

Crafting Glocal Identities: Youth Digital Practices in Negotiating Local and Global Cultures

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ABSTRACT

The concurrent processes of digital transformation and glocalization have fundamentally reshaped how young people construct and negotiate their cultural identities. This study aims to examine how Indonesian youth negotiate and construct glocal identities through digital practices embedded in their everyday lives. A qualitative approach with a descriptive phenomenological design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, digital walk-throughs, limited participant observation, and documentation. The participants were young people aged 17–24 years residing in Sidoarjo and Surabaya who were selected using purposive sampling. The analysis generated three main themes: (1) hybridity in cultural consumption and production practices, through which local and global elements are actively integrated; (2) digital spaces as emerging arenas for the exchange of cultural capital and the construction of social status; and (3) the use of reflexive strategies to manage and navigate digital identities, including the management of different social media accounts. The findings demonstrate that young people function as active agents who consciously reconstruct hybrid identities rather than merely passively receiving global cultural flows. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of digital sociology by integrating the theoretical perspectives of Bourdieu, Giddens, and Robertson. Practically, the findings provide valuable insights for sociology educators, cultural policymakers, and creative industry practitioners in developing strategies to strengthen local identities while adapting to ongoing digitalization. Future research should extend the analysis to a broader range of social media platforms and more diverse cultural domains.

Keywords: *Glocalization; Youth Digital Practices; Cultural Identity; Digital Sociology; Cultural Hybridity.*

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INTRODUCTION

Digital development has fundamentally transformed the ways in which young people across the world consume, produce, and negotiate their cultural identities. This transformation cannot be separated from the process of glocalization, namely the encounter between global cultural flows and local realities that subsequently gives rise to hybrid forms of identity (Robertson, 1995). Within digital spaces, cultural dynamics provide young people with opportunities to participate in virtual public spheres that transcend national boundaries while simultaneously generating new forms of civic and cultural engagement that differ from those of previous generations (Saad et al., 2023). At the global level, recent research indicates that social media has become a significant arena for the formation of global cultural identities among young people and has gradually assumed some of the functions traditionally performed by cultural socialization institutions, such as families and schools (Yolanda et al., 2025). This development raises an important question concerning how young people in developing countries, including Indonesia, position themselves amid the increasingly intensive flow of global culture mediated by digital technologies.

The Indonesian context demonstrates this phenomenon through the growing acceptance of Korean popular culture, or Hallyu, among young people through various digital platforms. Increasingly accessible social media has been found to encourage Generation Z in Indonesia to incorporate various elements of Korean culture, including music, drama, and lifestyle, into their everyday lives (Melisa et al., 2023). At the same time, findings from digital ethnographic research indicate that Indonesian youth also actively display and negotiate their local cultural identities through digital spaces, one example being the preservation of Javanese culture through digital media (Achmad & Febrianita, 2025). Another study demonstrates that urban youth are not merely passive recipients of global culture. Rather, they actively engage in negotiation processes when constructing and attributing meaning to their experiences of cultural identity within digital environments (Kusumaningtyas, 2025). These empirical conditions reveal the simultaneous operation of two tendencies: the rapid circulation of global culture through digital practices and the efforts of young people to preserve and reconstruct their local cultural identities.

The examination of this issue is significant from several perspectives. From a socio-cultural perspective, research indicates that popular culture circulating within digital spaces contributes to shaping the values and beliefs of Indonesian adolescents, which may subsequently influence the collective value orientations of younger generations (Hasan et al., 2023). From an educational perspective, understanding the mechanisms of identity negotiation is important for sociology educators in developing learning experiences that correspond to students' digital lives while fostering critical capacities to interpret the relationship between global and local cultures encountered in their everyday experiences. Meanwhile, from a sociological perspective, this issue provides an opportunity to understand the mechanisms through which cultural capital is exchanged and negotiated within digital spaces, which have increasingly developed into arenas for the formation of social status and distinction among young people. This perspective is consistent with research examining digital identity and aesthetics on Instagram (Prianti & Athique, 2025).

