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Beyond Dangdut: Documentation of WAWES Music Creativity in Yogyakarta

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Abstract:

“Wawes Bukan Dangdut Biasa” is a documentary film that explores a unique phenomenon in Yogyakarta’s alternative music scene, highlighting the transformation of dangdut music. Traditionally, dangdut was linked to working-class entertainment and influenced by Malay-Indian musical traditions. Today, it is being reinterpreted through creative innovation and modern styles of performance. The term Wawes means “waves,” symbolizing the breaking of boundaries and representing the creativity of younger generations who reshape dangdut to fit contemporary urban tastes. This study approaches the phenomenon through ethnomusicology and visual anthropology, focusing on how musical innovation emerges from the blending of traditional dangdut instruments such as ketipung and kendang with modern elements like electric guitar, brass sections, and electronic sequencers. A central aspect of the research is the performativity of Gaseng as a biduan lanang (male singer), which challenges conventional gender norms within dangdut traditions. The findings suggest that Wawes is not only a form of entertainment but also an adaptive strategy to reposition dangdut socially, countering stigmas related to class and modernity. By documenting performances through an observational film, this research shows how cultural negotiation takes place between traditional dangdut and Yogyakarta’s alternative music scene. It demonstrates that music can act as a medium of social change and

identity reformation. Ultimately, the study emphasizes that cultural legitimacy is not defined

solely by genre labels. Instead, it can be achieved through creative practices that remain relevant to social contexts and contemporary aesthetic values.

Keywords : Alternative Dangdut; Gender Performativity; Musical Hybridity;

Abstrak:

“Wawes Bukan Dangdut Biasa” adalah sebuah film dokumenter yang menyoroti fenomena unik di dunia musik alternatif Yogyakarta, khususnya transformasi musik dangdut. Dangdut yang dulu dikenal sebagai hiburan kelas pekerja dengan akar tradisi musik Melayu-India, kini mengalami reinterpretasi melalui inovasi kreatif dan gaya pertunjukan modern. Kata Wawes berarti “gelombang” yang melampaui batas, menjadi simbol kreativitas generasi muda dalam menghadirkan dangdut dengan cita rasa urban masa kini. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan etnomusikologi dan antropologi visual untuk melihat bagaimana inovasi musik muncul dari perpaduan instrumen tradisional dangdut seperti ketipung dan kendang dengan instrumen modern seperti gitar listrik, brass section, dan sequencer elektronik. Fokus khusus diberikan pada performa Gaseng sebagai biduan lanang (penyanyi laki-laki), yang menantang norma gender konvensional dalam tradisi dangdut. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Wawes bukan hanya hiburan semata, melainkan strategi adaptif untuk mengangkat posisi sosial dangdut di tengah arus modernitas dan stigma kelas. Melalui film dokumenter observasional, penelitian ini menggambarkan proses negosiasi budaya antara dangdut tradisional dan musik alternatif Yogyakarta, sekaligus menegaskan bahwa musik dapat berfungsi sebagai agen perubahan sosial dan pembentukan identitas.

Kata kunci: Dangdut Alternatif, Performativitas Gender, Hibriditas Musikal.

1. Introduction

Dangdut music, as one of Indonesia's popular music genres, has undergone significant transformations since its emergence in the mid-20th century. Born from a complex blend of Malay, Arabic, Indian, and local Indonesian traditional elements, this genre serves not only as entertainment but also as a reflection of the socio-cultural dynamics of Indonesian society (Weintraub, 2010). In its development, dangdut has continued to adapt to changes in technology, distribution platforms, and increasingly diverse audience tastes. In the digital era, the emergence of subgenres such as "jandut" (Jaranan Dangdut), dangdut remixes that went viral on social media, and dangdut EDM shows that this genre has a high adaptability to the context of the times (Arum & Anggara, 2023). However, the development of dangdut has never been uniform across regions; each city has its own dynamics in accepting, adapting, or transforming dangdut according to its local context. This is where Yogyakarta becomes an interesting case to observe, particularly through the phenomenon of Wawes, which presents the concept of "alternative dangdut" within the city's complex and diverse music ecosystem.

