

GENERATION Z AS AGENT OF CHANGE IN PRESERVING LOCAL CULTURE IN THE ERA GLOBALIZATION

1st Nurul Qhatami Musthafa¹, 2nd Wawan Darmawan²
{nurulqhatamimusthafa@gmail.com¹, wawand@upi.edu²}

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung^{1,2}

Abstract. This research is motivated by the emergence of the term Generation Z, referring to the generation born and raised amidst rapid digital technological development and globalization, which has transformed their lifestyles into modernization. This shift has led to a lower interest among Generation Z in studying and preserving their local culture. The research findings indicate that Generation Z, as agents of change, can bring about positive changes to local culture in the current era of globalization. Generation Z plays a crucial role in preserving and safeguarding local culture. The loss of local cultural identity due to the spread of foreign cultures presents a challenge in the era of globalization, making the role of Generation Z essential in offering solutions to preserve local culture, particularly through creative and innovative ideas, collaboration with various stakeholders, and utilizing digital technology to promote, preserve, and introduce local culture to the public.

Keywords: Generation Z, Agent of Change, Local Culture, Globalization.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has had a significant impact on various aspects of human life, including education, economy, social, politics, and culture. In this era, the flow of information from abroad enters Indonesia rapidly through technological advancements, making foreign cultures more accessible to the public. The introduction of foreign cultures is not inherently wrong, but without the ability to filter, foreign cultures can lead to a weakening of nationalism. This phenomenon can be seen in some segments of Indonesian society, which tend to adopt and take pride in foreign cultures without realizing their impact on local cultural identity (Azima et al., 2021).

However, the real challenge lies not just in the influx of foreign cultures, but in how Indonesian society, especially the younger generation, can filter these cultures. Many of them are more proud to follow global cultural trends than to embrace local culture. For instance, changes in fashion or music preferences often follow global trends without realizing that local cultures have unique values that are equally fascinating. Therefore, the influence of globalization is not entirely negative; rather, it can become an opportunity if managed properly. Indonesia can use globalization as a platform to introduce local culture in ways that are modern and relevant to the younger generation.

Globalization is often seen as a manifestation of cultural imperialism, where traditional cultural elements are gradually replaced by new cultural elements, especially from the West. This shift is evident in various aspects of daily life, such as fashion, food choices, architectural styles, music, language, and even social and political systems. As a result, local cultural identity, which reflects a sense of ownership, attachment, and affiliation to a community or nation, is affected. Amidst the rapid flow of globalization, local cultural identity becomes increasingly complex, even at risk of losing its original meaning (Hasan et al., 2024).

Generation Z, born in the digital era, is the group most affected by globalization but also holds great potential in addressing the challenges of local culture. This generation is known for its proficiency in using technology, openness to differences, and flexibility in adapting. According to H. Wibawanto (in Subandowo, 2017), Generation Z has the ability to socialize through social media, express

opinions, and embrace and understand various cultures. These characteristics actually offer significant opportunities for them to create innovations in preserving local culture.

On the other hand, the high mastery of technology has made Generation Z more inclined to follow foreign cultural trends that go viral on social media. Phenomena like fear of missing out (FOMO) often lead them to overlook local cultures, which are actually the identity of the nation. The modernization adopted by Generation Z has shifted their lifestyles, which often distances them from local traditions and customs. As a result, interest in local culture has decreased, even though local culture is a heritage with noble values that reflect the nation's diversity. If this situation continues, Indonesia risks losing its cultural identity (Swarna et al., 2024).

The role of Generation Z as agents of change is crucial in preserving and safeguarding local culture in the era of globalization. Rapid technological advancements can provide a solution to this challenge. Technology allows Generation Z to document, promote, and introduce local culture in creative and innovative ways. For example, they can utilize platforms like YouTube, TikTok, or Instagram to create content that highlights local traditions, cultural arts, or folklore. In this way, technology becomes not only a tool for consumption but also a means of cultural transformation.

