



Javanese Children's Songs Preservation in Orchestra: A Cultural Acculturation Study on Guntur Nur Puspito's YouTube Channel

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Abstract. The Korean Wave, or Hallyu, has become a global phenomenon in popular culture, driven by globalisation and increasingly embraced by Indonesian youth. In response, efforts to adapt traditional arts into contemporary formats have grown in the digital era, particularly through social media platforms. This study examines how Guntur Nur Puspito revives and revitalises traditional Javanese children's songs by transforming them into orchestral music and showcases them on his YouTube channels @gunturnurpuspito8107 and @orchestrajawaaofficial. Using a constructivist paradigm and a qualitative case study approach, the research aims to identify the cultural adaptation strategies employed by Guntur Nur Puspito and explore YouTube's role in preserving traditional musical arts within the framework of John W. Berry's cultural acculturation model. Results indicate that Guntur employs an integration strategy, blending European orchestral arrangements with Javanese gamelan instruments, traditional costumes, and original lyrics. As reflected in thousands of positive comments and high engagement metrics, audience responses show strong appreciation, emotional resonance, and increased pride in cultural heritage. The findings suggest that social media, particularly YouTube, can serve as an effective platform for revitalising traditional culture and engaging younger audiences in a globalised media landscape.

Keywords: Cultural Adaptation, Preservation, Cultural Acculturation.

1 Introduction

Cultural products that gain public acceptance and evolve into “new trends” tend to become part of popular culture, which rapidly spreads across the globe and may contribute to the erosion of local cultural identities (Dwiyanti et al., 2023). One of the most tangible examples of popular culture today is the Korean phenomenon that has triggered a wave of new global cultural trends known as the “Korean Wave” or *Hallyu* (Indrining-tiyas, 2022). This encompasses many South Korean cultural products, including K-Film, K-Drama, K-Pop, K-Fashion, K-Food, and K-Beauty. Over the past decade, Korean culture has captured Indonesian youth's attention and interest, influencing their lifestyles (Valenciana & Pudjibudojo, 2022). The dominance of global popular culture has significantly impacted the younger generation's cultural preferences. On one hand,

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this can lead to new cultural identities among adolescents, enriching the broader cultural landscape. On the other hand, it also presents a downside—the erosion of original local cultures that ought to be a source of pride (Handayani et al., 2024). Moreover, the increasing use of Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors for domestic products of Indonesia, while beneficial in enhancing competitiveness and driving growth in Indonesia's e-commerce sector, has simultaneously weakened the competitiveness of local artists and intensified consumerist tendencies among the public (Indriningtiyas, 2022).

This article focuses on how traditional Javanese songs, especially children's songs rich with meaning and moral teachings, gradually lose their presence. Known as *lagu dolanan anak*, these songs are integral to Javanese cultural heritage, traditionally passed down from parents to their children. However, they are increasingly rarely sung or even recognised by younger generations of native Javanese speakers. Amid this shifting cultural landscape, various creative initiatives have emerged to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity to preserve cultural legacy. A compelling example is the work of Guntur Nur Puspito, who has adapted *lagu dolanan anak* into contemporary musical arrangements and published them via the social media platform YouTube. His efforts represent concrete action to address the decline in children's awareness of these songs, particularly among native Javanese speakers. Guntur Nur Puspito's creativity offers a fresh innovation by fusing orchestral interpretations of Javanese children's songs with audio-visual presentations that combine contemporary orchestra and traditional Javanese musical instruments, shared through his YouTube channel.

Through the performance entitled *Kumandang Kidung Bocah*, uploaded on the YouTube channels @gunturnurpuspito8107 and @orchestrajawaofficial, as well as the official website of the Government of Yogyakarta Province (@tamanbudayayogyakarta2558), Guntur Nur Puspito endeavours to repackage traditional Javanese children's songs in a modern format within the framework of European orchestral music. By blending modern musical elements with traditional Javanese dances and melodies, he seeks to create a new musical formula that can capture the interest and attention of the younger generation, especially children, encouraging them to reconnect with and appreciate their cultural heritage. Nadhifah et al.'s (2021) research shows that YouTube is an ideal platform for enhancing adolescents' learning motivation.

