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THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MODERN CULTURAL VALUES AND BELIEFS

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become one of the most influential communication tools in modern society, significantly transforming cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and patterns of social interaction. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and X allow individuals to communicate, exchange information, share cultural experiences, and express personal opinions across geographical boundaries. The increasing use of social media has created new opportunities for cultural awareness, education, creativity, and intercultural communication. At the same time, it has introduced challenges concerning cultural identity, traditional values, religious beliefs, social norms, misinformation, and the influence of digital trends. This research examines the influence of social media on modern cultural values and beliefs, particularly its effects on young people, family relationships, traditional customs, cultural diversity, lifestyle choices, and social attitudes. It also investigates how digital communication influences the preservation and transformation of cultural traditions in contemporary society. The study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research approach based on secondary academic literature and recent scholarly publications. The findings suggest that social media can promote cultural exchange, awareness, social participation, and the acceptance of diverse perspectives. However, excessive exposure to digital content may also contribute to cultural homogenization, unrealistic lifestyle expectations, misinformation, and the weakening of certain traditional practices. The research concludes that social media is neither entirely beneficial nor harmful to cultural development. Its influence depends on how individuals use digital platforms, the quality of information they consume, their educational backgrounds, and their ability to evaluate online content critically. Responsible social media use and digital literacy are therefore essential for maintaining cultural identity while adapting to modern social changes.

KEYWORDS:*Social media, cultural values, cultural beliefs, modern society, digital communication, cultural identity, globalization, youth behaviour, traditional values, cultural diversity, digital culture, social interaction, cultural transformation, misinformation, and digital literacy.*

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an essential part of everyday life in contemporary society. The development of internet technology and smartphones has transformed the ways individuals communicate, exchange information, express opinions, and participate in social activities. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and X have created digital spaces where people from different geographical, cultural, and social backgrounds can interact. These platforms have significantly influenced how individuals understand society, develop personal identities, and adopt cultural practices. Avci, H., Baams, L., & Kretschmer, T. (2025). found that In the past, cultural values and beliefs were mainly transmitted through families, educational institutions, religious organizations, and local communities. Today, social media has become another powerful source of cultural information and influence.Cultural values represent the principles, traditions, customs, attitudes, and beliefs shared by members of a particular society. These values influence people's lifestyles, communication patterns, family relationships, religious practices, and social responsibilities. Social media has changed how cultural values are communicated and understood by providing immediate access to different cultural perspectives. Individuals can learn about international traditions, languages, clothing styles, celebrations, food habits, and social practices. This exchange can increase cultural awareness and encourage mutual

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understanding. However, exposure to foreign cultural influences may also challenge traditional expectations and influence individuals to adopt new lifestyles that differ from those of their families and communities.Young people are among the most active users of social media and are particularly exposed to digital cultural influences. Social media platforms allow young individuals to follow celebrities, influencers, content creators, and online communities that shape their opinions, preferences, and lifestyles. Fashion, music, entertainment, language, beauty standards, consumer habits, and social attitudes are frequently influenced by digital trends. These developments can create opportunities for creativity, self-expression, and personal development. However, excessive exposure to online lifestyles may also produce unrealistic expectations, social comparison, pressure to follow trends, and dissatisfaction with personal circumstances. Therefore, understanding social media's influence on youth is important for examining changes in modern cultural values.