Yogyakarta, with its reputation as a "city of culture" and "city of students," has a unique and multidimensional music ecosystem that has long been a laboratory for artistic experimentation and cultural innovation in the context of contemporary Indonesia. The city is known as home to a variety of musical genres, ranging from traditional Javanese gamelan and kerongcong music to a highly productive indie music scene since the 1990s, creating a heterogeneous and dynamic musical landscape. However, dangdut—despite its popularity among certain circles—has tended to remain on the fringes of the city's "official" music map, experiencing marginalization within the implicit cultural hierarchy. Dangdut in Yogyakarta is often associated with village celebrations, single organ stages in rural areas, or entertainment in lower-class economic areas, and rarely finds a place in alternative venues or more "prestigious" music festivals. This situation began to change in the last decade when a younger generation of Yogyakarta musicians—who grew up in an era of information openness and cultural hybridization—began to see dangdut in a different light: not as a genre to be avoided or considered "provincial," but as cultural material that could be explored, questioned, and transformed through conscious and reflective creative practice.

Wawes' journey began with musical experiments by Gaseng (vocals) and Tony (drums), who rearranged Anton's pop song "Cinta Abadi" into a rock and indie-style dangdut track titled "Sayang," which then spread widely on Soundcloud around 2016. The success of this song lies not only in its fresh arrangement, but also in the formation of a unique and provocative

performative identity. Musically, Wawes combines seemingly contradictory elements: the rhythmic structure of dangdut drums with distorted indie rock guitars, melodramatic love lyrics with the irony and humor typical of urban youth, and a stage aesthetic borrowed from the organ tunggal tradition but presented in alternative music venues. Most strikingly, Wawes presents the phenomenon of “biduan lanang” (male singers) as the center of the show, a practice that shifts the conventional norm of dangdut, which often places women as the main objects of attention. This hybridity is not merely a collage, but a conscious creative practice to reclaim dangdut from its social stigma while still respecting the essence of the rhythm and energy that makes it “dangdut.”

Previous studies have provided an important foundation for understanding the phenomenon of dangdut transformation in various contexts. Weintraub (2010) shows how dangdut developed from Malay music into a genre that represents the identity of the Indonesian people, emphasizing the relationship between music, politics, and social class. In the context of musical hybridity, Juwariyah and Dharmawanputra (2017) examine OM Sagita's strategy of combining koplo dangdut with jaranan art, showing how music groups can transform and remain relevant in the creative industry. The gender dimension in dangdut has been explored by Ferlitasari (2021), who discusses the representation of women and social stereotypes, and Ulya et al. (2021), who examine the construction of Javanese masculinity in koplo dangdut songs. Although these studies have made important contributions to understanding the transformation of dangdut and its gender dimensions, there has been no research that specifically explores the phenomenon of “biduan lanang” in the context of urban alternative dangdut and how this gender performativity plays a role in the transformation of dangdut's cultural legitimacy in alternative music spaces.

Wawes' presence in the Yogyakarta music scene raises relevant and pressing research questions that need to be answered. This study aims to answer how Wawes transforms dangdut through musical hybridity and gender performativity strategies, how their creative process combines traditional dangdut elements with alternative music aesthetics, what are the social and cultural meanings behind the presence of the “biduan lanang” figure as a form of expression that challenges gender boundaries in Indonesian popular music, and how does Wawes' position in the Yogyakarta music ecosystem reflect shifts in the values and cultural legitimacy of dangdut in the contemporary era. To answer these questions, this study uses an applied ethnomusicology approach with a documentary filmmaking method that integrates musical analysis with visual anthropology (Banks & Ruby, 2011; Pink, 2013; Merriam, 1964; Titon, 2015), with the aim of not only producing academic knowledge but also a cultural archive that is accessible to the music community and the wider public.

