

Echoes of Tradition: PADAT's Strategies for Selangor Cempuling Music Preservation

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ABSTRACT

Selangor, the most developed and populous state in Malaysia, is currently inhabited by about 7.4 million people of various ethnicities and is often referred to as a melting pot of cultures. However, much of its cultural heritage is on the verge of extinction due to the influence of technological advancements and the declining interest of younger generations. Recognising the importance of preserving these cultural traditions and heritage, the Selangor state government established the Perbadanan Adat Melayu dan Warisan Negeri Selangor (PADAT), formerly known as the Selangor Museum Board. Since its founding in 2009, PADAT has made numerous efforts to not only preserve but also promote the various cultural traditions of the people of Selangor, including the traditional music known as cempuling. Thus, this paper intends to examine PADAT's strategies to preserve cempuling music, focusing on the period between 2014 and 2024. This research utilises a qualitative approach, collecting data through participant observations, document analysis, and interviews with PADAT officers and musicians. The findings show that PADAT adopts a community- and education-centred approach, complemented by robust information management practices to promote and sustain cempuling music of Selangor.

Keywords—Cempuling; Preservation; Music-Culture; PADAT

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia, a country in Southeast Asia, comprises thirteen states and three federal territories, and is inhabited by approximately 34.1 million people (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2024). The country is made up of two separate geographical regions, namely Peninsular Malaysia (or West Malaysia) and East Malaysia (located on the island of Borneo). The former includes eleven states, including Selangor. With a population of 7.4 million, Selangor is the most populous and developed state in Malaysia due to its strong economic performance and infrastructure. It is home to various ethnic groups, including those of Indonesian origin, such as the Javanese, Buginese, Sundanese, Acehnese, and Minangkabau, among others. The diverse ethnic composition is evident in its distribution across the state's nine districts, with the Javanese being one of the major ethnic groups living mainly in the districts of Kuala Selangor, Klang, and Hulu Langat (Khazin Mohd. Tamrin, 1984).

Push-pull factors drove the Javanese to migrate to the Malay Land (Tanah Melayu) in the 19th century (Ramsay, 1956). Economic and social factors, as well as pressure from the colonial government, were the main reasons that prompted them to emigrate. Most Javanese came from Ponorogo, East Java, from where they settled in Selangor, Perak, and Johor. They worked in agriculture and as laborers on plantations, during which they assimilated and adopted the local culture, especially that of the Malays. Today, the descendants of the Javanese now refer to themselves as Javanese Malays or some simply as 'Malays.'

Like other immigrant groups, the Javanese also brought their culture and customs with them. Due to the large number of Indonesian immigrants, Selangor is known as a melting pot of cultures, encompassing diverse cultural traditions, including food, clothing, language, rituals, ceremonies, and the performing arts, such as music. The Javanese Malays are renowned for their traditional foods and delicacies such as *Nasi Ambeng*, *Lemper*, *Pecal*, and *Sambal Goreng*. Additionally, they are also known for their communal nature and often participate in *gotong royong*, a practice of communal cooperation, especially during important ceremonies such as weddings and circumcisions.

The declining inclination towards adopting ancestral customs, particularly among younger generations, is another contributing factor to the loss of many traditions. This includes the gradual disappearance of Javanese Malay intangible heritage, particularly the music culture, in modern society. The shift in societal priorities toward global technology, social media, and electronic devices has contributed to a decline in the interest in practicing traditional customs. If the Javanese Malays fail to preserve these customs quickly, they risk losing their cultural identity. Recognizing this potential loss, the Selangor state government, which has long been instrumental in preserving local heritage, established the *Perbadanan Adat Melayu dan Warisan Negeri Selangor* (PADAT) to protect, promote, and preserve Selangor's cultural heritage.

