



The Role of Youth in Character Education Bases on Local Sociocultural Values Through Digital Storytelling

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the role of youth in RT 05 Pondok Benda, Pamulang, in preserving local socio-cultural values through digital storytelling as an educational medium in the digital space. The study is grounded in the increasing use of digital media among younger generations, which has the potential to serve as a medium for the transmission and reinforcement of local cultural identity. A qualitative approach was employed using in-depth interviews with the Head of RT 05/RW 03 Pondok Benda and local youth actively involved in cultural content production. The data were analyzed thematically to identify the forms of youth participation and digital storytelling strategies used to represent local culture. The findings indicate that youth act not only as content creators but also as cultural curators with a high sensitivity to customary values in digital content production. Local cultural practices are adapted into short video formats using simple yet effective visual techniques, the incorporation of regional songs as background music, and the documentation of cultural activities such as traditional costume parades during the celebration of Indonesia's Independence Day on August 17, which are then disseminated through social media. The implications of this study highlight that digital storytelling plays a strategic role in expanding the reach of local culture, strengthening the cultural identity of younger generations, and fostering intergenerational collaboration in the context of cultural preservation and education in the digital era.

Keywords: Digital Storytelling, Youth, Local Culture, Digital Cultural Literacy, Pondok Benda

Introduction

The rapid development of digital transformation in recent years has significantly altered the ways in which local culture is represented and transmitted, thereby necessitating the strengthening of digital cultural literacy in cultural preservation practices within digital spaces. Young people represent the group most adaptive to technological advancements and play a strategic role as both producers and mediators of cultural content, requiring an understanding of cultural context, ethics, and customary boundaries (Basalama et al., 2020). Digital storytelling has emerged as a relevant approach, as it enables the communication of socio-cultural values through visual narratives that are communicative, contextual, and educational, while simultaneously reinforcing cultural identity within digital societies (Rahman, 2021).

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Cultural practices that are recorded and shared through social media have been shown to strengthen local identity and expand the reach of cultural audiences (Wardiani & Anisyahrini, 2022). The digital publication of cultural celebrations and community activities also facilitates broader public understanding of cultural values, making cultural experiences more meaningful (Fajarianto et al., 2023). Within this process of digitalization, youth demonstrate a high level of cultural sensitivity in determining appropriate forms of cultural representation for publication, ensuring that customary norms and local values are respected (Hervansyah et al., 2024). This indicates that cultural digitalization requires not only visual creativity but also mature cultural competence.

The title *From Ritual to Reels* represents a shift in cultural practices from ritual spaces to more interactive and participatory digital environments. Although previous studies have examined digital storytelling and the role of youth in cultural preservation, research that integrates digital cultural literacy, youth cultural sensitivity, and concrete digital storytelling practices at the local community level remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to explain how youth in RT 05 Pondok Benda produce cultural content, build collaboration with community leaders, and utilize cultural moments such as the August 17 Independence Day celebration to strengthen the representation and education of local socio-cultural values through social media.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, using in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method to explore the role of youth in digital storytelling practices as an effort to preserve local socio-cultural values.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, with criteria including direct involvement and adequate understanding of digital cultural content production. The research informants consisted of the Head of RT 05/RW 03 Pondok Benda, Pamulang, and three active youths who were directly involved in the creation and management of cultural content.

Data collection was conducted over a three-month period, from August to November 2025. In-depth interviews were carried out using semi-structured interview guidelines to allow for flexible and in-depth exploration of information. Interview data were supported by documentation of cultural content published on the Instagram social media platform as supplementary analytical material.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis through stages of data reduction, coding, categorization, and theme development to identify patterns in youth roles within digital storytelling practices. Data credibility was enhanced through source triangulation and member checking. Ethical considerations were applied by maintaining the confidentiality of informants' identities and avoiding the publication of cultural elements considered sacred by the local community.

