

Media Convergence and Cultural Hybridity: Negotiating Traditional Ketoprak and Global Netflix in Indonesia's Digital Landscape

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Abstract

Media convergence between traditional art forms and global digital platforms has fundamentally reshaped cultural expression. This study examines this transformation in Indonesia, focusing on the interaction between the traditional Javanese art of Ketoprak and the global streaming service Netflix. Employing a qualitative approach with a literature study method, the research investigates how digital media not only alters patterns of cultural production and consumption but also renegotiates local values within a global landscape governed by algorithmic logic. The findings indicate that this interaction generates cultural hybridity, expanding representational spaces and enabling new cross-border cultural practices. However, the process also presents ethical and ideological challenges, including cultural commodification and the potential erosion of local values due to dominant global market logic. The study concludes that the success of cultural preservation in the digital era hinges on the ability of local communities to adapt creatively without losing their cultural identity, framing media convergence as a field of meaning negotiation between tradition, modernity, and algorithmic power.

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Introduction

In recent decades, the currents of digitalization and globalization have brought significant changes to the ways societies produce, distribute, and consume cultural works (Duffy et al., 2019; "The Impact of Digital Platforms on Television for Australian Consumers' Access and Exposure to Cultural Diversity," 2023). However, these changes often create tensions between the preservation of traditional values and the penetration of new media technologies that introduce different paradigms (Qiu, 2023; Wang, 2023). Digital technology, operated through algorithmic systems and driven by the logic of global capitalism, does not fully align with the values of mutual cooperation (gotong royong), spirituality, and collectivism that underpin the social life of Indonesian communities (Hamid et al., 2024; Sihotang et al., 2023). This phenomenon

becomes evident when traditional spaces of cultural expression such as Ketoprak performances, which have long thrived in communal social settings, begin to be displaced by digital entertainment platforms such as Netflix that emphasize individual experiences (Amanatillah et al., 2024; Reisa & Irwansyah, 2021). This transformation not only affects how people interact with cultural works but also reshapes the social relations surrounding the processes of cultural production and consumption themselves (Han et al., 2025; Rahmadhani & Achdiani, 2024). Furthermore, gaps in digital literacy have left parts of society unprepared for these rapid changes. Many groups still lack the critical capacity to navigate the meanings, values, and ideologies embedded within technological systems. Consequently, cultural dislocation occurs: technology emerges without the necessary social foundation to sustain it, while local cultures struggle to preserve their living spaces amid the overwhelming currents of digital globalization.

Academic studies on cultural transformation driven by media convergence in Indonesia have thus far tended to view technology linearly, as if it were a neutral entity that automatically brings progress. Such perspectives create a significant gap in our understanding of the relationship between technology and culture. Many previous studies have focused primarily on the functional and implicational aspects of digital technology use in society, such as its influence on communication or entertainment consumption patterns (Carvalho et al., 2015; Fitriyani & Afrizal, 2025; Khumaira et al., 2024). Others have emphasized its negative impacts, such as social disruption, cultural homogenization, and the loss of authenticity (Muhammad Akbar Jibrán & Anita Puji Astutik, 2025; Saputra & Siddiq, 2020; Syahril et al., 2024). There are also studies that center on issues of digital literacy and community readiness in adapting to technology (Haryanto et al., 2023; Hasanah, 2021; Saputra & Siddiq, 2020). However, across these three tendencies, few have critically discussed how the social and cultural character of a society, particularly Indonesia, shapes the ways in which new media technologies are adopted and negotiated. In Indonesia's highly diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious context, understanding socio-cultural dynamics is crucial. Differences in how communities perceive technology determine the extent to which new media are accepted, interpreted, and integrated into everyday life structures. This gap thus becomes an important entry point for understanding how media transformation is not merely about technology but about the negotiation of meaning between modernity and tradition.

This paper seeks to fill this gap in previous research by emphasizing the role of social and cultural character in the process of adopting and transforming media technologies in Indonesia. By positioning Ketoprak and Netflix as two

extreme symbols of different media regimes, traditional media and global digital media, this study aims to explore how both interact in shaping contemporary cultural expression. The primary question this study seeks to answer is: how prepared are Indonesia's local infrastructure and media ecosystem in adopting the logic and business models of global media platforms like Netflix? The second question asks how social, economic, and digital literacy inequalities influence patterns of cultural consumption and production in a plural society. Finally, how do local cultural values such as *gotong royong*, communal narratives, and performative rituals play a role in negotiating the penetration of digital culture? Through these three guiding questions, this research aims not merely to describe surface-level changes but to understand deeper dynamics: how new media reproduce relationships between individuals and communities, between the local and the global, between spectacle and meaning. The findings are expected to provide a theoretical foundation for cultural policy that is more sensitive to local wisdom amid the powerful tide of digital media convergence.

