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The Role of Traditional Balinese Music in the Formation of Social and Cultural Identity: A Systematic Literature

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to examine the role of traditional Balinese music, particularly gamelan, in shaping the social and cultural identity of Balinese society amid the challenges of globalization, with a focus on the impact of ethnic tourism and innovations in gamelan composition. **Method:** Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach based on the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, this study analyzed 15 relevant articles selected from the Scopus and Web of Science databases. **Result and Discussion:** Key findings indicate that gamelan music plays a significant role in strengthening Balinese social identity, both in religious ceremonies and as a cultural symbol that preserves traditional values. However, ethnic tourism has a dual impact, preserving culture while risking the commodification of art, which diminishes the original meaning of traditional Balinese music. **Implication:** Innovations in gamelan composition are proven to be crucial for maintaining the cultural relevance of Balinese music without sacrificing its traditional essence. This study identified limitations in the methodology used, as well as challenges in applying the findings in real-world contexts, particularly regarding the influence of tourism. Recommendations for future research include the use of interdisciplinary methodologies and sustainable tourism policies to ensure the preservation of Balinese culture.

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INTRODUCTION

Balinese traditional music, particularly gamelan, has become an integral part of Balinese culture, serving not only as entertainment but also as a symbol of deep social and cultural identity. In recent decades, Bali has undergone significant changes due to the influence of globalization, which has brought challenges to the preservation of traditional culture, including gamelan music. According to Ruastiti, (2019), traditional Balinese music is an important element in maintaining social identity, even as the world continues to evolve rapidly. Globalization and modernization, reflected in the phenomenon of tourism, bring with them the challenge of commodification of art, where Balinese art and culture are often viewed as commercial products to satisfy international market tastes (Suharta, 2022). In this context, it is important to understand how traditional Balinese music survives and adapts within a constantly changing social and cultural context, as well as the impacts of such developments.

The main concepts related to this study are social identity and traditional Balinese music, particularly gamelan, which plays a crucial role in strengthening and preserving the cultural identity of the Balinese community. Gamelan music is not only used in religious ceremonies but also serves as a profound symbol in social life. Additionally, the concept of the commodification of art in ethnic tourism is relevant for analysis in this context. As explained by (Mok, 2019), Balinese traditional music often undergoes changes in meaning and function when traded for tourism, which reduces the spiritual and cultural essence of the music. This study aims to fill the gap in understanding how innovation in Balinese gamelan composition can maintain the cultural relevance of Bali, despite facing globalization and tourism.

Several internal and external factors influence the phenomenon of traditional Balinese music. A significant internal factor is Bali's tourism industry policy, which promotes traditional Balinese arts, including gamelan, as a major attraction for tourists (Clendinning, 2016). This has led to the commodification of art, which affects the authenticity of traditional music. External factors, such as globalization and technological developments, have also played a role in introducing Balinese music to the global market, although often with changes in form to suit market tastes. The results of research conducted by Mahira *et al.*, (2021) show how traditional Balinese art, despite facing the pressures of modernity, has survived by adapting some new elements without losing its original cultural roots.

Although a number of studies have discussed the role of traditional Balinese music in shaping social and cultural identity, there are still gaps in the literature discussing the impact of ethnic tourism on the commodification of art and cultural change (Pipitone & Raghavan, 2022). Previous studies have mostly focused on the role of gamelan in religious ceremonies or the resilience of Balinese culture against globalization, but few have examined how innovations in gamelan composition can transform and strengthen Balinese cultural identity amid the challenges of modernity and tourism. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining the impact of tourism and the adaptation of innovations in Balinese gamelan music.

The main objective of this study is to examine how traditional Balinese music, particularly gamelan, contributes to strengthening the social and cultural identity of Bali amid globalization and tourism. This study seeks to answer three main research questions:

- **RQ1:** How does traditional Balinese music, particularly gamelan, contribute to strengthening the social and cultural identity of the Balinese people amid the challenges of globalization?
- **RQ2:** What are the impacts of ethnic tourism on the sustainability and transformation of traditional Balinese music, particularly in terms of the commodification of art and changes in cultural meaning?
- **RQ3:** To what extent do innovations in Balinese gamelan composition play a role in maintaining the cultural relevance of Bali without sacrificing its traditional essence in the modern era?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach based on the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) to search for and review literature relevant to the topic “The Role of Balinese Traditional Music in the Formation of Social and Cultural Identity.” This approach was chosen because it provides a systematic and transparent framework for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing empirical evidence from existing studies, while helping researchers understand trends, gaps, and conceptual developments in the relevant literature, ensuring traceability and replicability in the study selection process. For literature search, leading scientific databases such as Scopus and Web

of Science were used. Scopus and Web of Science were chosen because they both index peer-reviewed journals with broad disciplinary coverage.

