

Cultural Change and Identity Negotiation among University Youth in the Digital Age: A Cultural Anthropological Study

Muhammad Muzammil¹

¹Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan-Pakistan,
Email: moosawains55@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: November 14, 2025
Revised: December 04, 2025
Accepted: December 23, 2025
Available Online: January 08, 2026

Keywords:

Cultural Anthropology, Human Resilience, Pakistan, Social Inequality, Climate Response

Corresponding Author:

Muhammad Muzammil

Email:

moosawains55@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The findings reveal that the Pakistan communities residing in the ecology regions of varying locations have developed a number of adaptive mechanisms that are anchored on the knowledge of the natives, interpersonal relations, and the historical experience. The strategies indicate human resilience to climate uncertainty; altered agricultural activity in the Indus plains, pastoral migration in arid regions, community-based water management in hilly regions, and livelihood diversification in coastal regions. However, the paper equally notes that the adaptive capacity is also uneven in terms of the marginalized groups bearing disproportionate impact of the climate change attack through social inequality, economic problem, institutional ineffectiveness, etc. This piece of work ends with the significance of anthropology in climate change research and policy. To develop adaptive strategies that are inclusive and sustainable, anthropology may supply the required information to preempt the voices of the locals, the cultural knowledge structures, and the social realities. The paper finds that the adaptation of climate in Pakistan should be anchored on the integration of the community-based knowledge and the scientific methods, the issues of structural inequalities should be addressed, and the institutions in Pakistan should be strengthened. It is not just a strategy that may be used to build resilience, but it would also contribute to the social fairness of climate responses, cultural appropriateness, and responsiveness to the actual lives of those who are the most vulnerable due to the climate change.



Introduction

The results indicate that many adaptive processes developed by the Pakistan communities living in the ecology territories of the different locations are based on their knowledge about the natives, interpersonal relationships, and the historical experience [1]. The strategies represent human response to climate uncertainty; changed agricultural practice in the Indus plains, pastoral movement in arid areas, community-based water management in hilly areas and diversification of livelihood in coastal areas [2-3]. Nevertheless, the paper also mentions that the adaptive capacity is also unequal regarding the marginalized groups who suffer disproportionate influence of the climate change attack by social inequality, economic issues, ineffectiveness of the institutions, etc.

The last piece of work is the importance of anthropology in climate change studies and policy. Anthropology can be used to provide the information needed to anticipate the voices of the locals, the cultural structures of knowledge and the social realities so as to develop adaptive strategies that are inclusive and sustainable [4]. The paper concludes that the adaptation of climate in Pakistan should be pegged upon the combination of the community-based knowledge and the scientific methodology, the problems of structural inequalities must be resolved, and the institutions in Pakistan must be fortified [5-7]. It is not only a plan which can be employed to create resilience, but it would also form part of the social equity of the climate responses, cultural suitability, and responsiveness to the real lives of the most vulnerable parties because of the climate change [8].

The anthropological aspect of adaptation to the climate change has been discussed in this paper, and much attention has been paid to the complexity of the geo-cultural and societal interplay between the environment, society, and culture in the Pakistani context [9]. As it has been discussed, climate change in Pakistan is not only an environmental or technical phenomenon but a social phenomenon that directly affects the livelihood, social relations, cultural activities, and human well-being [10]. A change of anthropological outlook to a more holistic approach the study indicates that adaptation is a dynamic process that is culturally mediated and context specified rather than being a constant response to environmental pressure.

The findings indicate that Pakistan communities inhabiting the various ecology regions have developed different adaptive strategies in accordance with the indigenous knowledge, interpersonal relationship, and historical experience [11-12]. Human resilience to climate uncertainty is manifested by altered agricultural activity in the Indus plains and pastoral movement in arid areas, community-based water management in hilly regions [13] and the livelihood diversification in coastal areas, all the strategies. However, the paper also brings out the fact that the adaptive capacity is not evenly distributed with the marginalized populations bearing the excessive burden of the effects of climate change through social inequality, economic and institutional frailty [14-15].

The end of this work of art plays a crucial role in light of anthropology in the study of climate change and policy. It is the anthropology that might have the required information to construct the adaptive strategies that are inclusive and sustainable by anticipating the local voices, the cultural knowledge systems, and social realities [16]. The paper has led to detailed conclusion that climate adaptation in Pakistan must be founded on the synergy of the community-based knowledge, and the scientific methods, structural inequalities must be addressed, and the institutions in Pakistan must be strengthened [17]. And it is not only a strategy that might assist in building resilience, but also might assist in making climate reactions socially just, culturally appropriate, and meeting the real life of individuals who are at the greatest threat due to the climate change.

The anthropological aspect of human adaptation to climate change has been discussed in this paper and much attention has been imparted to the complex geo-cultural and societal interaction between

the environment, culture, and the society in Pakistani context. As it has been discussed, climate change in Pakistan is not only an environmental or technical phenomenon but is a social phenomenon that impacts directly on livelihoods, social relationships, cultural practices and human welfare to a great extent [18]. The change in the anthropological outlook to the holistic approach to the study indicates that the adaptation process is dynamic and culturally mediated, context specific instead of reaction to the environmental pressure that is uniform.

