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From Local Communities to Digital Cultures: Globalization and Cultural Reorientation in Contemporary Vietnam

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the impact of digital globalization on cultural reorientation in contemporary Vietnam. Drawing upon perspectives from digital anthropology, globalization studies, media studies, and cultural sociology, the study analyzes how social media platforms, online communication, and transnational digital culture reshape community interaction, identity formation, and cultural values within Vietnamese society. Since the rapid expansion of internet access and smartphone usage after the mid-2000s, platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram have increasingly become important spaces of cultural production and mediated social interaction. The findings demonstrate that digital globalization contributes to the transition from territorially bounded local communities toward more networked, flexible, and translocal forms of belonging. Vietnamese youth increasingly construct identity through digital participation, symbolic consumption, online aesthetics, and transnational media engagement, generating hybrid cultural practices that combine local traditions with global influences. At the same time, online communication reshapes cultural values, social interaction, and symbolic hierarchies through influencer culture, digital consumerism, and platform-mediated participation. However, the study argues that digital globalization does not simply homogenize culture. Instead, Vietnamese users actively reinterpret and localize global digital flows within specific social and cultural contexts. Consequently, contemporary Vietnamese culture increasingly operates through mediated, negotiated, and hybrid forms of digital interaction within globally connected environments.

KEYWORDS: Cultural hybridity; Digital culture; Digital globalization; Networked communities; Vietnam.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Context

Contemporary globalization is increasingly shaped by the expansion of digital technologies, internet connectivity, social media platforms, and transnational communication networks. Unlike earlier forms of globalization that were primarily associated with economic integration and labor mobility, digital globalization now operates through online interaction, algorithmic media systems, platform-based communication, and the rapid circulation of symbolic content across national boundaries (Appadurai, 1996; Hannerz, 1996). Digital technologies have transformed not only economic and political processes but also everyday cultural practices, social interaction, and forms of identity construction in contemporary societies.

In Vietnam, the rapid growth of internet infrastructure and smartphone usage has significantly accelerated digital participation over the past decade. Platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram increasingly function as important cultural spaces where communication, entertainment, self-representation, and symbolic interaction take place (DataReportal, 2023, 2024). Digital environments have become deeply embedded in everyday social life, particularly among younger generations living in urban and semi-urban areas. Online platforms now shape how people consume information, maintain social relationships, construct identity, and participate in cultural communities.

This transformation reflects broader global shifts from territorially bounded social interaction toward digitally networked forms of communication and belonging. As Boyd (2014) and Miller and Slater (2000) suggested, online environments increasingly function as social worlds in which identities are negotiated through mediated interaction, symbolic performance, and digital visibility. In Vietnam, digital participation has contributed to the emergence of hybrid cultural practices influenced by global entertainment industries, online aesthetics, transnational consumer culture, and algorithm-driven media circulation.

The expansion of digital communication has also transformed cultural consumption patterns. Younger generations increasingly engage with transnational media content through streaming platforms, online fandoms, gaming communities, influencer culture, and social media networks. Korean popular culture, global fashion trends, internet slang, and digital aesthetics circulate rapidly through online environments and are selectively localized within Vietnamese cultural contexts (Zhao et al., 2022). Consequently, digital culture increasingly reshapes symbolic practices, language use, lifestyle aspirations, and forms of social participation.

At the same time, digital globalization alters traditional understandings of community and social belonging. Earlier forms of cultural organization in Vietnam were strongly associated with locality, kinship, communal rituals, and territorially rooted social interaction (Luong, 2010). However, online communication increasingly enables communities to operate through networked interaction rather than geographical proximity. Digital platforms facilitate the formation of online communities organized around shared interests, fandoms, political views, lifestyles, and symbolic identification rather than exclusively through local social structures (Hine, 2015; Pink et al., 2016).

Digital globalization has also intensified transnational connectivity among Vietnamese populations inside and outside the country. Overseas Vietnamese communities increasingly maintain cultural relationships with homeland society through social media, online communication, and digital cultural exchange (Vu & Satzewich, 2022). Similarly, migrant workers and geographically dispersed families rely heavily on digital technologies to sustain emotional and symbolic connections across distance (Madianou & Miller, 2012). These developments contribute to more flexible and translocal forms of community and belonging.

The rapid expansion of digital culture therefore represents not simply a technological shift but a broader process of cultural reorientation in contemporary Vietnam. Online environments increasingly reshape communication practices, symbolic interaction, identity formation, and cultural participation. As globalization becomes increasingly mediated through digital networks and transnational media systems, Vietnamese society experiences significant transformation in how culture is produced, circulated, and experienced within everyday life.

1.2. Research Problem

Traditional approaches to culture and community often conceptualized cultural life as territorially bounded and closely connected to local social structures, kinship systems, and geographically situated communities. Earlier anthropological and sociological perspectives frequently associated cultural identity with stable communal environments and localized systems of meaning rooted in face-to-face interaction and shared traditions (Anderson, 1983; Clifford & Marcus, 1986). Within this framework, culture was generally understood as embedded within relatively coherent and territorially organized communities.

However, digital globalization increasingly challenges these assumptions. Contemporary cultural life no longer operates exclusively through localized social interaction but increasingly through digital networks, online participation, and transnational media environments. Social media platforms, streaming technologies, and algorithmic communication systems now shape everyday cultural experience across national and territorial boundaries (Boyd, 2014; Hine, 2015). Individuals increasingly engage with multiple symbolic environments simultaneously through online interaction, digital consumption, and mediated participation.

In Vietnam, this transformation is especially visible among younger generations, migrant populations, and digitally connected urban communities. Social interaction increasingly occurs through online messaging, social media engagement, livestream culture, and transnational entertainment platforms rather than exclusively through localized communal structures. Digital participation increasingly influences language practices, lifestyle aspirations, political discussion, symbolic consumption, and forms of identity performance (Miller, 2011; Zhao et al., 2022).

As a result, culture in contemporary Vietnam increasingly operates through networked and translocal environments shaped by digital communication and global media circulation. Communities are no longer organized solely around territorial proximity or traditional social structures but increasingly through online interaction, symbolic affiliation, and digital participation. Identity formation similarly becomes more fluid, performative, and context-dependent within algorithmically mediated communication environments (Hall, 1996; Bhabha, 1994).