Although research on the digital cultural identities of Indonesian youth has continued to develop, the existing literature still reveals a significant gap. Previous studies have generally concentrated on one dimension of the issue, either examining the penetration of global culture without adequately considering local agency (Melisa et al., 2023), or focusing on efforts to preserve local culture without examining in depth its relationship with global cultures introduced through digital practices (Swarna et al., 2024). Furthermore, much of the existing research has relied on surveys or media discourse analysis to provide insights at the macro level. Such approaches have not sufficiently explored the subjective experiences of young people and the processes through which identity is negotiated through concrete digital practices in everyday life. Research on digital cultural identity and nationalism among TikTok users, for instance, has primarily emphasized perceptions and has not yet examined in depth how such identities are constructed through everyday practices (Putri et al., 2025, in *Revitalizing Cultural Identity in the Digital Age*). This condition provides the foundation for the importance of conducting the present study.

This study seeks to address this gap by employing Pierre Bourdieu's framework of habitus and cultural capital to analyze digital practices as a new arena in which the exchange and distinction of cultural capital take place among young people. This framework is then combined with Anthony Giddens' concepts of disembedding and reflexivity to explain the process through which identities are "disembedded" from local contexts and subsequently reflexively reconstructed within global-digital spaces. Furthermore, Robertson's concept of glocalization is employed to understand the outcomes emerging from this negotiation process. The novelty of this study lies in positioning young people as active agents in the construction of hybrid identities rather than merely as recipients of cultural influences. The analysis focuses on concrete digital practices, including the types of content produced, the digital communities in which young people participate, and their everyday cultural consumption rituals, rather than focusing solely on attitudes or perceptions. In addition, this study combines the perspectives of Bourdieu and Giddens, a theoretical combination that has been relatively uncommon in studies of glocal identities among Indonesian youth.

Building upon the foregoing discussion, this study aims to examine how Indonesian youth negotiate and construct glocal identities through digital practices embedded in their everyday lives. Particular attention is given to the processes, strategies, and meanings they construct when bringing together local and global cultural elements within digital spaces. Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of digital sociology in Indonesia, particularly by extending the application of the concepts of habitus, cultural capital, and reflexivity to the study of digital cultural glocalization. Practically, the findings are expected to serve as a reference for educators, cultural policymakers, and creative industry practitioners in developing strategies to strengthen local cultural identities while remaining adaptive to the evolving currents of global cultural digitalization.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Research on the negotiation of glocal identities among young people through digital practices requires a theoretical perspective capable of connecting three analytical dimensions simultaneously: the influence of social structures on the formation of individual dispositions, the capacity of actors to reflect upon and respond to those structures, and the broader context of interactions between global and local cultures. Accordingly, this study draws upon three complementary theoretical perspectives: Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus and cultural capital, Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration and reflexivity, and Roland Robertson's concept of globalization. These perspectives are positioned as an integrated analytical framework. Bourdieu's perspective is employed to explain the formation and exchange of cultural dispositions and resources; Giddens' perspective is used to understand how actors reflexively engage with and navigate social structures; while Robertson's concept provides a framework for explaining how interactions between local and global cultural elements generate hybrid identities.

