



## **A Phenomenological Study of Exploring the Construction of Cultural Identity in Youth: Globalization and Local Traditions**

**Qurnia Indah Permata Sari**

Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia

[qurniaindahpermatasari@ub.ac.id](mailto:qurniaindahpermatasari@ub.ac.id)

---

### **Article Info**

---

#### **Article history:**

Received 28-02-2025

Revised 26-03-2025

Accepted 17-04-2025

---

#### **Keyword:**

Cultural Identity, Youth, Globalization, Hybridization, Phenomenology, Local Traditions, Identity Formation.

---

### **ABSTRACT**

Cultural identity formation is a critical area of research in understanding how individual navigate their cultural belonging in a globalized world. While much of the existing literature focuses on the role of globalization in shaping identity, there is limited exploration of how youth personally experience the negotiation between local and global cultural influences. This research aims to address this gap by investigating the subjective experiences of youth as they form their cultural identities in a globalized context. Using a phenomenological approach, this study explores how youth perceive and negotiate their cultural identities amidst the influences of both local traditions and global media. Key findings indicate that identity formation is a dynamic process of hybridization where youth integrate elements from both local and global cultures, reconstructing their sense of self in response to external pressures. The study highlights the role of media and education in facilitating this process. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of cultural identity formation and suggest that future research should further explore the long-term impacts of globalization on youth identity, particularly across diverse cultural contexts.



©2025 Authors. Published by PT Mukhlisina Revolution Center.. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Cultural identity, an essential aspect of human experience, is constantly shaped by both local and global influences. In today's interconnected world, globalization has brought about significant changes in how individuals understand and express their cultural identities. The rise of digital media, migration, and international mobility has led to a fluid and dynamic exchange of cultural norms and practices, blurring the boundaries between the local and the global (Das Gupta, 2024). This phenomenon is especially prominent among youth, who are at the crossroads of traditional cultural values and the allure of a globalized, mainstream culture. As young people navigate through these cultural intersections, they encounter challenges in reconciling their local heritage with the broader global influences that shape their worldview.

The relevance of studying cultural identity in the context of globalization lies in its profound impact on the ways individuals perceive themselves and others. This study uniquely contributes to the existing body of work by focusing on the subjective, lived experiences of youth, contrasting with prior research that primarily relies on quantitative data. It highlights the internal struggles, aspirations, and evolving understanding of youth identity as they attempt to balance cultural pride with the desire for social integration. Unlike previous studies that mainly explored the general impact of globalization on identity through surveys or broad analyses, this research provides a deeper exploration of youth's personal, emotional negotiations with their cultural identities.

Given the personal and subjective nature of cultural identity, it is crucial to explore this phenomenon through a lens that prioritizes lived experience. Phenomenology, as an approach, is uniquely suited for this purpose, allowing researchers to delve into the depths of individuals' experiences and the meanings they assign to these experiences. Understanding how youth perceive and navigate their cultural identities amid globalization requires a methodology that goes beyond

surface-level observations and embraces the richness of personal narratives. By focusing on the lived experiences of youth, this research aims to offer a deeper understanding of the cultural identity formation process in the contemporary globalized context, shedding light on the nuanced ways in which individuals construct and negotiate their sense of self.

Research into the subjective experiences of individuals has increasingly become a pivotal area of study, particularly within the field of cultural identity. Understanding how people navigate the complexities of cultural influences, especially in a globalized world, requires an approach that goes beyond objective data and statistical analysis (Dionisio dkk., 2021). Phenomenology, with its emphasis on capturing the lived experiences of individuals, offers a valuable framework for exploring the deeper meanings people assign to their identities and how these meanings evolve in response to external influences such as globalization. This approach allows for a more intimate understanding of the personal, often contradictory, processes of identity formation, particularly among youth who are experiencing this transformation firsthand.