This study explores the cultural adaptation strategies employed by Guntur Nur Puspito, focusing on visual, audio, and genre-mixing elements. It further analyses these strategies through the lens of cultural acculturation theory to understand how cultural negotiation and fusion occur, enabling Javanese children's songs to be more readily accepted by the younger generation, similar to other forms of popular culture. This case study is expected to offer valuable insights into the potential of social media, particularly YouTube, as a medium for revitalising traditional culture and engaging young audiences within a cultural adaptation framework. A subsequent study was carried out by Prakoeswa and Meinarno (2021) under the title of *Acculturation Strategies Among Young Adults in Indonesia*. Using a quantitative approach, the study examined acculturation strategies employed by individuals aged 18 to 40 in Indonesia. The findings revealed that young adults generally adopt an integration strategy with no significant gender differences, while marginalisation strategies show notable differences based on gender.

Drawing from the preceding text, the core research problems for this study are formulated as: 'How does Guntur Nur Puspito carry out cultural acculturation?' and 'What is the audience's reception of Guntur Nur Puspito's cultural acculturation?' The research will examine Guntur Nur Puspito's work in the Javanese Orchestra, particularly the YouTube video “*Kumandang Kidung Bocah*”. During this process, an analysis will be performed using John W. Berry's theory of cultural acculturation to provide answers to both questions. Successfully addressing these research problems is expected to reveal both the cultural acculturation process and the audience's reception of Guntur Nur Puspito's work.

1.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

In the process of cultural change and adaptation, a community group with modern, complex culture rich in cultural values will find it difficult to analyze every phenomenon and every aspect of its culture (Steward, 1973). Therefore, this research is limited to the acculturation process proposed by John Widdup Berry, a professor from Queen's University, Ontario (Lietz, 2023). Berry is a cross-cultural psychologist who studies acculturation and cross-cultural phenomena and believes that behavioral changes and stress characterize the acculturation process as an effort to adapt to interactions with a new culture until a stable psychosocial and sociocultural condition is achieved. Acculturation occurs due to long-term interactions between individuals or groups with different cultural backgrounds, leading to changes in the culture of one or more parties.

Berry also stated that this model is not necessarily static, as the acculturation process can vary significantly across generations and within individuals in the same generational group (Gao, 2024; Lietz, 2023). In subsequent studies, this process is not limited to interactions between only two cultures; rather, Berry also opened up the possibility of a mixing process involving many cultures without losing the original culture and without being diluted by the mainstream cultural current. In summary, Berry's cultural acculturation model offers a clear framework for understanding how individuals and groups manage their cultural identity and relationships when interacting with different cultures, emphasising two key aspects: the preservation of the original culture and engagement with the new culture (Lietz, 2023), as illustrated by the simplified model in Figure 2 below.

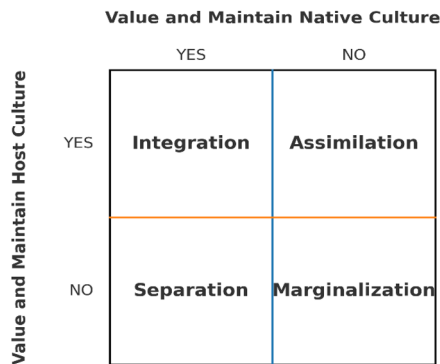


Figure 1: Cultural Acculturation Model by Berry (Lietz, 2023)

2. Research Methods

This research employs a qualitative approach using the case study method. A qualitative approach was chosen because it is considered the most appropriate for investigating problems that are still unclear, complex, and dynamic. The research focuses on cultural adaptation, which will be the single domain in the situation under study (Sugiyono, 2013). The underlying paradigm for this research is constructivism, which emphasises a deep understanding of the phenomena being studied from the actors' perspective and their social context. This allows the phenomenon, a social reality, to be viewed as whole, holistic, complex, dynamic, natural, meaningful, and reciprocal (Sugiyono, 2013). As Ridlo (2023) explains, the case study research method is a series of qualitative studies in social science conducted in-depth, in detail, and intensively on a phenomenon within a real-world event. Ridlo (2023), highlights the advantages of the case study method: it can present information on the relationships between variables and their processes more clearly, provide knowledge about the basic concepts of individual or group behaviour, and offer a basis for further research.

