity to acquire cultural knowledge, practical skills, self-confidence, and initial readiness to enter the makeup artist profession (Peng & Hwang, 2021). Through Semarangan bridal makeup training, students develop culturally rooted makeup skills, prepare a portfolio, and understand how to develop makeup services that reflect cultural identity and values.

Therefore, Semarangan bridal makeup learning based on experiential learning has double contributions. On the one hand, this program supports the strengthening of the vocational competence of prospective makeup artists. On the other hand, this program also encourages the preservation of local cultural heritage through active, reflective, and contextual educational practices. This

contribution aligns with the agenda of sustainable development, especially in quality education and the preservation of cultural heritage in the local community. Based on the description, the study was designed to describe the capacity-strengthening process of prospective makeup artists through experiential learning grounded in local cultural heritage in the learning of Semarangan bridal makeup. This study focused on the implementation of learning stages, the improvement of students' knowledge, the strengthening of practical skills, the development of cultural awareness, and portfolio contributions to the vocational readiness of Prospective Makeup Artists.

METHOD

This vocational learning-based empowerment program used experiential learning to strengthen prospective makeup artists' capacity to understand, practice, reflect on, and document Semarangan bridal makeup as part of local cultural heritage (Carale et al., 2026; Mann & Nelson, 2020; Roland, 2017). In this program, empowerment could be operationally understood as the capacity strengthening of Prospective Makeup Artists, including cultural knowledge, practical makeup skills, cultural awareness, students' responses, and portfolio preparation as initial evidence of vocational readiness.

The program was implemented for 50 students in the Beauty Education Program, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Negeri Semarang, currently enrolled in the Bridal Makeup subject. Semarangan bridal makeup was chosen as a thematic learning unit for the Javanese Bridal Makeup subject because the learning materials cover various local bridal styles. The material selection was also based on the importance of reintroducing Semarangan bridal makeup as a local cultural identity that students are largely unaware of. Data were collected through a pre-test and post-test, a learning process observation sheet, a makeup practice assessment rubric, a cultural awareness questionnaire, a student response questionnaire, a written reflection sheet, short interview guidelines, and a portfolio assessment rubric (Sulistyo et al., 2020).

The program was conducted in the Makeup Laboratory from 16 to 30 April 2026. The program was implemented over three meetings, each lasting 300 minutes. The activity plan was arranged with reference to the experiential learning stages, i.e., concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, active experimentation, and final reflection, as given in Table 1.

Table 1. Program Implementation

Meeting	Duration	Activity Focus	Stages of Experiential Learning
Meeting 1	300 minutes	Introduction to Semarangan bridal makeup, pre-test, picture observation, video, visual illustration, and initial discussion	Concrete experience and observation of initial reflection
Meeting 2	300 minutes	Strengthening of makeup technique concept, wardrobe, accessories, hairstyles, demonstration, and guided practice	Reflective observation and abstract conceptualization
Meeting 3	300 minutes	Complete practice of Semarangan bridal makeup, correction, documentation, post-test, questionnaire, written reflection, and arrangement of simple portfolio	Active experimentation and final reflection

Program implementation was started with the concrete experience stage. Students were introduced to Semarangan bridal makeup through an initial explanation, pictures, a video, visual illustrations, wardrobe, accessories, and a demonstration. This stage aimed to provide students with

initial experience to understand the visual character and cultural value of Semarangan bridal makeup. Furthermore, during the reflective observation stage, students were directed to discuss visual elements, compare Semarangan bridal makeup with other bridal styles, and reflect on the cultural values it conveys.

In the abstract conceptualization stage, students received conceptual strengthening on makeup techniques, color selection, face analysis, hairstyles, wardrobes, accessories, visual characteristics, and the cultural values of Semarangan bridal makeup. Afterward, in the active experimental stage, students conducted guided practice on Semarangan bridal makeup. Students received feedback, revised practical results, documented the products, and prepared simple portfolios. The final stage was the learning reflection, which aimed to understand students' experiences, cultural awareness, practical challenges, and initial readiness as prospective makeup artists.