Despite the value of phenomenological research, significant methodological challenges persist. One of the primary obstacles in studying the subjective experiences of cultural identity is the difficulty in capturing the depth and complexity of individual experiences through traditional quantitative methods (Wu dkk., 2024). Surveys or statistical models fail to adequately represent the nuanced and multidimensional nature of identity formation. These methods often overlook the internal struggles, emotional responses, and evolving perceptions that define how individuals relate to their culture. Furthermore, the reliance on pre-structured categories in quantitative research risks oversimplifying or even misrepresenting the lived experiences of participants.

These limitations make conventional research methods less effective in uncovering the essence of the phenomenon. To truly understand the impact of globalization on cultural identity, it is necessary to adopt an approach that allows participants to express their experiences freely and authentically. By focusing on qualitative, phenomenological methods, this research aims to bridge the gap left by previous studies, offering a more comprehensive and detailed account of the personal meaning-making processes behind cultural identity formation.

While much of the existing research on cultural identity has employed practical approaches such as quantitative surveys and broad statistical analyses, these methods have notable limitations when it comes to exploring the deep, subjective experiences of individuals. These conventional approaches often prioritize generalizability over the richness of personal narratives, failing to capture the nuanced emotions, internal struggles, and the evolving nature of identity that are central to understanding how globalization influences youth (Chinchay dkk., 2024). Although these methods can provide useful overviews, they fall short in addressing the lived experiences and the meaning-making processes that are essential to understanding the complexities of cultural identity in today's globalized world.

The existing studies have not fully explored how youth personally experience the tension between local traditions and global influences, or how they actively negotiate their identities within these intersecting cultural spheres. As a result, there is a gap in the literature regarding the deeper, more personal dimensions of cultural identity formation, especially in relation to the subjective impact of globalization. To bridge this gap, an alternative approach is required—one that allows for a more holistic and in-depth exploration of the phenomenon. Phenomenology, with its focus on capturing the essence of lived experience, presents a promising solution (Rosean dkk., 2023). By employing a phenomenological lens, this study aims to provide a richer, more comprehensive understanding of how youth perceive and make meaning of their cultural identities amidst the forces of globalization. This approach allows for a deeper exploration of the complexities of identity formation, moving beyond surface-level observations to uncover the fundamental experiences and meanings that shape how young people relate to their cultural heritage and the globalized world.

Previous studies have extensively explored the impact of globalization on cultural identity, often focusing on broad, generalized findings using quantitative approaches. Researchers have examined how youth negotiate their cultural identities amidst global influences, emphasizing the role of media, education, and migration. However, these studies frequently overlook the depth and

subjective nature of identity formation, which can only be fully understood through qualitative methods. Theories such as social identity theory and cultural adaptation have provided frameworks for understanding how individuals navigate cultural transitions. Yet, the personal, lived experiences that define the negotiation of identity remain underexplored, thus highlighting the gap that this study seeks to address.

This study adopts a phenomenological approach to explore how youth experience and construct their cultural identities in the context of globalization. Phenomenology is chosen because it emphasizes understanding the essence of human experience by focusing on participants' lived realities. By using this approach, we aim to provide a deeper insight into the internal processes of identity negotiation that are not captured through traditional quantitative methods. The goal is to explore the subjective meanings that youth attach to their cultural identity, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of how globalization influences their perceptions, struggles, and self-concept. This methodology will effectively address the knowledge gap identified earlier, offering a richer, more nuanced perspective on cultural identity.

The structure of this article follows a logical progression that supports the phenomenological methodology. It begins with an introduction that provides background on the research question and sets the context for the phenomenon being explored (Lee & Yu, 2020). The article then discusses the methodological approach, detailing the process of data collection, including interviews and thematic analysis. Following the analysis, the results are presented, discussing the key themes that emerged from the data. Finally, the discussion interprets these findings, drawing conclusions about the implications of globalization on youth identity, and suggesting directions for future research.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Study Design**

The study employed a phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of youth in constructing their cultural identities amidst the influence of globalization. Phenomenology is particularly suited for this research as it focuses on understanding the lived experiences of individuals and the meaning they assign to those experiences (Kim dkk., 2024). This design allows for an in-depth exploration of how the participants perceive and interpret their cultural identity in a rapidly globalizing world. The phenomenological approach enables a rich understanding of the subjective experiences of youth, offering insights into the complexities of cultural preservation and adaptation in a globalized context. Specifically, a descriptive phenomenological approach was used to capture the essence of these lived experiences without inferring or interpreting meanings beyond the participants' own perspectives.