The study was conducted from March to July 2025, focusing on content published by Guntur Nur Puspito on the YouTube channels @gunturnurpuspito8107 and @orchestrajawaofficial. Primary data were obtained from selected video content based on three criteria: (1) videos with a minimum of 10,000 views to ensure significant audience reach, (2) videos that explicitly present the fusion of traditional Javanese musical elements with contemporary genres, and (3) videos uploaded between January 2022 and December 2024 to ensure recency and contextual relevance. The observation process examined visual aspects (costumes, settings, dance), audio components (music arrangements, instruments used, vocal style), and genre mixing techniques (integration of traditional Javanese elements with modern music styles). Secondary data were drawn from the audience comments section of the same videos to explore audience reception and response. The comments were analysed through thematic coding, categorizing them into themes such as cultural appreciation, fusion quality, emotional reaction, and criticism. Additionally, sentiment analysis was applied to classify the comments as positive, neutral, or negative.

To ensure validity, the researcher employed peer debriefing by discussing the coding results with two independent reviewers with expertise in ethnomusicology and digital culture studies. For reliability, an inter-coder agreement procedure was implemented, calculating Cohen's Kappa coefficient to measure consistency between coders. Any discrepancies in the coding results were resolved through iterative discussion until consensus was reached, ensuring that the findings are credible and dependable.

3. Research Finding and Discussion

Orchestral music first arrived in the Nusantara region in the 16th century with the arrival of European nations like the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain. These nations, primarily driven by the spice trade, introduced orchestral music to Nusantara's royal and noble families (Paledung, 2024). Later, during the Dutch colonial period, orchestral

music was considered "expensive" entertainment, accessible only to certain social groups (Bagaskara et al., 2023). Guntur Nur Puspito's Javanese orchestra project features children's folk songs (*tembang dolanan anak*), originally composed by prominent Islamic religious figures and *wayang kulit* puppeteers. These traditional tunes are given a fresh orchestral arrangement with new instrumentation. The songs included in this project are: **Padang Bulan** (composed by Sunan Giri); **Cublak Cublak Suweng** (composed by Sunan Giri); **Sluku Sluku Bathok** (composed by Sunan Kalijaga); **Gambang Suling** (composed by Ki Narto Sabdo); **Dayohe Teko** (composed by Ki Narto Sabdo); **Dhondhong Opo Salak** (composed by C. Soebiantoro); **Iilir Iilir** (composed by Sunan Kalijaga); **Pitik Walik Jambul** (composed by Ki Hadi Sukatno); **Kidang Talun** (composed by R.C. Hardjasoebrata); **Menthok Menthok** (composed by R.C. Hardjasoebrata); **Jaranan** (composed by Ki Hadi Sukatno); **Kodok Ngorek** (composed by H. Sya'id Samsudin); **Kembang Jagung** (composed by Ki Hadi Sukatno); **Prau Layar** (composed by Ki Narto Sabdo); **Lela Ledhung** (composed by Markasan).

