CHANNEL: Jurnal Komunikasi
Vol. 14, No. 2, October 2026, pp. 186-198

P-ISSN: 2339-2681
E-ISSN: 2621-2579

Algorithmic Mediation and Local Cultural Integration among Generation Alpha through TikTok in Jakarta

Nabilla Maharani [a,1,*]

[a] Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika, Jl. Kayu Jati V No.2, RT.8/RW.5, Rawamangun, Kec. Pulo Gadung, Kota Jakarta Timur, Daerah Khusus Ibukota Jakarta, 13220, Indonesia
[1] nabillam39@gmail.com
* Corresponding author

ARTICLE INFO

Article history
Received: April 28, 2026
Revised: August 24, 2026
Accepted: October 1, 2026
Published: October 31, 2026

Keywords
Algorithmic mediation
Local cultural integration
Generation Alpha
Digital cultural exposure
TikTok

10.12928/channel.v14i2.2156

ABSTRACT

The development of digital communication has increased Generation Alpha's exposure to cultural content through algorithmically recommended media. This study examines how algorithmic mediation supports local cultural visibility and integration among Generation Alpha through TikTok in Jakarta, Indonesia. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach and Algorithmic Mediation Theory as its analytical framework. Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with eight informants comprising four Generation Alpha children aged 11–15 years, two parents, one educator, and one information technology practitioner. The study used source triangulation to compare perspectives across informant groups. The findings show that algorithmic recommendations introduce children to regional songs, sounds, and linguistic elements based on their interests and subsequent activity. Repeated exposure can build familiarity and support cultural recognition, while comments, hashtags, original versions, and related content provide information about cultural origins. Some children reused sounds, followed trends, imitated content, and shared it with peers, while others remained at the viewing stage. These different responses show that algorithmic mediation shapes cultural visibility and repeated exposure, whereas cultural integration develops through children's recognition, participation, imitation, and interaction with peers. Recognition and reproduction of cultural elements do not necessarily indicate complete cultural understanding. The study highlights how algorithmic visibility and children's digital and social activities contribute to integrating local cultural elements into everyday digital communication.

Copyright (c) 2026 CHANNEL: Jurnal Komunikasi.
This is an open-access article under the CC–BY-SA license.

INTRODUCTION

Culture develops as a value system that shapes social behavior and influences patterns of everyday life (Daniel et al., 2023). Through collectively maintained values, culture shapes people's views and strengthens a sense of togetherness (Liu et al., 2022). In *The World of Man*, John J. Honigmann conceptualizes culture in three forms: ideas, activities, and artifacts. Ideas represent concepts that develop in people's minds and can be expressed through oral and written forms (McDonnell, 2023). Continuous interactions between communities and their environment contribute to local culture as part of social identity.

Regional values and identities are passed from generation to generation, reflecting past societies' experiences and ways of responding to social conditions (Pramono et al., 2025).

Local culture and local wisdom play an important role in maintaining community identity amid social change. Local wisdom refers to knowledge and customary practices in people's daily lives that serve as references for action (Rasidi et al., 2025). Social experiences accumulated over time shape these values and help communities maintain their identity amid changes in social values (Pelealu et al., 2025). Local wisdom can also be reflected through people's perspectives, interactions with the environment, norms, and traditions (Haryono, 2025). Integrating local culture into learning through digital media can support cultural preservation and children's character development (Lin et al., 2024; Sakti et al., 2024).