In Bourdieu's theoretical framework, habitus refers to a set of dispositions formed through the internalization of social experiences, which subsequently shapes how individuals perceive, evaluate, and act in relatively consistent ways. Cultural capital, meanwhile, refers to symbolic resources, including knowledge, tastes, and skills, that can be converted into social advantages within a particular field (Verwiebe & Hagemann, 2024). Over the past decade, the application of Bourdieu's ideas to digital environments has undergone significant development. Several scholars have consequently introduced the concept of digital capital as an extension of cultural capital encompassing technical competencies, content-curation abilities, and reputational resources developed through social media (Verwiebe & Hagemann, 2024). Critical scholarship on this development indicates that individuals possessing greater conventional cultural capital tend to have stronger capacities to accumulate and convert digital capital into valuable social advantages, suggesting that offline inequalities may be reproduced within digital spaces (Ragnedda, 2022). Nevertheless, the application of Bourdieu's framework to digital contexts has also been subject to criticism because differences in social media use are shaped not only by social class and education but also by age, ethnicity, and gender (Ragnedda, 2022). In this study, habitus and cultural capital are employed to examine how young people transform their familiarity with digital culture into new forms of social distinction within peer networks, while also exploring whether their local cultural dispositions persist or are displaced when encountering globally dominant cultural dispositions in digital spaces.

In contrast to Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between structure and agency. From this perspective, social structures do not merely constrain individual action but also provide conditions that enable action; simultaneously, individuals' repeated actions may reproduce or transform those social structures (Rawal, 2022). Reflexivity occupies a central position in Giddens' understanding of late modernity. The concept refers to individuals' capacity to consciously monitor, evaluate, and adjust the direction of their actions in response to continuously changing knowledge.

Accordingly, self-identity is not regarded as a permanent set of characteristics but rather as a biographical project that is continuously constructed through reflexive processes (Rawal, 2022). When applied to social media, this perspective demonstrates that young people's use of digital platforms emerges from the interaction between individual agency, including their interests and motivations, and available structures, such as platform characteristics, prevailing norms, and regulations (Rawal, 2022). In this study, reflexivity is used to examine the extent to which young people consciously and critically consider and negotiate the cultural choices they display in digital spaces, rather than simply following global cultural trends passively.

Furthermore, Roland Robertson's concept of glocalization offers a perspective that rejects a rigid separation between the global and the local. Within this framework, the two are understood as mutually interconnected because globalization also involves linking different localities while simultaneously reconstructing those localities within a broader global context (Roudometof, 2023). This perspective enables the study to move beyond a dichotomous understanding in which local culture is viewed merely as an entity under threat while global culture is positioned as an inherently dominant force. Instead, attention is directed toward processes of mutual adaptation that may produce hybrid cultural forms according to the characteristics of particular contexts (Roudometof, 2023). Contemporary scholarship on glocalization has also expanded into various fields, including youth studies and aesthetic capitalism, providing a relevant perspective for understanding how young people develop cosmopolitan cultural tastes through the consumption of global culture mediated by digital technologies (Roudometof, 2023). In this study, glocalization is employed to interpret the outcome of the identity negotiation process. This process is not understood as a linear progression that culminates in the replacement of local culture by global culture, but rather as an active and context-dependent process of hybridization.

Relevant previous research identifies three major studies that serve as the foundation for this study. An international study by Prianti and Athique (2025), for example, examined how Indonesian youth strategically navigate Instagram to construct digital identities closely associated with postcolonial aesthetics and global consumerism. The findings indicate that users frequently manage two types of accounts: a primary account curated according to social expectations and an alternative account intended for more personal self-expression. A national study by Achmad and Febrianita (2025) employed a virtual ethnographic approach to examine how communities, including young people, preserve Javanese culture through the utilization and strategic adaptation of digital media, including streaming radio. Meanwhile, Kusumaningtyas (2025) investigated the lived experiences of urban youth in negotiating cultural identities in the digital era and found that this process is active and multilayered rather than merely a passive response to external cultural influences. Collectively, these three studies consistently demonstrate the agency of young people in engaging with digital culture. Nevertheless, each study remains limited by its focus on a particular platform or cultural domain, such as Instagram, digital radio, or urban life experiences in general. Limited attention has been given to the process through which glocal identities are constructed across multiple platforms and diverse cultural domains, including music, fashion, food, and

language, which simultaneously constitute significant aspects of contemporary Indonesian youth experiences. A theoretical gap is also evident in the limited number of studies integrating the perspectives of Bourdieu, Giddens, and Robertson within a single analytical framework, despite the potential of such an integration to provide a more comprehensive understanding by connecting the structural dimension of cultural capital, the agentic dimension of reflexivity, and the outcome dimension of glocal hybridity.

