

THE ESSENCE OF TIKTOK SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING LOCAL CULTURAL IDENTITY

Desti Chalipah¹, Hurin Dzatil Ishmah², Isti Masitoh³, Luthfiyyah Azzahrah⁴, Saphira Nava Edrea⁵, Siti Nurhaliza Chardi Subing⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5,6}. Elementary School Teacher Education, University of Lampung, Indonesia

destichalipah@gmail.com¹, hurindzatil3@gmail.com², istimasitoh11@gmail.com³,
luthfiyyahazzahrah26@gmail.com⁴, saphiranava@gmail.com⁵, snclsizza@gmail.com⁶

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Abstract

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Social media, particularly TikTok, has become a powerful platform for shaping global popular culture and influencing how cultural content is created, shared, and consumed. Its algorithm-driven system enables users from diverse backgrounds to participate in global cultural exchanges while offering opportunities to promote local cultural identity. TikTok allows communities, educators, and content creators to introduce traditional arts, languages, customs, cuisine, and historical heritage to broad audiences through creative and engaging short-form videos. These features can increase cultural awareness, especially among younger generations, and support the preservation of local traditions in the digital era. Despite these opportunities, local culture faces significant challenges due to the dominance of global popular culture. Local creators often struggle to compete with viral international content, overcome stereotypes, and maintain the authenticity of cultural representation while adapting to rapidly changing digital trends. There is also a risk of cultural simplification and commercialization in pursuit of online popularity. To address these challenges, effective strategies include producing educational and culturally authentic content, collaborating with creators from different cultural backgrounds, utilizing popular trends creatively, and encouraging partnerships among governments, educational institutions, tourism organizations, and local communities. By balancing creativity, authenticity, and digital innovation, TikTok can serve as an effective medium for promoting local cultural identity while contributing to cultural diversity in the global digital landscape.

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A. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology in the digital era has significantly transformed various aspects of human life, including communication patterns, social interactions, and the ways individuals and communities construct and preserve their cultural identities. Social media has evolved beyond its traditional role as a communication tool into a digital space for producing, disseminating, and representing

cultural values to global audiences. Among the various social media platforms, TikTok has emerged as one of the fastest-growing applications, enabling users to create creative short-form audiovisual content and reach audiences across geographical and cultural boundaries. Supported by its algorithm-driven content distribution system, TikTok has become an influential platform in shaping public opinion, identity expression, and cultural transformation within contemporary digital society (Abidin, 2021; Darvin, 2022; Kaye et al., 2022; Zeng et al., 2021).

The digital transformation has also significantly affected Indigenous communities, which possess rich local knowledge, traditional languages, customs, and cultural values that have been preserved across generations. Indigenous communities play a crucial role in maintaining cultural diversity and preserving the nation's cultural heritage. Nevertheless, globalization, accelerated by digital technology, has introduced substantial changes in their communication practices, social behavior, and cultural preservation efforts (Mutaqin & Iryana, 2018; Widowati, 2014; Zafi, 2018). Widespread internet access through smartphones has enabled Indigenous communities to engage more intensively with global cultures, creating continuous interactions between local traditions and global popular culture. Consequently, digitalization has become not only a medium for expanding access to information but also a driving force influencing how Indigenous communities negotiate, preserve, and reconstruct their cultural identities.

Within this context, TikTok has become one of the most influential social media platforms for representing local culture. Through its short-video format, Indigenous communities are provided with opportunities to introduce their local languages, traditional arts, customary ceremonies, local wisdom, traditional cuisine, and creative cultural products to national and international audiences. The utilization of TikTok as a cultural communication platform has the potential to enhance public appreciation of local culture, strengthen cultural identity among younger generations, and support the development of culture-based creative economies. Furthermore, social media serves as an effective educational medium for documenting and disseminating cultural heritage, ensuring that traditional knowledge remains accessible to future generations (Suarsana, 2020; Nauvalia & Setiawan, 2022; Zeng et al., 2021).

Despite these opportunities, the widespread use of TikTok also presents considerable challenges for the sustainability of Indigenous cultures. The platform's algorithm, which prioritizes popularity and audience engagement, often encourages the simplification of

cultural expressions into entertaining digital content, potentially diminishing the philosophical meanings embedded in traditional practices. Moreover, continuous exposure to global popular culture may contribute to shifts in cultural values, changes in intergenerational communication patterns, and the gradual transformation of social practices that have long characterized Indigenous communities. Without adequate digital literacy and cultural awareness, these changes may weaken cultural identity and reduce social cohesion within Indigenous societies (Nurhayanto & Wildan, 2016; Wignjosasono, 2022; Darwin, 2022).

