

CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION: A CONCEPTUAL PAPER ON NEGOTIATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY AMONG YOUTH IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia is well known for its rich tapestry of ethnicities and culture and is now experiencing a significant shift due to globalization. This increased interconnectedness brings a flow of global cultural influences, particularly impacting the nation's youth. The conceptual paper explores the complex negotiation process of Malaysian youth as they navigate global culture against their own ethnic heritage and national identity. The constant exposure to Western trends and homogenizing forces raises questions on potential erosion of the local culture practices and traditions. It also presents challenges to the formation of stable cultural identity. Malaysian youth, particularly those residing in urban areas with easy access to social media and trends, find themselves negotiating between their ethnic traditions and the allure of global pop culture. This research delves into how young Malaysians navigate this complex landscape, grappling with the question: How do they negotiate their cultural identities in the face of cultural globalization? Specifically, it seeks to identify the key influences of global culture among Malaysian youth including media consumption, fashion trends and others and examine the strategies employed to negotiate their cultural identities. To further understand the phenomenon, Identity Negotiation Theory is applied. This theory proposes that individuals actively construct and negotiate their identities through social interactions. It emphasizes the interplay between personal and social self-views. For future research agenda, a qualitative method will be employed to offer a nuanced perspective on the multifaceted relationship between cultural globalization and identity formation among youth. This research is able to contribute to the discourse on cultural globalization and cultural identity among youth in Malaysia.

Keywords: Global culture, global media, value negotiation, media influence, cultural hybridization

ABSTRAK

Malaysia terkenal dan kaya dengan etnik dan budaya dan kini mengalami perubahan ketara disebabkan globalisasi. Peningkatan kaitan antara budaya dan globalisasi ini membawa aliran pengaruh budaya global, terutamanya memberi kesan kepada golongan belia. Kertas konsep ini meneroka proses rundingan kompleks oleh golongan belia di Malaysia semasa mereka mengemudi budaya global di samping warisan etnik dan identiti kebangsaan mereka sendiri. Pendedahan berterusan kepada aliran Barat dan kuasa homogenisasi menimbulkan persoalan tentang potensi penghakisan amalan dan tradisi budaya tempatan. Ia juga memberikan cabaran kepada pembentukan identiti budaya yang stabil. Golongan belia di Malaysia, terutamanya mereka yang tinggal di kawasan bandar dengan akses yang mudah kepada media sosial dan trend, mendapati diri mereka berunding antara tradisi etnik mereka dan daya tarikan budaya pop global. Penyelidikan ini menyelidiki cara anak muda di Malaysia melayari landskap yang kompleks ini, bergelut dengan persoalan: Bagaimana mereka merundingkan identiti budaya dalam menghadapi globalisasi budaya? Secara khusus, ia bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti pengaruh utama budaya global dalam kalangan belia di Malaysia termasuk penggunaan media, trend fesyen dan lain-lain dan mengkaji strategi yang digunakan untuk merundingkan identiti budaya mereka. Untuk lebih memahami fenomena tersebut, Teori Perundingan Identiti telah diaplikasikan. Teori ini mencadangkan individu secara aktif membangunkan dan merundingkan identiti mereka melalui interaksi sosial. Ia menekankan interaksi antara pandangan diri peribadi dan sosial. Untuk penyelidikan masa depan, kaedah kualitatif akan digunakan untuk menawarkan perspektif bernuansa tentang hubungan yang pelbagai antara globalisasi budaya dan pembentukan identiti dalam kalangan belia. Penyelidikan ini mampu menyumbang kepada wacana globalisasi dan identiti budaya dalam kalangan belia di Malaysia.