The Perbadanan Adat Melayu dan Warisan Negeri Selangor (PADAT), or the Selangor Malay Customs and Heritage Corporation, was initially established as the Selangor Museum Board (*Lembaga Muzium Selangor*). In this capacity, it manages the state museum, *Muzium Sultan Alam Shah*, located in Shah Alam. However, with its inauguration on 18 June 2009, PADAT's role expanded to include not only museum-related work but also the development, preservation, and dissemination of Selangor's culture, traditions, and heritage. According to the State of Selangor Malay Custom and Heritage Corporation Enactment 2009 (Enactment No.4/2009), PADAT's functions include: 1. To stimulate public interest and support in the preservation and dissemination of knowledge of the State of Selangor custom, Malay culture, and historical heritage; 2. To preserve monuments and exhibits of historic, traditional, archaeological, architectural, or artistic interest; 3. To protect and augment the amenities relating to aspects of the state of Selangor Malay custom and heritage, and exhibit and 4. To take appropriate measures to preserve all historical objects, heritage objects, monuments, records, documents, and exhibits (Enakmen Perbadanan Adat Melayu dan Warisan Negeri Selangor, 2009). In general, PADAT serves as the custodian and gatekeeper of Selangor's heritage, both tangible and intangible, and is answerable not only to the state government but also to the ruler of Selangor, the Sultan of Selangor.

Entrusted with the preservation of Selangor's cultural tapestry, PADAT is dedicated to safeguarding its traditions and heritage. From its inception as Lembaga Muzium Selangor before 2009, PADAT has consistently promoted Selangor's traditions, with a particular emphasis on engaging the local community. A notable example of this dedication is its ongoing effort to maintain and promote *cempuling*, a Javanese Malay traditional music integral to ceremonial occasions. Cempuling's enduring presence in villages and its burgeoning popularity in schools, where PADAT has fostered the growth of numerous performance ensembles, underscores its continued significance. Acknowledging cempuling's enduring presence and its ongoing prominence in performances at state, national, and international levels, this paper analyzes PADAT's preservation strategies for this musical heritage from 2014 to 2024. Furthermore, it seeks to answer the following research questions: 1. What strategies has PADAT employed in the preservation of cempuling music? 2. How effective are these strategies in ensuring the long-term sustainability of cempuling?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The discourse surrounding cultural heritage preservation is multifaceted, encompassing a wide array of strategies, challenges, and theoretical underpinnings (Suaib et al., 2020). Preserving cultural heritage requires specialized expertise to formulate effective strategies, particularly given the cumulative nature of heritage itself (Gražulevičiūtė, 2006). Cultural heritage preservation requires a nuanced understanding of historical context, social dynamics, and artistic traditions to ensure the longevity of cultural expressions (Shukri et al., 2018). Recognizing cultural preservation as a strategic endeavor allows for the development of comprehensive plans that address both the tangible and intangible aspects of heritage (Talib & Sunarti, 2021). These plans often incorporate elements of documentation, conservation, education, and community engagement to safeguard cultural assets for future generations (Siliutina et al., 2024). Effective preservation strategies recognize the

dynamic nature of culture, adapting to evolving social contexts while remaining true to the core values and traditions they seek to protect (Chong & Balasingam, 2018).

The preservation of traditional music culture has become an increasingly important area of concern in both academic and policymaking circles. As globalisation and modernisation continue to reshape cultural practices, efforts to preserve and revitalize indigenous and traditional music forms have gained urgency. Various strategies are employed to ensure the sustainability of this intangible heritage, and a concerted effort is required from governments, NGOs, and the broader community to achieve this goal. It is not possible to work in silence, as the preservation of one's own culture requires efforts from various parties.

Education is a vital tool in ensuring the sustainability of a particular culture. Students learn about the history, instrumentation, and cultural significance of traditional musical ensembles through their inclusion in school curricula (Setiani et al., 2021). In addition, students have the opportunity to experience hands-on playing with guidance from master musicians, ensuring the continuation of the tradition (Opare, 2016). This view is further supported by Yan (2020), who argues that incorporating traditional musical forms, instruments, and practices into both formal and informal education systems enables societies to effectively transmit cultural knowledge and values to younger generations, thereby fostering a sense of identity and continuity.

