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## People Preserving Javanese Culture Through Digital Media: a Virtual Ethnographic Study of Radio Puspa FM's Strategic Adaptation

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### ABSTRACT

As a station dedicated to preserving local Javanese culture, Puspa FM faces challenges in expanding its audience and increasing advertising revenue within a competitive media landscape. This study examines Radio Puspa FM's strategic adaptation in Pacitan, Indonesia, amid digital transformation and cultural commodification. Using a qualitative approach and virtual ethnography, researchers interacted with the station as listeners, community members, and contributors. Seven informants were purposively selected based on their active involvement in Puspa FM's management, cultural programming, and online listener communities. We triangulated in-depth interviews, participant observation, and a focus group discussion as our data collection methods. The findings reveal that Puspa FM utilizes digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to extend its reach and attract advertisers, while participatory engagement sustains its cultural authenticity. It also shows that the station reconfigures its content and business model to enhance engagement and sustainability while maintaining its cultural mission. The study implies that integrating digital innovation with participatory values can serve as a practical model for local cultural media seeking to balance tradition, audience engagement, and financial resilience in the digital era.

## 1. Introduction

The commodification of cultural programs in local radio broadcasting has become the primary strategy for reconciling the demands of economic sustainability with the preservation of local identity amidst a progressively digitized media landscape. Researchers have intensively examined the bifunctionality of community radio in advancing both economic and cultural interests. Local-language programs and the mediamorphosis of traditional media are important for fostering cultural preservation and enhancing audience engagement (Achmad et al., 2021; Wahyuningtyas et al., 2021). Situating community radio within the field of media economics is essential to understanding the effects of commodification on ethnic and local language programming (Bosch, 2014; Fidler, 1997).

The concept of commodification in media refers to the transformation of cultural or informational content into marketable products (Mosco, 2009). It was criticized that commodification may reduce the intrinsic cultural value of content by placing it in a commercial context. It is also acknowledged that commodification can provide the financial resources necessary to sustain cultural programs, especially in local contexts where economic pressures may threaten their existence. The dual role of commodification as both a prospective cultural threat and an economic imperative makes it a worthy subject of study in media economics (Mosco, 2009).

Models of participatory media are essential in ensuring community involvement and the effectiveness of cultural broadcasting. In Carpentier's (2015) view, audience participation, through active involvement in content creation, strengthens community ties and loyalty among listeners. Furthermore, Fuchs (2021) expands on this view, emphasizing that participatory broadcasting is vital for gauging the relevance of cultural programs, particularly in regions where the conservation of local music and culture is of the highest significance. Anggraeni (2020) emphasizes the role of local radio in promoting cultural dynamism and accessibility amid commercialization and digital transformation. However, a gap remains in the literature regarding the interaction between commodification strategies and participatory models in balancing the preservation and commercialization of cultural content, which this study aims to address. To contextualize this gap within a real-world setting, Indonesia offers an illuminating case in which the tension between cultural preservation and market-driven imperatives becomes particularly evident.

Indonesia's rich cultural diversity, comprising 145 ethnic groups and over 1,300 sub-ethnic groups, offers a compelling backdrop for exploring the commodification of local cultural content (Ananta et al., 2015). Local radio stations, such as Puspa FM in Pacitan, East Java, play a vital role in promoting and preserving Javanese culture. They serve as essential platforms for safeguarding local languages, music, and traditions. However, Arviani et al. (2022) identify several challenges for stations like Puspa FM, including limited innovation in cultural programming, reliance on traditional formats such as

wayang kulit (shadow puppet performances), underutilization of social media, and a lack of well-developed branding strategies. These issues prevent the station from keeping up with the fast-evolving media environment.

Among the most significant dilemmas confronting local radio stations like Puspa FM is the conflict between maintaining cultural authenticity and commercial viability. Rachmiatie et al. (2020) found that radio management struggles to balance commercial and editorial interests, and that local identity is beginning to fade. Backhaus (2022) reveals that stations use different approaches to develop community identity, with commercialization increasingly influencing the content. Importantly, Syafrini et al. (2020) offer a nuanced perspective, arguing that commodification does not always erode cultural authenticity. Instead, it can strengthen cultural identity and social integration when carefully managed. The evidence suggests that while commodification poses risks to cultural authenticity, it can also serve as a strategic tool for preserving and promoting local identity when approached thoughtfully.