The preservation of local culture is not only about safeguarding the heritage of our ancestors but also about maintaining the identity of the nation. The traditions and values embedded in local culture can inspire the younger generation if repackaged in an engaging and relevant way. For example, traditional dances can be combined with modern music, or traditional clothing can serve as inspiration for contemporary fashion design. Through these steps, local culture is not only preserved but also celebrated as part of modern life (Setyaningrum, 2018). Therefore, it is crucial for the nation's successors, particularly Generation Z, to engage in the preservation of local culture as a solution to the challenges of cultural preservation, as local culture is a part of the nation's identity that must be protected. The traditions and customs within local culture reflect the diversity that is the nation's wealth.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a literature review method, with data collected from journals, scientific articles, books, research reports, newspapers, and other sources relevant to the discussion of Generation Z as Agents of Change in Preserving Local Culture in the Era of Globalization. The data obtained is analyzed by identifying the variables being studied, followed by an evaluation of relevant research findings, taking into account the novelty of the information presented.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

1.1 The Role of Generation Z as Agents of Change

Technology holds a very different meaning for Generation Z compared to previous generations. For them, technology is not just a tool, but an integral part of their identity and daily life. Generation Z uses technology to broaden their horizons, accelerate social processes, and drive change within society. This explains the significant impact that Generation Z has on social dynamics and the increasing demand for their contributions to societal development (Nabila et al., 2023).

Generation Z, also known as iGeneration, Net Generation, or Internet Generation, includes those born between 1995 and 2010. They grew up amidst rapid advancements in information technology, particularly computers, the internet, and smartphones. Therefore, it is not surprising that Generation Z is highly familiar with digital technology and social media in their daily lives (Subandowo, 2017). In this context, Generation Z plays a crucial role as "Agents of Change," individuals or groups who have the ability to improve conditions, whether in companies, organizations, institutions, or society

at large. These agents of change can contribute to the preservation of local culture, using their technological proficiency and creativity to bridge the gap between tradition and modernization.

As digital natives, Generation Z is not just users of technology, but also agents of change with great potential to create social, cultural, and economic transformations. Several characteristics that support their role as agents of change include (Firman, 2016; Kusuma, 2016; Surahman, 2016; Wibawanto, 2016):

1. Skilled in technology, generation Z is known as the digital generation, highly proficient in utilizing information technology and computer applications. They can access information easily and quickly, both for educational purposes and daily life.
2. High Social Awareness, they are very active in communicating and interacting with various groups, especially with peers through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. They are also tolerant of cultural differences and deeply concerned about environmental issues.
3. Multitasking, generation Z has the ability to perform multiple activities simultaneously, such as reading while listening to music or watching TV. They tend to prefer things that can be done quickly and dislike lengthy processes.
4. Challenges in Verbal Communication, despite their expertise in technology, Generation Z often struggles with direct and verbal communication. They tend to be more individualistic and seek instant, fast results.

Gazali (2019) adds that Generation Z has additional characteristics, such as:

1. Dependence on Technology, generation Z is highly dependent on technology, especially the internet, with an average use of social media ranging from 3 to 5 hours per day.
2. Openness to New Things, they are very open to new experiences, thanks to their broad exposure through social media, which sparks their curiosity to try various new things.
3. Creativity and Innovation, they tend to be very creative in processing the information they receive and are constantly looking for ways to innovate and make their lives easier.
4. Critical and Collaborative, due to their extensive access to information, they have a critical attitude in analyzing it. They also prefer working in teams, prioritizing collaboration over competition.

With these characteristics, Generation Z is well-suited to play a role as agents of change in preserving Indonesian culture. They are faced with a significant challenge in the era of globalization, where foreign cultures are often more appealing and practical than local ones. One of the factors contributing to the fading of local culture is the low interest among the younger generation in learning about and preserving their own culture. Therefore, it is crucial to raise awareness about the importance of local culture as part of national identity. Every layer of society, especially the youth, has a responsibility to maintain local culture, even as globalization continues to advance rapidly (Sanjaya, 2022).