Community engagement is another common strategy for promoting sustainability efforts. The process of incorporating cultural practices into the community ensures their long-term sustainability (Usmaedi et al., 2024). The preservation of cultural heritage faces numerous challenges, including urbanization, globalization, and a lack of public awareness. If these challenges are not adequately addressed, cultural heritage may be threatened with extinction (Ma, 2023). A community that actively engages in heritage conservation is likely to protect the inherent values of its heritage and, in turn, promote and revitalise it (Hoang, 2021). Therefore, the community must be actively involved in conservation efforts to effectively address these challenges (Prompayuk & Chairatananonda, 2017). By prioritising community involvement, conservation measures can effectively counteract the homogenising effects of globalisation by affirming cultural diversity and strengthening community identity (Gravagnuolo et al., 2021; Nugroho & Hardilla, 2020).

Khaizin Mohd. Tamrin (1977) noted that Javanese immigrants easily adapted to life in Selangor, as the region's tropical climate and fertile soil closely resembled those in their homeland. In addition, the Javanese could adopt and assimilate with the local Malay culture due to the shared adherence to the Islamic religion. This adaptability had led them to settle and cultivate the land with a sense of familiarity and continuity, allowing them to practice many of their traditional customs from Java, including their music cultures.

Among the music cultures that have become part of the Javanese Malay heritage today is the playing of cempuling music, a form of musical performance that involves singing accompanied by a group of percussive instruments. The word 'cempuling' originates from the combination of 'com-com' (macam-macam, or 'this and that'), 'pul-pul' (kumpulan-kumpulan, or 'groups'), and 'eling-eling' (beringat-beringat, or 'to be reminded of') (Ezza Rafedziawati Kamal Rafedzi et al., 2017). Thus, when combined, the cempuling can be described as 'a group of people singing songs of advice and reminders about both worldly life and the hereafter.' Based on oral history, cempuling music was used as one of the mediums of Islamic preaching (*da'wah*) to attract the interest of the Javanese people to embrace Islam, who at that time were predominantly Hindus. Cempuling music is believed to have been introduced by two brothers, Kiyai Zamzam and Kiyai Kasnin, who turned to music as a form of *da'wah* after finding that conventional preaching methods were ineffective (Ezza Rafedziawati Kamal Rafedzi et al., 2017).

The cempuling musical instruments consist of five different-sized frame drums, namely the gendang, enteng-enteng, gong/rebana, kempul, and kempreng. These instruments are hand-struck (*palu*), except for the enteng-enteng, which are played by using a pair of thin, wooden sticks. A group may comprise more than one individualized instrument, with the group members typically ranging between five and twelve musicians. Each instrument serves a specific function and contributes a unique rhythmic pattern that supports the vocals.

In the past, the singers were the cempuling musicians themselves. Today, however, the singer(s) do not play the instrument(s), and it is a common sight to see only one or two singers in a cempuling group. Apart from

accompanying the *selawat* and *zikir*, the cempuling songs also comprise both traditional and modern flavours and are sung in the Malay, Javanese, or Arabic languages. Regardless of the language, the songs depict words of advice and good deeds, including Islamic values. The cempuling music is often sung in communal festivities and activities, functioning as a form of entertainment for the crowds and spectators.

METHODOLOGY

This paper employs a qualitative approach, incorporating document analysis, participant observation, and interviews. The document analysis involves reviewing newspaper clippings, social media platforms (such as Facebook and Instagram), YouTube videos, websites, archival materials, and historical documents. In the period 2022-2024, the researcher conducted participant observations while seconded to PADAT, where she firsthand observed numerous initiatives related to cempuling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three PADAT officers, i.e., a curator, an assistant curator, and a musician, who have been employed at PADAT for more than 10 years. The researcher used thematic analysis to uncover patterns in PADAT's preservation strategies.

