

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Digital Adat: Local Cultural Practices in Indonesian Online Communities

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Abstract: Digitalisation has emerged as a significant phenomenon shaping traditional cultural practices within Indonesian online communities, exerting a significant influence on cultural identity and heritage preservation. Drawing on theoretical frameworks from cultural anthropology and digital sociology, this study examines the hybrid dynamics of cultural adaptation in digital contexts. This study aims to analyse the transformation of local cultural practices within online communities while addressing a gap in the existing literature concerning the comprehensive effects on digitalisation of cultural practices. Employing a literature review methodology, the study analyses a range of academic sources and case studies to identify patterns of cultural representation and transformation within digital spaces. The findings indicate that digitalisation facilitates both the preservation and the commodification of cultural practices, often leading to the simplification of complex rituals, the loss of sacred meanings, and the commercialisation of cultural symbols. The study further identifies three major patterns: cultural commodification, the transformation of cultural contexts for global audiences, and the risk of misrepresentation on digital platforms. It concludes that the careful and reflexive integration of digital technologies into cultural practices is essential to safeguarding authenticity and integrity, thereby ensuring cultural sustainability amid the forces of globalisation.

Keywords: Digitalisation; Cultural Identity; Local Culture; Traditional Practices; Online Communities

Abstrak: Digitalisasi telah muncul sebagai fenomena penting yang membentuk praktik budaya tradisional dalam komunitas daring di Indonesia, serta memberikan pengaruh signifikan terhadap identitas budaya dan pelestarian warisan budaya. Dengan mengacu pada kerangka teoretis dari antropologi budaya dan sosiologi digital, penelitian ini mengkaji dinamika hibrida adaptasi budaya dalam konteks digital. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis transformasi praktik budaya lokal dalam komunitas daring sekaligus mengisi kesenjangan dalam literatur yang ada terkait dampak komprehensif digitalisasi terhadap praktik budaya. Menggunakan metode tinjauan pustaka, penelitian ini menganalisis berbagai sumber akademik dan studi kasus untuk mengidentifikasi pola representasi dan transformasi budaya dalam ruang digital. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa digitalisasi memfasilitasi pelestarian sekaligus komodifikasi praktik budaya, yang sering kali mengarah pada penyederhanaan ritual yang kompleks, hilangnya makna sakral, serta komersialisasi simbol-simbol budaya. Penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi tiga pola utama, yaitu komodifikasi budaya, transformasi konteks budaya untuk audiens global, dan risiko salah representasi pada platform digital..

Kata kunci: Digitalisasi; Identitas Budaya; Budaya Lokal; Praktik Tradisional; Komunitas Daring.

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1. Introduction

The transformation of traditional cultural practices within Indonesian online communities constitutes a significant field of inquiry, both academically and practically. The importance of this study lies in the increasing penetration of digital technologies into everyday life, which has brought about substantial changes to traditional cultural practices, commonly referred to as *adat* (Rahmawati et al., 2023). This phenomenon strikes at the core of cultural identity and heritage preservation in an increasingly globalised world. Digital landscapes provide new platforms for the expression, preservation, and evolution of *adat* practices, presenting both opportunities and challenges. In this context, an understanding of how digital technologies may function to sustain or, conversely, transform *adat* becomes critically important. Nasruddin and Haq (2021) argue that digitalisation enables the wide dissemination and preservation of elements of traditional culture, while simultaneously posing the risk of eroding the original essence of *adat*. Consequently, examining how digital spaces reshape cultural norms and practices, and how this process affects social cohesion and cultural continuity in Indonesia, is of considerable importance.

Previous research has examined various dimensions of digitalisation and its impact on cultural practices. However, much of the existing research has yet to address the comprehensive transformation of *adat* within online communities, instead focusing on isolated elements rather than offering an integrated analysis of broader cultural shifts. Lim's (2018) study explores the digital adaptation of traditional arts in Southeast Asia, yet its emphasis remains largely on artistic expression rather than on *adat* as a holistic cultural system. Similarly, Nasution and Lubis (2019) investigate the role of social media in the preservation of regional languages, but do not engage with the specific mechanisms through which digital platforms mediate and transform these traditional practices. This gap in the literature points to the need for a more thorough and in-depth exploration of digital *adat*. Such limitations underscore the necessity of a comprehensive inquiry to advance understanding the dynamics of digital *adat* within Indonesian online communities.

