

## Negotiating Tradition and Digitalization: The Cultural Agency of Indigenous Communities in Social Media Adaptation in Indonesia

Paelani Setia<sup>1\*</sup>, Moh. Dulkiah<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Ikhlas Rosele<sup>3</sup>, Kristining Seva<sup>4</sup>, Renatha Aisya Nazwanindya<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yayasan Perspektif Sosiologi Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

<sup>4,5</sup> Parahyangan Catholic University, Bandung, Indonesia

\* Corresponding Author, Email: setiapaelani66@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

This study analyzes how indigenous communities in Indonesia, particularly the Cireundeu Indigenous Community, manage the relationship between tradition and digitalization through practices of cultural agency in the use of social media. The study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design through interviews, participant observation, and analysis of community social media content. The findings show that digital adaptation in Cireundeu occurs through three forms of cultural agency. First, community elders demonstrate a cautious attitude toward social media as an effort to preserve the continuity of cultural values (*resist*). Second, the community adjusts the use of technology to existing customary norms (*negotiate*). Third, younger generations utilize social media for cultural education, tourism promotion, identity representation, and local economic development (*enact*). This process is supported by collaboration among community members, universities, local government institutions, and other digital actors. The study shows that the community does not perceive social media as a threat to tradition. Instead, community members use social media as a medium to reproduce cultural identity and expand the visibility of the indigenous community. This study contributes to the scholarship on indigenous communities and digital transformation by proposing a cultural agency-based digital adaptation model that explains the relationship between tradition and technology within the context of indigenous communities in Indonesia.

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**ABSTRAK**

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*Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bagaimana komunitas adat di Indonesia terutama di Kampung Cireundeu mengelola hubungan antara tradisi dan digitalisasi melalui praktik agensi budaya dalam penggunaan media sosial. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus melalui wawancara, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis konten media sosial komunitas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa adaptasi digital di Kampung Cireundeu berlangsung melalui tiga bentuk agensi budaya. Pertama, kalangan sesepuh menunjukkan sikap kehati-hatian terhadap media sosial sebagai upaya menjaga keberlanjutan nilai budaya (resist). Kedua, komunitas menyesuaikan penggunaan teknologi dengan norma adat yang berlaku (negotiate). Ketiga, generasi muda memanfaatkan media sosial untuk edukasi budaya, promosi wisata, representasi identitas, dan penguatan ekonomi lokal (enact). Proses ini didukung oleh kolaborasi antara komunitas, perguruan tinggi, pemerintah daerah, dan aktor digital lainnya. Studi menunjukkan bahwa media sosial tidak dipandang sebagai ancaman terhadap tradisi, melainkan sebagai medium untuk mereproduksi identitas budaya dan memperluas visibilitas komunitas adat. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kajian masyarakat adat dan transformasi digital melalui model adaptasi digital berbasis agensi budaya yang menjelaskan relasi antara tradisi dan teknologi dalam konteks komunitas adat Indonesia.*

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

Digitalization has become one of the key agendas in rural development in Indonesia. By 2024, approximately 14,000 villages had adopted various forms of information and communication technology (ICT) to improve public services, strengthen local economies, and expand public access to information (Masterplan Desa, 2025). This phenomenon forms part of a broader global digital transformation that has not only altered governance systems but also influenced the social and cultural practices of local communities. In this context, an important question emerges regarding how indigenous communities, which are widely recognized for maintaining strong cultural traditions and values, respond to the presence of digital technologies, particularly social media.

Globally, studies have shown that indigenous communities increasingly utilize digital technologies for various purposes, ranging from cultural preservation and the documentation of traditional knowledge to economic promotion and social advocacy (Liang & Shuang, 2017; Sun et al., 2020; Wu & Huang, 2021). In many rural areas, communities also employ digital technologies to expand market access, enhance social participation, and support local community revitalization (Khoir & Davison, 2018; Mao et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2025). Nevertheless, digitalization does not always proceed without challenges. Infrastructure gaps, limited digital literacy, and concerns about cultural erosion remain major obstacles faced by many indigenous communities across different parts of the world (Mazyra & Kolopaking, 2021; Sheila & Fahmi, 2024).