It was found that the Pakistan communities residing in other ecology regions have developed a number of adaptive mechanisms founded on indigenous knowledge, interpersonal relations, and historical experience [19]. The Strategies now include the altered agricultural practice in the Indus plains and pastoral movement in the arid regions, community-based water management as noted in the hilly regions, and livelihood diversification in the coastal areas to demonstrate the human resilience towards the uncertain climate conditions. However, in the paper, there is as well the fact that the degree of adaptive capacity is not distributed evenly with the marginalized groups bearing the disproportionate effect of the climate change through societal inequity, financial problems, and institutional failures [20].

At the end of this work of writing, emphasis is placed on the significance of anthropology in climate change research and policy. Anthropology could provide the necessary information to build adaptive strategies that are inclusive and sustainable by preempting the local voices, cultural knowledge systems, and social realities [21]. The paper concludes that climate adaptation in Pakistan needs to be based on the combination of the community-based knowledge and the scientific methods, structural inequalities should be tackled, and the institutions in Pakistan should be reinforced. This is not merely a strategy that could help to create resilience [22], but that would also help to make climate responses socially just, culturally proper, and sensitive to the real lives of people who are most at risk because of the climate change.

Research Objectives

The main aim of the proposed study is to explore the dynamics of cultural transformation and identity negotiation in the digital age among the youths in the university in terms of cultural anthropology. The study aims to interpret how digital media effects the culture, social and identity formation of the youth who are enrolled in institutions of higher learning by concentrating on the Pakistani context.

The objectives of the study are specific and the following:

- To investigate the role of digital technologies and social media platforms in bringing change to cultures among university youth in Pakistan.
- To examine how university students can negotiate their cultural identities in online and offline social space.
- To investigate how traditional cultural elements, including family, religion and social norms affect digital identity practices in Pakistani youth.
- To examine how hybrid identities that are formed as a result of the exchange between local cultural practices and digital world influences.
- To learn the impact of such variables as gender, socio-economic background and urban educational setting on the processes of identity negotiation in the young population of universities.

Significance of the Study

The study has great academic and social importance because it helps to comprehend the process of cultural change and identity negotiation of university youth more in the digital age, specifically in

the Pakistani context. Culturally anthropologically speaking, the study is informative about the manner in which digital spaces are operating as powerful cultural spaces in which meanings, values, and identities are constantly created and redefinitions. The paper has identified the university youth as a critical social group because this population is the most important in the determination of upcoming cultural trends and social changes in Pakistan.

In scholarly terms, the research provides a significant gap in the literature through a qualitative approach to the topic, which is ethnographically informed study of the digital identity practices in Pakistan. Although a lot of the literature on digital media and youth is being overwhelmingly Western in orientation, the local cultural realities, such as the role of family structures, religious values, gender norms, and socio-economic conditions are being foreshadowed in this study. By so doing, it will contribute to the cultural anthropological literature by offering context-specific information about the ways global digital forces are influencing the indigenous cultural frameworks.

The social implications of the present study are significant to educators, policymakers and university administrators who need to know the changing young cultural orientations in institutions of higher learning. The study can be useful in the formulation of culturally sensitive policies of education and how to engage youth by shedding light on how youth negotiate cultural expectations in digital spaces. Moreover, the study stimulates a deliberate exchange between generations through the critique of the simplistic accounts of cultural loss and the focus on the adaptability and negotiability of cultural change in the contemporary Pakistani society.

Research Gap

The current research on the relationship between youth and digital media has focused on technological use and social effects largely, with the better part of the research being based on the western experience. Such strategies tend to ignore the cultural significance and identity negotiations that take place in a certain local context. Research on digital media and young people in Pakistan is still relative, and most studies revolve around the quantitative study on social media use, political participation, or communication practices. These studies do not give enough details about the experience of young people and the processes taking place within their cultures that form their identities.

In addition, it does not have any qualitative and ethnographic studies that explore how Pakistani university youth mediate identity in the interplay between the traditional cultural values and the digital global forces. There are not many studies which take a cultural anthropological approach to situating the digital practices within the wider pathways of cultural modification. As a cohort between the inherited culture and new digital life, university youth has not been properly studied as an active participant of identity negotiation. In this research, these gaps will be filled by applying the cultural anthropological approach to observe the cultural change and identity negotiation amongst the youth in Pakistani universities.

Work Contribution

The research contributes to the field of cultural anthropology and the general knowledge of the youth culture in the digital era in several ways. First, it includes a depth, context-focused analysis of cultural change and identity negotiation among Pakistani university youth, which has not been well represented in current anthropological and digital media literature. Locating the digital practices into the framework of the local culture, the research questions the hegemony of Western-centric views and provides an additive and comparatively more comprehensive insight into digital anthropology.

