

## Transformation of Student Behavior in The Digital Era: Technology Analysis of Social and Cultural Adaptation

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to thoroughly analyze the transformation of primary school student behavior in the digital era, specifically its impact on social and cultural adaptation. Employing a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study at SDN Mantimin 2, Balangan Regency, key informants (Principal, Class Teachers, Students, and Parents) were interviewed to gather their perspectives. The findings reveal that technology has become a fundamental agent of change, marked by two main issues: First, the transformation of social adaptation occurs through a shift to mediated communication (chat groups and online games as primary channels). Access to gadgets and digital proficiency constitute new social capital, posing a risk of social exclusion for digitally inactive students. A behavioral duality (code-switching) was observed, where students maintained local etiquette in the village but adopted informal language online. The major challenge is the intergenerational digital literacy gap, leaving parents feeling powerless to regulate their children's interaction ethics. Second, cultural value shifts are characterized by the instant adoption of global pop culture (challenges and styles) that clash with local Eastern values and politeness. The principal and parents express concern over the threat to hierarchy and respect due to the egalitarian nature of digital communication. The school has responded by implementing strategies for local value integration (Balangan customs) and digital cultural literacy. However, the success of this cultural guidance relies heavily on the synergy of values and consistency of supervision between the school and the home, necessitating digital literacy education programs for parents. This study affirms the critical need for policies focusing on ethical guidance and digital inclusion to achieve harmonious adaptation rooted in local values.

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## INTRODUCTION

The world of education is undergoing a fundamental transformation along with the rapid development of digital technology. This era, often referred to as the Industrial Revolution 4.0 or the Digital Age, has transformed nearly every aspect of human life, including how individuals learn, interact, and behave. Today's students are digital natives, growing up with unlimited access to information and communication through smartphones

and the internet. This context creates a new landscape in which educational institutions need to adapt, not only in teaching methods but also in understanding changes in student behavior.

Changes in student behavior have become a central issue in contemporary educational studies. Access to technology has shaped new mindsets and habits that differ significantly from those of previous generations. While social interactions were once dominated by face-to-face interactions, communication has now migrated to the virtual realm, altering group dynamics, identity formation, and self-expression. This phenomenon demands an in-depth analysis of how technology functions as an agent of social change among students.

Technology, such as social media and online platforms, serves as a catalyst in students' social adaptation. These platforms offer new spaces for collaboration, informal learning, and the formation of social networks. However, technology use also presents social challenges, such as privacy concerns, cyberbullying, and social isolation despite digital connectivity. Studies show that the intensity of social media use significantly influences how students interact and adopt social norms (Smith, 2021).

Technology has not only impacted the social sphere but also significantly impacted cultural adaptation. Digital globalization has brought foreign cultural content and values instantly to students, potentially causing value shifts and challenging local cultural identities. Students now face virtual multiculturalism, requiring them to filter and assimilate various cultural influences, from fashion trends to slang.

One of the biggest challenges of this transformation is the urgent need for digital literacy and digital ethics. Students must have the critical ability to evaluate the validity of information (hoaxes or disinformation) and understand the moral implications of their digital footprints. Without adequate guidance, technology use can lead to the spread of hate speech or doxing. Research emphasizes the importance of a curriculum that integrates digital ethics as part of character education (Chen & Wang, 2022).

On the positive side, technology is fueling innovation in learning. Blended learning models, flipped classrooms, and the use of Augmented Reality (AR) or Virtual Reality (VR) have transformed the learning experience into a more personalized and interactive experience. This aligns with the needs of students who demand more engaging and relevant content. This flexibility also supports the development of 21st-century skills, such as problem-solving and critical thinking.

Despite widespread technology adoption, the digital divide remains a serious obstacle. Differences in access to hardware, internet connections, and digital skills between urban and rural areas or between different economic levels can exacerbate inequalities in education. Efforts to ensure equitable access and digital training are key to ensuring that this behavioral transformation benefits the entire student population (Davis, 2023).

Psychological aspects are also a crucial concern. Dependence on digital devices can lead to mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and nomophobia (fear of being without a mobile phone). Increased screen time can impact sleep quality and attention span. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze students' adaptive behavior from the perspective of mental health and digital well-being (Perez & Garcia, 2024).