As agents of change, Generation Z has the potential to be innovators, promoters, educators, and active participants in preserving local culture. They can adapt traditions in a modern context, making them more relevant to the younger generation. With their technological skills and creativity, Generation Z can present local culture to the world in engaging and easily understandable ways. In fulfilling this role, Generation Z requires support from all levels of society so that the changes they advocate for can have a positive impact on the preservation of local culture.

1.2 Challenges of Local Culture in the Era of Globalization

Cultural diversity has long been regarded as a valuable asset for humanity, enriching the social, economic, and cultural life of communities worldwide. However, in the context of globalization, cultural diversity is often faced with pressure to adapt to norms and values imported from outside. The process of cultural homogenization driven by globalization can threaten traditional diversity, leading to concerns about the loss of local cultural identities and the creation of increasingly uniform societies (Arfina, 2023).

Currently, with the influx of foreign cultures into Indonesia as a result of the rapid flow of globalization, the existence of regional cultures in Indonesia is somewhat threatened. This influence is spreading quickly and has a broad impact on the cultural system of society. The effects of cultural globalization can be both positive and negative. The positive impacts of cultural globalization include: (1) changes in the values and attitudes of society, shifting from irrational to rational perspectives, (2) the development of science and technology, which provides convenience to people in their activities, and (3) encouraging society to think more progressively and strive for a better standard of living.

The negative impacts of cultural globalization include: (1) the development of individualistic traits, as people feel empowered by advanced technology that makes them believe they no longer need others, (2) an increase in materialistic tendencies, as society begins to view everything in terms of material value, (3) a rise in consumerism, which refers to the excessive or inappropriate consumption of goods and products, as well as hedonism, where happiness is perceived to be achieved solely through the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain (Ermawan, 2017).

Several factors threaten the existence of regional cultures due to the influx of foreign cultures, including:

1. Lack of Public Awareness. Public awareness to preserve local culture is currently minimal. People tend to favor foreign cultures, which are seen as more practical and in line with modern trends. However, local culture plays a significant role in shaping national identity. The lack of appreciation for regional culture can result in a loss of pride in one's cultural heritage.
2. Minimal Cultural Communication. The ability to communicate effectively about culture is crucial to avoid misunderstandings. The lack of cultural communication often leads to conflicts between ethnic groups, which ultimately affects the cultural resilience of the nation. The diversity of ethnicities and cultures should be a strength that brings people together, not a source of division.
3. Lack of Cultural Education. Education about culture should be instilled from an early age. However, many do not consider learning about regional culture important. Through cultural education, we can understand the significance of local culture in building the nation's culture and how to adapt it in the face of changing times. Education based on local cultural understanding can strengthen the national character and help the younger generation avoid being swept away by globalization that erodes these values.

Foreign cultures can influence local cultures through various channels, such as mass media, international tourism, commercial institutions, and international foreign cultural industries, which can have both positive and negative effects on local cultures. Globalization brings foreign cultures, including lifestyles and values that may differ from traditional values and Pancasila (Hasan et al., 2024). The impact of globalization on local culture refers to the changes that occur in local cultures due to the influx of global influences. Foreign cultures affect cultural changes in Indonesia, as in other countries, through various factors.

Several factors that influence cultural change in Indonesia include:

1. Mass Media and Digital Technology. The widespread global media, such as films, television, music, and the internet, bring elements of foreign culture into Indonesia. The use of social media and digital platforms also facilitates cultural exchange between Indonesia and the outside world. The spread of culture through these media sometimes presents a challenge in distinguishing which cultures align with national values and which do not.
2. Economic Globalization. Indonesia's involvement in international trade and foreign investments has led to the influx of global products, brands, and lifestyles. This can influence consumer preferences and behavioral patterns. International trade in goods and services is one of the most distinctive features of economic globalization, which indirectly also brings new cultural elements.
3. Education and Mobility. Opportunities for education abroad and international mobility offer direct experiences with foreign cultures. People who study or live overseas often bring back

cultural influences they have encountered. This mobility acts as a gateway that opens access to foreign cultures, which can be difficult to resist but also presents an opportunity to promote local culture on the international stage.

