



Visual Representation of Acehese Traditional Music on Digital Media YouTube and TikTok

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the revitalization of Acehese traditional music through visual representation on digital platforms, particularly YouTube and TikTok. The rapid development of digital media has transformed the ways traditional music is produced, distributed, and consumed, especially among younger generations. This research employs a qualitative approach using visual analysis methods to examine selected Acehese traditional music videos. Data were collected through screenshot techniques and analyzed based on visual composition, cultural costumes, environmental settings, performance movements, and production techniques. The findings reveal that the revitalization of Acehese traditional music occurs not only in its musical elements but also through the adaptation of modern visual aesthetics. The use of cinematic composition, overlay techniques, representations of Acehese coastal landscapes, and dominant cultural symbols such as traditional costumes and properties indicate a negotiation between tradition and modernity within digital spaces. Furthermore, the active participation of young performers demonstrates that digital platforms function as dynamic media for cultural transmission. This study concludes that YouTube and TikTok serve as strategic spaces for strengthening Acehese cultural identity through the visual construction of traditional music, thereby supporting cultural preservation and revitalization in the digital era.

Keywords: Visual analysis, Acehese traditional music, cultural revitalization, YouTube,

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1. Introduction

Acehese traditional music constitutes an essential component of cultural heritage, reflecting historical values and the collective identity of the community. Traditional Acehese songs function not merely as entertainment, but also as a medium for transmitting social, religious, and cultural values across generations [1]. However, social transformation and the expansion of the popular music industry have led to a declining interest among younger generations in traditional music, thereby necessitating more adaptive preservation strategies [2].

The advancement of digital technology has significantly reshaped the ways in which cultural products are produced, distributed, and consumed. Digital media platforms such as YouTube and TikTok enable individuals to act not only as consumers but also as producers of cultural content through creative

participation [3]. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as participatory culture, a condition in which individuals actively produce and disseminate cultural content through digital media [4]. In this context, YouTube functions as a digital cultural archive, allowing traditional music content to be stored and accessed widely [5], while TikTok facilitates cultural reproduction through practices such as remixing, covering, and reinterpreting musical content [6].

Amid these developments, Acehese traditional music has begun to undergo transformation through the production of digital content, including cover videos, rearrangements, and new musical interpretations. Songs that were previously disseminated through analog media such as radio and cassette recordings are now reproduced via digital platforms, enabling them to reach broader audiences [7]. This transformation reflects a process of cultural reproduction in which

traditional elements are modified to remain relevant within continuously evolving social and technological contexts [8].

Previous studies indicate that Acehese traditional music possesses strong cultural significance but faces sustainability challenges. Research on Alee Tunjang, for instance, demonstrates that this traditional music genre is performed less frequently and requires systematic documentation and sustainable preservation strategies [9]. Other studies reveal that Acehese song lyrics contain cultural values and moral messages that are integral to Acehese identity [1].

Although numerous studies have addressed the preservation of traditional music, most have focused primarily on documentation efforts or ethnomusicological analysis. Research specifically examining visual representation and visual communication strategies within Acehese traditional music content on digital media remains limited. Yet visual elements, such as lighting, composition, video editing, graphic illustration, and captions, play a crucial role in shaping audience perceptions of local culture [10].

Within the context of digital media, the visualization of traditional music functions not merely as a complement to auditory elements, but also as a medium of cultural representation that constructs meanings of local identity [11]. The integration of modern visual aesthetics with traditional music enables the emergence of new forms of cultural preservation that are more compatible with the characteristics of digital media environments [13].

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the visual representation of Acehese traditional music in YouTube and TikTok content and to examine the role of visual communication in the revitalization of traditional music in the digital era.

2. Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a primary focus on visual analysis of the representation of Acehese traditional music on digital platforms, namely YouTube and TikTok. A qualitative approach was selected because the study seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of visual meanings, forms of cultural representation, and patterns of presentation of Acehese traditional music within digital media environments.

The main method applied in this research is visual analysis, a methodological approach used to examine visual elements within media texts, including image composition, color, cultural symbols, costumes, gestures, properties, and visual settings that represent Acehese cultural identity. Visual analysis enables the researcher to explore how Acehese traditional music is visually constructed and represented within the

context of digital media [11]. In analyzing the visual dimension, this study also refers to the formalistic analysis approach in visual communication design as explained by Asrinaldi, [12] who states that illustration has three main functions: informative, decorative, and commentative.