The primary objective of this study is to map the transformation of local cultural practices within Indonesian online communities. Such mapping is essential, as it involves identifying and categorising the various ways in which *adat* is expressed, modified, and sustained within digital spaces, thereby offering in-depth insights into these ongoing changes. Through this process, the study seeks to reveal the diverse forms of *adat* expression that emerge within online communities, as well as the strategies through which they adapt to digital environments. Rituals that were once conducted exclusively in physical settings, for instance, are now broadcast through social media platforms. This article also aims to analyse the implications of these transformations for the nature and function of local *adat* within contemporary society. By focusing on mapping and analytical assessment, the study provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics of digital *adat* in present-day Indonesian society.

This study argues that integrating theoretical perspectives from cultural anthropology and digital sociology facilitates a nuanced understanding of the transformation of local cultural practices. Collectively, these perspectives offer a comprehensive framework for examining how digital technologies influence both the persistence and reconfiguration of *adat*. Such integration is essential for establishing a comprehensive and analytically sound conceptual framework through which the transformation of digital *adat* may be examined, while also providing theoretically relevant and contemporary insights. Theories of cultural adaptation and hybridity, as proposed by Bhabha (1994), offer a lens through which to interpret the interplay between traditional and digital practices. In addition, Giddens's (1991) concept of modernity and self-identity provides insight into how individuals

negotiate their cultural identities within digital spaces. Concrete examples, such as the digital revitalisation of customary rituals and the online dissemination of cultural knowledge, illustrate the diverse manifestations of digital *adat*. In this manner, a critical reflection on the ongoing interaction between tradition and modernity in the digital era can be systematically undertaken.

2. Literature review

The transformation of traditional cultural practices within Indonesian online communities constitutes a growing field of inquiry that reflects broader global trends in the digitalisation of culture. Scholars have increasingly recognised the importance of understanding how digital platforms and online interactions reshape traditional practices, particularly in societies possessing rich cultural heritage such as Indonesia. A prevailing trend in this field highlights a rising interest in the dual role of digital technologies: as instruments for both the preservation and the transformation of cultural practices. Nevertheless, despite the expanding body of research on the cultural implications of digitalisation, the specific mechanisms and outcomes of these transformations within online communities remain underexplored. Consequently, studies that offer a comprehensive understanding of how digitalisation influences traditional cultural practices in Indonesia are urgently needed.

Digitalisation has become a widespread force reshaping multiple aspects of society, including cultural practices. The integration of digital technologies into everyday life has generated new spaces in which traditional cultural practices may be expressed, preserved, and even transformed. Previous research has extensively examined the impact of digitalisation on various social domains, such as communication, commerce, and education (Katz and Rice, 2002; van Dijk, 2020). However, scholarly exploration of its effects on traditional cultural practices—particularly within non-Western contexts such as Indonesia—remains comparatively underdeveloped. Westerman's (2016) study underscores the potential of digital platforms to preserve cultural heritage, yet its focus is primarily on tangible heritage rather than on intangible practices, such as *adat*, which form the central concern of the present research.

Cultural transformation in the context of digitalisation refers to the ways in which locally grounded traditional practices are altered, adapted, or even reconstituted in response to technological advancements. Bhabha's (1994) concept of cultural hybridity is frequently cited to describe the blending of traditional and modern elements within digital spaces. Studies by Lim (2018) and Nasution and Lubis (2019) have contributed to our understanding of cultural transformation in Southeast Asia, particularly through the lens of digital adaptation. Lim's work, even though insightful, remains limited in scope, focusing primarily on the digital adaptation of the arts rather than providing a comprehensive analysis of broader cultural practices. Similarly, Nasution and Lubis (2019) explore the preservation of regional languages via social media, yet they do not address the wider implications of digital platforms for traditional cultural practices.

