



# Algorithmic Cultural Mediation: TikTok as a Venue for Youth Identity Negotiation and Local Heritage Preservation in Southeast Asia

Dani Manesah<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Potensi Utama Medan, Indonesia

Correspondence: [manesahh@gmail.com](mailto:manesahh@gmail.com)

Received: 02-05-2025 | Revised: 26-06-2025 | Accepted: 28-06-2025

## Abstract

*This study explores the role of TikTok as a medium for cultural expression and self-identity among teenagers in Southeast Asia, as well as its contribution to the preservation of local culture amid globalization. Using a qualitative approach, this research analyzes how TikTok enables young people to express their local culture, engage within global communities, and develop both personal and collective identities. Data were collected through literature review and content analysis of TikTok videos produced by users from various Southeast Asian countries. The main findings indicate that TikTok functions as a platform that democratizes cultural expression, allowing users to widely showcase traditional practices and socio-political issues. The platform also plays a role in social activism, with young users leveraging TikTok to raise awareness on issues like human rights and climate change. However, challenges arise related to cultural homogenization due to the dominance of global trends. This study concludes that TikTok can strengthen local cultural preservation while simultaneously providing space for global cultural exchange. Implications of this research highlight the importance of balancing participation in global culture with the preservation of local values, which can be optimized through cross-cultural collaboration. Further research is needed to explore the long-term impact of TikTok on the cultural and social identities of Southeast Asian youth.*

**Keywords:** Social Media, TikTok, Teenagers, Cultural Preservation, Local Culture

## Introduction

The rapid development of social media does not always coincide with a collective awareness to preserve cultural and social identities, increasing the risk of local values being eroded amid the tide of digital globalization. Social and cultural life in communities often contrasts sharply with the ways technology shapes individual mindsets and behaviors (Soares et al., 2023; Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020). Social media, as a form of communication technology, is often



perceived as global and not necessarily aligned with prevailing local cultural values (Erdem, 2018; Park et al., 2017). Generally, social media is seen as a global communication form that often neglects deep local cultural values. Moreover, the rapid adoption of social media platforms like TikTok among Southeast Asian teenagers often lacks a thorough understanding of their cultural impacts. Communities, especially teenagers, often show more interest in global trends without considering how these affect their cultural identities. This illustrates that despite offering ease, technology acceptance within Southeast Asian cultural contexts is not always harmonious and risks eroding local cultural identities. In other words, while technology facilitates easy access to information and communication, the global influences carried by social media such as TikTok potentially displace the cultural values that have traditionally defined these communities.

Although numerous studies have examined the impacts of social media, few have specifically investigated TikTok's influence on cultural identity formation among Southeast Asian teenagers. Most existing studies tend to address social media in general, without exploring the specific relationship between local culture and social media effects on youth identity in Southeast Asia. Some prior studies emphasize social media's impact on general social behavior (Liu et al., 2022; Tan, 2021), but few delve into how technologies like TikTok shape cultural identity. Furthermore, these studies often focus on the negative impacts of social media (Wong et al., 2023; Lim & Lee, 2022) or digital literacy (Chen et al., 2022), overlooking the cultural dimension highly relevant to the region. From this, it is evident that there is a lack of research specifically addressing TikTok's impact on cultural identity in Southeast Asia, considering the interaction between local and global cultures. Existing research mostly concentrates on technical or social impacts of social media use without giving adequate attention to its influence on cultural identity formation, which is particularly pertinent in culturally diverse Southeast Asia.

This study aims to fill the gap in literature by focusing on TikTok's effects on cultural identity among Southeast Asian teenagers. Changes in youth cultural identity are influenced by various factors, including local culture, globalization, and social media development. Key research questions include: (1) How does TikTok influence teenagers' views on their local cultural identity? (2) Which cultural aspects are preserved or displaced by global influences through TikTok? (3) How does TikTok shape the ways Southeast Asian teenagers culturally

express themselves? This study is expected to provide deeper insights into TikTok's impact on youth cultural identity and offer suggestions for balancing globalization with local cultural preservation. For instance, TikTok, dominating the cyberspace with viral content, can change teenagers' modes of self-expression, such as dress, speech, or social behavior. Therefore, exploring how this phenomenon shapes or alters youth cultural characteristics and how they maintain their cultural roots amidst intensifying globalization is vital.