Result and Discussion

The findings indicate that youth in RT 05 Pondok Benda play an active and significant role in preserving local socio-cultural values through digital storytelling practices. Based on interviews with the Head of RT 05/RW 03 Pondok Benda, youth were perceived to have a strong concern for local culture and a clear understanding of customary boundaries prior to recording and publishing cultural content. The Head of RT stated that *"the youth here do not record content carelessly; they always consider whether a cultural activity is appropriate to be published or not"* (Interview, August 17, 2025).

Youth were directly involved in all stages of content production, including simple planning, video recording using mobile phones, editing, and publication through Instagram. One youth informant explained that *"we produce content in a simple way; what matters most is that the cultural message is conveyed and understood by people"* (Interview, August 17, 2025). The cultural content produced generally

consisted of short videos documenting community activities, traditional costume parades, and the use of regional songs as background music.

The Independence Day celebration on August 17 emerged as one of the most prominent spaces for cultural expression. Youth consistently documented traditional costume parades involving community members and shared the content via Instagram. According to one informant, *"August 17 is the right moment because all residents are involved and cultural elements can be publicly displayed"* (Interview, August 17, 2025).

Furthermore, youth demonstrated high cultural sensitivity by establishing communication and collaboration with community leaders or traditional figures prior to publishing content. This practice ensured that the cultural representations presented did not violate local norms or values.

These findings reveal that the role of youth in digital storytelling extends beyond technical content production to reflect their capacity as cultural curators. Youth sensitivity in considering customary boundaries prior to publication indicates a mature level of digital cultural literacy. This aligns with Hervansyah et al. (2024), who emphasize that cultural digitalization requires cultural competence to prevent the loss of original meaning and values.

The use of short video formats and simple visual techniques suggests that cultural preservation does not necessarily require professional equipment, but rather a clear understanding of the cultural messages being conveyed. This strategy supports Rahman's (2021) argument that digital storytelling is effective as a medium for transmitting cultural values due to its visual, communicative, and accessible nature. The incorporation of regional songs as background music further enhances the emotional dimension and cultural identity embedded within the content.

Collaboration between youth and community leaders represents an important aspect of maintaining balance between digital innovation and the preservation of traditional values. This pattern of cooperation reflects intergenerational relationships in which traditional leaders serve as guardians of cultural meaning, while youth act as mediators bridging local culture with digital spaces. This finding reinforces the argument of Wardiani and Anisyahrini (2022) that cultural publication through social media can expand cultural reach without diminishing local identity when conducted contextually.

The utilization of the August 17 celebration as a medium for cultural expression demonstrates that national events can function as strategic spaces for strengthening cultural literacy within communities. Documentation and publication of these activities not only showcase cultural aesthetics but also internalize values of togetherness, diversity, and nationalism. Thus, digital storytelling functions not merely as a documentation tool, but also as an educational instrument for community-based cultural preservation.

Conclusion

This study confirms that youth in RT 05 Pondok Benda play an important and strategic role in preserving local socio-cultural values through digital storytelling practices. Youth demonstrate their capacity as both producers and cultural curators who are able to select, organize, and disseminate cultural representations appropriately while maintaining alignment with local customary norms. The use of digital media, including the documentation of traditional costume parades during the August 17 Independence Day celebration, illustrates that digital spaces can serve as effective platforms for enhancing the visibility of local culture and expanding its reach to broader audiences.

The incorporation of regional music into video content further enriches youth digital cultural literacy and strengthens the cultural identity being represented. These findings indicate that digital storytelling functions not only as a creative medium but also as an educational instrument capable of connecting traditional values with modern communication practices.

Overall, the results highlight that community-based cultural preservation can become more adaptive and inclusive when supported by youth participation and the strategic use of digital media. The contribution of this study is expected to strengthen scholarly discourse on cultural digitalization, digital literacy, and community-level models of cultural preservation in the era of digital transformation.

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Author Contributions

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest related to the conduct, analysis, or publication of this research.

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