In the context of Acehese song cover videos, visual elements such as thumbnails, stage design, lighting, and framing function not merely as decoration, but also as a medium of cultural information and a form of symbolic commentary on local identity. Therefore, the visual analysis in this research is not solely aesthetic in nature, but also interpretative and semiotic.

The objects of this study consist of Acehese traditional music videos published on YouTube and TikTok. The selection of research objects was conducted using purposive sampling, based on the following criteria: (1 The video contains Acehese traditional songs or music, 2. The video is published on YouTube or TikTok, 3. The video displays visual elements of Acehese culture, such as traditional attire, traditional musical instruments, or culturally significant settings, 4. The video is publicly accessible (available for open viewing). 5. The videos were uploaded between January 2023 and December 2025.

The units of analysis in this study include: 1. Visual composition (framing and camera angles), 2. Color and lighting, 3. Costumes and cultural attributes, 4. Properties and traditional musical instruments, 5. Background or visual setting, 6. Performers' gestures and facial expressions, 7. Typography and digital graphic elements

Data collection was conducted through direct visual observation of the selected video samples. The videos were downloaded or documented through screenshots to facilitate the analytical process.

The data analysis procedure was carried out through several stages:

2.1 Data Reduction

The researcher selected videos that met the research criteria and were relevant to the focus on the revitalization of Acehese traditional music.

2.2 Visual Classification

Visual elements within the videos were categorized based on analytical classifications such as costumes, musical instruments, settings, and cultural symbols.

2.3 Visual Interpretation

Each visual element was interpreted to understand the cultural meanings represented in the videos [13].

2.4 Conclusion Drawing

Conclusions were derived based on recurring patterns of visual representation identified in Acehese traditional music videos on digital platforms.

To ensure data validity, source triangulation was employed by comparing visual data from various Acehese traditional music videos originating from different YouTube channels and TikTok accounts [13].

Table 1. Screenshot Data







Kode	Sumber	Screenshot
D1-U1	Lagu "Meusare-sare" Cover Safira Amalia	
		
D2-U1	Lagu Tarek Pukat, Cover oleh Kaka Alfarisi	
D3-U1		
D4-U1		
D5-U1		

Table 1. Visual and Interpretations

Code	Visual Elements	Visual Description	Interpretation
D1-U1	Visual Composition	The frame presents a female singer positioned against the background of a guitarist, composed using a medium shot within a	The visual composition, which positions the singer as the primary focal point, reflects the adaptation of Acehese traditional music into a modern performance

D2-U1	Culturally significant costume	studio setting. The performer wears Acehese traditional attire featuring red, gold, and black ornamental elements within the visual presentation of the music video.	format. **The use of traditional attire serves as a symbol of Acehese cultural identity in the presentation of traditional music through digital media.
D3-U1	Natural setting	The cinematography employs a long shot that captures the coastal area and the landscape of Aceh as the background of the music video.	The representation of the Acehese landscape reinforces the connection between traditional music and the region's geographical identity.
D4-U1	Dance Movements and Cultural Properties	A group of female dancers dressed in Acehese traditional attire perform synchronized movements while manipulating net props.	The collective movements and the use of traditional properties indicate the interconnectedness between the music and the cultural practices of the Acehese community.
D5-U1	Visual Articulation	A close-up shot of the singer's face combined with a beach background overlay technique creates a dramatic visual effect.	The use of visual overlay techniques reflects the adaptation of contemporary music video aesthetics in the presentation of Acehese traditional songs.

The visual analysis in this study was conducted by identifying the visual elements appearing in Acehese traditional music videos on the YouTube and TikTok platforms. These visual elements include image composition, cultural attire, environmental setting, performance movements, and visual techniques employed in the production of the music videos.

To facilitate the analytical process, the researcher developed a set of visual analysis categories presented in tabular form. Each visual datum was assigned a specific code consisting of a video code and a visual element code. This coding system was designed to

ensure analytical consistency and to support a systematic interpretation of the visual data [14].

Visual data were collected through screenshot documentation of selected Acehnese traditional music videos used as research samples. Each screenshot represented a particular visual element considered relevant to the research objective, namely to understand the forms of revitalization of Acehnese traditional music through digital media.

Each unit of data was analyzed through two primary stages: visual description and visual interpretation. The visual description stage involved identifying observable elements within the image without introducing subjective judgment. The visual interpretation stage involved interpreting the cultural meanings embedded in the visual elements presented in the Acehnese traditional music videos [11][14].

