

Dangdut Koplo as a Manifestation of Popular Culture In Indonesia

Dangdut Koplo Sebagai Manifestari Budaya Populer di Indonesia

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Abstract

One of the original works of Indonesians is dangdut music, more specifically, dangdut koplo. Dangdut music continues to grow, and the coming of dangdut koplo is accompanied by the human invention of information and communication technology, namely social media. This technology has succeeded in having a positive impact on the work of the nation, namely spreading dangdut koplo to all corners of the islands and even to the corners of the world. The objective of this simple piece of writing is to highlight a popular culture that occurs in Indonesia. One of the results of human thought, especially that of the people of East Java, in terms of art, especially music, can be a type of music that is light, pleasing to the ear, favored by people of all ages, strata, and social statuses, is able to eliminate all kinds of barriers in society, and can be an alternative form of entertainment. The objective of the study is to describe a new culture which emerged from the grassroot but it attracts international attention. The method used is the observation of communication phenomena that occur in society and literature study, which are then linked into propositions that can be used as subjects for the development of the scientific repertoire of culture and communication. It can be concluded that the emergence of dangdut koplo is clear evidence that everyone can produce a work that can be enjoyed by many people and can become a new culture in society that does not discredit previous works but instead strengthens and perfects previous great works.

Keywords : *communication, community, manifestation, popular culture*

Abstrak

Salah satu hasil karya asli nusantara adalah karya seni musik dangdut, lebih spesifiknya adalah dangdut koplo. Musik dangdut terus berkembang dan kemunculan dangdut koplo dibarengi dengan hasil karya manusia dibidang teknologi informasi dan komunikasi yaitu media sosial. Teknologi tersebut berhasil memberikan dampak positif terhadap karya anak bangsa yaitu menyebarluaskan dangdut koplo ke seluruh pelosok penjuru nusantara bahkan ke penjuru dunia khususnya seni musik dapat menjadi salah satu jenis musik yang ringan, enak didengar, digemari oleh masyarakat segala umur, strata, status sosial yang mampu menghilangkan segala macam sekat di masyarakat dan dapat menjadi alternatif hiburan. Tujuan karya ilmiah ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan suatu budaya baru yang muncul dari kalangan kecil namun berhasil menarik perhatian dunia. Metode yang digunakan adalah observasi fenomena komunikasi yang terjadi di masyarakat dan studi pustaka yang kemudian dihubungkan menjadi proposisi-proposisi yang dapat menjadi bahan untuk menambah khasanah keilmuan budaya dan komunikasi. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa

kemunculan dangdut koplo menjadi bukti nyata bahwa setiap orang dapat menghasilkan sebuah karya yang dapat dinikmati banyak orang dan dapat menjadi sebuah budaya baru di masyarakat yang tidak untuk mendiskreditkan karya sebelumnya tetapi justru memperkuat dan menyempurnakan karya-karya agung sebelumnya.

Kata Kunci: budaya populer, komunikasi, komunitas, manifestasi

Introduction

The more human civilization develops, the greater the desire for innovation (Kamensky & Boev, 2015). This shows that there is a breakthrough or renewal both in terms of ideas and in terms of cultural products. The results of human work do not appear by chance or blessing in disguise; their appearance is planned and expected. New findings emerge not only because of creativity but also because human needs increase. This also happens when constructing messages. Messages can be constructed in various ways to meet human needs.

The culture of a community group emerges as a form of community creation (Seramasara, 2017). Every emergence of a new culture provides new nuances as a form of human dissatisfaction with whatever has existed. Therefore, a culture does not stop but continues to metamorphose and develop. The old culture slowly becomes unpopular, and a new, more popular culture emerges. Thus, new cultures will emerge as long as there is human civilization.

The development of technology and communication is a form of cultural development. The way of communicating, both in sending and receiving messages, develops over time. Channels, means, and mediums for delivering messages also continue to change. Therefore, new cultures will continue to emerge either as a form of innovation or as a new invention to enrich the culture of a society, which is often known as popular culture or pop culture.

The term pop culture cannot be separated from communication. In this digital age, it can be packaged into a message that can be received by anyone, especially because of the development of electronic media. A work or culture can easily spread to all corners of the world in just seconds and become viral or famous. It's time for the viral to become famous. One of the trending and viral cultural works is a dangdut koplo song sang by an elementary school child at the Indonesian Independence Day celebration on August 17, 2022 at the Jakarta President Palace.