Second, the study contributes to the theoretical debate about identity as it shows how university students in Pakistan actively mediate between the conventional cultural standards and the international digital forces. The article brings forth emergence of hybrid identities as an indication of continuity and change thus, providing empirical data into anthropological discussions on globalization, modernity and cultural hybridity. The idea of cultural agency of youth as active agents as opposed to passive consumers of digital change is highlighted in this work.

Third, the article has a methodological contribution to the study as it uses qualitative methods, such as interviews and online ethnography, to understand the everyday digital activities with a culturally sensitive approach. This research methodology can be used as a pattern in the studies of digital culture in other similar socio-cultural settings in the future. All in all, the research contributes to the knowledge of how digital space redefines cultural content and identity formation in the youths and provides a worthwhile contribution to the scholarship of scholars, educators, and policy makers, who are interested in the cultural transformation in modern Pakistani society.

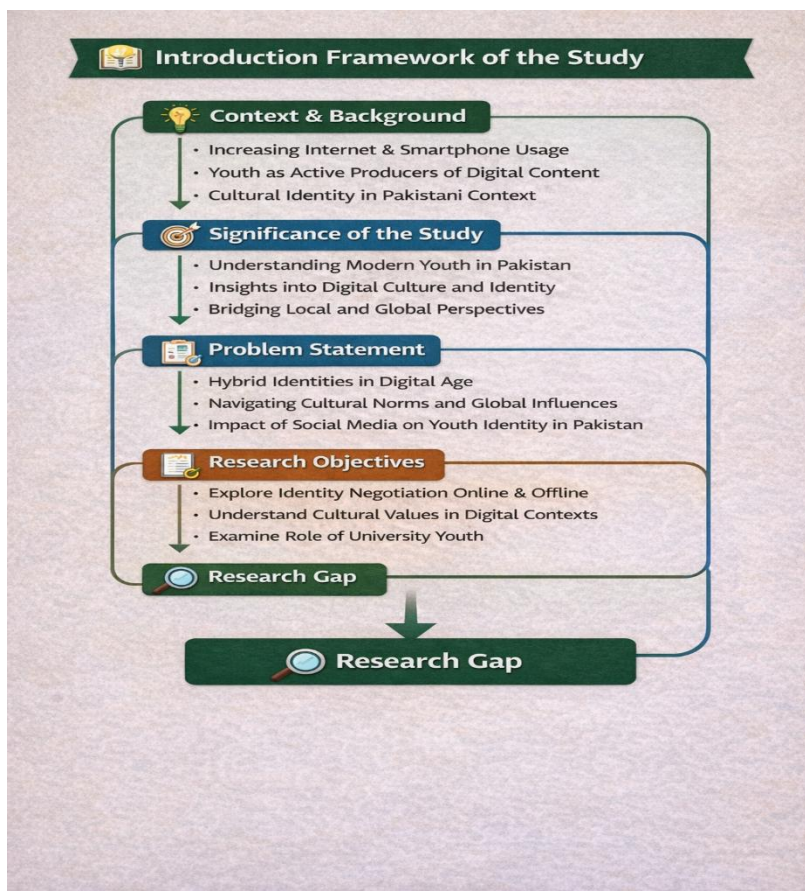


Figure 1: Analytical Framework of the Study Introduction

Literature Review

The analysis of culture and identity has been an aspect that has taken the top-most position in the field of cultural anthropology and other associated social sciences. The construction of identity has been well comprehended as a socially constructed and dynamic process that develops with cultural meanings, social interactions, and historical contexts contrasting with an essential or fixed attribute [23]. It theorizes cultural identity as a dynamic and constantly negotiated body and stresses places an emphasis on the fact that identities are constructed through certain cultural and discursive

practices [24]. The interpretation serves as a valuable basis of looking at the impact of formation of identity due to the shifting social state of digital era.

Cultural space has been greatly transformed by the rise of digital technologies, which have influenced the construction of identities in cultural space. Scholars propose that the digital media has facilitated new social spaces that allow people to experience identity performance and experimentation especially the youth [25]. The gems of the reflexive quality of the self-identity in the contemporary societies where people continue to ponder and recreate their identities in reaction to social transformation. Digital platforms enhance this reflexivity providing constant ways of self-presentation, interaction, and feedback [26]. To young people, these spaces serve as territories on which personal, social and cultural identities are negotiated against both local and global forces.

The digital era of cultural change also offers a contribution of the globalization theory. The model of cultural flows in the world can be used to describe the way ideas, values, and lifestyles cross the national borders with the help of media [27], technology, and communication networks. These flows affect local cultures, and in most instances, it leads to cultural hybridity and not cultural homogenization. Researchers claim that the identities of the young people are moving towards the hybrid types of cultures characterized by the integration of the local cultures and the global digital cultures [28-29]. This hybridization can especially be observed in fashion, the use of language, the political manifestation, and social relations that are mediated by the digital environment.

In the context of digital anthropology, other scholars have stressed that digital technologies need to be researched as a practice that is culturally embedded, rather than as a set of agents of change. Digital media cannot have the same impact on all societies, rather, its meaning and applications are defined by local social practices, power, and cultural values [30]. Research points out the role of gender, as well as class, religion, and morality in defining digital interaction and expression of identity [31]. This point of view gains particular importance when examining youth cultures in the non-Western world, where digital practices are colliding with the cultural traditions of the in-depth roots [32-33].