Puspa FM has employed commodification as a strategic adaptation in its cultural programming, while also utilizing participatory models to enhance listener engagement. This includes how the audience in content development leads to culturally meaningful programming, thereby enabling the station to remain loyal to its cultural mandate despite commercial pressures (see, for example, Carpentier, 2012; Fuchs, 2021). In media economics, commodification has dual advantages: ensuring economic sustainability while sustaining cultural integrity. For example, the commodification of Javanese-language programs can support public discourse on social, political, and legal issues by offering a platform for community participation (Faisal & Alhassan, 2018).

Fidler (1997) introduces mediamorphosis as the process by which traditional media adapt and integrate with new digital technologies (Achmad, 2020). This article explores how Puspa FM integrates mediamorphosis while preserving its cultural identity. Rather than merely adapting to digital platforms, the station uses new technologies to strengthen cultural expression and reach younger audiences. This approach shows that commodification and digitalization can coexist with cultural preservation, ensuring that modernization supports, rather than erodes, local values.

Hesmondhalgh (2017:21) argues that commercialization can lead to the standardization of cultural content, altering it to suit market demands. In the Indonesian context, however, commodification can facilitate the transmission of cultural programming to broader audiences without altering key cultural elements. Jenkins' (2006) convergence culture theory supports this view by arguing that the convergence of old and new media creates new opportunities for cultural interaction that are both economically and culturally sustainable.

This study seeks to answer two primary research questions: (1) How can commodification strategies be effectively applied to cultural programming and advertising at Puspa FM? and (2) Can these commodified programs enhance advertising revenue while preserving cultural authenticity? To address these

questions, we employ a multifaceted approach that includes the design of creative cultural programs with contemporary elements, the revitalization of social media platforms, and the development of innovative advertising formats. Additionally, self-branding training will be provided to Puspa FM to help attract advertisers (Oline, 2013). These strategies, framed within the mediamorphosis model, aim to modernize traditional media while maintaining the station's cultural mission.

While the proposed strategies at Puspa FM aim to balance commodification with cultural preservation, it is equally important to recognize that these initiatives are not isolated. Several Indonesian community radio stations have undertaken similar transformations, providing instructive examples of how local media can harness digital platforms to sustain cultural engagement and economic growth.

Local radio stations in Indonesia, such as Radio Komunitas Seni Budaya (RKSB) Maja and Balai Budaya Minomartani (BBM) FM, have demonstrated the potential of cultural broadcasting in preserving Sundanese and Javanese arts through social and behavioral change communication (Anggraeni et al., 2020; Jati, 2019). Moreover, radios such as Radio Puspa FM and Radio Media 90.1 FM have used online platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and streaming apps, to reach broader audiences and generate revenue (Achmad et al., 2023). Virtual listener communities, including Sanak Kadang Jodhipati, have also emerged, facilitating cultural discussions and community engagement (Achmad et al., 2021).

In an era where local media struggle to survive amid rapid digital transformation and market competition, understanding how Radio Puspa FM strategically adapts becomes increasingly urgent. This article examines Puspa FM's navigation through digitalization, cultural commodification, and audience participation as an adaptive response to these pressures. The commodification of cultural content represents both a necessity and a challenge, particularly for local broadcasters striving for financial sustainability while safeguarding cultural authenticity. Drawing on participatory media models and the theory of mediamorphosis, this study analyzes how Puspa FM maintains its cultural mission while negotiating the economic imperatives of a convergent media landscape.

## **2. Method**

This study employs a qualitative research design, using a virtual ethnographic approach, to explore the commodification of cultural programs at Puspa FM, a local radio station in Pacitan Regency, East Java. This study focuses on Radio Puspa FM because it represents a distinctive case of a rural-based cultural radio station that simultaneously faces digital, economic, and generational challenges. Unlike larger urban broadcasters, Puspa FM operates in a peripheral region where limited infrastructure and resources make digital. However, its strong cultural orientation and loyal community base make it a unique site for examining how commodification and mediamorphosis can coexist in sustaining local identity.