2. Literature Review

Weintraub (2010) shows how dangdut developed from Malay music into a genre that represents the identity of the people. An approach that combines musical analysis with ethnography provides an important framework for reading the transformation of contemporary dangdut, especially in relation to musical hybridity and gender performativity in an urban context.

The concept of hybridity is discussed by Ramadhan and Wulandari (2023) in campusari music, which combines traditional Javanese elements with modern music. Juwariyah and Dharmawanputra (2017) examine how OM Sagita combines koplo dangdut with jaranan to create a unique musical character, relevant to Wawes' musical practice that embraces hybridity and genre experimentation.

Arum and Anggara (2023) show how modern koplo dangdut functions as a means of entertainment and emotional expression for the younger generation, providing a perspective on the acceptance of Wawes among the youth of Yogyakarta. The gender dimension is crucial in understanding contemporary dangdut.

Ferlitasari (2021) discusses the representation of women and strategies for dealing with social stereotypes, while Ulya et al. (2021) examine gender relations in the construction of Javanese masculinity in koplo dangdut. This study is relevant for understanding gender performativity in the phenomenon of "biduan lanang" (male singers), which represents a shift in the concept of masculinity.

The methodological approach of this research is based on the framework of applied ethnomusicology and visual anthropology. Merriam (1964) defines ethnomusicology as the study of "music in culture," while Harrison et al. (2010) and Titon (2015) emphasize the active role of researchers in collaboration with communities.

Banks and Ruby (2011) understand visual practice as an interpretive process that involves the researcher's subjective position. Pink (2013) developed the concept of visual ethnography as a way of knowing through sensory experience, with the principles of reflexivity, sensory knowledge, and collaboration. Ruby (2000) added the importance of reflexive ethnography, which acknowledges the influence of the camera's presence on the subject.

3. Methods

The documentary film "Wawes: Bukan Dangdut Biasa" was designed using a visual-ethnographic approach that integrates theories from Sarah Pink (visual ethnography), Marcus Banks (contextual interview), and Jay Ruby

(reflexive ethnography). These three theoretical frameworks were selected for their capacity to capture social reality in a profound, reflexive, and contextual manner—aligned with the film's need to explore the biduan lanang phenomenon and dangdut transformation in Yogyakarta. This method emphasizes direct researcher engagement with subjects, awareness of the camera as a social tool, and acknowledgment that the documentation process constitutes a dialogue between filmmaker and subject.

This research employed a qualitative design with a visual ethnographic approach. The research subjects were Wawes, specifically the core members: Gaseng (vocalist/biduan lanang), Bayu (musician), and supporting crew. Research locations included rehearsal spaces, performance stages, backstage areas, cafés, and daily activity spaces of subjects in Yogyakarta. The observation period extended from pre-production through production, with a total field observation duration of approximately 3-4 months. This approach was flexible and adaptive, following the dynamics of subjects' lives without excessive intervention.

Data collection was conducted through four primary replicable procedures:

- A. Participant Observation Participant observation was conducted by following Wawes' activities across various contexts—music rehearsals, stage performances, travel to venues, and informal backstage moments. Following Sarah Pink's framework, observation not only documented visuals but also involved experiencing the same social space as the subjects. The researcher used a handheld camera to record body gestures, facial expressions, interpersonal interactions, and emotional atmospheres. Each observation session was documented in raw video footage and field notes recording situational context, time, location, and descriptions of significant events.
- B. In-depth Semi-structured Interviews In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted in natural locations close to subjects' lives—rehearsal spaces, backstage areas, or cafés. Following Marcus Banks' principles, interviews were conducted in contexts allowing subjects to feel comfortable and authentic. Core questions were prepared in advance covering themes of musical identity, creative process, experiences as biduan lanang, and perspectives on dangdut transformation. However, conversations were allowed to flow organically to capture spontaneous narratives. Interviews were recorded using video cameras and separate audio recorders to maintain sound quality. Beyond verbal data, this process also captured non-verbal expressions such as gestures, intonation, and emotional reactions of subjects.