This study is underpinned by the Cultural Sustainability Theory, which emphasises the need to maintain cultural practices, values, and expressions that contribute to a community's identity and continuity (Soini & Birkeland, 2014). Within this context, traditional music such as cempuling is viewed as an intangible cultural heritage that must be actively preserved through education, community participation, and institutional engagement.

Additionally, Merriam's tripartite model of ethnomusicology (1964)—which studies music as sound, behavior, and concept—provides a valuable lens to understand PADAT's strategies. Cempuling is not only a musical expression (sound), but also a set of communal practices (behavior) embedded with symbolic and religious meanings (concept). By applying these frameworks, this study positions PADAT's initiatives as both a form of cultural resilience and an educational intervention that strengthens identity, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and community engagement.

One limitation of this study lies in the relatively small and institution-focused sample, as the interviewees were limited to PADAT officers. While this offers valuable insights into internal strategies, it may not fully capture the perspectives of external stakeholders, such as audience members or non-affiliated musicians. To address this limitation, the study triangulated data from participant observation and document analysis to ensure a richer, more contextualized understanding of PADAT's initiatives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion of the qualitative analysis, which centres around the key themes that emerged from the document analysis, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews. Based on the findings, PADAT's primary strategy for preserving cempuling is to increase visibility through the following sub-strategies: 1. collaboration and partnerships, 2. education outreach activities, and 3. documentation and archiving efforts. These themes provide a framework for understanding PADAT's strategies for preserving cempuling music.

Collaboration and Partnerships

PADAT, the institution responsible for safeguarding Selangor's cultural heritage, takes a collaborative approach to preserving cempuling and recognises the need for partnerships with various cultural stakeholders. This collaborative ethos is evident in the organisation of cempuling music competitions, festivals, and public performances that bring together stakeholders such as government and state agencies (e.g., Tourism Selangor, Selangor State Economic Planning Unit (UPEN), Selangor Public Library Corporation (PPAS), National Department for Culture and Arts (JKKN), etc.), non-governmental organisation, cempuling practitioners, and primary and secondary schools.

In 2022, PADAT co-organized two cempuling music festivals and competitions, the first being the *Simfoni Cempuling Selangor 2022* festival held on 29 and 30 October 2022 at Malakat Mall Cyberjaya. It was a collaboration with JKKK Selangor and *Pertubuhan Armada Warisan Kesenian Dan Kebudayaan Muzik Alam Melayu Malaysia*, the latter being an NGO established to raise the profile of national heritage art within the realms of artistic and cultural heritage. This event showcased a range of cempuling practitioners from Selangor who represented a spectrum of age groups. As the venue (a shopping centre) was very well attended by visitors, PADAT complemented the festival with an exhibition stall to disseminate information about cempuling. This initiative aimed to promote and raise awareness about Selangor's traditional musical heritage among visitors to the shopping centre.

The *Temasya Silat Seni dan Cempuling 2022* was then hosted from 3 to 4 December 2022 at the grounds of the *Istana Bandar Jugra* in Kuala Langat, a palace constructed in 1898 during the reign of Sultan Sir Alaeddin Sulaiman Shah, the 5th Sultan of Selangor, which subsequently became his residence. As a historical monument under the purview of PADAT, Istana Bandar Jugra has seen several conservation treatments. Apart from a cempuling competition, the festival featured a silat tournament, highlighting other facets of local culture. A total of forty cempuling groups participated in the competition, which consisted of two categories: the open and the school categories. This event was made possible with the collaboration of two strategic partners, specifically UPEN and the Kuala Langat City Council.