In recent years, there is a rise in the number of studies conducted on the youth and digital media in Pakistan due to the increased availability of the internet and smartphone technology. Available literature has shown that Pakistani youths are very active on social media communicating, educating, entertaining, and engaging in political issues [34]. Yet, these digital practices are frequently discussed within the context of a conservative culture with a high family power, religious beliefs, and gender expectations. The studies indicate that on the one hand, digital platforms can be freer in expression, particularly in young and urbanized populations and educated ones [35], but on the other hand, social borders and cultural restraints are reproduced.

Research done on Pakistani university students emphasizes the fact that institutions of higher learning are a place where the traditional and modern culture collide. Youth in universities can be exposed to various ideas and other discourses in the world but they are still kept within the local cultural and family set ups [36]. It is in digital media that these influences are negotiated which allows students to create identities that both maintain and transform the culture. Alongside these insights, however, still lacks an in-depth anthropological study of lived experiences and cultural significance of digital identity practices among Pakistani university youth [37-38].

The purpose of this study is to fill this gap by taking the cultural anthropological approach in order to study cultural change and identity negotiation in Pakistani university youth [39]. The qualitative and ethnographic approach to research will help the researcher go beyond the description process of digital media use and provide a subtle insight on how young people are negotiating identity, belonging, and cultural values in the digital era by actively participating in digital space [40].

Methodology

The research paper has a qualitative research design to analyze cultural change and identity negotiation among the youth in the digital age in the university as a cultural anthropological paradigm. The qualitative research is best suited to the study because it will enable the research investigator to fully explore the social meanings, cultural practices, and subjective experiences that cannot be effectively stated using quantitative research. The proposed research aims to unravel how this group of university youth in Pakistan manage their identities in digitally mediated social contexts by taking lived experiences as the primary point of negotiation and understanding of their identities.

Research Paradigm and Approach

The research will be based on an interpretivist research paradigm that underlines that social reality is socially constructed and can be cognized in terms of meanings that people give to it in particular cultural settings. On cultural anthropological perspective, identity is regarded as dynamic and negotiated on a social interaction basis. The study is also based on concepts of digital anthropology, which acknowledge digital spaces as culturally relevant places of social production and practice of symbols. This interpretive methodology allows one to carefully examine the identity negotiation processes in both an online and offline setting.

Research Design

There is an adoption of exploratory and descriptive research design to gain the complexity of culture change within the university youth. The research paper combines the conventional ethnographic sensitivities with digital ethnography to explore the ways cultural practices are transferred into the online world. Instead of separating digital conduct into the real-life, the study considers online and offline experiences to be two inseparable aspects of social reality.

Population and Sampling Method of Study

The target population will include the university students of both public and private universities in Pakistan. The participants will be chosen by means of the purposive sampling method, that is, those, who actively use digital media platforms, especially social networking websites. To make the sample varied in terms of experience and opinion, there would be both male and female students with different academic backgrounds and socio-economic backgrounds. The participants are mostly in the age group of 18 to 25 years which is the main target group of the university youth. It also uses snowball sampling in order to access those that could give informative insights into the digital identity practices.

Data Collection Methods

Diverse qualitative approaches are taken to gather data in order to increase its depth and credibility. Semi-structured interviews are the main source of data collection because it will enable participants to share their opinion about the use of digital media, cultural values, and identity negotiation. The interview guide will contain open-ended questions that will be connected to online self-presentation, family expectation, religious value, peer pressure, and thoughts about cultural change.

Besides interviews, there is digital ethnographic observation to study the interactions of the participants in the online spaces. It involves monitoring the content of social media, social media discussions, and digital self-presentations, which are ethically permissible. Field notes are kept to record trends of behavior, expressive symbols and themes of culture that arise as a result of digital

interactions. The interviews and digital observation provide the opportunity to obtain a holistic perspective on identity construction and negotiation of digitally mediated spaces.

Data Analysis Techniques

Thematic analysis is used as a method of data analysis, which is conducted in a systematic and repetitive way. Transcripts of interviews and field notes of ethnographic studies are coded to find out common patterns and themes associated with the cultural change, negotiation of identity and digital practices. To narrow down important themes, initial open coding is preceded with focused coding. It is an interpretative analysis, which is informed by theoretical information, such as cultural hybridity, globalization and reflexive identity, imparted by cultural anthropology. The analysis is held through reflexivity to explain the positionality and possible prejudices of the researcher.

Trustworthiness and Rigor

In order to make the findings credible and trustworthy, a number of strategies are used. The triangulation is done through use of a number of data sources and approaches. Member checking involves presenting the interpretations of choice to the participants to be validated. Thick description is applied to give the detailed contextual descriptions, allowing the readers to determine the transferability of the findings. These are steps that enhance the rigor of the study.