The objective is to investigate how Puspa FM balances economic sustainability with cultural preservation through digital adaptation. The concept of mediamorphosis – the transformation of traditional media into digital forms – guides the study, focusing on how Puspa FM engages its audience through social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp (Bonini, 2014; Hine, 2015).

We interacted with the station digitally and physically through three methods: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and FGD. In-depth interviews was conducted to explore the history of cultural programming, listener segmentation, advertising strategies, digital engagement, and programming challenges. We conducted a single FGD session with seven informants. The discussion covered the cultural relevance of radio, audience engagement and expectations, innovation strategies, and institutional support from the local government. This triangulation method was used to validate information from multiple sources, with a focus on how digital transformation affects the station's finances and cultural mission.

To provide a clearer context, the study involved seven key informants representing diverse perspectives on Puspa FM's operations and transformation (see Table 1). Their experience ranged from managerial and programming roles to cultural performance, education, and policy, reflecting the multi-stakeholder nature of cultural broadcasting.

Table 1. Research Informants

| No | Name/Position                         | Length of Service | Contextual Note   |
|----|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| 1  | Mr. Faris<br>(Station Manager)        | 15 years          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programming and advertising strategy</li> <li>• Initiated Facebook and YouTube integration</li> </ul>                    |
| 2  | Mrs. Rini<br>(Programmer & Announcer) | 12 years          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designs cultural programs and schedules</li> <li>• Manages streaming and listener interaction on social media</li> </ul> |
| 3  | Mr. Kung Ni<br>(Cultural Performer)   | 40 years          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional arts and live performances</li> <li>• Collaborates in producing an online cultural segment</li> </ul>        |
| 4  | Mrs. Widayati<br>(Local Teacher)      | 25 years          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural education and youth engagement.</li> <li>• Uses Puspa FM content for school cultural activities</li> </ul>      |
| 5  | Mr. Bakti<br>(Loyal Listener 1)       | 12 years          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active participant in the listener community.</li> <li>• Follows and comments on live Facebook broadcasts</li> </ul>     |

|   |  |          |  |
|---|--|----------|--|
| 6 | Mrs. Linda<br>(Loyal Listener 2)                                   | 10 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member of <i>the Puspa FM</i> community</li> <li>• Provides feedback on program innovation via WhatsApp</li> </ul>                  |
| 7 | Mr. Wahyu<br>(Head of Cultural<br>Department of<br>Tourism Office) | 7 years  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversees cultural policy at the regional level</li> <li>• Supports digital media partnerships and programs with Puspa FM</li> </ul> |

Key research indicators focused on listener engagement, commodification strategies, and cultural preservation efforts. The data analysis employed a thematic approach developed by Miles et al. (2014:), which consists of data condensation, data display (by displaying digital transformation, reframing cultural preservation, and commodification and cultural authenticity), before we draw conclusions.

We closely monitored ethical standards during the research period. Participants were duly informed about the study, provided participants' consent to be interviewed and recorded, and were assured of strict confidentiality and privacy, especially during online interactions. They retained the right to withdraw from the study at any point (Flick, 2014); however, no participants exercised this option. To protect participants' identities, all names used in the study are pseudonyms.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### • Digital Transformation: Between Awareness and Adaptation-

From the perspective of mediamorphosis theory, Radio Puspa FM's trajectory illustrates the broader challenges local cultural media face in adapting to technological change (Fidler, 1997). The station has shown awareness of the need to embrace digital convergence but remains constrained by limited infrastructure, financial resources, and technical capacity. This situation reveals what Scott (2006) describes as a disparity between strategic awareness and operational readiness, where institutions understand the significance of media evolution but struggle to implement it effectively.

Findings from in-depth interviews as well as focus group discussions indicate that the station is undergoing a gradual, rather than comprehensive, digital transformation. As the station manager, Mr. Faris, stated, "We want our culture to be enjoyed not only by elders, but also by all age groups." This vision underscores the management's recognition that digitalization is a pathway toward generational inclusivity. However, he also admitted challenges in practice, explaining that Puspa FM lacks of supporting equipment, such as streaming devices. He acknowledged the issue candidly, highlighting that while management recognizes the urgency of digitalization, implementation remains far from being realized due to constraints on tools and funding.