- C. Reflexive Visual Documentation Reflexive visual documentation was applied by acknowledging the camera's presence as part of the process. Following Jay Ruby's approach, the researcher did not hide the camera or pretend objectivity. The camera's presence was acknowledged, and subjects' reactions to the camera—both spontaneous and performative—were treated as important data for understanding how subjects wished to present their identity. This technique included handheld shooting for emotional proximity, slow-motion for performative moments, and use of wide and telephoto lenses according to visual composition needs. Each footage was given metadata including date, location, context, and director's notes.
- D. Secondary Documentation Study Secondary documentation study was conducted by collecting archives from Wawes' social media (Instagram, YouTube), previous performance videos, media articles about Yogyakarta dangdut, and academic literature on gender performativity and ethnomusicology. This secondary data was used for triangulation and enriching analytical context.

Visual and verbal data were analyzed through a systematic staged process:

- A. Data Categorization All video footage (observations and interviews) was reviewed and coded based on themes: musical identity, gender performativity, social interaction, creative process, and dangdut transformation. Interview transcripts were created to facilitate verbal analysis, while visual footage was grouped based on key moments such as rehearsals, performances, informal conversations, and audience reactions.
- B. Thematic Analysis Following Pink and Banks' visual ethnography principles, data was analyzed not only from verbal aspects but also from visual-sensory aspects—gestures, facial expressions, use of space, and atmosphere. Major themes such as "biduan lanang as gender performative practice" and "modern dangdut hybridity" were identified through recurring patterns in the data. Field notes and metadata were used to provide situational context for each finding.
- C. Narrative Mapping for Film Structure Based on thematic analysis findings, data was arranged into a non-chronological narrative flow following major themes rather than temporal sequence. The editing structure was designed using a music-driven editing approach, where Wawes' music beats served as transition markers between segments. Cross-cutting and jump cut techniques were employed to show contradictions and tensions between tradition and modernity.

D. Methodological Reflection Following Ruby's reflexive ethnography concept, the researcher conducted ongoing evaluation of the camera's presence influence and the filmmaker's subjective position. Every aesthetic and editorial decision was documented with ethical and epistemological considerations: how visual representation influences audience readings of subjects, and how researcher-subject relationships shape the generated data.

Research validity was maintained through data triangulation—combining visual observation, verbal interviews, and secondary documentation. Member checking was conducted by showing rough cut footage to subjects to obtain feedback and ensure accurate and ethical representation. Procedural reliability was maintained through systematic documentation: all footage was given complete metadata, field notes were made consistently, and editorial decisions were recorded in production logs. An adaptive approach was applied throughout the process—when field situations changed (performance schedules delayed, subject moods shifted), the script and film flow were adjusted while maintaining the established methodological framework.

4. Results

The primary outcome of this research is a 15-minute documentary film titled "Wawes: Bukan Dangdut Biasa" (Wawes: Not Ordinary Dangdut), which comprehensively documents Wawes artistic journey as a representation of dangdut transformation in Yogyakarta. The film captures the authentic voice and performance of Wawes through high-quality audio recordings and detailed visual documentation, including performances of "Sayang"—the band's first composition written by Anton Obama, which became the foundation of Wawes' identity blending dangdut koplo, urban elements, a grand brass section, and fluid stage expression.

The film reveals how Wawes successfully bridges traditional dangdut elements with contemporary musical innovations. Through detailed musical analysis of "Sayang" song, the documentary demonstrates the band's strategic use of:

- A. Ketipung as the rhythmic foundation maintaining dangdut's identity
- B. Electric guitar, bass, and drum set providing modern textures and urban sensibility
- C. Brass section (trombone and saxophone) creating theatrical and grandiose atmospheres
- D. Keyboard and sequencer introducing electronic elements and synthetic sounds (bonang, angklung, etc)
- E. Vocal arrangements combining Gaseng's expressive lead vocals with female backing vocals

This musical hybridity demonstrates that traditional genres can transform without losing their core identity, creating what Wawes terms "dangdut alternatif" that appeals to alternative music venues in Yogyakarta previously closed to this genre.

