



## Digital Indonesia: Existing On The Global Scene, Rooted In Local Culture

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### Abstract

Indonesia's digital transformation has opened up significant opportunities for the nation to exist and compete globally. However, this success is inseparable from efforts to maintain local cultural roots as an identity that strengthens national competitiveness. This article examines how Indonesia utilizes digital technology to expand the reach of local culture while adapting global innovations. Using a literature study approach, this research highlights the role of social media, digital platforms, and creative initiatives in strengthening the presence of Indonesian culture in cyberspace. The results indicate that the successful digitalization of local culture requires synergy between the preservation of traditional values and the development of globally relevant digital content. Educational implications include increasing the relevance of education, strengthening students' cultural identity, and encouraging contextual learning innovation. However, challenges such as the digital divide, teacher training, and the availability of quality content based on local culture still require serious attention. This study recommends the development of an adaptive digital curriculum and cross-sector collaboration to ensure digital education can act as a bridge between globalization and the preservation of local culture.

### Abstrak

Transformasi digital di Indonesia telah membuka peluang besar bagi bangsa ini untuk eksis dan bersaing di kancah global. Namun, keberhasilan tersebut tidak lepas dari upaya menjaga akar budaya lokal sebagai identitas yang memperkuat daya saing nasional. Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana Indonesia memanfaatkan teknologi digital untuk memperluas jangkauan budaya lokal sekaligus mengadaptasi inovasi global. Dengan pendekatan studi literatur. Penelitian ini menyoroti peran media sosial, platform digital, dan inisiatif kreatif dalam memperkuat eksistensi budaya Indonesia di dunia maya. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa keberhasilan digitalisasi budaya lokal memerlukan sinergi antara pelestarian nilai-nilai tradisional dan pengembangan konten digital yang relevan secara global. Pada implikasi Pendidikan, dapat meningkatkan relevansi pendidikan, memperkuat identitas budaya siswa, dan mendorong inovasi pembelajaran yang kontekstual. Namun, tantangan seperti kesenjangan digital, pelatihan guru, dan ketersediaan konten berkualitas berbasis budaya lokal masih perlu menjadi perhatian serius. Studi ini merekomendasikan pengembangan kurikulum digital yang adaptif dan kolaborasi lintas sektor untuk memastikan pendidikan digital dapat berperan sebagai jembatan antara globalisasi dan pelestarian budaya lokal.

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## INTRODUCTION

In an era of increasingly rapid globalization, digital transformation has become an integral part of everyday life. Indonesia, with the fourth largest population in the world and a continuously increasing internet penetration, is on a path of significant digital acceleration. From the economic sector to education and government to lifestyle, digital technology has transformed the way this nation interacts, learns, works, and creates. (Adiyanto, A. (2023)

The Indonesian government has demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting digital development through various programs such as the 100 Smart City Movement, National Digital Literacy, and the development of the digital economy as the backbone of new economic growth. In the private sector, the emergence of various technology startups such as Gojek, Tokopedia, Traveloka, and Ruangguru demonstrates Indonesia's immense potential to become a major player in the global digital ecosystem.

Furthermore, Indonesia's young generation is demonstrating extraordinary creativity in utilizing technology to create solutions, entertainment, and products that are not only popular locally but also able to penetrate international markets. Indonesian content creators are now competitive with those from other countries; music, animation, games, and even digital-based fashion products are starting to gain a foothold on the global stage.