These developments raise important questions regarding how globalization and digital culture reshape social belonging and cultural identity in Vietnam. The expansion of online communication and transnational media suggests that contemporary culture must increasingly be understood through frameworks emphasizing mobility, mediation, connectivity, and negotiated identity rather than fixed territorial communities.

1.3. Research Gap

Although digital technology and social media have received growing scholarly attention in Vietnam, much existing research primarily focuses on technological development, communication practices, internet usage, or media consumption. Studies often examine the social effects of digital platforms descriptively while paying less attention to the broader cultural implications of digital globalization and networked sociality.

In particular, insufficient attention has been given to digital globalization as a transformative force reshaping culture, identity, and community in contemporary Vietnam. Existing scholarship rarely connects globalization studies, digital culture, and identity transformation within a broader analytical framework of cultural reorientation. Research on digital communication frequently remains separated from discussions of migration, transnationalism, symbolic belonging, and hybrid cultural formation.

Similarly, many studies continue to analyze culture through territorially bounded frameworks that emphasize locality and traditional social organization while underestimating the increasing importance of online environments and transnational media systems. Yet contemporary Vietnamese cultural life increasingly operates through digital platforms, online communities, and mediated symbolic interaction extending beyond local social structures (Pink et al., 2016; Vertovec, 2009).

Research on youth culture and online participation in Vietnam has demonstrated the growing influence of social media, digital aesthetics, and global entertainment industries (DataReportal, 2024). However, fewer studies have examined how these transformations contribute to broader processes of cultural restructuring and identity negotiation within globalizing digital environments.

Moreover, existing Vietnamese scholarship has only limitedly integrated perspectives from digital anthropology, transnationalism, and globalization studies into analyses of contemporary cultural transformation. Concepts such as networked communities, mediated belonging, hybrid identity, and digital culture remain underdeveloped in discussions of cultural change in Vietnam (Hine, 2015; Marcus, 1995).

This article addresses these gaps by examining digital globalization not simply as technological modernization but as a broader process of cultural reorientation. It analyzes how digital communication, online interaction, and transnational media reshape community, identity, and cultural practices in contemporary Vietnam.

1.4. Research Objectives and Central Argument

The primary objective of this article is to analyze the impact of digital globalization on cultural reorientation in contemporary Vietnam. More specifically, the study examines how internet platforms, social media, digital communication, and transnational media environments reshape cultural practices, forms of community, and identity construction within Vietnamese society.

The article argues that digital globalization is accelerating the transition from traditional local cultural communities toward more networked, flexible, and translocal forms of culture. Through online interaction, mediated participation, and digital communication, contemporary Vietnamese society increasingly experiences culture within algorithmically organized and globally connected environments.

This transformation contributes to the restructuring of identity, cultural practice, and communal belonging in contemporary Vietnam. Rather than disappearing under globalization, local cultural traditions are increasingly reinterpreted, mediated, and negotiated within digital environments shaped by transnational communication and online participation (Hall, 1990; Robertson, 1995). Digital culture therefore does not simply replace traditional culture but reorganizes how culture is experienced, represented, and negotiated within everyday social life.

Consequently, this article conceptualizes digital globalization as a major force of cultural reorientation in Vietnam. The expansion of online platforms and transnational media networks increasingly transforms how communities are formed, how identities are constructed, and how symbolic belonging is negotiated in contemporary society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Digital Globalization and Networked Culture

Contemporary globalization is increasingly mediated through digital infrastructures, online platforms, and transnational communication systems. Unlike earlier forms of globalization centered mainly on economic integration and physical mobility, digital globalization operates through internet connectivity, social media platforms, algorithmic communication, and platform-based cultural circulation (Appadurai, 1996; Castells, 2010). Digital technologies have transformed how information, symbols, identities, and cultural practices circulate across national boundaries, producing increasingly interconnected and networked social environments.

Online platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram facilitate rapid transnational media flows and symbolic exchange between geographically dispersed populations (DataReportal, 2023, 2024). As Appadurai (1996) argued through the concept of mediascapes, globalization increasingly functions through the circulation of mediated images, narratives, and symbolic systems shaping cultural aspiration and social imagination. Digital media therefore acts not only as communication technology but also as a major mechanism of cultural transformation.

One of the most influential theoretical perspectives is Manuel Castells' concept of the "network society." Castells argued that contemporary societies are increasingly organized through digitally connected networks rather than territorially bounded institutions. Communication technologies enable interaction across geographical distance while integrating individuals into global information flows and networked systems of participation. Culture therefore increasingly operates through decentralized and digitally mediated interaction.

This perspective is highly relevant to Vietnam, where internet access and smartphone usage have expanded rapidly. Social media platforms increasingly function as spaces where communication, commerce, entertainment, and identity performance intersect. Vietnamese users simultaneously participate in local social environments and transnational digital cultures shaped by influencer culture, algorithmic media systems, and online symbolic exchange.

Digital globalization also intensifies hybrid cultural formation and transnational media circulation. Korean popular culture, TikTok aesthetics, online gaming, and global fashion trends circulate rapidly through digital platforms and are selectively localized within Vietnamese social contexts (Zhao et al., 2022). These dynamics reflect Robertson's (1995) concept of glocalization, in which global cultural forms are continuously adapted within local cultural environments.

At the same time, digital globalization transforms communication itself. Earlier forms of mass media primarily operated through centralized broadcasting systems, whereas contemporary communication increasingly functions through participatory and interactive digital networks. Users no longer merely consume content but actively produce, circulate, remix, and reinterpret symbolic materials through online participation (Boyd, 2014). Consequently, culture becomes increasingly decentralized, networked, and platform-mediated.

Networked communication also contributes to new forms of social belonging. Communities increasingly emerge through online interaction, shared digital participation, and symbolic affiliation rather than solely through localized social organization or physical proximity. Digital globalization should therefore be understood not simply as a technological phenomenon but as a broader process reshaping identity, culture, and social interaction.