The literature on indigenous communities and digital technology reveals at least three major trends. First, scholars commonly view social media as a tool for cultural preservation and the strengthening of indigenous identities. Numerous studies demonstrate that digital media enable local communities to document traditional knowledge, preserve local languages, and construct independent cultural representations within digital public spaces (Botangen et al., 2018; Duarte, 2017; Nzeaka & Ehondor, 2024; Tella et al., 2025). Second, scholars position social media as an instrument of advocacy

and resistance against state domination and economic actors that may threaten indigenous rights to land, resources, and cultural identities (Duarte, 2017; Lupien et al., 2024; Raynauld et al., 2018). This perspective aligns with studies showing that indigenous peoples in Indonesia continue to face structural challenges related to legal recognition, cultural rights protection, and development pressures that may undermine the sustainability of indigenous communities (Buana, 2020; Colbran, 2011; Fahmi, 2024; Kadir, 2019; Persoon, 1998). Third, several studies emphasize the role of younger generations as key actors who bridge local values and digital transformation through digital literacy practices, cultural promotion, and community-based creative economic initiatives (Indainanto et al., 2024; Khoir & Davison, 2018; Permatasari et al., 2020).

Despite these developments, scholarship on the relationship between indigenous communities and social media in Indonesia continues to focus primarily on cultural preservation, community empowerment, and the protection of indigenous rights within the context of development and state policies (Buana, 2020; Colbran, 2011; Fahmi, 2024; Indainanto et al., 2024; Kadir, 2019; Khoir & Davison, 2018; Permatasari et al., 2020; Persoon, 1998). Studies that specifically examine how indigenous communities act as cultural agents who actively shape, negotiate, and direct the use of social media according to local values remain relatively limited. Yet digital adaptation involves more than access to technology; it also involves a community's capacity to determine the meaning, purpose, and boundaries of technological use. From the perspective of cultural agency, scholars do not view communities as passive objects of digital modernization. Instead, they view communities as active subjects capable of preserving, interpreting, and shaping responses to social change according to their cultural interests (Ortner, 2006). This research gap is evident in the limited number of studies examining how indigenous communities in Indonesia manage the relationship between tradition and digitalization through cultural agency in social media use.

The Cireundeu Indigenous Community in Cimahi City, West Java, provides an interesting case through which to address this issue. The community is widely known as one of the *Sunda Wiwitan* indigenous communities that continues to preserve various local cultural practices, including a cassava-based staple food system (*rasi*), ancestral values, and social traditions transmitted across generations (Sunarya, 1998). At the same time, the Cireundeu community demonstrates openness to social change through the principle of *Ngindung Ka Waktu, Mibapa Ka Jaman* (living in harmony with the times and adapting to the changing era), which emphasizes preserving ancestral heritage while adapting to contemporary developments (Pemerintah Daerah Kota Cimahi, 2019). Social media has created new opportunities for the community to expand cultural representation, strengthen the local economy, and build broader social networks. This situation raises an important question regarding how indigenous communities manage the relationship between tradition and digitalization without losing the cultural identity they seek to preserve.

Based on this research gap, this article aims to analyze how indigenous communities manage the relationship between tradition and digitalization through practices of cultural agency in social media use, with the Cireundeu Indigenous Community serving as a case study. Specifically, this study examines community attitudes toward social media, the forms of social media utilization in social and cultural life, and the actors involved in the process of digital adaptation. Drawing on Ortner's (2006) concept of cultural agency, this article argues that indigenous responses to social media cannot be understood solely as acceptance or rejection of technology. Instead, the Cireundeu community exercises cultural agency through three interconnected mechanisms: protect (maintaining cultural boundaries when engaging with digital technology), negotiate (adapting social media use to community norms and interests), and enact (using social media to display, reproduce, and strengthen cultural identity). Through these processes, social media functions not as a threat to tradition but as a new arena through which communities preserve, represent, and revitalize local culture amid ongoing digitalization.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The unit of analysis in this study is the Cireundeu Indigenous Community, located in South Cimahi District, Cimahi City, West Java, Indonesia. This study focuses on social media practices within

the indigenous community, particularly on how community members manage the relationship between tradition and digitalization through various forms of cultural agency. The researchers selected Cireundeu as a case study because it represents an indigenous community that maintains a strong local cultural identity while actively engaging with digital spaces.