This research posits that TikTok, as a social media platform, significantly influences cultural identity formation, especially among Southeast Asian teenagers who often tend to adopt global values and trends. While social media provides space for youth to explore cultural identities, TikTok may accelerate cultural assimilation, eroding existing local cultures. TikTok favors engaging and rapidly viral content formats that often neglect deep cultural context. This focus may lead teenagers to prioritize global trends over their own cultures, resulting in erosion of distinctive cultural identities. Therefore, mitigating these negative effects calls for wiser social media use, emphasizing cultural literacy and local cultural awareness so that teenagers can adopt technology while preserving their cultural identities. Additionally, it is essential to develop policies promoting culturally sensitive technology use and involve society elements in strengthening culturally-based identities reflecting each Southeast Asian country's rich cultural diversity.

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method to collect data and information relevant to the research topic. The literature review enables researchers to explore various concepts, theories, and previous study findings concerning social media's influence, particularly TikTok, on Southeast Asian teenagers' cultural identity. Data come from secondary sources such as scientific journals, articles, books, research reports, and other relevant publications. The data collection process begins with systematically identifying relevant literature from academic databases, digital libraries, and reliable sources. The emphasis is on works discussing social media's impact on cultural identity, social changes among youth, and TikTok's effect on local cultures in Southeast Asia. Each source is evaluated and selected based on its quality and relevance to research objectives. Data validity is maintained by choosing credible and verified literature and applying critical analysis considering diverse perspectives. Thematic analysis is used to identify main patterns emerging from the literature and connect findings with relevant theory.

By using a literature review as a data collection method, this study aims to provide deep and comprehensive insights into TikTok's effect on cultural identity among Southeast Asian youth.

### **The Influence of TikTok on Teenagers' Perspectives on Local Cultural Identity in Southeast Asia**

The exponential rise of TikTok as a global social media platform has undeniably influenced cultural dynamics across various regions, including Southeast Asia. As a platform predominantly used by teenagers, its impact is strongly felt in the expression of local cultural identity and the broader regional framework shaping that identity. This essay discusses the complex role of TikTok in influencing teenagers' perceptions of their cultural identity within the complex socio-economic constellation of Southeast Asia, based on various scholarly works that delve into identity construction, social cohesion, and the psychological impact of social media engagement. A fundamental aspect of understanding TikTok's influence lies in recognizing how identity is shaped within the framework of regional cultural dynamics. Rattanasevee, in a comprehensive analysis of identity construction during ASEAN integration, argues that identity formation goes beyond political and economic paradigms, exploring social norms and cultural expressions (Rattanasevee, 2023). This constructivist perspective emphasizes that the formation of regional collective identity is profoundly influenced by local cultural expressions, where platforms like TikTok play a major role. When teenagers engage with TikTok, they participate in a dynamic process of cultural expression and negotiation, contributing to their sense of attachment within the local and regional cultural landscape.

Research shows the multifaceted nature of this engagement. Reski et al. indicate that TikTok positively correlates with life satisfaction among teenagers, suggesting that the platform can enhance users' self-esteem and community feeling (Reski et al., 2024). This positive feedback mechanism boosts teenagers' perception of cultural identity as they create content that reflects their unique local experiences while remaining connected to the broader ASEAN cultural narrative. This duality is crucial in a region where diverse ethnic backgrounds and cultural expressions coexist, promoting a cultural integration process characterized by a political and cultural synthesis concept according to Manna (Manna, 2023). This synthesis is vital in shaping how teenagers negotiate their local identity in the fast-globalizing digital landscape. At the same time, TikTok

content also reveals the tensions and contradictions inherent in cultural identity formation. For example, Nuraeni discusses how nationalist sentiments may complicate cultural relations in the region (Nuraeni, 2018). TikTok provides a platform for teenagers to express their sentiments—both supportive and critical—toward neighboring cultures. By curating content that reflects these sentiments, teenagers engage in ongoing cultural negotiation processes that may reinforce or challenge prevailing stereotypes and prejudices, thereby influencing their perception of regional identity.