2.2. Digital Anthropology and Online Culture

The expansion of digital technologies has generated important developments within anthropology and cultural studies through the emergence of digital anthropology and internet ethnography. Digital anthropology examines how online environments reshape social interaction, identity formation, cultural production, and everyday life within increasingly mediated societies (Hine, 2015; Pink et al., 2016). Rather than treating the internet as separate from "real" life, digital anthropology conceptualizes online interaction as deeply integrated into broader social and cultural processes.

A central argument within digital anthropology is that digital environments increasingly function as spaces of symbolic negotiation and cultural production. Social media platforms, gaming communities, livestream environments, and online fandoms are not merely technological tools but social worlds where relationships, identities, and meanings are continuously negotiated (Miller & Slater, 2000). Digital participation therefore reshapes how individuals experience belonging and represent themselves.

This perspective is particularly relevant to online identity formation. Identity in digital environments is increasingly performative, interactive, and visual. Users actively curate profiles, share symbolic content, and negotiate self-representation through algorithmically mediated platforms (Boyd, 2014). Online identity is therefore continuously reconstructed through visibility, participation, and symbolic interaction.

Theoretical discussions developed by Hall (1996) and Bhabha (1994) are especially relevant to digital culture because online environments intensify hybridity, fragmentation, and negotiation. Social media exposes users simultaneously to local traditions, national identities, online communities, and transnational media cultures. Identity consequently becomes increasingly fluid and context-dependent within digitally networked environments.

Digital anthropology also emphasizes the transformation of community under networked communication. Earlier anthropological perspectives often associated community with localized social interaction and territorially bounded organization (Clifford & Marcus, 1986). However, online communication increasingly enables communities to emerge through shared interests, symbolic participation, and digital interaction rather than physical proximity. Networked communities organized around gaming culture, fandoms, activism, or lifestyle practices increasingly shape belonging in contemporary societies.

The concept of mediated culture is similarly important. Cultural practices are increasingly experienced through platforms, screens, and algorithmic systems rather than exclusively through face-to-face interaction. Digital mediation reshapes not only communication but also ritual participation, memory, emotional connection, and symbolic representation (Nora, 1989). Online platforms increasingly archive and circulate cultural symbols within transnational digital environments.

In Vietnam, these transformations are especially visible among younger generations and digitally connected urban populations. Online participation increasingly influences communication styles, fashion trends, language practices, entertainment preferences, and political discussion. TikTok culture, influencer economies, livestream interaction, and social media communities reshape how culture is experienced and performed. Digital culture therefore becomes an increasingly important space where Vietnamese identities are publicly represented and negotiated.

2.3. Globalization, Youth, and Cultural Transformation in Vietnam

The relationship between globalization, youth culture, and digital communication has become increasingly important in Vietnam. Younger generations experience globalization more directly through social media, transnational consumer culture, online entertainment, and digital participation than previous generations. Youth culture therefore increasingly reflects hybrid forms of identity shaped through interaction between local traditions and global digital environments.

Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram increasingly function as spaces where Vietnamese youth consume entertainment, construct self-image, and participate in online communities (DataReportal, 2024). Digital participation influences communication practices, aesthetic preferences, symbolic consumption, social interaction, and lifestyle aspirations. Algorithmic participation and online visibility increasingly shape how young people experience identity and social recognition.

Korean popular culture provides one of the clearest examples of transnational media influence in Vietnam. K-pop music, Korean television dramas, online fandoms, and fashion aesthetics strongly influence youth lifestyles and symbolic practices. However, Vietnamese youth do not passively imitate foreign cultural forms. Instead, global cultural products are selectively localized within Vietnamese contexts, producing hybrid lifestyles and negotiated identities (Zhao et al., 2022).

TikTok culture further intensifies these processes by accelerating the circulation of transnational humor, aesthetics, music, and symbolic trends. Vietnamese users actively participate in global online trends while adapting content to local social norms, language practices, and cultural references. TikTok therefore functions as a space of cultural hybridity where local and global symbolic systems continuously interact.

Consumer culture also increasingly shapes youth identity in Vietnam. Digital advertising, influencer culture, and online commerce expose young people to transnational lifestyles and market-oriented aspirations. Bourdieu's (1984) analysis of distinction is especially relevant because cultural consumption increasingly functions as a marker of symbolic status and social identity within digital environments.

At the same time, digital participation contributes to new forms of mediated belonging and online community. Vietnamese youth increasingly engage with gaming communities, fandoms, online activism, and digital subcultures that transcend traditional territorial boundaries. Overseas Vietnamese communities and migrant networks also maintain relationships through digital communication and online interaction (Vu & Satzewich, 2022). Young Vietnamese users are therefore exposed simultaneously to local traditions, diaspora experiences, national narratives, and transnational media cultures.

Despite these transformations, globalization does not simply erase local cultural values. Family expectations, communal traditions, and national identity continue to shape symbolic belonging and social behavior. Contemporary youth culture in Vietnam therefore reflects negotiation rather than replacement, combining local traditions with transnational digital influences within multidimensional and hybrid cultural environments.

2.4. Analytical Framework

This article develops the following analytical framework:

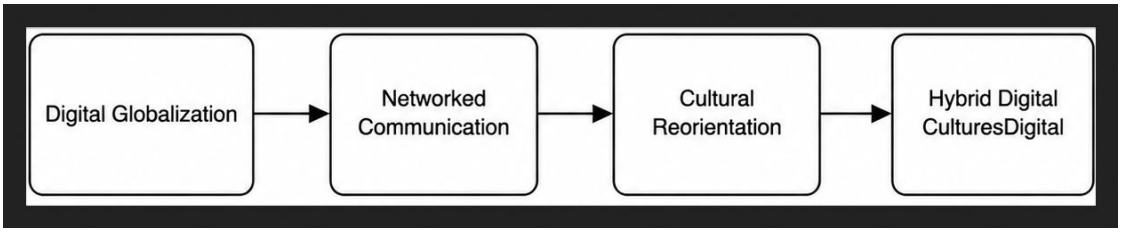


Figure 1. Analytical Framework of Digital Globalization and Hybrid Digital Cultures

This framework conceptualizes digital globalization as a multidimensional process operating through internet infrastructures, online platforms, algorithmic media systems, and transnational communication networks. Digital globalization intensifies cross-border interaction by enabling continuous circulation of information, symbolic content, and mediated cultural practices across geographically dispersed populations.