The keywords used in the search include a combination of terms relevant to the research topic, as follows:

- Scopus: ("traditional music" OR "cultural expression") AND ("identity" OR "social identity" OR "cultural heritage") AND ("role" OR "influence" OR impact)
- WOS: ("music" OR "traditional music" OR "art" OR "cultural expression") AND ("identity" OR "culture" OR "social identity" OR "heritage") AND ("role" OR "influence" OR "impact" OR "importance") AND ("Bali" OR "Balinese" OR "Indonesian culture" OR "South East Asia")

Boolean operators such as AND, OR, and NOT were used to combine relevant terms and filter search results to focus on articles closely related to the phenomenon of cultural identity and the impact of globalization or tourism on traditional Balinese music. This process was carried out in stages to ensure that all identified literature met the thematic and methodological relevance to the research objectives.

Strict inclusion and exclusion criteria are applied to ensure the quality and relevance of the analyzed literature. Inclusion criteria include peer-reviewed articles published within the last 10 years (2015–2025) that explicitly discuss Balinese traditional music in relation to social identity, culture, globalization, or tourism, and are written in English or Indonesian. Included articles must also provide substantial empirical data or conceptual reviews related to the issues under investigation. On the other hand, exclusion criteria include articles that have not undergone peer review (such as institutional reports or opinion pieces), articles that are not relevant to the main theme of the research, articles written in languages other than English or Indonesian, and articles that are not accessible in full text. The article selection process is conducted in four stages according to the PRISMA diagram: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion, resulting in 15 articles selected for further analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

