



The Influence of Digital Media Usage Intensity on the Level of Local Cultural Awareness among Generation Z in Indonesia

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Abstract

Digital technology has expanded rapidly in the past two decades and has changed how young people connect, find information, and form their cultural identities. In Indonesia, these changes are mostly seen in Generation Z, a group whose daily lives are very much a part of digital systems. This study looks at how much using digital media affects local culture awareness among Indonesian young people by focusing on how global content exposure and the small visibility of local cultural materials in digital spaces shape cultural knowledge, attitudes, and participation. A quantitative survey was held with 384 respondents and was supported by in-depth interviews and digital observations to get a wider view of media consumption patterns. The results show a significant negative relationship between digital media intensity and cultural awareness which means that engaging frequently with digital platforms—largely dominated by global entertainment—reduces opportunities for meaningful cultural exposure. On the other hand, this study finds that encounters with digital content featuring Indonesian cultural elements have positively and substantially impacts awareness of culture by enhancing both emotional connection as well as participation in activities related to the culture. These results highlight how dually functioning digital media may contribute to cultural dilution but at the same time offer a strong way for revitalizing culture if local traditions are presented through modern appealing and interactive formats. This study emphasizes collaboration among cultural institutions, educators, policymakers, and digital creators to culturally relevant content within the digital environment. Such representation must be strengthened to maintain continuity of culture as well as support developing cultural identity for Generation Z in an increasingly globalized and digitized world.

Keywords: Digital Media; Generation Z; Local Culture; Cultural Awareness; Cultural Revitalization

Introduction

Digital transformation has accelerated exponentially over the last twenty years, profoundly affecting human relationships, communication, and access to information. This is particularly true in countries with high technological penetration such as Indonesia. The country stands out as one of the world's largest markets for digital media. Several very significant changes are happening now because of broad Internet accessibility, increased smartphone penetration, and social media being used as a primary source for news and information. Data from Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association reveals that internet penetration reached 73.7% of total population thus indicating that it has become an integral part of daily life for most Indonesians; this is more pronounced among Generation Z defined here as people aged between 15 to 24 years since they are essentially the most digitally connected demographic group.

Generation Z is the generation formed by digital technology. They are different from any other generation because it was born to an environment where education, communication, entertainment, and even forming one's identity were always part with Digital devices. The smartphone usage, social networks, and content consumption over the internet have made a generation that lives on instant visual information exchange and engagement with global culture (Tapscott 2019). This makes Generation Z very much



relevant in any discussions about cultural values shaped through digital media or identity created through awareness brought about by such media.

This issue becomes particularly relevant for Indonesia due to its vast cultural plurality. More than 1,340 ethnic groups across 34 provinces speak different languages and have various traditions, arts, rituals as well as belief systems (Koentjaraningrat 2020). This rich cultural plurality provides both moral foundations as well as shared identities among members of Indonesian society. However rapid globalized content dissemination via digital networks poses great threats to these cultural values among youth who are most deeply embedded within modernized globalized digital systems. The very large availability of foreign content—from global fashion trends and entertainment trends to foreign ideologies—creates new dynamics in youth cultural preferences and identity formation.

Some studies indicate that there has been a gradual shift in the culture of Indonesian youth. Santiyuda et al. (2023) reported that Indonesian youth are more attracted to global pop culture and feel closer to modern international phenomena than local ones; this is not only in their fashion and consumption but also in their speech, entertainment, and attitude towards local arts. According to Widiastuti (2022), 67% of adolescents feel more familiar with symbols of global culture than those from their own local cultural heritage. From these findings, it can be inferred that digital media may substantially reduce cultural awareness when global contents dominate the digital ecosystem. Suparlan (2021) cautioned that reduced consciousness and appreciation for local culture could be a long-term threat to Indonesia's national identity since it is through digital media that perceptions and values increasingly shape society.