The main argument of this study rests on the notion that the incompatibility between Indonesian society and global technologies arises from fundamental differences between local cultural orientations and technological values themselves. Indonesian society is rooted in values of togetherness, ritual, and communal life, where cultural expressions such as *Ketoprak* function not merely as entertainment but as a medium of social reflection and moral dialogue. In contrast, digital technology and global entertainment platforms like Netflix prioritize efficiency, the privatization of experience, and the algorithmization of preferences, which tend to foster individualism and social isolation. This value contradiction creates a field of tension between participatory traditions and deterministic technologies. The success of technology adoption, therefore, is not solely determined by the sophistication of devices or infrastructure but by the social and cultural readiness to embrace and reinterpret new values. In this context, cultural transformation resulting from media convergence must be viewed as a process of social engineering, not merely a technological transition. Societies must find ways to integrate traditional values with the logic of modernity to avoid becoming uprooted from their cultural identities. Hence, Indonesia's success in facing global media convergence is not measured by the extent of technological penetration alone, but by its ability to harmonize *Ketoprak* and Netflix, local cultural heritage and global technological power, as two faces of a mutually sustaining cultural ecosystem.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using the literature review method to examine media convergence and the transformation of cultural expression in Indonesia, particularly within the dialectic between traditional Ketoprak art and global digital platforms such as Netflix. The qualitative approach is chosen for its ability to explore socio-cultural complexities in depth, with a focus on understanding the meanings, values, and cultural negotiations taking place in digital spaces (Cleland & MacLeod, 2022; Cocq & Liliequist, 2024). Data were obtained through a systematic search of relevant academic sources, including journal articles, books, research reports, and other scholarly publications discussing topics such as media convergence, cultural transformation, digital ethnography, and local and global media dynamics.

Data collection was conducted through documentation and systematic review techniques, taking into account source validity, contextual accuracy, and thematic relevance (Paoli & D'Auria, 2025). Data analysis was carried out through three main stages: data reduction, categorization, and thematic interpretation. The collected data were filtered and grouped according to key themes such as cultural hybridity, technological determinism, the digital divide, and the negotiation of local values. To ensure the reliability of the findings, this study also conducted theoretical triangulation and verification of secondary data from various literature sources (Lane & Lingel, 2022; Forberg & Schilt, 2023). Through this approach, the research not only describes surface-level changes but also seeks to understand deeper dynamics of how new media reproduce relations between individuals and communities, the local and the global, and spectacle and meaning within Indonesia's diverse socio-cultural context.

Media Convergence and the Crisis of Cultural Representation: Rethinking the Relationship Between Technology and Tradition in Indonesia

The discourse on media convergence and cultural representation in Indonesia demands an in-depth analysis of how digital technology has transformed the ways in which society produces, distributes, and consumes cultural narratives. In this context, digital media functions not merely as a communication channel but also as a space where values, identities, and ideologies are renegotiated. This shift is evident in the relationship between traditional performances such as Ketoprak and modern platforms like Netflix, which have become symbols of contemporary cultural globalization. One key theoretical lens for understanding

this dynamic is Henry Jenkins' concept of cultural convergence. Jenkins emphasizes that media convergence does not only refer to the merging of technologies but also to shifts in audience and industry behaviors that enable active participation in meaning production. Audiences are no longer passive consumers but are actively shaping, interpreting, and even negotiating cultural narratives across platforms (Vitania Yulia, 2022).

In the Indonesian context, this convergence manifests in the ways communities adapt traditional content into digital formats, for example, Ketoprak performances recorded and uploaded to YouTube or reimaged in cinematic form on streaming platforms. This process marks the emergence of a "hybrid space" where local culture and global technology intersect and interact. The rise of Netflix as a global platform highlights a new dimension within this convergence process. Netflix functions not only as an entertainment provider but also as a cultural actor wielding significant power over the forms and directions of cultural representation. Its strategy of producing original content reflects an attempt to foster representational diversity that transcends geographic boundaries. As (Bradfield, 2023) notes, Netflix's creative vision is rooted in the belief that the true power of media lies in its ability to tell unique and authentic individual stories.

This opens opportunities for various cultures, including Indonesia, to appear on the global stage. However, such diversity of representation is often shaped by market logic and algorithmic systems that determine what is deemed viable and profitable, meaning that "diversity" itself is not entirely free from economic and ideological interests. Thus, media convergence does not always equate to the full democratization of representation. In Indonesia, the post-1998 Reformasi era marked the beginning of media liberalization, initially celebrated as a step toward greater freedom of expression and cultural plurality. Yet in practice, the dynamics have proven more complex. As (Vitania Yulia, 2022) observes, media oligopolies controlled by large conglomerates have created new forms of cultural power centralization, potentially marginalizing alternative voices, including local cultural expressions. This phenomenon illustrates how media convergence in Indonesia unfolds amid the tension between the democratization of information and corporate domination.

