



Tegalan Song: An Expression of Musical Culture Identity of the Coastal Communities of Northern Coast of Java

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Abstract

Songs, regarded as a form of musical expression, consistently mirror societal culture. This research aims to unveil and analyze the song *tegalan*, which serves as a portrayal of Tegal's cultural identity. The research employs a qualitative descriptive methodology. Data collection for this study involved scrutinizing *tegalan* songs, particularly their lyrical content, with the purpose of comprehending the themes depicting the unique identity of the Tegal community. In addition to observation, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with three notable *tegalan* song artists. A literature review was also undertaken to corroborate the research findings. The collected data was then distilled to extract information pertinent to the research theme, which was subsequently presented based on the interpretation of Tegal's cultural identity and then conclusively analyzed. The research findings indicate that within the lyrics of *tegalan* songs, four cultural identities are discernible: (1) the utilization of colloquial Javanese infused with the "ngapak" dialect; (2) the characteristic of spontaneous and sincere communication reflective of the Tegal community's culture; (3) the identity of coastal communities, which tend to exhibit straightforwardness; and (4) the diverse range of typical Tegal delicacies such as "sega ponggol", tea with palm sugar ("teh poci gula batu"), among others. Based on these findings, it can be inferred that *tegalan* songs, in terms of their lyrical content, epitomize the linguistic culture of the Tegal community in both structure and communicative patterns. Moreover, in terms of messaging, these songs convey insights into the identity and distinctive attributes of the Tegal community..

Keywords: identity; *tegalan* songs; lyrics; community

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INTRODUCTION

Studies have addressed the theme of cultural identity in songs. Within the context of Indonesia, several studies have revealed the types of songs that represent Indonesian identity. Research conducted by Al (2013) reveals "Keroncong" music as Indonesia's identity. According to this research, "Keroncong" was born even before Indonesia's independence (before 1945).

"Keroncong" has been found to have grown and evolved into the identity and personality of the Indonesian nation. Yuliantari examined cultural identity in Manggarai Pop songs (Yuliantari, 2018). The study aims to understand how Manggarai Pop songs convey the values and cultural identity of Manggarai. The research identifies forms of cultural identity in Manggarai Pop songs and several cultural identities within the selected song lyrics. Relevant to

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these findings, a study examining Slovenian Americans and Canadians found that they utilize Slovenian music and lyrics to preserve and express their regional cultural identity (Polka) (Šabec, 2017). Referring to the lyrics of the songs, Šabec discovered motifs and themes in Polka music such as fond memories, home, love and romance, comedy, ethnic history and Polka, pride in ethnic identity, and spirituality.

Studies have also connected songs to identity and other elements, such as ideology (Michael, 2017) and political identity (Hess, 2019). Batcho et al. (2008) revealed that the content of original song lyrics could explore the relationship between nostalgia identity and social connectedness. Other studies link song lyrics to identity as well as representations of specific ideologies. Michael (2017) identifies that FAK's songs represent protests of the political, religious, and social realities that define the African socio-cultural and political system in general and the Nigerian space in particular. A study in West Sumatra, Indonesia (Fraser, 2011) found Minangkabau pop songs, as part of the tradition, can represent the customs of weddings, ethnicity, and entrepreneurs in the region.

Researchers have explored the meanings of regional songs in different contexts in Indonesia (e.g., Sularso, 2017; Desyandri, 2015; Saptawuryandari, 2019). Sularso (2017), for example, studied the meaning of the song "Tembang Pangkur" and found that the song contains teachings of moral values that urge humans to restrain themselves from evil deeds. Desyandri's research (2015), which applied hermeneutic analysis, found that in Minangkabau songs, there are nine (9) educational values. Meanwhile, Ulandari et al. (2018), exploring local wisdom in the "Batanghari Sembilan" song identified the song as a means of communication between parents and the younger generation, as well as among the younger generation. Ambarwati et al. (2019), studying the traditional songs of Madura, found the presence of social values in the community, namely, values of compassion and respon-

sibility. Previous research has also linked performances to the identity of a region. In the "Cingcangkeling" performance in West Java, it was found that this performance represents the Sundanese cultural identity through the characteristics displayed (Gustina et al., 2023).