Traditional cultural practices, or *adat*, constitute a vital component of Indonesia's cultural identity. The preservation and transformation of these practices in the digital era have become an increasingly compelling subject of scholarly interest. Previous studies have highlighted both the challenges and opportunities presented by digital platforms for traditional culture, with some researchers suggesting that these platforms offer new avenues for the preservation and dissemination of cultural practices (Nasruddin and Haq, 2021). Nevertheless, a notable gap exists in the literature regarding the specific mechanisms through which digital spaces mediate and transform traditional practices.

Although the potential of digitalisation to undermine the essence of these practices has been acknowledged (Rahmawati et al., 2023), there remains limited exploration of the diverse ways in which *adat* is adapted, maintained, or altered within online communities.

Online communities provide a unique space for the expression and evolution of traditional cultural practices. The role of these communities in mediating cultural transformation has been explored across various contexts, ranging from language preservation to the adaptation of traditional arts (Wellman, 2018; Boyd and Ellison, 2007). However, research specifically examining how Indonesian online communities engage with, modify, and sustain traditional cultural practices remains limited. Existing studies often overlook the complexity of these interactions and fail to provide a holistic understanding of how digital spaces reshape cultural norms and practices. This gap underscores the need for more comprehensive research that not only documents the transformation of *adat* but also analyses the broader social implications of these changes.

3. Method

This study analyses Traditional Cultural Practices in Indonesian Online Communities, focusing on how digitalisation influences traditional cultural practices, particularly *adat*, in the context of online media use in virtual communities. Investigating the impact of digitalisation on traditional culture is crucial, as digital technologies have transformed the ways in which societies interact and express their cultural identities (Postill, 2008). In the Indonesian context, *adat* constitutes the core of cultural identity and the continuity of cultural heritage, and changes in these practices due to the influence of digital media can have significant implications for social cohesion and cultural identity (Nasruddin and Haq, 2021). This study examines how online media, including social media and other digital platforms, mediate, transform, and preserve *adat* within virtual communities. The research is significant since online media can facilitate the preservation of *adat* by expanding its reach and accessibility, yet it may also introduce distortions or lead to desacralisation, thereby posing a threat to its purity and authenticity (Rahmawati et al., 2023). Therefore, understanding the impact of online media use on the transformation of *adat* is essential for capturing the dynamics of cultural change in the digital era.

This study employs a literature review design to examine the impact of online media use on the transformation of *adat*. A literature review was selected, as it enables the researcher to systematically map texts that document and discuss the intersections between technology and culture. This design is particularly relevant, as it provides a framework for understanding the consequences of online media usage on cultural practices through the content analysis of diverse sources, including academic journals, books, and articles (Snyder, 2019). The literature review approach is valuable as it enables the identification of common patterns and divergences in previous research, while also revealing gaps that remain in the existing scholarship (Webster and Watson, 2002). In this study, journal content mapping is utilised to understand the transformation of *adat* in the context of digitalisation, encompassing the identification of key trends and an in-depth analysis of the moral and ethical implications arising from online media use. The operational stages of the research involve the collection and analysis of relevant literature, which are subsequently employed to map and interpret the various forms of *adat* transformation resulting from digitalisation, as well as the attendant consequences.

This study draws on literature that examines various aspects of the impact of digitalisation on *adat* and the existence of traditional cultural practices. The collected data were categorised into three principal groups: the presentation and representation of traditional culture in online media; the desacralisation of traditional culture in digital spaces;

and the appropriation or commercialisation of traditional culture via online platforms (Gerbaudo, 2012). The use of text-based sources is particularly relevant, as it provides a broad and in-depth perspective on how *adat* is represented and interpreted within digital contexts. The literature consulted includes academic journals, books, and articles focusing on the interactions between culture and technology, accessed through academic databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and others. The data collection process involved selecting sources relevant to the research topic, followed by a critical analysis of relevant content. This stage is critical for ensuring that the data collected are representative and capable of providing in-depth insights into cultural transformation in the context of digitalisation.