Ethical Considerations

The research process is conducted under ethical principles. All the participants are informed before data collection and provide informed consent. Respondents also get a guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality and pseudonyms are applied in presenting findings. Participation is optional and the participants learn of their right to back out at any given point without penalty. By the virtue of the online character of the research, special attention is paid to the preservation of privacy and ethical principles concerning online data in order to conduct a responsible and culturally competent research.

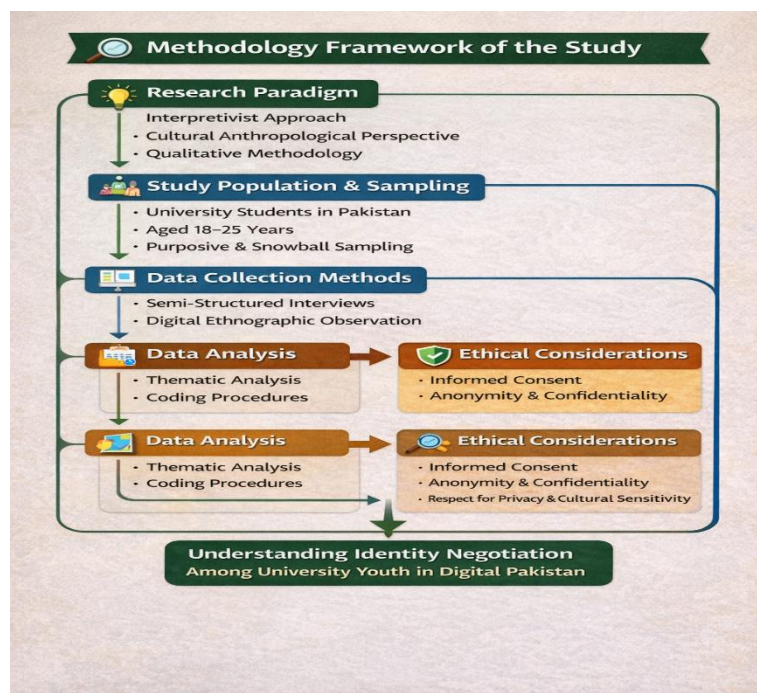


Figure 2: Methodology Framework of the Study

Analysis and Discussion

This section shows the analysis of the results of semi-structured interviews and digital ethnographic observation and discussion, which places these results in the context of the existing anthropological literature. The discussion is based on the experience of cultural change among university young people in Pakistan and their negotiations of their identities in the digitally mediated contexts. The identified themes refer to the continuity and change in cultural values, in that there is a dynamic interaction between the tradition and digital modernity.

Digital Spaces Digital Identity Construction

The results suggest that digital platforms are important cultural spaces in which youths of the university actively engage in constructing and expressing their identities. The social networks Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp allow youths to create self-images that are not necessarily accurate reflections of themselves in real life. The participants said that they used online spaces to give their views, passions and ways of living that are usually limited in the traditional family/social context. Culturally, anthropologically, the practices demonstrate how identity is enacted and negotiated in a symbolic process in daily digital interactions.

This observation conforms to the concept of identity as fluid and constantly created by the cultural practices by Hall. Instead of supplanting conventional identities, the digital spaces offer additional fronts upon which the youth are negotiating belonging and self. Online self-presentation is selective as the cultural expectations of modesty, respect to elders, and family values influence this process in the Pakistani context.

Tradition and Digital Modernity in Negotiation

One of the key themes that came out of the analysis is the conflict between the old cultural rules and the digital modernity. The necessity to strike the equilibrium between family, religious, and social expectations and the self-expression opportunities provided by digital media were often mentioned by the participants. Indicatively, as young people interact with the content in the world in terms of fashion, entertainment and political communication, they tend to control their online activities in order to prevent social reproach or familial confrontation.

This negotiation relates to the idea of cultural flows presented by Appadurai when the global digital influence is facing the local cultural frameworks. Instead of embracing the global culture blindly, the young generation is exhibiting agency by adjusting to the digital practices within the acceptable cultural contexts in Pakistani universities. The outcome of this process is hybrid identities where the traditional ethos is mixed with the new digital lives and the oversimplified statements of cultural decline.

Gendered Dimensions of Digital Identity

As has been depicted in the discussion, gender has a significant role to contribute to the development of the digital identity practices among university youths. Particularly the female respondents indicated that they were more scrutinized and they were more controlled regarding their presence on the internet than their male counterparts. The question of honor, reputation and modesty also influence the conduct of women in the digital society, thus compelling them to use privacy settings or anonymity.

When it comes to anthropology, the findings can be used to shed light on how existing gender norms are replicated and negotiated in the digital realms. Though digital platforms demonstrate the potential of empowerment and expression, they are believed to be the reflections of social power

relations, in general. These findings support the literature that observes the femininity of online presence in patriarchal organizations such as Pakistan.

Youth Agency and Environment in the University

The university setting was also introduced as an important setting that influences the identity negotiation. Students are also exposed to many ideas, peer networks and scholarly discourses that enable them to rethink their cultural norms and digital practices. The participants claimed that universities were quite free spaces where digital communication was a standard and intellectual exchange advanced. This environment enhances youth agency that will not imperial on students to conform to their cultural identity but allows them to experiment with the freedom to do so.