A significant finding documented in the film is Gaseng's performativity as a "biduan lanang" (male singer), challenging conventional gender norms in dangdut music. The documentary captures:

- A. Body gestures and facial expressions reflecting fluid gender identity
- B. Stage presence that defies traditional masculine and feminine boundaries in dangdut performance
- C. Audience interactions showing diverse receptions to gender-fluid performance

Through twelve slow-motion performance sequences, the film emphasizes Gaseng's body gestures as central to understanding how Wawes challenges the conventional dangdut aesthetic that typically positions women as the primary spectacle.

The film documents Wawes' social function by showing how the band brings dangdut to Yogyakarta's alternative music venues. Perspectives from five band members (Gaseng, Bayu, Gendhut, Bege, Anton Obama), crew (Pak Pethak as soundman), music observer (Michael), and fans provide context about social acceptance of the biduan lanang phenomenon and Wawes' position in Yogyakarta's music ecosystem.

The documentary successfully positioned Wawes within a broader cultural framework, demonstrating how the band contests narratives that dangdut is merely "kampungan" or irrelevant to urban youth. Michael's perspective—"Dangdut is not just music, but a mirror of social change"—emerges as a key message about contemporary cultural dynamics.

The implementation of participatory methodology proved successful, with Wawes members actively involved in directing the narrative and determining which aspects of their musical journey should be emphasized. This approach facilitated dialogue among various parties in Yogyakarta's music ecosystem and affirmed Wawes' value and significance in the local music scene.

Documentation Applying Sarah Pink's visual anthropology framework resulted in reflexive documentation that captures:

Backstage dynamics revealing intimate moments of band interaction

Spontaneous rehearsal moments showing creative processes

Sound check preparations displaying the chaotic but warm atmosphere

Gaseng's pre-performance activity

These elements, captured only through visual documentation, create a dynamic space for cultural reflection through the interaction between researcher, band members, and camera.

Achievements The film successfully employs:

- A. Handheld cinematography creating dynamic and organic visual narratives
- B. Warm-neon color grading establishing distinctive visual identity
- C. Music-driven editing where kendang beats and musical dynamics dictate visual rhythm
- D. Multi-sensory documentation combining six and a half minutes of live Wawes music, five minutes of natural ambient sound (venue atmosphere, audience cheers, band members' laughter), two minutes of narrative voice-over, and one and a half minutes of interview dialogue

The film's ten thematic segments—from introducing Jogja's dangdut scene to concluding with Wawes as a cultural movement—create an immersive viewing experience that functions as both entertainment and scholarly documentation.

As a living archive, "Wawes: Bukan Dangdut Biasa" documents an important moment in the transformation of contemporary Indonesian dangdut. The film serves as a reference for future researchers on the phenomenon of alternative dangdut and shifts in Indonesian popular music culture. It functions not merely as visual documentation, but as a meaningful cultural intervention contributing to understanding the transformation of Indonesian popular music while preserving an important moment in contemporary dangdut history.

5. Discussions

The findings of this research demonstrate that the dangdut transformation carried out by Wawes occurs through two main strategies: musical hybridity and gender performativity. Musically, Wawes maintains the ketipung as dangdut's identity while enriching it with electric guitar, brass section, and electronic sequencer, producing a formula that bridges traditional roots with urban tastes. This strategy answers the research question about how Wawes transforms dangdut through the combination of traditional dangdut elements with alternative music aesthetics, while expanding the understanding built by Weintraub (2010) about dangdut as a genre that continues to negotiate with modernity and Indonesian people's identity.