Apart from issues related to values, traditional songs often express things that are sources of pride and distinctive characteristics of certain communities in their lyrics. For example, research Guntari (2016) explored culinary vocabulary in Sundanese song lyrics. Based on the types of food, culinary vocabulary is divided into fruits, spices, main dishes, heavy meals, snacks, beverages, chili paste, and vegetables.

Within the scope of Tegal, research on the cultural identity of Tegal in songs remains limited. Previous studies have primarily focused on the musical structure and its elements. For example, research on "Terbang Biola Sabdo Rahayu" in Pekirangan Village, Talang District, Tegal Regency (Jatmiko, 2015), examines the utilization of the violin in *rebana* music performances. Meanwhile, research by Pratama & Wafa (2020) focuses on the existence of a music group from Tegal.

The *tegalan* songs studied in this research are among the distinctive songs of Central Java centered in the city of Tegal. As a pioneer in the emergence of this music genre, the late Najeeb Bahresy began popularizing *tegalan* songs with his hit single, "Man Droup Tukang Becak" (Mr. Droup, the Pedicab Driver). After being popularized by the late Najeeb Bahresy, his colleague Tri Widarti composed and sang some songs, including "Ketemu Maning" (Meeting Again), "Man Pian Bakul Bakso" (Mr. Pian, the Meatball Vendor), "Jaran Lumping" (Horse Dance), and "Teh Poci Gula Batu" (teapot and rock sugar tea).

In addition to these two musicians, several other artists also became active in creating *tegalan* songs in the subsequent stages. Imam Joend, a *tegalan* musician who is also the Chairman of the Art Council of Tegal Regency, launched his own

tegalan song titled “Trasa” (feeling) in early 2019. Imam remained consistent with songs themed around Tegal, such as “Kaligung” (the name of a river) and “Kelara-lara” (offended) (Fatuban, 2019). During the COVID-19 pandemic, Imam also released a song titled “Cintaku Dilockdown” (My Love Locked Down) (Bentar, 2020).

The enduring existence of *tegalan* songs to the present day is largely attributed to the contributions of musicians who continue to create and popularize them. However, a lack of understanding of their cultural identity has also diminished the community’s appreciation for *tegalan* songs. In relation to this matter, Imam Jendin Fatuban (2019) expressed that artworks created with reference to existing local characteristics will make listeners feel more familiar and easily recognizable. Therefore, listening to *tegalan* songs while understanding their various distinctive features will enable listeners to directly comprehend and appreciate them.

In theoretical terms, Tegal possesses coastal cultural elements that are inseparable from the geographical reality of Indonesia as an archipelagic nation. In relation to coastal culture, there is an intriguing study conducted by Triyanto (2020). In his research, Triyanto attempted to elaborate on the coastal (pesisir) community culture and found that within coastal art lies local wisdom reflecting the culture of coastal communities. Some of these include their renowned religious, open, tolerant, egalitarian, and spontaneous characteristics.

The term “pesisir” refers to an area situated along the coast. For instance, Java Island can be classified into two main areas: the western coastal area, centered around Cirebon and Indramayu, and the eastern coastal area, centered around Kudus and Demak. The latter encompasses the coastal communities and culture along the northern coast of Central Java, such as Brebes, Tegal, Pemalang, Batang, Kendal, Semarang, Demak, Jepara, Kudus, Pati, and Lasem-Lembang (Triyanto, 2020)

The coastal areas of the northern coast of Java were relatively distant from

the center of the Mataram Kingdom in the past. The strong influence of Islam led to coastal communities tending to perceive themselves as equal or on par with others. Their straightforward and spontaneous demeanor is also a distinctive characteristic of coastal community ethos. Communication is marked by the use of colloquial language, which tends to be ‘rough’ due to the utilization of informal speech forms (ngoko). (Thohir, 2017; Triyanto, 2020; Hidayatullah et al., 2022). In the context of language, “ngoko” is one of the language registers found in Javanese. This language is used by someone when speaking to others who are already known, similar in age, familiar, or younger. In problem-solving, the coastal communities of Tegal tend to go straight to the point (without small talk), hence often referred to as a community inclined towards an egalitarian lifestyle (Thohir, 2017).