On the other hand, digital media may also provide a great opportunity for cultural preservation and revitalization. Digital platforms—particularly social media—have opened up new spaces in which local heritage can be expressed, shared, and reinterpreted so as to resonate with younger audiences. Research by Prasetyo, Widodo, and Rahmat (2023) indicates that if used properly, digital media can serve as an updated channel for cultural transmission. Converting elements of traditional culture into digital formats—for example short clips of regional dances or folklore expressed through digital narratives or online exhibitions of traditional crafts or even the dynamic collaboration between cultural enthusiasts and influencers—this is how values are transmitted dynamically to Generation Z! In this sense, we may view digital media not merely as a platform for homogenizing global content but rather actively participating in the construction of cultural identity through innovative contextual representations relevant today.

However, while studies have indicated both aspects regarding the effect of digital media on Indonesian youth's cultural awareness, it is the extent to which they are exposed that will determine whether the result is more positive or negative. Generation Z spends around 7-9 hours daily across different digital platforms; thus these become largely the arenas where attitudes, perceptions, and identities get negotiated (McKinsey & Company, 2023). Such extensive exposure would predispose them to more frequent encounters with global cultural content which can distract from local traditions and practices. Furthermore algorithm-driven content distribution reinforces homogenization by prioritizing trending high-engagement content predominantly sourced from the global entertainment industry over localized cultural sources.

On the other hand, digital spaces can become channels for cultural education if local content is inserted into digital media. Yang and Wang (2024) said that the effect of digital media on cultural identity differs from one country to another depending on whether and how much local cultures are represented in digital spaces. The youth become aware of and engage with issues much more when relevant content is made available in digital spaces. In Indonesia, however, popular digital platforms do not yet have much local cultural content. Traditional culture in its various forms—the regional language, ceremonial culture, indigenous performances, and traditions of handicrafts—are poorly represented online at this time. Even if this kind of content exists, it is rarely presented in a modernized manner that would appeal to Gen Z users who are now more interested in short visual interactive formats; hence most Indonesian youths have a positive attitude toward cultural preservation but actually participate very little and know relatively few details about it since there is a discrepancy between knowledge and participation indicating that cultural transmission has increasingly been mediated by digital media.

It becomes important to comprehend the extent to which digital media usage intensity impacts local cultural awareness among Generation Z in light of the challenges and opportunities provided by digital media. This research picks up concerns from previous studies but narrows down to the specific relationship between digital media engagement and cultural awareness in Indonesia. Three main issues raised in the study 2024 are still very relevant and will be elaborated further in this study: The very high intensity of usage of digital media by Generation Z—often several hours daily—reducing opportunities for direct learning about culture through community-based interactions; Cultural values may erode with constant exposure to global narratives about culture, lifestyle patterns, and entertainment content that overshadow local practices; Local cultural content is underrepresented in mainstream digital media, limiting exposure and reducing the likelihood of engagement among youth. Thus, this study tries to answer one overarching question: How does the intensity of digital media usage influence the level of local cultural awareness among Generation Z in Indonesia? To answer this question, present research narrows down to specific objectives: To analyze



patterns and intensity with which Generation Z uses digital media regarding frequency and duration of use across different platforms as well as content types accessed.

1. Measure the level of cultural awareness among youth in Indonesia based on knowledge, participation, and attitudes towards culture preservation.
2. Quantitatively test and analyze the effect of digital media use intensity on cultural awareness.
3. Investigate how digital technology revitalizes culture and strengthens cultural identity among youth.

Generation Z, as heirs to abundant Indonesian cultural treasures, carries an enormous burden to keep culture alive within an ever-changing digital landscape; it is equally important to know what factors influence their awareness toward culture from not only an academic perspective but also social, cultural, and political dimensions. This study will see how the interplay between digital media usage and cultural identity could give some insights that might be useful for policymakers, educators, cultural institutions as well as digital creators in finding ways to strike a balance between technological progress with maintaining culture.

