





Submitted date : July 29th, 2025
Revised date : September 12th, 2025
Accepted date : September 19th, 2025

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The Resonant Roots of Pappaseng: Seeking Musical Inspiration from the Film Kuru Sumange

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Abstract:: This article examines the creative process of creating film music inspired by the cultural heritage of the Bugis people, focusing specifically on the incorporation of pappaseng verses in the film Kuru Sumange. Pappaseng denotes the oral transmission of ancestral wisdom, moral guidance, and philosophical insights that have been repeatedly passed down through generations, embodying profound ethical and spiritual values that are intricately woven into Bugis culture. This study emphasizes how film music serves as a medium for revitalizing traditional values, enabling them to be reimagined and expressed through modern artistic e ces amidst the challenges posed by modernization and the diminishing presence of oral traditions. The study utilizes a Practice-Based Research (PBR) method, framing the process of musical creation as a method for gathering data and a way to interpret them analytically. This method intertwines the process of composition with the act of inquiry, transforming the music into a space for generating knowledge. In the case of Kuru Sumange, selected pappaseng quotations are converted into lyrics and further crafted into melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic structures that closely align with the film's narrative flow and emotional atmosphere. This transformation allows the music to serve not solely as an aesthetic enhancement to the visual imagery, but also as a means of conveying traditional values to contemporary audiences. The findings indicate two key contributions: firstly, film scenes serve as the main stimuli for musical creation, influencing decisions regarding instrumentation, dynamics, and thematic development; secondly, the philosophical dialogues found in pappaseng are skillfully transformed into lyrical content, thus connecting oral tradition with cinematic expression. This work showcases the considerable potential of music as a culturally

contextual and emotionally impactful approach for preserving culture, facilitating intergenerational communication, and creatively revitalizing Bugis heritage through local cinema.

Keywords: *Pappaseng*, film music, local cinema, Bugis culture, practice-based research



1. Introduction

The Buginese, or Bugis, constitute one of the main ethnic groups in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, distinguished by their rich maritime traditions, intricate social structures, and profound commitment to ancestral values. The Bugis language, part of the Austronesian family, is currently spoken by millions and functions as both a mode of communication and an important repository of oral traditions, literature, and philosophy. Central to this cultural heritage is *pappaseng*, a collection of ancestral wisdom and ethical teaching that embodies the Bugis perspective. *Pappaseng* serves not only as an oral literary legacy but also as an ethical and spiritual framework that promotes interpersonal interactions, societal behavior, and cultural identity.

The cultural heritage of the Bugis people encompasses a rich array of precious values transmitted through generations through oral, written, and quotidian traditions. According to Teng and Saleh (2022), pappaseng contributes to both an ethical and social discourse. This highlights that pappaseng in film is not simply a cultural connection but a vehicle for promoting ethical and social awareness. In this context, pappaseng is regarded not merely as a kind of oral literature but also as a value system that unifies the social and spiritual frameworks of Bugis culture. Pappaseng embodies the Bugis philosophy of life, which prioritizes siri' na pace, a moral framework that underscores dignity, empathy, and integrity, functioning as the cornerstone for robust character development, pride, and mutual respect, as highlighted by Suwindia (2022), Pelu et al. (2023), and Syahril (2018).

Amid the escalating tide of industrialization and globalization that threatens to undermine indigenous wisdom, the values inherent in pappaseng confront significant difficulties. Younger generations exhibit a preference for digital narratives and worldwide popular culture that provide immediate amusement, however frequently lack philosophical contemplation and local ethical principles. In this context, pappaseng is often regarded as obsolete, inconsequential, or neglected. These qualities are essential for cultivating resilient and morally sound youth. Handayani and Sunarso (2020), Syahril (2018), and Sudirman et al.(2021) point out that pappaseng possesses significant potential as a medium for moral education, as it encompasses teachings on virtues such as goodness, honesty, diligence, and social awareness, which are contextually relevant and applicable in daily life. Syaparuddin (2018) emphasizes the significance of the value of reso in pappaseng, symbolizing the spirit of perseverance and resilience as essential attributes for overcoming life's adversities. In the Bugis cultural perspective, "reso" constitutes a fundamental concept that represents effort, hard work, and consistent determination in the pursuit of life goals. This value is not merely understood as physical activity, but also



encompasses moral and spiritual dimensions, namely perseverance, resilience, and an unwavering spirit.

The declining practice of directly transmitting *pappaseng* has engendered an urgent necessity for revitalization strategies that are congruent with the cognitive and interactive modalities of contemporary generations. The significance of creative media is paramount in connecting traditional values with modern cultural contexts. Film has emerged as one of the most potent media for the transmission of cultural messages and the stimulation of collective consciousness. Film functions not only as a medium for visual storytelling but also as an entity that engenders affective spaces and emotional experiences through the utilization of cinematic elements, including music, color, and symbolism. The preservation of intangible cultural heritage, such as *pappaseng*, can be effectively supported by film as a medium of recontextualization. This approach presents traditional values in a contemporary format that appeals to and is embraced by younger audiences (Cheng, 2022). Furthermore, -Nugroho and Hardilla (2020) highlight that the responsibility for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage extends beyond local communities, necessitating collaborative efforts across various sectors, including the arts, education, and media technology.