Related to issues of cultural identity, Ting-Toomey (2005) depicts cultural identity as the emotional significance an individual attaches to possessing or feeling connected or affiliated with a particular culture. Consequently, individuals engage in cultural identification and perceive themselves as representing a specific culture. Stacks & Salwen (2009) argue that cultural identification is a way to determine whether someone belongs to the in-group or out-group. Adding to that explanation, Rahardjo (2005) explains that cultural identity is the way someone should behave in a particular situation and affiliate with a specific culture. Meanwhile, Lustig & Koester (2000) view cultural identity as a sense of belonging someone has towards a particular cultural or ethnic group. The two previous studies explain that cultural identity can also be depicted through music, rhythm, and poetry (Šabec, 2017; Yuliantari, 2018). Based on this issue, this research analyzes the cultural identity present in the *tegalan* songs as a locally popular music piece that remains relevant today.

METHOD

This research applied a qualitative method. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with *tegalan* song artists. During the interviews, the author posed open-ended questions to three prominent figures/musicians of *tegalan* songs. Two of them are early artists of *tegalan* songs, while the other is a descendant of a famous *tegalan* song artist. In addition to interviews, researchers also conducted observations on various secondary data sources that provide information about *tegalan* songs. The aim was to obtain more comprehensive and in-depth information. (Creswell, 2015; Noor, 2011).

Here is the detailed primary source interviewed for Table 1.

Table 1. Data of Tegal Song Research Informants

Name and expertise
Dhimas Riyanto. A songwriter. He is one of the pioneers of <i>tegalan</i> songwriters, inseparable from the history of the birth of <i>tegalan</i> songs. He is a contemporary of the first singer of the Tegal song, Najeeb B. Dhimas, who focuses more on composing songs.
Lanang Setiawan. Alongside Dhimas, Lanang is a songwriter and pioneer of <i>tegalan</i> songs. He is also a creator of <i>tegalan</i> songs in newspapers. He is one of the productive <i>tegalan</i> song artists.
Firman Haryo Susilo. Haryo is a puppeteer and cultural practitioner of Tegal Regency. As a puppeteer, he always sings his own songs and those composed by his late father, Ki Enthus Susmono, which notably use the Tegal language. Besides, he is also known as someone who supports the development of the Tegal language.

The analysis of research data was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data display, and verification or drawing conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data reduction is the process of analysis conducted by sharpening, categorizing, directing, and discarding unnecessary data. Data presentation is the activity of arranging a set of information for the purpose of drawing conclusions. Forms of data presentation include nar-

rative text (field notes), matrices, graphs, networks, and charts. Meanwhile, the verification results or conclusions obtained in the final stage of the research are important findings related to answering the research problems.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Like other regional songs, *tegalan* songs are rich in meaning and reflect their surroundings' culture and environmental conditions. Therefore, the creators of *tegalan* songs are individuals who have a cultural background from Tegal or have at least lived in and studied Tegal culture. Regarding the cultural identity reflected in *tegalan* songs, this research has identified four important aspects of Tegal's cultural identity conveyed through the lyrics of the existing songs. These four cultural identities are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Cultural identities of Tegal and examples of songs

Tegal Cultural Identity	Sample Songs
The use of language	<i>Cintaku Dilockdown</i> (My love is locked down) by Imam Joend
Straightforward and spontaneous	<i>Ana Crita Ana Kanda</i> (Story and Talk) by Dhimas Riyanto
Identity as a coastal area	<i>Tegal Keminclong Moncer Kotane</i> (Tegal is clean with a beautiful city) by Nurngudiyono
Culinary in Tegal	<i>Teh Poci Gula Batu</i> (pot tea with rock sugar) by Najeeb Bahresy

Usage of Language in Tegal Song Lyrics

Tegal Songs emerge and exist in the Tegal region as a cultural identity of the community, one of which is because the lyrics are composed using the Tegal language. Tegal songs use the Javanese 'ngoko' language with a "ngapak" accent. For example, one of Imam Joend's songs titled 'Cintaku Dilockdown' has the follo-

wing lyrics:

*Wis rong wulan
Nyong ora nyambut gawe
Akhire compete for tipis
Tabungane gripis
Kangen pacar nyong dolan
Nang umahe
Biasane nyangking martabak
Nggo bapane sing galak
Akibat lockdown duit entong
Teka apel terpaksa enyong
Tangan kosong
Laka modal seperak peraka
Kanggo nyogok calon mertua
Lagi guyunan karo pacarku
Ujug ujug bapane teka
Nggawa sapu
Ngromed, mendelik
Lan mucu mucu
Nyong kon lunga
Nyong gongkon lunga
Nyong pamitan ora olih salaman
Nyong mlaku gentayangan
Mumet belih karuan
Duh nelangsa nasib cintane nyong
Gara garane corona
Cintane nyong di-lockdown*

In this song, familiar words from the coastal community of Tegal are apparent. "Nyong" (I) "entong" (there is nothing left), "teka" (come), "laka" (nothing), and "nggawa" (to bring). In this text, the words described are unique to the coastal Tegal dialect, known as "ngapak" (Pratama & Wafa, 2020). "Ngapak" is a term the Javanese community uses to refer to the Javanese accent spoken by Javanese people in the western part of Central Java province, such as Banyumas, Cilacap, Tegal, and Brebes.

The use of "ngoko" style with "ngapak" accent in Tegal follows the argument Thohir (2017) that coastal communities tend to be straightforward and spontaneous. According to one senior *tegalan* artist, Dhimas Riyanto, around 90 percent of *tegalan* songs, including his own works, use the "ngoko" language. In Tegal, said Dhimas, there were only two out of the three strata of the Javanese language, namely "kromo" and "ngoko". Tegal has no middle language or "madya". Dhimas Riyanto elaborates further:

In Tegal, the common Javanese language is indeed "ngoko", and that is it. There is no reason. The tegalan language is indeed "ngoko". The main language is "ngoko". This is because Tegal does not contain three language strata. Remember, it only consists of two strata, "ngoko", and "kromo". However, "kromo inggil" (language for the high strata) is completely absent in Tegal. So, "ngoko" and "kromo". However, if "kromo" Tegal is used in the eastern part (Wetan), it still sounds rough; it is still part of "ngoko" (Riyanto, 2021).

Although using "ngoko" in Javanese, *tegalan* song lyrics are composed while still paying attention to meaning, like poetry. This is as conveyed by Lanang Setiawan, one of the *tegalan* song artists:

Most of my songs have poetic value; I arrange the lyrics so that I only create songs full of meaning (Setiawan, 2021).

Tegalan songs with "ngoko" Javanese language composition or singing are inseparable from the conditions of the coastal community of Tegal. This is as expressed by Riyanto,

As artists, we are responsible for informing the younger generation about our noble culture, and it is a blessing if they are willing to continue it. They must recognize their mother tongue (Riyanto, 2021).

Therefore, the lyrics of *tegalan* songs, along with their various characteristics, serve as a means of communication about the identity and distinctive features of the *tegalan* community.

The Characteristics of Communicating Openly and Spontaneously

Song lyrics in *tegalan*, as expressed by Thohir (2017), tend to be straightforward and spontaneous. This means they get straight to the point, often being perceived as 'impolite.' Therefore, people outside of Tegal might misunderstand when judging someone from Tegal based on the language they use. When we first listen to someone from Tegal speak, the initial impression is of 'rough' speech because it tends to be straightforward, blunt, and frank. Dhimas Riyanto gives an example

of one of his songs titled 'Ana Crita Ana Kanda,' which uses short and spontaneous words. The lyrics are:

*Jarene nang Tegal kuwe
Apa bae bisa digawe
Paling komplit industrine
Ana Crita Ana Kanda
Tegal kuwe Jepang Jawa
Wesi bekas wesi lawas
Dadi barang sing berguna
Golet dandang, Ya ning Talang
Pompa tangan, Ya Pagongan
Engsel grendel, Ora Angel
Sikil mesin, Lan Liyane
Ana Crita Ana Kanda
Jepung jawa nggoleti bapak
Melu nyangking melu nyinjing
Eben bisa mlayu mlencing
Tegal belih tau turu
Industrine akeh sing nunggu
Melek mata akeh rencana
Sederhana tapi nyata
Margasari... Gunung gamping
Balapulung... Mebelane
Lebaksuu... Matrabake
Nang Bogares... Kacang Asine
Adiwerna... Ya Satene
Randugunting... Kupat Glabed te
Nang Babakan... Pesantrene
Pasar Senggol... Sautone*

Riyanto commented on his song creation as follows:

Ana Cerita Ana Kanda... it does not exist in other regions; there is no term like that. Inside, it is straightforward and spontaneous (Riyanto, 2021).