Literature Review

Generation Z and Digital Behavior

Generation Z, broadly defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012, represents the first generation to grow up entirely within a digital environment. As Tapscott (2019) notes, this cohort can be characterized as “digital natives,” reflecting their instinctive familiarity with digital technologies from an early age. Unlike previous generations, Generation Z’s everyday experiences—whether related to education, entertainment, communication, or self-expression—are deeply intertwined with digital platforms. Their high level of digital immersion positions digital spaces not merely as tools but as integral extensions of their social and cognitive environments. In line with Prensky’s (2020) notion of “technology-shaped cognition,” Gen Z’s thinking patterns, communication preferences, and social interactions are significantly influenced by constant connectivity and multimedia exposure.

According to Flew (2018), digital media is distinguished by interactivity, convergence, and algorithmic personalization, all of which shape how users find, consume, and engage with cultural content. Algorithmic curation—driven by platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube—plays a significant role in constructing user experiences and shaping cultural preferences. These characteristics strongly influence the ways Generation Z constructs meaning and negotiates cultural identity in digital environments. Continuous exposure to digital stimuli has sharpened their ability to process information rapidly, although such exposure may also contribute to shorter attention spans and limited deep-reading capacity (Rosen, 2022). Their media preferences tend to favor visual, short-form, and interactive content, particularly content that features creative storytelling or strong aesthetic appeal. Social validation also plays a central role in their digital behavior, with many young individuals seeking identity affirmation and social belonging through online engagement (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

Despite their strong global orientation—driven by extensive exposure to international content—Generation Z maintains a complex relationship with local cultural values, shaped by familial influences, community norms, educational exposure, and personal experiences. Studies across different countries (Yang & Wang, 2024) further reveal that the extent to which Generation Z aligns with local cultural identity varies depending on how prominently local culture is represented in digital ecosystems. Digital platforms with limited cultural representation often amplify global popular culture, thereby shaping youth identities in ways that transcend national boundaries. This context makes the Indonesian case particularly compelling, given the richness of its local cultures but the uneven visibility of such cultural elements within mainstream digital platforms.

Local Cultural Identity in Indonesia

Indonesia is widely recognized as one of the world’s most culturally diverse nations, with more than 1,340 ethnic groups dispersed across its 34 provinces. Koentjaraningrat (2020) identifies seven key domains of Indonesian local culture, including belief systems, social organization, knowledge systems, language, arts, livelihood patterns, and traditional technologies. Each domain contributes to a multifaceted cultural identity that encompasses traditional dances, regional languages, indigenous crafts, culinary practices, symbolic rituals, and community-based ceremonies. However, modernization, urbanization, and globalization have significantly reshaped cultural transmission patterns. Many traditional practices that were once passed down through family and community settings are now less visible—especially among youth who spend considerable time in digital environments. Studies in Indonesia (e.g., Hidayat, 2021; Marlia, 2022) show that younger generations often possess limited knowledge of cultural heritage and participate less frequently in cultural activities, prioritizing modern lifestyles and global cultural trends instead. Increasing exposure to global entertainment—such as Korean pop culture, Western lifestyle content, and fashion trends—has contributed to shifts in values and cultural preferences. These generational differences highlight a growing cultural gap and underscore the urgency of analyzing how digital media shapes cultural awareness in contemporary Indonesia.



Cultural Awareness: Conceptual Definitions

Cultural awareness itself is a multidimensional concept. Suparlan (2021) defines it as an individual's capacity to recognize, understand, appreciate, and internalize cultural values, symbols, and practices. It includes cognitive elements such as knowledge of cultural history; affective elements such as emotional attachment to cultural identity; and behavioral elements, including participation in cultural activities and efforts to preserve cultural heritage. Scholars such as Banks (2020) argue that cultural awareness functions as a foundation for intercultural competence and social cohesion in multicultural societies. In the digital era, traditional mechanisms of cultural transmission—such as family-based storytelling, community rituals, and localized forms of education—face increasing competition from global digital content. When local culture is insufficiently represented within digital platforms, younger generations may gradually lose their sense of cultural connection, which can contribute to the erosion of cultural identity. Conversely, when cultural content is presented in digital formats that appeal to youth—such as short videos, interactive media, gamified content, or visually engaging storytelling—levels of engagement and cultural awareness tend to increase.