The integration of film as a medium for the revitalization of cultural values gains heightened significance when it integrates with music, which serves to emotionally engage audiences and enhance the moral message conveyed by the film. Music possesses the capacity to shape atmosphere, promote meaning, and generate an emotional bond between the audience and the story being told. In this context, pappaseng goes beyond its traditional role as recited verse or educational content, emerging instead as song lyrics, musical atmospheres, or emotional narratives within film. Payán-Sánchez et al.(2021), Muslimin (2017), Siangphloen et al. (2024), and Budiawan et al. (2024) accentuate that the revitalization of local cultural values through contemporary artistic media, including film and music, becomes an effective strategy for reinforcing cultural identity while simultaneously addressing the affective dimensions pertinent to today's generation. The incorporation of pappaseng in film extends beyond its role as a mere traditional ornament; it serves as the essence of the narrative, shaping meaning, directing the storyline, and providing cultural resonance.

The film *Kuru Sumange* portrays the narrative of parental affection for a child an affection that is often unrecognized during the parents' lifetime but becomes deeply understood after their passing, when their words remain as lasting guidance. In Bugis culture, such advice is referred to as *pappaseng*, and the film incorporates this concept within both its narrative and musical structures, reflecting how contemporary media can effectively transmit ancestral values. The soundtrack, developed through a Practice Based Research (PBR) approach, transforms *pappaseng* quotations into lyrics,



melodies, and musical frameworks that align with the emotional and visual dimensions of the story. By doing so, *Kuru Sumange* illustrates that film music serves not only an aesthetic purpose but also functions as a reflective and affective medium that revitalizes Bugis cultural heritage for present-day audiences. This cinematic work was written and directed by Baso Indra Wijaya Aziz (2025), exemplifying a significant contribution to the regional film landscape.

2. Literature review

2.1 Pappaseng

Pappaseng epitomizes a form of local wisdom within Bugis society, functioning not only as an oral literary heritage but also as a foundational value system that shapes ethical and moral frameworks in daily life. Pappaseng, as a component of intangible cultural heritage, encompasses teachings that are transmitted from elders or traditional leaders to younger generations. Pappaseng is utilized in a range of traditional ceremonies, family education, and provides a medium for philosophical reflection in addressing the complexities of life.

Previous studies has highlighted that pappaseng incorporates both an oral literary tradition and a value system that determines the ethical and moral framework of Bugis society '(Hasmawati et al., 2023) and (Ediantes et al., 2025). The strength of pappaseng lies in its metaphorical structure, which facilitates multiple layers of interpretation, thereby enriching the conveyed messages and legitimizing social critique within a cultural framework that places a high premium on politeness and mutual respect. Furthermore, pappaseng is extensively acknowledged for its significant pedagogical role, particularly in the context of character education. Research conducted by Sudirman et al.(2022) and Willemsen and Kiss (2013) illustrates that the incorporation of pappaseng into educational materials or song lyrics can effectively serve as a learning medium, laden with significant emotional and cultural values. Consequently, earlier research highlights the significance of pappaseng in the realms of literature, education, and the conveyance of cultural values. Nevertheless, previous research has primarily ignored the potential adaptation of pappaseng into cinematic art forms, especially in the realm of film music. To this point, there has been no research that utilizes a Practice Based Research (PBR) approach to frame the act of music composition as both a form of inquiry and a means of cultural revitalization. Furthermore, the role of pappaseng as a narrative and emotional reinforcement in contemporary media, including film, has yet to be thoroughly examined.

The current study presents a novel perspective by identifying *pappaseng* as a source of musical inspiration within the film *Kuru Sumange*, utilizing a PBR approach.



The process of composing film music is conceptualized as a domain of knowledge generation, wherein cinematic scenes and emotional dynamics provide the basis for the transformation of *pappaseng* expressions into lyrics, melodies, and musical frameworks. In this sense, film music functions not merely as an aesthetic enhancement but also as a medium that is culturally contextualized and emotionally impactful. This research advances prior discussions that emphasized the literary, metaphorical, and pedagogical aspects of pappaseng, illustrating its potential in the fields of music and cinema. As a result, *pappaseng* is regarded not only as a cultural artifact but also as a dynamic narrative force that has the potential to connect traditional values with modern media, which will improve cultural awareness across different generations.

2.2 Film music

Film music extends beyond mere illustration of on-screen action; it actively constructs emotionally resonant narrative worlds, facilitates audience identification with characters, directs viewers' affective responses, and consequently enhances engagement with the story. Previous studies has highlighted its complex function in influencing the cinematic experience. Scholars argue that music not only enhances atmosphere, reflects character psychology, and supports dramatic structures (Tabak & Kendirci, 2024), but also directs audience emotions, builds tension, and deepens narrative immersion through its interaction with visual elements (Supiarza, 2022); (Willemsen & Kiss, 2013); '(Hammerschmidt & Wöllner, 2018), and '(Fuentes-Sánchez et al., 2021). Furthermore, film music has been conceptualized as a "second language" that conveys subtext, operates psychologically, and amplifies imaginative engagement, while functioning as a bridge between emotional expression and cultural transmission (Chattah, 2023); (Zhuang, 2023); (Krypchuk et al., 2025); (M. G. Boltz, 2004); (Fuentes-Sánchez et al., 2021); (Yan, 2022); and (Kvetanová & Rusňáková, 2023). While these studies emphasize the narrative, emotional, and cultural roles of film music, they predominantly frame their analyses within broad or universal contexts and infrequently consider the incorporation of indigenous oral traditions into film scoring. This study seeks to fill the existing gap by establishing pappaseng, a manifestation of Bugis oral wisdom, as the foundational element for the composition of film music in Kuru Sumange. Utilizing a Practice-Based Research (PBR) approach, the process of composition is redefined as a method of inquiry, wherein pappaseng expressions are changed into lyrics, motifs, and musical structures that engage with cinematic narratives and emotional dynamics. This research builds upon existing discourse by illustrating that film music functions not only as a narrative and aesthetic tool but also as a means of cultural revitalization, facilitating intergenerational