### **Participants**

The participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, focusing on individuals who could provide meaningful insights into the phenomenon of cultural identity formation in the context of globalization. The criteria for inclusion were: (1) participants aged between 18 and 30 years, (2) individuals who have experienced both local cultural traditions and global influences through exposure to media, education, or travel, and (3) participants from urban areas where globalization's impact on culture is more pronounced (Li dkk., 2024). The exclusion criteria included individuals who were not actively engaged in cultural activities or who had limited exposure to both local and global cultural influences. A total of 15 participants were included in the study, with an average age of 22 years. The group was diverse in terms of gender, educational background, and cultural engagement, which contributed to a broad range of perspectives on the research topic.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews designed to explore participants' subjective experiences regarding their cultural identity in the face of globalization. The interviews were conducted in a quiet, comfortable setting to ensure participants felt at ease and able to express their thoughts openly. Each interview lasted approximately 60-90 minutes and was audio-

recorded for accuracy. A semi-structured interview guide was developed with key areas covered, including: (1) participants' experiences with local cultural traditions, (2) the role of global influences such as media and education in shaping their identities, (3) how they reconcile local and global cultural elements, (4) challenges faced in maintaining cultural identity, and (5) their perception of cultural adaptation and preservation in the globalized context. These questions were developed based on existing literature and tailored to address the research gap in understanding how youth navigate their cultural identities amidst global pressures. The data collection process was designed to foster open dialogue and allow participants to share their experiences in their own words.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which is a widely used method in phenomenological research for identifying and interpreting patterns or themes within qualitative data. The analysis process involved several steps: first, the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Next, the transcriptions were read multiple times to ensure a deep understanding of the content. Meaning units were identified from the raw data, which were then coded and grouped into preliminary themes (Matiukaite dkk., 2024). These themes were refined and reduced to ensure that only the most significant and meaningful aspects of the participants' experiences were included. NVivo software was used to assist in organizing the data and identifying themes, though the analysis was conducted manually to maintain the depth and nuance of the phenomenological approach. The final step involved interpreting the themes in relation to the research question, providing insights into how globalization influences cultural identity formation among youth.

### **Ethics**

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequence. Anonymity was maintained throughout the research process, with all identifying information removed from the interview transcripts. Data confidentiality was strictly upheld, and all audio recordings and transcripts were stored securely. The study adhered to international ethical standards for qualitative research, ensuring the protection of participants' rights and the integrity of the data.

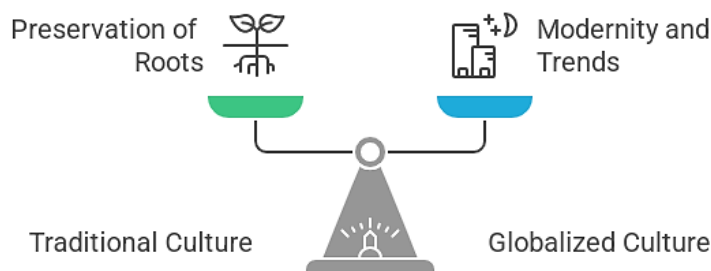
## **RESULTS**

The analysis of the interviews and observational data has led to the identification of several key themes that reflect the experiences of the youth in constructing their cultural identities amidst globalization. These themes are interconnected, each contributing to the complex process of identity formation, with globalization serving as both a challenge and an opportunity for cultural negotiation. The following presents the main themes and subthemes that emerged from the data.

