

The Use Of Social Media In Maintaining Cultural Identity

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Abstract—Social media use has become an integral part of everyday life in an increasingly connected digital age. However, behind the ease of this technology, lies the complex struggle associated with the formation and maintenance of cultural identity. This study adopts a qualitative approach with a literature review method to explore the role of social media in maintaining cultural identity. By adopting the right strategy and receiving support from various parties, social media is emerging as a powerful instrument in ensuring the survival and prosperity of cultural customs, languages, and rituals amid the challenges of globalization. This research aims to provide insight into the relationship between social media use and the maintenance of cultural identity in an increasingly digitally connected society. Through literature synthesis, the study identifies the role of local community collaboration and participation in online communities in cultural heritage preservation efforts. The results show that social media provides an important platform for individuals and communities to confirm, express, and celebrate their cultural identity. However, challenges and risks such as emphasis on cultural identity and inaccurate information also need to be considered. Therefore, a careful and critical approach is needed in the use of social media to maintain and strengthen cultural identity in an increasingly digitally connected society.

Keywords—Culture; Social Media; Globalization; Technology.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media plays an important role in the protection of cultural identity by offering a platform for individuals to express and protect their cultural heritage. Research shows that social media allows users to navigate polymedia settings, displaying various aspects of their identity, including national and cosmopolitan expressions (Radwan 2022). For example, Qatari youth extensively utilize social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter to maintain connections, exchange experiences, and participate in conversations on social and political issues, influencing their sense of belonging and personal inclinations (Condemayta Soto, Bauwens, and Smets 2023). In addition, social media serves as a culturally cohesive force for specific communities such as Mediterranean Turkey, allowing them to uphold and promote their cultural identity

despite the absence of a physical homeland (Bilge n.d.). Overall, social media serves as a tool for identity interaction, impacting how individuals communicate, build connections, and shape their cultural identity (Ahmed et al. 2022).

The dominant form of cultural content disseminated on social media includes a wide variety of material. Users mostly distribute personal interests, cultural products, and experiences that elicit intense emotional responses such as happiness, contentment, or sadness, thereby increasing their potential for wide circulation (Lee, Kang, and Ahn 2017). In addition, social media is flooded with a plethora of viral forms of digital content, including blog entries, podcasts, and tweets, which are currently being examined for their cultural consequences (McNulty 2022). Social media serves as a forum where many real-life events, ranging from global revolutions to local processions, are disseminated, reflecting important aspects of society, culture, and heritage (Naaman 2016). The rise of User Generated Content on social media has accelerated the development of the Social Media-focused Entertainment industry, where influencers and content producers take an important role in shaping cultural storylines and interacting with diverse audiences (Merced 2023).

In the realm of social media, influencers with significant influence play an important role in shaping cultural identity through the representation of diverse cultural principles and actions (Rétvári, Kovács, and Kárpáti 2022). They leverage their own reputation and influence to influence audience decisions and viewpoints (King and Fretwell 2022). By engaging in partnerships through companies, these influencers promote lifestyles that appeal to specific groups of people, thus encouraging them to aspire to certain ideologies and principles (Kiatkawsin and Lee 2022). In addition, social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok offer a platform for communities that are minorities, such as the Roma population in Hungary, to show their cultural heritage and challenge prevailing stereotypes, consequently influencing cultural perspectives (Arnesson 2023). Social media's capacity to transcend cultural gaps has the potential to result in cultural encroachment, where genuine identities can be replaced by intercultural phenomena (Tang and Chan 2020). Ultimately, influencers act as cultural intermediaries, and reshape cultural identity in the age of digitalization.

Nowadays social media is able to increase awareness and understanding of local culture among users. Research shows that social media platforms like Twitter can offer insight into linguistic diversity, population characteristics, and geographic distribution of cultural communities within countries (Magdy et al. 2014). Through the integration of social networks with geographic data, social media enhances the understanding of community trends and happenings, thus aiding in the interpretation of local subjects and attitudes in real-time (Wang 2019). Innovative tools such as Community Polls leverage social media to gather local news and public opinion updates, encourage users to participate more actively in conversations on local news issues and to promote awareness of public viewpoints (Kim, Kojima, and Ogawa 2016). In general, social media's capacity to distribute information, evaluate sentiment, and facilitate conversation significantly contributes to increased awareness and understanding of local culture among users.

