

Transformation of Social Interaction Patterns of the Young Generation in the Digital Age: An Analysis of the Influence of Social Media on Social Life and Local Culture

Hatty Suat¹, Atikah Khairunnisa², Sarmalina Rieuwpassa³, Faradila Ishara Lestari⁴

Universitas Pattimura^{1,2,3}, Universitas Borobudur⁴

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✉ Corresponding Author:

Name author: Hatty Suat

E-mail: hattysuat@yahoo.co.id

Abstract

Advances in digital technology, particularly social media, have brought about fundamental changes in the social interaction patterns of the younger generation. These changes not only include the way young people communicate and interact, but also have an impact on the dynamics of social life and the preservation of local culture. This study aims to analyze how social media affects the social interaction patterns of the younger generation and its implications for social life and local culture. A qualitative approach was used in this research, with literature study methods and in-depth interviews with the target group consisting of teenagers and youth in various social environments. The results show that social media facilitates wider connectivity and accelerates information exchange, enabling young people to build social relationships without geographical boundaries. However, on the other hand, high reliance on digital interactions leads to less face-to-face communication, which can reduce the depth of interpersonal relationships and weaken social ties within local communities. Exposure to global culture through social media has the potential to shift local cultural identity, both in communication patterns, lifestyles, and social values. This phenomenon can lead to changes in the mindset and behavior of the younger generation who are more likely to adopt foreign cultures than maintain their own cultural heritage. However, social media can also act as a tool to strengthen and promote local culture if utilized with the right strategy. A balanced approach is needed between the utilization of social media and the preservation of local culture, both through digital education and policies that support cultural integration in the digital world.

Keywords: Social Transformation, Young Generation, Social Media, Social Interaction, Local Culture.

1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has changed many aspects of human life, including patterns of social interaction that are increasingly shifting towards social media-based



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communication (Al, 2022). Advances in information technology allow individuals to communicate instantly without the limitations of space and time, which in turn changes the way humans establish relationships, share information, and build communities. The younger generation is the most active group in adopting digital technology developments, especially in the increasing use of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and Facebook (Blandi, 2022). This development is driven by easy access to the internet and innovations in communication technology that allow them to connect instantly and obtain information in a short time. Social media not only serves as a means of communication, but also a platform for self-expression, creativity, and economic opportunities through the digital industry (Kumar, 2024). Phenomena such as influencer marketing, digital content creation, and digital entrepreneurship are gaining popularity among the younger generation, allowing them to utilize technology as a means of increasing competence and economic independence.

Social media has changed the way individuals communicate, from direct interaction to text-, image- or video-based communication that can be accessed anytime and anywhere (Habibi, 2018; Nainggolan, 2018; Syaban, 2018). This change reflects a paradigm shift in communication patterns, where speed and ease of access to information are the main factors in modern social interactions. In addition, social media has also created virtual spaces that allow individuals to network and build communities globally. Digital platforms provide opportunities for individuals with diverse interests and backgrounds to interact, share information, and collaborate without geographical limitations (Agrawal, 2024). Through social media, various interest-oriented online communities are formed, such as academic, professional, hobby, and social activism communities. The presence of this virtual space not only accelerates the exchange of information, but also broadens horizons and strengthens social engagement in various global issues. However, behind these benefits, there are various impacts that need to be studied further, especially related to how social media affects social life and local culture. The shift of interaction from the real world to the digital world can change social norms and values that have long developed in a society, including in aspects of communication ethics, cultural identity, and patterns of relationships between individuals.

Changes in social interaction patterns influenced by the development of digital media present new challenges to social structures in society. Young people who are increasingly accustomed to digital technology-based communication tend to experience a decrease in the quality of face-to-face interactions, which has the potential to weaken social attachment in their social environment (Grunjes, 2024). Whereas in the past the values of togetherness and direct interaction were the main elements of social life, these roles are now being replaced by faster, but less in-depth, social media-based communication. Online interactions that tend to be instant and practical reduce the emotional aspects and depth of interpersonal relationships. In addition, the dominance of technology-based communication also has the potential to affect individual social skills, such as the ability to empathize, understand nonverbal expressions, and build meaningful interpersonal relationships, which are generally developed through direct interaction in everyday life (Misnawati, 2025). Easy access to global information contributes to cultural change, where the younger generation adopts global trends more than maintaining and preserving local cultural heritage. Increasingly strong globalization through digital media presents massive exposure to

foreign cultures, so traditional values are at risk of being shifted or even displaced by the dominance of a wider-reaching popular culture (Balogun, 2024). This phenomenon raises concerns about the diminishing sense of belonging to one's own cultural identity, especially when individuals identify more with global culture than with local cultural roots.