### **The Struggle for Cultural Preservation**

A predominant theme that emerged from the interviews is the youth's struggle to preserve their local cultural identity in the face of globalization. Participants expressed a deep sense of conflict between maintaining traditional cultural practices and embracing the globalized world that often promotes homogenized, mainstream cultural norms. One participant, a 23-year-old university student, shared, "I sometimes feel like I'm losing touch with my roots. Global culture is everywhere, and it feels hard to keep my own traditions alive when everyone around me is so focused on what's trending worldwide." This quote reflects the internal conflict many participants face as they try to navigate the complexities of belonging to both their local culture and a broader global society.

### **Balancing Local and Global Cultural Identities**



### **Influence of Media and Technology on Identity Formation**

Another significant theme that surfaced was the role of media and technology in shaping cultural identities. Participants highlighted how the internet, social media platforms, and digital content have become major influences in the construction of their identities. They reported feeling both empowered and overwhelmed by the constant exposure to global cultures through digital media. One participant stated, "Social media has exposed me to so many cultures, and while I enjoy learning about them, I sometimes feel disconnected from my own culture." This indicates that, while media provides an opportunity for cultural exchange, it also brings challenges in terms of maintaining a coherent sense of self amidst diverse global influences.

### **Generational Differences in Cultural Perception**

A key observation was the generational divide in how globalization is perceived and how cultural identity is constructed. Older generations, as mentioned by the participants, tend to emphasize the importance of traditional practices and customs, while younger generations are more likely to integrate elements from various cultures. One participant, aged 19, remarked, "My parents want me to stay true to our traditions, but I believe there's value in blending them with modern influences. It's not about abandoning tradition, but evolving with the times." This sentiment reflects the youth's desire to balance cultural preservation with the need to adapt to an increasingly interconnected world.

### **The Role of Education in Shaping Cultural Awareness**

Participants also emphasized the role of formal education in shaping their awareness of both local and global cultures. Several described how educational curricula and cultural exchanges have helped them form a more globalized perspective while simultaneously fostering pride in their local heritage. One participant shared, "Studying history and cultural subjects at school made me realize how rich our heritage is. At the same time, I learned about the world and how diverse it is, which made me see the value of being both local and global." This indicates that education plays a crucial role in helping youth reconcile the tension between local and global identities.

### **Cultural Fluidity and the Hybridization of Identity**

A significant theme that emerged from the data is the hybridization of cultural identity. Many participants described their cultural identity as fluid, incorporating both traditional and modern elements. This reflects a shift from the rigid concept of fixed cultural identity to one that is adaptable and dynamic. A 21-year-old participant remarked, "I don't think of myself as only one thing anymore. I'm both local and global, and that's okay. My identity is a mix of influences, and I embrace that." This finding highlights the adaptability of youth in negotiating their cultural identity in an increasingly globalized world.

The findings suggest that globalization has a profound impact on the cultural identity of youth, leading to complex negotiations between local traditions and global influences. While participants expressed a desire to preserve their local cultural identity, they also acknowledged the inevitable influence of global culture, especially through media and education. The youth's identity formation process is dynamic and fluid, characterized by a blending of both local and global elements. These results provide valuable insights into how youth experience and navigate cultural identity in a

globalized world, underscoring the importance of further exploration into the subjective experiences of identity in the context of cultural globalization.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study provide important insights into how youth experience the negotiation of their cultural identities amidst the forces of globalization. The analysis reveals that youth often experience a tension between preserving their local cultural heritage and adapting to the global cultural norms that surround them. This dynamic is not only a reflection of the broader societal changes but also a deeply personal journey of balancing the desire for cultural continuity with the need for social integration in a globalized world.

These findings contribute to answering the central research question about how globalization impacts the cultural identity formation of youth (Foresheew & Al-Jawad, 2022). The research uncovers that youth do not simply reject or fully adopt global culture but engage in a complex process of hybridization. In this process, they blend local traditions with global influences, creating new forms of cultural expression that reflect both their heritage and the evolving global landscape. This hybrid identity is characterized by an ongoing negotiation, where youth actively construct their sense of self while navigating external pressures from both their local communities and the globalized world. The study also highlights the role of media and education as key facilitators of this identity formation, providing youth with the tools to engage with both local and global cultural contexts.