Traditional culture includes customs, languages, historical practices, religious celebrations, family traditions, and community values passed from one generation to another. Social media has created new opportunities to preserve and promote traditional culture through photographs, videos, digital storytelling, educational content, and online cultural events. Individuals can share traditional music, clothing, local languages, festivals, and historical knowledge with national and international audiences. Nevertheless, digital trends may sometimes encourage individuals to prioritize modern lifestyles over traditional practices. Certain cultural traditions may become less popular among younger generations when they are perceived as outdated or incompatible with contemporary lifestyles. The relationship between social media and traditional culture is therefore characterized by both preservation and transformation. Gu, J., & Boukala, S. (2025). Explained that Globalization has increased cultural interaction between countries and communities, and social media has accelerated this process. People can now access international news, entertainment, educational materials, and cultural discussions without geographical restrictions. This development promotes intercultural communication and provides opportunities to understand different traditions and beliefs. At the same time, the widespread popularity of certain international trends may create cultural homogenization, in which local traditions and identities become less visible. Furthermore, online misinformation, stereotypes, cultural misunderstandings, and discriminatory content may negatively influence relationships between different communities. Promoting cultural diversity and responsible digital communication is therefore important in modern society.The influence of social media on cultural values and beliefs is an important subject because digital communication increasingly shapes individual attitudes and social relationships. Understanding this influence can help families, teachers, educational institutions, policymakers, and community organizations respond to the cultural opportunities and challenges created by digital technology. The study is particularly relevant to young people because they are growing up in an environment where traditional cultural influences interact continuously with global digital content. It examines both the positive and negative effects of social media on cultural identity, traditional values, modern lifestyles, and social attitudes. The research also emphasizes the importance of digital literacy, cultural awareness, and responsible online participation in maintaining a balance between cultural preservation and social development.

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RESEARCH QUESTION

1. How does social media influence modern cultural values and beliefs, particularly in relation to cultural identity, traditional practices, youth lifestyles, social attitudes, and cultural diversity?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the influence of social media on modern cultural values, beliefs, and social attitudes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media has become a powerful instrument in the transformation of cultural values and beliefs in contemporary society. It provides individuals with opportunities to communicate, exchange ideas, share experiences, and participate in discussions about social and cultural issues. Traditionally, cultural values were transmitted through family members, educational institutions, religious organizations, and local communities. Ghorzang, S. (2025). Explains that However, digital platforms have introduced new methods of cultural learning and communication. People can now access information about different societies, traditions, languages, and lifestyles within seconds. Tirocchi (2024) examines the relationship between Generation Z, media, and personal values, explaining how digital platforms and media personalities influence the values and aspirations of young individuals. This research demonstrates that media content does not always communicate the same values that young people consider personally important. It suggests that social media can influence cultural attitudes while individuals continue to maintain their own priorities and beliefs. Therefore, social media should be understood as an important factor in cultural transformation rather than the only source of cultural change. Its influence interacts with family traditions, educational experiences, religious beliefs, and wider social environments.Cultural identity refers to the sense of belonging that individuals develop through shared traditions, language, history, customs, beliefs, and social experiences. Social media has created new opportunities for individuals to express and explore their cultural identities. Users can share photographs, videos, stories, music, traditional clothing, and cultural celebrations with national and international audiences. These activities may strengthen cultural awareness and create connections among individuals who share similar backgrounds. Pérez-Torres (2024), in the study *Social Media: A Digital Social Mirror for Identity Development During Adolescence*, explains how online self-presentation, social comparison, role models, and audience feedback influence identity development. The study suggests that social media provides opportunities for adolescents to express their interests and beliefs while receiving feedback from other users. Avci, Baams, and Kretschmer (2025) also examine social media use and adolescent identity development through a systematic review of 32 studies involving 19,658 adolescents. Their review indicates that the quality and nature of social media participation are important for identity development. Authentic self-expression may support self-concept clarity, whereas social comparison may be associated with identity-related difficulties. These findings demonstrate that social media can influence how young individuals understand themselves and their cultural identities.

Young people represent one of the most active groups of social media users. Digital platforms provide them with opportunities to develop friendships, communicate with peers,