Digital Media and Cultural Identity: Previous Findings

This dual dynamic illustrates the complexity of digital media's role in cultural continuity. Media theorists such as Jenkins (2019) emphasize that digital spaces provide opportunities for "participatory culture," enabling youth to remix, reinterpret, and disseminate cultural symbols in creative ways. These opportunities can revive interest in local traditions, especially when cultural content is framed in contemporary formats. The rise of digital influencers promoting local culture, the growth of community-based cultural campaigns, and the emergence of cultural micro-communities on social media demonstrate that digital platforms can function as environments for cultural revitalization as well as cultural erosion.

A substantial body of previous research has explored the relationship between digital media and cultural identity, including both its negative and positive dimensions. Numerous studies argue that digital media can contribute to cultural homogenization by amplifying global cultural narratives. For instance, Widiastuti (2022) found that most adolescents are more familiar with global cultural symbols—such as international fashion, entertainment, and language—than with local cultural traditions. Similarly, Santiyuda et al. (2023) observed a strong youth preference for global popular culture, which significantly shapes their daily lifestyle choices. Scholars argue that the dominance of global cultural content may weaken cultural pride, reduce engagement with local traditions, and encourage the adoption of foreign cultural symbols (Hassan & Lee, 2021). The dominance of international entertainment industries, including Korean pop culture, Hollywood media, and global fashion trends, reinforces the presence of cultural homogenization within digital environments, raising concerns about cultural dilution.

At the same time, an equally significant body of research emphasizes the potential of digital media to support cultural revitalization. Prasetyo, Widodo, and Rahmat (2023) demonstrated that creative, youth-targeted cultural content—such as short videos, digital storytelling, interactive cultural campaigns, and gamified cultural learning tools—can increase young people's engagement with local culture. The World Economic Forum (2023) argues that digital innovation enables traditional cultural heritage to be preserved and reintroduced through virtual archives, digital exhibitions, augmented reality applications, and participatory storytelling. International research by Yang and Wang (2024) indicates that countries with strong representation of local culture in digital media experience higher levels of cultural pride among youth. This aligns with literature on cultural resilience, which suggests that cultural identity can be strengthened when communities leverage digital platforms to adapt traditional symbols into contemporary forms (Mandal, 2023).

Dual-Impact Digital Media Framework

Drawing from these scholarly contributions and the conceptual structure derived from the 2024 framework, this study adopts a dual-impact perspective in analyzing the relationship between digital media use and cultural awareness. On one hand, high exposure to globalized digital content can lead to cultural erosion, weakening young people's understanding of local traditions, values, and identities. On the other hand, engagement with digital content that highlights local culture can support cultural revitalization, enhance cultural pride, and strengthen awareness. This dual framework provides the conceptual foundation for the study's hypotheses.

1. Hypothesis 1: Higher digital media usage intensity is significantly associated with lower levels of local cultural awareness.
2. Hypothesis 2: Cultural awareness varies depending on the type of digital content consumed.
3. Hypothesis 3: Exposure to local cultural digital content positively influences cultural awareness.

Together, these hypotheses guide the empirical inquiry of the present study.



Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationship between the intensity of digital media usage and the level of local cultural awareness among Generation Z in Indonesia. The cross-sectional design enabled the collection of data at a single point in time, providing a comprehensive snapshot of respondents' media engagement patterns and cultural awareness levels. This design is widely used in social science research involving technology-mediated behaviors, making it highly relevant for analyzing how youth interact with digital platforms. The population of this study consisted of individuals categorized as Generation Z, specifically those aged 15 to 24 years residing across various regions of Indonesia. Considering the heterogeneity of this population, a stratified random sampling technique was applied to ensure proportional representation across key demographic categories. Stratification was based on geographical regions (Java and non-Java), age groups (15–19 years and 20–24 years), and gender. This approach enhanced external validity by ensuring that the sample reflected the actual distribution of Indonesian youth. A total sample size of 384 respondents was determined through the Slovin formula with a 95% confidence level. To minimize non-response bias, the survey was distributed to approximately 550 potential participants.

Data collection was conducted from January to March 2024 using three complementary methods. The primary method was an online survey administered via Google Forms, appropriate given Generation Z's high digital literacy and extensive use of internet-based communication channels. Respondents were reached through Instagram, WhatsApp groups, TikTok, Telegram, and university networks. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to enrollment. To enrich the quantitative data, in-depth interviews were conducted with twenty purposively selected respondents representing diverse levels of media usage and cultural awareness. Each interview lasted 45 to 60 minutes and followed a semi-structured protocol, allowing flexibility for deeper exploration of emerging themes. Additionally, a 30-day digital observation was conducted to examine algorithm-driven content exposure on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. This observation focused on the visibility of local cultural content, frequency of interactions, and the balance between global and local content within participants' digital environments. The integration of surveys, interviews, and observations ensured methodological triangulation and strengthened data validity. The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire encompassing four sections:

- (1) demographic information;
- (2) digital media usage intensity, including daily duration, platform preference, content type, and motivational factors;
- (3) local cultural awareness, measured across the dimensions of cultural knowledge, participation, and attitudes toward cultural preservation; and
- (4) perceptions of local culture and digital content preferences.

All items employed a five-point Likert scale. Prior to full deployment, the instrument underwent pilot testing with 30 Generation Z respondents to evaluate clarity, wording, and content relevance. Feedback from this phase informed revisions to ambiguous or conceptually weak items. Validity and reliability testing was conducted after the pilot phase using the Pearson product-moment correlation and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. Items that did not meet minimum validity thresholds were revised or removed. All major constructs demonstrated acceptable reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.78, indicating high internal consistency. These procedures ensured that the instrument accurately measured the intended constructs.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 26 and NVivo 12. Descriptive statistics—including frequencies, means, and standard deviations—were used to summarize respondent characteristics and identify general patterns in media usage and cultural awareness. Inferential analyses included Pearson's correlation to assess the relationship between media usage intensity and cultural awareness, ANOVA to examine differences across types of digital content consumed, and simple linear regression to determine the extent to which cultural content exposure predicted cultural awareness. Prior to regression analysis, assumption tests such as normality, homogeneity, and linearity were conducted. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically using NVivo to identify recurring patterns that complemented the quantitative findings. All research procedures adhered to ethical standards, including confidentiality, voluntary participation, and secure data handling.

Through this methodological framework, the study provides robust empirical evidence on how digital media engagement shapes cultural awareness among Indonesian youth. The combination of quantitative rigor, qualitative depth, and digital behavioral insights contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between digital media usage and cultural identity in the contemporary era.



Results and Discussion

Results

This chapter presents the results of the study, which include the demographic characteristics of respondents, the pattern of digital media use, the level of cultural awareness, and the statistical relationships between the variables studied. The study involved 384 respondents from Generation Z with diverse demographic and regional backgrounds. Based on the demographic profile of respondents, it can be seen that the sample was balanced in terms of gender, with 48.2% male and 51.8% female respondents. The age distribution revealed that 43.5% of respondents were aged between 15–19 years and 56.5% were in the age group of 20–24 years. In terms of geographic distribution, 59.6% were residents of Java, while 40.4% resided outside Java. Educational backgrounds indicated that 45.3% were high school students or graduates and 54.7% were university-level students. In order to provide an overview of how demographics are distributed, a descriptive summary is presented below:

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	48.2
	Female	51.8
Age	15–19 years	43.5
	20–24 years	56.5
Region	Java	59.6
	Outside Java	40.4
Education	High School	45.3
	University	54.7

The findings regarding digital media usage show that Generation Z spends a significant amount of time engaging with digital platforms. The average duration of digital media use was 7.8 hours per day, indicating high levels of digital exposure. The analysis also reveals platform preferences, with Instagram being used by 92% of respondents, followed by TikTok (88%) and YouTube (85%). When examining the types of content accessed, entertainment emerged as the most dominant category (78%), followed by informational content (65%) and educational content (45%). Importantly, only 15% of respondents reported actively consuming content related to local Indonesian culture, while 35% did so occasionally and 50% rarely encountered such content.

Table 2. Digital Media Usage Patterns

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Average daily media use	7.8 hours/day	—
Most used platforms	Instagram	92
	TikTok	88
	YouTube	85
Content consumed	Entertainment	78
	Information	65
	Education	45
Cultural content exposure	High	15
	Moderate	35
	Low	50

The findings related to cultural awareness show varying levels among Generation Z. Cultural knowledge levels were relatively low, with only 20% of respondents demonstrating high cultural knowledge, while 42% demonstrated moderate and 38% low levels. Participation in cultural activities was also limited, with only 25% of respondents frequently participating in cultural events. Meanwhile, 45% reported occasional participation, and 30% had never engaged in traditional cultural practices. Despite these findings, attitudes toward cultural preservation were generally positive, with 65% expressing supportive views concerning the importance of maintaining local cultural practices.

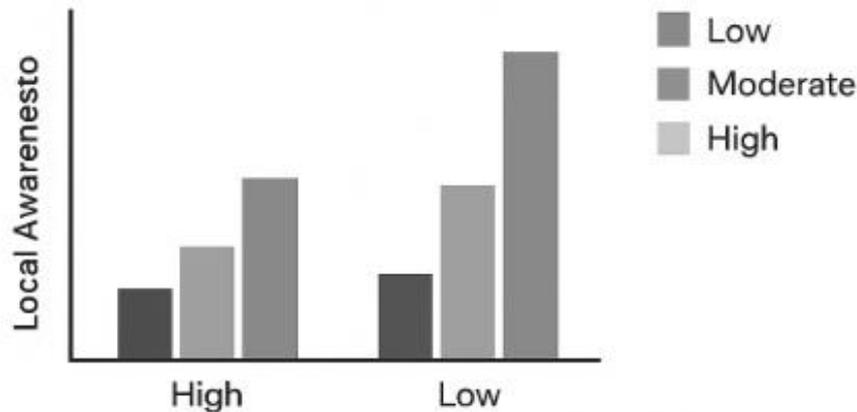


Figure 1. Digital Media Usage and Local Cultural Awareness

As shown in Figure 1, respondents with lower exposure to digital media tend to exhibit higher levels of local cultural awareness. This visual pattern further supports the statistical results presented in the subsequent hypothesis testing

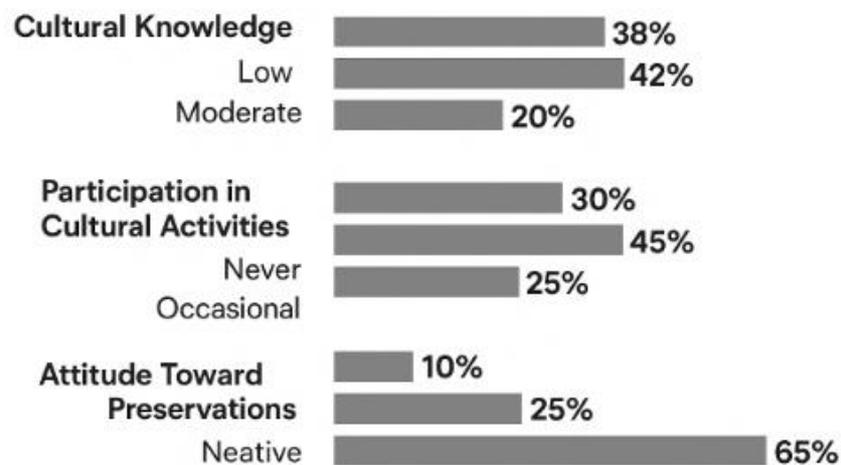


Figure 2. Levels of Cultural Awareness Among Respondents (Text Diagram)