Kata kunci: Budaya global, media global, rundingan nilai, pengaruh media, penghibridan budaya

1.0 Introduction

Globalization has profoundly transformed the world, significantly shaping contemporary society. Over the past 30 years, the globalization paradigm has had a significant impact on communication studies and social sciences (Flew, 2020). This phenomenon has facilitated daily activities including easier travel, communication, and cross border business activities. Particularly, the impact of globalization extends beyond economic and technological advancements where it also influences social, political and cultural landscape. For instance, the advent of technologies like the Internet, social networks, and mobile phones has facilitated global interactions, enabling individuals to connect with others worldwide (Cosenza, Gavidia & Gonza'lez-Avella, 2020). It has also enabled the exchange of ideas, traditions, and innovations, contributing to a dynamic and evolving global culture.

According to Hopper (2007), cultural globalization refers to the sharing of cultural symbols among individuals worldwide, which results in the development of common standards and behaviors that people link with their own unique identities and shared culture (Cosenza, Gavidia & Gonza'lez-Avella, 2020). In the contemporary era, cultural globalization has emerged as a powerful force in shaping societies around us (Taptiani et al., 2024). The process of cultural globalization is characterized by the widespread dissemination of cultural products, practices, and values across national borders, leading to increased interconnectedness and interdependence among diverse cultures (Kamran et al., 2023). It has also been a popular topic of debate among scholars in the idea of cultural homogenization and hybridity due to cultural globalization.

The impact of cultural globalization is particularly distinct among youth, who are often at the forefront of adopting and adapting to global cultural trends (Ozer, 2019). As digital natives, youth are highly engaged with social media, entertainment, and other forms of digital communication which serves as conduits for global culture. This exposure to a myriad of cultural influences can significantly shape their identities, values, and worldviews (Sutrisno, 2023). The pervasive presence of global culture in their daily lives can lead to both opportunities and challenges, as they navigate the complexities of maintaining their cultural identity while embracing new and globalized identities (Ozer, 2019). A society's cultural identity is a multifaceted tapestry, composed of values, traditions, language nuances, norms, and collective beliefs that shape its distinctive lens on the world (Sutrisno, 2023).

Malaysia faces significant challenges in preserving the cultural identity of its diverse population. As a multiracial and religion nation, it is home to numerous ethnic groups with the largest population being Malay, Chinese and Indian (Ng & Lee, 2024). According to the population data by the Malaysian Department of Statistics, the media has steadily influenced Malaysians over time (Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commissions, 2019). While Malaysians strive to maintain their cultural identities, they are increasingly blending into the global culture through media contents (Ng & Lee, 2024; Yusof & Esmaeil, 2017). This situation is particularly evident among youth, who find themselves in a conflicted state of mind regarding their cultural identities due to media influence. Cultural integration through media can lead to the dilution of individual cultural identities as they merge their identity with others (Ng & Lee, 2024).

Moreover, the influence of cultural globalization on youth is complex, affecting various aspects of their lives, including language, fashion, music and social norms (Taptiani et al., 2024). For instance, the widespread popularity of global music genres and fashion trends can lead to the adoption of new styles and behaviors that may differ significantly from traditional cultural practices. This can create a sense of cultural hybridity, where elements of local and global culture are blended, resulting in unique and hybrid identities. This shift in values, beliefs, and lifestyle choices often leads to cultural hybridization or tensions between local traditions and global trends. However, this blending process is not always seamless and can sometimes lead to cultural dissonance, where young individuals struggle to reconcile conflicting cultural values and expectations.

In a rapidly globalized world, youth continuously negotiate their cultural identities (Al-Dwakat, Al-Dwaikat, & Alolabi, 2023). This involves a delicate balance between preserving traditional values and integrating global influences. The ability to successfully navigate this cultural negotiation is crucial for youth as they seek to establish a sense of belonging and identity in an increasingly globalized society. This negotiation can lead to several outcomes where some youth might fully embrace global trends, while others might resist and cling onto a stronger local culture and identity. In spite of that, some youth might blend both global trends and local culture to form a new hybrid identity that allows them to fit in different cultural contexts. Thus, this conceptual paper explores the various ways in which youth engage in this negotiation of cultural identity, examining the factors that influence their choices and the outcomes of their efforts.