Data collection in this study was conducted through internet-based research and interviews, with a focus on mapping the availability and scope of data concerning the impact of social media use on changes in traditional cultural practices. Internet-based research facilitated access to a wide and comprehensive range of sources, including journal articles, research reports, and other digital content (Hewson, 2014). In addition, interviews were conducted with cultural experts and practitioners to obtain deeper and more contextualised insights into the transformations occurring in *adat* practices within digital spaces. The data collection process commenced with the identification and compilation of relevant literature via academic search engines, followed by structured interviews with key informants. This method is particularly appropriate as it combines the strengths of secondary data with the insights derived from primary sources, collectively providing a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of digitalisation on traditional culture. These stages ensure that the information obtained is not only representative but also rich and aligned with the objectives of the research.

Data analysis in this study was conducted through an interpretative approach applied to secondary data obtained from the literature. The analytical process followed three principal stages: restatement, involving the reorganisation of data to ensure accurate comprehension; description, entailing the identification of patterns within the data; and interpretation, aimed at attributing meaning to the analysed material (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis aimed to reveal the consequences of digitalisation for the existence and development of traditional culture, with particular emphasis on the presentation and representation of culture in online media, the desacralisation of *adat*, and the appropriation of culture in the context of commercialisation. Employing an interpretative method is fundamental, as it enables the researcher to explore the more comprehensive significance of the data, moving beyond basic descriptive accounts to critically examine its implications (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The analytical stages included identifying key themes, coding data according to relevant categories, and conducting in-depth interpretation to produce a comprehensive and contextualised understanding of the transformation of *adat* in online communities.

4. Result

4.1. Presentation and Representation of Local Culture in Online Media

Traditional culture is presented across various social media platforms, which has broadly resulted in the loss of its original social context. The extensive use of online media has transformed traditional local culture, reflecting the broader process of modernisation. Table 1 illustrates how modes of cultural presentation carry significant implications.

Table 1. Implications of Digitalisation in the Presentation of Local Culture

Forms of Presentation	Presentation Process	Implication of Digitalisation
1. Live Streaming of Adat Ceremonies	- Live broadcast via social media platforms. - Real-time interaction with online audiences. - Use of multiple cameras to capture different perspectives.	- Loss of sacredness due to excessive exposure. - Potential disruption from inappropriate online comments. - The risk of oversimplifying complex rituals.
2. Tutorial Video on Traditional Craft-Making	- Step-by-step video production, uploading to platforms, such as YouTube or TikTok. - The addition of multilingual subtitles.	- Standardisation of techniques that reduces local variation. - Commercialisation of traditional knowledge. - Loss of social and cultural context during the learning process.
3. Podcasts on Folk Tales	- Audio narration of traditional stories, distribution via podcast platforms. - The addition of sound effects and background music.	- Alteration of storytelling styles to appeal to a global audience. - Risk of misinterpretation without visual context. - Potential loss of regional variation in narratives.
4. Digital Photo Galleries of Traditional Dress	- Professional photography. - Curation and uploading to websites or Instagram. - The addition of detailed descriptions.	- Objectification of traditional dress as simple fashion items. - Loss of contextual meaning in ritual use. - The risk of cultural appropriation by external parties.
5. Mobile Applications for Regional Language Dictionaries	- Development of a database of words and phrases. - Programming of search and audio pronunciation features. - Distribution through app stores.	- Standardisation of language that diminishes local nuances. - Reduced oral transmission of the language. - The potential for translation errors without cultural context.
6. Virtual Reality Tours of Historical Sites	- 3D scanning of the location. - Development of an interactive VR environment. - Integration of narrative and historical information.	- Reduced motivation for physical visits. - Risk of oversimplifying the complexity of the site. - Potential manipulation of historical representation.
7. Online Marketplaces for Traditional Products	- Creation of dedicated e-commerce platforms. - Product photography with detailed descriptions. - Integrated payment and delivery systems.	- Excessive commercialisation of cultural artefacts. - Standardisation of products to meet market demand. - Loss of direct interaction between artisans and buyers.
8. Social Media for Adat Communities	- Creation of dedicated groups or pages. - Content moderation by <i>adat</i> leaders. - Regular sharing of updates and discussions.	- Excessive exposure of internal community information. - Generational conflicts in the interpretation of traditions. - The risk of cyberbullying or online harassment.
9. Crowdsourced	- Development of a platform for user-generated content uploads.	- Potential documentation of sacred rituals without consent.