The visual analysis model employed in this study follows an approach that emphasizes the relationship between visual form and cultural meaning as represented in digital media [11]. This framework enables the researcher to examine how visual elements contribute to the process of revitalizing Acehnese traditional music through digital platforms.

The results of the visual analysis are subsequently presented in the form of analytical tables to illustrate the relationship between visual elements, visual descriptions, and the cultural interpretations identified in Acehnese traditional music videos on digital platforms.

3. Results and Discussions

The visual analysis of Acehnese traditional music videos on YouTube and TikTok indicates that cultural representation functions not merely as an aesthetic component, but as a strategic mechanism of revitalization within the digital media context. Based on the coded data (D1–D5), several consistent patterns of visual representation were identified.

3.1 Key Finding 1 (*Adaptation of Modern Aesthetics in the Representation of Traditional Music*)

Data D1–U1 and D5–U1 demonstrate the use of medium shots, close-up framing, and visual overlay techniques commonly employed in contemporary music video production. These elements signify the incorporation of modern visual aesthetics into the presentation of Acehnese traditional music.

This approach suggests that revitalization does not necessarily entail preserving traditional forms in their original entirety; rather, it involves a visual negotiation between tradition and modernity. Within digital culture, visual representation plays a crucial role in shaping audience perception and constructing meanings of cultural identity [1].

Such visual transformation aligns with the concept of mediatization of culture, referring to the process through which cultural practices adapt to the logic and conventions of digital media environments [6].

3.2 Key Finding 2 (*Strengthening Cultural Identity through Costumes and Cultural Properties*)

Data D2–U1 and D4–U1 reveal the dominant use of Acehnese traditional attire, fishing net props (symbolizing coastal livelihood), and red-and-gold ornamental motifs associated with Acehnese aesthetics.

Traditional attire functions as a visual marker of cultural identity. In visual communication studies, cultural symbols operate as signifiers of collective identity that reinforce meaning construction within media representations [7].

These findings resonate with previous research by Asrinaldi, which emphasizes that Acehnese performing arts are inseparable from symbolic colors, ornaments, and patterns embedded with specific cultural meanings [8].

Thus, rather than eroding traditional symbols, digital platforms expand their circulation and visibility.

3.3 Key Finding 3 (*Landscape Representation as Geographical Identity*)

Data D3–U1 demonstrate the use of long-shot cinematography featuring Aceh's coastal landscape as a dominant visual background. This geographical representation underscores the connection between traditional music and socio-cultural space.

Landscape visualization functions not merely as a backdrop but as an integral component of regional identity construction. Studies on spatial representation in media suggest that landscapes operate as symbolic elements in the formation of cultural narratives [9].

In the context of revitalization, the inclusion of local landscapes reinforces the relationship between traditional music and the territorial identity of the Acehnese community.

3.4 Key Finding 4 (*Youth Participation within the Digital Ecosystem*)

Several visual data points indicate the prominent involvement of younger performers in producing traditional music content. This suggests an ongoing process of cultural regeneration facilitated by digital media.

Cultural revitalization in digital environments is often shaped by youth participation as both content producers and consumers [10]. Platforms such as YouTube and TikTok enable traditional music to be presented in more accessible and shareable formats.

These findings reinforce the argument that digitalization should not be viewed as a threat to tradition, but rather as a new medium for cultural transmission.

3.5 Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the number of video samples remains limited to selected representations that met the research criteria. Second, the study focuses exclusively on visual analysis and does not examine audience reception or the influence of platform algorithms on content distribution.

Future research may expand this study through: more in-depth visual semiotic analysis, audience reception studies of Acehese traditional music in digital media, analysis of digital metrics (views, engagement, and shareability), comparative studies across different regions in Indonesia.

4. Conclusions

The findings demonstrate that the revitalization of Acehese traditional music through digital platforms does not merely involve reproducing traditional content within new media formats. Instead, it entails a significant process of visual adaptation.

Modern compositional techniques, the strategic use of cultural symbols, the representation of local landscapes, and youth participation collectively illustrate that digital media function as a space of negotiation between tradition and modernity.

Therefore, YouTube and TikTok can be understood as strategic platforms for the preservation and revitalization of Acehese traditional music, particularly through visual constructions that reinforce cultural identity within digital spaces.

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