Furthermore, the negotiation of cultural identity among youth is influenced by various external factors

including family, peers, educational institutions, and media (Ozer, 2019). Family and community play a significant role in transmitting cultural values and traditions, while peers and educational institutions often serve as avenues where global cultural influences are encountered and negotiated. Media, particularly social media, acts as a powerful platform for the exchange of cultural ideas and practices, enabling youth to connect with global trends and communities (Sutrisno, 2023). Understanding the interplay of these factors is essential for comprehending how youth navigate their cultural identities in a globalized world.

In association with the background stated, this study aims to understand the complex processes by which Malaysian youth construct and negotiate their cultural identities in the face of cultural globalization. Specifically, it seeks to: 1) identify the key influences of global culture in Malaysian youth including media consumption, fashion trends and music preferences and 2) examine the strategies employed by Malaysian youth to negotiate their cultural identities.

2.0 Literature Review

Cultural Globalization

Cultural globalization is a complex process involving the interconnectedness of culture around the world through the exchange of ideas, values, practices, and artifacts (Peng, 2023). It brings together disparate cultural domains and streams, resulting in both homogenization, hybridity and heterogeneity. Moreover, it is also defined as the process in which different culture influence one another and become more alike through trade, immigration and the exchange of information and ideas. Cultural globalization has intense implications for individuals and communities, especially those who are much exposed to this process. This process often includes

the dissemination of Western cultural norms, lifestyles, and market economies, which can lead to the erosion of indigenous cultural identities and more.

Mass media plays a significant role in shaping and disseminating global culture. It facilitates cultural interaction, information sharing, and the convergence of popular trends across different countries (Ivashchenko, 2022). This can be clearly seen in Malaysia where media content from all over the world are easily accessed. Diversified contents of global media are available through Netflix, Spotify, YouTube, TikTok, South Korean dramas, Japanese Manga and more. In a globalized society, mass media can significantly influence collective behavior, particularly when influenced by dominant cultural groups (Cosenza, Gavidia & Gonza'lez-Avella, 2020). The globalization of the media and entertainment industry has led to the formation of large international conglomerates which can drive global cultural homogenization (Taptiani, et al., 2024). Hermans and Dimaggio (2007) argued that the ambiguity created by globalization can lead individuals and groups to seek localization as a counterforce (Kamran et al., 2023). Jensen (2003) suggests that globalization presents both risks and opportunities for young people as they navigate the formation of their cultural identities. The advent of the information age in the late 20th century ushered in the revolutionary technology of the Internet, surpassing the imagination of previous generations. This technological advancement has a profound impact on the globalization process, including in Malaysia. In the context of music and entertainment industries, fans, users, and consumers now have unprecedented access to digital content, including the ability to download songs and movies both legally and illegally from the Internet (Awang Pawi et al., 2020).

The expansion of mass media, which has facilitated the consumption and exchange of cultural

goods worldwide, is another indicator of the cultural aspects of globalization (Appadurai, 2016). Awang Pawi et al. (2020) in their thorough research on the globalization effect on Malaysian cultural life has identified that in the context of globalization, the Malaysian entertainment landscape has been significantly influenced by the production of soap operas from various regions, including the United States of America, South Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan, and Latin America. Prior to this, Japanese series like "Oshin" and "Rin Hanne Konma" had already made a significant impact on the Malaysian audience in the 1980s. The Korean Wave (Hallyu) emerged with the airing of "Winter Sonata" followed by a wave of other popular Korean dramas and as a result, has elevated South Korea to a global tourist destination. While these foreign dramas offer entertainment and catharsis, they also serve as vehicles for cultural exchange and consumerism. Advertisers and multinational corporations often utilize these programs to promote their products and increase sales. Not only that, Awang Pawi et al., (2020) also emphasized that the global media flow from all parts of the world also contributed to the popularity of fashion trends, lifestyles, and values while also showcasing the power dynamics and manipulation often portrayed in Western media.