Forms of Presentation	Presentation Process	Implication of Digitalisation
Documentation of Adat Rituals	- Implementation of tagging and categorisation systems. - Verification by cultural experts.	- Variation in the quality and accuracy of information. - Risk of cultural data exploitation by third parties.
10. Augmented Reality for Traditional Arts	- Development of AR applications. - Scanning artworks to trigger digital content. - Integration of contextual and interactive information.	- Experience overly dependent on technology. - Potential distraction from direct appreciation of the artwork. - Risk of oversimplifying the symbolic meaning in traditional art.

The data presented in the table provide a comprehensive overview of the various forms of Indonesian traditional cultural presentation within the context of digitalisation, as well as the processes involved and the risks or implications arising from such digitalisation. The table encompasses ten forms of cultural presentation, ranging from live streaming of *adat* ceremonies to the use of augmented reality (AR) for traditional arts. Each form of presentation is accompanied by specific digital processes, including the technologies and methods employed, such as the use of social media for live broadcasts, the production of tutorial videos, and the development of mobile applications for regional language dictionaries. Furthermore, the table identifies a range of risks and implications of digitalisation, including the loss of sacredness, excessive commercialisation, and the potential distortion or simplification of cultural meanings.

The data reveal three principal patterns in the transformation of traditional culture through digitalisation. First, there is a pattern of cultural commercialisation, in which digital technologies enable traditional culture to be converted into marketable products, as evidenced by online marketplaces for traditional products and tutorial videos on craft-making. This process often results in standardisation that diminishes local variation and creates a risk of excessive commercialisation. Second, there is a pattern of contextual transformation and adaptation, in which traditional culture is adapted to appeal to a global audience, such as in podcasts on folk tales and digital photo galleries of traditional dress. This process alters the mode of cultural presentation, often removing the original socio-cultural context. Third, the data indicate a pattern of ritual mediatization, where *adat* practices are recorded and shared through digital platforms, such as in crowdsourced documentation of *adat* rituals and live streaming of ceremonies. This pattern carries the risk of loss of sacredness and cultural accuracy due to uncontrolled exposure and variations in documentation quality.

4.2. Desacralisation of Traditional Culture in Online Media

The process of desacralizing culture is essential for preserving the cultural diversity and identity of a society. By understanding the factors that drive desacralisation, strategies can be formulated to safeguard cultural values that are positive and relevant within a modern context. The following data illustrate the impact of cultural desacralisation on both individual and collective identities, providing a basis for developing solutions to address these challenges (Table 2).

Table 2. Mapping the Issues of Cultural Desacralisation

Cultural Desacralisation	Cognitive Dimension	Evaluative Dimension	Symbolic Dimension
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Cultural Commercialisation	Transformation of cultural values into commodities for economic gain.	Cultural values are assessed based on their economic worth.	Cultural symbols become tools for marketing.
Decline in the Social Status of Traditional Artists	Decreased recognition of traditional artists and their skills.	Traditional skills are considered less relevant to contemporary demands.	Symbols of the social status of traditional artists lose their significance.
Loss of Traditional Knowledge	Loss of knowledge regarding traditional history, myths, and rituals.	Traditional knowledge is considered outdated and irrelevant.	Cultural symbols lose their magical and religious significance.
Adaptation to Popular Culture	Adoption of popular culture elements into local traditions.	Popular culture is perceived as more modern and appealing.	Traditional cultural symbols are combined with symbols of popular culture.
Cultural Standardisation	The demand to conform to global cultural standards.	Local culture is considered inferior compared to global culture.	Local cultural symbols lose their uniqueness.
Rising Individualism	Emphasis on individual interests over collective concerns.	Community values and <i>gotong royong</i> are considered outdated.	Symbols representing collective identity lose their meaning.
Secularisation	Decline in the influence of religion in daily life.	Religion is considered a private matter and irrelevant to public life.	Religious symbols lose their significance.
Orientation Towards Excessive Consumption of Goods and Services	Materialistic values replace spiritual values.	Consumption symbols become more important than cultural symbols.	
Rural-to-Urban Migration	Urban values are considered more modern and appealing.	Rural values are considered outdated.	Rural symbols lose their significance.
Cultural Globalisation	Widespread dissemination of Western culture.	Western culture is considered superior to local culture.	Western cultural symbols replace local cultural symbols.