Dangdut koplo is the result of community art that has developed into a work of art that is not only enjoyed by certain circles but has become a nationally recognized work of art (Raditya, 2013) and even internationally (Fitriyadi & Alam, 2020). With this background, this paper highlights the work of a group of people who try to break something that has been considered conventional and rigid. New alternatives are created to give another color to a work of art. This Indonesian original is called dangdut koplo or dangdut pantura (north coast). This new style of dangdut koplo music is not only loved by Javanese people but by most, if not all, Indonesians from various islands.

If this simple article is related to communication theory, the phenomenon of dangdut koplo popular culture, which is actually a means of entertainment for the proletariat in the north coast area, is closely related to critical theory, especially Frankfurt critical theory, which emphasizes freedom (Luthfiah, 2018). In this theory, it is said that the main obstacle to freedom is ideology, something that is considered standardized (Prakoso, 2020). It is said that dangdut is an indigenous Indonesian music that developed in the 1960s and reached its heyday in the 1970s (Fitriyadi & Alam, 2020), (Raditya, 2013), (Tarigan & Saputro, 2021), (Weintraub, 2010).

The type of music, the instruments, the lyrics, and the language are standardized and tend to be similar in many ways. For example, conventional dangdut is characterized by the dominant sound of drums and serulis. The language used is Indonesian, and so on. Those who didn't conform to this standard were considered disrespectful, ruining the image of dangdut and disrespecting the work of previous artists. This establishment stifles creativity, especially the creativity of the youth (Raditya, 2013). There need to be breakers and movers who can show that there are still many forms of alternative music that can be developed because humans have freedom of expression. The discovery of something new does not mean killing existing findings or works. Instead, new findings enrich existing ones.

The clashes between the 'King of dangdut' and young dangdut singers famous for their *goyang ngebor*, *goyang itik*, *goyang gergaji*, etc. is an example that dangdut music is considered final and cannot be changed. There is no need for new variants. Freedom of expression is severely restricted, not to say banned. In fact, in this pluralistic country, freedom is guaranteed by the government. Therefore, certain groups of people tried to shift the rigidity. It is precisely the fringe groups that have the courage to go against the existing doctrine.

Methods

This paper is prepared using an interpretive qualitative approach. It is the result of an analysis of the communication behaviors of a society that continues to develop. It is certain that new things emerge for certain reasons, economic reasons or dissatisfaction of the people with what already exists. The rise of a new culture, in this case the koplo dangdut variant, was because people were fed up and they were trying to break things that were considered taboo, established, and standardized. Therefore, an interpretive approach was used to analyze their reasons for creating artworks that were far different from the existing ones (Setyaningrum, 2018). Data was obtained from a literature review to explore the emergence of new cultures and observation. The last is the observation of people's behavior with the emergence of new cultures. Descriptive qualitative data analysis is carried out by grouping data based on themes or categories, then looking for patterns or relationships between existing data.

Findings and Discussion

Communication is never separated from interaction (Deddy & Rahmat, 2014). Culture is a way of life in society and is the foundation of communication. Culture and communication are inseparable. In communication, it is not only about who sends the message and to whom, but also about the sender's cultural background so that the message can be received by the recipient of the message (Deddy & Rahmat, 2014). Culture, including popular culture, is the basic capital of communication because culture affects all forms of communication and the messages produced are strongly influenced by the diversity of existing cultures (Djatimurti, 2016).

Communication is the process of delivering messages from the communicator to the communicant. Messages can be manifested in various forms of writing, images, sound, or videos that combine sound and images, both verbal and nonverbal. One form of message is the lyrics of dangdut koplo songs that are currently trending in the country. While dangdut usually uses the Indonesian language, dangdut koplo usually uses regional languages, especially Javanese, and some even combine Javanese and Indonesian. This is done because in everyday life, these two languages complement each other or are used simultaneously, which is known as mixed language (Hasanah, 2016; Susanto et al., 2019; Ulfa, 2016).

The language used to convey the message is a regional language, especially from East Java. The language used in the lyrics of dangdut koplo songs indicates that dangdut koplo was born and developed on the island of Java and then spread throughout Indonesia and even abroad with the help of social media or mass media.

In a culture, there is a meaning that wants to be conveyed to the wider community (Humaeni, 2013; Riezal et al., 2019; Setiawan, 2020). The role of communication is needed to keep a culture sustainable and to introduce a certain culture to a wider environment. In any reason, any human works are not massively popular or less known because of a lack of communication with the outside world. The relationship between culture and communication is very clear: in a culture, there is a meaning to be conveyed, and communication is carried out to help introduce the culture to the wider community.