The musical analysis of the song "Sayang" in this documentary film reveals complex creative strategies. The ketipung functions not only as a rhythmic foundation but also as a marker of dangdut identity that Wawes maintains

amid their musical experimentation. This finding reinforces the argument of Juwariyah and Dharmawanputra (2017) about how dangdut music groups can transform through hybridity strategies without losing their basic character. However, unlike OM Sagita which combines koplo dangdut with jaranan to create "Jandut," Wawes chooses a different path by integrating indie rock music elements and brass section that provide theatrical and grandiose nuances. The use of sequencer and keyboard with synthetic bonang and angklung sounds demonstrates Wawes' courage in blending digital music technology with traditional acoustic instruments, creating a unique "alternative dangdut" identity in the Yogyakarta context.

Gaseng's presence as "biduan lanang" becomes a key element that breaks gender norms in dangdut. Unlike the research by Ulya et al. (2021) which examines the construction of traditional Javanese masculinity in koplo dangdut through three dimensions—functional (men as breadwinners), emotional (calmness and maturity), and intellectual (logical and rational thinking)—this research shows how Gaseng actually transcends these three dimensions by presenting fluid performativity that is not bound to standard masculinity constructions. Visual documentation in the film successfully captures body gestures, facial expressions, and Gaseng's stage presence that reflect gender identity transcending conventional masculinity or femininity boundaries. This marks a significant shift from traditional masculinity concepts toward more modern and inclusive ones.

The findings on gender performativity also complement Ferlitasari's (2021) study that discusses women's representation and strategies for dealing with social stereotypes in dangdut. While Ferlitasari focuses on how women face cultural hegemony and stereotypes in the dangdut world, this research shows that men can also become agents of change in questioning and reconstructing gender norms through performative practice. The "biduan lanang" phenomenon is not merely a role inversion, but a conscious creative practice to reclaim dangdut from its social stigma while opening space for freer identity exploration. The presence of female backing vocals in some parts of Wawes' performances creates harmony that symbolizes that gender expression is a broad spectrum, not two separate poles.

The combination of musical hybridity and gender performativity opens Wawes' access to Yogyakarta's alternative music venues that were previously closed to dangdut. This proves that cultural legitimacy is not determined by genre alone, but by the manner of presentation and its social context. As explained in the research background, Yogyakarta with its reputation as a "cultural city" has an implicit musical hierarchy, where venues such as Kedai Kebun Forum or other alternative spaces more often present indie rock, folk, jazz, or experimental music considered more "intellectual" or "artistic." Meanwhile, dangdut tends to be on the periphery

of the city's "official" music map, associated with village celebrations and lower-class entertainment. Wawes' success in performing at these alternative venues shows that the "kampungan" (provincial) stigma can be overcome through proper presentation strategies and musical innovation that respects traditional roots.

The applied ethnomusicology approach through documentary film medium proved effective in capturing the complexity of this phenomenon. In accordance with Merriam's (1964) definition of ethnomusicology as the study of "music in culture" and Titon's (2015) principle of collaboration with communities and producing beneficial outputs, this 15-minute documentary film becomes not only an academic archive but also a cultural archive accessible to the broader public and the Yogyakarta music community. This approach aligns with the spirit of applied ethnomusicology which aims not only to produce knowledge but also to provide benefits to the researched community and wider society.

The implementation of Pink's (2013) visual ethnography approach with principles of reflexivity, sensory knowledge, and collaboration proved successful in capturing dimensions inaccessible through written text. The film not only records what is visible but also presents sensory experience—bass vibrations in the audience's chest, the warmth of crowds, collective energy built in performance spaces, to the emotional atmosphere emerging from small spaces where Wawes activities take place. The use of handheld cinematography technique creates emotional proximity with subjects, while slow-motion in Gaseng's performative moments strengthens analysis of body gestures as a medium for questioning gender norms. Banks and Ruby's (2011) approach to visual practice as an interpretive process involving the researcher's subjective position also proved important, where the camera's presence is not hidden but acknowledged as part of the dialogue process between filmmaker and subject.