The data presented in Table 2 identify ten principal issues concerning desecralisation of culture within the context of the transformation of traditional culture in Indonesia. Each issue is examined across three dimensions: cognitive, evaluative, and symbolic. These issues encompass a range of phenomena, including cultural commercialisation, the declining social status of traditional artists, the loss of traditional

knowledge, and the influence of globalisation. The cognitive dimension explains how perceptions and understanding of traditional culture have changed, while the evaluative dimension highlights shift in the values associated with that culture. The symbolic dimension illustrates how cultural symbols lose their original meaning or are repurposed for other objectives. This table provides insights how various external and internal factors influence and undermine the sacredness of traditional culture in the modern era.

The data reveal three principal patterns in the desacralisation of culture: “cultural commodification,” “decline in symbolic meaning,” and changes in the evaluation of cultural values.” First, cultural commodification is evident in the transformation of traditional culture into commodities traded for economic gain. Cultural symbols, which once held spiritual or communal significance, are now utilised as marketing tools, thereby diminishing their sacred meaning. Second, the data highlight a decline in symbolic meaning, where traditional symbols—such as the social status of artists or religious icons—lose their significance amid rising secularisation and individualism. Third, changes in the evaluation of cultural values are apparent in the application of global standards to local culture, often regarding traditional culture as inferior or irrelevant. These patterns underscore how desacralisation of culture occurs through interconnected economic, social, and ideological processes.

4.3. Cultural Appropriation by Online Communities

Cultural appropriation refers to the adoption of elements from one cultural group by another, often without a deep understanding or consent from the originating community. In the context of traditional culture, such appropriation can occur at various levels, ranging from the use of cultural symbols to ritual practices (Table 3). Understanding cultural appropriation is crucial for preserving cultural diversity and respecting the rights of the indigenous communities. By recognising the forms of cultural appropriation, strategies can be developed to safeguard cultural heritage and promote more responsible engagement with cultural practices.

Table 3. Mapping Forms of Cultural Appropriation

No.	Forms of Cultural Appropriation	Physical Structures (Heritage)	Social Behaviours (Actions and Institutions)
1	Commercialisation of Cultural Symbols	Use of cultural symbols (e.g., batik, wayang) on commercial products without authorization or through understanding.	Marketing products by claiming cultural authenticity that they do not possess.
2	Cultural Site Redevelopment	Redevelopment of cultural sites with designs that do not align with their original values.	Utilisation of cultural sites for commercial purposes without regard for their spiritual or historical values.
3	The Use of Traditional Arts for Entertainment Purposes	The use of traditional arts (e.g. dance and music) in commercial performances	The simplification or distortion of traditional art forms

		involving significant modifications.	to appeal to broader market interests.
4	The Use of Traditional Costumes in Fashion	The use of traditional costumes as fashion trends without an understanding of their original cultural context.	The sexualisation or fetishisation of traditional costumes.
5	The Development of Derivative Cultural Products	The production of derivative products (e.g. food and beverages) that claim inspiration from a particular culture without involving the originating community.	False claims regarding the authenticity and quality of products.
6	The Use of Local Languages and Dialects in Advertising	The use of local languages and dialects in advertising to attract consumers without a thorough understanding of their cultural meanings.	Stereotyping or misrepresentation of culture in advertising.
7	The Development of Culturally Insensitive Tourism	The development of cultural tourism that exploits unique aspects of local culture without providing benefits to the community.	Disrespectful treatment of cultural sites and local communities.
8	Imitation of Traditional Rituals in Modern Events	The imitation of traditional rituals in modern events (e.g. weddings, birthdays) without an understanding of their spiritual significance.	The reduction of rituals to mere performances.
9	The Use of Cultural Symbols in Logos and Trademarks Without Permission or Thorough Understanding	The excessive commercialisation of cultural symbols.	
10	Cultural Appropriation in Modern Art	The use of traditional cultural elements in modern artworks without appropriate contextualisation.	The depoliticisation or decontextualisation of cultural symbols.