Before further discussing dangdut koplo, we will first explain what is meant by culture, popular culture, and unpopular culture. The word culture comes from the Sanskrit *buddhaya*, which is the plural form of *budh*, meaning human thought or reason, because the essence of culture is things related to human mind and reason (Djatimurti, 2016). Another source states that culture is an attitude, pattern of behavior, and knowledge that are habits owned by a particular community.

Cultures in developed countries have even thought about exploring space far from Earth. In other countries, they are trying to create technology to help people live easier and better. These are all examples of people growing up and living in a culture that enables them to act. Specifically, John Storey (Storey, 2018) also says that culture is the way of life of a particular group or individual. Culture can also be interpreted as intellectual works and practices, as well as certain works of art. Therefore, what is meant by popular culture refers to a way of life as well as human works, including works of art. Mulyana says that culture is defined as an order of

knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meaning, hierarchy, religion, time, roles, space relationships, concepts of the universe, material objects, and property obtained by a group of people from generation to generation through individual or group efforts (Deddy & Rahmat, 2014).

The term culture is the result of culture, namely the results of human activities and inner creation (intellect) such as beliefs, arts, and customs (Djatimurti, 2016). Culture refers to various aspects of life, including ways of acting, beliefs, and attitudes, as well as the results of human activities unique to a particular society or population group. Malinowski argues that culture in principle consists of various systems of human needs (Malinowski, 2015). Each level of need presents a different and distinctive cultural style.

Popular culture and unpopular culture

Before discussing more about today's popular culture trends, let's first discuss popular culture. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), popular culture is culture that is produced commercially, en masse, and becomes an icon of mass culture. Popular refers to human inventions that are known and liked by many people. Therefore, it is referred to as something popular, including popular culture, a culture that is favored, interested, and loved by most people (Fitriyadi & Alam, 2020). Many examples that have been popular recently include online shopping, online schooling or college, online meetings, coffee in cafes, content creation, and others.

Popular culture by Strianti (Strinati, 2004) is understood as a dynamic force that breaks down old boundaries (conservative), traditions, tastes, and blurs all kinds of differences. Thus, popular culture is a style, idea, or idea as well as a perspective (way of seeing) and attitude that is completely different from the 'mainstream culture'.

Pop culture is usually well-liked and highly favored by the public, with a light, interesting, and fun concept for people to take part in or at least enjoy (Heryanto, 2012). Whatever in demand today is called pop culture. For example, pop culture can be foods, drinks, arts, entertainment, and political identity that are trending. Because of the development of social media, something new, beautiful, and fun can easily spread the information to all corners so that it can easily be popular among the public. Meanwhile, unpopular culture means culture that is not popular and has even been abandoned by the community because of its rigidity or because it is not interesting.

There are several characteristics of popular culture (Mayendra, 2011). Among other things, there is a trend and a high level of public favorability that is temporary and easily accepted by the community, and dissemination is carried out through mass media and also social media, which is also a trend or very popular at this time. An example of a culture that is currently popular occurs during holidays such as Christmas or Lebaran. Long before smartphone is popular, people flocked to buy greeting cards and sent them to persons they loved. Today, this tradition is gone. Greeting cards are replaced with short messages accompanied by pictures or other ornaments and sent via social media while wishing Merry Christmas or Happy Eid.

The use of smartphones is one example of today's popular culture. Regardless of who he is, his age, where he comes from, his status, and so on, nowadays most people can certainly have a smartphone. With smartphones equipped with various sophistications, people have a new culture, namely, communication without having to meet. Communication can be done anywhere, anytime, and at a low cost. In addition, content creation activities are where currently not only YouTubers or content creators can create content, but anyone can create content with simple equipment. Therefore, the development of short and interesting videos is very fast because this is not limited by anything.

Various folk arts have emerged and grown rapidly as popular culture because they are supported by social media. One of them is the development of dangdut koplo music. This type of music emerged in tandem with the rise of social media so that it could easily spread and expand to all corners of the world, even though this dangdut koplo music was originally only enjoyed by bus drivers and villagers, especially in the northern coastal areas. But because of the power of social media, this music spread and became part of the music that was favored not only by villagers but also by city people regardless of age because this music is very popular with people of all ages, all social statuses, and all ethnic origins.