The global shift toward internet and social media use has changed how people recognize, share, and experience culture (Kasemsarn & Nickpour, 2025). Digital innovation accelerates cultural exchange and encourages communities to participate as creators and audiences (Pérez-Rodríguez et al., 2022). Social media also provides opportunities for cultural promotion and preservation through engaging digital communication (Alam et al., 2025; Li & Qiu, 2025). Generation Alpha grows up with digital media and encounters cultural information through interactive and visual content, making digital platforms a relevant channel for cultural communication (Šramová & Pavelka, 2023). Children's early exposure to digital media also highlights the importance of healthy media consumption habits from an early age (Lukitowati et al., 2023). Digital communication can therefore support cultural content through formats that match Generation Alpha's information processing and interaction patterns (Zierock et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, Generation Alpha comprises 29.17 million individuals, accounting for approximately 10.88% of the population based on the 2020 Population Census (Desiana, 2024; Shahibah, 2025). Meanwhile, internet penetration reached 80.66% in 2025, with approximately 229.4 million internet users (Riyanto, 2025). This extensive digital environment has become closely connected to Generation Alpha's everyday communication. Algorithmic systems increasingly shape this environment by selecting and presenting content based on users' expressed interests and subsequent interaction patterns (Ionescu & Licu, 2023). Initial recommendations can introduce users to interest-related content. Subsequent recommendations may respond to their viewing and interaction behavior. Repeated engagement with particular content can lead to further exposure to related videos, increasing the visibility of content that aligns with users' digital behavior. TikTok provides one example through short videos that frequently reuse songs, sounds, and visual trends. Regional songs can enter this flow through remixes, reused sounds, and short videos that present their audio without explaining its cultural origins. User engagement with such content may drive subsequent recommendations, creating more opportunities to encounter videos featuring the same regional sounds. Repeated exposure may build familiarity with local songs and languages and create opportunities for cultural elements to enter Generation Alpha's everyday digital communication (Madsen, 2026).

Digital platforms amplify viral trends through repeated circulation. Regional songs, sounds, and languages compete for attention alongside content that spreads across global digital spaces (Scalvini, 2023). This condition places local cultural elements within the same attention-driven environment as globally circulating content. Global content can receive repeated exposure when it attracts strong interaction, local cultural elements also depend on continued circulation and engagement to remain visible (Cao, 2025; Wang et al., 2025). Regional songs and sounds may gain visibility as children repeatedly encounter them through short-form videos. Repeated exposure allows familiarity with sounds, lyrics, and visual elements to develop before their cultural origins become clear. Such exposure can encourage imitation as part of children’s learning and social communication (Azhar & Aesthetika, 2024). These processes suggest that visibility alone does not necessarily reflect cultural understanding, making it relevant to examine how repeated algorithmic exposure connects to recognition, participation, imitation, and social interaction.

P-ISSN: 2339-2681
E-ISSN: 2621-2579

Previous studies have discussed digital communication, cultural transmission, social media, Generation Alpha's digital behavior, and algorithmic recommendations. Limited research has connected these areas by examining algorithmic mediation as a process linking content visibility, repeated exposure, imitation, and social interaction in Generation Alpha's encounters with local cultural elements. Less attention has been given to regional songs and sounds as forms of local cultural exposure within short-form video environments. Imitation as part of digital interaction and cultural value integration also remains an area that requires further attention. These gaps indicate a need to examine local cultural integration not only as exposure to cultural content but also as a process involving recognition, participation, imitation, and interaction. Recent research shows that repeated user interaction can amplify interest-aligned TikTok content through feedback between user behavior and subsequent content exposure (Baumann et al., 2026). This study therefore connects algorithmic visibility, repeated exposure, imitation, and social interaction to examine Generation Alpha's encounters with and recognition of local cultural elements through digital communication.

Recent digital developments highlight the importance of examining children's exposure to algorithmically distributed content. Digital media can repeatedly expose children to popular content while also creating opportunities for local culture to reach younger audiences through familiar formats. This study contributes to digital communication scholarship by positioning algorithmic mediation as a process that shapes the visibility, repeated exposure, and social interaction surrounding local cultural content among Generation Alpha. The study focuses on repeated recognition, trend participation, imitation, and social interaction as processes connecting algorithmic exposure with cultural socialization. Based on this focus, the study examines how algorithmic mediation shapes the visibility and socialization of local cultural content among Generation Alpha on TikTok in Jakarta, Indonesia, particularly through regional songs and sounds encountered on the platform.