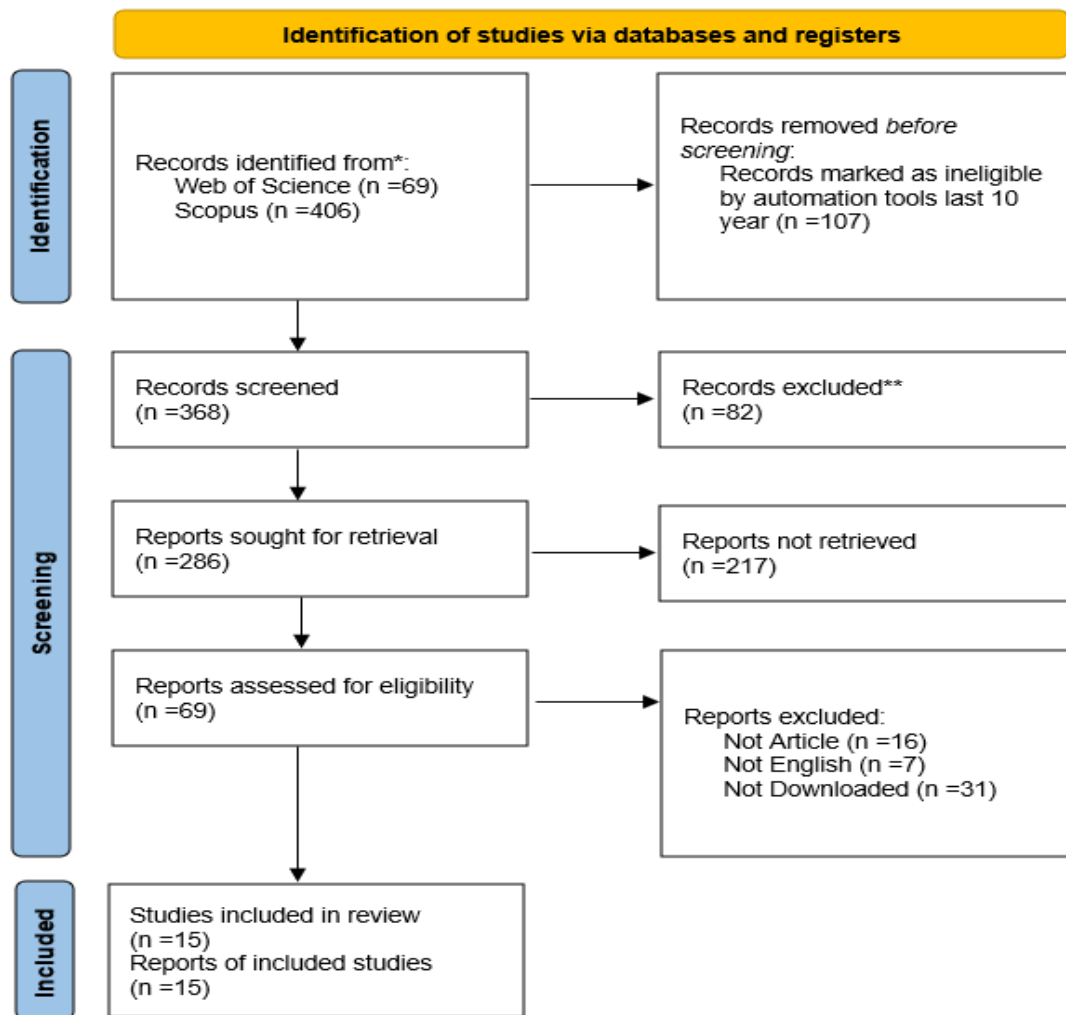


Figure 1. PRISMA Diagram of Study Selection

Figure 1 illustrates the PRISMA diagram article selection process found through systematic searches in several major databases, namely Web of Science and Scopus. The process began with the identification of relevant articles, where a total of 475 articles were identified from both databases (69 articles from Web of Science and 406 articles from Scopus). Next, during the screening stage, duplicate articles and those not relevant to the research topic were removed, resulting in 368 articles that met the initial criteria. During the eligibility stage, 286 articles were further evaluated through downloading and reading the abstracts, but 217 articles could not be retrieved or did not meet further criteria. Full-text evaluation at this stage resulted in 69 articles considered for further inclusion. Finally, at the inclusion stage, 15 articles relevant to the topic and meeting all inclusion criteria were selected for further analysis. The PRISMA diagram, which includes these steps, clearly visualizes how articles were

selected and screened based on topic relevance and scientific quality, providing a strong foundation for further systematic analysis.

Table 1. Literature Analysis Results

No	Article Title	Author	Methodology	Focus of Study	Key Findings
1.	Tourism Community Resilience Model in Bali	I. Praptika, Yusuf, & Heslinga (2024)	Qualitative, in-depth interviews	Bali tourism community resilience model	A local culture-based resilience model that strengthens social resilience through traditional Balinese culture.
2.	Urban Toys as a New Alternative Media to Promote Indonesian Culture	R C Oktaviani & Ichwan, (2018)	Qualitative, case studies, observation	Promotion of Indonesian culture through urban toys	Urban toys combine local culture and pop culture, relevant to the promotion of Balinese culture in the global market.
3.	Integrating Balinese Gamelan Music with Sensorimotor Rhythm Intervention	Ujianti et al., (2024)	Qualitative, ethnography, interviews	The use of gamelan for intervention in autistic children	Balinese gamelan supports brain synchronization and language development in autistic children.
4.	Strengthening Ideological Values through Pasantian Singing	Dimas Bayu Prakoso, (2022)	Qualitative, ethnography, observation	Strengthening identity through pasantian music	Pasantian strengthens Balinese cultural identity through traditional texts.
5.	A Balinese 'Call to Prayer': Sounding Religious Nationalism and Local Identity in the Puja Tri Sandhya	M Hynson, (2021)	Qualitative, interviews, sound analysis	The influence of Puja Tri Sandhya in strengthening Balinese religious nationalism	Puja Tri Sandhya creates a sense of Indonesian national identity through music and ritual.

6.	Innovation and Change in Approaches to Balinese Gamelan Composition	Sudirga, (2020)	Qualitative, descriptive analysis	Innovation in the composition of Balinese gamelan	Innovation in Balinese gamelan expands creativity while preserving the essence of tradition.
7.	The Role of Gamelan Jegog in Social Identity Formation	Komang & Gede Mahendrayana, (2023)	Qualitative, interpretive analysis	The role of Jegog gamelan in the formation of social identity	Jegog competitions strengthen social identity through vibrant social interaction.
8.	Gamelan Jegog: Cultural and Artistic Expressions in Jembrana	Sukerna & Setiawan, (2023)	Qualitative, text analysis	The transformation of Jegog gamelan in Jembrana society	Jegog gamelan has become a cultural symbol that strengthens social identity and artistic status.
9.	Genotypic Characterization of HIV-1 Isolated in Bali	S Q Khairunisa et al. (2018)	Observational, genetic analysis	HIV epidemiology in Bali	Although not directly related to music, it is important to understand the social context of Bali regarding health.
10.	Contestations in Balinese Gamelan: Jegog and Social Structures	Sukerna & Setiawan, (2023)	Qualitative, content analysis	Jegog competitions in shaping social structure	Mabarung Jegog strengthens social identity through competition and interaction among players.
11.	Kriya Bebal in Bali: Its Essence, Symbolic, and Aesthetic	Sciences, (2021)	Qualitative, observation, interviews	The function of kriya bebal in Balinese religious ceremonies	Kriya bebal preserves aesthetic and symbolic values in Balinese culture, despite the influence of globalization.