Haryo Susilo, a young artist and puppeteer from Tegal, conveyed similar statements. The straightforwardness and spontaneity of people from Tegal when meeting fellow Tegal residents could be a language of romance. However, meeting Javanese people from outside Tegal may sound harsh. Lanang Setiawan, when asked if there were *tegalan* songs with harsh words, initially answered no. He expressed the following:

As far as I know, the lyrics of the Tegal songs never use harsh language (Setiawan, 2021).

However, in the end, Setiawan corrected his answer by giving an example of a *tegalan* song that uses language that

could offend others. For example, the song titled "Dasar Kunyuk" by Atik Apriyanti. Dhimas Riyanto also acknowledged this example:

There is coarse ngoko, "Dasar Kunyuk" (you monkey!), which means 'to be beaten up.' We do have songs like that in Tegal (Riyanto, 2021).

The song with the word "kunyuk" (monkey) is a satire of unexpected situations in society. This satire is also straightforward by using the word 'kunyuk'. The correction of Lanang Setiawan's answer, which initially stated that it did not contain harsh words, might be due to confusion in interpreting the meaning of the word 'harsh'. In this context, the word 'harsh' needs to be redefined. If everyone in a certain place uses words that are considered harsh or sound harsh to outsiders, then that should not be considered harsh. So, harshness should be viewed by whom and where it is used.

Moreover, being rough in speech should not be interpreted as having a rough heart or having rough behavior. A similar sentiment was also expressed by *tegalan* song artist Firman Haryo Susilo (Haryo), who stated that outsiders perceive harsh words as such because they are not accustomed to hearing and saying such words. Haryo's expression regarding this matter:

It is considered rough when *tegalan* songs are sung in Central Java, and those listening are not from Tegal, making it sound rough (Susilo, 2021).

Dhimas Riyanto argues that the straightforward, frank, and blunt language used in *tegalan* songs should be embraced as it is one of Tegal's distinctive characteristics. He expressed it:

The uniqueness of the Tegal community lies in their honesty and lack of deceit. When I compose *tegalan* songs, their character is close to that. This means the issues addressed should not be taken too seriously; if they are too severe, no one will listen to them (Riyanto, 2021).

Dhimas explained that when composing *tegalan* songs, he avoids making

sentences or tones that are too serious. For example, the song titled “Sendehan Lawang”. This song aesthetically portrays the love of the Tegal community with sweet and characterful elements. Unfortunately, according to Dhimas, the song was less popular and less accepted by society. Conversely, another song titled “Ngodor Dewek” even went viral. Regarding this phenomenon, Riyanto stated:

It means Tegal should be like that... more vulgar (harsh) (Riyanto, 2021)

According to Dhimas Riyanto, most of the existing Tegalan songs contain the context of Tegal, such as environmental issues, nature, society, and the culture existing within the community. From the perspective of Tegal residents, the straightforward language culture of the Tegal community is not considered as rough language. In fact, if *tegalan* songs were composed based on the language and perspective used in Javanese songs from the Yogyakarta, Surakarta, and surrounding areas, it would seem strange (Riyanto, 2021). The characteristic of *tegalan* songs seems to be relevant to Triyanto’s argument (2020) that Tegal community is open, tolerant, straightforward, and spontaneous.