METHOD

A descriptive qualitative approach was employed to examine the integration of local culture into Generation Alpha’s digital communication environment through TikTok in Jakarta, Indonesia. The study focused on digital exposure, repeated content consumption, and the social processes associated with local cultural integration. Algorithmic Mediation Theory served as the sole theoretical framework, providing a basis for understanding how algorithmic systems mediate the visibility and circulation of local cultural content through users’ accumulated digital interactions (Sukri et al., 2025; Sun et al., 2025). This theoretical positioning reflected the study’s primary focus on recommendation systems as mediators of content visibility, repeated exposure, and user interaction. Meanwhile, processes such as imitation, peer influence, and cultural socialization were treated as empirical phenomena emerging from participants’ accounts rather than as separate theoretical frameworks. This approach maintained a clear analytical focus on how algorithmic visibility shaped the cultural experiences reported by participants.

Purposive sampling was employed to recruit eight informants based on their relevance to the research objectives (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024). Four Generation Alpha participants, coded A1 (11 years), A2 (15 years), A3 (12 years), and A4 (14 years), resided in Jakarta, used TikTok for up to six hours per day, and had encountered regional songs or sounds through the platform. Their selection was based on direct experiences with repeated exposure to, recognition of, reuse of, and participation in content involving regional cultural elements. Two parents, coded OT1 and OT2, were included because they accompanied the children in their daily lives and were familiar with their digital activities. G1 was an educator with more than ten years of experience teaching elementary students in grades 1–6. P1 was an information technology practitioner with a bachelor's degree in engineering, experience in application system design and artificial intelligence, and practical knowledge of algorithmic mechanisms relevant to social media recommendations. Collectively, these informants provided complementary perspectives on children's digital experiences, parental observations, educational contexts, and algorithmic systems. OT1 accompanied A1, while

OT2 accompanied A2, A3, and A4. To maintain confidentiality, all informants were identified using the codes A1–A4, OT1–OT2, G1, and P1.

The adequacy of the eight-informant sample was assessed using the concept of information power, which considers the focus of the research objective, participant specificity, theoretical framework, interview approach, and analytical strategy (Chu et al., 2021; Roberts et al., 2026). Rather than using data saturation as a stopping criterion, the study considered the sample sufficient for its exploratory scope because each informant group contributed specific knowledge relevant to algorithmic mediation, repeated digital exposure, and local cultural socialization. The focused application of Algorithmic Mediation Theory provided an analytical framework for interpreting these accounts, while semi-structured interviews enabled follow-up questions to explore relevant experiences in greater depth. Accordingly, the sample was considered information-rich rather than statistically representative of Generation Alpha in Indonesia.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted using a protocol developed in accordance with the research objectives (Dahal et al., 2024). The academic advisor and a technology practitioner independently reviewed the interview protocol and questions to assess their relevance and suitability. Following this review, the protocol was refined to improve question clarity and relevance. Core topics were maintained consistently across interviews, while question wording was adjusted to accommodate the characteristics of each informant. The interviews focused on local cultural content encountered through TikTok, particularly regional songs and sounds featured in short-form videos, remixes, dance trends, and other popular formats. Participants were invited to discuss their experiences of repeated exposure to these sounds, how they recognized and reused them, and whether they subsequently explored their cultural origins. Follow-up questions were used to clarify responses and investigate relevant experiences emerging during the interviews.

A1 participated in an individual interview on 10 March 2026 (15 minutes) and a group interview with A2, A3, and A4 on 22 August 2026 (25 minutes 45 seconds). The group interview facilitated shared discussion of the children's experiences but may also have influenced individual responses or encouraged agreement. This possibility was considered by comparing the children's accounts with perspectives from parents, an educator, and a technology practitioner. OT1 was interviewed on 10 March 2026 (15 minutes), while OT2 was interviewed on 22 August 2026 (15 minutes). G1 was interviewed on 10 March 2026 (20 minutes 20 seconds), and P1 was interviewed on 9 March 2026 (21 minutes 32 seconds).