Previous studies have demonstrated that social media plays an important role in shaping digital identity, cultural communication, and public participation. Most existing studies have primarily examined TikTok as a platform for entertainment, digital marketing, personal branding, or online identity construction (Darwin, 2022; Wang & Feng, 2022). Other research has explored social media as a tool for promoting and preserving local culture; however, these studies generally focus on specific communities or emphasize cultural promotion without comprehensively examining its implications for the social interactions and cultural transformation of Indigenous communities. Therefore, research integrating TikTok's dual role as both a medium for cultural preservation and a factor influencing cultural transformation and social interaction among Indigenous communities remains limited. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into the broader social and cultural consequences of digital media use within Indigenous contexts.

This study is significant because Indigenous communities currently face two interconnected realities. On the one hand, they are expected to preserve their cultural identity as an invaluable ancestral heritage. On the other hand, they must adapt to the rapid development of digital technology and social media, which have become integral parts of everyday life. Understanding how TikTok influences cultural transformation and social interaction is therefore essential for developing adaptive cultural preservation strategies that embrace technological innovation while safeguarding the cultural values that define Indigenous identity.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated analysis of TikTok from two complementary perspectives: first, as a platform that facilitates the preservation and promotion of Indigenous cultural identity, and second, as a digital environment that drives cultural transformation and reshapes social interactions within Indigenous communities.

Unlike previous studies that have tended to focus either on cultural promotion or on the social impacts of social media separately, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of the interrelationships among digital technology, cultural identity, cultural preservation, and the evolving social dynamics of Indigenous communities in the digital era.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze the impact of TikTok on the cultural transformation and social interactions of Indigenous communities, identify its opportunities as a medium for preserving local cultural heritage, and examine the challenges faced by Indigenous communities in maintaining their cultural identity amid the rapid development of digital technology.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a phenomenological design. A phenomenological approach was selected because the study aims to explore and understand the lived experiences, perceptions, and meanings constructed by Indigenous community members regarding the use of TikTok as a social media platform in relation to the preservation of local culture and changes in social interactions. This approach enables researchers to examine the subjective meanings individuals assign to their experiences while interacting with digital media in specific socio-cultural contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994).

The research participants consisted of Indigenous community leaders, Indigenous youth, cultural practitioners, and community members who actively use TikTok as a medium for cultural communication and the promotion of local cultural heritage. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, whereby individuals possessing relevant knowledge, experience, and direct involvement with the phenomenon under investigation were intentionally chosen to provide rich and meaningful information aligned with the objectives of the study (Patton, 2015).

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observation was conducted to understand how Indigenous communities utilize TikTok as a platform for preserving and promoting their cultural heritage. In-depth interviews were employed to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and viewpoints regarding the opportunities and challenges associated with TikTok in sustaining local culture. Documentary data included photographs of cultural

activities, archival materials, and TikTok content related to the representation of Indigenous cultural practices.

Data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three interrelated stages: data condensation, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. These analytical processes were carried out iteratively throughout the research to develop a comprehensive understanding of how TikTok influences cultural transformation and social interactions within Indigenous communities.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed source triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation involved comparing information obtained from different participants, whereas method triangulation was conducted by cross-checking findings derived from observations, interviews, and documentary evidence. In addition, member checking was carried out by returning the preliminary interpretations to several participants to confirm that the findings accurately reflected their experiences and perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Through this phenomenological approach, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Indigenous communities perceive TikTok as a medium for preserving local cultural heritage while simultaneously examining how the platform contributes to cultural transformation, the construction of cultural identity, and the dynamics of social interaction in the digital era.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Opportunities of TikTok in Promoting Local Cultural Identity

The rapid development of social media has fundamentally transformed the ways in which communities introduce, document, and preserve local cultures. Among the various digital platforms, TikTok has emerged as one of the most influential social media applications in recent years. Unlike conventional social networking platforms, TikTok utilizes the For You Page (FYP) algorithm, enabling uploaded videos to reach national and international audiences regardless of the creator's number of followers. This mechanism provides indigenous communities with broader opportunities to introduce their cultural identities to the public through creative, interactive, and easily accessible approaches. Consequently, TikTok has evolved beyond an entertainment platform into a digital space for representing local cultures and strengthening cultural identity in the digital era

(Abidin, 2021; Zeng et al., 2021; Kaye et al., 2022).