This structural limitation has immediate implications for audience reach and relevance. As Mr. Bakti, a loyal listener, emphasized, "Migration is no longer optional. It is time to join streaming platforms." His observation reflects the shift

in listening behavior from analog to mobile-based consumption. He elaborated that other stations have already entered the digital sphere, warning that “if Puspa FM continues to lag, its risks become irrelevant, especially to tech-savvy youth who primarily consume content via smartphones and apps.” His comments align with Jenkins’ (2006) convergence culture theory, which argues that traditional and new media must interact dynamically to retain relevance in participatory contexts. If Puspa FM does not embrace digital convergence, it will lose and fail to engage tech-savvy audiences who primarily consume media via smartphones and apps.

Similarly, Mrs. Linda, another loyal listener, addressed the generational shift by saying that “mobile phones are full of entertainment.” Her observation underscores how contemporary audiences—particularly the youth—prioritize platforms that offer interactivity, portability, and visual engagement. The digital landscape has become not only a distribution channel but also a cultural arena where meaning-making occurs through sharing, remixing, and participation (Fuchs, 2021).

Several studies confirm that younger generations are actively embracing mobile phones as learning platforms, driven by their entertainment value and interactive capabilities. Kannan and Meenakshi (2023) show mobile technologies enable learning “regardless of location and time”, while Liu (2023) highlights that smartphone devices have “an extensive range of potential applications”. Salhab and Daher (2023) provide the most comprehensive validation, identifying multiple engagement dimensions including social interaction, cognitive strategies, emotional excitement, and behavioral participation. The studies collectively suggest that mobile phones are not just communication tools, but also sophisticated learning environments that align with younger generations’ preferences for portable, engaging, and personalized educational experiences. The evidence spans multiple international contexts, including studies from Pakistan, Turkey, and the Arabian Gulf, indicating a global trend.

Institutional perspectives reinforce these findings. Mr. Wahyu, a government officer, explained: “At the office, we focus more on Instagram and YouTube, so radio must adapt to this trend to avoid falling behind.” His insight reflects a broader policy environment that views digital media as a standard of institutional communication. The comment illustrates that digital convergence is no longer optional; instead, it has become a normative expectation across sectors (Bonini, 2014).

Despite shared awareness, however, Puspa FM’s digital transformation remains partial. The lack of a comprehensive strategy for integrating new technologies into daily operations demonstrates what Hine’s (2015) phrase “the embeddedness gap” in digital ethnography—where traditional media structures fail to internalize the participatory logics of digital environments fully. Informants’ reflections suggest that digital stagnation limits not only technical performance but also cultural transmission. Without adaptive strategies, Javanese cultural content risks remaining invisible in online spaces dominated by algorithmic visibility and viral formats.

Therefore, strategic adaptation is essential. As Scott (2006) notes that effective mediamorphosis requires a combination of technological infrastructure, listeners' participation, and institutional openness to change. Puspa FM has viewed digital transformation as a survival strategy, not merely as a technological enhancement. Incremental innovations can begin through cross-sector collaboration—for example, partnering with universities for capacity-building, engaging local schools to design youth-led cultural content, or mobilizing volunteers with digital literacy. Such collaborations could lower operational barriers while fostering community ownership of cultural programming.

Moreover, digital transformation entails a cultural transformation in how content is produced and consumed. Integrating Facebook Live, YouTube streaming, and podcast could transform passive listening into interactive cultural dialogue. By adopting these platforms, Puspa FM can bridge generational divides, connecting older listeners who cherish tradition with younger users accustomed to on-demand media. As Jenkins (2006) contends that convergence enables hybrid spaces where old and new media coalesce, ensuring sustainability through mutual reinforcement rather than replacement.

In sum, the data reveal that Radio Puspa FM's digital awareness exceeds its implementation. The station's journey mirrors that of many local broadcasters caught between cultural preservation mandates and technological imperatives. Future strategies must address not only the acquisition of tools, but also the development of participatory frameworks that position digitalization as both a technical upgrade and a cultural renewal process.