Source triangulation was conducted by comparing interview accounts across the four informant groups (Donkoh & Mensah, 2023). The children's accounts provided insights into TikTok exposure, repeated encounters with local cultural content, recognition, imitation, and the reuse of regional sounds. Parents contributed observations of their children's digital experiences, while G1 offered an educational perspective and P1 provided technical insights into algorithmic mechanisms and social media recommendation systems. Comparing these accounts enabled the identification of converging and differing perspectives on algorithmic exposure, repeated content consumption, imitation, and local cultural socialization. TikTok videos and sounds were used solely as contextual references during interviews and were not analyzed as independent data sources.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Interview data were coded to identify recurring patterns related to algorithmic exposure, repeated content encounters, imitation, and local cultural socialization. These patterns were then compared across informant groups to examine similarities, differences, and complementary insights. Algorithmic Mediation Theory guided the interpretation of the identified patterns, particularly in understanding how algorithmic systems shaped content visibility and repeated exposure within participants' digital experiences. The findings were therefore bounded by the experiences of the selected participants in Jakarta and were not intended to statistically generalize to Generation Alpha's communication patterns as a whole.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Algorithmic Exposure to Local Cultural Content

The integration of local cultural content into children's digital experiences may begin with repeated exposure to short-form videos recommended through TikTok. Rather than encountering regional songs and sounds through explicit cultural-learning activities, children may engage with them as part of everyday entertainment. G1 explained that children tend to prefer simple videos they can easily follow and imitate. This preference creates an entry point for regional songs and sounds because creators can attach local audio to dance videos, entertainment posts, product-related content, or ordinary user-generated videos. These formats let cultural elements circulate without requiring explicit explanations of their regional origin.

> *"Children usually prefer to watch videos whose content is easy to imitate. If the video is too formal or too long, they quickly get bored."* (Interview with G1, 10 March 2026)

A1's experience illustrates how repeated exposure can build familiarity even when children pay limited attention to a video's creator or cultural background. Repeated digital exposure can become part of children's everyday media routines and relate to their cognitive and behavioral experiences (Sina et al., 2023). Frequent encounters with the same sound can make it easier for a child to recognize and remember it within their media environment.

> *"I do not pay too much attention to who made the video, anyway, if I often see it on FYP, I will memorize it myself." (Interview with A1, 10 March 2026)*

Repeated exposure to local cultural content can foster cultural recognition even when users have limited understanding of its cultural meanings. A2's experience illustrates how encountering viral sounds on TikTok can generate awareness of their regional origins and encourage further exploration, despite limited comprehension of the lyrics.

> *"I often make TikToks using viral sounds. I do not really understand the lyrics, but I know it is an Eastern Indonesian song because when I search for the full song on YouTube, it says 'viral Eastern Indonesian song on TikTok.'" (Interview with A2, 22 August 2026)*

A1's account indicates familiarity through recurring visibility, whereas A2's account demonstrates recognition followed by further exploration. This distinction suggests that repeated exposure does not necessarily produce equivalent levels of cultural knowledge. Although A2 recognized the regional association of the sound, limited understanding of its lyrics indicates that visibility may precede deeper linguistic or cultural understanding. P1's account further explains how such exposure is sustained through users' digital activity:

> *"The algorithm reads the user's habits. What is often watched will continue to reappear to keep users active on the platform." (Interview with P1, 9 March 2026)*

P1's account aligns with research showing that automated recommendation systems shape the content presented to children on video-sharing platforms (Radesky et al., 2024). The present findings extend this discussion by highlighting a cultural consequence of algorithmic visibility: repeated exposure can make regional sounds familiar and recognizable before children develop a fuller understanding of their cultural meanings.

Research on short-video cultural dissemination similarly demonstrates how platform characteristics and user engagement support the circulation of cultural heritage content on Douyin (Wang et al., 2025). TikTok's short-video environment and recommendation mechanisms have also been identified as facilitating the visibility and participation associated with musical cultural heritage (Cao, 2025). Extending these discussions to Generation Alpha in Jakarta, the findings show how regional sounds enter children's everyday media experiences through entertainment-oriented content rather than explicit cultural-learning activities. Algorithmic exposure thus serves as an entry point for local cultural socialization, while deeper cultural understanding depends on subsequent interpretation and exploration.