A practical rubric was employed to assess students' skills in Semarangan bridal makeup. The assessed aspects included the preparation of tools and materials, workplace hygiene, makeup technique, hairstyle, wardrobe, accessories, the suitability of Semarangan bridal makeup to the character, alignment of the final appearance, punctuality, independence, and work attitude. A questionnaire on cultural awareness was applied to measure the understanding, appreciation, conservation concern, and vocational relevance of Semarangan bridal makeup. A questionnaire was administered to determine students' perceptions of learning benefits, practical difficulties, cultural interpretations, and their readiness as prospective makeup artists. Written reflections and short interviews were used to deepen the data on the learning experience, practical difficulties, cultural interpretations, and students' readiness as prospective makeup artists. The portfolio was used as evidence of attainment, process documentation, and initial readiness for students in bridal makeup.

Instrument validity was assessed through content validity involving three validators: experts in bridal makeup, vocational learning, and learning assessment. The assessed aspects included indicator suitability, item clarity, aspect relevance, and instrument suitability to the indicators of capacity strengthening of prospective makeup artists. It was shown that all instruments were very valid. The pre-test and post-test of knowledge reached Aiken's V index of 0.87, the observation sheet of the learning process was 0.89, the makeup practical rubric was 0.91, the questionnaire of cultural awareness was 0.88, the questionnaire of students' response was 0.86, the written reflection sheet was 0.87, the short interview guideline was 0.86, and the portfolio rubric was 0.90. The quantitative instrument reliability also showed adequate results, i.e., KR-20 of 0.82 for the pre-test and post-test, Cronbach's alpha of 0.85 for the observation sheet, 0.89 for the cultural awareness questionnaire, and 0.90 for the students' response questionnaire. Meanwhile, the reliabilities of the makeup practical rubric and portfolio rubric were 0.88 and 0.86, respectively, as indicated by ICC values. The qualitative instruments consisted of written reflections and a short interview; data reliability was strengthened through the consistency of the question guides, the suitability of the themes to the activities' focus, and triangulation with quantitative results.

Quantitative data were descriptively analyzed through averages, percentages, and achievement categories. Pre-test and post-test results were compared to determine the improvement of students' knowledge before and after the program. A descriptive analysis was used in this study to describe students' empowerment after the learning session. The comparison of results before and after the program served as a basis for examining changes in students' knowledge of Semarangan bridal makeup. In the meantime, the achievement percentage was applied to indicate engagement level, practical skills, cultural awareness, students' response, and portfolio quality in a more readable way.

Given that the descriptive evaluation design in this study lacked a comparison group and inferential statistical analysis, the results were interpreted as descriptive changes and tendencies in students' achievement during the program. Therefore, the findings are not intended to state the causal

effect of experiential learning but to describe the strengthening of knowledge, practical skills, cultural awareness, learning response, and vocational readiness of students after the program. The design was selected because the program was intended primarily to describe program achievement in context rather than to compare inter-treatment effectiveness. Therefore, the interpretation focused on the tendency for students' capacity to strengthen during Semarangan bridal makeup learning.

The percentage results were then interpreted into achievement categories: very good, good, moderate, poor, and very poor. Qualitative data obtained from written reflection and short interviews were thematically analyzed. Analysis was conducted to identify the main themes related to the learning experience, cultural understanding, practical challenges, self-confidence, and vocational readiness of prospective makeup artists. The thematic analysis was applied to reinforce the explanation of the quantitative results through students' direct experience. The arising themes were then used to understand students' meaning regarding the learning process, practical challenges, and their readiness as prospective makeup artists.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The empowerment activity was conducted through experiential learning on Semarangan bridal makeup. Initial identification was conducted to investigate students' recognition of Semarangan bridal makeup and their initial interest in traditional bridal makeup. Preliminary data showed that 39 students (78%) were unfamiliar with Semarangan bridal makeup, while 11 students (22%) were familiar with it. This finding indicated that Semarangan bridal makeup has not been well established among the prospective makeup artists, even though they enrolled in a program directly related to makeup. The condition revealed clear empowerment needs. General makeup skills alone are not enough to prepare Prospective Makeup Artists. Various local bride makeup styles need to be introduced due to the cultural values and vocational potential. The initial introduction to Semarangan bridal makeup suggested that makeup education should make more space for local cultural heritage, especially local bride styles that are less popular than those of Solo, Yogyakarta, Sundanese, or modern bride styles.