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of cultural awareness levels among respondents, highlighting the predominance of moderate awareness across the sample. The diagram shows that only a small proportion of Generation Z respondents demonstrate high levels of cultural awareness, while a considerable segment falls under the moderate and low categories. This distribution aligns with the quantitative results presented earlier, suggesting that although positive attitudes toward cultural preservation are fairly common, actual cultural knowledge and participation remain limited. The figure further reinforces the pattern indicating that cultural awareness is not uniform but varies substantially depending on digital content exposure and individual engagement with cultural practices.

Hypothesis Testing

The results of hypothesis testing indicate statistically significant relationships between the variables:

- H1 (Correlation between digital media intensity and cultural awareness): Pearson's correlation analysis showed a significant negative relationship ($r = -0.467$, $p < 0.05$). Higher digital media usage correlates with lower cultural awareness.
- H2 (Differences in cultural awareness based on content type): ANOVA test results revealed significant differences ($F = 15.32$, $p < 0.01$). Respondents who consumed local cultural content exhibited higher awareness.
- H3 (Influence of cultural digital content on awareness): Linear regression results showed a positive effect of cultural content ($\beta = 0.385$, $p < 0.01$; $R^2 = 0.412$), indicating that cultural content explains 41.2% of the variation in cultural awareness.



Discussion

The results show that the digital world has a very significant two-fold effect on the appreciation of culture by Indonesian Generation Z. The negative relationship between the extent of digital media use and knowledge about culture indicates that high use of digital media, especially those filled with global entertainment content, takes youth far away from local cultural practices. This supports previous studies by Widiastuti (2022) and Santiyuda et al. (2023) which found that Indonesian adolescents are more attracted to symbols of global culture rather than local culture. The dominance of international digital content combined with algorithmic curation restricts the visibility of local cultural material and accelerates cultural homogenization.

On the other hand, a significant positive effect of cultural content consumption on awareness indicates an opportunity for digital platforms to act as instruments in reviving culture. When local cultural elements are packaged into modern formats that are easily accessible such as short videos digital storytelling or interactive educational content Generation Z responds with greater enthusiasm and appreciation. This is in line with what Prasetyo Widodo and Rahmat (2023) reported about the role of creative digital content in enhancing young audiences' connectedness to culture. Then ANOVA results indicated significant differences in awareness based on types of consumed content proving that exposure to local cultural content plays an essential part in shaping one's cultural identity. Those from Generation Z who frequently encounter cultural content either through Instagram reels TikTok videos or YouTube documentaries tend to develop stronger knowledge about culture participate more often in activities related to culture feel emotionally attached to their heritage. These findings further emphasize increasing the visibility of local culture within the digital ecosystem especially through platforms popular among youth.

The study reveals a disconnect between positive cultural attitudes and cultural participation. Generation Z respondents expressed positive attitudes toward cultural preservation, but they do not necessarily engage in cultural activities. This disconnect may be due to unavailability of opportunities, lack of exposure, or the perception that traditional cultural practices are outdated and irrelevant in today's digital age. Therefore, strategies for cultural preservation should not only foster positive attitudes but also enhance accessibility, relevance, and representation of cultural content in digital media. The overall results support the dual-impact conceptual framework: digital media can either undermine or enhance cultural awareness depending on how content is consumed. The study's implications place emphasis on collaboration among policymakers, educators, cultural practitioners, and content creators to embed local cultures into digital ecosystems in ways that are congruent with Generation Z's media consumption habits.