- **Reframing Cultural Preservation**

Cultural preservation stands at the heart of Radio Puspa FM's identity. The station broadcasts Javanese-language programs such as *ketoprak*, *ludruk*, *wayang*, and local songs, offering what Hall (1997) terms “spaces of representation” where identity, memory, and heritage intersect. These programs resonate deeply with older listeners who perceive them as cultural anchors amidst modernization. However, the findings highlight a critical paradox: the same commitment to tradition that sustains cultural authenticity also limits innovation and audience renewal. Mr. Bakti, a loyal listener, described this predicament vividly, by saying that: “Some cultural programs on Puspa FM already sound boring, suggesting the program's quality is declining. Listeners like me need surprises. We need new, fresh programs that involve young and old listeners.”

His remark reflects audience fatigue resulting from repetitive formats—a phenomenon consistent with Hesmondhalgh's (2017:21) observation that standardization in cultural industries risks diminishing creative vitality. Similarly, Mr. Kung Ni, a cultural performer, expressed his gratitude and concern, as follows:

I am very grateful to Puspa FM, which cares about the inheritance of Javanese culture. But, I am also worried that listeners of my age — those in

their 60s – will be bored by monotonous programs. Then who will care about Javanese culture if Puspa FM does not immediately create fresh cultural programs?

His statement embodies the generational anxiety that heritage without renewal may alienate both current and future audiences. This statement reflects the anxiety of an aged listener regarding the future relevance and sustainability of cultural programming. While they appreciate Puspa FM's commitment to preserving Javanese heritage, they also fear that repetitive and uninnovative content may fail to attract or retain audiences, particularly younger generations. The concern highlights a broader challenge faced by traditional cultural media: the need to balance between preservation and innovation. Without refreshing program formats and incorporating more engaging approaches, the station risks losing intergenerational appeal, thereby undermining its mission to sustain Javanese culture across time.

Several studies stated that radio stations are facing significant challenges in maintaining intergenerational appeal, mainly for increasing young listeners' interest in traditional local content. Wulandari and Wahyudin (2024) provide compelling evidence that radio stations must strategically transform to engage youth, identifying key weaknesses like formal broadcasting styles and misaligned content production. The research advocates for a comprehensive strategy including digital platform integration, interactive broadcasting, and collaboration with creative communities. Galán-Arribas (2022) further supports this, noting that traditional radio's unidirectional format has caused young people to turn away, with podcasting emerging as a more attractive alternative. Triwijayati et al. (2022) suggest that some cultural values persist across generations, but media delivery method must evolve to maintain relevance.

These testimonies reflect a tension identified by Barker (2004:29) that there is a need for media to negotiate between tradition and modernity. Cultural preservation, when framed as repetition, risks fossilizing identity; when framed as adaptation, it sustains relevance. Mrs. Widayati, a local teacher, for example, emphasized that "cultural broadcasts on Puspa FM should not only educate parents, but also educate children. We need educational and engaging content for teenagers on Puspa FM." Her call points toward intergenerational innovation that developing content can bridge cultural depth with youthful interactivity.

The theoretical lens of uses and gratifications further clarifies this issue. According to Katz et al. (1973), audiences actively select media that satisfy cognitive, emotional, and social needs. For older listeners, Puspa FM fulfills nostalgic and identity-based gratifications. However, younger audiences seek interactive and participatory experiences, which the station's one-way communication model fails to deliver. As Mr. Bakti criticized, "There are no live broadcasts in Puspa FM... listeners would feel more connected if they are greeted directly." This absence of live interactivity undermines what McCombs and Shaw (1972) describe as the media's agenda-setting potential to shape discourse through engagement. Without dialogic platforms, cultural programming risks

becoming didactic rather than dialogic, reducing its capacity to influence and inspire.

Participatory media theory offers a solution. Carpentier (2012) argues that genuine participation involves not only access, but also influence over content production. Mrs. Linda, a loyal listener, proposed an inclusive approach by saying that: "If children are invited to make radio programs, they will be more interested. This could be a way to preserve culture and, at the same time, to educate them as well." This aligns with Fuchs' (2021) thought, which emphasizes audience co-creation as central to cultural relevance in digital societies. By involving youth in content design—whether through co-hosting segments, producing podcasts, or managing social media—Puspa FM can transform passive listeners into cultural actors.