The findings of this study indicate that TikTok offers significant opportunities for indigenous communities to construct representations of local culture through various forms of digital content. Features such as video editing tools, visual effects, background music, text overlays, and hashtags enable users to communicate cultural values in engaging and communicative ways. The creative affordances provided by TikTok encourage communities to repackage diverse forms of cultural heritage—including traditional dances, customary ceremonies, folklore, traditional games, regional languages, and local culinary traditions—into short-video formats that align with the preferences of contemporary digital audiences. This transformation allows local cultures to become more understandable, accessible, and appreciated by broader audiences without diminishing the cultural values embedded within them.

This phenomenon demonstrates that digital creativity extends beyond the mere production of online content; it functions as a cultural communication strategy capable of reinforcing the existence of local identities amid the forces of globalization. Indigenous communities are no longer solely custodians of cultural heritage in the conventional sense but have also become digital content creators who actively construct cultural narratives through social media. These findings support Darwin's (2022) argument that social media has become a space for identity negotiation, where users deliberately select cultural symbols, values, and practices to represent themselves publicly. Therefore, TikTok serves not only as a medium for information dissemination but also as a platform for constructing cultural identity within digital environments.

In addition to fostering creativity, TikTok provides an extensive communication network. Its algorithm-driven recommendation system allows local cultural content to reach users across different regions and even international borders. This capability creates substantial opportunities for indigenous communities to introduce cultural traditions that were previously recognized only within specific local communities. Content featuring customary rituals, traditional clothing, regional music, indigenous languages, and traditional handicrafts has the potential to attract global attention when presented in engaging formats that align with platform characteristics. Consequently, TikTok functions as a form of digital cultural diplomacy, expanding international awareness of local cultures while simultaneously enhancing Indonesia's cultural image on the global stage.

These findings are consistent with Kaye et al. (2022), who argue that TikTok's

recommendation algorithm provides relatively equal opportunities for users to gain visibility based on content quality rather than account popularity. Unlike many other social media platforms that rely heavily on follower counts, TikTok's distribution mechanism enables local communities and indigenous groups to compete on a more equal footing in introducing their cultural identities to global audiences. This democratization of content visibility has become one of the major factors encouraging cultural communities to adopt TikTok as a platform for cultural promotion and public education.

Another equally important opportunity lies in the emergence of interest-based digital communities. Through hashtags, search functions, and recommendation algorithms, users who share interests in particular cultural traditions can connect despite geographical differences. Such interactions facilitate the exchange of information, experiences, and knowledge related to local cultures in a more intensive manner. These digital communities subsequently evolve into collaborative spaces where cultural content creators support one another in producing educational materials, sharing best practices in cultural preservation, and expanding communication networks among indigenous communities.

The emergence of these digital communities has important implications for the sustainability of local cultures. Cultural knowledge that was once transmitted primarily through face-to-face interactions is now increasingly documented in digital formats that can be repeatedly accessed by wider audiences. This process of digitalization strengthens TikTok's role not only as a medium for cultural documentation but also as an informal learning platform for younger generations. Young people become not merely consumers of cultural information but also active producers of cultural content who contribute to preserving cultural heritage in the digital age. These findings support Zeng et al. (2021), who argue that TikTok has evolved into a participatory space where communities collectively construct identities through the production and distribution of digital content.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that TikTok presents numerous strategic opportunities for promoting local cultural identity. Digital creativity, extensive communication reach, and the formation of interest-based communities position the platform as an effective medium for introducing local cultures to global audiences. Nevertheless, these opportunities can only generate optimal benefits if indigenous communities utilize social media responsibly while maintaining the authenticity of their inherited cultural values. Therefore, TikTok should not merely be used to pursue popularity or viral content but should instead be directed toward strengthening cultural

preservation, enhancing public cultural literacy, and fostering sustainable local cultural identities in the midst of rapid technological advancement.