Moreover, the representation of local fashion and cultural events through TikTok content illustrates how teenagers can reclaim cultural identity narratives. Ridzki and Darwinsyah analyze fashion trends propagated through TikTok, arguing that social media allows users to depict and recreate cultural practices and historical narratives in contemporary contexts (Ridzki & Darwinsyah, 2024). This is particularly relevant in Southeast Asia, where traditional practices must negotiate with modernity. By participating in viral trends celebrating local culture, teenagers foster pride and identity, further strengthening their attachment to their communities. However, this involvement may also risk commodifying cultural practices, suggesting a complex relationship between authenticity and commercial appeal in the digital representation of cultural heritage. The implications of TikTok extend beyond individual expression toward social cohesion and community formation. According to Guo's findings, TikTok not only shapes users' self-esteem but also strengthens collective identity through shared cultural content (Guo, 2022). When users collectively engage with popular trends, they foster a sense of community and belonging vital for social integration in a diverse region like Southeast Asia. However, this collective engagement is not without its drawbacks; Cai's research highlights the potential negative impact on self-esteem due to social comparison facilitated by the platform (Cai, 2023). Such concerns necessitate a deeper understanding of how online interactions influence offline cultural identity and psychological well-being.

TikTok's development also raises critical questions regarding the preservation and transformation of indigenous identities in Southeast Asia. Suwignyo discusses how language serves as an essential channel for cultural identity amid globalization (Suwignyo, 2021). In the TikTok space, language not only carries cultural value but also affects how cultural narratives are disseminated and transformed. With the platform's global reach, regional

dialects and languages find new expression, supporting both the preservation and evolution of cultural practices. This linguistic diversity enriches Southeast Asia's cultural tapestry but also poses challenges as younger generations might lean more toward globalized forms of expression rather than traditional ones. Additionally, the evolving narratives about cultural identity through TikTok cannot ignore the role of external cultural influences. The widespread dissemination of Chinese culture in Southeast Asia presents challenges and opportunities for local identities. Rüland and Arndt's study on geopolitical dynamics highlights that cultural exchanges, partly driven by platforms like TikTok, can lead to the hybridization of cultural identities (Rüland & Arndt, 2019). This hybrid cultural expression may allow Southeast Asian teenagers to blend elements from multiple cultures into their identities but also raises concerns about cultural dilution and loss of authenticity.

Concurrently, the psychological impact of TikTok usage is crucial to understanding teenage identity formation. The dynamic nature of feedback received through likes, shares, and comments can significantly affect self-perception and cultural alignment. As reflected in Adams et al.'s discussion on identity politics (Adams et al., 2022), the socio-political landscape greatly influences user engagement. Consequently, teenagers may approach or avoid cultural expression based on their emotional interactions with the platform. Furthermore, the intersectionality of media consumption and identity formation in Southeast Asia leads to discussions about gender roles in these narratives. As explored in Fadhil's work, gender representation in TikTok content warrants attention, considering the platform's potential to challenge or reinforce cultural stereotypes (Fadhil, 2024). As teenagers navigate their online presence, they may reinforce traditional gender norms or subvert them, reflecting an important dimension of social change in cultural identity. This phenomenon illustrates the complexity of cultural performance through social media, where teenagers actively negotiate their identities in public spaces.

As the global social media landscape evolves, TikTok's role in shaping local cultural identity in Southeast Asia will likely become increasingly significant. The relationship between online content creation, real-world impact, collective engagement, and individual identity construction highlights a critical evolution in how cultural identities manifest and adapt in the digital era. Therefore, it is imperative for stakeholders—educators, parents, and



policymakers—to understand these dynamics and support healthy identity development among youth in this region.

### **Changes in Aspects of Local Culture in Southeast Asia That Are Preserved or Displaced by Global Influences**

The cultural landscape of Southeast Asia is rich with texture, the result of complex interactions between local identities and external influences shaped by globalization. The ongoing negotiation between tradition and modernity is marked by phenomena such as cultural synthesis, local adaptation to global trends, and the preservation or displacement of indigenous practices and beliefs under external pressures. Historically, Southeast Asia has demonstrated remarkable capacity for political and cultural synthesis, evolving from pre-colonial kingdoms through colonial and post-colonial transitions. The arrival of foreign influences from places like India, China, and the Middle East facilitated significant cultural exchanges that continue to resonate in contemporary Southeast Asian societies. Manna discusses how these historical interactions have triggered dynamics of cultural adaptation and synthesis that define the region today, illustrating the continuity and change in these traditions over time (Manna, 2023).