Marwan Kraidy's theory of media hybridity further illuminates this situation. Kraidy argues that in the era of media globalization, the blending of local and global elements produces new forms of expression. (Mulyana & Yaputra, 2020) explain that such hybridity can serve as an adaptive strategy for local cultures to survive amid modernity's pressures. Yet this blending also risks blurring the boundaries between the authentic and the constructed, between

tradition and commodification. For instance, when Ketoprak is adapted into digital formats with modern cinematic aesthetics, it risks losing its philosophical values, those rooted in the Javanese ideals of togetherness, morality, and spirituality. In a broader sense, Marshall McLuhan's concept of technological determinism provides another dimension to this discussion. McLuhan famously asserted that "the medium is the message," suggesting that every medium carries ideological implications shaping how societies think and behave. Digital media, with its instant, interactive, and algorithmically measured nature, does not merely facilitate communication; it embeds new values such as efficiency, individualism, and consumerism (Peter Akongfeh Agwu et al., 2025). Within this framework, Netflix and similar platforms are not simply content providers but ideological machines that propagate the values of global capitalism. (Han et al., 2025) argue that the form of algorithmic capitalism operated by such platforms often prioritizes profit over the authenticity of cultural representation. Consequently, culture becomes a commodity curated by algorithms, where what is displayed is not necessarily what is culturally relevant but what holds commercial appeal and viral potential.

Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that media convergence also creates opportunities for audiences to articulate their identities and perspectives more freely. (Trisnawati et al., 2025) demonstrate that user interaction with diverse narratives on digital platforms has fostered new awareness of social issues such as gender, identity, and minority rights. Through digital spaces, Indonesian audiences can renegotiate meanings of culture and diversity, even challenging the hegemony of mainstream representation. In this sense, media convergence becomes not merely a technological process but also a cultural-political arena. A concrete example of this tension can be seen in the digital representation of Ketoprak. As a traditional art form combining theater, music, and dance, Ketoprak serves a social function as a medium for conveying moral reflection and societal critique. However, when this art is produced for global platforms or packaged as streaming content, it often undergoes a commodification process that shifts its focus from cultural meaning to visual spectacle (Utami, 2019). Paradoxically, as global exposure increases, cultural integrity faces the risk of erosion. This raises critical questions: To what extent do these new forms of representation still reflect the essence of local culture? And who truly holds authority over these narratives?

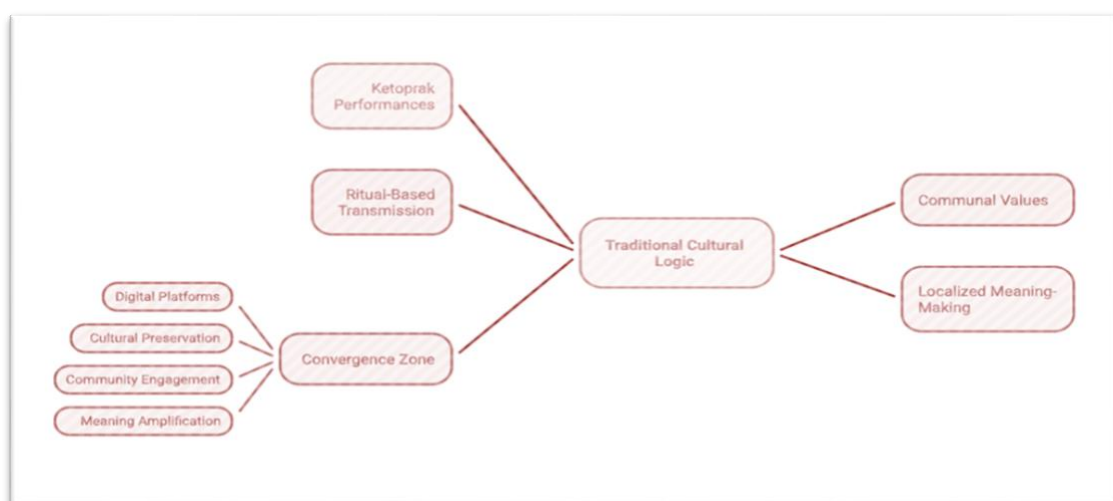
Furthermore, media globalization has significant implications for the concept of "cultural ownership." In the digital age, boundaries between the local and the global have become increasingly blurred. Indonesian cultural narratives featured on global platforms are not always controlled by local creators but often

by multinational corporations with specific economic agendas (Han et al., 2025). As a result, the process of meaning production is no longer entirely in the hands of the cultural community itself but is negotiated within a broader system of global capitalism. Ultimately, the relationship between technology, media, and tradition in Indonesia exhibits a multifaceted character. Media convergence has opened opportunities for cultural expression to reach wider audiences and enrich the discourse of representation. Yet behind these opportunities lie complex ideological challenges. Platforms such as Netflix, YouTube, and social media carry the potential to revive traditions through new forms while simultaneously posing risks of cultural homogenization. Therefore, critical awareness and interdisciplinary approaches are needed to understand how cultural narratives are constructed, mediated, and distributed within the global media ecosystem.

