

## Cultural Resilience in the Digital Era: A Qualitative Study on Traditional Music and Urban Adolescents in Makassar, Indonesia

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**ABSTRACT:** Globalization has reshaped cultural consumption among youth, particularly in urban centers where traditional music struggles to maintain relevance. This study investigates how globalization affects adolescents' perceptions and engagement with traditional songs in Makassar, Indonesia. This research, conducted in 2025, utilized a qualitative descriptive approach involving ten youth participants aged 15 to 19, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings indicate a dominant preference for global music genres such as K pop and Western pop, shaped largely by exposure through platforms like YouTube and TikTok. Traditional songs were minimally recognized and often regarded as outdated. However, youth expressed willingness to re-engage with traditional music if presented through modern digital formats. The study highlights the breakdown of intergenerational cultural transmission and the limited role of schools and families in cultural education. Nonetheless, digital media and participatory culture present viable strategies for revitalizing traditional music. By promoting hybrid musical forms, community based initiatives, and educational reforms, traditional music can be repositioned as a dynamic component of youth identity. The study contributes to cultural sustainability discourse, offering actionable insights for policy and practice in preserving musical heritage in urban, globalized contexts.

**Keywords:** Traditional Music, Globalization, Urban Youth, Digital Media, Cultural Identity, Participatory Culture .



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## INTRODUCTION

Globalization in the digital era has reshaped multiple aspects of life, including arts and culture. In Makassar, this phenomenon directly influences adolescents' music preferences and challenges the sustainability of traditional music. The proliferation of media ranging from streaming platforms and social media to cable television has transformed how urban youth consume music. Traditional music, once deeply embedded in ceremonial rituals and local cultural values, now faces marginalization amid the widespread popularity of global pop genres that are more accessible and

appealing to younger generations. In Indonesia, especially in urban centers like Makassar, this shift presents both a cultural challenge and an opportunity for revitalization.

Traditional songs such as Anging Mammiri, Pakarena, and Sajojo, historically rooted in the cultural fabric of Makassar, were once integral to communal identity and social functions. Since the mid 20th century, particularly after the 1960s, these songs have undergone a transformation, adapting to the entertainment sector through performances on formal stages and in recording media. While this evolution aligns with broader patterns of cultural modernization, it has not necessarily resonated with urban youth, who are increasingly drawn to globalized lifestyles and musical trends. This divergence signals a shift in cultural alignment and raises questions about the sustainability of traditional music within contemporary youth culture.

Studies on youth culture in Makassar reveal the overwhelming impact of cultural globalization in shaping lifestyle preferences, including fashion and music. Influences from Western pop and Korean wave (K-Pop) phenomena have significantly reshaped the musical tastes of urban adolescents, often at the expense of indigenous musical expressions. According to Khusna et al. (2021), exposure to international pop and hip hop via digital platforms such as YouTube and TikTok has contributed to a homogenized musical landscape where traditional music is perceived as irrelevant (1). Urbanization and the speed of modern life further exacerbate this cultural shift, diminishing spaces and occasions where traditional music can be meaningfully experienced (2).

This pattern of declining interest in traditional music is accompanied by the pervasive stereotype among younger audiences that traditional forms are "old fashioned" and disconnected from current aesthetic norms. As Khusna et al. (2021) assert, media algorithms reinforce these perceptions by prioritizing visually and sonically appealing global content, leaving little room for local traditions (1). Furthermore, educational institutions tend to favor mainstream music genres, often neglecting the inclusion of regional music heritage in their curricula (3). Consequently, younger generations grow up with minimal exposure to their musical heritage, resulting in diminished cultural literacy and engagement.

Despite these challenges, the historical trajectory of traditional music in Makassar reveals a pattern of adaptability. Between the 1960s and 1990s, cultural figures such as Andi Nurhani Sapada and musical groups like Orkes Baji Minasa pioneered the fusion of traditional melodies with Western instruments, creating hybrid musical forms that appealed to broader audiences. These initiatives exemplify the potential of cultural flexibility as a strategy for preserving musical traditions in an evolving sociocultural landscape.

In contemporary contexts, digitalization emerges as a critical avenue for revitalizing traditional music. The development of cultural applications such as Android based encyclopedias of Bugis ethnic knowledge has demonstrated the potential of digital tools to enhance access and revive youth interest in local heritage (4). Similar approaches could be employed to reintroduce traditional song lyrics and melodies through digital formats that resonate with modern audiences. According to Sakti et al. (2019), participatory culture enabled by social media allows youth not only to

consume but also to remix and produce cultural content, thereby fostering a hybrid identity that bridges tradition and modernity (5).