The expansion of networked communication creates digitally mediated cultural spaces in which social interaction increasingly occurs through online participation rather than exclusively through localized communal structures. Social media platforms, online communities, livestream environments, and transnational media networks therefore function as important spaces of identity formation and symbolic negotiation.

As digital communication becomes increasingly integrated into everyday life, cultural reorientation emerges through changes in communication practices, social belonging, identity performance, and symbolic consumption. Individuals increasingly experience culture within networked and algorithmically mediated environments shaped by transnational media circulation and online interaction.

These transformations contribute to the emergence of hybrid digital cultures combining local traditions with global symbolic influences. Contemporary Vietnamese digital culture increasingly reflects multidimensional forms of identity and belonging shaped by online participation, transnational media flows, and negotiated interaction between local and global cultural systems.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative and interdisciplinary approach to examine the relationship between digital globalization and cultural reorientation in contemporary Vietnam. Rather than treating digital transformation as merely a technological phenomenon, the article conceptualizes digital culture as a broader social and cultural process that reshapes communication, identity, and forms of community within networked environments. A qualitative orientation is particularly appropriate because the study seeks to interpret symbolic interaction, mediated participation, and changing forms of belonging associated with online communication and transnational media circulation.

The article integrates perspectives from digital anthropology, globalization studies, media studies, and cultural sociology. Digital anthropology provides important analytical tools for understanding how online environments function as spaces of cultural

production, identity performance, and social interaction (Hine, 2015; Pink et al., 2016). This perspective emphasizes that digital communication is deeply embedded within everyday social life rather than existing separately from offline social experience.

Globalization studies contribute broader theoretical frameworks for understanding transnational connectivity, media circulation, and the global flow of symbolic systems (Appadurai, 1996; Castells, 2010). These approaches help explain how internet infrastructures, digital platforms, and algorithmic communication reshape social interaction and cultural participation across national boundaries. In contemporary Vietnam, globalization increasingly operates through digitally mediated environments linking local communities to global cultural networks.

Media studies further support the analysis by examining how social media platforms and transnational entertainment industries influence communication practices, consumer culture, and identity formation. Online platforms increasingly function not only as communication technologies but also as spaces where symbolic values, social aspirations, and mediated identities are negotiated (Boyd, 2014; Miller & Slater, 2000).

Finally, cultural sociology provides analytical perspectives for examining how social belonging and cultural meaning are reconstructed through networked communication and digital participation. Contemporary Vietnamese society increasingly reflects the coexistence of local traditions, transnational media influences, and digitally mediated forms of interaction. Combining these interdisciplinary perspectives allows the article to examine digital globalization as a multidimensional process reshaping cultural life in contemporary Vietnam.

3.2. Research Methods

3.2.1. Document Analysis

The primary method employed in this study is qualitative document analysis. This method enables the systematic interpretation and synthesis of academic scholarship related to globalization, digital culture, media studies, online communication, youth culture, and social transformation in Vietnam. Document analysis is particularly suitable for examining digital globalization because it allows the integration of diverse theoretical and empirical studies into a broader interpretive framework of cultural reorientation.

The study draws upon international scholarship on globalization, network society, digital anthropology, transnational media, and online identity formation. Theoretical contributions by scholars such as Appadurai (1996), Castells (2010), Hall (1996), and Bhabha (1994) provide the conceptual foundation for understanding digital globalization, mediated culture, and negotiated identity. These perspectives help explain how digital communication reshapes symbolic interaction and forms of belonging within networked societies.

The article also incorporates scholarship on digital culture, internet ethnography, and mediated communication. Studies by Boyd (2014), Hine (2015), Miller (2011), and Pink et al. (2016) are particularly important for understanding online participation, digital identity, and the cultural implications of social media environments. These approaches conceptualize digital platforms not simply as communication tools but as social spaces where identities and communities are continuously constructed and negotiated.

In addition, the study draws upon research on Vietnamese youth culture, online communication, and social transformation. Reports and digital data from sources such as DataReportal (2023, 2024) provide important insights into internet usage, social media participation, and digital communication trends in Vietnam. Scholarship on transnational popular culture, digital consumerism, and online communities further supports the analysis of hybrid cultural practices and mediated belonging among younger generations (Zhao et al., 2022).

Document analysis also includes research on migration, diaspora networks, and transnational communication in order to examine how digital technologies reshape relationships between geographically dispersed communities (Vu & Satzewich, 2022; Madianou & Miller, 2012). These studies are important for understanding how online communication contributes to more flexible and translocal forms of social connection in contemporary Vietnam.

Through document analysis, the article identifies recurring themes related to digital globalization, online identity, networked communication, mediated belonging, and hybrid digital culture. Rather than examining these themes separately, the study synthesizes them into a broader analytical interpretation of cultural transformation within digitally connected environments.

3.2.2. Theoretical Synthesis and Interpretive Analysis

In addition to document analysis, the study employs theoretical synthesis and interpretive analysis to connect globalization theory with digital culture and contemporary Vietnamese social realities. This approach allows the article to move beyond descriptive discussion and develop a more analytical understanding of how digital communication reshapes culture and identity.

Theoretical synthesis involves integrating perspectives from digital anthropology, media studies, globalization theory, and cultural sociology in order to explain how online communication and transnational media collectively contribute to cultural reorientation. Rather than relying on a single theoretical model, the study combines multiple perspectives to capture the complexity of digital globalization and mediated social life in Vietnam.

Interpretive analysis is used to examine how individuals and communities negotiate identity and belonging within digital environments. This perspective recognizes that digital globalization does not affect all social groups uniformly. Different

generations, social classes, and communities engage with digital technologies in different ways depending on access, mobility, cultural background, and social context (Vertovec, 2009).