In addition to low recognition of Semarangan bridal makeup, the data on students' initial interest also indicated a need for a more engaging learning approach and for direct experience. Based on the initial interest, 17 students (34%) showed high interest in traditional makeup, 25 students (50%) were at a moderate level of interest, while 8 students (16%) were in the low category of interest. The data showed that most students had initial interest; however, it was not fully established. Therefore, hands-on, visual, reflective, and practical learning is important for increasing students' interest and broadening their understanding of culture-based bridal makeup. In the context of empowerment, the initial profile serves as an important foundation. The empowerment of prospective makeup artists is not only about improving technical skills but also about strengthening knowledge, interest, cultural awareness, and self-confidence to learn and develop local makeup as part of professional competence.

Implementation of Experiential Learning-based Learning

Learning about Semarangan bridal makeup was conducted through experiential learning stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. In this program, the process observation focused on three stages that required direct observation of students' involvement: concrete experience, reflective observation, and active experimentation. The stage of abstract conceptualization was analyzed through improvements in pre-test and post-test results, while the final reflection was analyzed through a questionnaire, written

reflection, a short interview, and a portfolio. Table 2 displays the observation results of the experiential learning-based learning process.

Table 2. Results of Observation on Experiential Learning-based Learning Process

Stages of Experiential Learning	Observed Aspects	Maximal Score	Average Score	Percentage	Category
Concrete experience	Attention to the material, observation ability of visual examples, and interest in Semarangan bridal makeup	12	10.65	88.75%	Very Good
Reflective observation	Discussion participation, ability to recognize distinctive elements, and ability to relate makeup to cultural values	12	10.20	85.00%	Good
Active experimentation	Involvement in practice, independence, ability to receive feedback, and professional attitude	16	14.70	91.87%	Very Good
Total		40	35.55	88.87%	Very Good

The observation results revealed that the implementation of experiential learning was rated very good, with a total achievement of 88.87%. The achievement showed that students were actively involved in the learning process, especially when the learning provided space for direct experience, visual observation, discussion, practical work, and reflection. This finding aligns with the experiential learning framework, which holds that direct experience is fundamental to the formation of knowledge and skills. In this approach, students not only receive information but also develop understanding through observation, reflection, concept formulation, and retrying in the practical work. This result also supports Rahmi (2024) and Seh et al. (2024), who found that concrete experience and observation activities were associated with increased learning involvement and helped students develop conceptual understanding more meaningfully. In the context of bridal makeup, experiential learning stages are relevant because the developed competence is not only cognitive but also visual, technical, reflective, and applicative.

The highest achievement was obtained in the active experimentation stage, i.e., 91.87%. It revealed that students were most engaged when allowed to conduct direct makeup practice, receive feedback, revise their work, and document results. This finding strengthened the idea that learning bridal makeup could not depend solely on theoretical explanations. As a vocational skill, makeup requires practical skills that enable students to relate concepts, techniques, aesthetics, and work attitude in real-life situations. In the concrete experiences stage, the 88.7% achievement indicated that students showed high levels of attention and interest when introduced to Semarangan bridal makeup through pictures, videos, visual examples, wardrobe, accessories, and an initial demonstration. This stage was an important entry point because previously most students were unfamiliar with Semarangan bridal makeup. Through concrete experiences, students obtained an initial description of the visual characteristics, colors, shapes, accessories, and distinctive appearance of Semarangan bridal

makeup. In the meantime, the reflective observation stage achieved 85% in the good category. This achievement showed that students began to recognize the specific elements of Semarangan bridal makeup and to appreciate the value of local culture. However, this achievement also indicated that cultural reflection still needs guidance. Students do not automatically read the relationship between visual form and cultural meaning. Therefore, lecturers must guide the discussion so that students not only assess makeup from a beauty perspective but also understand local identity, cultural history, and the symbolic value inherent in local bridal makeup. The illustration of students' practice is displayed in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Students Practicing Semarangan bridal makeup