Previous studies have highlighted the role of social media in shaping the social behavior of younger generations, but there is still a research gap in understanding how these changes impact the preservation of local culture. Most studies have focused on the psychological and behavioral aspects of individuals using social media, while its influence on social and cultural structures has not been studied in depth. In addition, there are still few studies that discuss how social media can be a tool to strengthen local culture in the midst of digital globalization. The novelty of this research lies in its approach that combines the analysis of social interaction with cultural impact in the context of the digital era. This research not only focuses on how social media is changing the communication patterns of the younger generation, but also explores how this phenomenon affects local cultural heritage as well as possible strategies that can be used to strike a balance between modernization and cultural preservation. Using qualitative methods through literature review and in-depth interviews, this research aims to further explore the social dynamics that occur due to digital transformation.

This research is expected to contribute to developing strategies that can be used by various parties, including the government, educational institutions, and cultural communities, to optimize the use of social media as a means of preserving local culture. This research also aims to provide insights to the younger generation on the importance of maintaining a balance between the utilization of digital technology and the preservation of cultural identity. Thus, the results of this research are expected to be the basis for efforts to strengthen local culture in the midst of rapid globalization. In conclusion, the transformation of young people's social interaction patterns in the digital era brings complex impacts, both positively and negatively. Social media opens up new opportunities for networking and information dissemination, but also presents challenges in maintaining local cultural values. A deeper understanding of this phenomenon is needed so that appropriate strategies can be designed in managing the social changes that occur. With this research, it is hoped that the younger generation can remain active in the digital world without losing their social and cultural identity.

2. Methods, Data, and Analysis

This research uses a qualitative approach with an exploratory descriptive design to understand how the transformation of social interaction patterns of the younger generation in the digital era affects local social and cultural life. This approach was chosen because it allows in-depth exploration of complex social phenomena, especially in relation to changes in communication, interpersonal relationships, and cultural dynamics due to the use of social media. Data in this study were obtained from two main sources, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with young people who actively use social media, cultural figures, and academics with expertise in communication and culture. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, taking into account the age factor (15-30 years old), the

level of involvement in using social media, and their concern for local culture. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from various sources such as scientific journals, books, research reports, and news articles that discuss social and cultural transformation in the digital era. In addition, this research also involves analyzing content uploaded on social media to understand communication trends and how local cultural values are represented or even shifted.

Data collection was conducted through several main techniques. First, in-depth interviews were conducted to explore the experiences and views of young people regarding changes in their communication patterns and their impact on local social and cultural life. Second, participatory observation was conducted by observing communication patterns on social media, including how young people express their social and cultural identities in the digital space. Third, document analysis was used to review various relevant literature to strengthen the research findings. The data obtained was analyzed using a thematic analysis method that included several stages. First, the data was compiled and organized to identify emerging patterns and themes. Next, the data was coded to find the main categories related to changes in social interaction and the impact of social media on local culture. After that, the data was interpreted using social and cultural theories to gain a more comprehensive understanding. To ensure the validity and reliability of the research results, data triangulation was conducted, comparing the results of interviews, observations, and document analysis to ensure consistency of findings. With this method, this research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how social media changes the social interaction patterns of the younger generation and its implications for local culture. The results are also expected to provide insights for the community, academics, and policy makers in designing strategies that can support the balance between the utilization of digital technology and the preservation of local culture.

3. Results and Discussion

Changes in the social interaction patterns of the younger generation in the digital era show a significant shift from face-to-face communication to social media-based communication (Zis, 2021; Herman, 2024; Sari, 2024). Technological advances and the rapid development of digital platforms have made social media an integral part of everyday life. The majority of respondents in this study revealed that they interact more often through applications such as WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter compared to communicating directly. Social media provides convenience in communication as it allows individuals to stay connected anytime and anywhere without having to physically meet. This factor is especially influential in certain situations, such as when geographical distance is an obstacle or in conditions that limit mobility, for example during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ease of access and flexibility of time are the main factors that make social media increasingly dominant in building social relationships (Azzaakiyyah, 2023). Compared to face-to-face interactions that require physical presence, digital communication allows one to talk to many people at the same time, even with individuals located on the other side of the world. This creates opportunities for young people to expand their social networks, including connecting with people who have different interests or cultural backgrounds. In addition, social media also provides a