transmission and the preservation of local wisdom in contemporary cinema.

2.3 Local Cinema

Local cinema plays a vital role in documenting and voicing cultural realities that are often overlooked by mainstream film narratives. In the context of Indonesia's rich cultural diversity, local films serve as a medium of intergenerational communication, reintroducing narratives, symbols, and cultural practices into the public sphere. By exploring locally rooted themes, films such as *Kuru Sumange* offer alternative representations that are more authentic and grounded in the lived experiences of local communities. This is particularly crucial in cultural revitalization efforts, where film can serve as a medium to restore pride in cultural identity that has been eroded by the forces of modernity.

In *Kuru Sumange*, local elements such as the Bugis language, traditional symbols, and the values embedded in *pappaseng* are not merely cultural ornaments, but the narrative core that conveys meaning. Local cinema of this kind elevates *pappaseng* beyond a nostalgic symbol, presenting it as a living philosophy that remains relevant today. Through this approach, local films create opportunities for cultural education while expanding the reach of minority narratives to national and even global audiences.

The local cinema plays an essential role in documenting and presenting cultural realities that are frequently overlooked by mainstream film narratives. Within the framework of Indonesia's extensive cultural diversity, local films function as a conduit for intergenerational communication, reintegrating narratives, symbols, and cultural practices into the public domain. Through the examination of locally rooted themes, films like *Kuru Sumange* provide alternative representations that are more authentic and firmly anchored in the lived experiences of local communities. The significance of this is especially pronounced in initiatives aimed at cultural revitalization, wherein film functions as a medium for reviving pride in cultural identity that has been diminished by the influences of modernity.

In *Kuru Sumange*, local elements such as the Bugis language, traditional symbols, and the values embedded in *pappaseng* serve not merely as cultural ornaments, but constitute the narrative core that conveys meaning. The local cinema of this nature extends beyond the status of *pappaseng* as merely a nostalgic symbol, instead portraying it as a dynamic philosophy that continues to hold significance in contemporary society. This approach enables local films to foster cultural education and simultaneously broaden the dissemination of minority narratives to both national and global audiences.



2.4 Bugis Culture

Formal language cannot access the affective domains that music can reach. It resonates with collective memory, transcends generational boundaries, and conveys cultural values in a more emotional and personal form. In the context of cultural preservation, music serves as an effective medium for bridging the past with the present. Previous studies highlight the capacity of music to reach affective domains inaccessible to formal language, resonating with collective memory, transcending generational boundaries, and conveying cultural values in deeply emotional and personal ways. In the field of cultural preservation, scholars such as Muhtar et al. (2024); Daikoku et al. (2024); He (2024); and Murugesapandian (2025) emphasize that traditional music safeguards the continuity of local values and strengthens emotional connections across generations. While these studies affirm the role of traditional music in sustaining culture, they have not explored how Bugis oral traditions, specifically pappaseng, can be adapted into the medium of film music. The function of music as a strategy for Bugis cultural revitalization within cinema, combining aesthetic, emotional, and intergenerational dimensions, has yet to be examined in depth. This study offers novelty by positioning pappaseng as a creative foundation for film music in Kuru Sumange. Through a practice-based research approach, pappaseng is transformed from an oral narrative into a cinematic-musical expression that bridges past and present while engaging younger audiences. In this way, the research extends previous discussions by demonstrating that cultural revitalization need not be conservative but can instead be creatively rearticulated through musical cinema as a contextual, communicative, and intergenerational medium for sustaining Bugis identity.

2.5 Practice Based Research

Practice Based Research (PBR) is a research approach in the arts that places artistic practice as both the source and process of knowledge production. Unlike conventional research methods that emphasize external observation and analysis, PBR directly involves the artist in the act of creation as an integral part of the inquiry. In the context of film music composition, this approach enables musical exploration rooted in affective experience, cultural reflection, and creative intuition.

Previous studies have highlighted Practice Based Research (PBR) as an approach in the arts that positions artistic practice as both the source and process of knowledge production. Within the field of music, scholars such as Jatmika et al. (2024) and Ediantes et al. (2025) emphasize that creative practice can serve as a pathway to heightened awareness and the revelation of spiritual meaning that often escapes



verbal articulation. Similarly, Chitalkina et al. (2021) argue that the effectiveness of film music depends on its alignment with the audience's cognitive expectations, emphasizing the value of contextual coherence in shaping interpretive impact. While these studies affirm the role of PBR in connecting artistic creation, affective experience, and cultural reflection, they remain largely in general discussions of art and music, without specific reference to indigenous oral traditions or film scoring. This research addresses the gap by applying PBR as the methodological foundation for composing film music in *Kuru Sumange*, where *pappaseng* verses are transformed into lyrics, tonal structures, and musical motifs carefully aligned with visual dynamics and character emotions. In this context, the act of composition is not merely aesthetic but constitutes a transformative process of cultural inquiry, bridging Bugis oral traditions, cinematic storytelling, and audience perception. The study therefore extends previous scholarship by demonstrating the potential of PBR to function as an integrative method that combines artistic practice, cultural revitalization, and contemporary media.