As globalization advances, certain cultural aspects, such as language and local customs, face increasing tension between preservation and displacement. The region's linguistic diversity, as explored by Suwignyo, creates a unique cultural character, emphasizing that instead of merging into a single language or culture, Southeast Asia thrives in its diversity. This diversity functions not only as a means of communication but also as a framework for shaping cultural identity, often clashing with unification efforts seen in regional initiatives such as ASEAN (Suwignyo, 2023; Suwignyo, 2021). The influence of media, particularly the Korean Wave, illustrates the complexity of cultural adaptation in the region. Chung's analysis highlights how popular elements of South Korean culture have been adopted and localized by Southeast Asian media producers, leading to a hybridization of cultural expressions. This process often results in changes that not only enrich local cultures but also challenge traditional forms, showing how global trends can penetrate and reshape cultural identities without completely replacing them (Chung, 2013). In the religious context, the historical dynamics of Islam in Southeast Asia offer another perspective to observe the interaction between local and global influences. Aljunied explains how the integration of Islam into local contexts manifests unique cultural expressions

distinct from Islamic practices elsewhere in the world. The visible adaptations in Southeast Asia reflect a synthesis between global Islamic teachings and local customs, thus preserving the core tenets of Islam while allowing distinctive regional identities (Aljunied, 2019).

Furthermore, the colonial legacy has deeply impacted the production and understanding of local knowledge, particularly within visual arts and cultural practices. Simanullang emphasizes that although colonial heritage introduced new paradigms of thought and creativity, it also posed challenges to the preservation of traditional knowledge systems and practices (Simanullang, 2023). Because colonial modes of thinking often prioritize Western knowledge frameworks, local customs and art forms may lose status or recognition, complicating efforts to maintain cultural heritage amid waves of globalization. As indigenous populations face increasing pressures from industrialization and globalization, legal and institutional systems designed to protect their rights often struggle to address these challenges adequately. Aditya and Al-Fatih highlight ongoing conflicts related to land use and cultural preservation, underscoring the importance of effective legal frameworks that recognize and support indigenous cultures and their rights in the face of expanding global economic interests (Aditya & Al-Fatih, 2023). These dynamics reveal how local identities can be marginalized by larger forces, resulting in the loss of traditional practices and knowledge.

Regarding biodiversity and local ecological knowledge, there is parallel discussion on the traditional wisdom of indigenous communities concerning land management and conservation practices. Franco et al. provide insights into how traditional ecological calendars and folk medicines embody forms of local knowledge that contribute to sustainability and biodiversity, emphasizing their value in contemporary ecological discourse (Franco et al., 2022). However, as globalization accelerates the introduction of industrial practices, these traditional forms of knowledge face existential threats, revealing a fragile balance between local practices and global economic pressures. Culturally, folk dance in Southeast Asia symbolizes another area where traditional practices are at risk of being overlooked due to modernization. Studies by Bahl et al. show that with increasing urbanization and modern influences, it becomes ever more important to protect and promote the cultural significance of folk dance, which serves as a vital medium for expressive identity ("Development of Southeast Asian Folk Dance from an Art Anthropology Perspective," 2024). This highlights the delicate



interaction between preserving cultural heritage and adapting to modern forms of expression—where failure to balance both may lead to the erosion of important artistic traditions.

Overall, the ongoing changes within the cultural context of Southeast Asia illustrate a complex and multifaceted relationship between local traditions and global influences. Each aspect—whether language, religion, art, or indigenous knowledge—demonstrates various degrees of adaptation and resistance to globalization. While some cultural practices are embraced and integrated into global frameworks, others struggle to survive amid pressures for conformity or modernization. Ultimately, understanding these interactions is essential to fostering a cultural landscape that respects and maintains the rich and diverse identities of Southeast Asia amidst rapidly evolving global dynamics.

### **TikTok as a Medium for Cultural Expression and the Self-Identity of Youth in Southeast Asia**

TikTok has emerged as an important platform for cultural expression and self-identity among youth in Southeast Asia, reflecting contemporary social dynamics in the region. In this digital landscape, TikTok functions not only as a social media application but also as a space for young people to navigate their identities, engage with cultural phenomena, and participate in activism. This multifaceted role shapes their personal lives and collective experiences within various social frameworks. The rise of TikTok, characterized by engaging short video content, resonates deeply with Southeast Asian youth, particularly because of the platform's ability to embrace local cultural nuances while enabling global engagement. For example, Turuba et al. (2024) discuss how platforms like TikTok fulfill the informational needs of youth by offering content that reflects their cultural context. The local flavor in this content acts as a mechanism for self-identity exploration, encouraging users to express aspects of their heritage, beliefs, and social challenges.