The dialectical tension between traditional cultural expressions and global digital platforms necessitates a conceptual framework that captures the complex negotiations occurring in Indonesia’s media convergence landscape. Drawing upon the theoretical foundations established by Jenkins’ convergence culture, Kraidy’s hybridity, and McLuhan’s technological determinism, we propose a tripartite model that maps the interaction between Ketoprak’s communal logic and Netflix’s algorithmic system. This framework (Figure 1) illustrates how the convergence zone, mediated by digital platforms, becomes a contested space where cultural values are not merely transmitted but actively negotiated, resulting in varying outcomes ranging from cultural preservation to commodification. The model serves as an analytical tool to understand the power dynamics at play when local traditions encounter global digital infrastructures.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of Cultural Value Negotiation in Media Convergence



Source: Developed by the author based on a synthesis of research findings, 2025.

As visualized in Figure 1, the convergence zone represents more than mere technological integration; it constitutes a field of cultural negotiation where power relations are constantly redefined. The Traditional Cultural Logic embodied by Ketoprak emphasizes communal participation, spiritual values, and social cohesion, elements that align with Indonesia's collectivist social foundations (Hamid et al., 2024; Sihotang et al., 2023). Conversely, the Global Digital Logic represented by Netflix operates on principles of algorithmic personalization, individualized consumption, and market efficiency that often contradict these communal values. The convergence zone becomes particularly significant in the Indonesian context, where digital platforms serve as both bridges and barriers between local traditions and global audiences. Platforms like YouTube and Netflix do not merely host content but actively shape its reception through algorithmic filtering and interface design that privilege certain.

The key challenge for Indonesia moving forward is to maintain a balance between openness to global media flows and the preservation of local values. Cultural representation in digital spaces must be seen not merely as a commercial strategy but as part of a broader cultural project of sustainability. In this way, media convergence can serve as a means to strengthen rather than dilute national identity. Narratives emerging from the interaction between technology and culture will hold deeper meaning if they remain rooted in local wisdom while adapting to an ever-changing global reality.

Digital Infrastructure and the Gap in the Local Media Ecosystem: Indonesia's Readiness in Facing the Tide of Technological Globalization

Indonesia's readiness to face the tide of digital technological globalization is a strategic issue that demands serious attention, especially amid the increasing public dependence on communication and information technologies. Over the past two decades, the development of digital infrastructure, internet penetration, and the expansion of social media have fundamentally transformed the communication landscape in Indonesia. Technology is no longer merely a supporting tool but has become an integral part of social, economic, and political life. In this context, understanding Indonesia's readiness means deeply examining the interaction between government policy, the digital divide, and the adaptive capacity of local media in integrating themselves into an increasingly complex global digital ecosystem.

Recent studies affirm that the government's efforts to accelerate digital infrastructure development are a crucial component of the national strategy toward a technology-based economy. One key strategic initiative is the

establishment of the Telecommunications and Information Accessibility Agency (Badan Aksesibilitas Telekomunikasi dan Informasi, BAKTI), under the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, which plays a role in expanding communication networks to remote, frontier, and outermost regions. (Rachmawati et al., 2023) explain that BAKTI was established to address the digital divide by increasing fiber-optic penetration, expanding underground cable networks, and strengthening national connectivity through the Palapa Ring program. Additionally, the government has introduced programs such as “Internet for Villages” and increased the construction of Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) in remote areas. This strategy reflects Indonesia’s vision to expand equitable access to information and communication technologies (ICT).

However, as (Fatimah et al., 2023) argue, infrastructure development alone is insufficient to bridge the digital divide. Physical access to internet networks must be accompanied by the improvement of digital literacy, particularly among rural communities and older age groups. Their study emphasizes that the digital divide in Indonesia is not merely material, related to the availability of devices and networks, but also cognitive and social, encompassing skills in producing and managing digital content. Thus, digital literacy is a critical prerequisite for enabling communities to use technology productively and critically, rather than remaining passive consumers of the global information flow. Limitations at the local government level also hinder the implementation of digital governance (e-governance). (Pribadi et al., 2024) show that deficiencies in infrastructure and human resources in many regions remain obstacles in executing digital governance policies. According to them, the lack of digital capacity within regional bureaucracies reduces the effectiveness of technology-based transparency and public accountability programs. Consequently, even though many regions have adopted government information systems, their success remains limited due to disparities between infrastructural readiness and bureaucratic competence. This issue demonstrates that digital transformation in governance cannot be separated from local socio-political and institutional contexts.