The findings have also brought out the significance of education institutions as the places of cultural mediation where youths are struggling with the cultural heritage they receive and world forces entering the fray. The situation in the university thus facilitates the cultural change and preservation of the culture.

Relation to the Existing Literature Discussion

The findings of the present study are reminiscent of the digital anthropological literature that has emphasized the local nature of the digital practices. As mentioned in the contention by Miller, the digital media is not that because it delivers a homogenous response in regard to culture but rather it is subjected to the same local norms and social relations. The study also paves the way of the existing body of literature by anticipating the Pakistani context by giving empirical evidence of how youth actively construct an identity rather than being submitted by the digital forces.

Overall, the analysis indicates that the cultural change in the Pakistani youth among the students in the Pakistani university will not be characterized by its loss but accommodation, and compromise. The reinterpretation of the cultural meanings causes the formation of the hybrid identities that merge continuity and change which is the source of the digital media.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis of Identity Negotiation among University Youth in Digital Pakistan

MAJOR THEME	SUB-THEMES / CATEGORIES	KEY FINDINGS	ANTHROPOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION
DIGITAL SPACES AS CULTURAL ARENAS	Online self- presentation	University youth are forming and maintaining digital identities using social media sites and tend to distinguish between online and real selves.	Online spaces are considered as cultural spaces in which identity is symbolically acted and negotiated.
	Expression and visibility	Digital media help to be candid, forthright, and assertive in ways that youth might not be capable of doing in physical social environments.	The identity is dynamic and situational and is constructed in the daily culture practices in the digital world.

NEGOTIATION BETWEEN TRADITION AND DIGITAL MODERNITY	Cultural boundaries	The young people, in their turn, have choosy access to the global digital information and keep the cultural and religious limits.	Is cultural hybridity and not cultural replacement.
	Family and social expectations	The Internet conduct is controlled in order to confirm to the norms and social respectability of the family.	Shows agency in the way it is adapting digital practices to local cultural frameworks.
	Blending of cultural values	The young people are combining the old values with the new digital lifestyle and create hybrid identities.	The process of change is culturally not culturally lossful but rather culturally adaptive and reinterpreted.
HYBRID IDENTITY FORMATION	Continuity and change	Global digital cultures do not lose their impact on traditional norms.	Bears anthropological perspectives of continuity in social change.
	Female online participation	There is increased monitoring and limitations of female students in cyberspace.	The digital space replicates the power relations of gender in Pakistani society.
	Privacy and anonymity	Women experience the necessity to use privacy options or anonymity to navigate through digital space without any damage.	Accentuates the significance of the agency negotiation in the patriarchal cultural systems.
GENDERED DIGITAL EXPERIENCES	Exposure to diversity	There are various concepts, peer groups and discourses of the universities of the world.	Cultural negation is a ground of mediation at schools.
	Youth agency	Students are more critical and formative in identity.	The youth are the active operators of culture that produce identity and cultural change.
DIGITAL MEDIA AND YOUTH AGENCY	Active engagement	Adolescents are able to make a conscious choice as to how they consume digital materials and when	Gets in the way of the deterministic views of the power of the digital.

Meaning-making practices	they consume them. Globality is founded on local meanings contrary to homogeneity in digital practices.	Is in line with the localized digital culture of digital anthropology.
--------------------------	--	--

Conclusion

This paper has examined the cultural change and identity negotiation among the youths in the digital age at the university level within the context of cultural anthropology using the Pakistani case. The findings reveal that the digital media has formed an indivisible part and parcel of the life of the youth and can be utilized as a significant cultural site whereby identities continue to be made, negotiated and re-constructed. Rather than having a complete release of the traditional cultural values, the Pakistani university youth are part of the process of adaptation that has not only the aspect of continuity but also change.

The article notes that identity negotiation amongst the youth in the university is formed in terms of the interplay between global digital factors and well-established local cultural institutions, such as family, religious ideologies, and social practices. The digital platforms offer a space of self-expression, experimentation, and interaction with others; nevertheless, the space is explored prudently within the limits of cultural acceptability. The arising of hybrid identities are the manifestation of youth agency and their capacity to selectively make use of digital modernity and integrate it with the inherited cultural demands.

Moreover, the study also highlights the role of gender, school setting, and the socio-cultural background in the development of digital identity practices. The universities are important spaces where one can reflect, engage and be exposed to various points of view and they can negotiate their identities more intensely. The qualitative and anthropological methodology enables this research to make a contribution to the body of scholarly literature by providing context-specific data that provoke the deterministic interpretations of digital media as a source of cultural homogenization.

Drawing a conclusion, the cultural change of the Pakistani youth in the digital age at Pakistan university must be perceived as a negotiated and dynamic process and not a linear transformation towards the loss of culture. This paper highlights the importance of culturally aware methodologies in future research and policymaking processes and acknowledges youth as one of the active players in the cultural landscape of modern Pakistani society.