Koplo Originality

If traced in the Indonesian dictionary, the word koplo means dumb, stupid, gobble. Dangdut koplo does not mean that its fans or singers are or will become dumb. The song Koplo is pinned to give the meaning that the connoisseurs do not come from the upper class, urban, or elite circles as well as jazz music fans. Koplo's audiences are rural people. The language used is a genuine regional language, not a national language. The communication event or source of inspiration for the song lyrics is the daily life of rural and coastal communities. They enjoy dangdut koplo while lying on a chair, at the neighborhood post, at someone's house during a celebration, or while singing like koplo people.

The music of dangdut koplo makes its audience feel as if they're swept away' by the music and simple lyrics of the songs. It can be said that dangdut koplo can make its listeners 'drunk'. They danced and swayed to the rhythm of the drums and ketipung. They sing out loud like koplos.

Aside from its danceable rhythms, dangdut koplo is also characterized by the singer's appearance, which doesn't have to be seductive and has a more varied sway. Dangdut koplo, which is now favored by many people, has successfully catapulted the names of newcomer singers such as Via Vallen, Nella Kharisma, Happy Asmara, and Denny Caknan.

It is not known for certain why dangdut koplo grew and developed on the north coast of East Java instead of other regions such as Central Java and Yogyakarta. No literature has been found that details the origin of dangdut koplo. What can be found is that dangdut koplo was born by musicians in East Java, especially on the north coast of East Java. It grew and developed from one place to another in the form of performances from stage to stage. Thus, this dangdut koplo

emerged from the coastal communities, whose members were generally farmers or fishermen.

The only entertainment available in the lower-class community is local and of their own origin, so they don't need a big budget like they would if they were to respond to a music group from the city. When they are having a celebration, such as a wedding or circumcision, they generally respond to dangdut koplo. Besides being simple, dangdut koplo doesn't require a lot of personnel and equipment, so the cost of performing dangdut koplo tends to be low. Therefore, the musicians and singers of Koplo dangdut initially performed from one celebration to another, from one stage to another, in East Java. It was entertainment for the coastal community, which was mostly fishermen, truck drivers, or bus drivers because the north coast is the main cross-provincial road from East Java to Central Java and West Java. Dangdut koplo is their choice as a means of cheap entertainment in buses, trucks, and the homes of fishermen in East Java.

Dangdut koplo developed as the identity of the musicians and their fans. Therefore, the language used is not purely Indonesian because the villages on the coast of East Java do not use fully Indonesian. They use 'Jawa Timuran' as well as in Yogyakarta and its surroundings, which tend to use lower Javanese language (*ngoko*). Indonesian is only used in schools and in the city center. The Javanese language used in the lyrics of Koplo songs was chosen because it could represent Koplo dangdut fans who come from the outskirts or fishing villages.

Eastern Javanese is closely related to their daily lives, which also use *Timuran* Javanese. If the lyrics of the songs do not use Indonesian, it would not be 'njawani', as Indonesia is unable to provide the right vocabulary or idioms for things that are very local. Javanese is considered more flexible and richer in vocabulary than Indonesian. The word 'jancuk or cuk' has no equivalent in Indonesian. Therefore, the lyrics of dangdut koplo songs became a tool to reveal their true identity. Dangdut koplo further emphasizes that this genre of song originated and developed in the land of East Java.

If you look at the daily lives of truckers, bus drivers, and fishermen, they spend a lot of time working in their respective fields. This gives room for an informal activity like enjoying music. Due to the lack of access to modern musical instruments, coastal communities tend to modify existing musical instruments and add to the musical instruments owned by coastal communities. Instruments such as ketipung, drums, and flutes are local instruments that can be produced by the community. Therefore, dangdut koplo actually only emphasizes the dominant playing of drums and ketipung, and these instruments can be heard in a wider radius than a guitar or violin. The stomping and loud sounds give them the spirit to work.

Another source said that dangdut originated from the development of Malay music that was given additional instruments or musical instruments so that it would be more exciting, varied, and able to amaze the listeners and be enjoyed by the listeners. In the beginning, the music scene in the country was long adorned by the strains of Malaysian music, which developed quite well and could survive until now.

Dangdut Koplo and Popular Culture

Dangdut usually uses Indonesian language and is synonymous with '*cengkok*' vocals. It is called "dangdut" because this music is dominated by the playing of musical instruments such as drums, or drums in Javanese, which sound dang and dut, hence the name dangdut according to the sound of the drum accompaniment.