The analysis therefore focuses on processes of symbolic negotiation, digital participation, hybridization, and mediated identity formation. This interpretive approach is particularly important because online culture in Vietnam rarely involves direct imitation of global cultural forms. Instead, digital users actively reinterpret global influences within local social and cultural frameworks, generating hybrid forms of communication, online participation, and symbolic expression (Robertson, 1995).

The study also examines tensions associated with digital globalization. While online communication expands opportunities for social interaction and cultural creativity, it may simultaneously challenge localized social structures, traditional authority systems, and earlier forms of communal belonging. Such tensions are central to understanding the transition from territorially bounded communities toward networked digital cultures in contemporary Vietnam.

3.3. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on Vietnam from approximately 2005 to the present, a period characterized by rapid internet expansion, smartphone adoption, social media growth, and increasing integration into global digital communication networks. During this period, digital technologies became deeply embedded in everyday social life and significantly transformed communication practices, cultural consumption, and symbolic participation throughout Vietnamese society.

The analysis concentrates particularly on social media platforms, youth culture, online communication, and the transformation of community and identity within digital environments. Platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram are examined as important spaces of cultural production and mediated interaction because they increasingly shape how individuals communicate, construct identity, and participate in social communities.

Special attention is given to younger generations because youth populations are among the most active participants in digital culture and transnational media environments in Vietnam. The study explores how digital participation influences lifestyle aspirations, symbolic consumption, online self-representation, and forms of social belonging among Vietnamese youth.

The article also examines broader transformations associated with online communities and networked communication. Rather than focusing exclusively on technological development, the study investigates how digital globalization contributes to changes in cultural practices, mediated interaction, and perceptions of identity and community.

Although the article draws upon examples from youth culture, social media participation, migration networks, and transnational communication, it does not aim to provide a comprehensive ethnographic account of any single online community or platform. Instead, the study develops a broader analytical interpretation of how digital globalization contributes to cultural reorientation and the emergence of hybrid digital cultures in contemporary Vietnam.

4. FROM LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO DIGITAL CULTURES IN CONTEMPORARY VIETNAM

4.1. Social Media and the Transformation of Community Interaction

The expansion of social media has significantly transformed patterns of social interaction and communal belonging in contemporary Vietnam. Platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram increasingly function not only as communication technologies but also as social environments where cultural participation, symbolic interaction, and community formation take place (DataReportal, 2023, 2024). As digital communication becomes deeply integrated into everyday life, traditional locality-based forms of interaction are increasingly supplemented—and in some cases partially replaced—by networked and translocal forms of communication.

Earlier forms of community organization in Vietnam were strongly associated with locality, kinship relations, and face-to-face social interaction. Village structures, communal rituals, and geographically bounded social networks historically played central roles in shaping social belonging and cultural identity (Luong, 2010). However, digital communication increasingly enables individuals to maintain relationships and participate in communities independent of territorial proximity. Online interaction now connects geographically dispersed individuals through shared interests, symbolic participation, and mediated communication rather than solely through localized communal structures.

Facebook communities provide a clear example of this transformation. Vietnamese users increasingly participate in online groups organized around hobbies, fandoms, educational interests, migration experiences, professional networks, and lifestyle identities. These digital communities often function as important spaces of emotional support, symbolic belonging, and social interaction. Community membership increasingly depends on shared participation and digital engagement rather than physical proximity or kinship relations.

TikTok networks similarly reshape communication and cultural interaction. TikTok's algorithmic structure encourages rapid circulation of symbolic trends, humor, aesthetics, and lifestyle practices across geographically dispersed populations. Vietnamese users actively engage in global digital trends while simultaneously localizing content within specific cultural and linguistic contexts. As a result, online interaction increasingly operates through networked participation and algorithmically mediated visibility rather than through territorially bounded communication systems.

These developments reflect broader transformations associated with what Manuel Castells described as the "network society," in which social relations increasingly operate through digitally connected communication networks rather than stable territorial structures (Castells, 2010). In contemporary Vietnam, social interaction increasingly occurs through online messaging, livestream environments, digital fandoms, and social media participation. Communication therefore becomes more flexible, mobile, and decentralized within digitally mediated environments. The transformation of community interaction in contemporary Vietnam can be summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Transformation of Community Interaction in Contemporary Vietnam

Traditional Community Interaction	Emerging Digital Interaction
Localized social relations	Networked communication
Face-to-face interaction	Online interaction
Territorial belonging	Translocal participation
Stable communal networks	Flexible digital communities
Kinship-centered communication	Interest-based communication
Community rituals and gatherings	Platform-mediated participation

As shown in Table 1, community interaction increasingly shifts from territorially bounded forms toward networked and platform-mediated communication. Digital environments create flexible forms of belonging that transcend geographical boundaries and allow individuals to participate simultaneously in multiple symbolic communities.

At the same time, online communication does not completely eliminate localized social relations. Rather, digital interaction frequently coexists with family networks, hometown communities, and traditional social obligations. Migrant workers, overseas Vietnamese populations, and geographically dispersed families increasingly rely on digital technologies to maintain emotional and symbolic ties across distance (Madianou & Miller, 2012; Vu & Satzewich, 2022). Community therefore becomes increasingly translocal and digitally interconnected rather than exclusively locality-based.

These transformations suggest that digital globalization contributes to the reorganization of community structures in contemporary Vietnam. Social belonging increasingly operates through flexible networks of online interaction and mediated participation, reshaping how individuals experience communication, identity, and collective connection within digitally connected environments.

4.2. Digital Consumer Culture and Youth Identity

Digital globalization has profoundly transformed youth culture and identity formation in contemporary Vietnam. Younger generations increasingly experience globalization through social media participation, online entertainment, digital consumer culture, and transnational symbolic interaction. Consequently, identity formation among Vietnamese youth increasingly occurs within digitally mediated environments shaped by algorithmic communication, online aesthetics, and global cultural circulation.

The influence of Korean popular culture illustrates the growing role of transnational media in shaping youth identity. K-pop music, Korean dramas, fashion aesthetics, beauty standards, and online fandoms have become deeply integrated into digital youth culture in Vietnam. However, these influences are not simply reproduced through passive imitation. Instead, Vietnamese youth selectively localize and reinterpret global symbolic trends within local social and cultural contexts (Zhao et al., 2022). This process strongly reflects Robertson's (1995) concept of glocalization and Bhabha's (1994) notion of cultural hybridity.