Characteristics of TikTok Content and Its Impact on Local Cultural Identity

The emergence of TikTok as one of the leading short-video social media platforms has introduced distinctive characteristics of digital communication that differentiate it from other social networking platforms. TikTok's primary strength lies in its ability to integrate audiovisual content, the For You Page (FYP) recommendation algorithm, music, visual effects, hashtags, and various interactive features that facilitate the rapid and widespread dissemination of information. These characteristics have not only transformed the way people consume information but have also reshaped how local cultures are represented, understood, and transmitted within digital environments. Consequently, TikTok has evolved beyond a platform for entertainment into a dynamic space for cultural communication where local cultural identities are constructed, negotiated, and maintained through diverse forms of creative content (Abidin, 2021; Zeng et al., 2021).

The findings of this study indicate that the short-video format is one of the primary factors driving public interest in local cultural content. The concise, communicative, and visually engaging presentation enables various cultural elements—including traditional dances, regional music, customary rituals, indigenous languages, traditional cuisine, and local handicrafts—to be understood more easily by audiences across different age groups. This format allows cultural information to be communicated effectively without sacrificing its essential message. As a result, TikTok has become an effective medium for introducing local cultures to individuals who previously had limited access to information regarding Indonesia's rich cultural diversity.

In addition to its short-video format, the incorporation of traditional music, local narratives, and visual effects plays a significant role in shaping digital cultural identity. Regional songs, traditional melodies, and indigenous musical instruments used in TikTok content serve not merely as audiovisual enhancements but also as cultural symbols capable of fostering emotional connections between content creators and audiences. The integration of these cultural elements strengthens the representation of cultural identity while simultaneously introducing cultural richness to broader communities. These findings demonstrate that digital media has transformed cultural preservation from a predominantly conventional practice into a more adaptive process that aligns with the

rapid advancement of information technology.

Another influential characteristic is TikTok's recommendation algorithm, which enables local cultural content to be presented to users with similar interests even if they do not follow the content creators. This mechanism provides indigenous communities with greater opportunities to introduce their cultural identities to both national and international audiences. Unlike conventional communication media, which are often constrained by limited reach, TikTok's algorithm facilitates the rapid, extensive, and sustainable dissemination of cultural content. These findings support Kaye et al. (2022), who argue that TikTok's content distribution system creates a more democratic environment by providing visibility based primarily on content quality and relevance rather than user popularity.

On the other hand, this study also reveals that TikTok's strong orientation toward virality has complex implications for the representation of local culture. The platform's algorithm prioritizes content that generates high levels of user engagement, including views, comments, likes, and shares. Consequently, some cultural content creators have begun adapting the presentation of cultural practices to align with algorithmic preferences and prevailing social media trends. This tendency has resulted in the simplification, modification, and even commercialization of certain cultural elements in order to attract wider audiences. Although such strategies may significantly increase audience reach, they also pose the risk of diminishing the philosophical meanings embedded within authentic cultural practices.

This phenomenon illustrates that social media functions not only as a medium for cultural preservation but also as a space for negotiating cultural identity. During the content creation process, indigenous communities inevitably select which cultural elements are considered most attractive and suitable for publication. Cultural expressions with strong visual appeal tend to receive greater attention than philosophical values that require more comprehensive explanations. Consequently, many TikTok users become familiar with local cultures primarily through visual representations, while the historical significance, social values, and indigenous wisdom that constitute the core of these traditions remain insufficiently understood. This finding aligns with Darwin's (2022) concept of identity negotiation, which emphasizes that digital identities emerge through continuous interactions among cultural values, technological systems, and audience preferences.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that TikTok's interactive features provide broader opportunities for public participation in cultural preservation. Functions such as comments, duets, stitches, and content sharing facilitate two-way communication between creators and audiences. These interactions encourage discussions regarding cultural history, the meanings of traditional symbols, and community experiences in maintaining local traditions. Consequently, cultural preservation is no longer a one-directional process, as commonly observed in conventional media, but has evolved into a collaborative practice involving diverse social groups. Such active participation highlights the increasingly significant role of digital communities in safeguarding cultural sustainability through virtual spaces.

Nevertheless, the high level of user interaction also has implications for public perceptions of local culture. Continuous exposure to globally popular cultural content may influence users' preferences, particularly among younger generations, in their perceptions of indigenous traditions. International trends often receive greater attention than educational content featuring traditional culture. As a result, local cultures face considerable challenges in maintaining their relevance amid the dominance of global popular culture circulating through social media platforms. These findings suggest that the success of cultural preservation through TikTok depends not only on technological sophistication but also on the ability of content creators to present cultural heritage in engaging ways without compromising its authenticity.