When compared to existing literature, the findings of this study align with and extend previous research on cultural identity and globalization. Similar to the work of Shelton dkk (2021), this study confirms that globalization plays a significant role in shaping youth cultural identities, particularly through exposure to digital media and education. However, this research goes beyond previous studies by providing a more nuanced understanding of how youth internalize and balance these global influences with their local cultural practices. The findings complement the theoretical frameworks of social identity theory and cultural adaptation, which have long suggested that individuals maintain multiple, sometimes conflicting, cultural identities. This study further emphasizes the fluid and dynamic nature of cultural identity, as opposed to the static models often suggested by earlier research. In doing so, it offers a more comprehensive view of how identity is formed in a globalized context, emphasizing the hybrid and evolving nature of cultural belonging.

The implications of these findings extend both academically and practically, offering new perspectives on how youth construct their cultural identities in an increasingly globalized world. From a social and cultural standpoint, the study highlights the ongoing negotiation between global and local cultural influences, emphasizing the importance of this hybridization process in shaping the identity of young individuals (Mendenhall dkk., 2019). Practically, this research suggests that educators, policymakers, and cultural leaders should recognize the fluid nature of cultural identity and foster environments that support youth in navigating these cultural intersections. For example, educational programs that encourage critical engagement with both local traditions and global trends may help youth develop more robust and resilient cultural identities. These findings also suggest that media and technology play critical roles in shaping youth perceptions of cultural identity, which has implications for how these platforms can be used to promote cultural awareness and diversity.

Despite its valuable contributions, this study is not without limitations. One notable constraint is the relatively small and homogenous sample of urban youth, which may not fully represent the experiences of youth in rural or less connected areas (Hauser, 2021). Additionally, the study's reliance on self-reported data through interviews may introduce biases based on participants' subjective recollections and interpretations. Although the phenomenological approach provides rich insights into individual experiences, the findings may not be universally applicable to all youth or cultural contexts. Future research could address these limitations by including a more diverse sample and incorporating longitudinal designs to track changes in cultural identity over time.

Looking ahead, the findings from this study open the door for further exploration into the broader impacts of globalization on cultural identity (Na dkk., 2024). Future research could examine

how youth from different cultural backgrounds experience and navigate these global-local intersections, focusing on whether these processes vary based on factors such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or geographic location. Additionally, it would be valuable to investigate the role of educational systems and digital media in fostering or hindering the development of hybrid cultural identities. By expanding this line of research, scholars can continue to refine our understanding of cultural identity formation in a globalized world and contribute to the development of policies and practices that support the well-being and cultural resilience of youth.

## CONCLUSION

This study focused on exploring how globalization influences the cultural identity formation of youth, addressing the gap in understanding the subjective experiences of individuals navigating both local and global cultural spheres. The findings revealed that youth actively engage in the hybridization of cultural identity, blending traditional practices with global influences, creating dynamic and evolving identities. This research contributes to the existing literature by providing a more nuanced understanding of how youth negotiate their cultural identities, going beyond previous studies that relied on quantitative approaches. It also highlights the critical roles of media, education, and community in shaping this process. The broader significance of these findings lies in their potential to inform future studies on the impacts of globalization on cultural identity, particularly in different geographical and cultural contexts. Future research could investigate how youth from diverse regions and cultural backgrounds experience and adapt to the forces of globalization, offering insights into the universal and context-specific aspects of cultural identity formation. Expanding on these findings could offer valuable insights for educators and policymakers in supporting the development of resilient and adaptive cultural identities in young people.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. No financial or personal relationships that could have influenced the work presented have been disclosed.