Based on the foregoing review, this study develops a conceptual framework that integrates the three theoretical perspectives. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and cultural capital are used to identify the cultural dispositions and resources possessed by young people and to analyze how these elements are exchanged within digital fields. Giddens' perspective on reflexivity is then employed to understand the processes of awareness, consideration, and decision-making through which young people determine and negotiate their cultural choices. Robertson's concept of glocalization is used to interpret the outcome of these processes in the form of hybrid identities that bring together local and global cultural elements. This conceptual framework provides the foundation for analyzing the qualitative data, particularly by understanding young people's digital practices not merely as technical activities but as social spaces in which glocal cultural identities are continuously constructed, crafted, and negotiated.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive phenomenological design. This design was selected because the study seeks to understand the lived experiences of young people as they negotiate and construct glocal identities through digital activities in their everyday lives. Such a phenomenon is more appropriately examined by exploring participants' experiences and subjective meanings than through quantitative measurement. Phenomenology specifically seeks to identify the shared essence of lived experiences among individuals who encounter a particular phenomenon, thereby enabling researchers to develop an in-depth understanding of how the phenomenon is experienced, perceived, and interpreted by participants (Qazvin Antimicrobial Stewardship Study, 2023). Compared with ethnography, which emphasizes the comprehensive examination of cultural patterns within a group over an extended period, and case study research, which focuses on the boundaries of a particular case, a phenomenological design is considered more appropriate because this study emphasizes the essence of subjective experiences across individuals who encounter similar forms of digital glocalization while attaching personal meanings to those experiences.

The study is planned to take place in Sidoarjo and Surabaya, East Java. The selection of these two areas is based on the researcher's accessibility to urban youth communities with relatively high levels of digital engagement. Data collection is scheduled to take approximately two months, from Juni-July 2026, encompassing participant recruitment, interviews, and data verification. Participants will consist of young people aged 17–24 years selected through purposive sampling based on three main criteria: (1) actively using at least two social media platforms on a daily basis, (2) engaging with global cultural consumption, including music, drama, fashion, or digital trends, while simultaneously participating in local cultural practices, and (3)

being willing to share their digital experiences in depth. Purposive sampling is employed because phenomenological research prioritizes the depth and richness of participants' experiences rather than statistical representation. Therefore, participant characteristics are specifically determined to ensure their direct relevance to the research objectives (Westh et al., 2025). The number of participants will be determined according to the principle of data saturation, following general phenomenological research guidelines that recommend approximately 5 to 25 participants, depending on when thematic saturation is achieved (Westh et al., 2025; Bartholomew et al., 2021). If additional informants are required, snowball sampling will be employed by asking initial participants to recommend other individuals who meet the relevant research criteria.

Data will primarily be collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 45–60 minutes per participant. The interview guide will be designed in an open-ended format to allow the researcher to explore emerging issues during the interview process, consistent with the characteristics of phenomenological research, which seeks to obtain rich and contextual accounts of subjective experiences (Qazvin Antimicrobial Stewardship Study, 2023). As a complementary technique, a brief walk-through will also be conducted by asking participants to display and reflect upon their personal digital content or feeds during the interviews. This technique is intended to enrich verbal accounts with visual evidence that directly represents participants' digital practices. Interview data will be complemented by limited participant observation of participants' interactions within public social media spaces, subject to their consent, as well as documentation in the form of screenshots of relevant cultural content as part of methodological triangulation. Data trustworthiness will be strengthened through source triangulation by comparing information across participants and examining it against observation and documentation findings. In addition, member checking will be conducted by asking participants to confirm the researcher's interpretation of the interview findings to ensure the accuracy of meaning. An audit trail will also be maintained through systematic documentation of all stages of data collection and analysis. These three strategies are commonly employed to enhance the credibility of qualitative research, including contemporary phenomenological studies (Rodríguez et al., 2023; Kilonzo et al., 2024).