Beyond structural challenges, socio-economic dimensions also play a major role in widening or narrowing Indonesia’s digital divide. (Hadi, 2018) in his research on digital connectivity between rural and urban areas, highlights that digital connectivity depends not only on infrastructure but also on the social and economic readiness of communities. He explains that factors such as education level, income, and individual motivation to use technology directly influence digital technology utilization. Therefore, infrastructure enhancement policies must be accompanied by community empowerment strategies so that

technology genuinely becomes a means to improve quality of life rather than merely a tool for consumption. Within the local media ecosystem, the rise of digital platforms and social media has revolutionized how people produce, distribute, and consume information. (Maryani et al., 2020) explain that local media in Indonesia face major challenges in adapting to digital disruption. Social media has become not just a supplementary channel for news distribution but a central part of media business models. This shift has led to a decline in advertising revenues for traditional media and has transformed the overall structure of the media industry. Their study in three major cities, Palembang, Manado, and Bandung, shows that most local media still struggle to adapt to the dynamics of digital platforms dominated by global corporations such as Meta (Facebook) and Google. Consequently, local media have had to develop new strategies, such as producing more visual and interactive content and building audience engagement through social media.

However, the dominance of global digital media also poses serious challenges to the sustainability of local media and information diversity. (Maryani et al., 2020) emphasize that the imbalance between local and national media creates unequal adaptation conditions. National media, equipped with greater resources, can fully exploit digital technologies, while local media face limitations in capital, expertise, and access to advanced technology. As a result, information tends to concentrate in the hands of a few major players, while local media struggle to maintain their existence in an increasingly competitive ecosystem.

This situation becomes even more complex when linked to public demands for digital-based public services. (Weningsih et al., 2022) stress the importance of local governments' roles in utilizing digital technology to enhance public service efficiency and transparency. According to them, the success of e-government implementation largely depends on the ability of local governments to understand local contexts and adapt technology to community needs. Thus, digital transformation cannot be uniform; each region requires a distinct approach based on its geographical, social, and economic conditions. (Haqqi, 2023) adds that uneven digital readiness among regions requires more specific and targeted policies from the central government, especially to strengthen the competitiveness of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the global digital economy.

Furthermore, the impact of digital globalization extends beyond infrastructure and technical capacity, it also touches cultural and ideological dimensions. (Kencana & Meisyanti, 2020) note that the adoption of digital media platforms by local groups signifies a fundamental change in how communication

and information production are conducted. This transformation is not merely technological but also strategic, as it demands continuous innovation and adaptive responses to changing audience behaviors. In this context, local media are challenged not to merely follow the global digitalization trend but to develop business models and content strategies that resonate with Indonesia's sociocultural character. Although global trends exert inevitable pressure, Indonesia's unique socioeconomic context remains a decisive factor in shaping its digital evolution. The country's diverse geography, spanning thousands of islands with significant regional disparities, requires digital development policies that account for such diversity to prevent widening the gap between urban and rural areas. A successful digitalization program is not merely one that emphasizes economic efficiency but also one that strengthens social inclusion and expands civic participation in the digital sphere. In conclusion, Indonesia's readiness to face digital technological globalization depends on three main factors: equitable infrastructure advancement, improved digital literacy, and adaptive strategies in managing local media. The government must continue strengthening infrastructure through programs such as BAKTI while simultaneously investing in digital education and human resource development. Local media, as an essential part of the national information ecosystem, should be encouraged to innovate and build cross-sector collaborations to survive amid global platform dominance. By balancing technological development with social empowerment, Indonesia can build an inclusive, resilient, and competitive digital ecosystem on the global stage.

Social Inequality, Digital Literacy, and Cultural Consumption Patterns: Society in the Current of Media Individualization

The interconnection between social character, inequality, and technology adoption is a crucial element in understanding how Indonesian society adapts to the contemporary digital media ecosystem. In the era of media convergence, where the boundaries between technology, culture, and economy are increasingly blurred, media consumption is no longer merely a matter of entertainment but also a reflection of deeper social structures. In Indonesia, socio-economic factors play a significant role in shaping patterns of access to and use of digital technology, including streaming platforms such as Netflix, which have now become part of the daily lives of urban residents and the emerging middle class. Research by (Evita et al., 2023) highlights media consumption patterns among Indonesian Generation Z and emphasizes that socio-economic status and educational background strongly determine the intensity and type of media platforms used. Individuals from higher economic groups have better access to

technology and digital education, enabling them to navigate platforms more skillfully and utilize recommendation algorithms to find content that aligns with their preferences.