12.	A Balinese 'Call to Prayer': Sounding Religious Nationalism and Local Identity in the Puja Tri Sandhya	M Hynson, (2021)	Qualitative, interviews, sound analysis	The use of Puja Tri Sandhya in strengthening Balinese identity	Enhancing local and national awareness through traditional sounds and music.
13.	Is Meeting the Needs of Tourists Through Ethnic Tourism Sustainable?	Mayuzumi, (2022)	Qualitative, survey, statistical analysis	The impact of ethnic tourism on Balinese culture	The influence of ethnic tourism leading to the commodification of traditional Balinese culture.
14.	Bali Traditional Pottery as a Cultural Heritage on the Global Competition Era	Mudra, (2018)	Qualitative, interviews, observation	The sustainability of Balinese pottery in global competition	Highlighting how Balinese art and culture survive despite pressure from foreign products.
15.	Is Meeting the Needs of Tourists Through Ethnic Tourism Sustainable? Focus on Bali, Indonesia	Mayuzumi, (2022)	Qualitative, survey, regression	The impact of ethnic tourism on Balinese culture	Investigating the impact of tourism on the sustainability of Balinese culture and commodified traditional music.

Based on data extracted from selected articles, the scoping table presents important information about the studies analyzed. This table includes key elements such as author and year of publication, article title, and methodology used (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method). The majority of studies analyzed used qualitative methodology, with a focus on the role of gamelan music in Balinese traditional ceremonies and the social identity of the Balinese people. Many articles also highlight the impact of tourism on the sustainability of traditional Balinese music, emphasizing the commodification of art resulting from global market demands. A general trend that emerged from this analysis is how gamelan music functions not only as a cultural

symbol but also as a tool for overcoming the challenges of modernity and globalization. Overall, the articles analyzed demonstrate the importance of traditional Balinese music in strengthening Balinese social identity, both in ritual contexts and in everyday life, as well as in preserving cultural meaning amid the tide of globalization.

Continuing the interpretation of the findings in the scoping table, more attention is given to key findings related to the methodology used in the studies analyzed. Most articles apply a qualitative approach using interviews and participatory observation to explore how Balinese people experience and practice gamelan music in their lives. These articles often highlight how gamelan functions as a unifying tool in Balinese society and as a spiritual medium that reinforces traditional values. Additionally, some articles incorporate comparative analysis to evaluate changes in Balinese musical practices due to globalization and tourism, as well as their impact on Balinese cultural identity. The findings from these articles provide deep insights into how Balinese musical traditions adapt to social and economic changes, as well as how Balinese people strive to preserve the essence of their traditional music while innovating to remain relevant. These findings are highly relevant to answering the Research Questions (RQ), particularly regarding how gamelan music strengthens Balinese social identity and how innovations in gamelan composition contribute to the preservation of Balinese culture amid the pressures of globalization.

This study aims to examine the role of traditional Balinese music, particularly gamelan, in shaping Balinese social and cultural identity amid the challenges of globalization, as well as the impact of ethnic tourism on the sustainability and transformation of traditional Balinese music. This discussion section will outline the main findings presented in the results section and provide answers to the three research questions (RQ). Each subsection will link the findings to the research questions that have been formulated and provide an in-depth analysis relevant to the context of this study. Findings from the reviewed literature will be analyzed to answer how Balinese traditional music strengthens social identity, how ethnic tourism affects this music, and to what extent innovations in gamelan composition contribute to the preservation of Balinese culture.

RQ1: How does traditional Balinese music, particularly gamelan, contribute to strengthening the social and cultural identity of Balinese society amid the challenges of globalization?

Based on the findings identified in the analyzed articles, traditional Balinese music, especially gamelan, plays a very significant role in strengthening the social and cultural identity of Balinese society. Gamelan music not only serves as a form of entertainment but also as a spiritual and cultural symbol in various traditional ceremonies. This finding is in line with research by Komang Sudirga, (2020) which shows that despite the push for innovation in gamelan composition, its traditional essence remains intact. Balinese gamelan serves as a bridge between the younger generation and traditional Balinese cultural values, which is becoming increasingly important amid the influence of globalization (I. P. G. E. Praptika, Yusuf, & Heslinga, 2024). For example, in religious ceremonies, Balinese gamelan plays a central role in strengthening the sense of community, which is a collective identity of Balinese society (Wayan Sudirana, 2020).