Overall, the findings indicate that TikTok's distinctive characteristics exert a dual influence on local cultural identity. On the one hand, the platform creates extensive opportunities for introducing local cultures to global audiences through creative, interactive, and accessible content. On the other hand, its algorithmic orientation toward virality may encourage the oversimplification of cultural meanings if not accompanied by adequate cultural literacy. Therefore, utilizing TikTok as a medium for cultural preservation requires a careful balance between digital innovation and the preservation of authentic local cultural values. In this regard, social media should be understood not merely as a communication platform but also as a strategic space for fostering adaptive and sustainable cultural identities in the digital era.

The Influence of Local Content on TikTok Users

The findings of this study indicate that local content disseminated through TikTok

significantly influences how users understand, appreciate, and establish connections with local cultures. Through creative and engaging content presentation, users not only gain information about indigenous traditions and cultural practices but also experience visual and emotional engagement that enhances their interest in local heritage. Unlike conventional media, which primarily facilitates one-way communication, TikTok enables users to interact directly through comments, likes, shares, duets, and stitches, making the dissemination of cultural knowledge more participatory. These findings suggest that social media has evolved into a collaborative cultural learning environment in which users function not only as recipients but also as disseminators of cultural knowledge (Abidin, 2021; Zeng et al., 2021).

One of the most significant impacts of local content is the increased awareness of Indonesia's cultural diversity among TikTok users. Videos featuring traditional dances, regional languages, customary ceremonies, traditional music, local cuisine, and indigenous handicrafts provide opportunities for audiences to discover cultural traditions they may never have encountered previously. The presentation of cultural information through engaging short-form videos makes the learning process more accessible, particularly for younger generations who are accustomed to consuming information through digital media. Consequently, TikTok functions not only as an entertainment platform but also as an effective medium for cultural education that broadens public understanding of Indonesia's rich cultural heritage.

Beyond enhancing cultural knowledge, local content also contributes to fostering a sense of pride and strengthening cultural identity among users. The findings reveal that exposure to authentic cultural content encourages individuals to recognize local culture as an essential component of both personal and collective identity. Users do not merely consume such content for entertainment; they increasingly demonstrate curiosity about the meanings behind cultural traditions, seek additional information regarding their historical backgrounds, and actively share cultural content with others. This phenomenon illustrates the capacity of social media to strengthen emotional connections between communities and their cultural heritage.

These findings support Hall's (1996) perspective that cultural identity is a socially constructed phenomenon continuously shaped through processes of representation and communication. Within the context of TikTok, cultural representation is no longer monopolized by cultural institutions or governmental organizations but is increasingly

created by ordinary individuals acting as digital content creators. Every video showcasing local traditions becomes a representation of cultural identity that contributes to shaping public perceptions of particular communities or regions. Therefore, local content plays a strategic role in constructing positive images of indigenous cultures while simultaneously reinforcing cultural identity within digital spaces.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that local content encourages greater public participation in cultural preservation. Various online challenges featuring traditional dances, indigenous attire, folk games, and regional languages often inspire users to recreate similar content while incorporating the unique characteristics of their own local communities. This phenomenon indicates that users are no longer passive audiences but have become active participants in the reproduction and dissemination of cultural heritage through digital media. Such participation expands the reach of cultural dissemination while strengthening social networks among communities committed to preserving local traditions.

In addition, local cultural content contributes to the development of culture-based creative economies. The findings reveal that videos featuring traditional handicrafts, regional culinary products, cultural commodities, and indigenous tourism destinations attract substantial public attention on TikTok. High levels of engagement have the potential to increase public interest in purchasing local products, visiting cultural tourism destinations, and supporting economic activities within indigenous communities. Consequently, TikTok functions not only as a medium for cultural communication but also as a platform for promoting creative industries that generate tangible economic benefits for local communities. These findings are consistent with Kaye et al. (2022), who argue that digital platforms increasingly facilitate the integration of cultural activities with economic opportunities through extensive and rapid content distribution.

Nevertheless, this study also reveals that the influence of local content is not exclusively positive. The increasing intensity of digital content consumption has led some users to prioritize entertainment over a deeper understanding of cultural meanings. Many cultural videos are intentionally simplified to align with current trends and maximize algorithmic visibility, resulting in the incomplete communication of the historical, philosophical, and symbolic values embedded within cultural traditions. Consequently, many users become familiar with local culture only at the level of visual representation without fully comprehending the underlying values that constitute its foundation. These

findings suggest that the dissemination of culture through social media continues to face significant challenges in balancing content popularity with cultural authenticity.