### Indonesia's Internet Penetration Rate

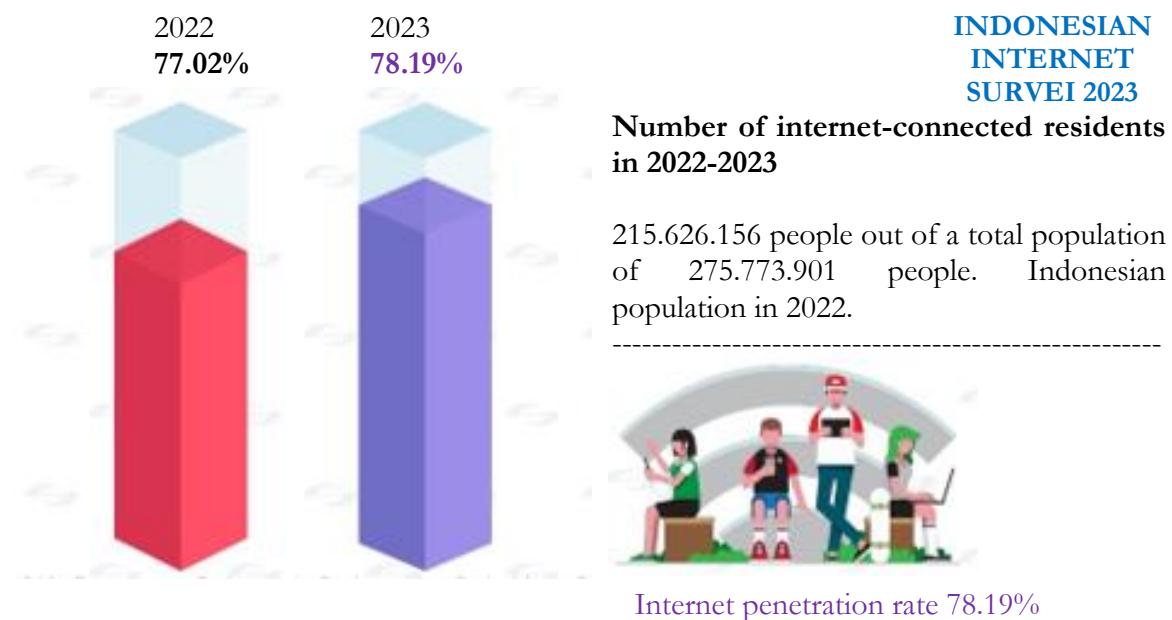


Figure 1. Indonesia's Internet Penetration Rate

Becoming part of the global world doesn't mean abandoning cultural roots. In fact, local culture is an added value that provides a unique differentiator amidst global competition. Many countries are now beginning to recognize that cultural strength is a powerful soft power in international diplomacy, including through digital media.

Indonesia boasts an extraordinary cultural richness: more than 1,300 ethnic groups, hundreds of regional languages, traditional arts, distinctive cuisine, and a profound spiritual heritage. This culture is not a burden of the past, but rather a creative capital for innovation in the digital age. For example, we can see this in the local gaming and animation industry. Studios like Agate and Mojiken Studio have developed games with a folklore feel and captivating local visuals. In the fashion world, many young Indonesian designers are embracing batik, woven fabrics, and

traditional motifs in contemporary works that are marketed globally through e-commerce platforms and social media. (Arifin, J. (2023).

The "Aura Farming" phenomenon by Rayyan Arkan Dikha, an 11-year-old from Riau, Indonesia, has become a global sensation through a traditional dance that went viral on social media, demonstrating how local culture can reach an international audience. His performance during the Pacu Jalur festival has inspired global celebrities and athletes, and earned recognition from the local government. (Source: India Times).

In music, the fusion of traditional instruments like gamelan with digital technology has created a new genre that has captured global attention. In fact, Indonesian musicians have begun to regularly perform on the international stage, conveying the message that Indonesia is not only a consumer of global culture, but also a creator of authentic digital culture.

Beyond art and entertainment, local cultural roots are also crucial in shaping digital ethics and social values in cyberspace. Amidst the rise of hoaxes, hate speech, and instant gratification, local wisdom such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, and tolerance can become fundamental values that shape healthy and civilized internet ethics. (Arifin, J. (2023).

Indonesia's digital future must be built on a strong cultural foundation. This is not only the government's responsibility, but also the responsibility of all parties: communities, industry players, educators, content creators, and of course, the younger generation. Digital education must begin to expand beyond technology to include cultural literacy. Young people need to be introduced to their cultural heritage from an early age—not as a romanticization of the past, but as inspiration to create new things in the present. Technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and even artificial intelligence (AI) can be used to present local culture in new, interactive and engaging forms. (Bilo Thomas, P., Hogan-Taylor, C., Yankoski, M., & Weninger, T. (2021).