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design (Yin, 2009). The qualitative approach enables the researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the meanings, experiences, and social practices underlying social media use within the indigenous community (Samosir et al., 2023). The case study design allows the researchers to examine contextually the dynamics of digital adaptation occurring in Cireundeu as a community situated at the intersection of cultural preservation and digital technological development.

The study utilizes both primary and secondary data sources. The researchers collected primary data through interviews with indigenous leaders, younger community members, and individuals involved in managing community social media platforms. Secondary data consist of documents, publications related to the Cireundeu Indigenous Community, and digital content published through community social media accounts, including @visitcireundeu and @cireundeuvillage\_.

The researchers collected data through interviews, participant observation, and digital documentation. Interviews explored participants' views regarding social media use, the meaning of digital technology, and strategies for preserving cultural values within digital spaces. The researchers conducted direct observations in Cireundeu on May 30 and June 9, 2025, to understand the social and cultural contexts underlying the community's digital practices. In addition, the researchers carried out digital documentation by collecting and examining social media posts that represented cultural activities, community identity, and interactions between community members and digital audiences.

The researchers analyzed the data using thematic analysis through three stages. The first stage involved open coding to identify important concepts and information derived from interviews, observations, and documentation. The second stage involved categorizing the data into themes that emerged from the field. The third stage involved thematic interpretation using Ortner's (2006) cultural agency perspective to understand how the community practices protect, negotiate, and enact mechanisms in responding to social media and managing the relationship between tradition and digitalization.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Community Attitudes toward Social Media

The Cireundeu Indigenous Village is a *Sunda Wiwitan* indigenous community that continues to preserve various local cultural practices amid ongoing modernization. One of the core principles that guides community life is *Ngindung Ka Waktu, Mibapa Ka Jaman*, which means preserving ancestral heritage while adapting to changing times (Sunarya, 1998). This principle shapes how community members perceive social change, including the emergence of digital technology and social media. Rather than viewing technology as a threat that must be completely rejected, community members regard it as part of social change that requires a careful response in accordance with prevailing customary values and norms.

Community responses to social media are not uniform. Elders generally demonstrate a cautious attitude because they worry that digital technology may weaken younger generations' attachment to local traditions. However, this attitude does not reflect a complete rejection of modernity. Several elders acknowledge that community members may use technology as long as it does not interfere with customary values that have been transmitted across generations (Interview with Kang Yana, May 30, 2025). For this group, social media remains acceptable as long as it operates within cultural boundaries that they consider essential for the continuity of the community.

Younger generations demonstrate a different orientation. They view social media as a strategic instrument for introducing Cireundeu's cultural identity to a broader audience. Through accounts such as @visitcireundeu and @cireundeuvillage\_, community members regularly document and publish various customary activities, ranging from the production of *rasi*, cultural rituals, and the promotion of the indigenous settlement as a cultural tourism destination. This practice expanded significantly after

the COVID-19 pandemic, when the need for digital communication and online visibility increased considerably. Unlike older generations, who emphasize cultural protection, younger community members view social media as an opportunity to broaden the reach of local culture without abandoning their indigenous identity.

**Figure 1. Documentation of *Rasi* Production on Social Media**



Source: Instagram, 2025.

Differences in perspectives between generations have not developed into open conflict. Instead, community members have established a process of adjustment that allows them to accept technology within specific limits. Community members use social media as long as it does not contradict customary norms or alter cultural practices that they consider fundamental to the continuity of the community. In this context, technology does not transform culture unilaterally; rather, community members place it within a framework of values that has long existed within the community.

This pattern is evident in the content that the community produces on social media. Most posts do not focus on the personal lives of individual residents. Instead, they emphasize representations of the community's collective identity. Documentation of *rasi* production, customary rituals, indigenous forests, and other cultural activities demonstrates a deliberate effort to introduce and strengthen Cireundeu's identity in digital spaces. Social media serves as a means of re-presenting local cultural values in formats that broader audiences can easily access without losing their cultural significance.