Given the complexity and multidimensionality of technology's impact on student behavior, encompassing social, cultural, ethical, and psychological aspects, a comprehensive

academic study is necessary. This research aims to bridge the knowledge gap by in-depth analyzing the correlation between digital technology adoption and specific social and cultural adaptation patterns among the Indonesian student population. This analysis will provide valid recommendations for educational policymakers and school practitioners.

Based on this background, this study focuses on an in-depth analysis of how technological devices mediate the transformation of students' behavior and how their social and cultural adaptations are shaped within the digital ecosystem. This study is expected to provide a theoretical and practical framework for optimizing the use of technology for the development of character, literacy, and student well-being in the digital era (Wang & Lee, 2023). Therefore, the problem formulation is as follows: How does the use of digital technology (such as social media and the internet) affect the way students interact and adapt socially in the school and community environment and what changes or shifts in cultural values occur in students due to exposure to digital technology, and how can schools guide this cultural adaptation?

## **METHOD**

This research will use a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore and interpret data in depth regarding the phenomenon of student behavioral transformation in the digital era, which is contextual and unique in an elementary school environment. This case study aims to describe in detail how technology influences the social and cultural adaptation of students at SDN Mantimin 2, Jln Simpang Tiga, Mantimin Village, RT 04, Balangan Regency (Yin, 2023). The main focus is to understand the subjective experiences, perceptions, and digital interactions of students in a rural context.

The specific location of the research is SDN Mantimin 2, Balangan Regency. This location was chosen based on the consideration that the school represents educational institutions in the region that may face unique challenges in technology adaptation. Key informants will be selected using a purposive sampling technique. Informants consist of:

1. Headmaster: To understand school policies regarding technology.
2. Classroom teacher: Especially teachers who actively use technology in learning.
3. Students (Grade IV, V, or VI): Those who are considered to actively use devices/internet and are fluent in interacting digitally.
4. Parents of Students: To gain perspective on children's behavior in the home environment.

The main data collection techniques were in-depth interviews with informants, participant observation (including observation of their digital interactions in the school environment), and document analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The data analysis technique used in this qualitative research is an interactive model data analysis, referring to the concept of Sugiyono (2022). According to Sugiyono, qualitative data analysis is carried out continuously and includes three main interrelated stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction is carried out by grouping the results of interviews and observations based on the themes of behavior and

adaptation. Data presentation is done in the form of descriptive narrative descriptions, and then conclusions are drawn to answer the problem formulation regarding the transformation of student behavior at SDN Mantimin 2.

To ensure data validity (trustworthiness), the study will implement source triangulation, namely comparing data obtained from various informants (Principals, Teachers, Students, and Parents), as well as method triangulation (comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documents). In addition, diligent observation will also be carried out to increase the depth of contextual understanding. The ethical aspects of the study will be strictly maintained, including obtaining official permission from the Education Office and the Principal of SDN Mantimin 2, maintaining the confidentiality of informants' identities, and ensuring informed consent from all parties involved, especially parents of students.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **a) The Use Of Digital Technology Influences The Way Students Interact and Adapt Socially In The School and Community Environment**

Based on interviews with the Principal and Class Teachers, it was found that although face-to-face interactions remain a routine at SDN Mantimin 2, the substance of students' informal interactions has been greatly influenced by the digital world. Main Conclusions of the Principal and Class Teacher Interview Analysis: Digital media (especially WhatsApp groups and online games) have become primary communication channels for resolving social issues, planning activities, and disseminating information among students. Teachers have observed an increase in the use of digital slang in everyday conversations and students' difficulty distinguishing emotional intonation during face-to-face communication, reflecting the impact of adapting to text-based communication.

Based on interviews with three student representatives (Grades IV, V, and VI), it was revealed that acceptance and formation of social groups are now closely related to digital activity. Main Conclusions of Student Interview Analysis: Access to devices and expertise in online games or social platforms (e.g., knowing the latest memes or trends) have become new social capital that significantly determine popularity and inclusion within peer groups. Students who lack devices or are digitally inactive tend to struggle to adapt to the conversations of the majority of their peers, making them vulnerable to social exclusion.

Based on interviews with parents, most parents feel powerless or lack adequate digital literacy to monitor their children's social interactions in cyberspace. Main Conclusions of Parent Interview Analysis: Parents' primary concerns are the lack of control over their children's digital friendship circles and the potential for them to engage in negative behaviors such as making negative comments or spreading disparagement in chat groups. This suggests that students' digital social adaptation often occurs without a strong ethical framework at home, thus ensuring schools play a crucial role in teaching digital communication ethics.