The active involvement of Wawes members in the production process—from discussions about representation to member checking of rough cut footage—reflects the principles of collaboration and knowledge co-production championed by Pink. This approach is not only ethical but also produces deeper and more nuanced understanding of how subjects want to be represented and what narratives they wish to convey. Gaseng, Bayu, Gendhut, Bege, and all Wawes personnel are not merely documented objects but knowledge co-producers who have a voice in the story about themselves.

The findings of this research also enrich understanding of how dangdut is received and functioned by young urban audiences. Arum and Anggara (2023) show that modern koplo dangdut music functions as a means of

entertainment, education, and emotional expression for the younger generation, especially through the influence of social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. This research complements those findings by showing that the young generation of Yogyakarta musicians not only passively consume dangdut but actively transform it into a form of expression appropriate to their urban identity. Wawes becomes evidence that the younger generation growing up in an era of information openness and cultural hybridization is beginning to see dangdut not as a genre to be avoided or considered "kampungan," but as cultural material that can be explored, questioned, and transformed.

The broader implication of this research lies in the understanding that dangdut as the most democratic and dynamic genre in Indonesia continues to negotiate with tastes, technology, and new platforms. Weintraub (2010) has shown how dangdut developed from Malay music to become a genre representing people's identity, with emphasis on the relationship between music, politics, and social class. This research continues that narrative by showing that in the digital and globalization era, dangdut can no longer be understood as a homogeneous or static genre. The emergence of subgenres such as "jandut," dangdut remixes that went viral on TikTok, to dangdut EDM—and now "alternative dangdut" à la Wawes—shows that this genre has high adaptive capacity to the context of the times.

However, this transformation does not occur without resistance and controversy. As revealed in the research, Wawes' presence in Yogyakarta's music scene becomes a subject of debate. Some circles view Wawes' approach as fresh air that breaks the stagnation of the genre, opening doors for experimentation and inclusion of new audiences. Others criticize them for being considered to distance dangdut from its authentic "people's culture" roots, even accused of merely exploiting dangdut as a gimmick to attract attention. Questions about authenticity, legitimacy, and representation arising around Wawes are classic questions in popular music studies: who has the right to define a genre? How does a musical tradition negotiate with modernity? How do relations of class, gender, and generation shape acceptance or rejection of a form of musical expression?

This research shows that cultural legitimacy is not inherent to genres but is constructed through presentation strategies and contextual positioning. Wawes' ability to navigate between traditional dangdut roots and contemporary urban aesthetics shows that the development of Indonesian popular music in the future may increasingly depend on such hybrid practices that honor tradition while embracing innovation. This finding contributes to understanding how young generation musicians in cultural centers like Yogyakarta actively reshape Indonesia's musical landscape and challenge existing cultural hierarchies.

Finally, this research affirms the importance of visual documentation as a method in applied ethnomusicology. The documentary film "Wawes: Bukan Dangdut Biasa" not only records a musical phenomenon but also becomes an accessible and engaging medium for disseminating knowledge about the birth of a new musical identity in the heart of Javanese culture. As a cultural archive, this film becomes an important record of how dangdut is renegotiated in the era of globalization and cultural hybridization, before this phenomenon transforms or even disappears. Thus, this research provides an important methodological contribution to the development of applied ethnomusicology in Indonesia, demonstrating that visual approaches can be a powerful alternative for studying contemporary popular music.

6. Conclusions

This research demonstrates that Wawes transforms dangdut through musical hybridity combining ketipung with modern instrumentation and gender performativity through the "biduan lanang" phenomenon. The documentary film captures how these strategies enable Wawes to gain acceptance in Yogyakarta's alternative music venues, proving that cultural legitimacy is determined by presentation strategies rather than genre alone. The applied ethnomusicology approach through visual documentation effectively captures this complexity and produces an accessible cultural archive. Research limitations include focus on a single case in Yogyakarta and emphasis on production rather than reception. Future research should explore comparative studies across cities, longitudinal analysis, audience reception studies, and gender performativity in other Indonesian popular music genres.

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