

Transformation of Cultural Values and Social Practices in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

Modern technology, especially through the internet and social media, has influenced almost all aspects of social and cultural life. Changes in the way we interact, communicate and form social identities have created tensions between local and global cultures. Social media allows for faster cultural exchange, but at the same time can lead to the erosion of traditional cultural values. This process of digitization has also changed social norms, especially in relation to the way people build social relationships and interact with others. Some social practices that once focused on physical interactions are now shifting to more individualistic digital spaces. Technology also plays a role in shaping a more flexible personal identity, but it often leaves questions about local cultural backwardness. In the face of this phenomenon, it is important to find ways that technology can be used to enrich, rather than replace, local culture and social norms. This research aims to identify the changes that occur in cultural values and social practices due to the influence of technology and to provide perspectives on how communities can maintain cultural diversity while adapting to technological advances.

INTRODUCTION

Technology has become a force that changes almost every aspect of human life, including culture, values and social norms. As digital technology has evolved, the way we interact with others, access information and communicate has changed dramatically (Warschauer & Matuchniak, 2010). Social media platforms, the internet and smart devices have introduced new ways of connecting, learning and working (Trouillot, 2016). The biggest impact of this technological revolution is the change in cultural values, such as the way time, space and relationships are perceived (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Society is now more open to change, but also faces shifts in long-standing traditions (Castells, 2010). This process affects the way we communicate and how we understand and appreciate long-standing social values (Balkin, 2017). Technology not only acts as a tool but also as an agent of change that alters the way we see the world, interact, and appreciate existing social values.

Technology plays a role in redefining existing social norms and practices in society. For example, the use of social media has changed the way people view their privacy, interpersonal relationships and social identity (Krasnova et al., 2009). Information that was previously limited to local environments can now be widely disseminated within seconds, erasing the boundaries between local and global cultures (Greig, 2002). This process of digital globalization has led to the emergence of digital cultures that differ from established traditional cultures (Morley & Robins, 2002). Digital culture offers opportunities to share knowledge and experiences across borders whereas traditional culture is more rigid and bound by established norms (Blank, 2012). This enriches cultural diversity, but on the other hand can lead to the erosion of local values and traditions that have been preserved for centuries (Hendricks, 2014). As a result, society has to face the dilemma of balancing technological advancement and the preservation of long-established cultural values.

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While technology offers many benefits in improving access to information and communication, one of the main issues that arises is the tension between traditional culture and digital culture. Changes in the way we interact with technology, such as social media, affect social relationships between individuals, which used to be heavily influenced by local cultural norms (Burkhardt, 1994). This has led to cultural disorientation, where individuals feel disconnected from their cultural heritage (Pacheco, 2020). In many societies, there is a concern that digital technologies may replace more in-depth social interactions and reduce the quality of long-standing interpersonal relationships (Castells, 2015). Concerns have been raised that this shift could reduce the sense of close connection between individuals and undermine long-respected values (Crowley & Heyer, 2015). According to Turkle (2011), impact of dependence on technology is also seen in how individuals shape their identities, which are often influenced by trends that develop in cyberspace, without considering deeper local values.

Technology also exacerbates inequalities in access to information and participation in society. While digital technology can open up opportunities for many, the reality is that there is still a huge gap between those who have full access to technology and those who do not (Warschauer, 2004). This exacerbates social inequalities and creates a greater divide in society. Technology adoption even poses challenges in maintaining existing cultural values, while the new culture brought by technology dominates (Hershock et al., 2003). According to Norris (2001), technology-driven cultural change can raise questions about how to maintain a balance between technological advancement and the preservation of local cultural identity.

Looking at the cultural changes brought about by technology in society is crucial to understanding the evolving social dynamics. These changes can affect our daily lives, mindsets and the way we interact with the world around us. An understanding of how technology affects cultural values and social norms can help us mitigate negative impacts while utilizing the opportunities provided by technology to enrich social and cultural life.

This research aims to analyze how technology influences changes in cultural values, social norms and social practices in communities, and explore its impact on social interactions and local cultural identities. It also aims to understand how communities can adapt to such changes, while maintaining important cultural values amidst rapid technological advancements.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a literature study approach to analyze the impact of technology on changes in cultural values, social norms and social practices in society. The literature study allows researchers to gather information from various published sources, such as journal articles, books and research reports, that are relevant to this topic. Through this approach, researchers can explore existing theories on technology and culture, and identify how technological developments, such as social media and the internet, affect cultural and social dynamics. This process also allows the researcher to understand the results of previous studies and map the various views and findings relating to technology-induced social change (Babbie, 2013). This literature analysis will include various disciplines, including sociology, communication and anthropology, to get a more comprehensive picture.