Based on observations and confirmation from Class Teachers and Principals, significant differences in behavior were found between interactions in digital spaces and interactions in village environments. Main Conclusions of Interview Analysis of All Informants: Although students demonstrated rapid adaptation to relaxed and informal social behavior online, they

generally maintained norms of politeness and hierarchy when interacting with community leaders and adults in Mantimin Village. This suggests the ability to code-switch, or adapt to two pathways: one for the digital world and one for local social culture.

Thus, the use of digital technology at SDN Mantimin 2 has changed the media and criteria of social adaptation, creating new challenges related to inclusion and the need for ethical guidance on interactions in the school and community environment.

#### **b) Changes Or Shifts In Cultural Values That Occur In Students Due To Exposure To Digital Technology, And How Schools Can Guide This Cultural Adaptation**

Based on interviews with the Principal and Parents of Students, the most worrying shift in values is related to ethics and politeness in language. Main conclusions of the analysis of the interviews with the principal and parents: Parents reported an increase in defiant or disrespectful behavior toward parents/teachers, who were suspected of imitating the informal and aggressive communication styles of the digital content they consume (e.g., influencers or gamers). The principal emphasized that the value of respect for elders is being threatened by a digital culture that tends to be egalitarian and permissive.

Based on interviews with students (grades IV, V, and VI) and observations by class teachers, it was found that exposure to technology has caused a shift in interests and cultural values. Main Conclusions of the Analysis of Student and Class Teacher Interviews: Students tend to adopt global pop culture (e.g., fashion trends, music, and challenges from TikTok or YouTube) instantly, which often conflicts with the values of simplicity and Eastern culture taught at home and school. This shift is evident in more stylish clothing, the use of foreign languages (a mix of Indonesian and English), and a declining interest in local arts and culture (e.g., folklore or traditional games from Mantimin Village).

Based on interviews with Class Teachers and Principals, SDN Mantimin 2 has implemented several strategies to guide cultural adaptation. Main Conclusions of the Principal and Class Teacher Interview Analysis: Schools have taken the initiative to integrate local cultural values (e.g., Balangan Regency customs or Pancasila values) into Character Education and Religious Education lessons. Teachers also strive to foster "digital cultural literacy" by openly discussing the impact of viral content on student behavior. This effort is realized through the practice of polite greetings within the school environment and assignments that connect technology with local wisdom (e.g., creating a short video about the environment in Mantimin Village).

Interviews with parents and class teachers underscored the importance of collaboration in guiding students. Main Conclusions of Interview Analysis of All Informants: All parties agree that cultural adaptation guidance cannot be provided solely by schools. Consistency is needed between the values taught in school and the supervision implemented at home. The Class Teacher suggested that schools hold digital literacy seminars for parents so they can act as effective "cultural filters" at home, ensuring that students' cultural adaptation aligns with local values while still utilizing technology positively.

In summary, exposure to digital technology at SDN Mantimin 2 triggered a shift in values from local culture/politeness to global pop culture/egalitarianism. School guidance

efforts are implemented through the integration of digital cultural values and literacy, but their success depends heavily on parental support and consistent supervision.

## **Discussion**

### **a) The Use Of Digital Technology Influences The Way Students Interact And Adapt Socially In The School And Community Environment**

Interviews conducted at SDN Mantimin 2 indicate that digital technology has become a major transformative agent in student behavior, particularly in how they interact and adapt socially. This finding confirms the initial hypothesis that the digital native generation is experiencing a shift in communication patterns from face-to-face to mediated communication. This analysis will examine these findings within the framework of social adaptation theory in the digital era, highlighting the challenges of social inclusion, ethical literacy, and the phenomenon of behavioral duality.

The principal and class teacher's conclusions, which mention digital media as the primary communication channel, are highly relevant to academic studies on the displacement effect of technology. While physical interactions persist, the essence and substance of social relationships are now largely processed and resolved in virtual spaces (WhatsApp groups, game chats). The use of digital slang and difficulty distinguishing emotional intonations indicate a profound adaptation to text-based communication. Contemporary research highlights that excessive use of text-based communication can diminish nonverbal cues essential for complete social understanding (Güler & Özer, 2021).