Meanwhile, groups with limited resources face various challenges, ranging from lack of devices, unstable internet connections, to insufficient digital literacy. This results in a form of digital divide that is not only technical but also symbolic, demonstrating how access to information and entertainment can reflect and reinforce existing social hierarchies. In this context, digital literacy should not be understood merely as the technical ability to operate digital devices. It also involves critical awareness of the ideologies, values, and representations embedded in digital media. (Lindell, 2022) explains that in contemporary societies, cultural consumption is not neutral but is tied to an individual's social position and symbolic capital. Through digital media, individuals are not only passive consumers but also actors in the symbolic reproduction that reinforces social structures. Therefore, the ability to access and understand digital media also entails the capacity to articulate one's social position within the increasingly interconnected global cultural space.

Algorithmic personalization on platforms like Netflix complicates this dynamic. As (Moussa et al., 2024) note, Netflix's recommendation system tends to tailor content based on users' implicit preferences, without considering the social and cultural contexts in which they live. Consequently, users are often guided toward homogenized viewing experiences that reinforce dominant tastes and marginalize local cultural diversity. In the Indonesian context, where local narratives and regional cultures are important for collective identity formation, such algorithms can act as a form of digital colonialism, where global logic dictates local taste, and cultural diversity is sidelined by the hegemony of global market preferences. (Floegel, 2020) adds that Netflix's algorithms function not only as content selection tools but also as mechanisms reflecting the cultural and economic biases already embedded in media production systems. The algorithms classify users based on behavior and consumption patterns, reinforcing social boundaries in the digital world. In many cases, this deepens social inequality because groups with limited resources are less likely to be meaningfully represented within this digital cultural architecture. Thus, Netflix and similar platforms are not merely entertainment providers but also social actors shaping how identity, class, and culture are produced and consumed in digital spaces.

On one hand, digital platforms like Netflix provide broad access to global and local content, creating new opportunities for cultural exchange. On the other hand, these systems can deepen symbolic inequality and widen the gap between those who can master technology and those who cannot. Individuals with high

digital literacy can actively select, interpret, and produce content, while others tend to be passive recipients within the vast flow of digital culture. This phenomenon is referred to by media theorists as a “cultural gap”, a cultural divide that stems not only from economic disparities but also from the ability to critically engage with digital messages shaping societal worldviews.

Furthermore, participation in digital spaces demands reflective capacity toward the dynamics of circulating information and cultural representation. (Parahita, 2019) emphasizes that the ability to evaluate and navigate digital media platforms is an integral part of active citizenship in the digital era. In political and social contexts, citizens’ engagement in public discourse is increasingly mediated by technology. Without the capacity to critically assess algorithms and consumed content, such participation risks reproducing misinformation or ideological bias disseminated by the media system itself. Therefore, digital literacy should be understood as part of modern civic education, an effort to cultivate a society that is not only technologically literate but also culturally and politically aware.

Engagement with digital media also reveals complex cultural dimensions. For instance, Netflix consumption is closely tied to lifestyle changes among Indonesia’s middle class, which is becoming increasingly cosmopolitan and globally oriented. Behind these consumption patterns lies an identity negotiation process, between the desire to be part of a global culture and the need to maintain local identity. This tension makes the study of technology adoption and digital media consumption highly relevant in the context of postcolonial societies like Indonesia. Consequently, Netflix usage in Indonesia can be seen as a mirror of broader social transformation. When access to technology still heavily depends on economic status, education, and geographic location, the narrative of “digital democratization” must be critically examined. Digital platforms promise openness and inclusivity, but in practice, they operate under market logic and algorithms driven by data and profitability, rather than equality or fair cultural representation. In conclusion, the socio-cultural implications of digital technology adoption in Indonesia, particularly through the lens of Netflix, demonstrate that media consumption in the digital era is not merely a matter of entertainment preferences but also a reflection of symbolic power and social inequality. Higher socio-economic status provides advantages in access and literacy, reinforcing the dominance of certain groups in digital cultural spaces. Meanwhile, seemingly neutral algorithmic personalization can create cultural isolation and deepen social segregation. Therefore, more inclusive and context-sensitive digital literacy strategies are required to ensure that technology does not merely reproduce inequality but instead serves as a tool to expand participation and cultural diversity in Indonesia’s digital public sphere.

Negotiating Local Values in Digital Spaces: Between Ketoprak Communalism and Netflix Algorithms

The negotiation of local values in digital spaces, particularly in the context of traditional arts such as Ketoprak, represents a complex intersection between efforts to preserve culture and the influences of modern digital platforms. In an era where social media and online spaces have become primary arenas for meaning-making, cultural expression is no longer purely local but enters a global domain characterized by shifting values, representations, and interpretations. Digital ethnography emerges as a crucial methodological approach for understanding this phenomenon, as it allows researchers to observe how traditional forms of cultural expression adapt and survive within an ever-changing digital landscape (Cleland & MacLeod, 2022; Cocq & Liliequist, 2024; Forberg & Schilt, 2023). In other words, digital spaces become a new arena for cultural communities to negotiate their identity, through aesthetic adaptation, reinterpretation of meaning, or strategies to maintain relevance amid the flow of popular culture.