Digital Content Exposure and Trend Participation

Participants described TikTok exposure as extending beyond viewing when they incorporated frequently encountered content into existing digital activities. OT2 described intensive TikTok use involving dancing and video creation, suggesting that repeated exposure can lead to observable participation.

> *"Once they start scrolling TikTok, they keep going. Even at night, they are still on TikTok, dancing and making videos." (Interview with OT2, 22 August 2026).*

A2 explained that different age groups encounter similar sounds through different content categories, while the same sounds can be reused for photos and dance videos.

> *"A1 usually prefers watching toy content, and the sounds often use jedag-jedug songs. Older children like me and A3 see more content about clothes or perfume. The sounds also often use jedag-jedug songs. If something is already going viral, we usually take a photo and post it using that sound. If a dance is going viral, we make a dance video too." (Interview with A2, 22 August 2026)*

The recurring use of one sound across different visual contexts keeps it recognizable even as the surrounding content changes. A2's account shows that recognition can move into participation when children reuse sounds, post photos, or reproduce dances. A4 offers a contrasting response, describing TikTok use that remains at the viewing stage.

> *"Sometimes, if Mama does not give me money, I just watch it on TikTok." (Interview with A4, 22 August 2026)*

> *"Yes, the song keeps appearing. It is viral, so we join in and make videos using it." (Interview with A3, 22 August 2026)*

Different responses to recurring content suggest that exposure does not produce the same form of participation. A4 remained at viewing, whereas A2 and A3 described reuse, posting, video creation, and dance participation. Research on social media engagement shows that content characteristics can encourage different levels of audience interaction rather than a uniform response (Setiawan & Lestari, 2025). In the present study, this variation is also visible in the children's own accounts, indicating that algorithmic visibility creates opportunities for participation without determining participation itself. OT1 described another behavioral response to popular content.

> *"When they see something that is going viral, they usually want to join in too. Sometimes they even ask me to buy it for them." (Interview with OT1, 10 March 2026)*

This account indicates that viral visibility can extend beyond screen-based activity into children's requests and everyday behavior. Digital socialization research similarly identifies social media content as a source of behavioral references for children (Khatout et al., 2025). These findings place this process within algorithmically mediated exposure: recurring content becomes available for participation, but children's responses remain differentiated.

From the perspective of Algorithmic Mediation Theory, participation emerges after content becomes visible through platform-mediated exposure and is shaped by children's existing activities. The algorithm does not directly produce participation. It creates repeated opportunities for children to encounter content, while children's interests and routines determine whether they view, reuse, or incorporate the content into a trend. Regional sounds can therefore become part of digital activities without requiring children to intentionally search for local cultural material.

Algorithmic Mediation and Content Preference Formation

A4's experience illustrates an initial stage of algorithmic mediation through TikTok recommendations. She explained that TikTok requested her date of birth and content interests before presenting initial For You recommendations. These signals provided an initial basis for content selection, while subsequent activity supplied additional behavioral

 P-ISSN: 2339-2681
E-ISSN: 2621-2579

information. The recommendation process therefore moved from initial user information to ongoing adaptation through interaction.

> *"When I first opened TikTok, I was asked about my date of birth and the content interests I liked. After that, the videos shown to me were related to those interests." (Interview with A4, 22 August 2026)*

User interaction continues after initial recommendations. P1 explained that viewing duration, repeated playback, and other activity can influence subsequent exposure even without comments.

> *"The system does not see whether the content is educational or not. What is seen is how long it is watched and how often it is played, even if the user does not comment." (Interview with P1, 9 March 2026)*

Research on AI-based recommendations shows that social media platforms use personalized recommendation mechanisms to provide content suggestions based on user information and preferences (Haque et al., 2025). TikTok-specific research further shows that personalized feeds rely on interaction-related factors, including engagement measures such as viewing time, in content selection (Dekker et al., 2025). These studies provide a stronger basis for interpreting P1's account because they link user activity to ongoing personalization rather than treating recommendation as a one-time process.

