



The Role of Sundanese Ethnic Music in Supporting Creative Economy and Cultural Tourism Development

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Abstract. This study examines the role of Sundanese ethnic music as a living cultural heritage that contributes to community well-being, the creative economy, and the development of cultural tourism in Kelapa Nunggal, Bogor, Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, documentation, and NVivo-assisted thematic analysis involving cultural actors at Saung Kalinga. The findings show that Sundanese ethnic music, including Tarawangsa, Karinding, Suling, and gamelan buhun, is not merely perceived as entertainment but as a medium of cultural communication, emotional expression, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and local identity strengthening. Community preferences toward this music are shaped by family memories, childhood experiences, cultural familiarity, social environment, and the calming character of traditional sounds. The study further reveals three interconnected pathways through which ethnic music supports development: an emotional pathway that promotes comfort and stress relief, a cultural pathway that preserves meaning and identity, and a social pathway that encourages participation and collective belonging. These pathways create opportunities for creative performances, cultural products, heritage education, and authentic tourism experiences. The study concludes that Sundanese ethnic music can become a culturally rooted strategy for inclusive and sustainable local development in contemporary rural communities.

Keywords: Community Well-Being; Creative Economy; Cultural Heritage; Cultural Tourism; Sundanese Ethnic Music.

1. BACKGROUND

Cultural heritage tourism is increasingly positioned as a strategic pathway for sustainable development because it connects cultural preservation, destination competitiveness, and community well-being. Cultural heritage tourism has grown rapidly and is now closely linked to sustainability, authenticity, destination management, and place attachment (Geçikli et al., 2024). In this field, intangible cultural heritage is crucial because it transforms lived practices of music, performances, rituals, oral traditions, and crafts into experiential resources that can be interpreted, practiced, and transmitted through tourism encounters (Qiu et al., 2022). Intangible cultural heritage tourism also demonstrates that tourism development is not merely a promotional activity; it requires stakeholder participation, protection mechanisms, and sensitivity to local meanings so that cultural expressions are not separated from the communities that preserve them (Chen et al., 2022).

The intersection of heritage, creative industries, and tourism provides a relevant framework for understanding Sundanese ethnic music as more than just an artistic performance. Intangible heritage and creative industries can serve as tourism assets when organized into participatory experiences, learning activities, festivals, performances, and local narratives that enhance the appeal of creative destinations (Arcos-Pumarola et al., 2023). Cultural and creative

industries also have a strong link to tourism, generating place-based products, symbolic value, and creative entrepreneurial opportunities (Henriques & Elías, 2022). More broadly, developing a creative economy requires cultural governance that does not reduce culture solely to economic outcomes, but recognizes cultural vitality, participation, innovation, and policy support as essential dimensions of sustainable cultural development (Yan, 2023).

Community well-being is a central concern in these discussions. Tourism and creative economy programs are increasingly assessed not only by visitor numbers or revenues, but also by their capacity to empower residents, improve skills, strengthen social networks, and distribute benefits locally. Research on rural tourism in Indonesia shows that sustainable tourism and creative economy development can improve community well-being when supported by community empowerment and participation (Pranita et al., 2022). Responsible tourism also emphasizes that cultural, social, economic, and environmental responsibility impacts residents' quality of life and community well-being (Mathew & Nimmi, 2022). Creative tourism within community-based tourism can further advance sustainable development through cultural revitalization, local identity management, collaborative governance, and inclusive community empowerment (Suriyankietkaew et al., 2025).

Sundanese ethnic music is particularly relevant within this framework because music is a living cultural resource that carries memories, identities, emotions, and social connections. Music and well-being, as defined by musical activity, can impact health and well-being through psychosocial mechanisms such as mood regulation, arousal, social connection, identity, cognitive engagement, and cultural inclusion (Dingle et al., 2021). Music-based interventions have also been shown to reduce stress-related impacts, suggesting that engaging with music can support emotion regulation and psychological recovery (de Witte et al., 2022). During times of crisis, music has been used globally to achieve well-being goals such as enjoyment, relaxation, social connection, and self-reflection (Granot et al., 2021).