Overall, the experiential learning component of this program served as a bridge between cultural knowledge and practical skills. Students were not only introduced to Semarangan bridal makeup as course material but also allowed to experience a more complete learning process through observing, discussing, trying, revising, and reflecting. This process is the core of empowering prospective makeup artists.

The Improvement of Students' Knowledge about Semarangan bridal makeup

Students' knowledge was measured through a pre-test and post-test. The test was given to determine students' understanding of Semarangan bridal makeup as local cultural heritage, the visual elements of makeup, cultural values, and their relevance to prospective makeup artists. The results are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of Students' Knowledge Pre-test and Post-test

Component	N	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Average	Category
Pre-test	50	45	78	60.75	Moderate
Post-test	50	76	100	88.50	Very Good
Average Difference	50	-	-	27.75	Increased

Pre-test results showed that students' initial knowledge averaged 60.75, placing them in the moderate category. This score indicated that, prior to the program, students had basic knowledge of general bridal makeup but lacked a strong understanding of the unique characteristics of Semarangan bridal makeup. This condition was consistent with initial data indicating that most students were unfamiliar with Semarangan bridal makeup. After participating in experiential learning, the average post-test score was higher, i.e., 88.5 in the very good category. The average difference of 27.75 indicated positive descriptive changes in students' knowledge after the program. However, the absence of an inferential statistical test and comparison group needs more careful interpretation, as it was an indicator of knowledge strengthening rather than definitive evidence of learning effectiveness.

Students' knowledge improvement was also related to the significance of local cultural-based learning in vocational education. Knowledge of local bridal makeup does not only cover the name, form, and visual elements, but also the cultural context that shapes the makeup style. This result is consistent with previous studies that emphasize that bridal makeup can reinforce cultural values in vocational education (Lestari & Saripah, 2020; Wahjuningsih et al., 2024). Therefore, the knowledge improvement in this program indicated that Semarangan bridal makeup could serve as a learning resource to expand cultural insight and strengthen the competency base of prospective makeup artists.

The increase in knowledge not only demonstrates students' greater knowledge but also indicates a shift in understanding, from general knowledge about bridal makeup to a more specific understanding of the characteristics of Semarangan bridal makeup (Pallant et al., 2026). Students started to recognize the visual elements, hairstyle, wardrobe, accessories, color, and display alignment shaping the identity of Semarangan bridal makeup. In the experiential learning framework, the improvement could be understood as the result of a learning process that is not only cognitive but also visual and practical (Sarannee, 2024). Students gain initial experience through observation, reflect on the observed elements, receive concept reinforcement, and test their understanding through practical work (Wijnen-Meijer et al., 2022). Therefore, knowledge is not only acquired through lecturer explanation but also developed through students' engagement in the overall learning process (Schneider & Simonsmeier, 2025).

For Prospective Makeup Artists, this enhanced knowledge provides an important foundation for the development of vocational competence. A makeup artist not only needs to create attractive looks but also to understand makeup characteristics. In the context of Semarangan bridal makeup, understanding local cultural elements is important so that students do not simply imitate visual appearance but also maintain the unique characteristics and cultural value. This understanding also helps students present bridal makeup more responsibly, as each visual element represents local identity. Therefore, cultural knowledge becomes an important part of professional competence in local heritage-based bridal makeup services.