## REFERENCES

- Chinchay, Y., Torrado, J. C., Gomez, J., & Montoro, G. (2024). Towards more supportive ICT for children with autism spectrum disorders: Lessons learned from COVID-19 pandemic. *Behaviour and Information Technology*, 43(12), 3027–3046. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2023.2268734>
- Das Gupta, S. (2024). A “Criminal Tribe” in Post-Colonial India: Discrimination and Resistance in Chuni Kotal’s Writings. *Archiv Orientalni*, 92(3), 523–545. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.47979/aror.j.92.3.523-545>
- Dionisio, J. C., Evangelista, J. A. G., Heimerl, K., & Festin, C. A. M. (2021). Voices from the last mile: The place of emotions in the social impact analysis of access to communication. *Plaridel*, 18(2), 259–280. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.52518/2020-01dievhef>
- Foreshew, A., & Al-Jawad, M. (2022). An intersectional participatory action research approach to explore and address class elitism in medical education. *Medical Education*, 56(11), 1076–1085. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.14857>
- Hauser, J. (2021). Education, secularism, and illiberalism: Marginalisation of Muslims by the French state. *French Cultural Studies*, 32(2), 149–162. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09571558211007444>
- Hershkovitz, A., Abu Elhija, M., & Zedan, D. (2019). Whatsapp is the message: Out-of-class communication, student-teacher relationship, and classroom environment. *Journal of*

- Information Technology Education: Research*, 18, 73–95. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.28945/4183>
- Kim, Y., Dhammasaccakarn, W., Laeheem, K., & Rinthaisong, I. (2024). The Impact of Family Functioning Factors on Smartphone Addiction and Phubbing among Muslim Adolescents in Thailand. *Children*, 11(5). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children11050522>
- Lee, C. H., & Yu, H. (2020). The impact of language on retweeting during acute natural disasters: Uncertainty reduction and language expectancy perspectives. *Industrial Management and Data Systems*, 120(8), 1501–1519. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-12-2019-0711>
- Li, X., Zhang, M., Liu, W., & Wang, Z. (2024). The impact of entrepreneurial co-founders' support on founders' entrepreneurial resilience in the high-tech industry: The roles of perceived digital technology and perceived failure-tolerant climate. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 202. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2024.123320>
- Matiukaite, K., Sciukauskė, I., & Usas, A. (2024). THE IMPACT OF E-WOM ASPECTS ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTIONS. *Polish Journal of Management Studies*, 30(2), 162–180. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.17512/pjms.2024.30.2.10>
- Mendenhall, E., Bosire, E. N., Kim, A. W., & Norris, S. A. (2019). Cancer, chemotherapy, and HIV: Living with cancer amidst comorbidity in a South African township. *Social Science and Medicine*, 237. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2019.112461>
- Na, J. S., Bajgai, J., Sharma, S., Dhakal, S., Ahn, D. W., Doh, Y.-A., Kim, Y., & Lee, K.-J. (2024). Enhancing Health and Empowerment: Assessing the Satisfaction of Underprivileged Rural Women Participating in a Functional Literacy Education Program in Kailali District, Nepal. *Healthcare (Switzerland)*, 12(11). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare12111099>
- Rosean, L., Matić, J., & Samardžija, J. (2023). The Propensity for Dating Apps Usage and the Millennials' Interpersonal Skills Development. *Medijska Istrazivanja*, 29(2), 95–114. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.22572/mi.29.2.4>
- Shelton, D. S., Delgado, M. M., Greenway, E. V. G., Hobson, E. A., Lackey, A. C. R., Medina-García, A., Reinke, B. A., Trillo, P. A., Wells, C. P., & Horner-Devine, M. C. (2021). Expanding the Landscape of Opportunity: Professional Societies Support Early-Career Researchers Through Community Programming and Peer Coaching. *Journal of Comparative Psychology*, 135(4), 439–449. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1037/com0000300>
- Wu, C.-K., Lin, C.-A., & Hsu, Y.-M. (2024). Unveiling the intricate dynamics of user engagement in social media: The triad co-evolution through affordances and emotional attachment. *Communication Research and Practice*, 10(2), 230–248. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2024.2341212>