The emotional dimension of music is closely related to preferences. People often choose music that feels familiar, meaningful, and emotionally aligned with their needs. Listening to music has been identified as an effective strategy for managing stress, particularly when listeners choose music that helps them cope with difficult situations (Vidas et al., 2021). The perceived effectiveness of music for emotional well-being is influenced by personal and contextual variables, including the importance of music, training, and life circumstances (Martínez-Castilla et al., 2021). Cross-cultural evidence during lockdown further suggests that changes in musical behavior and interest in music are associated with socio-emotional coping,

suggesting that music serves as affective support and a socio-symbolic resource (Fink et al., 2021).

For older adults and community members, music can also serve as a social substitute and a medium for reminiscing. Qualitative research suggests that listening to music can provide emotional comfort, companionship, and a reminder of social connections during isolation (Groarke et al., 2022). Daily music listening among nursing home residents supports psychosocial well-being by connecting individuals with memories, routines, identities, and relational experiences (Krause & Davidson, 2021). At the same time, music's influence on well-being is shaped by individual characteristics and listening contexts, meaning that culturally embedded music must be studied through the lived experiences of its listeners and practitioners (Rossi et al., 2024).

In the context of Kelapa Nunggal, Bogor, Sundanese ethnic music has the potential to bridge cultural heritage, the creative economy, cultural tourism, and community well-being. Instruments and genres such as tarawangsa, karinding, suling, and gamelan buhun are not only objects of preservation but also resources for learning, performance, storytelling, youth engagement, and cultural tourism. Memorable intangible cultural heritage tourism depends on the quality of the experience, authenticity, credibility, and perceived value, all of which can be fostered through community-based music activities (Ye, 2025).

However, cultural heritage tourism also faces risks, including decreased visitor engagement, weak innovation, and disruption to cultural heritage institutions, particularly when cultural sites lack adaptive management (Naramski et al., 2022). Therefore, this research is important because it examines how Sundanese ethnic music can be positioned as a culturally rooted resource that supports the creative economy and cultural tourism development while strengthening community well-being. This research contributes to the debate on sustainable cultural tourism by demonstrating that local music should not be treated solely as entertainment for tourists, but as a living heritage ecosystem involving artists, communities, emotions, knowledge transmission, and local identity.

2. METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive-interpretive design to examine the role of Sundanese ethnic music as a form of cultural heritage that contributes to community well-being, creative economic potential, and cultural tourism development in Kelapa Nunggal, Bogor, Indonesia. This approach allowed researchers to explore the meanings, experiences, values, and community narratives surrounding traditional musical practices (Levitt et al.,

2018). This study positions Sundanese ethnic music not only as an artistic object but also as a living heritage practice. Therefore, the analysis focuses on how community members understand music as a source of identity, emotional comfort, cultural education, social interaction, and a potential cultural tourism attraction.

This research was conducted in Kelapa Nunggal, Bogor Regency, with Saung Kalinga as the primary cultural location. Saung Kalinga was chosen because it serves as a community space where traditional Sundanese music is preserved, performed, taught, and passed down to the younger generation. This location represents a local cultural ecosystem where artists, community leaders, and residents interact through music, cultural storytelling, and collective activities.

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method. Informants included individuals with direct knowledge of Sundanese ethnic music, including cultural practitioners, traditional music community leaders, studio or studio managers, artists, and local listeners with experience engaging with Sundanese music. Selection criteria included familiarity with Sundanese ethnic music, involvement in cultural activities, willingness to participate in interviews, and the ability to describe personal or community experiences related to music, culture, well-being, and local development.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, documentation, and a literature review. In-depth interviews were used to elicit participants' narratives about their preferences for Sundanese ethnic music, their emotional experiences when listening to or performing it, and their views on the role of music in cultural preservation, community bonding, and the potential for local tourism. Observations were conducted to understand the social context of musical activities, including how participants interact, how instruments are introduced, and how cultural values are communicated through practice and performance. The data management process involved organizing interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentation into a structured qualitative database.