Additionally, TikTok's role in facilitating youth activism and collective political expression is also significant. Jalli (2025) highlights the emergence of grassroots movements on TikTok in Southeast Asia, where youth use the platform to mobilize social issues such as human rights and environmental concerns. These movements employ popular culture content to create compelling narratives, demonstrating how TikTok can act as a catalyst for civic engagement and collective identity formation. A crucial element of TikTok's impact on self-

identity is its reflective nature, as the platform provides youth not only with content consumption but also content creation opportunities, leading to unique exchanges of ideas and identities. Studies by Literat and Kligler-Vilenchik (2021) describe how popular culture within the app encourages young users to engage in political dialogues, reinforcing their identities through shared interests. This political expression builds a sense of community among users, where diverse backgrounds converge around shared cultural expressions and social issues.

In personal expression, TikTok enables users to explore and affirm their identities as they navigate gender, sexuality, and socio-political affiliations. Lively individuality is particularly visible among subcultures, where content creators can embrace alternative identities. Steinke et al. (2024) note that identity presentations on TikTok are multifaceted, facilitating discussions about gender identity and social roles, thus blurring previously rigid boundaries. TikTok also serves as an important information channel related to mental health, showing how young people articulate their struggles and seek connections with others facing similar challenges. The platform becomes an outlet for vulnerability among youth sharing mental health experiences, as noted by Lee (2022), who highlights the growing volume of mental health content on TikTok amid rising anxiety. However, this dialogue also presents challenges related to misinformation that users must navigate, emphasizing the importance of wise engagement with content.

The complexity of identity formation on TikTok is also connected to commercial interests and influencer culture, which significantly shape users' self-perceptions. Nasidi et al. (2024) describe how social comparison mechanisms on TikTok can exaggerate perceptions of others' experiences, leading young users to negatively evaluate their self-worth compared to edited representations. The nature of TikTok contributes to continuous identity negotiation both personally and within wider communities. Despite challenges related to self-presentation on the platform, TikTok empowers users by offering resources to support their exploration. For example, Basch et al. (2022) discuss TikTok initiatives aiming to promote mental well-being and encourage informed conversations about health, reinforcing the platform's role as a supportive environment amid cultural pressures and socio-political instability. This dual role—supportive yet stressful—shapes TikTok's influence as a tool for cultural expression and potential distress. Furthermore, TikTok's rising popularity in Southeast Asia has implications for global cultural exchange, with user-generated content

facilitating cross-border conversations. As users from diverse cultural backgrounds interact creatively, they build alliances and expand cultural representation. Thus, TikTok acts as an incubator for new forms of cultural hybridity and collaboration, where cultural elements blend into unique expressions that resonate globally while remaining rooted in local meaning. The multifaceted impact of TikTok on cultural expression and youth self-identity in Southeast Asia is profound and continually evolving. The platform fosters complex interactions between personal expression, collective activism, cultural exchange, and social influence, all contributing to ongoing dialogue about youth identity in a rapidly changing and globalized digital era. Further research is essential to understand its implications for youth identity and cultural expression..

### **Preservation of Local Culture Amid the Currents of Globalization Through TikTok in Southeast Asia**

In the rapidly changing landscape of Southeast Asia, globalization presents both opportunities and challenges for the preservation of local culture. The emergence of platforms like TikTok has opened space for cultural expression and engagement, especially among the younger generation, by providing a venue for community members to showcase traditional practices, lifestyles, and narratives that might otherwise disappear if not preserved. TikTok's unique format enables creativity and rapid dissemination of local culture, which can stimulate interest and engagement both within and beyond the local context, while promoting cultural sustainability through digital means (Liu, 2024; Abidin et al., 2022). With the intensification of globalization, the impact of social media on cultural practices has become increasingly significant. In Southeast Asia, TikTok facilitates cultural dialogue by highlighting local traditions that can attract global audience attention. The platform democratizes content creation, allowing users from diverse backgrounds to display their cultures, potentially igniting a resurgence of cultural pride within local communities (Liu, 2024; Abidin et al., 2022). TikTok's participatory nature enables users to create, remix, and share content, creating an environment in which traditional local practices can gain wider recognition. This dynamic illustrates how globalization and technology can act as drivers of cultural preservation, as seen in the popularity of certain genres in each region—such as traditional dances or local culinary

practices—broadcast in innovative formats (Abidin et al., 2022; Mawaddah & Misrah, 2023).