This transformation stems from a fundamental shift in the concepts of community and cultural expression, which are no longer constrained by physical space. In the Javanese context, Ketoprak is not only a form of folk theater but also a symbol of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and respect for moral values and the philosophical life of Javanese society. However, in digital spaces, these values engage in a new dialogue with the faster, more interactive, and fragmented visual and performative culture of online media. Studies by (Amanatillah et al., 2024) demonstrate that the Yogyakarta Youth Sineprak community has successfully adapted this traditional kinetic art into digital formats through short cinematography and social media content. This adaptation not only expands the audience reach but also introduces local values to younger generations accustomed to modern visual narratives. Such phenomena indicate that digitalization is not merely a threat to cultural preservation but also an opportunity to strengthen cultural participation and education in digital society. The emergence of cultural hybridity becomes the clearest sign of negotiating local values in digital spaces. As explained by (Sabila, 2024; Wirandi & Sukman, 2023), hybridity in the context of Ketoprak performances allows a blending of local and global, traditional and modern elements. In performances like Ketoprak Dor by the Rahayu Cipto Rukun Group, classical storytelling patterns are combined with more theatrical and cinematic presentation styles, utilizing modern sound and lighting technology. As a result, Ketoprak does not merely appear as a cultural artifact of the past but also as a form of art continuously evolving with the times. Through this hybridization process, the identity of the local community also

expands: society understands itself not only in terms of tradition but also as part of a global cultural ecosystem in interaction.

The digital transformation of traditional arts like Ketoprak presents a complex landscape of simultaneous challenges and opportunities that reflect broader tensions between cultural preservation and digital globalization. As traditional performances transition from communal physical spaces to algorithmic digital platforms, multiple dimensions of cultural practice become reconfigured. The following table synthesizes key findings from recent studies on this transformation, highlighting how the encounter between Ketoprak's communal values and Netflix's algorithmic logic creates both threats to cultural integrity and possibilities for innovative adaptation. This framework helps organize the contradictory forces at play in Indonesia's media convergence landscape, where technological adoption is never neutral but always embedded in socio-cultural power dynamics.

Table 1
Challenges and Opportunities in the Digital Transformation of Local Culture
(Case Study: Ketoprak)

Dimension	Challenges	Opportunities
Representation	Cultural commodification, erosion of original meanings, dominance of market logic (Utami, 2019; Han et al., 2025)	Global exposure, creative hybridity, expansion to younger audiences (Wirandi & Sukman, 2023; Sabila, 2024)
Access & Literacy	Digital divide, low critical literacy, infrastructure inequality (Fatimah et al., 2023; Hadi, 2018)	Community-based digital education, local content on global platforms (Amanatillah et al., 2024; Haryanto et al., 2023)
Sustainability	Marginalization of traditional arts, declining physical audiences (Rahmadhani & Achdiani, 2024)	Digital revitalization, digital documentation, online archives (Cocq & Liliequist, 2024)
Value Negotiation	Conflict between communal vs. individual values, tradition vs. modernity (Hamid et al., 2024; Sihotang et al., 2023)	Intergenerational dialogue, reinterpretation of traditional values in new formats (Cleland & MacLeod, 2022)
Policy & Regulation	Weak protection of cultural copyright, lack of governmental support (Kencana & Meisyanti, 2020)	Integration of local culture into national platforms, incentives for local creators (Haqqi, 2023)

Source: Developed by the author based on a synthesis of research findings, 2025.

As illustrated in Table 1, the digital transformation of Ketoprak reveals a dialectical relationship between preservation and innovation. The challenges identified, particularly cultural commodification and digital inequality, reflect deeper structural issues in how global platforms operate. Netflix's algorithmic curation, driven by market logic and engagement metrics (Moussa et al., 2024;

Floegel, 2020), often privileges content that fits commercial formulas over culturally authentic representation. This creates what Han et al. (2025) describe as “speculative authenticity,” where cultural elements are selected not for their intrinsic value but for their market appeal.

However, the opportunities column demonstrates that digital platforms also enable new forms of cultural agency. Community-based initiatives like the Yogyakarta Youth Sineprak community (Amanatillah et al., 2024) show how local actors can leverage digital tools for cultural education and intergenerational transmission. The concept of hybridity, as explored by Wirandi and Sukman (2023), becomes particularly relevant here, not as mere blending, but as strategic adaptation where traditional elements are reconfigured to maintain relevance while preserving core values. The tension between these challenges and opportunities ultimately points to the central question of agency in digital cultural transformation. Who controls the narrative when Ketoprak moves from village pavilions to YouTube or Netflix? The answer depends significantly on digital literacy levels, infrastructure access, and policy frameworks that either empower or marginalize local cultural producers. As Fatimah et al. (2023) emphasize, bridging the digital divide requires more than technical infrastructure, it demands critical literacy that enables communities to navigate platform algorithms while maintaining cultural sovereignty.