Social media platforms increasingly function as spaces where identity is visually performed and publicly negotiated. Instagram aesthetics, TikTok performances, livestream interaction, and influencer culture encourage users to curate online self-representation through fashion, lifestyle display, symbolic consumption, and digital visibility (Boyd, 2014). Identity therefore becomes increasingly performative and mediated within digital environments.

Online aesthetics and fashion trends play particularly important roles in youth identity construction. Vietnamese youth increasingly participate in globalized digital aesthetics shaped by Korean entertainment industries, online influencers, and transnational consumer culture. Fashion, photography styles, digital editing practices, and online lifestyle presentation function as markers of symbolic distinction and social aspiration. As Bourdieu (1984) suggested, symbolic consumption increasingly operates as a mechanism through which individuals negotiate identity and social status. The relationship between globalization and youth identity in contemporary Vietnam is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Digital Culture and Youth Identity Formation in Vietnam

Digital Cultural Influence	Forms of Youth Participation	Identity Implications
K-pop and transnational entertainment	Online fandoms and symbolic consumption	Hybrid youth identity
Social media aesthetics	Self-presentation and lifestyle display	Performative identity
Influencer culture	Digital visibility and aspiration	Consumer-oriented identity

Online communication	Digital interaction and symbolic affiliation	Networked belonging
Global fashion trends	Hybrid fashion practices	Flexible cultural identity

As shown in Table 2, youth identity increasingly emerges through participation in digitally mediated cultural environments rather than exclusively through localized social structures. Social media platforms encourage flexible forms of identity shaped by symbolic consumption, mediated participation, and transnational cultural interaction.

TikTok culture further intensifies these processes by accelerating the circulation of digital aesthetics and lifestyle globalization. Vietnamese users actively participate in global online trends while adapting content to local language practices, humor, and cultural references. TikTok therefore functions as a hybrid cultural space where global and local symbolic systems continuously interact.

At the same time, local cultural values continue to shape digital participation in important ways. Family expectations, educational pressures, and Vietnamese social norms remain influential despite the growing prominence of online lifestyles and transnational media culture. Youth identity in contemporary Vietnam therefore reflects negotiation rather than complete cultural replacement. Young people increasingly combine local traditions with global digital influences within multidimensional and hybrid cultural environments.

These developments suggest that digital globalization contributes to a broader transformation of identity construction in Vietnam. Youth increasingly build identity through digital participation, symbolic consumption, and mediated interaction within networked global environments.

4.3. Online Culture and the Restructuring of Cultural Values

The expansion of digital culture has contributed to significant changes in cultural values, symbolic systems, and social norms in contemporary Vietnam. Online communication increasingly shapes public discourse, lifestyle aspirations, consumer behavior, and perceptions of morality through algorithmically mediated environments and transnational media circulation. Digital globalization therefore transforms not only communication practices but also the broader symbolic foundations of social life.

One important dimension of this transformation concerns the emergence of digital celebrity culture. Influencers, livestreamers, online creators, and social media personalities increasingly function as important cultural actors shaping consumption trends, lifestyle ideals, and public values. Online fame is often associated with visibility, follower counts, aesthetic performance, and algorithmic popularity rather than traditional forms of social prestige or institutional authority. Symbolic influence increasingly operates through digital platforms and online attention economies.

This transformation reflects broader shifts in symbolic consumption and mediated aspiration. Fashion brands, beauty products, online aesthetics, and luxury lifestyles are increasingly circulated through social media and influencer culture. Digital consumerism therefore contributes to changing understandings of success, social status, and personal identity. Consumption increasingly functions not only as economic activity but also as symbolic performance within digital environments (Bourdieu, 1984).

Online communication has also altered public discussions of morality and social values. Social media platforms create spaces where political debates, moral controversies, celebrity scandals, and public criticism circulate rapidly through networked interaction. Online communities increasingly participate in collective moral judgment through commenting, sharing, and algorithmic amplification. As a result, moral discourse becomes more decentralized, emotionally driven, and publicly visible within digital environments. The restructuring of cultural values under digital globalization can be summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Digital Globalization and the Transformation of Cultural Values

Traditional Cultural Orientation	Emerging Digital Cultural Orientation
Community-centered values	Individualized self-expression
Face-to-face moral regulation	Online public judgment
Stable cultural symbols	Rapid symbolic circulation
Institutional cultural authority	Influencer-based visibility
Localized cultural consumption	Global digital consumerism
Territorial social belonging	Networked symbolic affiliation

Table 3 demonstrates that digital globalization increasingly reorganizes cultural values through online participation and mediated symbolic interaction. Digital environments encourage rapid circulation of trends, symbols, and cultural meanings, contributing to more flexible and fragmented forms of social participation.

At the same time, these transformations generate tensions regarding authenticity, morality, and cultural continuity. Public debates in Vietnam frequently express concern about online toxicity, excessive consumerism, and the influence of transnational digital culture on traditional values. However, digital users actively reinterpret and localize global symbolic influences rather than simply adopting them passively.

Consequently, digital globalization should not be understood simply as cultural homogenization. Instead, it contributes to the restructuring of values, tastes, and symbolic systems through ongoing processes of negotiation, hybridization, and mediated interaction within contemporary Vietnamese society.

4.4. From Territorial Communities to Networked Communities

One of the most significant consequences of digital globalization in contemporary Vietnam is the gradual transition from territorially bounded communities toward networked forms of belonging organized through online interaction and mediated participation. Earlier forms of community in Vietnam were strongly associated with locality, kinship, communal rituals, and face-to-face interaction (Luong, 2010). However, digital communication increasingly enables individuals to participate in multiple online communities independent of geographical location.

This transformation reflects broader shifts associated with networked communication and translocal culture. Online communities increasingly emerge through shared interests, symbolic participation, digital interaction, and mediated emotional connection rather than through territorial proximity. Fandoms, gaming communities, online activist networks, lifestyle groups, and digital creator communities increasingly shape social belonging in contemporary Vietnam.