The data in Table 3 identify various forms of cultural appropriation occurring within the context of the transformation of traditional cultures in Indonesia, encompassing both tangible manifestations and social behaviours. These forms of appropriation include the commercialisation of cultural symbols, the redevelopment of cultural sites, the utilisation of traditional arts for entertainment, the use of traditional costumes in fashion, and the incorporation of local languages and dialects in advertising. Each form of appropriation is represented through two primary dimensions: tangible manifestations, such as the incorporation of cultural symbols into commercial products or the redevelopment of cultural sites with designs that do not align with their original values, and social behaviours, such as the simplification of traditional arts or the stereotyping of culture in advertising. This table

provides insight into how cultural appropriation can erode the original values of traditional cultures through exploitation and distortion in various forms.

From the data, three primary patterns of cultural appropriation can be identified within the context of the transformation of traditional cultures in Indonesia: “cultural commercialisation,” “cultural distortion for entertainment and fashion,” and “inappropriate use of cultural symbols in modern contexts.” First, cultural commercialisation is evident in the use of cultural symbols, such as batik and wayang, in commercial products and logos without permission or thorough understanding, leading to false claims regarding cultural authenticity. Second, cultural distortion is apparent in the utilisation of traditional arts for entertainment and the use of traditional costumes in fashion, where these art forms and garments are simplified or altered to appeal to broader market interests, often removing their original cultural context. Third, the inappropriate use of cultural symbols occurs in the development of culturally insensitive tourism and the incorporation of cultural elements into modern art without appropriate contextualisation, frequently disregarding or distorting the spiritual and political meanings of these symbols. These patterns demonstrate how cultural appropriation manifests through various forms of exploitation that reduce the value and significance of traditional cultural heritage.

5. Discussion

Research aimed at understanding the transformation of local cultural practices within Indonesian online communities indicates a tendency towards the desacralisation and appropriation of culture. The significance of this study lies in the increasing use of digital technology, which has substantially altered the ways in which traditional culture is expressed, maintained, and commercialised in digital spaces. The data indicate that desacralisation occurs through the commodification of cultural symbols, the diminution of symbolic meaning, and shifts in the evaluation of cultural values, while cultural appropriation is manifested through commercialisation, distortion for entertainment and fashion, and the misuse of symbols in modern contexts. For instance, the use of batik in commercial products without cultural understanding, or the development of culturally insensitive tourism, highlights how cultural elements can lose their meaning within a fast-paced global context. This study concludes that digitalisation and cultural appropriation pose significant challenges to the sustainability and authenticity of Indonesia’s traditional cultures, necessitating a more careful and culturally aware approach in the development of technology and culture-related products.

The study’s findings can be analysed through three interrelated processes. First, the digitalisation of culture. This data analysis indicates that the digitalisation of traditional culture in Indonesia not only presents new opportunities for preservation but also poses significant challenges regarding authenticity, sacrality, and cultural identity. The process of commercialisation occurring through online marketplaces and tutorial videos, for instance, threatens to reduce traditional culture to basic commodities, potentially leading to the loss of the profound meanings associated with *adat*. Contextual adaptation in digital media, such as podcasts and photo galleries, also demonstrates how traditional culture can lose its essence when tailored for a global audience, which often disregards important local contexts. The mediatization of rituals, such as in crowdsourced documentation of *adat*, carries risks of exploitation and misuse of cultural data, which can result in the distortion of meanings and customary practices. In conclusion, the transformation of traditional culture through digitalisation requires considerable caution to ensure that the essence and integrity of culture are not lost in the process.

Second, the desacralisation of culture. This data analysis indicates that the desacralisation of culture within the context of traditional cultural transformation in Indonesia results from a complex interaction between the forces of globalisation, commercialisation, and social change. The commodification of culture, for example, not only transforms culture into an economic product but also undermines the intrinsic values inherent in cultural practices and symbols. The decline of symbolic meaning marks a shift from collective communities that value traditional symbols to more individualistic and secular societies. Meanwhile, changes in the evaluation of cultural values demonstrate how pressures from global cultural standards and urbanisation marginalise and weaken the distinctiveness of local cultures. In conclusion, cultural desacralisation in the digital era is not merely a change in the way culture is presented but also reflects a fundamental shift in how culture is understood, assessed, and appreciated within increasingly modern and globally connected societies.