Users respond to cultural material shared on social media in a variety of ways. Social Media Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) explores the influence of the latest media technology in constructing discursive meanings (KhosraviNik 2023). Studies show that an individual's level of trust in arts and cultural exhibition information providers plays an important role in shaping their trust in content, thus influencing word-of-mouth promotion (Johnson and Callahan 2013). The rise of social media has eased global communication, transcended geographical limitations and fostered cultural exchange, despite persistent challenges such as language barriers and cultural gaps (Gillespie and Postigo 2015). In addition, utilizing platforms such as Twitter to distribute cultural and political information has been underlined, demonstrating efficiency in generating rapid reactions and stimulating engagement in civil society (Welzer et al. 2011). In general, individual reactions to cultural material on social media vary, including discourse surveillance, political engagement, global interaction, and information distribution.

The use of social media significantly influences the cultural and behavioral perspectives of young people. Various studies show that social media channels such as Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube play an important role in shaping adolescent behavior and building patterns for future generations. In addition, scientific research emphasizes that young individuals' engagement with social media has evolved into a fundamental aspect of their daily routines, erasing the distinction between their physical and virtual worlds (Radwan 2022). The impact of social media on cultural identity, in particular, has raised concerns, as research findings show an increased rate of cultural identity transformation among rural populations caused by their social media interactions (Ilbury 2022). In addition, teens' trend toward contemporary image-centered apps like Snapchat and Instagram over conventional platforms like Facebook and Twitter shows how local user behavior is influenced by broader patterns in social media utilization (Lozano-Blasco, Mira-Aladrén, and Gil-Lamata 2023).

Social media for cultural preservation purposes shows variations on different platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. Instagram, known for its emphasis on visual content, is commonly used for the dissemination of images and short video clips, making it a suitable medium for showcasing cultural relics and historical sites (Mak, Poon, and Chiu 2022). Instead, YouTube is mostly used to share longer and more detailed videos, allowing for comprehensive discussions and demonstrations relating to cultural traditions such as the practice and protection of Kungfu (Chanda and Das 2022). Therefore, while Instagram excels at visual representation, YouTube and similar platforms provide extensive and interactive opportunities to document and disseminate cultural heritage, catering to a wide range of preservation requirements and preferences.

The acceptance of indigenous peoples and attitudes towards the use of social networking sites as a means of safeguarding cultural heritage compared to conventional techniques have emerged as focal points in recent scientific investigations. Scientific findings have shown that social media platforms can take an important role in supporting and preserving cultural heritage through user engagement and awareness-raising (Rochayanti et al. 2019). In addition, the integration of social media has ushered in a new component into the dialogue on heritage, facilitating documentation and deliberation on heritage destruction, thereby enriching the public conversation on heritage conservation (Putranto and Sari 2018). In addition, the utilization of social media channels can be important in formalizing and recording local traditional artistic expressions, thus offering templates to safeguard local heritage and ensure its sustainability (Sedlacik 2015). This perspective underscores the capacity of social media to complement conventional approaches and engage local communities in efforts to preserve cultural heritage.

Having the potential to serve as a powerful instrument for educating global populations about indigenous cultures, social media promotes intercultural understanding and awareness (Wang 2019). Through the utilization of social networks and geographic data, it has the capacity to offer insight into local happenings and societal trends, enabling an in-depth understanding of different cultures and societal dynamics (Tuzel and Hobbs 2017). Nevertheless, there are barriers such as unbalanced power dynamics in the global media environment and the need to confront the prevalence of certain cultural viewpoints, as shown in a study involving students from the United States and Turkey (Schweisfurth 2010). Despite these barriers, the utilization of social media platforms can facilitate informal exchange, sharing of common interests, and exploration of local subjects based on spatiotemporal associations, ultimately enriching cultural representation in digital learning (Kim, Kojima, and Ogawa 2016).

The interaction between different cultures on social media has a significant impact on cultural identity as individuals are able to establish, negotiate, and shape their identity through digital exchanges (D'Silva and Atay 2019). The role of social media platforms is crucial in influencing the process of identity construction, negotiation, and expression, leaving a digital footprint that reflects these activities (Baldauf, Develotte, and Ollagnier-Beldame 2017). Findings from a study focusing on rural communities in Egypt underscore the important frequency of cultural identity transformation as a result of social media use, underscoring the importance of meaningful content in preserving communal values and maximizing the beneficial impact of social media (Radwan 2022). This study shows the impact of intercultural interaction on social media in shaping cultural perceptions through the facilitation of integration, understanding, and beneficial communication encounters.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a literature review method to explore the use of social media in maintaining cultural identity. The relevant population is literature related to the topic. The information is obtained from various sources including scientific journals and digital libraries. The sample is not limited to a specific number, but is selectively selected from the relevant literature. Data analysis involves the synthesis and interpretation of findings in the literature. The validity of the research is determined by the credibility of the sources used and the suitability of the findings to the conceptual framework. This method is expected to provide a deep understanding of the relationship between social media use and the maintenance of cultural identity.

III. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

3.1. The process of globalization affects local cultural identities in different countries

The important role of social media in raising global awareness and understanding of indigenous cultures as a platform for the circulation of various cultural materials (Wang 2019). The utilization of social media platforms such as Twitter allows individuals to participate in dialogue, exchange personal encounters, and promote local cultural customs, thus contributing to a more interconnected global society (Sutarso 2020). The accessibility and interactive features of social media allow users to learn

about diverse cultures, languages, and customs, nurturing cultural interaction and appreciation. (Gloor et al. 2016). Apart from some negative aspects such as the spread of false information and hate speech, social media can be used to showcase selective, innovative, and informative indigenous cultural materials, mitigate the adverse effects of globalization, and encourage cultural incorporation on a wider spectrum (Welzer et al. 2011).

The effects of globalization on local cultural identities in different countries are profound, as they change individuals' perspectives on themselves and their communities. This phenomenon has given rise to a cohesive dual identity that combines the principles of universal democracy with the values of local culture (Ikhsanov 2023), which leads to changes in how subjective identities are formed and poses challenges to conventional boundaries. This impact extends to the preservation of sovereignty and territorial integrity, underscoring the importance of individuals identifying with their place of residence to uphold social cohesion (Lončar and Špehar 2023). In the realm of sports, such as football leagues, globalization has transformed local identities into more global, demonstrating the influence of global processes on sporting and cultural phenomena (Zaylalov and Zaylalova 2022). Furthermore, examinations in social and humanitarian studies explain how globalization affects cultural and social identities, resulting in shifts in intercultural interactions and the emergence of new forms of identity (SAÇLI 2022). In addition, globalization has affected the concept of urban identity, with cities losing their distinctive nature and individuals feeling alienated due to a lack of connection with their urban environment.

Cultural content shared on social media platforms manifests in various forms, such as blog posts, art exhibitions, User-Generated Content (UGC), and Social Media Entertainment (SMBs). These different forms of content are distributed for diverse purposes, including informational and relational intent, which affects the audience's trust in both the content itself and its creator (McNulty 2022). The emotional resonance of viral content, evoking intense feelings such as excitement, passion, or pleasure, significantly contributes to its rapid spread and favorable acceptance among viewers (Merced 2023). In addition, the construction of communal realities facilitated by the mutual recognition of emotional responses to cultural material encourages the dissemination and organization of social behaviors rooted in said content (Kashima, Bratanova, and Peters 2018). Overall, the ever-expanding digital sphere of social media serves as a dynamic medium for the exchange and absorption of varied cultural content, shaping cultural interactions and encounters globally.

In maintaining cultural identity in a digital age characterized by the global dissemination of information is essential because of the complexity arising from the juxtaposition of globalism and glocalism, as emphasized in scientific articles. The digital sphere facilitates continuous interaction among diverse cultures at an unparalleled magnitude, potentially resulting in cultural dissonance and clashes when encountering individuals from different backgrounds. In addition, the digital domain allows migrants to maintain a connection with their native culture, possibly hindering their adjustment to the new environment and encouraging segregation. To address this issue, there is a need to advocate for transcultural identities that can bridge cultural gaps and effectively reduce intercultural strife (Trufanova 2023). In addition, in the realm of museums engaging with online platforms, the freedom to express one's heritage embedded in digital identity as an important element underscores the importance of maintaining cultural identity amid global digital engagement (Giannini and Bowen 2023).

The loss of cultural identity significantly affects local communities, impacting their social, cultural, and environmental well-being. Studies have shown a strong link between loss of cultural heritage and loss of identity, leading to emotions of displacement, alienation, and threats to well-being (Archary and Landman 2021). In addition, hazards to cultural identity pose challenges to the maintenance of human well-being and biodiversity, as indigenous groups and local communities face risks to their cultural assets due to global environmental and social transformations (Yletyinen et al. 2022). Furthermore, the research underscores that transformations in traditions and cultural expressions can create uncertainty regarding the conservation of cultural heritage and identity in society, underscoring the need for sustainable management approaches to effectively protect cultural identity (Ruiz Palacios et al. 2022). Recognizing the importance of cultural elements, such as community identity and memory, is essential to reduce the impact of environmental hazards and contamination on local communities, as these cultural elements play an important role in influencing people's reactions to such difficulties (Messer, Shriver, and Adams 2015).