The emergence of networked belonging is particularly visible among younger generations and migrant populations. Social media allows individuals to maintain relationships across geographical distance while simultaneously participating in transnational online cultures. Migrants and overseas Vietnamese communities increasingly sustain symbolic connections through digital communication and online interaction (Madianou & Miller, 2012; Vu & Satzewich, 2022). Community therefore becomes increasingly flexible, mobile, and digitally interconnected. The transformation from territorial communities toward networked communities can be summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. From Territorial Communities to Networked Communities in Contemporary Vietnam

Territorial Communities	Networked Communities
Based on locality and proximity	Based on digital participation
Face-to-face interaction	Platform-mediated communication
Stable communal membership	Flexible and overlapping membership
Kinship and neighborhood ties	Interest-based and symbolic affiliation
Local cultural identity	Hybrid and translocal identity
Territorial belonging	Networked belonging

As shown in Table 4, contemporary forms of belonging increasingly operate through the logic of networks rather than exclusively through territorial organization. Individuals now participate simultaneously in multiple online communities shaped by digital communication, symbolic affiliation, and transnational media circulation.

Nevertheless, networked communities do not entirely replace local social structures. Family relations, hometown identities, and localized social obligations continue to remain important within Vietnamese society. However, digital communication increasingly reorganizes how these relationships are maintained and experienced. Community becomes less dependent on physical proximity and more dependent on continuous mediated interaction.

These developments suggest that digital globalization contributes to a broader process of cultural reorientation in Vietnam. Contemporary communities increasingly function through digitally mediated networks that connect local experiences with transnational communication systems and online symbolic cultures. Belonging therefore becomes increasingly flexible, hybrid, and translocal within networked digital environments.

Ultimately, the transformation from territorial communities toward networked communities illustrates how globalization reshapes not only communication technologies but also the social organization of culture itself. Contemporary Vietnamese society increasingly experiences culture through online participation, mediated interaction, and transnational digital connectivity rather than exclusively through localized communal structures.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Digital Globalization and Cultural Reorientation

The findings of this study demonstrate that digital globalization is fundamentally reshaping cultural orientation in contemporary Vietnam. Culture increasingly operates through digitally mediated communication, transnational media circulation, and networked participation rather than exclusively through territorially bounded social structures. Online platforms, algorithmic communication systems, and social media networks now play central roles in organizing communication, symbolic interaction, and cultural participation within everyday life.

This transformation reflects broader shifts associated with what Manuel Castells described as the emergence of network society, in which social interaction increasingly occurs through flexible communication networks rather than stable territorial institutions

(Castells, 2010). In Vietnam, digital environments increasingly reshape how individuals experience belonging, consume culture, and construct identity. Social interaction no longer depends solely on locality and face-to-face communication but increasingly occurs through online participation and mediated connectivity.

The expansion of digital infrastructures has also transformed the circulation of symbolic systems and cultural meaning. As Arjun Appadurai argued, globalization increasingly operates through mediascapes that shape imagination, aspiration, and identity formation across national boundaries (Appadurai, 1996). In Vietnam, digital media platforms expose users to transnational entertainment, online aesthetics, influencer culture, and global symbolic trends, contributing to more fluid and multidimensional forms of cultural participation.

At the same time, digital globalization contributes to the reorganization of community and social belonging. Communities increasingly function through networked interaction and symbolic affiliation rather than solely through kinship, neighborhood relations, or territorial proximity. Online communities organized around fandoms, gaming culture, digital activism, and lifestyle identities increasingly shape social interaction in contemporary Vietnam. These developments indicate that culture becomes progressively networked, mediated, and translocal within digitally connected environments.

Digital globalization therefore represents not simply technological modernization but a broader process of cultural reorientation. Contemporary Vietnamese society increasingly experiences culture through screens, platforms, online interaction, and algorithmically mediated communication systems. Identity, belonging, and cultural participation become increasingly flexible and negotiated within digital networks shaped by transnational connectivity and symbolic circulation.

5.2. Vietnamese Culture within Digital Globalization

The Vietnamese case demonstrates that globalization does not operate through simple one-way cultural domination or passive reception of global influences. Instead, Vietnamese users actively reinterpret, hybridize, and localize digital cultural flows within specific social and cultural contexts. Global digital culture in Vietnam is therefore characterized less by homogenization than by continuous processes of adaptation and symbolic negotiation.

This dynamic is particularly visible in youth culture and social media participation. Korean popular culture, TikTok aesthetics, online fashion trends, and global entertainment industries strongly influence digital practices in Vietnam. However, these influences are frequently adapted to local language practices, humor, symbolic traditions, and social expectations (Zhao et al., 2022). Vietnamese users actively remix and reinterpret global symbolic materials rather than merely reproducing them. This process strongly reflects Robertson's (1995) concept of glocalization and Bhabha's (1994) notion of cultural hybridity.

Online communication in Vietnam increasingly combines global digital forms with local cultural values. Social media users simultaneously participate in transnational digital environments while remaining influenced by family expectations, communal norms, and Vietnamese social traditions. Digital participation therefore generates hybrid cultural practices that combine local and global symbolic systems within everyday life.

The localization of digital culture can also be observed through language use and online aesthetics. Vietnamese users frequently adapt English internet slang, global memes, and transnational symbolic references into locally recognizable forms. TikTok content, online humor, and digital performances increasingly reflect the interaction between global platform cultures and Vietnamese communicative practices. Culture in digital environments therefore becomes continuously negotiated and reconstructed through mediated participation.

Furthermore, Vietnamese digital culture increasingly reflects multidimensional forms of belonging. Users simultaneously engage with local communities, national narratives, transnational media environments, diaspora networks, and online subcultures. Digital globalization consequently contributes to more flexible and layered forms of identity shaped by online interaction and symbolic mobility.

These developments suggest that Vietnamese society should not be understood simply as receiving globalization from external centers of cultural power. Instead, local actors actively participate in shaping digital culture through reinterpretation, adaptation, and symbolic localization. Contemporary Vietnamese digital culture therefore emerges through interaction between transnational media systems and locally situated cultural practices.