The studies of cultural globalization have examined the complex interplay of cultural homogeneity and hybridization resulting from cross cultural exchange (Tuncer, 2023). Tuncer (2023) highlighted that globalization has fostered significant cultural exchanges and interactions, leading to both cultural convergence and hybridization. The global dissemination of products, music, film, and fashion exemplifies these cross-cultural influences. As a result, globalization has impacted various aspects of society, including economics, culture, and social life. Globalization's contradictory nature too can lead to

both homogenization and heterogenization cultural outcomes, as forces of integration and fragmentation co-exist.

Globalization has a profound impact on individuals' sense of self and identity (Bearce, Mc Leer & Stallman, 2023). Today's young people face a more complex environment when making decisions about their values, beliefs, and ideologies due to the increasing integration of local and foreign values in various aspects of life, including classrooms, workplaces, hotels, concert venues, television, and the Internet (Kamran et al., 2023). Youth are often exposed to the values, standards, and practices of cultures that they have never directly experienced. Due to this, it has empowered youth to explore and embrace multiple cultural influences. They are able to connect with peers or even anyone from around the world through platforms like social media and share experiences and ideas that transcend national borders. This exposure can lead to a more cosmopolitan worldview, fostering tolerance and understanding of different culture. On the other hand, cultural globalization can also pose challenges to cultural identity (Taptiani et al., 2024). As discussed above, the dominance of global media, especially from the West, can erode the uniqueness of local traditions and customs. This can create a cultural displacement or loss among youth who are struggling to reconcile with their traditional heritage.

Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is deeply rooted in one's cultural background, often shaped by the specific country or region where an individual was raised (Yunita, Setyari & Safitri, 2022). It serves as a guiding framework for understanding one's own identity, drawing upon personal and collective memories. Another definition of cultural identity refers to the sense of belonging to a group that shares a similar cultural trait such as language, traditions,

and values (Radwan, 2022). It is a crucial aspect of an individual's self-concept and social identity. In recent years, the rapid advancement of global media and cultural change has posed significant challenges to the preservation and evolution of cultural identities. This literature explores the arguments supporting the importance of cultural identity and examines how global media and cultural globalization threaten its integrity.

Cultural identity is a versatile construct that encompasses various dimensions including ethnicity, nationality, religion, and language. It provides individuals with a sense of continuity, belonging, and purpose. According to Hall (1990), cultural identity is not a fixed essence but a dynamic process of becoming, that is shaped by historical, social, and political contexts. This perspective highlights the fluidity and adaptability of cultural identity, allowing it to evolve over time while maintaining some core elements. Cultural identity plays a central role in fostering cohesion and individual well-being and it provides a framework of interpreting experiences, making sense of the world, and forming social connections. Research has shown that a strong cultural identity is associated with higher self-esteem, better mental health and greater resilience in the face of adversity. Additionally, cultural identity contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage, ensuring the transmission of traditions, languages, and values to the future generations. The global media has exposed individuals to a diverse range of foreign culture, presenting a challenge to preserve traditional cultural identities while navigating the influx of the new cultural elements. Societies must grapple with the paradox of maintaining the sanctity of their heritage while embracing the infusion of novel cultural influences introduced by global media. This tension between cultural preservation and adaptation is a central theme in contemporary cultural studies (Sutrisno, 2023).

Global media, characterized by the widespread dissemination of information and cultural products across borders has both positive and negative impact on cultural identity. On one hand, it facilitates cross-cultural exchange and promotes diversity but on the other hand, it can lead to cultural homogenization and the erosion of local identities. Several scholars argue that global media often perpetuates Western ideologies and values, marginalizing non-Western cultures and creating a scent of cultural inferiority (Kamran, et al., 2023). The dominance of Western media and cultural products can overshadow local traditions and practices, leading to a crisis of identity among individuals and communities. Youth are particularly vulnerable to the influence of global media and cultural change. As digital natives, they are constantly exposed to diverse cultural content through social media platforms, television and the Internet. This exposure can create tension between their traditional cultural values and globalized cultural norms that they encounter leading to confusion. Studies have shown that young people often engage in a process of negotiation, selectively incorporating elements of both their local and global culture to construct a hybrid identity (Zajda & Majhanovich, 2021). This process of identity negotiation can lead to both positive and negative outcomes, depending on the extent to which individuals are able to integrate and balance these diverse influences.