Moreover, the dominance of global popular culture on TikTok also influences users' content preferences. The platform's recommendation algorithm tends to prioritize highly engaging content, causing globally popular trends to receive greater visibility than educational local cultural content. As a result, younger generations may perceive local culture as less attractive unless it is presented through creative and innovative digital formats. Therefore, the development of cultural content requires communication strategies capable of integrating traditional cultural values with digital storytelling approaches that align with contemporary social media practices while preserving the authenticity and deeper meanings of local traditions.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that local content on TikTok exerts a multifaceted influence on users. On the one hand, it enhances cultural knowledge, strengthens cultural identity, encourages public participation in cultural preservation, and supports the growth of culture-based creative economies. On the other hand, the platform's strong emphasis on virality and entertainment may reduce users' understanding of the philosophical values embedded within local cultures when popularity is prioritized over educational substance. Therefore, the successful utilization of TikTok as a medium for cultural preservation depends not only on digital technology itself but also on the ability of content creators, local communities, policymakers, and other stakeholders to produce content that is creative, educational, and culturally authentic. These findings highlight the strategic role of local content as both a medium for cultural learning and an instrument for strengthening cultural identity amid the rapid transformation of digital communication.

Challenges in Promoting Local Cultural Identity and Strategies for Addressing Them

Although TikTok offers substantial opportunities for promoting local cultural identity to global audiences, the findings of this study reveal that the utilization of the platform is accompanied by a range of challenges that may affect the sustainability of indigenous cultural heritage. The transformation of cultural communication from conventional social settings into digital environments has not only facilitated the dissemination of cultural information but has also altered the ways in which culture is produced, represented, and interpreted by society. Consequently, cultural preservation through TikTok should be understood as a dynamic process that requires balancing adaptation to rapidly evolving

digital technologies with the preservation of the authenticity of cultural values inherited across generations.

One of the primary challenges identified in this study is the dominance of global popular culture within digital spaces. TikTok's recommendation algorithm is designed to prioritize content based on user engagement metrics, including views, comments, likes, and shares. As a result, content that follows global trends tends to receive greater visibility than educational content highlighting local cultural traditions. Consequently, local cultures must compete with a vast array of digital entertainment produced and distributed globally. This situation may significantly influence user preferences, particularly among younger generations, who are increasingly exposed to popular global content rather than educational materials emphasizing local cultural values. These findings are consistent with Kaye et al. (2022), who argue that digital platform algorithms play a crucial role in determining content visibility while simultaneously shaping public patterns of information consumption.

The predominance of global popular culture also poses the risk of cultural homogenization. Continuous exposure to international trends may encourage individuals to adopt similar lifestyles, languages, and forms of cultural expression, thereby reducing the space for cultural diversity. Within indigenous communities, this phenomenon may gradually weaken cultural practices that have traditionally been transmitted through direct social interactions. Without systematic preservation efforts, younger generations may become less connected to their local heritage as they become increasingly familiar with globally popular cultures circulating on social media. Therefore, TikTok should be positioned as a complementary tool that strengthens, rather than replaces, traditional processes of cultural transmission within indigenous communities.

Another major challenge concerns the distortion of local cultural representation. The findings indicate that some content creators simplify cultural presentations in order to maximize algorithmic visibility and audience engagement. Cultural traditions rich in philosophical meanings and historical significance are often reduced to visually appealing performances that emphasize aesthetics while neglecting their deeper cultural contexts. In some instances, cultural symbols are used merely as decorative elements without adequate explanations regarding their meanings, functions, or sociocultural significance. Such practices may generate misunderstandings and reinforce stereotypes about indigenous cultures, particularly among audiences who lack prior knowledge of these

traditions.

These findings suggest that the principal challenge of digital cultural preservation lies not in the technology itself but in the ways culture is represented within digital environments. Darvin (2022) argues that identity in digital media is continuously negotiated through interactions among cultural values, audience preferences, and the algorithmic logic of digital platforms. Accordingly, indigenous communities and digital content creators must recognize that every piece of cultural content functions not only as entertainment but also as a representation of cultural identity capable of shaping public perceptions of particular communities.