In conclusion, Table 1 serves not merely as a summary of findings but as a conceptual map for understanding the contested terrain of digital cultural transformation. The balance between challenges and opportunities in each dimension will determine whether Ketoprak’s digital future represents cultural erosion or revitalization, or perhaps, as the hybridity concept suggests, a complex synthesis of both. However, digitalization of traditional arts also raises ethical questions regarding authenticity and representation. As noted by (Lane & Lingel, 2022; Wismaningtyas et al., 2022), the shift from physical to digital communication brings new challenges for local cultural stakeholders. Digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok operate according to algorithmic logic that prioritizes popularity and user engagement over cultural values or historical context. In such situations, cultural expression risks commodification, where art forms like Ketoprak are simplified or altered to attract a global audience. (Paoli & D’Auria, 2025) emphasize that digital ethnography must be accompanied by critical reflection on how cultural data is presented and interpreted in algorithmic contexts, as digital economic logic can obscure deep cultural meanings. Thus, efforts to preserve culture in digital spaces require not only creativity but also ethical awareness to maintain the authenticity and spiritual value of cultural expressions.

Another challenge in negotiating local culture in digital spaces is inequality of access and representation. (Vadrot et al., 2021) show that the shift of social activities to digital spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic opened new avenues for participation but also widened the gap between those with technological access and those without. In the context of traditional performing arts, this means that only communities with adequate digital resources can present themselves online. Consequently, traditional art forms from areas with limited technological facilities risk further marginalization. Here, a community-based digital participation approach becomes essential to ensure that cultural transformation in digital spaces is inclusive and does not sideline smaller or marginalized local values. On the other hand, several community-based initiatives demonstrate that local agency plays a key role in determining the direction of digital cultural transformation. Barkhatova (2023) explains that computational analysis of online community digital traces can help understand how people negotiate with platforms and produce new collective meanings. Meanwhile, (Boukala & Serafis, 2023) emphasize the importance of an ethnographic approach to social media discourse to reveal narrative strategies used by communities in preserving or negotiating their cultural identity. In the context of Ketoprak, revitalization efforts by the Sineprak community aim not only at preservation but also at strengthening the local economy through cultural tourism and cross-disciplinary creative collaborations. Such approaches demonstrate that digital transformation can coexist with the strengthening of local capacity, as long as communities maintain autonomy in determining how their culture is represented.

Thus, digital spaces can be understood not merely as arenas for cultural reproduction but also as fields of meaning contestation. In the case of Ketoprak, the negotiation of local values in digital spaces demonstrates a two-way dialogue between tradition and modernity. On one side, artists and local communities strive to preserve traditional narratives that reflect moral values, spirituality, and Javanese philosophy. On the other side, they must adapt to aesthetic expectations and distribution formats dictated by global digital logic. This tension becomes a strength that enriches contemporary Indonesian cultural discourse, showing that cultural preservation is not a static process but a dynamic practice involving adaptation, reinterpretation, and continuous negotiation between cultural actors and technology. Finally, within the theoretical framework of digital ethnography, the process of negotiating local values in digital spaces teaches that cultural preservation does not always mean maintaining the original form but preserving the spirit or values embedded within it. Ketoprak performances on YouTube, for instance, may differ visually from performances in traditional pavilions, yet their

essence, community spirit, social critique, and collective morality, can still be conveyed. In this context, as emphasized by (Cleland & MacLeod, 2022) digital ethnography functions not only as a research method but also as a cultural practice that opens space for dialogue between the past and the future. By facilitating ongoing exchanges of knowledge between local communities and the global audience, digitalization can become a cultural bridge that strengthens identity rather than erasing it.

Conclusion

The key findings of this study indicate that media convergence in Indonesia is not merely a technological shift but a process of negotiating values between tradition and modernity within digital spaces. The intersection of Ketoprak, as a symbol of communal cultural expression, with Netflix, representing global culture, reveals new dynamics in how society interprets identity, entertainment, and togetherness in the digital era. This phenomenon provides a broad and meaningful understanding of how local culture not only survives but also transforms through adaptation and reinterpretation under the logic of global media algorithms. Academically, this research contributes to enriching studies on media convergence and digital ethnography in Indonesia by emphasizing that cultural transformation should be understood as a complex social process, not merely a technological one. The study opens a new conceptual space for understanding the dialectical relationship between digital media and local traditions as an ongoing form of cultural negotiation. The limitations of this research lie in its literature-based approach, which has yet to explore the direct experiences of cultural practitioners in the process of digitalization. Therefore, further studies are needed using field ethnography or more in-depth digital media analysis. Future research topics should include the representation of local culture on streaming platforms, the adaptation patterns of traditional art communities to social media, and the impact of algorithms on the sustainability of cultural values within Indonesia's digital ecosystem.

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