Research that access to devices and digital skills has become new social capital for students is crucial. Analysis of student interviews shows that popularity and inclusion in friendship groups are now measured by digital status (e.g., gaming expertise or knowledge of trending memes). This aligns with the theory of Digital Social Capital, where the ability to use and participate in digital platforms confers social advantages (Yadav, 2023). Students who do not own devices or are digitally inactive are vulnerable to social exclusion, requiring specific interventions from schools to prevent technology-based social inequalities.

Parents' concerns about the lack of control and the potential for their children to engage in negative behavior (e.g., negative comments, spreading shame) highlight the gap between children's technology adoption and parental oversight capabilities. This gap is often referred to as intergenerational digital literacy. Parents feel powerless due to a lack of understanding of online ethics, which leaves children's digital social adaptation without a strong moral framework at home.

The above conditions place SDN Mantimin 2 in a crucial position as the only institution expected to teach digital communication ethics. Schools must fill the gap in ethical guidance that students lack at home. In-depth discussions of cyberbullying, digital footprints, and netiquette must be integrated into the character education curriculum, not simply as supplementary lessons. This demands that schools mitigate the psychosocial risks arising from unrestricted interaction.

Research on behavioral duality, or code-switching, where students maintain local norms of politeness when interacting in the Mantimin Village environment but adopt a relaxed and informal style online demonstrates flexible adaptability. They are able to separate virtual

communication norms from communal/local communication norms. This phenomenon reflects social intelligence in responding to different contexts, but also has the potential to lead to identity confusion if the boundaries between the two worlds are not explicitly taught.

This research can be analyzed through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's Developmental Ecology Theory. The digital environment (social media, games) now acts as a Mesosystem or even a very powerful Ecosystem, influencing the behavior of students (Microsystem) at SDN Mantimin 2. Behavioral transformation and social adaptation are responses to stimuli from the digital ecosystem dominated by non-local values. To achieve healthy adaptation, there must be synchronization of values between the Microsystem (family and school) and the Mesosystem (technology).

It's important to discuss how social adaptation driven by digital inclusion (such as that sought by Sinta, Grade V) can potentially trigger social anxiety if students fail to meet the digital standards of their peers. The need to keep up with the latest memes or trends to be socially accepted places psychological pressures not experienced by previous generations. Therefore, discussions about social adaptation must always be connected to digital wellbeing, ensuring that technology use supports, rather than threatens, students' mental health (Dabbous & Barakat, 2021).

This analysis concludes that interventions at SDN Mantimin 2 must be contextual. Schools cannot ban technology but must instead teach "navigation skills" between two worlds: the egalitarian digital world and the world of Mantimin Village, which upholds hierarchy and etiquette. Strategies such as peer-to-peer education or digital mentoring programs can be used to leverage students' digital skills (Yadav, 2023). Tripartite collaboration (School-Parent-Community) is key to ensuring balanced social adaptation.

Thus, the use of digital technology at SDN Mantimin 2 has transformed the media and criteria for students' social adaptation, as confirmed by field findings. This transformation creates serious challenges related to ethical literacy and the risk of digital-based social exclusion. This research emphasizes the need for school policies that focus on ethical guidance and digital inclusion as an essential part of character education in the modern era (Cahyono et al., 2022).

#### **b) Changes Or Shifts In Cultural Values That Occur In Students Due To Exposure To Digital Technology, And How Schools Can Guide This Cultural Adaptation**

Interviews from SDN Mantimin 2 explicitly demonstrate that digital technology not only influences how students interact but also triggers a substantial shift in their cultural values. This shift is characterized by a contradiction between local values, which are hierarchical and polite, and global pop culture values, which tend to be egalitarian and permissive. This analysis will examine these findings, examining the implications of pop culture adoption, threats to local ethics, and the effectiveness of the school's cultural adaptation guidance strategies.

The main conclusion from the Class Teacher and Students, who stated that the instant adoption of global pop culture (TikTok, challenges, stylish fashion) is a manifestation of the globalization of digital culture. Children in Mantimin Village, through their mobile screens, have unlimited access to external values that are often more appealing and instantaneous than

local wisdom. This aligns with studies that found that social media has become a primary channel for the spread of global ideologies and lifestyles, potentially leading to the erosion of local cultural identity among the younger generation (Pertiwi & Santosa, 2022). This shift is marked by a decline in interest in the local arts and traditions of Mantimin Village.