Cultural Identity of Coastal Areas Reflected in the Lyrics of Tegalan Songs

The songs of Tegal depict the identity of Tegal as a coastal region. For instance, this is evident in the song ‘Tegal Keminclong Moncer Kotane’ (The Beauty of Tegal) by Nurngudiono. The description of the coastal environment of the city area is portrayed through the lyrics:

*Pan balik ya mana los pan balik ya mana los
Enyong ora bakal ngganduli
Ana sate ana auto
Aja nggajog aja mlongo
Keminclong segarane keminclong segarane
Kinclong kinclong bening kaya kaca
Resik resik sawise didis
Ora sisik ora busik kabeh kalis
Ora nyana ora ngira kota Tegal saiki keminclong
Angger awan sedep disawang
Angger bengi padang njimbrang
Moncer moncer moncer kotane*

In addition to depicting the beauty of the city of Tegal, this song text mentions the beauty of Tegal’s position located in the coastal area. For example, the phrase “keminclong segarane” reflects Tegal being situated in a coastal area with clear and beautiful sea. The values conveyed in this song include the notion that the beauty and cleanliness of Tegal should be preserved and conserved. Another example is illustrated by Setiawan (2021) through the song “Wulan Bunder Nduwur Laut Muarareja” by Nurngudiono narrate the beauty of the Tegal Sea and the conditions of its fishermen. Other songs themed around the beauty of Tegal beaches can also be found in the works of Dhimas Riyanto, such as in the song titled “Tembang Pesisir” (Coastal Song), “Sing Nalar” (Understanding), and “Kang Daroji” (Mr. Daroji), as well as in the works of Imam Joend (Riyanto, 2021).

The Variety of Typical Foods and Beverages of Tegal as Part of the Concept of Composing Tegalan Song Lyrics

In the lyrics of *tegalan* songs, there are numerous mentions of typical dishes that are the pride of the Tegal community. Some of these include “Teh Poci Gula Batu”, “Tahu Plethok”, “Ndog Asin Brebes”, “Sate Tegal”, and “Rujak Kluban”. For example, “Teh Poci Gula Batu” is not just the title of a song, but its lyrics contain descriptions of the tradition of tea drinking in the Tegal community. The arrangement of the lyrics of “Teh Poci Gula Batu” in the form of a poem language model:

*Teh poci mas manis gulo Jowo
Mampir mriki bakule mbak ayu
Kerso ngunjuk teh poci biso kagem jampi
Jampi wuyung sing lagi gandrung
E sajake mas ono sing dikarepke
Milih mriki nopo milik kae
Pripun mas pie yen arep naksir bloko wae
Akeh liyane malah milik bakule
Pripun badhe manut wae
Teh poci dik manis gulo jowo
Pados jampi malah nemu rondo
Rondo soko brang wetan duwite segudang
Ngajak dolan pados hiburan
E sajake ono sing dikarepke
Pingin disko opo karaqoke*

*E pripun, e piye yen kesel ayo bali wae
Mumpung isih sore penake diteruske
Pripun aku manut wae*

"Teh Poci Gula Batu", as acknowledged by Dhimas Riyanto, is one of the activities of the Tegal community. This is included as an element of the identity of the coastal community of Tegal, known in Tegal as the Moci Culture. Setiawan (2021) also acknowledges the presence of Tegalan songs within Tegal's typical foods and beverages:

For example, the song 'Jajanan Tegal' by Dhimas Riyanto. Its lyrics utilize the names of typical snacks from Tegal (Setiawan, 2021).

Regarding his created songs themed around unique culinary delights found exclusively in Tegal, such as "Sega Ponggol" (wrapped rice with *tempeh* and spicy fried sauce), and "Jajanan Pantura" (North coast snacks), Dhimas Riyanto stated:

'Sega Ponggol' and 'Jajanan Pantura' are also my songs. The song 'Jajanan Pantura' made it to the top three in Central Java Province, indicating that *Central Java recognizes Tegal's cuisine* (Riyanto, 2021).

In summary, *tegalan* song lyrics, although not all explicitly convey the identity of the Tegal community, are believed to represent the emotional structure of the Tegal community. The values held by the people of Tegal serve as differentiators from other communities.

Songs with lyrics about typical Tegal foods depict culinary specialties and reflect popular foods among the Tegal community. For instance, the song "Ana Sate Ana Sauto" portrays the unique and popular foods among the people of Tegal. Similarly, the song "Tempe Mendoan" highlights a specific type of processed food made from *tempeh*, with a distinct process and form compared to other regions in Central Java.