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follow celebrities, participate in online communities, and explore new interests. However, these platforms also expose young users to different cultural expectations, social standards, and lifestyle trends. Influencers and content creators frequently promote particular ideas about beauty, fashion, relationships, education, success, and personal development. Wilska, Holkkola, and Tuominen (2023), in their research on the role of social media in creating young people's consumer identities, examine how teenagers construct and express their identities through online consumption practices. Ginzarly, M., Teller, J., & Dujardin, S. (2025). revealed that Their research highlights the growing importance of influencer content and commercial messages in shaping young people's consumer preferences. Tirocchi (2024) similarly explores the relationship between Generation Z and the values communicated through digital media. These studies suggest that young people's cultural attitudes are influenced by a combination of personal experiences, peer relationships, online content, and commercial trends. Consequently, digital literacy and critical thinking are important for helping young individuals distinguish between meaningful cultural values and temporary online trends.Traditional cultural values include customs, family responsibilities, respect for elders, hospitality, community cooperation, religious celebrations, and historical practices. These values are important because they connect individuals with their cultural backgrounds and provide continuity between generations. Social media has introduced new opportunities for preserving traditional values through digital storytelling, cultural photographs, educational videos, and online discussions. Individuals can share traditional recipes, folk music, local languages, historical events, and cultural celebrations with audiences around the world. However, modern digital trends may also challenge traditional cultural expectations. Young people may become more interested in international entertainment, fashion, and lifestyles than in local customs. Ghorzang (2025), in research examining the impact of social media on the preservation of cultural identity among Afghan youth, explores the relationship between digital communication and cultural continuity. This research is particularly relevant to societies where traditional customs and cultural identities remain important despite increasing exposure to global digital content. The study highlights the importance of considering social media as a platform that can be used to support cultural preservation. Rather than viewing modern technology as an automatic threat to traditional values, communities can use it to document, communicate, and promote their cultural heritage.

Globalization has increased communication and cultural interaction between individuals and societies. Social media has accelerated this process by allowing people to access international information, entertainment, educational resources, and cultural discussions. Individuals can learn about different traditions, beliefs, languages, and lifestyles without travelling to other countries. This interaction can promote cultural awareness and reduce misunderstandings between communities. At the same time, globalization may encourage the widespread adoption of dominant cultural trends, potentially reducing the visibility of local customs and traditions. Yao (2025), in the study of digital media applications and cross-cultural communication in the construction of cultural identity, investigates how digital communication influences identity formation across cultural contexts. The research considers the importance of technological features, symbolic representation, and social engagement in shaping cultural identity. This suggests that digital communication can create opportunities for intercultural learning while also influencing how individuals negotiate their cultural belonging. Globalization therefore produces both cultural exchange and cultural tensions, making it important for individuals to maintain awareness of their cultural heritage while developing respect for different societies.Cultural diversity refers to the existence of different

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languages, traditions, beliefs, values, and lifestyles within and across societies. Social media provides an important platform for representing and communicating this diversity. People from different geographical regions can share their experiences and introduce their cultural practices to international audiences. These interactions may encourage tolerance, understanding, and appreciation of cultural differences. However, digital communication does not always result in positive intercultural relationships. Stereotypes, offensive content, discriminatory language, and misinformation can create misunderstandings between communities. The influence of social media on cultural diversity depends on the quality of communication and the willingness of individuals to engage respectfully with different perspectives. Tabatabaei, Bulgarova, Trofimova, and Barabash (2025), in their research on social media, cultural values, and digital citizenship among Iranian digital natives, investigate the relationship between digital participation and cultural values. Their work is relevant to understanding how digital citizens negotiate cultural beliefs within an increasingly connected environment. The study reinforces the importance of responsible participation and awareness of the social consequences of online communication.

Cultural preservation involves protecting and promoting traditional practices, languages, historical knowledge, art, music, and community traditions. In modern society, digital platforms have become important tools for documenting and sharing cultural heritage. Videos, photographs, online exhibitions, digital storytelling, and community pages can help preserve cultural information that might otherwise become less accessible to younger generations. Zhang, Ikiz Kaya, and van Wesemael (2024) examine digital participatory practices involving young people in cultural heritage management. Their research highlights how digital engagement can create opportunities for youth participation in heritage-related activities and emphasizes the importance of digital citizenship. Similarly, Jeljeli, Farhi, Mohsen, Mallek, and Setoutah (2025) investigate the influence of social media storytelling on Generation Z's support for cultural heritage and sustainability in the United Arab Emirates. Their findings indicate that sharing cultural and family stories through digital platforms can strengthen family cohesion and contribute to cultural identity preservation. These studies demonstrate that social media can support the transmission of cultural knowledge between generations. Saad, H. M., Eyada, M. M. K., Saleh, M. M. E. D., & Abd El-Fadeal, N. M. (2025). Elaborated on Cultural organizations and educational institutions can use digital platforms to encourage young people to participate in preserving their cultural heritage.Consumer culture refers to the social values and practices associated with the purchase, ownership, and consumption of products and services. Social media has transformed consumer culture by making advertising, product recommendations, influencer marketing, and online shopping part of everyday digital communication. Users are frequently exposed to content promoting particular clothing styles, technological devices, beauty products, food habits, and entertainment preferences. Wilska, Holkkola, and Tuominen (2023) explain that social media contributes to the development of young people's consumer identities by influencing how they express themselves through consumption. Online personalities and influencers can become important sources of inspiration for young consumers. This influence may encourage creativity, access to new products, and awareness of different lifestyles. However, it may also encourage excessive consumption, materialism, unnecessary spending, and social comparison. Individuals may feel pressure to purchase products or adopt lifestyles that are presented as desirable by popular online personalities. These developments suggest that consumer culture is increasingly shaped by digital visibility, online popularity, and commercial communication. Responsible media use can help