Identity Negotiation Theory

Identity is a fundamental aspect of human existence, encompassing the various ways individuals perceive and express themselves within their social and cultural contexts. Identity negotiations theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals navigate and reconcile their identities in response to changing social and cultural environments (Ting-Toomey, 2015). This literature review explores the concept of identity, the

principles of identity negotiation theory, and the impact of global media and globalization on youth identity negotiation. It also examines theories related to acceptance, adaptation, and resistance in the context of identity negotiation.

The term identity pertains to the range of traits, qualities, principles, convictions and additional elements that mold the manners in which people or communities perceive themselves and engage with their surroundings. Identity also encompasses an individual's sense of self, their understanding of their role in society and their desire to be recognized by others (Peng, Strijker & Wu, 2020). Identity is a construction of self that includes personal, social, and cultural dimensions. There are several types of identities which include personal identity, social identity, and cultural identity. Personal identity refers to an individual's self-concept encompassing traits, beliefs, and values that define who we are (Ting-Toomey, 2015). Social identity involves the roles and group memberships that individuals assume within their social networks, such as family, friends, and professional associations (Ting-Toomey, 2015). Whereby, cultural identity pertains to shared values, traditions, and practices that connect individuals to a particular cultural group (Yunita, Setyari & Safitri, 2022). According to Pfeifer and Berkman (2018), identity formation is a critical development task for youth, as they are exploring and integrating various aspects of identity. This process involves both internal self-reflection and external social interactions, highlighting the dynamic and relational nature of identity.

Social construction of identity is a result of interpersonal interactions. Social identities, accepting, debating, evaluating, negotiating, and coordinating are some essential elements in identity construction (Tun & Khairuddin, 2023). Identity is a construct that is dynamic and situation specific (Fauzi, Anindita, & Lye, 2021). In

other words, identity is malleable and a process of 'becoming' alongside of 'being'. Moreover, identity is concerned with positioning issues that are impacted by social interaction and self-awareness (Fauzi, Anindita, & Lye, 2021). Under these circumstances, identity is associated with how people place themselves and are positioned by others.

Identity negotiation theory (INT) was introduced by Ting-Toomey (1999) and is grounded in the idea that identity is fluid and contextually constructed. INT emphasizes that individuals engage in continuous interactions, each shaping their sense of self depending on the given social context. Ting-Toomey (1999) posits that identity is negotiated in every communicative encounter, shaped by the need to establish a sense of self-worth, inclusion and understanding. Key aspects of identity negotiation include the balancing of personal identity as stated above.

Youth are particularly susceptible to identity negotiation due to the transnational nature of adolescence. Identity formation is a central developmental task of adolescence where they must reconcile their self-concept with societal expectations. During this phase, the negotiation of identity becomes critical as youth interact with peers, family, and institutions that shape their sense of self. The process of identity negotiation is further complicated for youth in multicultural and or globalized contexts, where conflicting cultural norms and values may require adaptation, resistance or acceptance. These challenges make identity negotiation theory a useful framework for understanding how youth navigate the complexities of identity construction in an increasingly interconnected world.

Cultural globalization has intensified the negotiation of identity among youth, exposing them to diverse influences that challenge traditional notions of

self. Appadurai (1996) argues that globalization has created new “scapes” (ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, and etc.) that transcend geographical boundaries, allowing individuals to construct identities that are hybrid and complex. For youth, this means navigating a landscape where traditional cultural markers such as language, dress, and values may no longer hold the same weight. Instead, they are influenced by global trends, social media, and consumer culture, all of which play a role in shaping their identity negotiation processes. Youth may find themselves negotiating between the expectations of their local culture and the appeal of global identities.