Third, cultural appropriation. This data analysis reveals that cultural appropriation within the context of traditional cultural transformation in Indonesia reflects exploitative processes that potentially undermine cultural integrity. The commercialisation of culture, as evident in the use of cultural symbols for commercial products and logos, not only diminishes the spiritual and aesthetic value of these cultural elements but also demonstrates a disregard for the intellectual property rights of the originating communities. Cultural distortion for entertainment and fashion, where traditional arts and costumes are modified to appeal to market interests, illustrates how global capitalism can diminish cultural identity by transforming it into shallow consumer products. The inappropriate use of cultural symbols in modern contexts, such as in tourism development and contemporary art, highlights how cultural elements can lose their meaning when removed from their original contexts. In conclusion, cultural appropriation in the transformation of traditional culture in Indonesia constitutes not only an ethical concern but also a serious threat to the sustainability and authenticity of local culture.

This study offers a significant contribution that distinguishes it from previous research by highlighting the complex interplay between digitalisation, desacralisation, and cultural appropriation within the context of online communities in Indonesia. Earlier studies by Lim (2018) and Nasution and Lubis (2019) have explored the impact of digitalisation on traditional arts and the preservation of local languages, yet they tended to focus on specific aspects without providing a holistic analysis of how these transformations affect overall cultural practices, including desacralisation and appropriation. For example, Lim (2018) emphasised the adaptation of arts in digital spaces without addressing how cultural symbols may be commodified, whereas this study demonstrates how the commercialisation and misuse of cultural symbols in online contexts can diminish the spiritual value and original meaning of culture. Furthermore, Nasution and Lubis (2019) examined language preservation through social media but did not explore aspects of cultural appropriation in commercial products, which constitutes a central focus of the present study. Therefore, this research fills a gap in the literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of how digitalisation not only transforms but also challenges the sustainability of traditional culture through complex processes of desacralisation and appropriation.

6. Conclusion

The principal finding of this study is that digitalisation has emerged substantial transformations in traditional cultural practices in Indonesian online communities, leading to both the desacralisation and appropriation of culture. These transformations suggest that, while digital technology provides opportunities for cultural preservation, it also poses considerable challenges to the authenticity and sustainability of traditional culture. For

instance, the commercialisation of cultural symbols and the inappropriate use of traditional elements in modern contexts can diminish spiritual meaning and compromise cultural integrity. The insight gained from this study emphasises the necessity for a more cautious approach in integrating digital technology with cultural practices, to ensure that original values are maintained and not subsumed by the homogenising forces of globalisation.

The strength of this study lies in its significant contribution to understanding how digitalisation affects traditional cultural practices within online communities, with a particular focus on the desacralisation and appropriation of culture. This research provides a strong theoretical and empirical framework for comprehending the complex interactions between technology and culture, which have been underexplored in the existing literature. For example, the study offers insights into how the commercialisation and distortion of culture on digital platforms can threaten the sustainability of local cultures. Academically, it enriches the discourse on cultural transformation in the digital era, while practically, the findings can serve as a guide for policymakers and cultural practitioners in designing more effective strategies for cultural preservation in the context of digitalisation.

Despite its considerable contributions, this study has limitations that warrant acknowledgement, particularly with regard to its focus on Indonesian online communities, which do not fully represent the cultural diversity across the country or of other regions. Furthermore, the study's emphasis on desacralisation and cultural appropriation limits the exploration of other aspects of cultural transformation, such as cultural innovation or resistance to digitalisation. Therefore, a recommendation for future research is to broaden the scope to include various other cultural communities and to explore additional dimensions of cultural transformation, including the positive impacts of digitalisation on cultural revitalisation and adaptation in the era of globalisation. Therefore, despite its limitations, this study provides a foundation for further research that can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the interaction between traditional cultural practices and digital technologies.

Author Contribution Statement

The author approved the final version of the manuscript and agrees to take full responsibility for all aspects of this work.

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