However, in everyday life, efforts to preserve local culture and traditions in the current era of globalization face many challenges. Several factors hinder the preservation of regional cultures, including:

1. Internal Factors, the lack of individual nationalism in loving and embracing Indonesia's native culture is a key obstacle. Sometimes, individualism becomes a barrier to collective awareness. In fact, pride in regional culture is part of a collective identity that should be maintained.
2. External Factors, the lack of socialization and mediation, both from those responsible for addressing these issues and the media as a public relations tool to bridge information to the public, is another challenge. This is crucial for teaching the younger generation to develop the skills necessary to preserve their culture. However, in reality, this effort is not realized, leading to the younger generation's indifference toward the existence of their own culture. For example, young people may not know the songs and dances from their own regions, yet they can easily perform modern dances or ballet and sing current popular songs (Ermawan, 2017).

In facing the globalization of foreign cultures, the resilience of local culture must be strengthened. Globalization should be approached wisely as a positive result of modernization that drives society towards progress. Inability to cope with globalization is akin to allowing the erasure of local identity sources, which begins with a crisis of local identity. Therefore, Generation Z, as the bearer of local culture, must not be complacent because the current era, which is all about openness, is a positive outcome of modernization that encourages societal advancement (Azima et al., 2021). The current era of globalization has both positive and negative impacts on humans, including (Januarharyono, 2019):

The positive impacts of globalization include:

1. Rapid spread of information across the globe
2. Advancing technology
3. Increasing sophistication of online systems on the internet
4. Development of new scientific knowledge
5. Freedom of the press
6. Growth in national economic development
7. Easier communication both locally and internationally
8. Improved infrastructure development
9. Easier travel and transportation
10. Better quality of life

The negative impacts of globalization include:

1. The unfiltered influx of foreign cultures
2. The emergence of modernization, leading to the erosion of local cultures
3. Uncontrolled media reporting
4. Uneven economic growth between urban centers and rural areas
5. Local human resources (HR) being unprepared to embrace new technologies
6. Increased smuggling of goods into the country
7. Misuse of technology (cybercrime)

The challenges faced in preserving local culture in the current era include the threat of cultural homogenization due to digital globalization, difficulties in maintaining the authenticity of traditions amidst modernization and commercialization trends, and the declining interest of the younger generation in traditional and local cultures. These challenges pose a significant task for the younger generation as the successors to appreciate and protect the values of local traditions and culture.

Therefore, it is essential to emphasize the relevance of local traditions as a unique cultural identity amidst global homogenization.

Introducing local culture using technology is an effort full of potential, but it also faces several obstacles and challenges. In this context, there are several aspects that affect the smoothness of this process. One of the main obstacles is the limited access to and literacy of technology among certain communities (Supriyanto, 2019). Therefore, technology-based innovations need to be made in preserving culture, such as virtual museums, online festivals, and cultural learning applications. Additionally, (Astini et al., 2024) explains that the conditions that may hinder the spread of information about local culture through technology platforms include limitations in technological infrastructure and understanding of digital devices, which is often encountered in rural areas.

1.3 The Role of Generation Z in Preserving Local Culture in the Era of Globalization

Generation Z, as agents of positive change in preserving local culture, plays a crucial role in safeguarding and developing Indonesia's cultural heritage amidst the rapid flow of globalization. Their proficiency in utilizing technology, creativity, and global connectivity allows them to elevate local culture and make it relevant to contemporary developments. This is especially important, considering the growing dominance of foreign cultures, which could threaten the existence of Indonesian traditions and cultural identity. By harnessing the potential of technology, Generation Z can create an appeal for local culture to compete and be embraced by a global audience while preserving its authenticity.

Generation Z, as the youth of Indonesia, should certainly take the responsibility to preserve and maintain local culture in the current era of globalization, as this is also part of their nationalism. According to Rajasa (2007), there are three processes in developing the character of nationalism, which are:

1. Character-building, this process involves the role of the youth in building the positive character of the nation through strong will, upholding moral values, and implementing them in real life.
2. Character-enabling, in this stage, the youth act as role models in the development of the nation's positive character, taking the initiative to build collective awareness with a strong interest, such as advocating for conflict resolution.
3. Character-engineering, here, the youth play a role in achieving excellence in knowledge and culture, and in participating in the learning process related to developing the positive character of the nation in line with the progress of time and the values of Pancasila.