Reinforcement of Practical Skills of Prospective Makeup Artists

Students' practical skills were assessed using a rubric for Semarangan bridal makeup. The rubric covers the preparation of tools and materials, workplace hygiene, makeup technique, hairstyle, wardrobe, accessories, suitability of the Semarangan bridal makeup character, alignment of final appearance, punctuality, independence, and work attitude. The assessment results revealed that practical skills were in the good category, with an average of 85.42%. This achievement indicated that students were able to apply the knowledge they had gained during the practical session on Semarangan bridal makeup. The results also showed that experience-based learning strengthened the relationship between concept understanding and practical skills.

This result supports the view that vocational skills learning requires students' direct involvement in the practical process. In the makeup field, skill proficiency is not developed solely through theoretical explanations or short demonstrations; it requires practice, correction, feedback, and repetition. This result aligns with previous studies demonstrating that experience and hands-on practice significantly contribute to skill readiness (Bhila & Niswaty, 2026; Rosario, 2025). In the context of bridal makeup, this is also in accordance with Josua et al. (2025), which placed bun practice and bridal makeup as professional competencies that need to be assessed through clear practice instruments. Therefore, students' skill development in this program suggests that experiential learning can reinforce practical competence more effectively.

The highest achievement was in the preparation aspect of tools, materials, and workplace hygiene, at 90.00%. It indicated that students had good practical readiness in preparing equipment, keeping tools clean, focusing on material suitability, and providing an orderly work area. In the makeup field, workplace hygiene is an important part of professional attitude because it is related to safety, model comfort, and service quality. Aspects of work attitude, independence, and punctuality also reached high achievement, i.e., 89.50%. This achievement indicated that students were adequately able to follow the work stages, receive direction, complete the task, receive feedback, and manage practical time. Work attitudes of accuracy, neatness, persistence, and responsibility are important aspects in developing the professional makeup artist of the future.

In terms of makeup technique, students achieved 85.50% in the good category. Students could apply basic makeup techniques, color selection, face-shape adjustment, and appearance arrangement that support the Semarangan bridal makeup character. Nevertheless, this aspect could be strengthened, especially in technical finesse, the proportion of eye and lip makeup, color gradation, and makeup harmony with the overall bridal appearance. The relatively lower achievement of 81.50% was observed in hairstyle, wardrobe, and accessories, while the character suitability of Semarangan bridal makeup achieved a score of 82.00%. Although placed in a good category, both aspects indicated that students still need guidance in achieving complete visual unity. Local bridal makeup not only demands makeup skills but also the ability to harmoniously integrate face makeup, hairstyle, wardrobe, accessories, color, proportion, and cultural character.

This finding suggests that the empowerment of prospective makeup artists should encompass two dimensions: technical skills and cultural sensitivity. Students need to create neat, aesthetic makeup; moreover, they need to understand the identity formation of Semarangan bridal makeup through each visual element. Therefore, the local cultural-based makeup skills are not only technical but also interpretative, as they demand the ability to read, maintain, and display the cultural characters appropriately.

Cultural Awareness, Learning Response, and Professional Relevance

Students' cultural awareness was measured using a questionnaire that assessed understanding, appreciation, preservation concerns, and vocational relevance. Students' responses to learning were also measured through a questionnaire, supported by written reflection and a short interview with three purposively selected students. The questionnaire results showed that students' cultural awareness was in the very high category at 89.05%. This achievement indicated that learning Semarangan bridal makeup not only enhances knowledge and skills but also fosters cultural awareness. Students began to understand that Semarangan bridal makeup was not only a bridal makeup style but also a part of local cultural heritage, embodying identity, aesthetics, history, and social value.

The high level of cultural awareness indicated that local heritage-based makeup learning could serve as a space for cultural education. This finding is relevant to Hung et al. (2021) and Zabulis et al.

(2023), underscoring that the preservation of cultural heritage should be linked to education, training, and skill transmission for the younger generation. In this program, students not only recognize Semarangan bridal makeup as a visual appearance but also begin to understand its associated identity value, aesthetics, and cultural sustainability. Thus, Semarangan bridal makeup learning could be considered a potential form of cultural preservation conducted through vocational education.