Conclusion, Suggestions, and Recommendations

Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate that digital media has become a central force in shaping the cultural awareness of Generation Z in Indonesia. As a generation that is entirely immersed in digital environments, their perception of culture, identity, and social belonging is heavily influenced by the content they consume online. The findings reveal that the intensity of digital media usage is negatively correlated with local cultural awareness, indicating that prolonged engagement with globalized digital content may reduce young people's exposure to traditional cultural values. This trend corresponds with earlier studies suggesting that the dominance of global entertainment, fashion, and lifestyle content tends to overshadow local cultural practices, resulting in gradual cultural detachment among youth.

Nevertheless, the study also affirms the significant potential of digital media to serve as a powerful platform for cultural preservation when used strategically. Respondents who regularly accessed digital content related to Indonesian culture displayed higher levels of cultural knowledge, stronger emotional connections to cultural identity, and greater participation in cultural activities. This demonstrates that local culture can remain relevant and appealing to Generation Z when presented through modern, creative, and visually engaging digital formats. Therefore, the key challenge lies not in reducing digital media use but in ensuring that local cultural content becomes more visible, accessible, and integrated into platforms favored by youth. Another important finding is the discrepancy between positive attitudes toward local culture and actual participation in cultural activities. Although many respondents expressed appreciation for cultural heritage, they did not consistently engage in cultural practices. This suggests that cultural appreciation alone is insufficient without supportive environments, accessible opportunities, and digital content that reinforces cultural values. Overall, this study concludes that digital media plays a dual role: it can either weaken or strengthen cultural awareness depending on how it is utilized and the type of content consumed. Strengthening cultural representation in digital platforms is therefore essential to sustaining Indonesia's diverse cultural heritage in the digital age.

Suggestions (Implications for Practice)

Based on the findings, several practical implications emerge that can support the effort to strengthen cultural awareness among Generation Z. First, cultural institutions, educators, and policymakers should collaborate with digital content creators to develop



modern, attractive, and easily shareable cultural materials. Short videos, animations, interactive quizzes, and digital storytelling formats have proven highly effective in capturing the attention of young audiences. Incorporating local culture into these formats will increase cultural exposure and engagement. Second, local governments and cultural organizations should facilitate more youth-centered cultural events that integrate digital elements, such as virtual exhibitions, hybrid cultural workshops, and online cultural festivals.

These initiatives can reduce the perception that traditional culture is outdated or irrelevant and encourage youth to participate actively. Educational institutions also play an essential role; integrating digital-based cultural learning into school curricula will provide structured opportunities for students to explore cultural heritage in ways that resonate with their technological preferences. Third, social media platforms can be leveraged as strategic spaces for cultural promotion. Partnerships with influencers, creative communities, and digital ambassadors can help expand the reach of cultural content, making it visible within the algorithm-driven environments where Generation Z spends most of their time. Ensuring consistent and appealing representation of local culture will strengthen cultural identity and counterbalance the overwhelming presence of global content.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should consider expanding the scope of this research by incorporating qualitative ethnographic approaches to capture deeper insights into how young individuals interpret cultural content within digital spaces. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to examine how cultural awareness evolves over time as digital media ecosystems continue to develop. Additionally, future research could compare cultural awareness across multiple generations to identify intergenerational shifts in cultural values and the role digital media plays in shaping these transitions. Researchers may also explore platform-specific cultural dynamics, such as how TikTok algorithms influence cultural preferences or how Instagram aesthetics shape perceptions of cultural identity. Further investigation into the effectiveness of digital cultural interventions—such as gamification, AI-based cultural learning tools, or virtual reality cultural experiences—would provide valuable insights into innovative strategies for cultural preservation. Finally, expanding the sample to include more diverse demographic groups across Indonesian regions would enhance the generalizability of the findings and provide a richer understanding of the cultural landscape in Indonesia's digital era.

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