Moreover, the cultural implications of TikTok go beyond mere entertainment; they also relate to socio-political dialogue and identity formation in Southeast Asia. Within a framework developed by Liu, TikTok's governance and platform logic have sparked discussions around content moderation and visibility, highlighting the conceptual debate between local expression and global oversight (Liu, 2024; Guo et al., 2024). This conversation is crucial because it reflects ongoing debates about who controls narrative spaces on digital platforms and how marginalized voices can find representation against dominant global narratives. Social media platforms play a critical role in this discourse, shaping public opinion and cultural discourse, thus functioning as tools for cultural revival and advocacy (Chavanayarn, 2024; Rahman & Baddam, 2021). In exploring TikTok's cultural impact, it is also essential to address the conscious need to balance global trends with local authenticity. Although TikTok offers a platform for cultural manifestation, concerns about cultural homogenization arise, wherein unique local cultures may face dilution due to the influence of dominant global content standards (Guo et al., 2024; Mawaddah & Misrah, 2023). Therefore, preserving local culture becomes a complex interaction of engaging with global networks while maintaining cultural uniqueness. Involving local communities to highlight their cultural narratives can enhance resilience to the blurring effects of globalization. Crucially, cross-cultural collaboration and partnerships can enhance visibility while ensuring local cultures remain vibrant and contextually grounded (Guo et al., 2024; Mawaddah & Misrah, 2023).

Community-focused initiatives further strengthen TikTok's role in cultural preservation. By engaging local influencers and promoting traditional practices through user-generated content, platforms like TikTok empower community members to take pride in their heritage while sharing it with the world. In this context, local wisdom and traditional knowledge become vital in shaping narratives that resonate well with both local and global audiences, reaching youth who might be caught between their cultural roots and dominant global culture (Mawaddah & Misrah, 2023; Rahman & Baddam, 2021). The blend of traditional values with contemporary digital expression affirms an important aspect of cultural sustainability in the region. Additionally, exploring the economic dimension of tourism in Southeast Asia illustrates another channel where TikTok facilitates cultural preservation. As noted by Rahman and

Baddam, tourism acts as a channel for cultural exchange and economic empowerment in local communities; TikTok's role in promoting unique cultural experiences can enhance marketing efforts for local businesses, crafts, and traditional foods (Rahman & Baddam, 2021; Liu, 2024). By generating content that emphasizes the authenticity of local experiences, TikTok can promote responsible tourism that not only respects but also uplifts local culture. Priority should be given to initiatives that resonate with cultural contextualization, allowing local economies to thrive while maintaining cultural practices as not merely consumable goods but integral parts of community identities (Rahman & Baddam, 2021; Liu, 2024; Changsong et al., 2021).

In summary, the interaction between TikTok and the preservation of local culture in Southeast Asia offers rich insights into how digital media can play a transformative role in maintaining cultural identity amid globalization. TikTok's unique attributes provide a platform for innovative local narratives, empower community engagement, and enhance economic sustainability through cultural tourism. However, it is vital to navigate this landscape carefully to protect the integrity of local traditions from cultural homogenization forces. Future efforts should focus on developing cross-cultural collaborations that enrich local identity and global understanding, ensuring culture remains a living and evolving entity despite rapid global changes (Mawaddah & Misrah, 2023; Liu, 2024).

## **Conclusion**

TikTok as a digital platform has played a very significant role in cultural expression and self-identity formation among youth in Southeast Asia. The most important finding of this research is that TikTok does not merely function as a social media for entertainment but also as a space enabling the younger generation to express and explore their cultural identities while also participating in relevant socio-political discourses. TikTok provides a safe place for users to share experiences, engage with social issues, and advocate for local cultural values amid the ongoing tides of globalization. The scholarly contribution of this research enriches our understanding of the role of social media, particularly TikTok, in shaping cultural identity in the digital era. This study highlights how digital platforms not only create spaces for global communication but also strengthen the connection between youth and their cultural roots. The results open up possibilities for further exploration on how technology can be used to

support cultural preservation while addressing the challenges posed by cultural homogenization driven by globalization.