All interview recordings were transcribed, reviewed, and classified based on research themes. The data was then imported into NVivo to aid in the coding process (Saldaña, 2021). The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is considered appropriate because it allows researchers to identify, organize, and interpret patterns in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2021). In this study, themes were not treated as isolated findings, but as interconnected dimensions of the local cultural ecosystem.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines Sundanese ethnic music as a living cultural heritage practice that connects community well-being, the transmission of cultural knowledge, creative economic opportunities, and the development of cultural tourism in Kelapa Nunggal, Bogor. Findings indicate that Sundanese ethnic music is not simply experienced as entertainment. It is interpreted by cultural actors as a medium for emotional expression, symbolic communication, ancestral memory, social gathering, and identity formation. Two key informants represent complementary positions within the local cultural ecosystem. Abah Tateng, a cultural elder and manager of Saung Kalinga, provided information on the philosophy of karawitan (traditional Javanese music), the history of laras (traditional music), the meaning of traditional arts (*artis buhun*), and the community's role in preserving local heritage.

Kang Hiyang, a cultural practitioner and youth leader in the community, described the affective experiences of performing and listening to Sundanese music, its role in social bonds, and the practical challenges faced by local artists. The key empirical pattern is that music operates through interconnected emotional, cultural, and social meanings. Participants repeatedly associated Sundanese music with serenity, taste, memory, social acceptance, and cultural pride. These terms are crucial to the article's argument because the creative economy and cultural tourism are not treated as external commercial add-ons to the community. Instead, they are interpreted as potential developmental pathways arising from music's intrinsic cultural, emotional, and social values.

NVivo Coding and Dominant Empirical Patterns

NVivo results indicate that the central theme of this study is the role of Sundanese ethnic music in strengthening community well-being. This core theme is connected to six main categories: preference for Sundanese ethnic music, meanings of Sundanese ethnic music, music as cultural communication, music and mental well-being, music in social life, and community roles. These categories do not operate in isolation. They form an interpretive chain in which cultural familiarity shapes preference, preference supports emotional resonance, emotional resonance strengthens meaning, and meaning is maintained through community practices.

A word cloud provides a useful entry point for describing the data. Words such as music, art, Sundanese, traditional, culture, Kalinga, saung, Tarawangsa, pupuh, society, artist, instrument, and feeling dominate the corpus. This lexical concentration confirms that the data field lies at the intersection of musical practice, cultural identity, community life, and affective experience. The dominance of music and art indicates the artistic core of the data, while Sundanese, traditional culture, and Buhun indicate that the music is culturally embedded rather

described traditional sounds as familiar, gentle, reflective, and closely connected with family memory, childhood experience, natural landscapes, and the cultural environment of Sunda. Instruments such as suling, Tarawangsa, Karinding, gamelan buhun, and related traditional forms were valued not only for their sonic beauty but for their capacity to evoke places, feelings, and social memories.

Kang Hiyang emphasized that traditional music differs from modern music because a short suling phrase can evoke images of mountains, rice fields, and the atmosphere of Sundanese life. This statement shows that preference is spatial and affective: the listener does not only hear notes but also encounters an imagined cultural landscape. The finding supports the argument that musical preferences become a form of cultural attachment. In tourism terms, this attachment is important because meaningful cultural tourism depends on authenticity, local narratives, and affective engagement, not only on visual display or entertainment packaging.

The second layer of preference is emotional need. Kang Hiyang explained that people need calmness when facing pressures in their work, family, and economic lives. In this sense, music is selected because it provides a relaxing emotional atmosphere. This aligns with the literature on music and well-being, which shows that music activities affect mood, social connection, relaxation, identity, and emotional regulation (Dingle et al., 2021; Granot et al., 2021). However, the present study adds a cultural dimension: the calming function of music becomes stronger because the music is familiar and meaningful within local identity.

