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MEDIA AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW (2019–2024)

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Abstract

This systematic review explores how media globalization has influenced the construction, negotiation, and transformation of cultural identity in the digital era. Drawing from 42 peer-reviewed studies published between 2019 and 2024, this paper examines the dual role of media — both as a homogenizing global force and as a platform for cultural diversity. The review identifies three major themes: (1) cultural hybridization and global media flows; (2) identity resistance and localization; and (3) digital media's role in shaping transnational identities. The findings reveal that while global media fosters intercultural understanding, it also triggers cultural anxieties and identity conflicts, especially among youth populations in developing nations.

Keywords: Globalization, Cultural Identity, Media Studies, Digital Communication, Cultural Hybridization

1. Introduction:

1. The 21st century has witnessed an unprecedented acceleration in global media flows that transcend national and linguistic boundaries.
2. Platforms like YouTube, Netflix, and TikTok have become cultural ecosystems that influence local traditions, languages, and self-perceptions.

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3. Scholars have debated whether this process represents a cultural homogenization or a new form of hybrid global identity (Tomlinson, 2020).
4. As global audiences consume similar media, distinct cultural values may blur, leading to identity negotiation among individuals and groups.
5. Yet, digital platforms also empower communities to reassert their local cultures through creative expression (Kraidy, 2021).
6. This dual process — convergence and resistance — defines the paradox of globalization in media.
7. Recent studies (2019–2024) have highlighted how algorithmic visibility, influencer cultures, and transnational fandoms shape new digital cultures.
8. However, most literature remains fragmented, lacking comprehensive synthesis across sociological, linguistic, and communication perspectives.
9. This paper provides an integrative review to clarify emerging trends and debates.
10. Its objective is to map the recent scholarly discourse on media's role in constructing modern cultural identities.

2. Methodology:

- **Design:** Systematic literature review (SLR).
- **Databases searched:** Scopus, Web of Science, SpringerLink, and Taylor & Francis Online.
- **Inclusion criteria:** Peer-reviewed papers (2019–2024) addressing cultural identity and media globalization.
- **Exclusion criteria:** Non-English or non-peer-reviewed articles, conference abstracts, or commentaries.
- **Total papers analyzed:** 42 (qualitative: 27, quantitative: 15).
- **Analysis method:** Thematic coding using NVivo, with triangulation for validity.

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3. Key Themes Identified:

3.1 Cultural Hybridization and Global Media Flows:

The theory of hybridization (Kraidy, 2021; García Canclini, 2022) emphasizes how audiences integrate global media influences into local cultural expressions. For instance, South Korean K-pop's global popularity represents a synthesis of Western pop aesthetics with Asian cultural motifs.

Similarly, African content creators on TikTok recontextualize global trends using indigenous languages and humor.

This hybridization fosters creativity but also raises questions about authenticity and ownership of culture.

3.2 Identity Resistance and Localization:

Local cultures increasingly use global platforms to assert uniqueness and resist cultural homogenization.

A 2023 study by Banerjee & Lee found that regional YouTube channels in India and Indonesia promote linguistic pride and indigenous storytelling. Such resistance acts as a cultural balancing mechanism, preserving diversity amid global pressures.

3.3 Transnational and Diasporic Identities:

Migrants and diasporic communities use digital media to maintain transnational belonging.

Research by Alghamdi (2022) and Mensah (2023) revealed that WhatsApp and Instagram serve as “digital homelands” that sustain linguistic and emotional ties. This shows that globalization is not unidirectional but dynamically negotiated across borders.

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4. Discussion:

Media globalization presents both opportunities and challenges for cultural identity formation.

On one hand, global media fosters intercultural dialogue and inclusivity; on the other, it promotes cultural commodification and Western hegemony. Young people, in particular, oscillate between global digital identities and local cultural expectations.

The role of algorithms in privileging dominant languages (e.g., English) has drawn criticism for marginalizing smaller linguistic communities. However, emerging scholarship (Lee, 2024) shows that AI-based localization tools are beginning to reverse this bias by supporting multilingual accessibility. Cultural identity in the digital age is thus fluid, hybrid, and performative — shaped through participation, representation, and negotiation.

5. Conclusion:

The interplay between globalization and cultural identity is more complex than a simple loss of cultural distinctiveness.

Modern digital media allows for hybrid identities that transcend geographic and linguistic boundaries while reaffirming local voices.

Future research should focus on algorithmic fairness, local content production, and cross-cultural media literacy to promote equity in global media representation.

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