Digital platforms can also be a space for affordable, fast, and global cultural promotion. Cultural festivals, art exhibitions, regional music performances, and even traditional culinary delights can be packaged digitally to reach an international audience. Initiatives like the Indonesia Digital Culture Festival or the Digital Batik Gallery can become new creative spaces that blend technology and tradition. (Adiyanto, A. (2023).

Furthermore, Indonesia also needs to encourage the development of a locally rooted digital ecosystem. This means that the technology developed must be aligned with the needs, values, and context of Indonesian society. Digital village applications, local community-based payment systems, or marketplaces for traditional products are concrete examples of technology that is not only sophisticated but also culturally relevant.

By combining digital power and local cultural roots, Indonesia is not only a technology user but also a creator of a new digital civilization that is humanistic, creative, and down-to-earth. Amidst the currents of globalization, a nation that maintains its identity will remain strong. DataReportal reported that there were 4.95 billion internet users in January 2022, a 4% increase from 4.76 billion in January 2021. Meanwhile, the world population, according to 2022 data, was 7.951 billion.

## Reasons for Using the Internet

- 3.33** To be able to access social media (including accessing Facebook/WhatsApp/Telegram/Line/Twitter/YouTube/Instagram and others)
- 3.15** To be able to access information or news
- 3.11** To be able to work or study from home
- 3.05** To be able to access public services
- 2.92** To be able to make online transactions
- 2.91** To be able to use email
- 2.9** To be able to access entertainment content (online games/TV/radio/online video)

**2.86** To be able to access financial services

**2.85** To be able to access online transportation

Indonesia's digital transformation has brought significant changes across various sectors of life, from the economy to education to culture. With its large and diverse population, Indonesia faces unique challenges in integrating modern technology with rich local values.

Indonesia can play a significant role on the global stage through its digital development, while simultaneously maintaining and strengthening its cultural identity. How can Indonesians participate in the digital world without losing their identity as a nation deeply rooted in local culture?

## METHODS

Qualitative research using a literature approach is a research method used to understand and analyze social phenomena or research problems through an in-depth review of relevant literature. The following is a description of the qualitative research method using a literature approach:

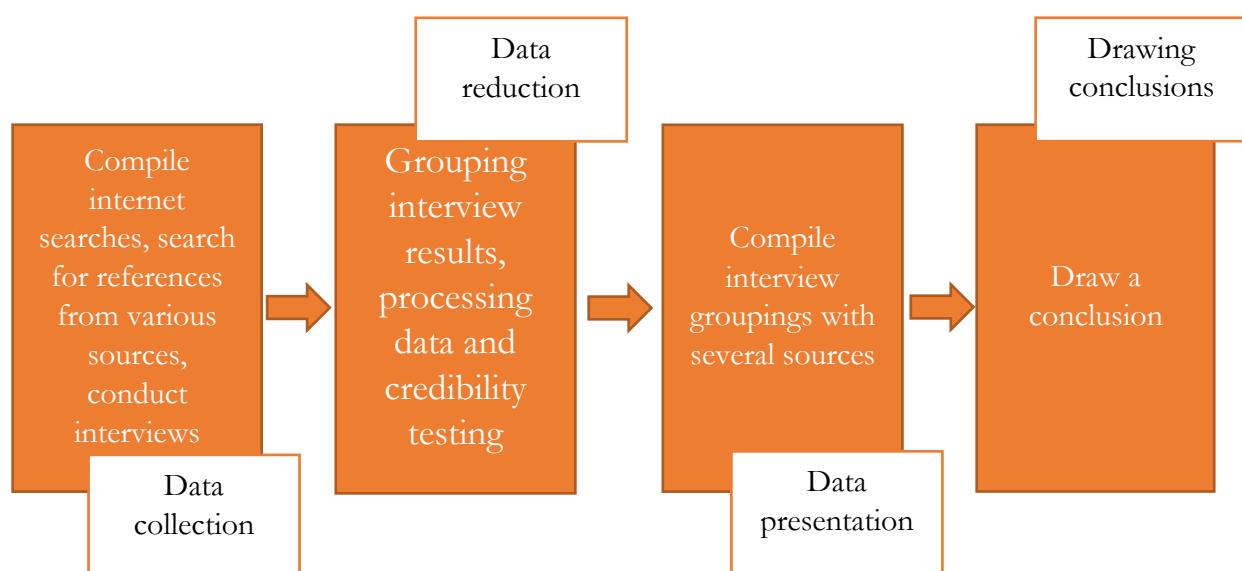


Figure 2. Methods

### Research Steps

1. Literature Search: Searching for and collecting literature relevant to the research topic.
2. Literature Analysis: Analyzing the collected literature to understand relevant concepts, theories, and research findings.
3. Information Synthesis: Synthesizing information from various literature sources to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic.
4. Gap Identification: Identifying research gaps or unexplored areas in the literature.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One concrete manifestation of this transformation is the presence of social media, which has now become an integral part of global society, including Indonesia. Social media is no longer merely a means of entertainment; it has evolved into a platform for social, political, economic, and even cultural interaction. Social media can encompass various types of platforms, such as social networks like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn; video-sharing sites like YouTube and

Vimeo; photo-sharing sites like Instagram and Pinterest; and instant messaging platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram.

There are also niche platforms like Snapchat, TikTok, and Tumblr that offer unique features aimed at specific audiences. Its interactive and real-time nature makes social media a very different communication platform than conventional media like newspapers or television. In Indonesia, social media usage is massive. According to the latest data from We Are Social and Hootsuite (2025), more than 75% of the Indonesian population are active social media users. This figure shows that social interaction now occurs more in the digital space, rather than just in physical spaces. Communication between individuals, communities, and even countries can now be done easily, quickly, and without geographical boundaries.

*Table 1. Frequently used social media*

**Frequently used social media**

Social Media	Percentage
Youtube	<b>65.41%</b>
Facebook	<b>60.24%</b>
Instagram	<b>30,51%</b>
Tiktok	26.80%
WhatsApp	1.57%
Twitter	0.91%
Snake video	0.17%
Linkedin	0.06%
Google	0.03%
Don't know or never accessed or don't exist	10.98%

\*This question is a multiple-answer questionnaire, meaning respondents can answer more than one question.

\*Comparison with the previous year.

*Table 2. Time spent on social media*

**Time spent on social media**

Time	Percentage
Under 1 hour	12.41%
1 to 2 hours	<b>46.16%</b>
2 to 3 hours	<b>25.14%</b>
3 to 4 hours	8.46%
More than 4 hours	7.84%

\*This question is a multiple-answer questionnaire, meaning respondents can answer more than one question.

\*Comparison with the previous year.

Social media has become a virtual social interaction space, where people can connect with family, friends, coworkers, and even strangers from all over the world. This interaction involves the exchange of messages, symbols, ideas, and emotions, no longer limited by time and place. Communication can occur anytime and anywhere, simply with access to a digital device and an internet connection.

In a sociological context, social media can be seen as an arena for forming social relationships, establishing virtual communities, and expanding social networks. Many individuals form "online communities" based on shared interests, such as book communities on Instagram, educational groups on Telegram, or gaming communities on Discord. This demonstrates that social interaction is no longer local, but has become global and cross-cultural.

Social media also enables active two-way communication, unlike the one-way communication model of conventional media. Users are not only consumers of information but

also content producers. Anyone can express opinions, share experiences, or influence public opinion—without having to be a celebrity or a media owner.

This phenomenon has also given rise to a participatory culture, where the public is directly involved in the production and distribution of information. This can be seen in the abundance of viral content, public discussions, social campaigns, and digital activism emerging from the grassroots. Social media provides a space for social expression and engagement that was previously limited by access and authority.

The influence of social media on human interaction patterns cannot be underestimated. It has transformed the way individuals construct identities, manage interpersonal relationships, and navigate social life. In many cases, a person's self-image is now shaped and judged based on what is displayed on social media—whether through photos, status updates, comments, or the number of followers and “likes”.