**Figure 2. Cultural Activities in Cireundeu Published on Social Media**



Source: Instagram, 2025.

Overall, community attitudes toward social media reveal three major tendencies. First, elders demonstrate cultural caution when responding to digital technological developments. Second, community members practice selective acceptance by allowing social media use as long as it does not contradict customary norms. Third, younger generations serve as intermediaries between tradition and technology through the production of various forms of cultural content in digital spaces. These three tendencies indicate that digital adaptation in Cireundeu occurs through an active process of cultural management. Consequently, community members do not perceive social media as a threat to tradition; instead, they regard it as a new medium for expanding the representation and continuity of the community’s cultural identity.

### Purpose of Social Media Use

Social media has become an important part of the social and cultural life of the Cireundeu community. The principle of *Ngindung Ka Waktu, Mibapa Ka Jaman* enables community members to adopt digital technology without abandoning the cultural identity they continue to preserve (Sunarya, 1998). For the people of Cireundeu, social media serves as a means to expand the reach of local culture while strengthening the community’s presence amid the rapid development of information technology.

This orientation is evident in the various digital activities carried out by the community. Community members regularly document and publish customary activities, including the production of *rasi* as the community’s staple food, through the @visitcireundeu and @cireundeuvillage\_ accounts. These forms of documentation function not only as community archives but also as channels for disseminating cultural information to wider audiences. Through social media, cultural practices that were previously witnessed only by local residents or visitors can now reach a much larger audience.

Figure 3. The @visitcireundeu Social Media Account



Source: Instagram, 2025.

Figure 4. The @cireundeuvillage\_ Social Media Account



Source: Instagram, 2025.

Education constitutes one of the primary purposes of social media use in Cireundeu. Most posts not only display cultural activities but also explain the community's philosophy of life, *rasi*-based food practices, environmental management, and various other customary traditions. Through this approach, community members use social media to introduce Cireundeu's cultural identity while reducing stereotypes that are often associated with indigenous communities. They present themselves as a community that preserves tradition while remaining capable of adapting to contemporary developments.

In addition to serving as a medium for cultural education, social media also supports local economic activities. The @visitcireundeu account consistently promotes cassava-based products (see Figure 5), cultural tourism activities, and various economic initiatives managed by community members. These digital activities connect directly with the village cooperative, which markets traditional foods, *rasi*-based products, and various souvenirs for visitors. In this context, social media functions as a promotional tool that expands the economic visibility of the community beyond the boundaries of Cireundeu.

**Figure 5. Food Products from Cireundeu Village**



**Source: Personal Documentation, 2025.**

Young people play a crucial role in this process. They act not only as social media users but also as managers and producers of cultural content. Through posts featuring customary rituals, local food traditions, community activities, and the ecological landscape of the village, young people actively construct an image of Cireundeu as an indigenous community that remains rooted in tradition while embracing technological development (Interview with IW, June 9, 2025). Their involvement enables local cultural values to be translated into digital formats that diverse audiences can more easily understand.

Overall, social media use in Cireundeu serves three primary purposes. First, it functions as a medium for cultural education by disseminating information about indigenous values, traditions, and philosophies of life. Second, it acts as an instrument for strengthening the local economy through the promotion of community-based products and cultural tourism. Third, it serves as a medium of identity representation that enables community members to construct and communicate their own cultural narratives in digital spaces. Through these functions, social media becomes more than a communication tool; it serves as an important platform for expanding cultural visibility and strengthening community sustainability in the digital era.

### **Intermediaries and Actors in Community Digitalization**

Digital adaptation in the Cireundeu Indigenous Village did not emerge spontaneously, nor was it driven solely by technological development. The findings indicate that various actors shaped this process by serving as intermediaries between the indigenous community and digital spaces. Although the people of Cireundeu have long embraced a philosophical foundation that supports openness to

change through the principle of *Mibapa Ka Jaman*, mastering digital technology requires knowledge, skills, and networks that are not always available within the community itself (Sunarya, 1998). In this context, digitalization has developed through a collaborative process that connects local and external actors in an effort to expand the cultural representation of Cireundeu in digital public spaces.