space for individuals to express themselves, share experiences, and form social identities through uploading photos, videos, or statuses that reflect their personalities. This shift also raises concerns about the quality of social interactions, where communication becomes more superficial and is often limited to a brief exchange of information without strong emotional depth. Unlike face-to-face communication that allows one to read the other person's facial expressions, body language and tone of voice, communication through social media tends to lack the same emotional dimension. As a result, social relationships established through digital media are often more superficial, where one can easily initiate a conversation, but also easily ignore or end the interaction without any meaningful social consequences. over-reliance on social media also has the potential to reduce interpersonal communication skills in the real world (Khaira, 2024; Ahmad, 2024; Apriyanti, 2024). Many young people feel more comfortable communicating through text messages or comments on social media than speaking in person. This can cause them to experience difficulties in interacting effectively in actual social settings, for example in face-to-face meetings, job interviews or other formal situations. This imbalance between digital and offline interactions has the potential to create a social divide where interpersonal relationships lack depth and tend to be transactional.

This phenomenon is also exacerbated by the fear of missing out (FOMO), where individuals feel pressured to always engage in digital conversations so as not to miss out on information or emerging trends. This pressure drives younger generations to constantly monitor social media, often at the expense of more meaningful social interactions in the real world. Ironically, while social media was created to increase connectivity, many studies show that overuse can actually lead to feelings of loneliness and social isolation. Some individuals may have thousands of friends or followers on social media, but still feel a lack of authentic and deep relationships in life. Thus, while social media provides great benefits in terms of ease of communication and expansion of social networks, the challenges arising from this shift cannot be ignored. A balance between digital and face-to-face interactions is needed to maintain the quality of social relationships (Regina, 2024; Chatlina, 2024; Agustina, 2023). Efforts to raise awareness of the importance of quality interpersonal communication need to be made, both through education, policies, and individual approaches in managing the use of social media. In this way, the younger generation can continue to utilize technology without losing the essence of healthy and meaningful social relationships.

In the aspect of interpersonal relationships, this study found that although social media allows young people to stay connected with many people, there is a trend of declining interpersonal communication skills in real life (Oh, 2023). Previously in-person interactions are now increasingly being replaced by text-based or visual communication through instant messaging apps and social media. This convenience does provide high accessibility, but on the other hand, it reduces the frequency of face-to-face verbal communication. In the long run, this can lead to difficulties in building authentic social relationships as individuals become accustomed to short, instantaneous communication that lacks in-depth emotion-reading skills. Some participants in this study admitted to feeling more comfortable expressing feelings through text messages compared to speaking directly. Younger generations feel that through text, they have more time to carefully compose words, thus avoiding misunderstandings or awkward feelings that may occur in face-to-face conversations. However, while text-based communication provides a certain convenience,

there are limitations in conveying more complex emotions and meanings. Tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language, important elements in interpersonal communication cannot be completely replaced by emojis or digital stickers. As a result, individuals who are accustomed to communicating digitally may have difficulty in understanding emotional nuances when interacting in person (Arbi, 2024; Setiadi, 2024; Taib, 2024). This has implications for the younger generation's reduced ability to read the facial expressions, body language and emotions of the other person, which in turn can reduce the quality of social interactions in the real world. Face-to-face interactions require more in-depth social skills, such as understanding other people's feelings, picking up on implied meanings in conversations, and adjusting responses based on the situation. When young people communicate more through social media, they lose the opportunity to practice these skills, so in certain social situations they may feel awkward, lack confidence, or even avoid face-to-face interactions. This trend is even more evident in environments such as the workplace, school, or other formal situations, where the ability to communicate effectively is an important factor in building healthy and productive relationships.

The impact of Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) is not only limited to social anxiety, but can also contribute to stress and decreased mental well-being (Hayran, 2021). Some individuals experience feelings of dissatisfaction with their own lives due to constantly comparing themselves to others they see on social media. In fact, what is shown on social media is often only the best version of a person's life, not a completely accurate representation. These insecurities can worsen young people's self-confidence, causing them to rely more on online validation rather than building more meaningful relationships in person with those around them. The pressure to be present and active on social media also reduces the quality of time spent on real interactions (Sadagheyani, 2021). Many individuals, despite being in the same room with friends or family, are more focused on their phones than interacting in person. This situation creates a paradox, where social media that is supposed to bring people closer together can actually create distance in social relationships. If this phenomenon continues, there will be long-term consequences to the way young people build and maintain interpersonal relationships.