Data analysis will employ the interactive analytical model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2018), consisting of four interconnected and iterative stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data condensation, raw data will be processed through transcription, coding, and reduction to identify meaning units relevant to the research focus. In the data display stage, emerging themes will then be organized into analytical matrices or networks to facilitate the identification of patterns within the data. Coding will be conducted inductively, beginning with open coding of interview transcripts to identify initial categories. These categories will subsequently be developed and grouped into broader themes through thematic analysis. This process will remain guided by the Bourdieu-Giddens-Robertson conceptual framework outlined in the literature review, ensuring that the analysis moves beyond merely describing participants' experiences toward a deeper theoretical interpretation. To strengthen the validity of the analysis, two researchers or coders will independently

conduct the coding process and subsequently compare and discuss the degree of consistency within the resulting thematic framework (Mihas, 2023).

The entire research procedure is designed to enable limited replication by other researchers working with participants who have similar characteristics and contextual backgrounds. Nevertheless, the research design retains the methodological flexibility that constitutes a central characteristic of qualitative phenomenological research. Such flexibility allows the interview guide and direction of exploration to be adjusted in response to themes emerging from the field, while maintaining systematicity, consistency, and rigor throughout the data analysis process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The phenomenological analysis of data obtained through in-depth interviews, observation, and digital *walk-throughs* with young participants aged 17–24 in Sidoarjo and Surabaya revealed three main themes concerning the negotiation of glocal identity. These themes reflect the participants' subjective experiences as well as the patterns of their everyday practices when engaging in digital spaces.

Theme 1: Hybridity in Cultural Consumption and Production Practices

The findings demonstrate that urban youth do not merely receive influences from global culture but actively integrate them into their local contexts. Exposure to global popular culture, including *Hallyu*, which encompasses Korean music, dramas, and lifestyles, does not result in the disappearance of participants' local identities. Instead, global cultural elements are reworked through digital content production that brings global cultural references into dialogue with local experiences. Examples include the use of the Javanese language in captions when discussing Korean popular culture and attempts to relate global lifestyles to the social conditions of Sidoarjo and Surabaya. These findings indicate that cultural identity is neither singular nor fixed. Rather, it continuously undergoes a process of detachment from its original context, reinterpretation, and reconstruction, resulting in hybrid forms within cyberspace.

Theme 2: Digital Spaces as Arenas for the Exchange of Cultural Capital

The examination of digital activities indicates that young people's abilities to curate content and develop digital aesthetics can function as forms of cultural capital emerging within digital environments. Participants utilize their technical competencies and their ability to organize and present cultural content on social media as means of achieving distinction and establishing social positions within their peer networks. This pattern demonstrates the presence of a digital habitus, whereby cultural dispositions acquired through previous social experiences continuously shape participants' preferences, tastes, and patterns of interaction when engaging with global cultural flows.

Theme 3: Reflexive Strategies in Navigating Digital Identity

The findings demonstrate that participants do not position themselves as passive recipients of cultural influences but instead exercise conscious control over how they present themselves in digital environments. Interviews and observations reveal a tendency to differentiate spaces of self-expression through the management of multiple accounts. Young people use primary accounts that are organized with consideration for local cultural norms and social expectations, while alternative

accounts provide greater space for global cultural expression and personal preferences. This pattern indicates an ongoing process of evaluating and adjusting actions as a means of responding to the social environments surrounding their digital lives. The findings demonstrate that identity negotiation in digital environments constitutes an active process of glocalization. Within this process, local and global elements are not treated as separate forces but are interconnected and mutually reconstructed. Roland Robertson's glocalization perspective helps explain that such cultural encounters do not necessarily lead to global homogenization that eliminates local culture. Instead, their interaction produces processes of mutual adaptation through which distinctive hybrid identities can emerge. In this context, Indonesian youth demonstrate their capacity to maintain local values while simultaneously developing cosmopolitan orientations through their engagement with global culture.