Higher education institutions constitute one of the most important actors in this process. According to community members, several universities, including Universitas Padjadjaran, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, and Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta, have participated in social media training, video production workshops, digital content management programs, and the development of communication strategies based on local culture (Interview with Kang Yana, May 30, 2025). These activities focus not only on improving technical skills but also on emphasizing the importance of maintaining local cultural narratives in every piece of content produced. As a result, the transfer of digital knowledge occurs alongside efforts to preserve the community's cultural identity.

In addition to educational institutions, local government also plays a significant role in expanding the visibility of Cireundeu's culture. The organization of the Cireundeu Festival 2024 provides a clear example of how the government has connected local cultural activities with broader digital promotional spaces (PPID Kota Cimahi, 2024). Various programs, including cultural dialogues, traditional art performances, cultural tourism activities, and local product exhibitions, have taken place not only in physical venues but also across social media platforms and public digital channels. Through this mechanism, local culture extends beyond internal community consumption and becomes part of information circulation that reaches regional and national audiences.

Influencers and local social media managers also make significant contributions to the digitalization process. Collaborations with accounts such as @infocimahi, @shafaalifias, and several travel-content creators have expanded public access to information about Cireundeu. These actors serve as bridges between the indigenous community and digital audiences that conventional communication channels previously struggled to reach. Nevertheless, the findings show that the community maintains control over the cultural narratives being disseminated. Influencers help expand the distribution of information, while community members themselves determine the cultural substance presented to audiences. This pattern demonstrates that digital collaboration operates within a framework controlled by the community rather than through the dominance of external actors.

Young people in Cireundeu play an equally important role through their management of community accounts such as @visitcireundeu and @cireundeuvillage\_. They function as cultural mediators who translate customary values into digital communication formats that contemporary audiences can easily understand. Through the production of photographs, videos, and educational content, they act not only as technology users but also as active producers of cultural knowledge. In this position, they bridge two worlds that are often perceived as contradictory: indigenous tradition and digital technology. Their presence has become a crucial factor that enables digital adaptation to occur without severing the community's connection to its cultural roots.

**Table 1. Supporting Actors in the Digital Adaptation of the Cireundeu Indigenous Community**

<b>Actor</b>	<b>Role in Digital Adaptation</b>
Higher Education Institutions	Provide social media training, digital content production, video management, and communication strategies based on local culture to strengthen the community's digital capacity.
Local Government	Facilitate cultural promotion through various public programs and activities, including the Cireundeu Festival, while expanding community visibility through digital channels and cultural tourism initiatives.
Influencers and Social Media Managers	Expand the reach of information and promotional content about Cireundeu through digital content distribution while helping build the image of the indigenous community in digital public spaces.

The impact of this collaborative network appears in the growing visibility of Cireundeu in public spaces. Community members report that increasing numbers of schools, universities, community organizations, and tourists have visited the village to learn about local cultural practices after obtaining information through social media (Interview with Kang Yana, May 30, 2025). These visits have also generated economic benefits by increasing demand for *rasi*-based products, souvenirs, and various community-based tourism services. Consequently, social media has produced not only symbolic benefits in the form of cultural recognition but also tangible economic benefits for local residents.

These findings indicate that digitalization in Cireundeu results from a mediation process involving multiple actors with distinct yet complementary roles. Universities provide digital knowledge and skills, local government expands institutional support and cultural promotion, influencers broaden audience reach, and young people serve as cultural translators in digital spaces. From the perspective of cultural agency, these collaborative networks do not diminish the autonomy of the indigenous community. Instead, they strengthen the community's capacity to negotiate social and technological change while maintaining control over its cultural representation. Therefore, the success of digital adaptation in Cireundeu cannot be explained solely by the presence of social media. Rather, it reflects the community's ability to build collaborative relationships that enable it to remain the primary actor in the representation of its culture in the digital era.