Technology alone, however, is insufficient. The role of curriculum and community engagement remains vital. Research on cultural globalization in South Sulawesi highlights the contributions of institutions such as the South Sulawesi Arts Council (Dewan Kesenian Sulsel) and youth focused cultural organizations in developing educational programs, performances, and media documentation aimed at maintaining the relevance of traditional songs in urban settings (6). These efforts reflect a pragmatic integration of tradition and modernity, offering a model for sustainable cultural preservation.

Given this backdrop, the present study seeks to examine the dynamics of music consumption and adolescent perceptions of traditional songs in Makassar. Specifically, it explores the following research questions: How do urban youth consume music in the digital age? What are their perceptions of traditional songs? What factors contribute to the declining interest in indigenous music? And what revitalization strategies via digital innovation, cultural education, or community engagement can be implemented to ensure the continuity of traditional music amid globalization?

By addressing these questions, this article aims to contribute to scholarly discourse on cultural sustainability and provide practical recommendations for cultural stakeholders. The study not only identifies the challenges facing traditional music in an urbanized, globalized environment but also illuminates potential pathways for renewal by aligning traditional forms with contemporary modes of cultural engagement.

## **METHOD**

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the impact of globalization on the existence of traditional songs among adolescents in the urban context of Makassar. Qualitative descriptive methodology was selected due to its ability to delve into the subjective meanings and social experiences of individuals regarding traditional music within a globalized cultural setting. As emphasized by Fadli (2021), this approach allows researchers to capture and present participant experiences authentically, particularly valuable in cultural studies where lived realities are central to the analysis (7). The research sought not only to document trends but also to uncover nuanced perspectives, enabling insights into both challenges and opportunities for cultural preservation.

### **Research Design**

The study utilized qualitative descriptive design as its foundation, aligning with its purpose of portraying participant views without imposing interpretive frameworks. This design is ideal for understanding cultural practices, attitudes, and transformations, especially among youth navigating the intersection of traditional and global music cultures. As noted by Khusna et al. (2021), this methodology provides a platform for participants to articulate their experiences in their own terms,

thereby offering in depth cultural insights that are grounded in social context rather than theoretical abstraction (1).

### Research Setting

The research was conducted in Makassar, South Sulawesi, a strategic urban center in Eastern Indonesia known for its rapid urbanization and technological development. Makassar has also historically functioned as a cultural hub, rich in traditional songs such as Anging Mammiri, Marendeng Marampa, and other Bugis Makassar musical expressions. However, the prominence of these cultural forms has waned among urban youth, making the city an appropriate setting for examining the intersection of global and local musical identities.

### Participants and Sampling

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that informants possessed specific characteristics relevant to the study's objectives. The inclusion criteria were: (1) aged between 15 and 19 years (representing adolescence), (2) residing in Makassar, (3) actively consuming music via digital or social media platforms, and (4) having at least minimal familiarity or experience with local traditional music. A total of ten participants were included: high school students, early year university students, and members of youth art communities. According to Pandve (2016), purposive sampling is effective in cultural research, as it enables researchers to target individuals with informed perspectives, ensuring data richness and relevance (8).

### Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out using three complementary methods: semi structured interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Semi structured interviews allowed for flexibility in probing individual perceptions, attitudes, and comparisons between traditional and global music genres. Interviews facilitated the exploration of how participants perceive, engage with, and value traditional songs.

Participant observation was conducted during cultural events, school performances, and youth community activities that featured traditional music components. These observations aimed to capture the real time reception and participation of adolescents in traditional music performances, thus grounding interview data in behavioral evidence. Documentation included field notes, photographs, and relevant digital content (such as social media posts or YouTube videos) that reflected youth interactions with traditional music. This multi method approach strengthened data triangulation and offered a holistic view of the research phenomenon.

### Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model, encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Interview transcripts were coded thematically to identify recurring concepts such as globalization influence, traditional music values, musical preferences, and revitalization strategies. Thematic coding ensured that insights were

systematically categorized, while also allowing for emergent themes to surface from participant narratives.

To ensure validity, the study employed triangulation of data sources and methods. Member checking was conducted to confirm the accuracy of interview interpretations with participants. Field notes and visual documentation were cross referenced with interview data to verify consistency. According to Fadli (2021), such methodological rigor is critical in qualitative research to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of findings (7).

Ultimately, this methodology enabled a comprehensive exploration of not only the decline in traditional music interest among youth but also the potential for re engagement through culturally relevant strategies. The design supports an inductive understanding of how globalization and digital media intersect with cultural identity, offering actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and cultural institutions aiming to sustain traditional musical heritage in urban youth populations.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This study involved ten adolescent informants aged 15 to 19 years residing in Makassar. The informants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation based on age, gender, educational background (public and private schools), and musical exposure. Of the ten informants, six were female and four were male. The group comprised five senior high school students, three early year university students, and two members of youth art communities who actively engage in cultural events.