This approach also allows researchers to evaluate different perspectives on the interaction between technology and cultural change in society. The literature review will include studies that examine the impact of digital media on social norms, as well as changes in cultural identity that arise from technological advances. The researcher will select relevant and reliable sources, both from classic literature and from recent studies to ensure an in-depth and up-to-date analysis. This literature review method allows the researcher to present a complete and evidence-based analysis of how technology affects culture and social structures in society (Flick, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Public acceptance of technology in general varies depending on the context and the type of technology being introduced. Many studies show that people tend to accept technologies that are perceived to provide tangible benefits and convenience in their daily lives, such as communication and information technologies (Trouillot, 2016). For example, communication and information technologies, such as the internet and smartphones, have been very well received as they make it easier to communicate, access information and live a more efficient life (Selwyn, 2003). Such technologies are seen as tools that improve the quality of life, whether in work, education or social interaction, which makes them more readily accepted in many walks of life. There is also resistance to new technologies, especially if people feel underprepared or do not understand how to use them. New technologies that are too complex or not suited to local needs are often met with resistance.

Factors such as education, previous experience with technology, and support from the social environment also affect the level of acceptance of new technology. People who have a good understanding of the benefits of technology and how to use it tend to be more open to innovation (Millar et al., 2018). They not only understand how to use technology, but can also see its potential benefits in improving the quality of life, both in the fields of work, education and personal life (Rattle, 2010). Collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and communities is essential to improve readiness and acceptance of new technologies (Godoe & Jihansen, 2012). Governments can provide policies that facilitate technology access and training, while educational institutions can integrate technology in the curriculum to prepare young people for the digital age. Support from the social environment, be it family, friends or community, can also provide a sense of security and encourage individuals to try and utilize new technologies.

Community acceptance of technology reflects the dynamics between needs, understanding, and trust in the technology. The right approach, such as education and support, people can more easily adapt and utilize technology to improve their quality of life can be a way of community acceptance of technology (Balkin, 2017). Society's acceptance of technology is also influenced by the social and cultural impact that the technology has (Srite, 2000). For example, advances in communication technologies, such as social media, have changed the way people interact and communicate (Sarwar & Soomro, 2013). While many see it as a tool that eases connections, there are also concerns about its negative impacts, such as a decrease in face-to-face interactions and an increase in digital addiction. This suggests that technology acceptance depends on functional benefits, and on how the technology integrates with existing social values and norms.

Economic aspects also play an important role in technology acceptance. People who feel the positive impact of technology in terms of increased efficiency and productivity are more likely to accept the innovation (Agarwal & Prasad, 1997). For example, in the agricultural sector, the use of modern technologies such as advanced farming tools, ground sensor, and land management applications have helped farmers increase yields and reduce costs (Saiz-Rubio & Rovira-Más, 2020). This technology allows farmers to monitor crop conditions, manage irrigation more effectively, and optimize fertilizer or pesticide use. Another thought that arises, concerns about unemployment caused by automation and digitalization, which can lead to resistance to new technologies.

It is important to note that technology acceptance is dynamic and can change over time. As people's understanding and experience with technology increases, their attitudes may also adapt (Bhattacharjee & Premkumar, 2004). Experience in using technology often helps individuals overcome initial hesitations and understand the practical benefits the technology offers, which in turn can increase adoption rates (McGrath & MacMillan, 2000). It is also important for technology developers and stakeholders to continuously communicate and involve the community in the process of technology development and implementation. In this way, public acceptance of technology can be enhanced, and its benefits can be more widely realized.

Technology has become a major force influencing almost every aspect of human life, including cultural values, norms and social practices. Along with the rapid development of technology, especially in the field of communication and information, people are experiencing significant changes in the way they interact, access information, and even shape their cultural identity (Reed, 2018). Technology, particularly the internet and social media, has created a global space where cultures and traditional values interact and influence each other, sometimes causing changes or even shifts in existing norms and customs (Castells, 2010). According Redner (2004), advent of technology brings people closer to outside cultures, posing new challenges related to the preservation of local culture in the midst of digital globalization.

The use of social media, for example, allows individuals to connect and communicate without geographical boundaries. This facilitates a wider exchange of ideas, notions and cultures (Urry, 2012). This phenomenon also brings an impact on social values, such as privacy and interpersonal relationships (Roessler & Mokrosinska, 2013). It is worth noting that in many cases, relationships built through social media tend to be more superficial and less in-depth compared to the face-to-face relationships that have been part of social culture for centuries. People tend to be more open to foreign lifestyles and customs, which often challenge more conservative or traditional local values (Sennett, 2000). Technology is changing the way we interact, and affecting long-accepted cultural values.