PADAT's collaborative network also includes stakeholders outside the state, exemplified by its partnership with *Radio Televisyen Malaysia* (RTM), the Malaysian government's broadcasting division, for the *Seni Warisan Cempuling 2024* competition on 18 May 2024. The final of the competition, which was held at the prestigious Angkasapuri Auditorium on 18 May 2024, was contested by six cempuling groups and broadcast live on RTM's TV2 channel. The main sponsor, DCM Herbs Legacy, and strategic partner Syazia Collection Sdn Bhd contributed prizes. The first-place winner, *Damar Wulan*, received a cash prize of RM13,000, a trophy, and additional prizes. Second place was secured by *Suara Cempuling Sungai Kajang Tanjung Karang*, who received RM10,000 in cash, and third place went to *Fiona Harmoni* with RM7,000 in prize money. The prize for the best performance was awarded to *Kumpulan Seri Rantau* and is worth RM5,000.

The collaboration between PADAT and RTM is also evident in the promotion of cempuling on *Selamat Pagi Malaysia* (SPM), a long-running morning talk show on TV1 RTM. This programme serves as a platform to inform the public about current affairs and announcements, educate viewers on various topics such as culture and heritage, entertain with live performances and interviews, and promote government initiatives and local events—an ideal way to raise awareness and appreciation of cempuling music among a broad Malaysian audience.

B. Educational Outreach Activities

The undeniable value of equipping the younger generation with knowledge of their heritage and traditions presents a significant opportunity. To capitalize on this, proactively reaching out to them, primarily through the school system, is a vital strategic move. PADAT's close relationship with schools stems from the recognition that they are not only cultural stakeholders but also fertile ground for nurturing students as active agents in promoting and sustaining tradition.

PADAT's commitment to the sustainability of cempuling is notably demonstrated by its proactive educational outreach to schools. A core element of this undertaking is a program wherein eleven schools across Selangor were selected to receive cempuling instruments and pedagogical guidance from PADAT's in-house musicians. The successful integration of cempuling as part of the co-curricular activities is attributable to both PADAT's instrumental contribution and the school's crucial support, which has collectively encouraged student participation and provided various opportunities for competitions and performances. This collaborative process has, in turn, fostered a significant link between cempuling and the cultural identity of participating schools. The eleven schools involved were 1. *SAMT Tengku Ampuan Jemaah, Shah Alam*; 2. *SMK Bukit Kapar, Klang*; 3. *SMKA Kuala Selangor*; 4. *SMK Tengku Ampuan Rahimah, Klang*; 5. *SMK Sungai Kapar Indah, Klang*; 6. *SMK Jugra, Banting*; 7. *SMK Sungai Manggis, Banting*; 8. *SAM Unwanus Saadah, Banting*; 9. *SMK Dato' Mustafa, Sabak Bernam*; 10. *SK Sungai Lang, Banting*; and 11. *SK Bukit Bangkong, Sungai Pelek*. A

ceremony was conducted on 23 January 2019, at the Muzium Sultan Alam Shah, to mark the official handover of cempuling musical instruments. Datuk Abdul Rashid Asari, a member of the Selangor State Executive Council (EXCO) responsible for Culture and Tourism, Malay Civilization and Heritage portfolio, presided over the presentation of the instruments.

A fundamental element for the survival of traditional music is the constant availability of the musical instruments themselves. Therefore, maintaining the art of making these instruments is of the utmost importance. The production of many musical instruments is currently declining, putting them in danger of becoming extinct. This decrease is attributed to the ageing of instrument makers and the lack of interest from their descendants, leading to an interruption in the transmission of this craft. The lack of instrument makers inevitably leads to the cessation of instrument production, which ultimately leads to the disappearance of the associated musical traditions.

In recognition of the need to raise a new generation of cempuling makers, PADAT organized a workshop on cempuling musical instrument making at *Institut Kemahiran Belia Negara Kuala Langat* (IKBNKL), also known as National Youth Skills Institute Kuala Langat, from 30 June to 3 July 2018. This initiative, held at IKBNKL to utilise its expertise in skills development and support its vision to 'develop youth with a strong identity and competence in skills to meet national development needs', directly complements PADAT's mission to preserve cultural traditions and heritage. The workshop was attended by thirty-five participants, including students from IKBNKL and PADAT staff.