The study further identifies the challenge of maintaining an appropriate balance between creativity and cultural authenticity. TikTok encourages creators to produce innovative, engaging, and trend-oriented content. However, adapting cultural expressions to contemporary digital trends may inadvertently alter the presentation of cultural traditions to better suit audience preferences. Although these adaptations may enhance audience reach and engagement, they also risk diminishing the authentic values that constitute the defining characteristics of local cultures. Therefore, innovation in cultural presentation should be implemented selectively while preserving the essential meanings and values that define indigenous cultural identity.

In addition, limited levels of digital literacy and cultural literacy represent significant challenges. Not all content creators possess sufficient knowledge regarding the ethical representation of culture in digital media, and many users struggle to distinguish educational cultural content from content designed solely to achieve popularity. Consequently, inaccurate or misleading information about local cultures can easily circulate and be accepted as factual by audiences. These findings indicate that cultural preservation through social media requires digital literacy that extends beyond technological competence to include the ability to understand cultural values, critically evaluate information, and communicate cultural knowledge responsibly.

Based on these challenges, this study identifies several strategies for strengthening the use of TikTok as a medium for preserving local cultural identity. The first strategy involves improving the quality of cultural content through an edutainment approach that integrates educational value with entertaining presentation. This approach enables cultural knowledge to be communicated in engaging ways without compromising its philosophical meanings or cultural significance. The use of accessible narratives, compelling visual

storytelling, and traditional music can enhance audience engagement while simultaneously deepening public understanding of local cultures.

The second strategy emphasizes strengthening collaboration among indigenous communities, digital content creators, academics, local governments, and cultural organizations in producing digital cultural content. Such collaboration is essential to ensure that cultural information remains both accurate and accessible to wider audiences. The active involvement of indigenous leaders and cultural practitioners as primary sources during the content production process can minimize the risks of cultural distortion and oversimplification while enhancing the credibility and authenticity of cultural representations.

The third strategy focuses on improving digital literacy and cultural literacy, particularly among younger generations. Sustainable educational programs that provide training in cultural content production, digital communication ethics, and the strategic use of social media for cultural preservation should be continuously developed. These initiatives aim to cultivate a generation capable not only of utilizing digital technologies creatively but also of preserving, respecting, and promoting cultural heritage responsibly. In this context, social media should be regarded not as a threat to local culture but as a strategic instrument for strengthening cultural identity in the digital era.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the successful utilization of TikTok as a platform for cultural preservation largely depends on society's ability to manage the relationship between digital technology and local cultural values. TikTok should not merely be perceived as a platform for promoting culture; rather, it represents a dynamic arena in which cultural preservation, digital creativity, and global communication continuously interact and shape cultural identity. The novelty of this study lies in its demonstration that cultural preservation in the digital age is determined not only by the availability of technology but also by the capacity of indigenous communities to construct authentic, participatory, and adaptive representations of their cultural heritage through social media. Therefore, future cultural preservation strategies should integrate digital innovation, strengthen cultural literacy, and encourage multi-stakeholder collaboration to ensure that local cultural identities remain sustainable and relevant within contemporary digital society.

D. CONCLUSION

Promoting local cultural identity through TikTok is a dynamic process that presents both significant opportunities and considerable challenges. The opportunities include the platform's creative affordances, which enable users to produce engaging cultural content, its extensive reach that facilitates communication with global audiences, and the formation of interest-based digital communities that encourage users to exchange cultural knowledge and experiences. At the same time, several challenges must be addressed, including the dominance of global popular content that may overshadow local cultural identities, the risk of cultural distortion and oversimplification in digital representations, the need to adapt continuously to rapidly evolving platform trends, and the importance of fostering cultural awareness and appreciation among users.

To successfully promote local cultural identity on TikTok, content creators should adopt approaches that are creative, authentic, and educational. They should maximize the platform's opportunities by producing innovative and engaging content while ensuring that cultural values are represented accurately and respectfully, thereby avoiding distortion, stereotyping, or excessive commercialization. Furthermore, creators should remain responsive to emerging digital trends without compromising the authenticity and philosophical meanings of the cultural traditions they represent. Collaborative efforts involving indigenous communities, cultural practitioners, academics, government institutions, and digital creators are equally essential to ensure the credibility and sustainability of cultural representation. In addition, strengthening digital literacy and cultural literacy among TikTok users is crucial for enhancing public understanding, appreciation, and long-term commitment to preserving cultural diversity. Ultimately, TikTok should be viewed not merely as a social media platform for entertainment but as a strategic digital space for promoting, preserving, and strengthening local cultural identity in an increasingly interconnected global society.

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