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individuals distinguish genuine personal needs from advertising pressure and temporary consumer trends.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a qualitative, descriptive, and analytical research methodology to investigate the influence of social media on modern cultural values and beliefs. The research is primarily based on secondary data collected from academic journal articles, scholarly publications, systematic literature reviews, and relevant research studies published between 2023 and 2025. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the study focuses on understanding cultural meanings, social attitudes, individual identities, traditional practices, and changing beliefs rather than measuring a single numerical relationship. The literature is selected according to its relevance to the research objectives, academic credibility, publication date, and contribution to the understanding of social media and cultural transformation. Particular attention is given to studies examining youth behaviour, cultural identity, globalization, digital citizenship, traditional heritage, family values, consumer culture, and intercultural communication. Research conducted in different geographical and cultural settings is considered to develop a broader understanding of the subject. The collected information is organized into major thematic categories and examined to identify common patterns, differences, and emerging issues. The study also considers the limitations of existing research, including differences in research populations, cultural environments, social media platforms, and methods of measuring digital engagement. Ethical research principles are maintained through appropriate acknowledgement of original authors, accurate referencing, and responsible interpretation of published findings. Since this study uses secondary sources, it does not claim to have conducted original interviews, questionnaires, or field observations. The methodology therefore provides a systematic academic foundation for understanding how social media influences cultural values and beliefs in modern society.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design of this study is descriptive, qualitative, and literature-based, with a comparative and thematic analytical approach. The descriptive aspect explains the various ways social media influences cultural beliefs, attitudes, identities, traditions, and lifestyles, while the analytical aspect examines the relationships between digital communication and cultural transformation. The research is organized around social media engagement as the principal explanatory factor and modern cultural values and beliefs as the main subject of investigation. Social media engagement includes content consumption, content creation, online discussions, influencer following, digital storytelling, and participation in online communities. Cultural values and beliefs are examined through cultural identity, family traditions, religious and moral attitudes, language, consumer behaviour, social relationships, and appreciation of cultural diversity. The design also recognizes the influence of additional factors such as age, education, family background, geographical location, economic circumstances, and digital literacy. These factors may influence how individuals respond to online cultural content. The literature is compared across different geographical settings to identify similarities and differences in the experiences of young people and wider communities. The findings are organized into themes that correspond to the research objectives, making it possible to examine cultural preservation and cultural transformation together. The study does not claim to establish direct causal relationships because the

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reviewed publications employ different research methods and investigate different populations. Instead, the research design provides an integrated understanding of the ways in which social media is associated with changing cultural values and beliefs.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis process is based on the thematic examination of academic literature and secondary research findings related to social media and modern cultural values. The collected information is organized into major themes according to the research objectives, including cultural identity, youth behaviour, traditional values, globalization, cultural diversity, family relationships, consumer culture, and digital citizenship. The first theme examines the influence of social media on cultural identity by considering how online communication, self-expression, social comparison, and digital communities affect individuals' understanding of their cultural backgrounds. Research by Pérez-Torres (2024) and Avci et al. (2025) provides useful evidence concerning the relationship between digital participation and identity development. The second theme focuses on youth behaviour and modern lifestyles, examining how influencers, online trends, entertainment, and commercial content affect young people's preferences and social attitudes. The third theme considers traditional cultural values and investigates how digital platforms can support cultural preservation through storytelling, photographs, videos, and online cultural activities. Research by Ghorzang (2025) and Jeljeli et al. (2025) provides relevant evidence about digital communication and cultural heritage preservation. The fourth theme examines globalization and cultural diversity by comparing how international communication encourages cultural exchange while potentially creating pressure towards cultural uniformity. The fifth theme explores family values and social relationships, particularly the effects of digital communication on intergenerational relationships and traditional responsibilities. The sixth theme examines misinformation, digital citizenship, and cultural misunderstanding, emphasizing the importance of critical thinking and responsible online participation. A comparative approach is used to identify similarities and differences between studies conducted in different cultural settings. The analysis also distinguishes between positive associations and established causal effects because social media behaviour is influenced by multiple social and personal factors. Finally, the findings are synthesized to develop an overall interpretation of the opportunities and challenges created by social media for modern cultural development.