The concept of "performative identity" becomes relevant in this context, where individuals consciously construct the self-image they wish to present to the online public. Social interactions are often influenced by perception and image, rather than solely by actual reality. While this opens up space for creativity, it can also trigger social pressure, anxiety, and insecurity—especially among adolescents.

On the other hand, social media is also a powerful tool for building social solidarity, advocating for justice, and strengthening citizen engagement. Examples include social movements like BlackLivesMatter, MeToo, and GejayanMemanggil in Indonesia, all of which utilize social media as a tool for mass mobilization and the spread of collective consciousness. (David Meerman Scott, 2015).

Social media also accelerates cultural change. Global values, lifestyles, and even trends are rapidly disseminated and adopted by local communities. This creates a new dynamic between global and local cultures, which can be mutually enriching, but also pose challenges in maintaining national cultural identity.

As a constantly evolving platform for interaction, social media brings both opportunities and risks. On the one hand, it expands communication and democratizes information; on the other, it demands emotional intelligence, ethics, and digital responsibility from each user.

*Table 3. Frequently used paint media*

**Frequently used paint media**

<b>Pint Media</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
WhatsApp	<b>98.63%</b>
Facebook Messenger	<b>46.00%</b>
Telegram	<b>12.91%</b>
Instagram Direct Messenger	10.72%
Line	2.07%
Twitter Direct Messenger	0.41%
SMS	0.13%
Google Talk	0.11%
Tiktok	0.10%
LiteBig	0.05%
Don't know or never accessed or don't exist	28.23%

\*This question is a multiple-answer questionnaire, meaning respondents can answer more than one question.

\*Comparison with the previous year.

Social media has also become a crucial platform for companies and organizations to interact with their customers and audiences. Many businesses use social media to promote their products and services, increase brand awareness, and engage with potential customers.

While social media offers many benefits and opportunities, it's important to use these platforms wisely. Users need to understand the risks and potential negative impacts, such as privacy threats, online bullying, the spread of fake news, and social media addiction.

Social media has become a global force capable of propelling the presence of individuals, communities, brands, and cultures to an international level. With its fast, interactive, and geographically limitless nature, social media opens up tremendous opportunities for anyone to build their image, expand their reach, and strengthen their influence on the global stage. The ways and mechanisms by which social media supports the development of a global presence include:

1. Unlimited Global Reach

Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Twitter, and Facebook have a network of users across countries. A single piece of engaging content can be easily viewed, shared, and responded to by users from all over the world in a matter of minutes. Implications: A person or brand that was previously only known locally can now quickly become a global phenomenon—for example, the phenomenon of Indonesian content creators like NIKI, Rich Brian, or Jerome Polin, who are widely known abroad through platforms like YouTube and Instagram.

2. Virality and Supporting Algorithms

Social media algorithms work by displaying relevant, engaging, and frequently interacted with content. If a piece of content receives a positive response (likes, shares, comments), the algorithm will expand its reach—even to an international audience. The implication: Authentic, creative, and universally relatable content can go viral and be seen by millions of people across the globe. This creates a global presence strategy without the need for paid promotion or institutional connections.

3. Cross-Cultural Connections and Global Communities

Social media facilitates the formation of global communities based on shared interests or values. These communities can revolve around music, art, fashion, technology, or even activism. The implication: Local creators can connect with international communities, collaborate, learn about global trends, and introduce their local culture to a global audience. An example is a batik artist who markets her work through Instagram to the European market.

4. Personal Branding and Cultural Representation

Social media provides a space for individuals and groups to build their personal brands and promote their cultural identities. This is an informal yet highly effective form of cultural diplomacy. The implication: For example, a young Indonesian who creates content about traditional food or village life can attract global attention as an unofficial "cultural ambassador"—while simultaneously strengthening their international presence.

5. Global Collaboration and Opportunities

Platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram, or even TikTok have become a means of finding global collaboration partners, such as for endorsements, international projects, cultural exchanges, or cross-border job offers. The implication: By building a strong and professional digital presence, social media users have the opportunity to tap into global networks, whether in business, education, or arts and culture.