Social media and digital technologies can have a significant impact on the preservation of cultural identity through facilitating connectivity, self-expression, and awareness in diverse societies. Studies have shown that social media allows individuals, especially young people, to investigate and articulate their cultural identity, thereby bridging the gap between conventional beliefs and contemporary influences. In addition, digital platforms offer ongoing engagement with one's cultural heritage, helping to maintain bonds and a sense of belonging, especially for migrants navigating new cultural landscapes

(Radwan 2022). Research underscores the constructive role of social media in encouraging community engagement, awareness, and volunteer efforts, which can contribute to upholding community values and cultural identity enrichment in rural communities (Trufanova and Khan 2022)³. By recognizing the advantages of social media in terms of identity, portrayal, and social ties, and implementing measures to reduce adverse influences, individuals can leverage digital technology to fortify and protect their cultural identity (McKenzie 2022).

3.2. The Role of Social Media in Cultural Preservation

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok play an important role in cultural preservation in various domains. TikTok's interaction with the cultural sector has influenced aesthetic preferences, potentially hampering traditional culture while also opening up new channels for its spread (X. Chen and Zeng 2023). YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp serve as mediums for sharing videos and content, facilitating virtual educational settings for conservation and the study of indigenous practices such as Chinese martial arts (Kungfu) (Fernández Valdés 2023). An examination of Instagram posts was conducted to assess the effect of User Generated Content (UGC) on visitor behavior on protected nature sites, underscoring the importance of integrating social media analytics into objective settings for sustainability purposes (Chanda and Das 2022). The platform makes it possible to safeguard intangible cultural heritage through diverse participation and collaborative creation, ensuring the sustainable survival of society in the event of a potential crisis (Mak, Poon, and Chiu 2022).

The use of social media for cultural preservation encompasses legal and ethical issues related to the storage of personal material (Allen-Greil 2023), the need for adept strategies in managing the risks associated with social media use in memory-focused institutions, and the intricate nature of using social media materials for extensive 3D restoration of cultural heritage sites (Shiozaki 2022). To effectively address these barriers, it is critical to prioritize consent for information and data anonymization during archiving private content, establish a comprehensive framework for managing risk on social media specifically tailored to cultural heritage domains, and utilize advanced methodologies to identify, filter, and reconstruct content from social media to ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of preservation efforts (Doulamis et al. 2020).

3.3. The Influence of Social Media on Cultural Awareness

In shaping users' perceptions and attitudes towards their own and other cultures, with the capacity to change cultural practices, norms, and impacts on individuals' lives, challenging prevailing stigmas and stereotypes (Samy 2022). Serving as a conduit between macro and microsocial components, social media undermines conventional norms and fosters socio-cultural transformation through technological advances (Tasruddin, A, and AB 2022). In addition, social media serves as a facilitative tool in the acculturation process to global consumer culture, accelerating this process through social connections, cultural innovation, and economic incentives (Dutot and Lichy 2022). Studies have shown that social media users often show bias towards members outside the group based on ethnicity and gender, influencing their perspectives on different ethnicities (Nagornyy 2019). In addition, the impact of social media on opinion formation during election campaigns illustrates how tailored messaging and peer-to-peer engagement shape individual viewpoints, ultimately influencing election outcomes (Gündüç 2020).

Social media influencers fulfill an important role in raising cultural awareness among their audiences by leveraging their authenticity, authority, and ability to influence public discussion and advocate for socio-political causes (Li and Feng 2022). These influencers, who went from casual consumers to opinion leaders, used their debut to influence the choices and judgments of their followers, garnering widespread approval and captivating a sizable audience (Kiatkawsin and Lee 2022). In particular, influencers who concentrate on political subjects are progressively being used by younger audiences to understand political data, potentially influencing opinion developments and even changing voting preferences (Yang and Wang 2023). Media platforms, which include social media, serve as significant cultural advocates and influencers, actively contributing to individual awareness and cultural formation, especially among youth, who are heavily affected by the cultural aspects of media globalization (Peter and Muth 2023). Through their engagement, innovation, and ethical communication strategies, influencers and cultural personalities on social media make a major contribution to shaping cultural awareness and identity among their audiences.