## Discussion

This study demonstrates that digital adaptation in the Cireundeu Indigenous Village does not occur through a pattern of absolute acceptance or rejection of technology. Instead, the Cireundeu community manages the relationship between tradition and digitalization through practices of cultural agency that allow community members to preserve customary values while taking advantage of the opportunities offered by social media. The findings reveal three major patterns. First, elders perform a cultural protection function through their cautious attitude toward digital technology. Second, community members negotiate the use of social media by aligning it with community norms and interests. Third, they actively use social media to represent cultural identity, expand public education, and support local economic development. These findings indicate that digital technology does not automatically transform local culture; rather, it becomes part of an ongoing social process that indigenous communities continuously manage and interpret.

From the perspective of cultural agency, scholars do not view communities as passive objects that merely receive the impacts of modernization. Instead, communities act as agents that possess the capacity to interpret, direct, and manage social change according to their cultural interests (Ortner, 2006). In the context of Cireundeu, this capacity is reflected in the principle of *Ngindung Ka Waktu, Mibapa Ka Jaman*, which allows community members to preserve their ancestral cultural heritage while adapting to contemporary developments. This principle serves as a cultural foundation that explains why community members do not perceive social media as a threat to customary traditions. Instead, they regard it as a technology that they can utilize as long as it remains within the framework of values recognized by the community.

One of the most significant findings of this study concerns the cautious attitude displayed by community elders toward social media use. Their caution is directed not at technology itself but at the possibility that digital technology may weaken younger generations' attachment to cultural practices that have long formed the foundation of community life. Therefore, this response is better understood as a form of cultural protection rather than a rejection of modernity. This finding aligns with studies on indigenous communities that show how local communities frequently develop mechanisms of cultural protection when responding to social change originating from outside the community (Colbran, 2011; Persoon, 1998). In Indonesia, such protection has become increasingly important because indigenous peoples continue to face challenges related to rights recognition, cultural sustainability, and development pressures that may alter community social structures

(Buana, 2020; Fahmi, 2024; Kadir, 2019). Consequently, the caution demonstrated by Cireundeu elders can be understood as a form of cultural agency that functions to safeguard customary values amid rapid technological change.

At the same time, cultural protection does not evolve into a rejection of social media. Instead, the Cireundeu community engages in a process of negotiation that allows technology to be accepted within boundaries that align with customary norms. Community members use social media as long as it does not disrupt cultural practices that they consider fundamental to community continuity. This finding demonstrates that community members possess the capacity to determine their own forms of engagement in digital spaces. In other words, technology does not occupy a position above culture; rather, community members adapt it to an existing framework of values. This phenomenon challenges modernization perspectives that assume technological development will gradually erode traditional culture. On the contrary, the Cireundeu case demonstrates that indigenous communities can actively negotiate the social and technological changes they encounter. This result is consistent with studies on digital transformation in rural areas that show successful technology adoption depends heavily on local communities' ability to adapt technology to their own needs and values (Mao et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2025).

The findings also reveal that social media has evolved into an important arena for the reproduction of community cultural identity. Posts documenting *rasi* production, customary rituals, ecological landscapes, and other cultural activities demonstrate a conscious effort to construct cultural representation in digital spaces. In this context, social media functions not only as a communication tool but also as a medium for cultural education and the documentation of local knowledge. This finding is consistent with studies showing that indigenous communities increasingly use digital technologies for cultural preservation, the documentation of traditional knowledge, and the strengthening of collective identity (Liang & Shuang, 2017; Sun et al., 2020; Wu & Huang, 2021). Other studies have similarly demonstrated that social media can provide a space for local communities to independently construct cultural representation, preserve language, and expand cultural visibility in digital public spheres (Ajani et al., 2024; Boamah & Liew, 2016; Nzeaka & Ehondor, 2024; Tella et al., 2025). In the case of Cireundeu, community members do not present culture as a static artifact of the past. Instead, they present it as a living practice that they continuously reproduce and enact in everyday life.

In addition to functioning as a medium of cultural representation, social media also contributes to local economic strengthening. The promotion of cultural tourism, *rasi*-based products, and various community activities through social media expands the economic visibility of the Cireundeu Indigenous Village. These digital activities connect directly with community economic initiatives, including the village cooperative that markets local food products and souvenirs to visitors. This finding indicates that digitalization within indigenous communities extends beyond cultural preservation and also serves as a strategy for local economic development based on cultural identity. Thus, culture and economy do not operate separately; instead, they reinforce one another through digital spaces.