Abah Tateng deepened this interpretation through the concept of *rasa*. In his explanation, *rasa* is not merely spontaneous emotion but a mode of understanding and inner appreciation. The concept of *Aji Rasa* suggests that music must be studied, felt, and internalized before it can be genuinely understood. Therefore, preference for Sundanese ethnic music is layered. It begins with an attraction to sound, continues through cultural familiarity, deepens through *rasa*, and finally produces emotional and social significance. This layered preference is the cultural foundation that enables Sundanese music to become a creative-economy and cultural-tourism resource without losing its rootedness.

Music as Living Heritage and Cultural Communication

The second key finding is that Sundanese ethnic music functions as a living heritage and a means of cultural communication. Participants did not describe music as an isolated artistic object. They interpreted it as a carrier of values, philosophy, language, ancestral knowledge, spirituality, and local identity. Abah Tateng explained that many ancient art forms are not historically preserved through written documentation but through oral transmission from elders

to younger generations. Therefore, Saung Kalinga is positioned as a place where lost or diminished cultural knowledge can be reintroduced, explained, and practiced.

This finding is consistent with the concept of intangible cultural heritage, which emphasizes living practices, performance, knowledge, expression, and transmission within communities. In the context of tourism, intangible heritage becomes meaningful when interpreted through community knowledge and protection mechanisms rather than extracted as commodities. For this reason, Sundanese music should be seen as an active process of cultural communication. Instruments, tunings, performance settings, oral explanations, and community rituals all serve as media through which cultural messages are transmitted.

Interviews with these informants revealed that music communicates through symbolic and nonverbal forms. Abah Tateng links karawitan with knowledge, light, and the ethical discipline of Titi Laras, which teaches careful sound production. This interpretation suggests that music carries a moral pedagogy. Music teaches not only how to play but also how to speak, behave, and maintain social harmony. Kang Hiyang also describes the symbolic meaning of the names and sounds of traditional instruments, suggesting that certain sound patterns are understood as prayers, vibrations, and spiritual communication. This interpretation demonstrates that music is a culturally rich text whose meanings transcend mere verbal explanation.

If Sundanese music is presented to visitors simply as background noise, its cultural function is weakened. However, if performances are accompanied by storytelling, instrument explanations, participatory learning, and dialogue with artists, the music can become an interpretive tourism experience. This aligns with research on intangible heritage and the creative industries, which shows that living heritage can become a tourism asset when integrated with creative interpretation and community participation (Arcos-Pumarola et al., 2023; Henriques & Elías, 2022).

Music, Community Well-Being, and Social Participation

The third key finding relates to the relationship between Sundanese music and community well-being. NVivo coding identified comfort, calmness, stress reduction, emotional balance, positive mood, and inner peace as key subthemes. These findings suggest that well-being is experienced through three pathways: emotional, reflective, and social. The emotional pathway is activated when music evokes calm and relaxation. The reflective pathway emerges when music helps listeners remember family, childhood, ancestors, and meaningful places. The social pathway emerges when music brings people together and strengthens community connections.

Kang Hiyang stated that traditional music can unite communities because artistic events bring together people who might not otherwise meet. Through shared curiosity and appreciation, people build social bonds and friendships. This statement is important because mental well-being is not limited to individual feelings. In this study, well-being is relational. People feel calmer and more meaningful when they participate in social spaces where they are accepted, connected, and culturally recognized. This supports previous research that music contributes to well-being through psychosocial mechanisms such as mood, social connection, identity, and relaxation (Dingle et al., 2021).

Music's social function also emerges in community events like Nyawang Bulan, which create recurring opportunities for residents to gather around cultural practices. These events are not simply performances; they serve as community infrastructure. They allow local communities to share memories, learn instruments, discuss cultural meanings, and experience a sense of community. This is why music can serve as a cost-effective and culturally appropriate resource for community well-being. Music does not replace formal mental health services, but it can support improved well-being through culturally meaningful participation. From a development perspective, this relational understanding of well-being is crucial. Sustainable tourism and creative economy development should not be evaluated solely on the basis of visitor numbers or revenue generated. They should also be assessed on whether local communities gain confidence, recognition, skills, social networks, and a better quality of life.