3. Method

This study employs a Practice Based Research (PBR) approach, a method that positions artistic practice as an integral component of knowledge production. In the context of the film *Kuru Sumange*, music composition is central to the research process and serves as a means to explore Bugis cultural values through the cinematic medium. The film's music was composed by Dzulfitra Ramadani Mar (2025), a composer who has consistently developed works rooted in local wisdom over the past three years, particularly as accompaniment for performing arts. For this project, he was specifically dedicated to composing the soundtrack of *Kuru Sumange*.

The process of music composition was grounded in quotations from *pappaseng* and the film's emotional dynamics. Through stages of interpretation, reflection, and musical experimentation, the composer transformed *pappaseng* into lyrics, melodies, and musical structures that aligned with the film's narrative. Musical techniques applied in this process include thematic layering, dynamic intensity, and chord progression, all carefully integrated into the narrative framework. Thus, the creation of music is understood not merely as an aesthetic endeavor but as a research practice that revitalizes cultural values within a contemporary media context.

This research adopts a Practice-Based Research (PBR) approach, a method that places artistic practice at the center of exploration and knowledge production. In this context, the creation of film music is not merely regarded as an end product but as a creative process that serves as primary data for reflective analysis. The resulting artistic work becomes a form of articulation for the researcher's understanding of the



meaning of *pappaseng* and simultaneously serves as a medium for transforming Bugis cultural values into a cinematic format.

PBR allows us to view creative practices like music composition not only as aesthetic activities but also as independent research. According to Halbritter (2006), music in film represents a form of aural rhetoric that conveys meaning through profound sensory experience. Music does not stand alone; rather, it interacts integratively with visual and narrative elements to produce a product that is emotionally and culturally coherent and compelling.

The composition of music for the film *Kuru Sumange* was carried out by reflecting on the metaphorical meanings embedded in *pappaseng* and aligning them with the development of characters and dialogue throughout the film. Hou (2024) reinforces the process of music creation as a medium of emotional experience for the audience, arguing that viewers cognitively and emotionally construct musical meaning in film through symbolic elements and personal associations. This notion aligns with "'Druet (2024), who posits that musical representation in cinema can function as a psychological metaphor, portraying the characters' internal transitions that are not explicitly verbalized. Music thereby becomes a medium that bridges the inner world of the character and the audience through a symbolic structure that operates affectively and intuitively.

The music composition process also considers the integration of text, visuals, and sound as a unified multimodal framework. In his research, (Deng, 2025) emphasizes the importance of semantically mapping visual elements to musical components in order to create cohesive and meaningful compositions within the cinematic context. From this perspective, a guiding principle emerges based on the emotional and visual understanding of scenes. The music in this film was therefore composed to enhance the atmosphere, signify the emotional states of the characters, and function as a narrative device.

The creative process was conducted in several stages: (1) Identifying the meaning of *pappaseng* within the film and its dialogue, (2) Interpreting philosophical values into musical structures, (3) Exploring thematic motifs based on character emotions and visual dynamics, and (4) Composing musical notation based on the results of this exploration. Each stage was accompanied by a reflective journal and audiovisual documentation that captured the creative thought process throughout the composition. Through this approach, music in *Kuru Sumange* is not merely a complement but a consciously and critically crafted medium of cultural transmission realized through an artistic research process.



4. Results

4.1 Film scenes serve as the basis for musical creation

This study asserts that music in the film *Kuru Sumange* does not merely serve as an emotional enhancer or visual complement but functions as a primary medium for conveying and reviving cultural values, particularly *pappaseng*, the moral teachings and ancestral wisdom of the Bugis people. Through a Practice-Based Research (PBR) approach, the music composition process was designed based on interpretations of *pappaseng* verses and the film's emotional dialogues. The film's narrative structure intricately weaves musical techniques such as thematic layering, dynamic sound intensity, and chord progression into the resulting compositions. This approach aligns with the perspectives of Selva-Ruiz & Fénix-Pina (2021) and –Steffens (2020), who emphasize the importance of cultural integration in audiovisual creation, as well as with Krypchuk et al. (2025), who demonstrate the profound impact of film music on viewers' emotional experiences and narrative interpretation in *Kuru Sumange*.

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The creative endeavor incorporates local elements, such as the use of traditional Bugis instruments like the *suling* (bamboo flute). This instrument is not merely atmospheric but serves as a cultural signifier and intergenerational bridge. Its presence underscores how film music can be a contextual and aesthetic medium for cultural revitalization, embodying values such as *siri* (*self-respect*) and *pesse* (social empathy), which are central to Bugis ethics (Pelu et al., 2023) and (Syahril, 2018).