To address this challenge, efforts are needed to teach young people about the importance of a balance between digital and face-to-face communication. Digital literacy education is not only about how to use technology safely, but also how to manage its use so that it does not hinder essential social skills. Encouraging activities that involve face-to-face interactions, such as group discussions, social activities or interpersonal communication training, can be an important step in improving young people's social skills. Overall, while social media provides many benefits in maintaining social connectedness, its excessive and uncontrolled use can negatively impact young people's interpersonal communication skills and emotional well-being (Rizaldi, 2024; Amalia, 2024; Faudji, 2022). Therefore, there is a need for awareness of the importance of balancing digital interactions with real-world social experiences in order to maintain quality and meaningful interpersonal relationships.

In terms of impact on social life, social media brings complex benefits and challenges. On the one hand, it expands young people's social networks and makes it possible to get information from different parts of the world (Swart, 2023). This provides advantages in terms of idea exchange, global collaboration, and access to wider academic and professional opportunities. However, on

the other hand, this study also found that excessive use of social media can lead to social isolation. Some respondents stated that despite actively communicating online, they felt lonely and lacked emotional closeness with those around them. The social pressures that arise on social media are also a problem. Many young people feel the need to present an idealized self-image, whether in terms of physique, lifestyle, or academic and professional achievements. This often leads to social anxiety, low self-confidence, and even mental health disorders such as stress and depression. Some participants admitted that they often compare themselves to others on social media, resulting in feelings of self-dissatisfaction. Thus, while social media provides a space for self-expression, it can also be a significant source of social pressure.

In the context of culture, social media has an ambivalent role in the preservation of local culture (Manan, 2024; Arifianto, 2013). On the one hand, social media opens up great opportunities for the younger generation to introduce their culture to a wider audience. With platforms such as YouTube, TikTok and Instagram, individuals and communities can share various aspects of culture, ranging from regional arts, traditional dances, specialties, to local languages and literature (Purnamasari, 2024; Susanti, 2023; Rusiana, 2024). Content creators utilize interactive features on social media to present information in an interesting and accessible way, so that local culture can be better recognized by the global community. In addition, social media also enables collaboration across regions and countries, which in turn can strengthen awareness of the importance of preserving cultural heritage. However, on the other hand, massive exposure to global culture can lead to a shift in the cultural preferences of the younger generation. Content from international popular culture is often more dominant and more accessible, which can shift young people's interest away from their own local culture. This phenomenon risks leading to the erosion of indigenous cultural values along with an increased interest in foreign cultures that are considered more modern or attractive. Moreover, in some cases, the commercialization of culture on social media can lead to the simplification or even distortion of the meaning of local culture for the sake of the market. Therefore, although social media can be a powerful tool in cultural preservation, it requires awareness and appropriate strategies so that its use still provides positive benefits without sacrificing the authenticity of the culture itself. Most participants revealed that they are more interested in following global cultural trends than maintaining local traditions. This is reflected in media consumption patterns, lifestyles and the language used in daily interactions. Many young people are more comfortable using foreign languages, especially English, in digital communication than using local or national languages. In addition, entertainment consumption patterns have also shifted, with more consumption of foreign content such as movies, music and fashion compared to local cultural products.

The implications of this shift are significant for the sustainability of local culture in the future. If this trend continues without serious preservation efforts, there is a possibility that future generations will drift further away from their own cultural roots. This could lead to the loss of traditions, languages, and local wisdom values that have been passed down from generation to generation. When local culture is no longer considered relevant or interesting to young people, there is a risk that these cultural elements will be further marginalized and replaced by a more dominant global culture. Therefore, there needs to be an appropriate strategy in maintaining a balance between the utilization of social media and the preservation of local culture. One such

strategy is to raise the awareness of the younger generation on the importance of local culture through digital campaigns that are engaging and relevant to their communication style. This campaign can be realized in various forms, such as creating creative content based on local culture that is packaged in a modern way, collaborating with influencers or young figures who have influence on social media, and organizing online challenges or competitions that encourage active participation in promoting their regional culture.