Additionally, gamelan reflects the life cycle and spirituality of Balinese society, which is closely tied to Balinese Hindu teachings. Hynson, (2021) highlights the role of music in strengthening religious nationalism and local identity, particularly in the context of Puja Tri Sandhya, which uses gamelan music as a medium to convey spiritual and cultural values. This shows that gamelan serves as a tool to preserve and strengthen the social and cultural identity of Bali, especially in the face of globalization that threatens the sustainability of traditional Balinese values (Dimas Bayu Prakoso, 2022).

RQ2: What are the impacts of ethnic tourism on the sustainability and transformation of traditional Balinese music, particularly in terms of the commodification of art and cultural meaning?

Findings from the analyzed literature indicate that ethnic tourism has a significant impact on the sustainability and transformation of traditional Balinese music. As a cultural commodity, gamelan music is often adapted to meet the expectations of tourists, which has the potential to alter the original meaning of the music. Mayuzumi, (2022) states that tourism that relies on traditional Balinese culture often leads to the commodification of art, where gamelan music, which was originally

used in spiritual and traditional contexts, transforms into entertainment to meet tourist demand. This can diminish the spiritual and cultural value of gamelan itself, as highlighted in Sukerna & Setiawan, (2023), research, which emphasizes how traditional Balinese music loses its original meaning when adapted to global market demands.

However, some studies also suggest that tourism can serve as a tool for preserving Balinese culture, provided it is carried out in a wise manner that does not undermine its traditional essence. Mudra, (2018) explains that despite pressure to commodify Balinese art, some forms of traditional art can still survive, even thrive, with support from the tourism sector that promotes local culture. Thus, while ethnic tourism has negative impacts in some ways, it can also serve as a catalyst for the preservation of Balinese culture, provided there is a balance between innovation and respect for tradition (Siti Qamariyah Khairunisa et al., 2018).

RQ3: To what extent does innovation in Balinese gamelan composition play a role in maintaining the relevance of Balinese culture without sacrificing its traditional essence in the modern era?

Innovation in the composition of Balinese gamelan plays an important role in maintaining the cultural relevance of Bali in the modern era without sacrificing its traditional essence. Oktaviani & Ichwan, (2018) explain that many Balinese composers have begun to combine traditional elements with contemporary aesthetic influences to create gamelan music that is more relevant to the times. This innovation allows gamelan to continue evolving and adapting to the needs of the times without diminishing the cultural depth it contains (Yanko, 2022). For example, the use of modern technology in gamelan performances can attract the attention of younger generations, who are increasingly connected to the global world Antara *et al.*, (2024).

However, it is important to note that innovation in Balinese gamelan must be done carefully to ensure that its traditional essence is preserved. As explained by Bräuchler, (2019), although there are innovations in composition, these changes must be in harmony with traditional Balinese values so as not to fundamentally alter the identity of gamelan music. Thus, innovation in Balinese gamelan not only maintains the relevance of this art form in a global context but also strengthens the connection between the younger generation and their cultural heritage (Sunarya, 2021).

Some of the main challenges identified in the analyzed literature regarding the role of traditional Balinese music in shaping social and cultural identity are the challenges of integrating tradition with the demands of the global market. Ethnic tourism often leads to the commodification of art, which has the potential to diminish the authentic value of traditional Balinese music. Additionally, while innovations in gamelan composition can help maintain the cultural relevance of Bali, there is a risk of excessive changes that could undermine its traditional essence. To address these challenges, practitioners and companies can adopt an approach that prioritizes cross-sector collaboration, involving local communities in the process of preserving and innovating art. Thus, more effective strategies will include a balance between preserving tradition and innovation, as well as utilizing tourism to support, rather than alter, the cultural values of Bali.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that traditional Balinese music, especially gamelan, plays an important role in strengthening Balinese social and cultural identity, both through religious ceremonies and as a cultural symbol that preserves traditional values. The impact of ethnic tourism on traditional Balinese music is twofold: it can preserve culture but also lead to the commodification of art, which reduces its original meaning. Innovation in gamelan composition also plays a role in maintaining the relevance of Balinese music in the midst of modernity, although this must be done carefully to preserve its traditional essence. The main constraints faced in this study were methodological limitations, particularly in terms of the use of interviews and observations that were limited to the local context, as well as external factors such as the impact of tourism that influenced the application of findings in practice. For future research, it is recommended to use a more interdisciplinary methodology and broaden perspectives to address research gaps. Practically, it is important to develop sustainable tourism policies and cultural education programs to ensure the preservation of traditional Balinese music without compromising its essence.

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