This study shows that cinematic and musical media can both preserve and creatively transform pappaseng, an oral cultural heritage. In Kur Sumange, music does not merely accompany the visual narrative; it serves as an aesthetic, educational, and spiritual conduit. In Kuru Sumange, music does not merely accompany the visual narrative; it serves as an aesthetic, educational, and spiritual conduit. This aspect reveals the powerful potential of local cinema as a bridge between tradition and modernity and as a strategic space for the preservation and transformation of local wisdom in contemporary contexts.



4.2 The adaptation of philosophical dialogue into song lyrics

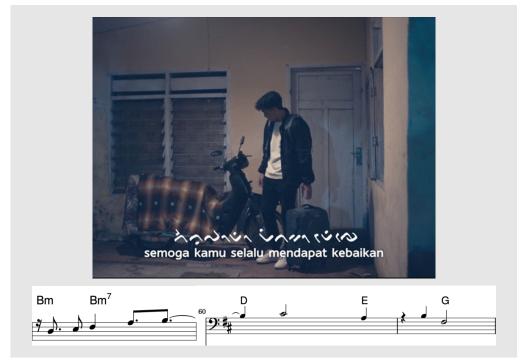
Figure 1. Film still and musical notation of Kuru Sumange'mu anakku



The musical moment in *Kuru Sumange* (as seen in Figure 1) begins as the lyrics are presented, coinciding with Aco's memories of a childhood memory involving his father. The process of "returning" aligns with the concept articulated by Jatmika et al. (2024), which posits that an individual can transcend material boundaries when memories derived from previous interactions with a specific material experience contraction or unification. This transformation modifies the manner in which individuals perceive and react to the present material, as a novel perception arises from the interaction between past experiences and current circumstances.

This moment is profoundly resonant with the father's exhortation to Aco: "Kuru Sumange'mu anakku" ("Be strong in spirit, my child"), which serves as the opening lyric of the film's principal song. The father's gentle stroking of Aco's hair serves as a poignant symbol of paternal love and care. The heartfelt expressions are articulated spontaneously, imbued with sincerity, following Aco's successful reading of the Lontara script imparted by his father. The composer, hailing from Bugis heritage, possesses a profound understanding and internalization of each word in the Bugis language. This understanding is enriched by his lived experiences from childhood to the present, fostering an emotional and cultural connection that significantly informs the musical composition.

Figure 2 . Film still and musical notation of "May you always be blessed".



The scene then transitions to a pivotal moment in which Aco attempts to run away from home. In his haste, he becomes entangled with the handlebars of an old motorcycle, a relic left behind by his late father. This motorcycle plays a significant symbolic role in the narrative arc of *Kuru Sumange*, as it has, from the outset, represented Aco's envy toward his peers who are gifted new motorcycles by their parents. In contrast, Aco's mother is unable to provide such a luxury due to more pressing financial obligations, including Aco's educational expenses and their daily subsistence. As this moment unfolds, a song begins to play, with the lyric "May you always receive goodness" resonating softly. This phrase, originally spoken by Aco's father, is a paternal benediction drawn from a traditional pappaseng.

Kuru Sumange's musical composition incorporates lyrics directly quoting pappaseng, symbolizing a pivotal moment where traditional values merge with modern cinematic storytelling. Lines such as "Kuru Sumangemu, Anakku" (May you always receive goodness, my child) are not merely vocal elements but serve as spiritual and moral representations inherited through generations in Bugis culture. When these phrases are rendered in a subdued vocal performance accompanied by traditional suling and acoustic guitar, a transformation occurs: oral cultural wisdom is transmuted into musical form, accessible on an emotional level to the audience. This artistic integration bridges the temporal divide between past and present, linking ancestral voices with modern aesthetic experience.

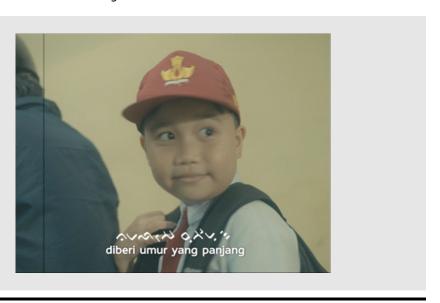


Figure 3. Film still and musical notation of "Keep weaving your success".



A flashback sequence (Figur 3) depicts a young Aco attired in his elementary school uniform, readying himself for departure to school, alongside his father, who is also preparing to leave for work. At the same time, his mother remains on the front porch, observing their departure. This scene embodies a moment of familial closeness and unity. The phrase, "Keep weaving your success," functions as both a paternal encouragement and a manifestation of optimism regarding Aco's future as he begins his journey toward achieving his goals. The portrayal highlights the notion that deep-seated happiness frequently arises from the uncomplicated nature of daily family traditions, exemplified by parents bidding farewell to their child with affection, warmth, and emotional encouragement.

Figure 4. Film still and musical notation of "Granted a long life".







The scene in Figure 4 presents a detailed depiction of Aco sitting on a motorcycle ridden by his father. Aco is depicted smiling and looking back at his mother, encapsulating a moment of joy and emotional fulfillment as he engages with both parents, which symbolizes a sense of familial completeness. The accompanying lyric, "granted a long life," serves as both a prayer and an expression of hope, articulating the parents' desire for Aco to be endowed with longevity. This blessing not only embodies aspirations for his future success but also underscores his position as a valued son and a source of pride for the family. The incorporation of this lyric into the musical narrative illustrates the manner in which emotional and cultural values are intricately interwoven through audiovisual storytelling, thereby transforming traditional pappaseng into a dynamic and affective heritage within the context of cinema.