The findings also show that algorithmic mediation involves a feedback relationship between exposure and user activity. Children encounter content based on initial preferences, respond to particular videos or sounds, and generate further behavioral information through their activity. Algorithmic Mediation Theory explains this relationship by positioning the recommendation system as a mediator of content visibility rather than a source of cultural meaning. The system structures opportunities for repeated exposure, while children determine the content's cultural relevance through recognition, interpretation, reuse, and further exploration. A2 and A4 also identified information surrounding TikTok content as a basis for cultural recognition.

> *"I do not know the lyrics of the jedag-jedug sound, but when I look at the comments, there are usually people saying, 'Eastern songs really sound that good.'" (Interview with A2, 22 August 2026)*

> *"Yeah, sometimes you can see from the hashtag which region the song comes from. I do not think some of them are traditional songs, but some really are traditional songs because sometimes videos of people dancing with the original song appear." (Interview with A4, 22 August 2026)*

Comments, hashtags, original-song videos, and related content provide contextual cues through which children can associate a sound with a particular region. This process suggests that the recommendation system alone does not produce cultural recognition. Algorithmic mediation shapes opportunities for repeated visibility, while users interpret the information attached to circulating content. The distinction between visibility and interpretation is central to the findings. A regional sound can become familiar because it repeatedly appears in the user's feed, while its cultural association becomes clearer through comments, hashtags, or original versions. Algorithmic mediation therefore creates the conditions for recognition, whereas cultural meaning remains dependent on the information available around the content and the child's subsequent interpretation.

Trend Diffusion through Social Interaction

Social interaction extends digital exposure after children become familiar with popular content. G1 explained that one child's activity can encourage friends to follow the same trend, showing that content can move from individual exposure into peer interaction.

> *"Usually one child starts first, later their friends join because they saw their friend playing or following that trend." (Interview with G1, 10 March 2026)*

Peer behavior also becomes a reference for participation. A1 described the desire to follow activities shared by friends, particularly when those activities are associated with viral content.

> *"I also want to have the same ones as my friends, so if I have them, I won't miss what is going viral." (Interview with A1, 10 March 2026)*

OT1 described another circulation pathway in which children may learn about a trend from friends before recognizing its popularity on TikTok.

> *"Sometimes they find out first from their friends, then I see that it is indeed popular on TikTok." (Interview with OT1, 10 March 2026)*

These accounts indicate that trend diffusion moves in both directions. G1 describes movement from one child's participation toward peers, while OT1 describes movement from peer information toward later recognition on TikTok. A1 adds the social relevance of participation by linking trend-following to the desire to stay connected with friends. This pattern is consistent with research showing that children's TikTok practices are embedded in peer relationships and can move between online and offline social settings (Mensonides et al., 2025).

This finding also aligns with research showing that adolescents' online and in-person friendship networks are closely connected through social media use (Al-Jbouri et al., 2024). The present study extends this perspective to Generation Alpha by showing that peer interaction can reinforce, reproduce, or introduce popular content alongside algorithmic exposure. From the perspective of Algorithmic Mediation Theory, this reciprocal movement places algorithmic visibility within a broader social environment: TikTok creates opportunities for individual exposure, while peer relationships shape subsequent attention and participation. Children may encounter a regional sound through TikTok and reproduce it with friends or encounter it through friends and subsequently recognize related content on TikTok. Algorithmic exposure and peer circulation therefore operate as interconnected processes rather than separate stages.