5.3. Contribution of the Study

This article contributes to the growing scholarship on digital culture and globalization in Vietnam in several important ways. First, the study expands research on digital anthropology within the Vietnamese context by conceptualizing digital environments not merely as communication technologies but as important spaces of cultural production, identity negotiation, and mediated belonging. While existing Vietnamese scholarship often focuses on technological development or media usage, this article emphasizes the broader cultural implications of digital globalization and networked communication.

Second, the article contributes to bridging globalization studies with media studies and digital anthropology. Rather than examining digital communication separately from broader processes of globalization, the study demonstrates how online interaction, social media participation, and transnational media circulation collectively reshape community, identity, and symbolic culture in Vietnam.

This interdisciplinary approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of cultural transformation in digitally connected societies.

Third, the article contributes to the reinterpretation of community and cultural belonging in the digital era. Traditional approaches frequently conceptualized culture through territorially bounded frameworks associated with locality, kinship, and face-to-face interaction. In contrast, this study demonstrates that contemporary communities increasingly operate through networked communication, online participation, and translocal symbolic affiliation. Community therefore becomes increasingly flexible, mediated, and digitally interconnected within contemporary Vietnamese society.

Fourth, the study contributes to broader debates on cultural hybridity and digital globalization by illustrating how Vietnamese users actively localize and reinterpret transnational digital culture. Rather than producing complete cultural homogenization, digital globalization generates hybrid cultural forms shaped by negotiation between global symbolic systems and local cultural contexts.

Finally, the article contributes to understanding social transformation in post-Đổi Mới (Renovation) Vietnam by highlighting how digital communication reshapes social interaction, identity formation, and cultural participation simultaneously. The findings suggest that cultural transformation in Vietnam should increasingly be understood through frameworks emphasizing mediation, connectivity, symbolic negotiation, and digital participation rather than solely through territorially bounded models of culture and community.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. Summary of the Argument

This article has examined how digital globalization contributes to cultural reorientation in contemporary Vietnam through the expansion of social media, online communication, transnational media circulation, and networked interaction. The analysis argued that digital globalization increasingly accelerates the transition from territorially bounded local communities toward more networked, flexible, and translocal forms of culture and belonging.

Earlier forms of social organization in Vietnam were strongly associated with locality, kinship structures, communal rituals, and face-to-face interaction. However, digital communication increasingly reorganizes cultural participation and social interaction through online platforms, mediated communication, and algorithmically structured environments. Contemporary Vietnamese society therefore experiences culture increasingly through digitally networked systems rather than exclusively through localized communal structures.

The article demonstrated that online environments now function as important spaces where identity, symbolic participation, and cultural belonging are continuously negotiated. Social media platforms, digital communities, and transnational communication networks reshape how individuals experience culture and interact with others within everyday life.

6.2. Main Findings

The findings indicate that digital globalization significantly contributes to the restructuring of community, identity transformation, changing patterns of cultural consumption, and the emergence of hybrid digital cultures in contemporary Vietnam.

First, social media and online communication increasingly transform community interaction by enabling flexible and translocal forms of belonging. Communities increasingly operate through networked communication and mediated participation rather than exclusively through geographical proximity or traditional communal organization.

Second, youth identity increasingly develops through digital participation, symbolic consumption, and online self-representation. K-pop culture, influencer aesthetics, TikTok participation, and transnational media consumption shape hybrid forms of identity that combine local traditions with global digital influences.

Third, digital globalization contributes to broader transformation of cultural values and symbolic systems. Online celebrity culture, digital consumerism, and mediated public discourse increasingly influence social aspirations, lifestyle practices, and symbolic hierarchies within Vietnamese society.

Finally, the findings demonstrate that digital globalization does not produce complete cultural homogenization. Instead, Vietnamese users actively localize and reinterpret transnational cultural flows, generating hybrid digital cultures shaped by negotiation between global symbolic systems and local cultural contexts.

6.3. Broader Implications

The findings of this study suggest broader implications for understanding culture within digitally connected societies. In the digital era, culture increasingly becomes:

- flexible,
- transnational,
- mediated,
- and highly negotiated.

Digital communication technologies reorganize not only how information circulates but also how identities, communities, and symbolic systems are constructed within everyday life. Contemporary social belonging increasingly operates through networked communication and online participation rather than exclusively through territorially bounded social structures.

The Vietnamese case further demonstrates that globalization should not be understood simply as unidirectional cultural domination. Instead, local communities actively reinterpret and localize global digital influences through ongoing processes of adaptation and symbolic negotiation. Digital globalization therefore contributes to hybrid cultural formation rather than complete cultural uniformity.

These developments suggest that studies of contemporary culture must increasingly integrate perspectives from digital anthropology, globalization studies, media sociology, and transnationalism in order to understand the growing importance of mediated interaction and networked communication within contemporary societies.

6.4. Directions for Future Research

Several important areas require further research. First, future scholarship could explore the relationship between artificial intelligence and digital identity formation in Vietnam. AI-generated communication, recommendation systems, and algorithmic personalization may increasingly influence online self-representation and symbolic participation.

Second, research on online nationalism and digital political culture would provide important insights into how social media platforms shape collective identity and public discourse in contemporary Vietnam. Digital communication increasingly influences political discussion, national belonging, and symbolic representation within networked environments.

Third, future studies could examine virtual communities and online sociality in greater depth, particularly regarding how digital interaction reshapes emotional connection, communal participation, and social cohesion across geographically dispersed populations.

Fourth, digital religion represents another important area for future research. Online ritual participation, livestream religious practice, and digital spirituality increasingly transform how religious communities operate within contemporary society.

Finally, further scholarship should investigate ethnic representation on social media and digital platforms. Digital communication increasingly shapes how ethnic minority identities, cultural symbols, and local traditions are publicly represented and negotiated within transnational online environments.

Overall, continued research on digital globalization remains essential because digital communication technologies continue to reshape culture, identity, and social interaction at an accelerating pace. Contemporary Vietnamese society increasingly experiences culture through networked communication and mediated participation, making digital anthropology and media globalization increasingly important frameworks for understanding cultural transformation in the twenty-first century.

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