Saung Kalinga as a Cultural Ecosystem for Creative Economy and Cultural Tourism

The fourth key finding relates to Saung Kalinga's role as a cultural ecosystem. This community serves as a place for preservation, informal education, performance, youth engagement, and social bonding. Participants described the community as a space that introduces traditional arts, reduces misunderstandings about traditional practices, and creates opportunities for younger generations to learn. This role is strategically crucial because intangible heritage survives not only through archives but also through repeated practice, collective memory, mentorship, and social recognition.

The data also revealed several challenges. The preservation of traditional music faces limited structural support, inadequate facilities, weak economic appreciation, and a lack of attention to artists' well-being. This finding is highly relevant to the article's focus on the creative economy. Creative economy development must not romanticize cultural work while leaving artists economically vulnerable. If Sundanese music is to support tourism and local development, community artists must receive fair recognition, adequate facilities, training opportunities, and benefit-sharing mechanisms.

Saung Kalinga can become a hub for the local creative economy through several channels. First, it can develop regular cultural performances that are ethically curated and grounded in local narratives. Second, it can offer participatory workshops on instruments such as the Tarawangsa, Karinding, suling, and gamelan buhun. Third, it can produce educational materials, recordings, and digital storytelling that introduce Sundanese music to younger audiences. Fourth, it can collaborate with schools, local governments, tourism actors, and creative entrepreneurs to create heritage-based products while preserving cultural significance (Figure 3).

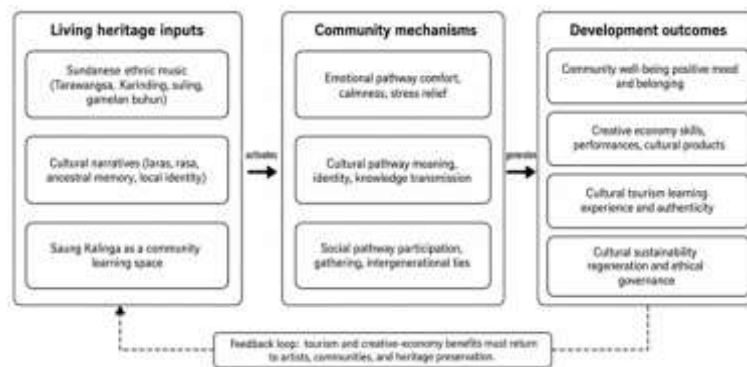


Figure 3. Integrative model of Sundanese ethnic music, community well-being, creative economy, and cultural tourism development.

Creative economy governance must remain flexible and culturally sensitive, recognizing cultural innovation and sustainability (Yan, 2023). Saung Kalinga's tourism potential lies in its authenticity as a vibrant community space. Visitors can experience music not simply as a staged spectacle, but as a learning experience involving sound, stories, philosophy, practices, and interactions with local artists. This aligns with the concept of creative tourism, where visitors participate in cultural learning and co-create experiences with the local community. If managed responsibly, such an approach can link cultural heritage preservation with community-based tourism, creative entrepreneurship, and well-being outcomes (Pranita et al., 2022; Arcos-Pumarola et al., 2023).

Integrative Discussion: From Heritage Preservation to Ethical Development

The findings suggest that Sundanese ethnic music can be positioned as a bridge between cultural heritage preservation and community development. This bridge is possible because the music carries four forms of value. First, it has emotional value because it provides comfort, tranquility, and stress relief. Second, it has cultural value because it conveys local tastes, manners, ancestral memories, and identity. Third, it has social value because it creates a space for gathering, recognition, and communication between generations. Fourth, it has economic

and tourism value because it can form the basis for performances, workshops, cultural events, creative products, and destination narratives.