Informants also suggested applying community-centered strategies. Mr. Kung Ni envisioned interactive formats by saying that: "We could hold events... like *guyon waton* or cultural dialogue." Such initiatives would translate broadcasting into performative engagement, merging media with community rituals. He further proposed building listener communities by stating that: "We can gather elders who enjoy traditional songs like *sinom*... and meet face-to-face to strengthen our bonds." These gatherings could revitalize social capital around shared heritage, consistent with Carpentier et al.'s (2015) view that sees participatory audiences as transformative publics rather than solely as consumers.

Government collaboration also emerged as a key enabler. Mr. Wahyu affirmed institutional support that: "We are ready to help... this is an extraordinary moment." He added that: "Radio is a classic medium that can be developed with a millennial touch." His vision of blended legacy and innovation echoes Anggraeni et al.'s (2020) demonstrate how community radios in Indonesia preserved cultural arts by combining traditional storytelling with social and behavioral change communication. Mrs. Widayati reinforced this synergy by saying that: "We need synergy between schools, cultural communities, and radio, so that cultural programs not only survive, but also thrive." Her perspective redefines preservation as collaborative education, where radio functions as a bridge between formal institutions and vernacular knowledge.

Empirical parallels strengthen this argument. Jati (2019) found that local art communities sustained relevance by integrating digital-based media, while Chan and Saidon (2021) illustrated that participatory co-creation revitalized indigenous music traditions in Malaysia. Similarly, Puspa FM's transformation serves a dual aim: adapting to digitalization for institutional survival and engaging younger listeners who experience culture through online platforms. Hybrid programming that blends live broadcasts, educational talk shows, and social media campaigns can renew participation and loyalty. Ultimately, Puspa FM's authenticity remains its core strength, but innovation is its means of survival—transforming the station from a repository of memory into a laboratory of creativity.

- **Commodification and Cultural Authenticity: A Balancing Act**

The findings also reveal the station's struggle to balance cultural authenticity with commercial viability—a dilemma central to the political economy of communication (Mosco, 2009). Commodification, defined as the transformation of cultural content into marketable products, is both a necessity and a threat. On one hand, advertising revenue ensures economic sustainability; on the other, excessive commercialization may erode cultural integrity.

Originally, Puspa FM broadcast advertisements exclusively in Javanese, aligning with its mission to preserve linguistic heritage. However, the station has gradually shifted to Indonesian-language ads to attract a broader client base. Mr. Faris acknowledged this change by stating that: "Initially, all ads were in Javanese, but now they use Indonesian." Mrs. Rini, the programmer, confirmed this, saying that: "The change was gradual and often met with internal debate, but the management believed it was essential to maintain the station's financial health." These testimonies exemplify institutional pragmatism, where economic imperatives dictate adaptation.

However, adaptation raises cultural concerns. Mr. Bakti cautioned that we need to be careful because commodification can erode cultural values. His statement resonates with Hesmondhalgh's (2017:21) critique that commercial pressures often lead to standardization and cultural dilution. Nevertheless, other informants proposed contextual strategies. Mr. Wahyu argued that: "If the content is culturally strong, the ads can still be adapted to avoid reducing local cultural values." His perspective reflects Kiyan's (2015:4) notion of dual production, in which cultural and commercial objectives coexist through culturally embedded marketing—for instance, by incorporating local idioms, proverbs, and music into promotional messages.

In practice, balancing authenticity and commodification demands cultural sensitivity in advertising design. Rather than replacing Javanese identity, Puspa FM can leverage it as brand capital, attracting sponsors interested in heritage-based branding. Such strategies mirror findings from Achmad et al. (2021), who viewed that mediamorphosis in ethnic radio can support economic viability without sacrificing local values. By pressing culture as both identity and asset, Puspa FM can align commercial logic with cultural mission.

Moreover, commodification provides resources essential for digital investment and program innovation. As Kurnia et al. (2023) note, digital diversification expands Indonesian radio's revenue base by integrating streaming, sponsorship, and branded content. For Puspa FM, advertising income can finance training, technology, and participatory initiatives, turning commerce into a catalyst for empowerment. The key lies in co-creation: engaging advertisers, artists, and listeners in developing campaigns that are marketable yet meaningful.