The interaction between users within the realm of social media has a profound impact on the understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures. Studies show that social media platforms serve as arenas in which users, which includes immigrants and non-immigrants, create collective narratives that shape acculturative outcomes, such as self-affirmation and

overall well-being (Sephehr et al. 2023). In addition, online engagement can foster cultural understanding through facilitating informal dialogue and exchange of common interests, transcending national borders and underscoring parallels and power dynamics in global media culture (Tuzel and Hobbs 2017). The alignment between health message framing and national culture-driven regulatory focus plays an important role in influencing the effectiveness of health-related communications on social media, consequently influencing user participation and cultural interpretation (Agnihotri et al. 2022). Engagement on platforms like Facebook in the midst of periods of conflict can result in the breakdown of connections based on cultural parameters, reconfiguring social connections and symbolically cleaning them up, illustrating the impact of physical design on cultural exchange and network configuration (Schwarz and Shani 2016). Overall, the incorporation of culture and technology in online social media interactions offers fertile domain for inquiry and advancement in fostering cross-cultural understanding and admiration (Garcia-Gavilanes 2014).

Studies have shown the significant impact of social media on cultural identity, such as the important prevalence of cultural identity transformation in rural communities associated with social media utilization. Virtual social networking communities offer a platform for individuals to reflect on intercultural encounters, facilitating the collective formation of intercultural knowledge and understanding (Radwan 2022). In online professional development programs, educators and instructional designers negotiate variations in national cultures and organizations, while learners articulate and bridge these gaps to enrich cross-cultural exchanges (H.-I. Chen 2017). Overall, social media platforms serve as important spaces for cultural exchange, fostering the advancement of users' cultural awareness and insights.

3.4. Challenges in Using Social Media for Cultural Preservation

The main barriers faced in the use of social media for cultural conservation include issues related to overcommercialization, cultural simplification, and concerns regarding intellectual property rights. The prevalence of overcommercialization can shift the focus to sales promotion rather than the original transmission of cultural heritage, potentially weakening its cultural significance (Prados-Peña, Crespo-Almendros, and Porcu 2022). Cultural simplification, on the other hand, manifests when complex heritage narratives are summarized or misunderstood across multiple social media platforms, affecting the understanding and admiration of diverse cultural heritage (Kelpšienė et al. 2023). In addition, complications arise in terms of intellectual property rights regarding the ownership and protection of cultural materials disseminated on social media, triggering concerns about the unauthorized use, replication and dissemination of cultural heritage resources (Doulamis et al. 2020). These barriers underscore the need for careful consideration and strategic management in the application of social media aimed at cultural preservation.

IV. CONCLUSION

The use of social media has played an important role in maintaining cultural identity in an increasingly digitally connected society. Through these platforms, individuals can express and confirm their cultural identity, despite being faced with complex external pressures and influences. Collaboration between local communities and participation in online communities are also key factors in cultural heritage preservation efforts. Social media not only facilitates interaction between individuals, but also empowers users to manage narratives about their own cultural identity.

Nurturing cultural identity plays a role in establishing a diverse foundation and reducing the risk of global cultural homogenization. This involves protecting indigenous cultural traditions, languages, and customs so that they can be passed on to the next generation, thus strengthening people's sense of pride in their cultural heritage. Various platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok facilitate cultural communities to disseminate content covering their traditional aspects, arts, languages, and distinctive cultural practices. In addition, social media encourages wider and deeper interaction between cultural groups and global audiences, thus extending the reach of cultural preservation to an international level. The phenomenon of cultural preservation that has gone viral on social media shows the ongoing impact of increasing interest in culture and triggering the interest of the younger generation to be involved in cultural preservation efforts. Despite the huge potential of social media in cultural preservation, there are some challenges that need to be addressed. These constraints include issues such as over-commercialization, oversimplification of culture, and disputes over intellectual property rights. In addition, algorithms on social media platforms often hinder the spread of less popular or less commercially profitable cultural content. Effective strategies and policies are therefore critical to addressing these challenges, which require cooperation between governments, cultural institutions, and social media platforms.

Thus, it is important to recognize the great potential of social media in promoting understanding, appreciation, and preservation of cultural heritage in this digital age. However, while social media brings significant benefits, it is also important to confront the associated challenges and risks, such as the suppression of cultural identity, the dissemination of inaccurate information, and the formation of biased narratives. Therefore, a careful and critical approach is needed in the use of social media to maintain cultural identity, with attention to the balance between freedom of expression and protection of cultural uniqueness and integrity. With collaboration, awareness, and the right actions, social media can continue to be an effective tool in preserving and strengthening cultural identities in an increasingly connected digital age.

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