3.0 Future Research Agenda

Given the rapid rise in cultural globalization and its increasing pervasiveness in daily life, it is therefore not surprising that there are increasing efforts to explain social developments from an academic perspective. The primary aim of this study is to understand the complex processes by which Malaysian youth construct and negotiate their cultural identities in the face of cultural globalization. To further analyze this study, it is best for researchers to adopt the qualitative research method. The goal of qualitative research is to explore and provide deeper knowledge of challenges that are present in the real world (Tenny, Brennen & Brennen, 2022; Moser & Korstjens, 2017). It also allows for in-depth comprehension and adaptability in the exploration of complicated events and evaluation of topic’s evolution (Sutrisno, 2023).

Through emphasis on the personal experiences and viewpoints of individuals, qualitative methods facilitate a comprehensive and contextual comprehension of the negotiation process. For this purpose, data will be gathered through in-depth interview techniques. In-depth interviews will be conducted to explore how

Malaysian youth negotiate their cultural identities in the face of globalization, to identify the key influences of global culture and examine the strategies employed by Malaysian youth to negotiate their cultural identities.

The population for this study is suggested to be youth in Malaysia aged 18 to 24 residing in urban areas across Malaysia. According to a study by Meltwater (2024), the demographic of youth aged 18 to 24 holds 24.5% of the total social media users in Malaysia. The same study has also highlighted that this group age is the future of social media demographic and is the most influential. For urban areas across Malaysia, it is suggested to focus on selecting participants from Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Perak, Penang and Johor as these states have the highest number of social media users in Malaysia (Department of Statistics, 2024).

Semi-structured interviews are suggested to be employed in this study to gather data and provide a balance of structure and flexibility (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach allows researchers to focus their exploration on specific topics while also giving participants the opportunity to introduce and discuss their opinions and experiences that they considered as important. Interviews will be continued until data saturation has been reached. This is to ensure that no new significant themes emerged from subsequent interactions. This principle of saturation is essential in qualitative research, as it guarantees comprehensive data collection and analysis of the subject matter.

Hitchings and Latham (2019) recommended that a qualitative study should include at least 20 participants for the in-depth interview. Thus, this study will be conducted in Malaysia focusing on youth. The target population for this study is Malaysian youth residing in major cities in Malaysia as these are the individuals that are more likely to have increased exposure to global

media content due to factors such as higher education levels of education, access to technology, and urban lifestyles. Purposive sampling is the method used in this study to select the participants, with individuals that can directly address the study topic (Schreier, 2018). Hence, it is important that participants understand and have firsthand experience with the topic of study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and to ensure a diverse representation of experiences related to the cultural identity negotiation. Hence, the criteria for selection of samples should include Malaysian youth aged 18 to 24, of various gender, race or ethnicity, and with prior knowledge and understanding of cultural identities and of course global media users.

Thematic analysis will then be employed to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within the data (Creswell, 2013). This iterative approach involves repeatedly examining the dataset, coded extracts, and emerging themes. This process will ensure that a thorough understanding of the data in relation to the research questions will be answered. By carefully examining the interview scripts, the research will extract key themes related to this study which is related to cultural globalization and youth's negotiation process on their cultural identity. These themes will then be categorized and analyzed to provide insights into the study's research questions.

4.0 Conclusion

Identity negotiation is a fundamental process for youth as they navigate the complexities of self-construction in a rapidly changing world. Identity negotiation theory provides a robust framework for understanding how young people balance acceptance, adaptation and resistance in their interactions with different social and cultural environments. As cultural globalization, social media and cross-cultural interactions continue to shape

youth experiences, identity negotiation will remain a central aspect of their development. Future research should focus on how these processes evolve in response to new global dynamics and technological advancement, particularly in contexts where youth must negotiate increasingly hybrid and complex identities.

5.0 References

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