This approach repositions commodification not as a cultural compromise but as a strategic instrument for sustainability. It embodies Mosco's (2009) dual view of commodification as both an economic imperative and a cultural negotiation. Through value-based branding and community consultation, Puspa FM can

ensure that each commercial decision reinforces rather than undermines its cultural identity.

Across these three thematic dimensions—digital transformation, participatory renewal, and the balance between commodification and authenticity—the findings converge on a shared insight: strategic adaptation grounded in community participation is essential for Radio Puspa FM’s survival. Digital transformation expands reach, participatory renewal sustains cultural relevance, and culturally sensitive commodification which ensures continuity. Together, these processes demonstrate how local cultural media can modernize without surrendering identity. By embedding Javanese values within digital ecosystems, Puspa FM can serve simultaneously as a custodian of tradition and a laboratory of transformation, embodying what Fidler (1997) describes as the essence of mediamorphosis-continuity through change.

The following sections synthesize findings from virtual ethnographic observations and interviews, as summarized in Figure 1, which captures the transformation of Radio Puspa FM from a traditional broadcaster to a participatory cultural media in the digital era. Puspa FM's ethnographic trajectory demonstrates a progressive redefinition of radio as a participatory digital platform.

Figure 1. Ethnographic Construction of Radio Puspa FM’s Transformation

| Stage                   | Ethnographic Observation   | Digital Adaptation                 | Cultural Implication  |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Traditional Era</b>  | Radio relied on live Javanese performances (ketoprak, wayang, ludruk). Content was one-way, targeting older audiences. | None (analog broadcast only).      | Strengthened cultural memory but limited youth participation.         |
| <b>Transitional Era</b> | Observed awareness of social media potential. Limited use of Facebook for announcements and community events.          | Early streaming via Facebook Live. | Created a bridge between cultural preservation and online visibility. |

|                                   |   |  |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Digital Transformation Era</b> | Field notes show increased engagement via WhatsApp groups, Facebook Live chat, and YouTube uploads. Listeners co-create content, sharing recordings and feedback. | Integrates mediamorphosis and participatory culture. | Reframed radio as a cultural hub rather than a one-way broadcaster. |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|

Source: Ethnographic Notes

Ethnographic observations reveal that Radio Puspa FM's transformation is not merely technological, but also cultural. Through interactions in virtual spaces such as Facebook and WhatsApp, radio evolves from a transmitter of information into a participatory medium that fosters dialogue, creativity, and collective identity. This transition exemplifies what Fidler (1997) defines as mediamorphosis, in which traditional media reshape their structures and logics to remain relevant in the new media ecosystem. The process marks a shift from radio as a mainstream broadcast to a networked cultural medium embedded in everyday digital practices.

#### 4. Conclusion

The management of Puspa FM are aware of the importance of technological adaptation, not merely as a technological enhancement, but also as a survival strategy. At the moment Puspa FM has undergone a gradual, rather than comprehensive, digital transformation, while facing some challenges in terms of equipment, funding, comprehensive strategic adaptation, and inclusiveness of youth listeners.

The central challenge lies in balancing cultural authenticity with economic viability under the pressures of media convergence. Transformation requires not only adopting new technology, but also rethinking how radio content is created, shared, and experienced by audiences. Puspa FM's evolution shows that traditional broadcasting can successfully blend with participatory digital practices while retaining its cultural foundation.

Commodification, when guided by cultural values, can sustain rather than diminish authenticity. Through strategic innovation and community participation, Puspa FM can maintain its position as a dynamic cultural institution in the digital era.

The implications of this research extend beyond a single case. The findings reaffirm the continuing relevance of community radio in cultural preservation while offering a framework for sustainable commercialization. Looking forward, the future of radio lies in recombination—the creative merging of traditional formats and new media interactivity—to ensure that cultural voices remain vibrant, adaptive, and inclusive in the evolving communication landscape..

Radio Puspa FM must continue to strengthen its adaptive strategy by integrating digital platforms, diversifying content, and fostering interactive audience engagement. Its dedication to cultural preservation remains crucial, but must evolve to resonate with younger listeners who inhabit digital spaces.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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