However, the limitation of this study lies in its narrow focus on TikTok use in Southeast Asia, which may not encompass the dynamics of platform use in other regions. Therefore, it is important to conduct further research to explore how TikTok influences the formation of identity and cultural expression in other regions with different social and political contexts. Related topics that need further investigation include TikTok's impact on socio-political changes at the global level, the relationship between social media influencers and collective identity formation, and TikTok's influence on youth mental health perceptions. Additionally, questions concerning content moderation policies and their effects on freedom of expression also deserve deeper examination in future studies.

## References

- Abidin, C., Lee, J., & Kaye, D. (2022). Introduction to the media international australia special issue on "TikTok cultures in the Asia Pacific." *Media International Australia*, 186(1), 3-10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878x221130126>
- Adams, K., Choe, J., Mostafanezhad, M., & Phi, G. (2022). (Post-) Pandemic tourism resiliency: Southeast Asian lives and livelihoods in limbo. In 267-288. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003265429-14>
- Aditya, Z., & Al-Fatih, S. (2023). The legal protection system of indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia. *Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum Legality*, 31(2), 285-309. <https://doi.org/10.22219/ljih.v31i2.27619>
- Aljunied, K. (2019). Islam in Southeast Asia. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.658>
- Badad Alauddin, M., Fitri, D., & Apri Wenando, F. (2025). Tradition to technology: The transformation of Indonesian culture in the social media era. *Asian Journal of Media and Culture*, 1(1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.63919/ajmc.v1i1.16>
- Basch, C., Donelle, L., Fera, J., & Jaime, C. (2022). Deconstructing TikTok videos on mental health: Cross-sectional, descriptive content analysis. *JMIR Formative Research*, 6(5), e38340. <https://doi.org/10.2196/38340>



- Cai, Y. (2023). The influence of TikTok on the establishment of adolescent self-esteem. *BCP Education & Psychology*, 8, 107-111. <https://doi.org/10.54691/bcpep.v8i.4292>
- Changsong, W., Kerry, L., & Marta, R. (2021). Film distribution by video streaming platforms across Southeast Asia during COVID-19. *Media Culture & Society*, 43(8), 1542-1552. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437211045350>
- Chavanayarn, S. (2024). Epistemic injustice and ideal social media: Enhancing X for inclusive global engagement. *Topoi*, 43(5), 1355-1368. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-024-10070-7>
- Chung, P. (2013). Co-creating Korean Wave in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 8(2-3), 193-208. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973258613512912>
- Erdem, B. (2018). How can social media be helpful for immigrants to integrate into society in the US? *European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 3(3), 74-79. <https://doi.org/10.26417/ejms.v3i3.p74-79>
- Fadhil, H. (2024). Rethinking Islamization in Southeast Asia: Historical dynamics, distinction, and existence of Muslims. *Journal of Modern Islamic Studies and Civilization*, 2(02), 158-172. <https://doi.org/10.59653/jmisc.v2i02.612>
- Franco, F., Knudsen, M., & Hassan, N. (2022). Case studies in biocultural diversity from Southeast Asia—traditional ecological calendars, folk medicine, and folk names. 1-20. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-6719-0\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-6719-0_1)
- Guo, H., Aris, A., & Rusli, R. (2024). Heritage and innovation: Redefining Kuala Lumpur's fashion identity through cross-cultural collaboration. *MySE*, 11(2), 135-158. <https://doi.org/10.24191/myse.v12i1.1604>
- Guo, J. (2022). Research on the influence of TikTok on teenagers. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220105.254>
- Jalli, N. (2025). Viral justice: TikTok activism, misinformation, and the fight for social change in Southeast Asia. *Social Media + Society*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051251318122>
- Lee, J. (2022). Factors contributing to youth's exposure to mental health misinformation on TikTok during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Student Research*, 11(4). <https://doi.org/10.47611/jsrhs.v11i4.3296>