However, this research also suggests that these values must be ethically managed. Economic and tourism values should not be placed above cultural and social values. Instead, the creative economy and tourism development should be designed as an extension of cultural preservation and community well-being. This means that local artists and cultural guardians must remain central actors in decision-making. Their knowledge should shape how music is presented, interpreted, commercialized, and transmitted. Without this ethical orientation, cultural tourism can lead to symbolic exploitation, where cultural heritage is showcased to visitors while the artists and communities that preserve it remain under-supported.

The selected visualizations support this argument. The word cloud shows the density of music, culture, and affective terms. The thematic map demonstrates the interdependence between music preferences, cultural meanings, community roles, social life, and well-being. The integrative model then translates the empirical findings into an article-level contribution: Sundanese ethnic music should be understood as a living heritage that generates development outcomes through emotional, cultural, and social pathways. In this model, the creative economy and cultural tourism are not separate sectors imposed on society; both are potential outcomes of a healthy cultural ecosystem.

This study demonstrates that traditional music can support development when treated as social and cultural infrastructure. It also contributes to the study of music and well-being by demonstrating that the psychological effects of music are enhanced by cultural familiarity and collective meaning. Finally, it contributes to the debate on responsible tourism by emphasizing that heritage-based tourism should benefit cultural actors, strengthen local identity, and support sustainable cultural regeneration.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Sundanese ethnic music in Kelapa Nunggal, Bogor, plays a crucial role in connecting cultural heritage, community well-being, creative economic potential, and cultural tourism development. The findings suggest that Sundanese ethnic music is more than just traditional entertainment. It is a living heritage practice that embodies cultural knowledge, emotional meaning, social connections, and local identity. Through instruments such as the Tarawangsa, Karinding, suling, and gamelan buhun (traditional Indonesian gamelan), music serves as a medium through which people remember their ancestors, experience peace, communicate cultural values, and strengthen social bonds. The first

conclusion is that preferences for Sundanese ethnic music are shaped by cultural and emotional attachments. People value music because it is familiar, gentle, reflective, and connected to family memories, childhood experiences, local landscapes, and the atmosphere of Sundanese life.

The second conclusion is that Sundanese ethnic music functions as a form of cultural communication. It conveys values through sound, language, stories, symbolic meanings, performance practices, and intergenerational learning. Concepts such as *rasa* (feeling), *Titi Laras* (traditional Indonesian music), *karawitan* (traditional Indonesian gamelan), *seni buhun* (traditional Indonesian art), and ancestral memory demonstrate that music is a cultural language. Music teaches manners, prudence, a love of tradition, and respect for local knowledge.

The third conclusion is that Sundanese ethnic music supports community well-being through emotional, reflective, and social channels. Emotionally, music creates a sense of comfort, calm, relaxation, and a positive mood. Reflectively, music connects listeners to identity, family, places, and meaningful memories. Socially, music unites people, creates gathering spaces, and strengthens community support. These channels demonstrate that well-being is not only an individual psychological effect but also a collective cultural experience.

The fourth conclusion is that *Saung Kalinga* plays a strategic role as a local cultural ecosystem. It preserves music, educates residents, engages young people, provides performance spaces, and reduces misconceptions about traditional arts. At the same time, the sustainability of this ecosystem depends on stronger structural support, improved facilities, economic appreciation, and policy attention to artists' well-being. Without adequate support, the creative potential and tourism potential of Sundanese music may not generate sustainable benefits for cultural actors.

Therefore, this study proposes that Sundanese ethnic music can support the creative economy and cultural tourism development when managed through an ethical, community-based approach. Cultural performances, participatory workshops, storytelling, digital documentation, and heritage-based tourism packages can be developed, but they must remain grounded in local meaning and benefit sharing. The main contribution of this research is to demonstrate that the creative economy and cultural tourism should not commodify local music as a separate product. They should strengthen the living heritage ecosystem that sustains music, supports artists, educates young people, and improves community well-being.

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