Cultural identity in Tegalan songs can be understood as a cultural identity involving one's emotions. Ting-Toomey suggests that when someone identifies with something through a song, they affiliate themselves with the culture conveyed in

that song (Ting-Toomey, 2005). Those who listen to these songs engage in cultural identification, considering themselves as representing the culture contained within the song.

In their natural state, a singer of Tegalan songs undoubtedly has emotions towards the songs they perform. Therefore, when these songs are listened to by someone or the Tegal community, the listeners feel themselves to be a part of the song. In this context, the values and distinctive characteristics of the Tegal community serving as their identity, as conveyed by Thohir (2017), can be effectively conveyed through Tegalan songs as a medium.

The themes that Šabec (2017) offered in their research on Slovenian diaspora communities are partly found in Tegalan songs. Similar themes in both Tegalan and Polka songs are nostalgic memories, family life, love and romance, humor, and spirituality. However, some culinary-themed songs found in Tegalan music are not present within the themes of Polka music. The interpretation of each theme is influenced by the cultural activities of each respective community. For example, the theme of "nostalgic memories" in Polka music is manifested in the form of communal tea-drinking events, as expressed in the song "Teh Poci Gula Batu" within the Tegal community. Whereas in Slovenian American and Canadian communities, it may be expressed through different activities.

There are several cues to identify these values. Firstly, *tegalan* songs are preserved and archived, easily accessible through digital tools since the song "Man Draup Tukang Becak" was released. Therefore, anyone seeking to understand will never forget the context depicted in *tegalan* songs. "Man Draup" is a fictional character in *tegalan* songs by Najeeb Bahresy, which remains popular from past to present. Secondly, *tegalan* songs depict what exists in Tegal, which may eventually disappear over time. Thus, the moral value of *tegalan* songs lies in reminiscing about what once existed in Tegal, whether it be activities, arts, or cuisine. Hence, *tegalan* songs carry

a message of remembering Tegal's past as part of its history.

It is interesting to incorporate what Chingiz Aitmatev wrote, stating that life, death, love, passion, and inspiration are all narrated through music because we achieve the highest freedom through music. He believes that the struggle throughout history can only be achieved through music (Abdukhalimovna, 2020).

Therefore, *tegalan* songs can inspire the present and future generations about what Tegal's artists have created throughout history.

Thirdly, several artists in Tegal consistently create them. This indicates that these songs are recognized, exist, and hold values that deserve high esteem. These three aspects demonstrate the presence of cognitive and behavioral identity dimensions, as proposed by Hecht et al. (2005), and their behavior shows that they are affiliated with the Tegal community, as suggested Rahardjo (2005). The sense of belonging to a particular culture or ethnicity (Lustig & Koester, 2000), as expressed by the people of Tegal through *tegalan* songs, demonstrates that they are part of the community.

CONCLUSION

The *tegalan* songs reflect the characteristics that constitute the identity of the community, social status, and several aspects related to the culture and potential of the Tegal community. Firstly, like other regional songs that utilize their respective local languages in Indonesia, the songs also employ the Tegal Javanese language as their distinctive feature. Interestingly, people outside Tegal often misunderstand the use of the "ngoko" Javanese language as 'coarse'. Therefore, this research finding reveals and paves the way for a better understanding and redefining the meaning of "ngoko".

Secondly, the spontaneous and straightforward lyrics of *tegalan* songs are characteristic of the Tegal community. This characteristic is not arbitrary but

has historical arguments. Thirdly, Tegal is a coastal area whose community characteristics are often expressed in these songs as an egalitarian society. Fourthly, *tegalan* songs often express themes of identity and distinctive characteristics present in Tegal as an expression of their love for the Tegal community.

In summary, *tegalan* songs are not just entertaining songs but also serve as the identity of the Tegal community. This identity is not only due to the use of the Tegal language but also because of the content of the lyrics, which possess the characteristic of the Tegal community being straightforward and spontaneous. The proximity of the Tegal community to the sea and its distance from the center of the Mataram Kingdom make them more egalitarian, open to outsiders, placing others in equal positions, and being straightforward.

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