- Literat, I., & Kligler-Vilenchik, N. (2021). How popular culture prompts youth collective political expression and cross-cutting political talk on social media: A cross-platform analysis. *Social Media + Society*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051211008821>
- Liu, D. (2024). Borderline content and platformised speech governance: Mapping TikTok's moderation controversies in South and Southeast Asia. *Policy & Internet*, 16(3), 543-566. <https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.388>
- Manna, A. (2023). Political & cultural synthesis: A new paradigm of Southeast Asia. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Review*, 04(03), 83-97. <https://doi.org/10.55662/ajmrr.2023.4302>
- Manna, A. (2023). Political & cultural synthesis: A new paradigm of Southeast Asia. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Review*, 04(03), 83-97. <https://doi.org/10.55662/ajmrr.2023.4302>
- Mawaddah, M., & Misrah, M. (2023). The role of culturists in guiding the local wisdom tradition of *pantang kemali* in adolescents. *Scaffolding Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Multikulturalisme*, 5(1), 364-379. <https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v5i1.2580>
- Nasidi, Q., Norde, A., Dahiru, J., & Hassan, I. (2024). TikTok usage, social comparison, and self-esteem among the youth: Moderating role of gender. *Galactica Media Journal of Media Studies*, 6(2), 121-137. <https://doi.org/10.46539/gmd.v6i2.467>
- Nuraeni, M. (2018). Identity in contemporary ASEAN. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icclas-17.2018.54>
- Park, M., Park, J., Baek, Y. M., & Macy, M. (2017). Cultural values and cross-cultural video consumption on YouTube. *PLOS ONE*, 12(5), e0177865. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0177865>
- Rahman, S., & Baddam, P. (2021). Community engagement in Southeast Asia's tourism industry: Empowering local economies. *Global Disclosure of Economics and Business*, 10(2), 75-90. <https://doi.org/10.18034/gdeb.v10i2.715>
- Rattanasevee, P. (2023). Understanding and prospect of identity construction in ASEAN integration. *International Studies*, 60(4), 379-400. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00208817231213500>
- Reski, R., Galugu, N., & Nurhayati, A. (2024). The effect of using TikTok on the satisfaction of life of late adolescents. *Bikotetik (Bimbingan Dan Konseling*

- Teori Dan Praktik*), 8(1), 20-27. <https://doi.org/10.26740/bikotetik.v8n1.p20-27>
- Ridzki, A., & Darwinsyah, M. (2024). Teenagers' perceptions of Citayam Fashion Week content on @abdulsofiailail's TikTok account. *Jurnal Ekonomi Kreatif Dan Manajemen Bisnis Digital*, 2(4), 479-493. <https://doi.org/10.55047/jekombital.v2i4.659>
- Rüland, J., & Arndt, M. (2019). Overlapping regionalism and cooperative hegemony: How China and India compete in South and Southeast Asia. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 32(2), 178-200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2019.1568393>
- Simanullang, P. (2023). The impact of colonial thinking legacy on the production of knowledge about the fine arts in Southeast Asia. *IJHE*, 8(1), 33-44. <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijhe.v8i1.59182>
- Soares, F. B., Gruzd, A., & Mai, P. (2023). Falling for Russian propaganda: Understanding the factors that contribute to belief in pro-Kremlin disinformation on social media. *Social Media + Society*, 9(4), 20563051231220330. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231220330>
- Steinke, J., Gilbert, C., Coletti, A., Levin, S., Suk, J., & Oeldorf-Hirsch, A. (2024). Women in STEM on TikTok: Advancing visibility and voice through STEM identity expression. *Social Media + Society*, 10(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051241274675>
- Suwignyo, A. (2021). Bahasa sebagai jejaring budaya Asia Tenggara. *Jurnal Sejarah Citra Lekha*, 6(2), 90-101. <https://doi.org/10.14710/jscl.v6i2.41438>
- Suwignyo, A. (2021). Bahasa sebagai jejaring budaya Asia Tenggara. *Jurnal Sejarah Citra Lekha*, 6(2), 90-101. <https://doi.org/10.14710/jscl.v6i2.41438>
- Suwignyo, A. (2023). Language plurality as cultural characteristics of Southeast Asia: A review of John F. Hartman's thesis. *Indonesian Historical Studies*, 6(2), 206-222. <https://doi.org/10.14710/ihis.v6i2.16937>
- Turuba, R., Cormier, W., Zimmerman, R., Ow, N., Zenone, M., Quintana, Y., ... & Barbic, S. (2024). Exploring how youth use TikTok for mental health information in British Columbia: Semistructured interview study with youth. *JMIR Infodemiology*, 4, e53233. <https://doi.org/10.2196/53233>
- Vaccari, C., & Chadwick, A. (2020). Deepfakes and disinformation: Exploring the impact of synthetic political video on deception, uncertainty, and trust in news. *Social Media + Society*, 6(1), 2056305120903408. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120903408>

Wang, Jinyuan. (2024). Development of Southeast Asian folk dance from the perspective of artistic anthropology. *International Journal of Art Innovation and Development*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.38007/ijaid.2024.050105>