Technology has changed the way individuals perceive time, space and how they communicate. In more traditional societies, time and space have meanings that are more tied to physical interactions and specific social environments. With the advent of digital technologies, such as smartphones and the internet, interactions can occur anytime and anywhere, blurring these boundaries (Castells, 2015).

This influence can lead to changes in the way people communicate and interact, which in turn impacts the social norms that have evolved (Ellison, 2004; Page, 2013). Old norms that govern when and how people communicate are no longer relevant, as technology gives people the freedom to communicate anytime and with anyone (Turkle, 2011).

The digital culture that develops along with technological advancements has an impact on the way individuals and groups perceive their identities. For example, social media allows people to form identities that are different from their real-world identities, sometimes creating tensions between traditional and digital social identities (Marlowe et al., 2017). This practice shows that digital culture is more flexible and allows people to choose or even shape their own identities according to their online representations (Boyd, 2014; Döveling et al., 2018). This has implications for the way social norms are established and maintained, as individuals are now more likely to interact in virtual worlds that are not bound by traditional social norms.

Technology-induced cultural change is also seen in the way people perceive authority and social hierarchy. With easy access to information through the internet, people have the opportunity to examine, compare and question information that was previously considered as authority or absolute truth (Trouillot, 2016). This can lead to shifts in social norms that value traditional authority, be it in the form of family, religion or government (Das & Kolack, 2008). This affects social practices relating to power relations and information distribution in society (Benkler, 2006). For example, in many countries, social media has become a platform for individuals to share their political views, which often challenges existing hierarchical structures in society.

Technology also brings challenges in terms of the digital divide, where access to technology and information is unequal. In many parts of the world, especially in developing countries, differences in access to technology and the internet exacerbate social inequality. Those who do not have full access to technology tend to lag behind in terms of information, education and participation in socio-political life. Technology influences cultural values, and creates inequalities in social opportunities and participation that further exacerbate social class divisions (Norris, 2001). Those with greater access to digital technology often have an advantage in terms of education and economic opportunities, while those with less access continue to be marginalized (Armenta et al., 2012). This raises the question of how societies can respond to these disparities while maintaining their cultural diversity.

Changes in social practices are also reflected in the way we work. Technology has transformed almost all sectors of work from the way we communicate with colleagues to how work is done and results are produced. Many jobs that used to be done physically are now moving to the digital world, affecting the pattern of social interactions in the workplace. This has also brought about changes in work-related values, such as the importance of time and space flexibility, and reliance on technological devices. In some cases, technology speeds up work processes and increases productivity, but also risks reducing the face-to-face interactions that are part of traditional work culture (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014).

Technology is also changing the way people consume entertainment and the arts on a cultural level. Streaming music and movies, as well as content-sharing platforms like YouTube, have changed the way people access entertainment and the arts. In the past, entertainment was often limited to physical spaces such as movie theaters or concerts, but with technology, entertainment can now be accessed anytime and anywhere. This has changed social values relating to collectivity and participation in shared cultural activities (Jenkins, 2006). Cultural consumption is becoming more individualistic, but also more inclusive, allowing more people to engage in global culture using technology.

One important aspect of the changes brought about by technology is its impact on long-established traditions and customs. The globalization of technology, particularly social media and the internet, allows individuals to access and adopt cultures from different parts of the world. While this enriches cultural diversity, it can, on the other hand, lead to the loss of some local cultural traditions (Balkin, 2017). More modern and global cultural values often take over older traditions, creating tensions in the preservation of cultural identity amidst changing times (Appadurai, 1996). This phenomenon challenges how communities can maintain their cultural sustainability while adopting technological advancements.

The changes in cultural values and social norms triggered by technology require us to reconsider how technology should be applied in social and cultural life. Technology, while providing many benefits, also poses risks that should not be ignored, especially in relation to cultural homogenization and social inequality. It is important to reflect on how technology can be used to enrich culture, instead of eroding local values and traditions (Lash & Urry, 1994). Using a thoughtful approach, technology can be a tool to strengthen culture, while creating space for a healthier and more inclusive cultural exchange.

CONCLUSION

Technology has brought significant changes in cultural values, norms and social practices in society. The use of social media, the internet and other digital tools has accelerated globalization and intercultural interaction, but it has also created tensions between local and global cultures. Technology is changing the way we communicate, interact and form social identities, while on the other hand, it also has the potential to erode long-accepted traditional cultural values. Social practices that once relied heavily on physical relationships have become more digitalized, sometimes creating emotional distance between individuals. Technology opens up opportunities for greater connectivity, although it poses challenges in maintaining the integrity of local cultures and preserving existing values.

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