As previously explained, John W. Berry proposed that in cultural interaction, individuals or groups can choose one of four acculturation strategies: Separation, Assimilation, Integration, or Marginalisation. With the separation strategy, a culture maintains its identity without interacting with other cultures. In this context, it would mean Guntur Nur Puspito would only perform Javanese music with no influence from modern orchestral music. Conversely, with the assimilation strategy, a culture sheds its original elements and completely replaces them with a new culture. So, if applied to this context, Guntur would only play orchestral music without including any Javanese elements. Consequently, there is the marginalisation strategy, where a culture loses its original identity and fails to adapt to other cultures, leading to social and cultural alienation. In this context, if Guntur's work neither adopts orchestral elements nor features original Javanese cultural elements, and subsequently receives poor reception from both the Javanese community and modern music audiences, it would represent a form of marginalisation. The last strategy is integration. This is a state where a culture retains elements of its original identity while interacting with and adapting to a new culture. The result is a new form that represents both cultures without negating either.

In the video "*Kumandang Kidung Bocah*" uploaded by Guntur Nur Puspito, we see a creative work that merges two cultures: Javanese and European. This is presented through movements and songs accompanied by grand modern orchestral music. This work showcases the fusion of these two cultures, which is evident in its audio and visual aspects and in the reception from the audience watching the video on YouTube.

In terms of audio, the integration strategy of Javanese and European cultures is evident in the musical arrangement, the instruments used, and the language and vocal style. Although the songs performed are Javanese children's folk songs (*tembang dolanan anak*) re-arranged with orchestral music, Guntur still maintains the original structure of the Javanese *tembang dolanan*. Guntur combines orchestral instruments, such as violins, cellos, clarinets, and others, with Javanese gamelan instruments, specifically the *kendang* and *g nder*. He skillfully re-arranges these children's folk songs in a European orchestral style without losing the distinct characteristics of Javanese culture. This approach manages to evoke both a sense of nostalgia and novelty towards Javanese artistry.



Figure 2: Gender player (with blangkon on his head)

For the visual aspect, the overall staging of "*Kumandang Kidung Bocah*" features a grand modern setup. This includes an elevated stage for the orchestral musicians and a lower stage (arena) for the dance and song performers. Modern lighting and a videotron backdrop that displays videos for the stage background exemplifies contemporary professional modern performance art direction and demonstrates an adaptation to digital technology.

Regarding costumes, the orchestral musicians wear European attire (suits), while the Javanese gamelan players wear traditional Javanese clothing (*beskap*). Similarly, the performers wear Javanese traditional attire such as *surjan*, *blangkon*, *batik* cloth, *kebaya*, and specific Javanese dance costumes for the "*Jaranan*" song, all complemented by dance movements characteristic of Javanese dance.

The grand stage design with orchestral instruments is an adaptation from modern performances with contemporary global cultural elements. However, the authentic Javanese culture, showcased through the costumes and dance movements, is still preserved. The integration carried out by Guntur is evident in the presence of Javanese cultural arts, specifically Javanese costumes and dances, presented within a modern stage setting. This shows that there is neither an erasure of original cultural elements nor a rejection of new cultures. This blend of original and new cultures, presented on the YouTube channel, demonstrates an acceptance of modern culture in today's digital era.

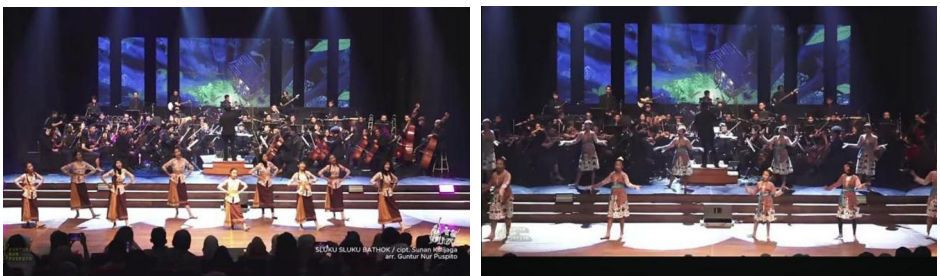


Figure 3&4: The stage setup features performers on both the upper stage and in the arena, all wearing distinctive Javanese attire

The performance in the YouTube video seamlessly blends European orchestral music with traditional Javanese music, offering a fresh take on Javanese culture that appeals to audiences of all ages and cultural backgrounds. The dynamic orchestral music,

which provides a dramatic flair, combines ethnic gamelan elements that preserve Javanese cultural identity. This combination creates the impression that Javanese songs (*tembang*) can adapt to European music. The harmonization of these two musical genres results in a more symphonic and expressive sound, making traditional Javanese songs appear grander and more elegant to listeners. This reflects Berry's integration strategy because it preserves the essential identity of Javanese music while simultaneously adopting and blending elements from European orchestral traditions, creating a cultural synthesis that values heritage and innovation.