Figure 5. Film still and musical notation of "Go forth in pursuit of lawful livelihood"



This scene in figure 5, poignantly illustrates a mother expressing her emotions as she bids farewell to her child, who is departing for school, while concurrently seeing off her husband, who is leaving for work to support the family. The lyric *Go forth in pursuit*



of lawful livelihood is in harmony with the visual narrative, illustrating the mother's pride and joy in observing her child's educational pursuits, alongside the emotional depth and hopeful sentiment as she bids farewell to her husband, encouraging him to earn a living through honest means.

This interpretation aligns with the theory put forth by Nagari (2016) in his work *Music as Image*, which asserts that the psychology of music aims to categorize the extensive range of emotions provoked by musical expression, encompassing both those that are consciously acknowledged and those that are experienced unconsciously by listeners. The notion of perceived emotions is fundamental to this framework, denoting the emotions conveyed through music and recognized by its audience. However, the boundary between recognizing emotion (emotion recognition) and directly experiencing it (emotion experience) is often blurred, forming a continuum of interconnected affective responses. The music in this scene transcends mere cognitive communication of emotions; it actively engages the audience in a profoundly immersive emotional experience, intertwining the visual elements, lyrical content, and the characters' inner emotional landscapes in a manner that is both affective and resonant.

Figure 6. Film still and musical notation "Be a leader, my child".





This scene depicts a mother positioned on the front porch, observing with keen attention as her son and husband leave, remaining stationary until they are no longer visible. This visual metaphor embodies the persistent prayers and quiet dedication of a mother, whose aspirations for her child's future achievements surpass temporal and situational boundaries. The accompanying lyric, Be a leader, my child, embodies both a benediction and a moral obligation, grounded in the cultural transmission of values and aspirations from parent to child. In this context, the role of the mother transcends mere domestic caregiving; it encompasses the emotional and spiritual realms, serving as a steadfast source of strength, guidance, and moral foundation. The depiction of the mother in the role of a homemaker highlights the relentless character of maternal labor, which encompasses ongoing emotional investment, the nurturing of family cohesion, and the instillation of ethical values, including leadership, in the child. The convergence of lyrical elements, visual storytelling, and cultural ideology serves to enhance the film's overarching aim: to convey traditional Bugis values through modern cinematic representation.

Figure 7. Film still and musical notation " A leader who brings to



The moment when Aco unveils the aged folder bequeathed by his late father elicits a profound sense of nostalgia connected to his prior encounters with both of his departed parents. As he halts on the concluding page and observes a photograph of himself at the age of three, smiling radiantly in his father's embrace while seated on a



motorcycle, the emotional intensity of the narrative culminates. Accompanying this moment is the lyrical refrain, a leader who brings benefit to others, which emphasizes the ongoing legacy of his parents' aspirations for Aco to develop into a wise and socially responsible leader. The lyrics in music have the ability to evoke profound and intricate emotions, especially those related to grief, loss, and longing. The lyrics function as a narrative medium, articulating meaning in a clear manner and allowing listeners to connect their individual experiences to the narrative being conveyed. In this context, music serves not only as an aesthetic enhancement but also as an essential medium for fostering a particular and intimate emotional connection between the viewer and the film's narrative.

Figure 8. Film still and musical notation "Do not live like a stone".



In this particular scene, Aco engages in the act of opening a drawer within his deceased mother's cabinet, where he becomes momentarily captivated by an antique metal wristwatch that was previously owned by his father. The lyrics do not live like a stone, adapted from a traditional pappaseng expression, reveal an emotional undercurrent that is brought to the forefront. This particular phrase was previously included in Aco's local language assignment on pappaseng, which he completed during his childhood with the support of his father. The moment possesses profound symbolic significance, embodying both a sense of temporal nostalgia and the essence of intergenerational memory. The wristwatch, previously donned on a daily basis by his father, serves as a concrete connection between the past and the present, thereby



reinforcing the cultural and emotional continuity that the film aims to convey. The narrative, through its visual and auditory interplay, revisits familial bonds while emphasizing the transformative power of inherited wisdom as conveyed through music and material memory.

Figure 9. Film still and musical notation "every human must have a good purpose in life".



The scene illustrates Aco in a stationary position, holding the iron gate while intently observing his residence. Concurrently, the lyrics, every human must have a good purpose in life, commence, underscoring the emotional weight of the moment and embodying a life philosophy focused on growth, perseverance, and resilience in the face of life's challenges. At this point, Aco is depicted donning his deceased father's metal wristwatch, a significant emblem of intergenerational legacy and his individual determination to uphold the family's values. His position at the threshold of the gate indicates a moment of contemplation, as though he is summoning the courage to move beyond the familiar boundaries of home and into the expansive world beyond. The black-and-white attire, often linked to formal employment, symbolizes a new beginning and a transition into a more mature phase of life. The nostalgic quality of the accompanying music amplifies the emotional impact of the scene, in accordance with the findings of Sedikides et al. (2021), who contend that music with nostalgic themes can elicit feelings of confidence, foster optimism, rejuvenate a sense of youthful vitality, and act as a catalyst for motivation. In this context, music serves to enrich the emotional aspects of the narrative while simultaneously functioning as a catalyst for the protagonist's transformation.