6. Multilingual Features and Global Advertising

Many social platforms now support multilingual features, automatic translation, and cross-border ad targeting. This allows users to strategically reach international audiences, not just organically. The implication: Local businesses or influencers can target overseas markets through affordable and segmented digital advertising campaigns.

The relationship between social media platforms and local culture is not simply about content distribution. It involves a complex process of interaction between the preservation of traditional values, adaptation of content to be relevant to a global audience, and the challenge of maintaining cultural authenticity amidst the dynamics of modernization. (David Meerman Scott (2015). Social Media as a Connecting Platform for Local and Global Culture has become a very

broad and dynamic interaction space. With billions of users worldwide, this platform allows local culture to not only be maintained but also to expand its reach.

## 1. Dissemination and Documentation of Local Culture

Social media platforms enable cultural practitioners and the general public to upload various content representing local culture, such as traditional dances, regional culinary specialties, traditional ceremonies, regional languages, and handicrafts. This content not only serves as digital documentation but also as an educational medium for the younger generation and a global audience curious about the uniqueness of these cultures. For example, through short videos on TikTok or Instagram Reels, regional dances can be presented in an attractive format that is easy for viewers across countries to understand. This content has the potential to go viral and attract global attention, thereby increasing the awareness of local culture.

## 2. Intercultural Interaction and Collaboration

Social media also facilitates intercultural dialogue and collaboration that was previously difficult. Artists, cultural figures, and cultural activists from various regions can exchange ideas, collaborate on creative projects, or introduce each other to their traditions. This interaction enriches understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, while also forming a global network that supports the preservation of local cultures. This cross-cultural collaboration not only brings local cultures to the world stage but also encourages adaptation and innovation in how those cultures are presented.

Adapting Local Culture in a Global Context Through Social Media to be accepted and appreciated by a global audience requires adapting content presentation. Social media makes it easy for creators to package culture in relevant, engaging, and accessible formats.

### 1. Creativity in Presenting Cultural Content

Content creators utilize various social media features, such as short videos, stories, live streaming, and filters and visual effects, to make local culture more "lively" and engaging. For example, traditional food recipes presented in a modern and fast-paced cooking style can attract the interest of the younger generation and international audiences. The use of easy-to-understand language, sometimes with English subtitles, is also a strategy for ensuring cultural messages are widely accepted. Furthermore, combining local cultural elements with global trends such as pop music or fashion helps capture the attention of the global market without losing the distinctive characteristics of the original culture.

### 2. Strengthening Cultural Identity through Personal Branding

Individuals who become local cultural influencers often build strong personal brands, combining their unique culture with a compelling persona. This increases the appeal of the cultural content they share and opens up opportunities for collaboration with international brands. A prime example is Indonesian artists and creators who utilize social media to creatively promote batik, angklung, or traditional Indonesian cuisine, thereby gaining international followers and effectively promoting Indonesian culture. (Fitriani, L., & Hidayati, N. (2023).

While social media offers significant opportunities, the challenge of maintaining cultural authenticity remains. Cultural content displayed on social media is vulnerable to commodification or distortion to make it more "viral" and trendy.

### 1. Risk of Commodification and Stereotyping

When local culture is simply used as entertainment without a deeper understanding, there is a risk of it being misinterpreted or stereotyped. Social media can reinforce stereotypes if content only displays visually appealing aspects but loses the meaning and context of the original culture.

### 2. Preservation and Education Strategies

To address this, cultural actors and content creators need to collaborate with cultural experts, indigenous communities, and the government to ensure the content they present

remains authentic and educational. Social media can also be utilized as an educational platform, for example by adding narratives, history, and cultural explanations to each uploaded content.

Education in the digital era is increasingly adapting to the development of social media as a new medium that plays a significant role in the daily lives of the younger generation. Social media is not only a means of communication but also a crucial platform for the preservation and dissemination of local culture. In this context, education plays an active role by integrating digital literacy and cultural awareness into the curriculum and learning process.