PADAT facilitated the public's learning of cempuling through various music workshops that allowed participants to gain firsthand experience in playing cempuling. These workshops included the *Bengkel Seni Muzik Cempuling Warisan Negeri Selangor*, which was held from 15 to 19 May 2014 to mark the International Museum Day; the *Bengkel Ketuk-Ketuk Cempuling* on 25 May 2016; and the *Bengkel Edu Kreatif Pendidikan Seni Muzik Cempuling*, a weekly class held on Saturdays from 8 June to 24 August 2024. These educational initiatives were led by both PADAT musicians and prominent cempuling performers, such as the Damar Wulan group, with the program's content emphasizing both the historical background of cempuling and the opportunity for participants to play together in ensembles.

A notable achievement for PADAT was the organisation of a cempuling workshop at the 14th Asia-Pacific Symposium on Music Education Research (APSMER 2023), held in Seoul, Korea. This workshop, presented at Seoul National University from August 9 to 11, 2023, by two PADAT musicians under the abstract title 'The Rhythm of Selangor – Cempuling Traditional Music' provided an international platform for engaging approximately eighty participants. Furthermore, the workshop was streamed live via PADAT's official Facebook, serving as an essential initiative to promote cempuling, especially among music educators worldwide.

The PADAT cempuling workshop series demonstrates the importance of education in maintaining long-term cultural viability. It includes advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns targeting schoolchildren and the public. Additionally, PADAT's participation in international conferences, such as APSMER 2023, has created significant networking opportunities. These contacts have shown that the threat of cultural tradition extinction is a global issue, which has led to discussions on potential sustainability methods from other countries that could be adapted for use in Malaysia.

C. Documentation and Archiving Efforts

A key element of sustainability work is the systematic documentation and archiving of cultural assets. This involves a series of processes aimed at transforming these assets into tangible results, including audio and video recordings, as well as written documentation. The crucial role of documentation and archiving in preserving cultural heritage as a resource for future generations is undeniable. With the advancement of modern technology, the possibilities of documentation have expanded considerably. For example, video recordings of cempuling music performances can be easily captured with smartphones and stored on cloud-based platforms or shared on social media sites such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

To document and archive cempuling in a visual format, PADAT produced a DVD titled *Seni Muzik Cempuling Selangor* in 2021. This DVD features nineteen musical performances by eight cempuling groups, including PADAT's musicians. A vital aspect of this production is the demonstration of the diversity and development of cempuling, featuring songs in Javanese, Malay, and Arabic, while also preserving its original form. The participation of musicians from different age groups emphasises the widespread acceptance of cempuling. This DVD is therefore a valuable contribution to PADAT's efforts to document and archive cempuling.

In a further effort to promote cempuling and increase audience reach, PADAT has established an official YouTube channel, PADAT TV, and distributed the DVD content through this platform. This strategy aims to ensure the long-term preservation of cempuling through online and digital mediums, making it accessible to future generations. The cempuling performance includes songs such as *Piye Kepriya*, *Lir Elir*, *Rekabare*, *Kitakan Sekampung*, *Kondangan*, and *Nasi Ambeng*, among others. The cempuling groups featured are 1. Damar Wulan; 2. Arjuna SMAT Tengku Ampuan Jemaah; 3. Saadah, Sam Uwanis Saadah; 4. Sinar Tunas Cempuling, SK Sungai Lang; 5. Riadah Cempuling Kanchong Darat; 6. Mustika Seni, SMK Tengku Ampuan Jemaah; 7. Seni Warisan, and 8. the Kombo PADAT groups.