FINDINGS

The findings of this literature-based study indicate that social media has a considerable influence on modern cultural values and beliefs. The reviewed literature suggests that digital platforms have transformed the ways individuals communicate, develop identities, understand cultural traditions, and interact with people from different backgrounds. One important finding is that social media encourages cultural exchange by providing opportunities to learn about international traditions, languages, lifestyles, and social practices. This exposure can increase cultural awareness and promote appreciation of diversity. Another important finding concerns young people's cultural identity. Research by Avci et al. (2025) indicates that the nature of social media engagement is important for adolescent identity development, with authentic expression and social comparison having different associations with identity outcomes. The study also finds that social media influencers and online trends can influence young people's consumer preferences, fashion choices, and lifestyle

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expectations. Wilska et al. (2023) highlight the relationship between digital media and young people's consumer identities. Furthermore, social media can contribute positively to cultural preservation by allowing individuals to share traditional music, clothing, languages, family stories, and historical information. The research by Jeljeli et al. (2025) demonstrates the potential contribution of digital storytelling to family cohesion and cultural heritage preservation. However, the findings also identify negative consequences, including cultural homogenization, misinformation, unrealistic lifestyle expectations, excessive consumerism, and the possible weakening of traditional practices. Online communication may sometimes create misunderstandings when cultural differences are presented through stereotypes or discriminatory content. Another important finding is that social media does not influence all individuals in the same way. Its effects depend on age, education, family background, cultural environment, platform use, and digital literacy. The literature also suggests that individuals can maintain traditional cultural identities while participating in global digital communities. Overall, the findings demonstrate that social media is both an instrument of cultural preservation and a source of cultural transformation. Its influence becomes more constructive when users participate responsibly, critically evaluate information, and respect different cultural traditions and beliefs.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that social media has become an important factor influencing modern cultural values and beliefs. The development of digital communication has transformed the ways individuals express their identities, exchange cultural information, understand traditions, and develop relationships with people from different societies. Social media platforms provide opportunities for cultural awareness, education, creativity, social participation, and international communication. They also help individuals preserve and promote traditional customs, languages, music, clothing, festivals, and historical knowledge through digital content. At the same time, the study recognizes that social media can contribute to cultural challenges, including the weakening of certain traditional practices, excessive consumerism, unrealistic lifestyle expectations, misinformation, cultural stereotypes, and social comparison. Young people are particularly influenced by online trends, influencers, entertainment, and digital communities because social media has become an important part of their everyday experiences. However, digital influence does not necessarily mean that traditional cultural values must disappear. Individuals can adopt modern technologies and participate in global communication while continuing to respect their cultural heritage, family traditions, and social responsibilities. The study also highlights the importance of digital literacy in developing responsible online behaviour. Educational institutions should encourage students to evaluate online information critically, recognize misinformation, respect cultural differences, and understand the social consequences of digital communication. Families should maintain healthy communication with young people and encourage a balance between online activities and traditional family relationships. Similarly, cultural organizations and community institutions should use social media to promote local languages, traditional arts, historical knowledge, and cultural celebrations. Social media companies and content creators should also encourage accurate information and respectful cultural representation. Future research should examine these issues through empirical studies involving different age groups, geographical locations, and cultural communities. In conclusion, social media is a powerful instrument of cultural change that can either strengthen or challenge traditional values depending on how it is used. A balanced

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approach that combines technological development, cultural awareness, digital responsibility, and respect for traditional beliefs can help societies benefit from modern communication while protecting their cultural identity and heritage.

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