Through education, students are encouraged to recognize, appreciate, and preserve local cultural values by utilizing social media positively and creatively. Furthermore, education also develops critical digital literacy skills so that students can select information wisely and produce content that respects and strengthens their cultural identity. Education Responds to Social Media and Local Culture: (Fitriani, L., & Hidayati, N. 2023).

#### 1. Social Media as a Medium for Learning and Cultural Expression

Education is now beginning to recognize social media as an effective platform for learning and disseminating local culture. Teachers and educational institutions use social media to: (1) Share educational content rooted in local cultural values. (2) Invite students to participate in digital projects that highlight their regional cultural heritage. (3) Facilitate discussions and collaborations across cultural communities, thereby enriching students' horizons.

#### 2. Development of Digital and Cultural Literacy

In response to the rapid development of social media, education seeks to develop digital literacy that focuses not only on technical skills but also on cultural awareness. This includes: (1) Teaching students to recognize and appreciate local cultural values amidst the global flow of information. (2) Critically evaluating social media content to prevent it from damaging or obscuring the meaning of indigenous cultures. (3) Equipping students to use social media productively and responsibly.

#### 3. Preserving Local Culture through Digital Media

Social media provides a space for local culture to survive and thrive. Education encourages the use of digital media as a means of cultural preservation, for example: (1) Documenting local dances, music, languages, and rituals in easily accessible digital formats. (2) Using social media platforms to introduce local culture to the younger generation and global audiences. (3) Encouraging student creativity in creating digital content with relevant and engaging local cultural themes.

#### 4. Challenges and Solutions

Education also faces challenges such as: (1) the risk of spreading misguided or misused cultural content on social media. (2) disparities in technology access between regions that hinder the equitable distribution of digital education. (3) To this end, educational institutions are collaborating with the government and local communities to develop: (4) digital and cultural literacy training programs for teachers and students. (5) a curriculum that integrates local cultural values with the wise use of social media.

### Conclusion

Social media has revolutionized the way global presence is built and expanded. It provides democratic access to anyone—without the need for large infrastructure, significant capital, or elite networks. By strategically and ethically leveraging the power of social media, individuals and groups from any country, including Indonesia, can shape global identities, expand their influence, and contribute to global conversations.

Social media has become a global force capable of propelling the presence of individuals, communities, brands, and cultures to an international level, among others: 1). Unlimited Global Reach. (2). Virality and Supportive Algorithms. (3). Cross-Cultural Connections and Global

Communities. (4). Personal Branding and Cultural Representation. (5). Global Collaboration and Opportunities. (6). Multilingual Features and Global Advertising.

Social media, as a platform connecting local and global cultures, has become a vast and dynamic space for interaction. With billions of users worldwide, these platforms enable local cultures to not only be preserved but also expand their reach.

1. Dissemination and Documentation of Local Culture
2. Intercultural Interaction and Collaboration

Adapting Local Culture in a Global Context Through Social Media to be accepted and appreciated by a global audience, adapting content presentation is crucial.

1. Creativity in Presenting Cultural Content
2. Strengthening Cultural Identity through Personal Branding

While social media offers significant opportunities, the challenge of maintaining cultural authenticity remains. Cultural content displayed on social media is vulnerable to commodification or distortion to make it more "viral" and trendy.

1. Risks of Commodification and Stereotyping
2. Preservation and Education Strategies

In this context, education plays an active role by integrating digital literacy and cultural awareness into the curriculum and learning process.

1. Social Media as a Medium for Learning and Cultural Expression
2. Development of Digital and Cultural Literacy
3. Preserving Local Culture through Digital Media
4. Challenges and Solutions

The relationship between social media platforms and local culture is very close and mutually beneficial in the context of global development. Social media is not only a tool for disseminating information, but also a dynamic and creative space for cultural interaction. With proper utilization, social media can help preserve local culture while opening the door for that culture to be recognized and appreciated on the global stage.

The success of developing local culture through social media depends on the ability to adapt without losing its essence, maintain the authenticity of content, and utilize social media as a medium for education and collaboration. Thus, local culture can become a powerful identity and attraction that supports Indonesia's presence on the global stage.

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