Figure 10. Film still and musical notation "If life does not offer any benefit".



The camera angle shifts to a frontal perspective of Aco, who is grasping the gate of his residence, thereby exposing a padlock that has been employed to secure the entryway. The lyrics, if life does not offer any benefit, correspond with the symbolic significance of the padlock. In addition to its primary role as a protective device that inhibits unauthorized access, the padlock serves as a metaphorical representation of the key to achieving success. This underscores the imperative of venturing beyond the familiar confines of home in search of both sustenance and moral integrity in the broader world, while concurrently reminding us that these endeavors are ultimately aimed at returning home, where one can share the rewards of their labor with cherished individuals. This scene exemplifies how ordinary objects, when combined with musical and lyrical components, can acquire complex philosophical significances, thereby enhancing the film's thematic synthesis of traditional values and individual development.

Figure 11. Film still and musical notation "Life is no different from a stone"







The scene gradually unfolds, following Aco as he walks away from his home. Initially filmed from behind, the camera angle slowly widens to reveal his shaved head and a radiant expression that conveys renewed enthusiasm and determination. The act of shaving one's head, in this context, serves as a symbolic gesture of shedding past burdens and embracing personal transformation following a pivotal life event. In both local cultural and broader social contexts, a shaved head often signifies the beginning of a new life chapter, commonly observed during milestones such as entering employment or starting university. This symbolic gesture is further accentuated by the accompanying song lyric, "life is no different from a stone," which illustrates the importance of continual learning and hard work. Without such efforts, a person risks becoming stagnant, akin to a stone: motionless, unchanging, and devoid of purpose in life.

5. Discussion

5.1 Voicing *Pappaseng*: Music, Emotion, and Cultural Identity in the Film *Kuru Sumange*

The musical composition in *Kuru Sumange* functions not merely as an emotional backdrop but also as an articulative medium that conveys the philosophical values embedded in *pappaseng*. Through a meticulously developed musical approach in both notation and arrangement, the poetic counsel of *pappaseng* is translated into melodic and harmonic elements that express advice, moral responsibility, and life reflection. This music acts as an emotional signifier, bridging the oral messages of *pappaseng* with the cinematic experience of the audience. This aligns with Zhang (2024), who asserts that music in film serves to reinforce narrative structure and evoke profound emotional responses from viewers. In this context, the primary musical theme derived from *pappaseng* lyrics such as *"Tenna podo mitako deceng"* encapsulates the essence of resilience, structured in a deliberate tempo and minor tonality to convey a sense of somberness that retains an underlying hopefulness.

The film's music further stimulates visual attention and enhances emotional resonance, particularly during climactic scenes where the protagonist, Aco, grapples with internal conflict between ancestral values and contemporary life challenges.



Traditional Bugis instruments such as the *kacapi* (zither) and *suling* (flute) are subtly combined with modern instruments like string sections and piano, creating a layered soundscape that is both complex and emotionally communicative. Kwon et al. (2022) assert that music not only enhances visual focus but also strengthens the viewer's affective engagement with the film's narrative. This aspect is evident in how recurring musical motifs in *Kuru Sumange* facilitate audience identification with characters and cultural context.

The musical structure in the film emphasizes thematic repetition and melodic variation to represent the emotional journey of the protagonist. This technique supports strong narrative recall, consistent with the findings of Boltz et al. (1991), who note that music can enhance memory and comprehension of filmic narrative structure. In several transitional scenes, motifs that initially appear in slow tempo are later transformed with faster rhythms and increased dynamics, musically reflecting character development and conflict resolution. Not only is this musical narration descriptive, but it also constructs meaning symbolically.

Furthermore, the use of *pappaseng*, both lyrically and as emotional inspiration within the score, serves a profound psychological function. The music in *Kuru Sumange* assists viewers in regulating emotions that arise while witnessing Aco's life journey. Schäfer et al. (2013) emphasize that one of the primary functions of music is emotion regulation and reinforcement of self-identity. Accordingly, the film offers not just entertainment but a deep and reflective aesthetic experience. Its music revives Bugis ancestral values in a manner that is both contemporary and emotionally resonant through cinematic aesthetics.

Vieillard et al. (2008) demonstrate that musical excerpts structured by tonal color and tempo can be classified into emotional categories such as happiness, sadness, fear, and peace. In *Kuru Sumange*, musical notation is deliberately designed with these emotional spectra in mind. For instance, the film's opening sequence employs compositions in a minor pentatonic scale with slow rhythms to create a contemplative mood. Additionally, findings from Ciborowski et al. (2021) show that deep learning approaches can even predict the emotional impact of film music, reinforcing the notion that musical design is a strategic tool for shaping narrative experience.