Suggestions in Future research

Further research can be conducted on the digital identity negotiation between the youth in the universities in various parts of Pakistan and can involve longitudinal or mixed-method research to measure the variations over a period. More studies on gender, class, and religious relations in the digital environment and the impact of new digital technologies will enhance the knowledge about cultural change among the young population.

References

1. Daza Bernal, M. Í. (2020). La transformaciones en la identidad cultural en el ámbito universitario, desde una perspectiva de la migración campo-ciudad. *Investigación & Negocios*, 13(21), 132–140. <https://doi.org/10.38147/invneg.v13i21.89>

2. Zalukhu, E. W., & Yuliamir, H. (2025). Peran media sosial dalam pembentukan identitas budaya mahasiswa di Kabupaten Semarang. *Journal of Education, Humaniora and Social Sciences*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.34007/jehss.v8i1.2814>
3. Li, X., Liu, M., & Su, C. (2024). Exploring the impact of social media on the integration of Western cultural elements by university students in China. *Studies in Social Science & Humanities*, 3(3), 25–29. <https://doi.org/10.56397/sssh.2024.03.05>
4. Wuysang, J. M., Patriani, I., Pijoh, F. E., & Rahmawati, R. (2025). Fear of missing out and the dynamics of student identity: An intercultural communication perspective in the digital age (Study at Faculty of Social and Political Sciences of Universitas Tanjungpura Pontianak). *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 74(1), Article 13091. <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v74i1.13091>
5. Ozer, S., Bertelsen, P., Singla, R., & Schwartz, S. J. (2017). “Grab your culture and walk with the global”: Ladakhi students’ negotiation of cultural identity in the context of globalization-based acculturation. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 48(3), 294–318. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022116687394>
6. Echesony, G. (2024). *Impact of social media on cultural identity in urban youth*. *American Journal of Arts, Social and Humanity Studies*, 4(2), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.47672/ajashs.2354>
7. Patel, P. (2025). *The interplay between social media and cultural identity: A study of multicultural societies*. *Advanced International Journal for Research*, 6(6), Article 2265. <https://doi.org/10.63363/aijfr.2025.v06i06.2265>
8. Daffa, D. R., Arthuro, D., Fernanda, J. A., & Widya Pratama, M. B. (2024). *Gen-Z: Eksplorasi identitas budaya dan tantangan sosial dalam era digital*. *Jurnal Insan Pendidikan dan Sosial Humaniora*, 2(2), 169–183. <https://doi.org/10.59581/jipsoshum-widyakarya.v2i2.3112>
9. Singh, A. K. (2022). *A study of popular culture and its impact on youth’s cultural identity*. *The Creative Launcher*, 7(6), 150–157. <https://doi.org/10.53032/tcl.2022.7.6.16>
10. McKenzie, J. (2025). *Digital media as sites for cultural identity development: The case of Hmong American emerging adults*. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 40(2), 296–330. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07435584221116312>
11. Hafidhoh, H. (2025). *Cultural identity and traditional commodification: A case study of local tourism branding in the digital age*. *INJURITY: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(2), Article 1421. <https://doi.org/10.58631/injury.v4i2.1421>
12. Anista, R. (2023). *Transformasi kebudayaan: Dampak perkembangan teknologi dan media sosial*. *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Indonesia*, 1(1), 33–40. <https://doi.org/10.62238/jupsijurnalpendidikansosialindonesia.v1i1.6>
13. Pangesti, M., Khaeriah, A. S., Purwanto, E., et al., (2024). *The influence of social media on the cultural identity of the millennial generation: Indonesian case study*. *Procedia of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2(1), 7–7. <https://doi.org/10.47134/pssh.v2i1.241>
14. Belorussova, S. Y. (2025). *Ethnic identities in virtual space*. *Changing Societies & Personalities*, 9(1), 5–10. <https://doi.org/10.15826/csp.2025.9.1.314>
15. Crowe, N., & Hoskins, K. (2019). Researching Transgression: Ana as a Youth Subculture in the Age of Digital Ethnography. *Societies*, 9(3), 53. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc9030053>
16. Nursetiyawati, P. S., Mutahir, A., & Sabrina, L. (2025). *Nyantri jaman now: Manifestation of Indonesian santri identity in the digital era*. *Jurnal Studi Agama*, 9(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.19109/jsa.v9i1.27426>
17. Agossi Aguessy, A. N. J., & Fandy, R. M. (2025). *Identity construction in the digital age: The impact of social media on American cultural dynamics*. *Advances in Social Sciences and Management*, 3(06), 55–72. <https://doi.org/10.63002/assm.306.1184>