From Pierre Bourdieu's perspective, the findings indicate that digital spaces have developed into new arenas in which cultural capital can be accumulated, exchanged, and converted into social advantages. Participants' familiarity with digital culture extends beyond consumption and can be transformed into social value through their ability to curate and present content. Meanwhile, the practice of maintaining differentiated social media accounts and selectively engaging with cultural content reinforces the relevance of Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration and reflexivity. Within this context, participants' identities can be understood as biographical projects that are continuously reconstructed through reflexive awareness. Agency is exercised to respond to and navigate structures shaped by platform algorithms and various forms of social expectations.

When considered in relation to previous research, the findings both reinforce and extend the results of several earlier studies. The strategy of differentiating digital account management is consistent with Prianti and Athique (2025), who examined the construction of digital identities on Instagram in relation to social expectations and the need for personal expression. The present findings also extend Kusumaningtyas (2025) by demonstrating that cultural negotiation among urban youth takes place across multiple digital platforms and is not merely a passive response to external influences. Furthermore, this study extends the focus of Achmad and Febrianita (2025). Whereas their study specifically examined the preservation of Javanese culture through digital media, the present findings demonstrate that local cultural preservation can occur simultaneously with the consumption of highly influential global culture.

At the theoretical level, this study contributes to the development of digital sociology in Indonesia by integrating the perspectives of Bourdieu, Giddens, and Robertson to examine structural, agentic, and hybrid dimensions in an interconnected manner. From a practical perspective, the findings are relevant to sociology educators in developing learning experiences that correspond to students' digital lives while fostering their critical capacity to understand encounters between local and global cultures. For cultural policymakers and creative industry practitioners, these findings can serve as a consideration in developing strategies to strengthen local cultural identities while remaining responsive to transformations generated by digitalization.

Future research should consider expanding the demographic characteristics of participants by including young people from non-urban and rural areas. Such an expansion is necessary to examine the extent to which differences in technological

access and variations in social class backgrounds contribute to the formation of digital habitus and the reflexive capacities of young people as they negotiate their glocal identities.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that young people actively construct, reconstruct, and negotiate their glocal identities through various digital practices, challenging the notion that they are merely passive recipients of global cultural flows. Cyberspace serves as a dynamic arena for reciprocal adaptation between local and global cultural elements. Rather than eliminating one another, these elements interact and become integrated, giving rise to hybrid identities with distinctive characteristics. The findings further indicate that digital environments have developed into arenas for the exchange of cultural capital, where young people reflexively evaluate and adjust their cultural expressions in response to platform algorithmic structures as well as various forms of social expectations. At the theoretical level, this study contributes to the development of digital sociology literature in Indonesia by demonstrating that the integration of Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Giddens' concept of reflexivity, and Robertson's concept of glocalization can provide a comprehensive framework for explaining the interrelationship among structural, agentic, and cultural adaptation dimensions within a unified analytical perspective.

From a practical perspective, the findings have important implications for educators, particularly sociology educators, in designing learning experiences that correspond to students' digital realities while strengthening their critical thinking abilities to understand cultural encounters in everyday life. For cultural policymakers and creative industry practitioners, the findings can serve as a strategic basis for developing efforts to strengthen local cultural identities while remaining adaptive to the ongoing process of digitalization. Given the rapid transformation of cultural dynamics, future research should expand the examination of glocal identity construction across a wider range of social media platforms and encompass more diverse cultural domains, including fashion, food, and language. Such an expansion would enable a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of young people's identity experiences within digital environments.

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