Students' responses to learning were very positive at 91.25%. This result suggested that students regard experiential learning-based learning as an interesting, active, and meaningful learning experience. Learning involving visual observation, discussion, demonstration, practical work, feedback, reflection, and portfolio preparation provides students with opportunities to learn more fully. The aspect of relevance to prospective makeup artists obtained the highest achievement of 93.00%. This finding revealed that students consider learning Semarangan bridal makeup to be a relevant skill for the makeup artist profession. Mastering local bridal makeup could be an added value for students by providing identity, uniqueness, and differentiation in local, culturally based makeup services. The results of a short interview reinforced the quantitative findings. A student stated:

> *"Initially, I was more familiar with Solo and Yogya bridals. After this session, I understand that Semarangan bridal makeup also has strong characters and cultural value."— M1.*

The statement indicated a shift from a limited introduction to a more open acceptance of Semarangan bridal makeup. Students started to recognize that local bridal style also has important visual character and cultural value to be learned. Another student emphasized the importance of hands-on practices:

> *"Hands-on practices make me understand more because not only viewing the pictures but also experiencing processes of makeup, hair styling, and adjusting accessories."— M2.*

The statement showed that practical experience helps students understand the relationship between visual knowledge, technical skills, and cultural suitability. Through hands-on practice, students not only observe final results but also experience the process of makeup application, hair styling, wardrobe, and accessories as an appearance unity. Meanwhile, another student stated:

> *"Portfolio of practical results makes me more confident as a prospective makeup artist."— M3.*

The statement revealed that the portfolio serves as evidence of achievement and a source of confidence. In the context of empowerment, self-confidence is important because students not only learn to complete their assignments but also develop an initial identity as prospective makeup artists. Overall, the questionnaire and interview results indicated that experiential learning in Semarangan bridal makeup was associated with strengthened cultural awareness, positive responses, and greater vocational relevance for students. Cultural awareness develops as students directly experience a learning process that combines cultural information, practice, and reflection. A positive response emerged because the learning was considered active and closely aligned with the profession's needs. Meanwhile, vocational relevance has strengthened, as students regard local makeup skills as a means of supporting work readiness.

Portfolio as Empowerment Evidence of Prospective Makeup Artists

Students' portfolios were used as evidence of work, process documentation, learning reflection, and initial readiness of prospective makeup artists. The portfolio included students' identity, concept

description, process documentation, final product documentation, explanation of cultural elements, personal reflection, and a conclusion to the work. The assessment results revealed that students' portfolios were in the good category, with an average of 84.75%. This achievement indicated that students could systematically document the practical results of Semarangan bridal makeup. A portfolio is not only a collection of practical results photos but also a medium for recording the learning process, explaining work concepts, and demonstrating the initial readiness of prospective makeup artists.

A portfolio in this program is relevant to authentic assessment in vocational education because it simultaneously presents students' process, product, and reflection. A portfolio not only presents students' ability to produce makeup work, but also their ability to document the process, explain concepts, and reflect on the practical product. This is in accordance with Wilson (2022), which emphasized the importance of observation rubrics and documentation in completely interpreting learning practice. The portfolio is evidence of competence development and an initial set of assets for developing a work-based professional identity. The highest achievements were in documentation completeness (88.50%), work visual quality (87.00%), and vocational potential (87.50%). These results suggested that students were able to compile process documentation and practical results effectively. In the makeup field, work documentation is important because makeup results are temporary and must be documented as evidence of competence. Good documentation could also support the development of students' professional portfolio. The results of the final practice are given in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Final Practice Results of Semarangan bridal makeup

The aspect of high vocational potential implied that the portfolio could be a valuable starting point for students in developing their identity as prospective makeup artists. Through the portfolio, students could demonstrate their practical skills, learning experiences, and skill development. The portfolio could also be used as self-evaluation material and as initial evidence of competence when students start to enter the workforce or to make up for service practice. However, the aspects of concept description and cultural elements received the lowest achievement of 81.50%. Although it is still in a good category, the result implied that the ability to produce visual products is not always accompanied by the ability to explain cultural concepts and meaning in depth. Some students have

achieved neat, attractive makeup results but still need guidance in formulating the work narrative, explaining the character of Semarangan bridal makeup, and relating the visual elements to local cultural values.