18. Virginia, A. (2012). *Pergeseran budaya komunikasi pada era media baru: Studi kasus penggunaan Facebook oleh digital natives*. Jurnal Komunikasi Indonesia, 1(2), 77–85. <https://doi.org/10.7454/jki.v1i2.7822>
19. Su, Y. (2024). *Cultural identity negotiation among English-dominant Malaysian Chinese university students*. Current Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 7(2), 148–162. <https://doi.org/10.12944/CRJSSH.7.2.09>
20. Sheikh, F. (2020). *Korean Muslims: Shaping Islamic discourse and identities online*. European Journal of Korean Studies, 19(2), 129–147. <https://doi.org/10.33526/ejks.20201902.129>
21. Pattihua, M., & Manuputty, F. (2022). *Intimasi digital dan keterbukaan diri pada dewasa awal: Perspektif sosiokultural dari pengguna Litmatch di Kota Ambon*. Populis: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, 17(1), 52–68. <https://doi.org/10.30598/populis.17.1.52-68>
22. Maashi, M. M. (2025). *Use of social networking sites and their relationship to cultural identity formation: A field study applied to university youth at King Faisal University*. International Journal of Educational Sciences and Arts, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.59992/ijesa.2025.v4n2p5>
23. Liu, Y. (2024). *“I want to be a bridge”? The digital identity positioning of transnational bloggers on Chinese social media platforms: Between ethnic differences and cultural affinities*. Media, Culture & Society, 46(1), 130–147. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437231188451>
24. Altıntaş, M. C. (2023). *Change of identities and religiosities of Muslim young people across time and space: Resilient youth*. Şırnak Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, 31, 22–46. <https://doi.org/10.35415/sirnakifd.1257267>
25. Varghese, T. (2025). *Social media influence on Naga youth identity formation: Navigating digital spaces, cultural preservation, and online harassment*. Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities, 5(5), 73–78. <https://doi.org/10.55544/ijrah.5.5.12>
26. Ajitoni, B. D. (2024). *Digital storytelling and cultural identity: The role of social media in contemporary narratives*. The Abuja Communicator: A Journal of Culture and Media Arts, 1(1), Article tacj0007. <https://doi.org/10.70118/tacj0007>
27. Bingaman, K. A. (2023). *Religion in the Digital Age: An Irreversible Process*. Religions, 14(1), 108. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14010108>
28. De Leyn, T. (2023). *Reclaiming agency in the digital neighborhood: An ethnographic exploration of ethno-religious minority youths' performances of the masculine self*. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 28(6). <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmad037>
29. Tongdhamachart, N., & Alwi, A. (2023). *The cultural identity of Mien ethnic group in a digital era*. International Journal of Professional Business Review, 8(1), Article e01256. <https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2023.v8i1.1256>
30. Qumseya, T. G. I. (2018). *Toward a better understanding of the cultural identity negotiation: The experiences of minority youth in multicultural societies* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Victoria University of Wellington. <https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.17134244.v1>
31. Gürkan, H., Serttaş, A., & Sarıkaya, T. (2023). *The virtual mask: The dark underbelly of digital anonymity and gender identity construction in Turkey*. Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research, 16. https://doi.org/10.1386/jammr_00068_1
32. Ayish, M., & AlNajjar, A. (2019). *Arab Millennials' articulation of identity in cyberspace: A study of three MENA YouTubers*. Arab Media & Society, (27). <https://doi.org/10.70090/ma27qmic>

33. Riski Dwi Putri, Eko Purwanto, Nazla Keyla, Rapih Nur Kharismatika, & Kholifia Ainun Muthmainah. (2024). Identitas Budaya dalam Era Digital. *El-Mujtama: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 4(4), 2000–2011. <https://doi.org/10.47467/elmujtama.v4i4.3380>
34. Nam, V. H. (2021). *Youth identity in the digital age*. Asia Journal of Theology, 35(1), 58–82. <https://doi.org/10.54424/ajt.v35i1.4>
35. Condemayta Soto, P., Bauwens, J., & Smets, K. (2023). Cultural Identity Performances on Social Media: A Study of Bolivian Students. *Journalism and Media*, 4(1), 304–321. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia4010021>
36. Merung, A. Y., Larisu, Z., Bahriyah, E. N., & Ulhaq, M. Z. (2024). *Transformation cultural identity in the global era: A study of globalization and locality*. Socius Journal, 1(5), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.62872/jnxmz319>
37. Husnita, S. R. I., Simarmata, Y. V. R., & Setijadi, N. N. (2025). *Fusi bahasa dan identitas: Analisis pemakaian bahasa Inggris-campur dalam komunikasi Generasi Z*. Jurnal Humaniora: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Ekonomi dan Hukum, 9(1), 352–365. <https://doi.org/10.30601/humaniora.v9i1.6568>
38. Matayane, G., & Rahawarin, Y. (2022). *Menegosiasikan aspirasi global dan keterikatan lokal: Analisis sosiologis tentang K-Pop, ikatan emosional, dan performativitas identitas remaja di Ambon*. Populis: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, 17(1), 87–104. <https://doi.org/10.30598/populis.17.1.87-104>
39. Bala, A. V. (2024). *Digital media and cultural identity: Exploring intersections, impacts, and challenges*. Gusau Journal of Sociology, 4(3), 305–317. <https://doi.org/10.57233/gujos.v4i3.17>
40. Timmis, S., & Muñoz-Chereau, B. (2019). *Under-represented students' university trajectories: Building alternative identities and forms of capital through digital improvisations*. Teaching in Higher Education, 26(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2019.1696295>