Support from various parties, including the government, cultural communities and educational institutions, is also crucial in strengthening this initiative. Digital-based education programs, creative workshops, and the involvement of technology in cultural documentation and digitization can be concrete steps in ensuring that local culture remains alive and relevant for today's generation. With an adaptive and innovative approach, cultural preservation can not only survive, but also evolve with the changing times (Prameswari, 2024; Irianto, 2017; Husen, 2024). Collaboration between the government, cultural communities and social media platforms can also play an important role in strengthening the existence of local culture in the digital space (Sari, 2024; Wulan, 2024). For example, social media platforms can work with cultural institutions to promote content related to local cultural heritage.

Another step that can be taken is to encourage the younger generation to become content creators who not only follow global trends, but also promote local cultural values in their work. With this encouragement, social media can be an effective tool to educate and build public awareness about the importance of preserving cultural heritage (Zulkarnain, 2025). Some participants in this study even stated that they felt more proud of their local culture after seeing interesting content on social media, suggesting that digital approaches can be an effective strategy in preserving culture. Cultural preservation cannot rely entirely on social media. There must be a balance between digital life and real-life activities that maintain local traditions. Therefore, there is a need to support offline activities such as cultural festivals, art workshops, and culture-based communities that can be a platform for the younger generation to get to know and preserve their culture directly. Thus, social media is not only a tool of modernization, but can also play a role in strengthening local cultural identity.

The conclusion of this study shows that social media has brought about profound changes in the social interaction patterns of the younger generation, both in their interpersonal relationships and in their connection to local culture. Although it provides various benefits, social media also poses challenges that need to be managed wisely. Therefore, the right strategy in utilizing social media should be directed not only to build extensive social networks, but also to strengthen social relationships in the real world and maintain local cultural values. As a way forward, further research can be conducted to explore how public policy and education can play a role in creating a balance between digitalization and cultural preservation. With a deeper understanding of these dynamics, it is hoped that the younger generation can remain part of the global community without losing their own cultural roots. In other words, social media does not have to be a threat to local culture, but instead can be an effective tool in maintaining the sustainability of cultural heritage in the digital age.

4. Conclusion

This research shows that social media has brought about significant changes in young people's social interaction patterns. The shift from face-to-face communication to digital-based communication has changed the way young people build and maintain social relationships. Although social media provides convenience in establishing communication and expanding social networks, excessive use has the potential to reduce the quality of in-person interactions, hinder the development of interpersonal communication skills, and increase social anxiety due to the pressure to always be active and follow trends. Phenomena such as Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) and the tendency to present an idealized self-image on social media further complicate the social dynamics of young people in the digital era. In addition to affecting social relationships, social media also has a major impact on local culture. On the one hand, social media provides opportunities for the younger generation to introduce and preserve local culture to a wider audience through various digital platforms. However, on the other hand, the strong exposure to global culture often leads to a shift in the values and cultural preferences of the younger generation. The fascination with global trends in lifestyle, language and entertainment has led to less interest in local culture, which in the long run risks weakening the cultural identity of a community.

However, this study also found that social media can be utilized as a strategic tool in local culture preservation. With the right approach, social media can be used to raise young people's awareness of the importance of local culture through creative content that is relevant to their digital preferences. Collaboration between the government, cultural communities and social media platforms can be a solution in strengthening the existence of local culture in the digital realm. In addition to digital-based strategies, a balance between online and offline activities is also needed to ensure that local culture does not only live in cyberspace, but is also preserved in real life. Activities such as cultural festivals, art workshops, and culture-based communities need to be continuously supported so that the younger generation still has a direct attachment to their cultural values. Thus, social media is not only a tool for modernization, but can also play a role as a means of education and cultural preservation. Overall, this research confirms that the impact of social media on social interaction and local culture is complex, depending on how young people use it. Therefore, a more balanced approach is needed in utilizing social media, so that it is not only an effective means of communication but also able to maintain local social and cultural values. With the right awareness and strategy, social media can be a tool that strengthens cultural identity in the midst of digital globalization. For future research, it is suggested that a more in-depth exploration of how education and public policy can play a role in creating a balance between the use of social media and the preservation of local culture. With a more comprehensive understanding, it is hoped that the younger generation can remain part of the global community without losing their own cultural roots.

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