The success of digital adaptation in Cireundeu cannot be separated from the role of younger generations and various external actors involved in the community's digitalization process. Young people function as cultural mediators who translate customary values into digital communication formats that broader audiences can easily understand. They manage community social media accounts, produce cultural content, and construct digital narratives that strengthen Cireundeu's identity. This finding aligns with studies that position young people as bridges between local values and digital transformation in rural communities (Indainanto et al., 2024; Khoir & Davison, 2018; Permatasari et al., 2020). Furthermore, the involvement of universities, local governments, and social media influencers demonstrates that indigenous community digitalization develops through complex collaborative networks. These actors provide training, expand promotional reach, and strengthen community digital capacity without taking over cultural authority, which remains in the hands of the indigenous community.

These findings demonstrate that indigenous community digital adaptation does not occur through a passive model of cultural preservation. Instead, the people of Cireundeu actively manage the relationship between tradition and digitalization through practices of cultural protection, social negotiation, and identity reproduction in digital spaces. Unlike previous studies that primarily position social media as an instrument of cultural preservation (Ajani et al., 2024; Tella et al., 2025) or as a medium for political advocacy and resistance against states and corporations (Duarte, 2017; Lupien et al., 2024; Raynauld et al., 2018), this study demonstrates that social media can simultaneously function as an arena for cultural protection, social negotiation, identity representation, and local economic strengthening.

From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the application of Ortner's (2006) concept of cultural agency within the context of Indonesian indigenous communities. The study demonstrates that responses to digitalization occur through three interconnected mechanisms: protect, negotiate, and enact. These mechanisms explain how indigenous communities do not merely become objects of technological change; rather, they act as agents who actively shape the direction of digitalization according to the cultural values they maintain. Accordingly, this article proposes a cultural agency-based model of digital adaptation that can help scholars understand the experiences of other indigenous communities confronting digital transformation in the contemporary era.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Cireundeu Indigenous Village community does not respond to social media through a pattern of absolute acceptance or rejection. Instead, community members engage in a selective process of digital adaptation through practices of cultural agency that are reflected in three primary mechanisms: resist, negotiate, and enact. Community elders demonstrate resistance through their cautious attitude toward digital technology as an effort to preserve the continuity of customary values. At the same time, the community engages in negotiation by accepting social media use as long as it does not contradict the cultural norms they maintain. Meanwhile, younger generations enact cultural agency by using social media to represent cultural identity, disseminate local knowledge, promote cultural tourism, and strengthen the community's economy. Universities, local governments, and various digital actors support this process by strengthening the community's capacity to manage digital spaces. Consequently, social media does not function as a threat to the continuity of indigenous traditions. Instead, it serves as a new medium through which local culture can be represented, negotiated, and reproduced in the digital era.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the scholarship on indigenous communities and digital transformation by applying the cultural agency perspective within the context of Indonesian indigenous communities. Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasize cultural preservation or resistance to modernization, this study demonstrates that indigenous community responses to digitalization emerge through a dynamic interaction among cultural protection, social negotiation, and the reproduction of cultural identity. These findings generate a cultural agency-based model of digital adaptation that explains how indigenous communities retain the capacity to determine the forms, purposes, and boundaries of technology use according to the values they preserve. This model demonstrates that tradition and technology do not necessarily exist in an antagonistic relationship. Instead, they can coexist through ongoing processes of negotiation.

This study has several limitations. First, the research focuses on a single indigenous community; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all indigenous communities in Indonesia, which possess diverse social and cultural characteristics. Second, the study concentrates primarily on social media practices and does not explore in depth the dynamics of digital algorithms, audience interaction patterns, or the long-term effects of social media use on the cultural transformation of younger generations. Future research can address these limitations by

conducting comparative studies across multiple indigenous communities in Indonesia and by developing more comprehensive digital ethnographic approaches to examine the relationships among cultural identity, digital participation, and social change in contemporary indigenous societies.

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