The historical transmission of cempuling music has occurred orally, passed down from one generation to the next without the use of standardized notation, a convention largely prevalent in Western musical traditions. To enable accurate documentation and improve educational resources, PADAT musicians with expertise in Western musical notation have transcribed the rhythmic structures of cempuling music. This effort aims to secure the long-term preservation of cempuling music by creating a readily accessible written form for reference and performance, particularly beneficial for its integration into primary schools where music instruction is provided and students can read musical notation.

These strategies employed by PADAT closely align with global recommendations for cultural sustainability, particularly in their emphasis on education and community-led initiatives (Yan, 2020; Prompayuk & Chairatananonda, 2017). For example, PADAT's integration of cempuling in schools mirrors similar practices in Indonesia and Thailand, where embedding traditional music in formal education fosters intergenerational transmission (Usmaedi et al., 2024). Furthermore, PADAT's collaboration with RTM and use of digital platforms align with the participatory preservation models highlighted by Gravagnuolo et al. (2021), where visibility and accessibility are crucial for revitalizing traditional arts in modern contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

Today, the preservation of cultural heritage has become increasingly important, requiring various measures to ensure its longevity. PADAT, the government agency that preserves, maintains, and promotes the tangible and intangible heritage of Selangor, cannot work alone. It requires strong and committed collaboration across the ecosystem, involving all relevant stakeholders, which will ultimately increase the visibility of the heritage. Since its inception by the then Lembaga Muzium Selangor, PADAT has successfully implemented a series of carefully planned and executed strategies to preserve the cempuling, as cempuling remains a visible aspect of Selangor's cultural landscape. Through the strategy employed, PADAT's indispensable importance as the principal agency in Selangor in charge of preserving the cultural legacy cannot be denied. The success and sustainability of these linked approaches depend naturally on a healthy and mutually supportive environment.

One way to measure the effectiveness of PADAT's strategies is through the visible growth of cempuling groups across Selangor. The increasing participation in competitions and festivals, such as the *Temasya Silat Seni dan Cempuling 2022* which featured forty participating groups, and the *Seni Warisan Cempuling 2024* competition broadcast nationally on RTM, indicates that these strategies have successfully encouraged more communities and schools to establish and maintain active ensembles. The proliferation of such groups not only demonstrates rising interest but also reflects the intergenerational transmission of cempuling practices. Thus, the expanding number of ensembles and the frequency of competitions can be seen as clear indicators of long-term sustainability.

Future research should consider expanding the scope of analysis through comparative studies involving different Malaysian states or heritage institutions to identify variations in preservation strategies and their

outcomes. Traditions such as makyong in Kelantan or the Malay gamelan of Terengganu may demonstrate different approaches to preservation that could inform the Selangor context. Positioning cempuling within this broader regional discourse not only enhances the analysis but also reinforces its importance within a wider cultural sustainability framework.

Such comparisons could reveal best practices or challenges unique to specific regions and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of cultural sustainability across Malaysia. Additionally, examining audience reception could provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of public outreach efforts and cultural programming, particularly in terms of engagement, awareness, and long-term impact on community participation.

Moreover, longitudinal studies tracking the continuity and development of school-based cempuling groups offer a clearer picture of the sustainability and generational transmission of this musical tradition. Understanding how student participation evolves could inform future educational strategies. Given the growing influence of digital platforms, further research could explore how technology and social media either enhance or dilute traditional music forms, particularly in the context of visibility, authenticity, and youth engagement.

Lastly, future research should directly include the perspectives of younger generations to address the issue of disinterest. Capturing their voices through interviews or surveys would provide valuable insights into how they perceive cultural heritage and traditional music, and what motivates or hinders them from engaging with cempuling. Such perspectives would enrich the discussion, making preservation strategies more youth-oriented and sustainable.

Declaration Of Ai-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

Statement: During the preparation of this paper, the author used OpenAI (ChatGPT) to improve readability and language, following major revisions. After using this tool/service, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and took full responsibility for the content of the publication. Furthermore, all the content is original and written by the authors. The tool was solely employed during the primary revision phase to assess readability and language, if necessary, and not to generate any content.

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