From the video's comment section uploaded at the link here, there were 2,292 comments, almost all showing positive sentiment, as reflected in 15,000 likes and 603,422 views. While some did not express negativity, they offered constructive suggestions such as holding the performance periodically every year, staging it outdoors, organising performances in every region, and even performing at the Presidential Palace during the celebration of Independence Day on August 17th. Among the many viewers, some were Indonesian citizens residing abroad in countries like Australia, America, and Spain and foreign nationals such as Malaysians and Surinamese with Javanese heritage, all of whom positively appreciated the video. This reflects Berry's integration strategy because it shows acceptance and engagement from both the heritage culture (Javanese) and host/global cultural communities, fostering cross-cultural participation without losing the original identity of the music.

The comments from viewers predominantly praised Guntur's creative work as an intelligent way to educate children about the preservation of Javanese culture. Expressions like "this is true child education through culture," "proud to be Javanese," and "touched to hear this *dolanan* song in an orchestral version" indicate an emotional reaction to the content. Words such as "moved, touched, goosebumps, and crying" are frequently written in the comments, emphasizing that reawakening childhood memories with parents successfully evoked a deeper emotional connection. This reflects Berry's integration strategy because it demonstrates that adaptation to another cultural form (orchestral) can deepen emotional attachment to the heritage culture rather than replace it. Viewers' admiration is also reflected in the appearance of words like "cool, awesome, good, great, and amazing," followed by requests and hopes that such performances be more actively promoted and publicized nationally so that enthusiasts who do not wish to miss out can attend and enjoy similar performances firsthand. Appreciative comments were also directed towards Guntur's musical arrangement, where he acted as Arranger and Conductor. He successfully imbued the children's folk songs (*tembang dolanan anak*) with an "exceptional, sophisticated, grand, epic, fantastic, masterful, and elegant" feel, helping to reintroduce these songs to the younger generation. This reflects Berry's integration strategy because the creative adaptation expands the appeal and relevance of the heritage culture in modern contexts while maintaining its recognisable cultural roots.

Furthermore, there were comments from young users who described the content as "fresh," making them "proud of their own culture," and even calling it "Javanese K-pop." This indicates that the younger generation, avid fans of Korean culture, can also enjoy the orchestral arrangement of *tembang dolanan anak* presented in a European musical style. This highlights YouTube's role as a video-sharing social media platform, which can indirectly introduce, socialise, and promote authentic Javanese culture, specifically *tembang dolanan anak*, in a new format more palatable to current youth tastes.

4. Conclusions

In the strong current of global cultural trends, such as Hallyu, the creativity showcased by Guntur Nur Puspito is highly appreciated. He successfully repackaged Javanese children's folk songs (*tembang dolanan anak*) in a way that resonates with all demographics, especially today's youth and teenagers. Orchestral music, introduced by European nations in the 16th century, has remained a consumption for specific social groups until now. However, Guntur Nur Puspito's innovative blend of these two cultural genres has garnered attention and appreciation from children to adults. With YouTube acting as a catalyst, this effort is hoped to preserve *tembang dolanan anak* among the younger generation.

Nevertheless, future challenges remain. National artists must continuously develop new creative endeavours to introduce this integration format further and broaden its recognition among the wider public. Therefore, new and more intensive strategies are required in the digital communication era to ensure this cultural acculturation process extends beyond just *tembang dolanan anak*, allowing other indigenous regional arts to transform and gain acceptance among a youth generation heavily exposed to information technology advancements.

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