This finding is important because local cultural heritage-based makeup not only demands practical skills but also cultural literacy. Prospective makeup artists must be able to explain the application of specific elements, the development of visual characters, and the cultural values to be conveyed through their work. Therefore, a portfolio not only serves as technical documentation but also as a medium for reflection and cultural communication. In the context of empowerment, the portfolio serves as concrete evidence that students not only receive learning experience but also generate products that could demonstrate competence development. The portfolio bridges three key dimensions, i.e., technical skills, cultural awareness, and vocational readiness. Technical skills are reflected in the quality of makeup results; cultural awareness is reflected in the ability to explain cultural elements; and vocational readiness is reflected in the ability to compile work evidence for professional development.

Implication of the Empowerment of Prospective Makeup Artists

Overall, the program results suggested that experiential learning could be a relevant approach to strengthen the capacity of Prospective Makeup Artists in the Semarangan bridal makeup learning. Empowerment was evidenced in improved knowledge, strengthened practical skills, increased cultural awareness, positive responses to learning, and students' ability to prepare a portfolio as initial evidence of vocational readiness (Al Abri et al., 2024; Levy-Feldman, 2025). However, empowerment was understood as capacity strengthening in the context of vocational education, not as long-term socio-economic empowerment. The findings showed that students developed cultural knowledge, practical competence, cultural awareness, self-confidence, and portfolio-based vocational readiness as prospective makeup artists.

The novelty of this program lies in integrating experiential learning, preserving local cultural heritage, and strengthening prospective makeup artists' vocational competence through Semarangan bridal makeup training. Unlike makeup learning, which generally emphasizes technical mastery, this program positions Semarangan bridal makeup as a cultural learning resource, acquired through observation, reflection, practice, feedback, and portfolio documentation. This program contributes to the model's knowledge development, strengthening local cultural heritage-based vocational learning that not only develops technical skills but also cultural literacy, preservation awareness, self-confidence, and professional readiness among prospective makeup artists. Given the descriptive evaluation design, the findings could constitute potential evidence of positive trends and of students' capacity strengthening during the program. The results could not support a strong causal claim about the effectiveness of experiential learning. This is due to the absence of a control group and inferential statistical tests in the program.

Therefore, the experiential learning-based Semarangan bridal makeup learning could be considered as a potential empowerment strategy in integrating vocational skills, local cultural preservation, and professional readiness (Pamungkas et al., 2020; Rohiat et al., 2025). However, the program results also indicated that some aspects need strengthening, especially students' ability in hair styling, fitting wardrobe and accessories, maintaining the unique characteristics of Semarangan bridal makeup, and explaining cultural concepts and elements in the portfolio. Accordingly, the next learning must be conducted by providing more in-depth guidance on cultural literacy, bridal visual unity, and narrative writing for a local cultural-based portfolio.

CONCLUSION

The capacity-strengthening program for prospective makeup artists, based on experiential learning rooted in local cultural heritage, yielded positive descriptive results. The program results suggested an increase in students' knowledge from a pre-test average of 60.75 to a post-test average of 88.50. Students' practical skills were in the good category at 85.42%. Moreover, students' cultural awareness was 89.05%, their response to learning was 91.25%, and their relevance to future profession was 93.00%. This program affects the availability of a bridal makeup learning strategy, which not only strengthens students' vocational skills but also supports the preservation of local cultural heritage and the development of professional portfolios for prospective makeup artists. Therefore, experiential learning-based Semarangan bridal makeup training could be considered a potential empowering strategy that integrates vocational education with the preservation of local cultural heritage. However, further studies with a comparison group and statistical testing are needed to confirm its effectiveness.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

The authors declare that no generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were used in the writing process of this manuscript.

CONFLICTING INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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