Generation Z, as part of Indonesian society that is digitally connected to the world, has a great opportunity to introduce and promote local culture through social media and other digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and others. They can create creative content that showcases local traditions, arts, and cultures, thus attracting global audiences and introducing the beauty and uniqueness of Indonesian culture. Additionally, they can also actively participate in various cultural activities, such as festivals, art exhibitions, or traditional performances, which not only provide direct experiences of Indonesia's cultural wealth but also strengthen their sense of belonging and national identity (Swarna et al., 2024). Through these activities, Generation Z will increasingly recognize the importance of local culture and be motivated to play an active role in preserving it. Cultural preservation can also be carried out through two main approaches proposed by Gunawan (2021), namely culture experience and culture knowledge.

1. Culture experience, involves direct participation in learning and disseminating local culture.
2. Culture knowledge, focuses more on building information centers for education and development of local culture, both through conventional and digital media.

With these two methods, the younger generation can deepen their understanding of local culture and ensure its preservation from being eroded by the influence of foreign cultural globalization.

However, in the effort to preserve local culture, the role of various parties is crucial. Formal and non-formal education, the government, and cultural communities must work together to create technology-based preservation programs that can reach a wider audience. Additionally, cultural

education based on history becomes the key to preserving and passing on local cultural values to Generation Z. These programs must emphasize the importance of balancing the development of local culture with the acceptance of global progress. In this way, Generation Z can play the role of agents of change who not only preserve culture but also adapt it to the needs of the times.

Generation Z has a great opportunity to become the driving force in the revitalization of local culture. One way to do this is by utilizing social media for the promotion of local culture, creating vlogs, educational apps, or interactive content that can enhance understanding and appreciation of Indonesian culture. Additionally, they can encourage their peers to get to know and love local culture through digital campaigns or participation in cultural activities. The success of Generation Z in preserving and sustaining local Indonesian culture amidst globalization not only relies on technology but also on collective awareness and a sense of responsibility towards the cultural heritage they possess. By doing so, they can become agents of change who not only maintain the preservation of local culture but also ensure that Indonesian culture remains relevant in the global world.

CONCLUSION

Generation Z plays a crucial role as "Agents of Change," contributing to the preservation of local culture. As digital natives, they are not only technology users but also change-makers with great potential to create social, cultural, and economic transformation. With these characteristics, Generation Z is well-suited to play an active role in preserving Indonesian culture. As agents of change, they have the potential to be innovators, promoters, educators, and active participants in ensuring the sustainability of local culture.

The influx of foreign cultures into Indonesia due to the rapid pace of globalization has posed a significant threat to the existence of regional cultures in the country. This influence is spreading quickly and having a broad impact on the cultural systems of society. In facing the globalization of foreign cultures, the resilience of local culture must be strengthened. Globalization should be approached wisely as a positive outcome of modernization that encourages societal progress. The strengths of Generation Z in utilizing technology, creativity, and global connectivity enable them to elevate local cultures and make them relevant to the current era. This is crucial, considering the growing dominance of foreign cultures, which can threaten the existence of traditions and the cultural identity of Indonesia.

By harnessing the potential of technology, Generation Z can create an appeal for local culture that allows it to compete and be accepted by a global audience, while also preserving its authenticity. In the effort to preserve local culture, the roles of various parties are crucial. Formal and non-formal education, the government, and cultural communities must collaborate in creating technology-based preservation programs that can reach a wider audience. The success of Generation Z in maintaining and preserving Indonesia's local culture amidst globalization relies not only on technology but also on collective awareness and a sense of responsibility toward the cultural heritage they hold. In this way, they can become agents of change who not only preserve local culture but also ensure that Indonesian culture remains relevant in the global world.

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