Dangdut koplo uses the Javanese language, grows and develops in Java and its surroundings, and is an original Indonesian culture (Weintraub, 2010). Its emergence is the result of the creation of an anti-establishment society. They wanted something new, light, and interesting to replace the conventional dangdut popularized by Rhoma Irama and others. The presence of dangdut before the emergence of dangdut koplo was opposed by many, especially by the King of Dangdut (Raditya, 2017).

In the 2000s, 2003 to be exact, there was tension between Inul Daratista and Rhoma Irama, who claimed to be the ones who established dangdut music, hence his nickname as the king of dangdut. In addition to the clash between the king of dangdut and the queen of ngebor, there was also the development of a model of dangdut that was popular for its singers, with the nicknames '*goyang ngebor*', '*goyang itik*', '*goyang gergaji*', and '*goyang patah-patah*' criticized by the king of dangdut, Rhoma Irama. Various ways were taken to ban singers with the characteristics of *goyang ngebor*, *goyang itik*, *goyang gergaji*, and *goyang patah-patah* (Raditya, 2017). The banning of the king of dangdut and other dangdut singers gave rise to a new genre of dangdut, dangdut koplo, which was completely different from conventional dangdut (Yusar, 2015).

Inul's arrival is considered destructive due to her swaying, which is considered to damage the nation's morals (Inderasari & Ferdian, 2018). Rhoma considers Inul's ngebor shake to have violated the limits of reasonableness and included porn that must be prohibited. He considers her speech to cause unrest and lust in the audience. Something new must cause tension, both pro and con. Then there are various kinds of swaying to create the image of the singer. It was this establishment that then encouraged new ideas and created a new genre of dangdut music that broke away from the establishments conventionalism and rigidity (Raditya, 2017).

Dangdut's dominant instrument is the sound of drums combined with ketipung, and the music is faster and more upbeat. The language of the lyrics is usually ngoko Javanese, or rough Javanese, or a mixture of Javanese and Indonesian. The emergence of dangdut koplo occurred in the 2000s. At that time, people were getting bored with the original dangdut music (Inderasari & Ferdian, 2018). Therefore, dangdut players in the coastal areas of East Java's Pantura region began to develop a new type of dangdut with a very strong drum and ketipung sound. They called this new type of dangdut music 'koplo' dangdut.

Dangdut koplo is one form of art variant that emerged from the community. Koplo dangdut was first popularized by Via Vallen, who sang it during the 2017 Asean Games with the title "*Meraih Bintang*". Koplo dangdut became more popular not only among Javanese but also among other ethnic groups in Indonesia after it

was popularized by Farel Prayoga when he was invited to the president palace during the August 17 celebration in 2022 with the title '*ojo disbanding-bandingke*'. This Javanese song was so thunderous that it was memorized not only by the elderly but also by the young and children.

Why is Dangdut Koplo so popular? The popularity of dangdut koplo cannot be separated from the role of mass media and social media (El Ishaq & Mahanani, 2018; Hanif, 2011; Rahayu, 2009). Dangdut music is present on television in talent shows. The widespread use of social media reaches all corners, and something that is loved by the public easily spreads and spreads the news. If there were no mass media and social media, it is certain that everything would not be widely known by the public.

The lyrics of dangdut koplo songs contain daily life experiences. The language used is regional, especially Javanese, mixed with Indonesian, which is not standardized. In addition to the mixture of Javanese and Indonesian, the words used are light words, not using standardized language in general. Even the rhyme of the song lyrics is not good, like AABB, ABAB, AAAA, BBBB, which is not patterned. The form of the stanza is also not standard; some are two lines, some are three lines, and others.

What does all this mean? Koplo songs want to get out of something that is already considered ordinary, so-so, established, and standardized. Dangdut Koplo wants to get out of the establishment and into something that is standardized. Dangdut koplo becomes a work of art that is free, light, and loved by all levels of society without compartmentalizing anyone (Yusar, 2015).

Conclusion

Culture as a manifestation of diversity continues to emerge and is part of the changing human civilization that continues to develop. Culture, including popular culture, cannot be separated from communication because, with communication, a culture as a human creative work can be widely known. Therefore, communication and culture are inseparable. One of the very fast disseminations is the dissemination of popular culture information that people like through social media, because social media is also one of the changes in popular culture that cannot be avoided. Information and communication technology allows people to adapt to new cultures. It is recommended that other researches can be implemented in focus on the impact of the new pop culture to the existing culture.

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