Most informants reported regularly listening to music via digital platforms such as YouTube, Spotify, and TikTok. All participants indicated a higher familiarity with global popular music than with their local traditional songs. Only two out of ten had prior experience performing or participating in traditional music related events. These findings provide a nuanced view of how globalization influences youth musical preferences and perceptions.

### **Exposure to Global Music**

The majority of participants cited global pop genres such as K pop, R&B, and Western hip hop as their primary musical preferences. Eight informants recognized international artists like BTS, Taylor Swift, or The Weekend more than traditional songs from their cultural background. Their engagement with global music occurs predominantly through platforms like YouTube and TikTok, which act as amplifiers for international trends (1). One 17 year old female informant remarked, "I used to hear Bugis songs when I was little, but now I mostly listen to foreign music what's trending on TikTok."

The data confirms previous research suggesting that digital platforms personalize and prioritize content aligned with global trends, sidelining traditional music (2,8). Consequently, youth are

exposed early on to a musical landscape heavily influenced by global content, reshaping their preferences in ways that marginalize local traditions (1).

### **Limited Knowledge of Traditional Songs**

When asked about traditional songs, most informants could not name more than two titles from their cultural background. Anging Mammiri was the only song familiar to most, often associated with elementary school performances or childhood lullabies. One 16 year old male student admitted, "Anging Mammiri was a bedtime song when I was little; now I don't even remember the lyrics."

This limited recognition underscores a broader issue of cultural illiteracy, where youth are not exposed to their musical heritage either at home or in school settings (6). As noted by Khusna et al. (2021), early exposure to traditional music is crucial in shaping future appreciation (1). The lack of such exposure, as observed in this study, results in a disconnect that hinders the preservation of musical identity across generations.

### **Perceptions and Attitudes**

Participants generally perceived traditional music as outdated, slow, and aesthetically less engaging than global pop music. Three informants mentioned language barriers, noting that the use of local dialects made traditional songs difficult to understand. One informant stated, "The melody is soothing, but it doesn't fit with the vibe of today."

Nevertheless, two informants involved in youth art communities or cultural festivals expressed a more favorable view. They acknowledged the emotional depth and unique aesthetic value of traditional songs. This aligns with findings from Fadlilah et al. (2022), who argue that educational and participatory exposure can reshape stereotypes that paint traditional music as irrelevant (2).

Common stereotypes such as traditional music being monotonous or representative of older generations persist among urban youth (1). Media portrayals that highlight traditional music only in ceremonial or historical contexts further entrench these views, ignoring contemporary adaptations and innovations.

### **Digital Media as an Opportunity**

Despite the marginal status of traditional songs, informants saw potential for their revival through digital adaptation. They cited remixed versions of traditional music on TikTok and YouTube as more appealing. One informant said, "If a traditional song had a modern beat, I might be interested in watching or listening."

This response echoes broader trends noted by Khusna et al. (2021), who advocate for hybrid musical forms that blend local traditions with global aesthetics. Platforms such as YouTube provide an ideal space for this experimentation, allowing for wide reach and youth engagement (2).

Digital media also facilitates participatory culture, where users can remix and reinterpret content (5). Encouraging youth to co create digital content such as TikTok challenges or cover song competitions can reposition traditional music as a living, dynamic form of cultural expression.

### **Environmental and Educational Influence**

Observations at schools revealed that traditional music was included in the curriculum only in a limited, formal manner through art and culture subjects. No extracurricular activities focused on deepening students' involvement with traditional songs. Families similarly played a minimal role; most informants noted that their parents no longer sang or discussed traditional music at home.

These findings indicate a breakdown in intergenerational cultural transmission, both in educational and familial settings. Khusna et al. (2021) emphasize that schools and families must act as cultural mediators, especially in urban environments where traditional practices are not readily encountered (1).

Innovative educational models that incorporate both traditional and modern music elements have shown promise in bridging this gap (6). Similarly, involving families in cultural programs or community arts can reignite interest and contextual relevance among adolescents (9).

Together, these environmental factors highlight the necessity of integrated cultural strategies spanning schools, families, and digital spaces to sustain traditional music in a globalized world.

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate the powerful influence of globalization on the musical preferences of urban youth in Makassar. The dominance of global pop genres particularly K pop, Western pop, and trending digital music reflects a significant cultural transformation, where traditional music struggles to remain relevant in contemporary youth culture. This shift is not merely a matter of sonic appeal or lyrical content but rather the result of sustained exposure to global cultural streams through social media, streaming services, and digital algorithms that normalize global musical tastes.

The patterns observed resonate with the theory of cultural homogenization, which posits that local traditions are increasingly marginalized as global standards become normative (1). As urban youth become more familiar with international artists than their own regional music, a cultural identity crisis emerges one in which the local is rendered invisible by the pervasiveness of the global. The minimal exposure to traditional music in both educational and familial contexts exacerbates this phenomenon, creating a vacuum where cultural continuity is disrupted.