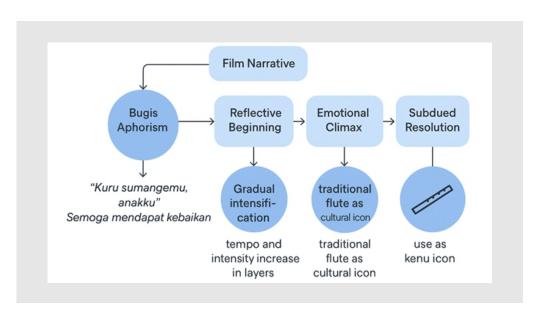
The use of musical symbols in the film also becomes an integral part of its narrative. Yan (2022) highlights that in youth-focused films, musical symbolism plays a vital role in conveying psychological development and identity conflict. This is evident in Aco's journey, which is musically depicted through variations of the main *pappaseng* motif, from melancholic minor tones in the beginning to reflective major tones at the end. Millet et al. (2021) further argue that emotionally integrated soundtrack design



can significantly enhance the viewer's affective response. Thus, *Kuru Sumange* not only tells a story but also embeds cultural values through a carefully curated emotional experience through musical creation.

5.2 Story-Music Mapping and the Articulation of Local Values in the Film Music of *Kuru Sumange*

Figure 12. Story – music pappaseng



This study demonstrates that the alteration of tempo and intensity within the musical composition employs the principle of layering, whereby musical elements are progressively introduced to facilitate a transition from a serene atmosphere to heightened emotional tension. This technique facilitates a direct response of the music to the fluctuations in mood and the internal conflicts encountered by the film's protagonist. According to Zhang (2024), film music has the ability to enrich storytelling by influencing emotional pacing, a mechanism through which music modulates the emotional experience of the audience. Similarly, Millet et al. (2021) highlight that a thoughtfully crafted soundtrack, especially regarding the choices of dynamics and tempo, has been demonstrated to enhance emotional responses and enrich the narrative impact.

The utilization of string instruments is equally significant, as they contribute to the film's overall musical atmosphere, infusing it with a pronounced sense of local character. The *suling* (flute) transcends its role as a mere complementary sonic layer, functioning instead as an auditory cultural icon that intricately links ethnic identity with the emotional landscape of the film. In specific segments, the string instruments elicit a sense of nostalgia, invoking values that are in danger of being overlooked. This



aligns with the findings of Muhtar et al. (2024), who emphasize the significance of cultural preservation via traditional music as a fundamental approach to conveying local identity. In a similar vein, Supiarza (2022) emphasizes the essential interplay between musical and visual components in the creation of profound meaning within local cinema. This section illustrates the seamless integration of music with the film's visual and narrative elements, while highlighting how music allows to revive and convey indigenous wisdom, particularly *pappaseng*, through a universally resonant and emotionally impactful sonic language.

6. Conclusion

This study asserts that the music in *Kuru Sumange* extends beyond its role as a mere emotional support element or cinematic embellishment; it operates as a fundamental medium for the transmission of cultural values, specifically *pappaseng*, which embodies ancestral counsel and moral instruction inherent within Bugis society. *Kuru Sumange* emerges as a medium that concurrently articulates Bugis-Makassar cultural identity through both cinematic and musical forms. Music videos that integrate film excerpts demonstrate a greater emotional resonance compared to traditional trailers, as they convey the essence of the film through the emotive strength of music and lyrics.

Using a Practice-Based Research (PBR) method, this study examines the process of music creation through the interpretation of *pappaseng* verses and the emotional dialogue present in the film. These elements are subsequently transformed into musical compositions that utilize thematic layering, dynamic intensity, and chordal progression, all of which adhere to the narrative structure of the film. This indicates that music significantly influences viewers' emotional experiences by creating atmospheres that enhance the significance of both visual and verbal narratives.

The visual elements of cinematic scenes serve as the foundational material for the process of musical composition. The musical composition evolves in direct response to the emotional dynamics inherent in each scene, encompassing themes of grief, longing, internal conflict, and hope. *Kuru Sumange* exemplifies how music can serve as a direct reflection of narrative atmosphere through its intense tonal progressions, shifting tempos, and expressive instrumental choices, rather than merely functioning as an illustrative background. Cultural values are intricately woven into musical arrangements, eliciting both sentimentality and spirituality.

Philosophical dialogues are reinterpreted as song lyrics. Selected quotes from *pappaseng*, including "Kuru Sumangemu, Anakku" ("May you find peace, my child"), "May you attain goodness," and "Be a leader, my child," have



been transformed into lyrics that convey profound emotional and spiritual significance. The selection of lyrics enhances the message's complexity while enabling the musical conveyance of cultural values, thereby reinforcing the relationship between narrative and audience engagement.

Furthermore, the film's musical composition integrates traditional Bugis instruments, including the *suling* (flute), which not only enhances the atmospheric quality but also serves as a symbolic representation of cultural identity, thereby amplifying the film's local character. The incorporation of these indigenous elements reinforces the idea that film music can function as a vehicle for cultural revitalization, both contextually and aesthetically, in alignment with the Bugis social ethics of *siri'* and *pesse*.

This study illustrates that *pappaseng* can be revitalized through the mediums of film and music in a manner that is innovative, introspective, and expressive. The music in *Kuru Sumange*, grounded in *pappaseng* values, serves to enhance the visual narrative while simultaneously acting as a medium for conveying profound aesthetic, educational, and spiritual experiences. Ultimately, this affirms that culturally rooted local cinema possesses the capacity to connect tradition with the younger generation, functioning as an essential platform for the preservation and evolution of indigenous knowledge in contemporary society.

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