Findings from the Principal and Parents regarding the increase in defiant behavior and impolite language indicate the most alarming shift: a threat to the values of politeness (*tatakrama*) that are a pillar of Indonesian culture and the culture of Mantimin Village. The informal and aggressive communication etiquette exemplified by influencers and gamers in the digital realm is being imitated in the real world. This egalitarian and permissive digital culture fundamentally challenges the values of respect for elders and social hierarchy.

This problem can be analyzed as a conflict between cyber norms (egalitarian, free, and anonymous) and local cultural norms (hierarchical, polite, and communal). Students adopt digital communication styles because they are considered "cooler" or more efficient, but fail to discern the context in which they will be used in real life. As a result, a value transfer crisis occurs, where they struggle to apply universal principles of politeness amidst a bombardment of content that upholds unlimited freedom of expression.

SDN Mantimin 2 has demonstrated adaptive initiatives through a strategy of integrating local cultural values (*Balangan* customs/*Pancasila*) into Character Education and Religious Education lessons. This effort is an appropriate step in the context of digital character education research, where schools focus not only on technological skills but also on values (Zulkarnain et al., 2021). Implementing digital cultural literacy through open discussions on the impact of viral content is a good mechanism to enhance students' critical thinking regarding the culture they consume.

Concrete school actions, such as fostering polite greetings and assignments connecting technology with local wisdom (making videos about the village environment), demonstrate an approach that seeks to bridge the cultural divide. This strategy aligns with the concept of a local asset-based approach, where technology is used as a tool to promote and preserve one's own culture, rather than simply consuming foreign culture (Putra & Wijaya, 2023). This aims to encourage students to see technology as a cultural enabler, not a destroyer.

Interviews with all informants firmly concluded that consistent parental supervision is a determining factor in the success of cultural adaptation. If schools teach politeness, but children experience permissiveness at home, the school's efforts will be in vain. Research confirms that the effectiveness of children's digital character education depends heavily on active and informed digital parenting (Syarif et al., 2022). Parents must be the primary "cultural filter," not just a screen-time limiter.

The Class Teacher's suggestion regarding a digital literacy seminar for parents is a very practical and urgent recommendation. This program should focus on understanding the content children consume, digital ethical norms, and how to communicate essential cultural values. A shared understanding fosters synergy between the microsystem (home) and mesosystem (school), which is crucial within the framework of Developmental Ecology.

Ultimately, exposure to digital technology at SDN Mantimin 2 sparked the formation of a hybrid cultural identity. Students did not completely abandon local values, but instead assimilated global elements. The challenge is to ensure that this assimilation occurs

selectively and consciously, rather than simply blind imitation. Successful cultural adaptation occurs when students become global citizens aware of global trends while remaining firmly rooted in the Eastern values and politeness of Mantimin Village.

This analysis confirms that behavioral transformation at SDN Mantimin 2 includes a shift in values from local to global, which has ethical implications. The school's efforts through digital cultural integration and literacy are key, but their effectiveness depends heavily on consistent support and adequate digital literacy from parents to create a harmonious culturally adaptive environment.

## CONCLUSION

The use of digital technology has caused a fundamental transformation in the behavior and social adaptation of students at SDN Mantimin 2. This transformation is characterized by a shift in primary communication channels to digital media (mediated communication), creating new social capital where inclusion and popularity are largely determined by digital engagement and expertise. Despite flexible adaptation (code-switching) between relaxed digital norms and polite local norms, there are serious challenges related to digital ethical literacy among students, which is exacerbated by the intergenerational digital literacy gap among parents. Therefore, schools play a crucial role in integrating ethical guidance and netiquette to mitigate psychosocial risks, such as social exclusion and cyberbullying behaviors that arise from limitless interactions.

In addition to social adaptation, exposure to technology also triggers a substantial shift from local cultural values to global pop culture that tends to be egalitarian and permissive, threatening the values of politeness and respect for elders. The adaptive response of SDN Mantimin 2, through a strategy of integrating local values (Balangan customs) and digital cultural literacy, is the right step to shape a hybrid cultural identity in students, namely being able to become global citizens while remaining firmly rooted in local wisdom. However, the success of this cultural adaptation is largely determined by the synergy of values and consistent supervision between the school and parents, which requires a special digital literacy program for parents to ensure the guidance process runs harmoniously and effectively.

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