This also aligns with García Canclini's (1995) concept of cultural hybridization, where local traditions may persist but often do so in subordinated forms. Traditional music that fails to adapt to digital aesthetics or integrate into youth centered digital platforms is at risk of being perceived as obsolete. As such, globalization does not merely introduce new cultural options it redefines what is deemed culturally valuable, often to the detriment of indigenous forms.

Another critical insight from this study is the breakdown of intergenerational transmission of traditional music. Many informants were not introduced to traditional songs at home, and their school curricula provided limited and superficial engagement with local musical heritage. This deficiency underscores the importance of viewing cultural preservation not as a solitary institutional task, but as a shared responsibility among families, schools, and communities.

Traditional songs such as Pakarena and Mareng Marampa, rich in philosophical values and historical meaning, are in danger of fading into irrelevance unless concerted efforts are made to

revitalize their presence in daily life. Without meaningful cultural regeneration, these songs risk becoming mere symbols of a bygone era, disconnected from the lived experiences of the younger generation. This situation calls for a shift in strategy one that incorporates affective, social, and technological dimensions into the cultural transmission process.

Despite these challenges, the research also highlights a promising avenue for revitalization through digital media. Informants expressed a willingness to engage with traditional music if it was presented in a modern format, such as remixes, acoustic covers, or engaging TikTok content. This suggests that traditional music still holds emotional and aesthetic value for youth provided it is delivered in ways that resonate with their lived digital realities.

The digitalization of traditional music represents more than a change in format; it embodies a recontextualization of culture itself. As Jenkins (2006) argues, participatory culture allows individuals especially youth to become active agents in the creation and dissemination of cultural content (10). Through platforms like TikTok and YouTube, young people can remix, reinterpret, and even reinvent traditional songs, thereby breathing new life into cultural forms that might otherwise stagnate.

In this regard, collaborative initiatives involving local artists, cultural institutions, and youth communities are essential. Organizing digital challenges, school based competitions, and community workshops focused on remixing traditional music can foster both cultural pride and creative agency. As noted by Khusna et al. (2021), such participatory strategies are effective in bridging the generational and stylistic divides that often alienate youth from their cultural roots (1).

The literature on cultural hybridization supports this approach. Events that blend traditional and modern music not only make heritage more relatable but also provide a platform for intergenerational dialogue (2). Furthermore, festivals and community based performances that combine local traditions with contemporary genres attract wider and younger audiences, ensuring that traditional music evolves while maintaining its cultural integrity (6).

Additionally, educational reform is necessary to embed traditional music more deeply into school programs. Curricula must move beyond token inclusion and instead provide immersive and contextual experiences with traditional music. Project based learning, interdisciplinary modules, and digital integration can make traditional music education more engaging and impactful.

The concept of participatory culture, as emphasized by Jenkins (2006), is particularly relevant in this context. Engaging youth as co-creators rather than mere consumers fosters a sense of ownership and connection to cultural heritage. This engagement transforms traditional music from a passive object of preservation to an active domain of cultural innovation.

It is also vital to recognize the limitations of this study. With a sample size of only ten participants from a single urban location, the findings may not be generalizable to all Indonesian youth or even other urban centers in Sulawesi. Additionally, the study relies on qualitative data, which, while rich in detail, may benefit from being complemented by quantitative measures in future research to assess broader patterns.

This study is limited by the small sample size (ten participants) from a single city, which restricts generalizability. In addition, reliance on qualitative methods provides in-depth insights but does not capture wider statistical patterns. Future studies should expand to multiple urban and rural contexts, employ larger samples, and integrate quantitative data to validate trends observed here.

Nevertheless, this study offers valuable insights into the cultural dynamics at play in urban Indonesia. It affirms the urgency of rethinking traditional music preservation strategies in the face of globalization. Rather than resisting change, cultural stakeholders should embrace adaptive and innovative methods that align traditional values with contemporary forms of expression.

In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of integrating traditional music into digital and educational ecosystems to ensure its relevance and sustainability. By leveraging participatory culture, fostering hybrid forms, and encouraging intergenerational collaboration, traditional music can be revitalized and reimagined as a living heritage that speaks to both past and present.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study confirms the profound influence of globalization and digital platforms on adolescents' music preferences in Makassar, while also identifying opportunities for revitalizing traditional songs through hybridization, education, and participatory media. Future research should examine broader regional variations, involve comparative cross-cultural analyses, and test the effectiveness of digital interventions for cultural sustainability.

Practical implications call for schools, families, policymakers, and cultural institutions to actively integrate traditional music into curricula, community activities, and digital ecosystems. By fostering participatory and intergenerational collaboration, stakeholders can ensure that traditional songs remain relevant and dynamic in the lives of urban youth.

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