This interaction is particularly relevant to local cultural content because regional songs and sounds can gain additional visibility when people discuss, reproduce, or incorporate them into peer activities. Such circulation is simultaneously platform-mediated and socially mediated, potentially strengthening familiarity as children encounter the same cultural elements across digital and interpersonal settings. However, repeated exposure and reproduction do not necessarily indicate deeper cultural understanding, as peer interaction may reinforce familiarity and participation without providing historical, linguistic, or cultural context. Trend diffusion therefore marks the point at which algorithmic visibility becomes socially reproduced, with the algorithm shaping exposure opportunities while children and their peers influence whether cultural content continues to circulate within their social environment.

Local Cultural Integration through Digital Communication

Local cultural integration among Generation Alpha occurs through gradual interaction among algorithmic exposure, repeated visibility, cultural recognition, digital participation, and peer circulation. Regional songs and sounds do not necessarily enter children's digital environments through intentional searches for cultural content. Instead, they appear within entertainment-oriented videos, dance content, product-related posts, and other user-generated content recommended through TikTok. Repeated encounters can make these cultural elements familiar, while comments, hashtags, and original-song videos provide contextual information that helps children associate circulating sounds with particular regions. This pattern suggests that local culture can become visible within children's everyday media routines without being presented explicitly as cultural content.

This finding supports previous research that positions TikTok as an important environment for Generation Alpha's music discovery, trend participation, and social engagement (Dias et al., 2025). It also extends research on algorithmic recommendation

P-ISSN: 2339-2681
E-ISSN: 2621-2579

and cultural dissemination by showing that repeated platform-mediated exposure can contribute to young users' recognition of regional cultural elements (Radesky et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2025). However, the findings indicate that visibility and recognition should not be equated with cultural understanding. Regional sounds may become familiar or recognizable before users understand their lyrics, historical background, or broader cultural significance. Algorithmic recommendation therefore appears to provide an initial condition for cultural visibility rather than directly producing cultural knowledge.

Furthermore, exposure can develop into participation when cultural elements are incorporated into existing digital practices. Regional sounds may be reused for photographs, dance videos, and other forms of trend-based content. Such reproduction illustrates how cultural elements can move from passive exposure into communicative practice. This process can be understood through imitation, which has been identified as having communicative and affiliative functions in children's social interaction (Altınok et al., 2023). Within the present findings, however, imitation represents observable participation rather than evidence of cultural comprehension. Reproducing a song, movement, or trend shows that a cultural element has entered children's communicative repertoire, but it does not necessarily indicate that they understand its cultural meaning.

Children's social relationships also shape participation. The findings indicate that popular content can circulate between TikTok and peer environments: children may reproduce trends with friends after encountering them online, while peer interaction can also introduce children to content that they subsequently encounter on TikTok. This reciprocal movement aligns with research showing the close relationship between children's digital practices and peer interaction (Mensonides et al., 2025; Al-Jbouri et al., 2024). In this context, peer interaction functions as an additional mechanism of cultural circulation. Algorithmic exposure may initiate visibility, but social interaction can reinforce it by creating opportunities for discussion, imitation, and reproduction beyond the individual user's feed.

These findings provide a more nuanced understanding of Algorithmic Mediation Theory. Algorithmic mediation operates primarily by structuring opportunities for visibility and repeated exposure, rather than directly determining how cultural content is interpreted or used. The recommendation system makes particular content more available within children's media environments, while children's interests, activities, interpretations, and peer relationships influence what happens after exposure. The process is therefore not linear or deterministic. Algorithmic exposure can lead to recognition, but recognition may or may not develop into participation; participation may involve imitation without cultural understanding; and peer circulation can reinforce exposure independently of the algorithm.

Accordingly, local cultural integration in this study refers to the process through which regional cultural elements become visible, familiar, recognizable, reproducible, and socially circulated within children's everyday digital communication. The findings suggest that local cultural integration emerges through the interplay of algorithmic visibility, repeated exposure, cultural recognition, digital participation, and peer circulation. However, these processes are not linear. Exposure does not necessarily lead to recognition, understanding, or participation, and these processes are related but analytically distinct. Visibility does not necessarily produce recognition, recognition does not establish cultural understanding, and reproduction does not demonstrate complete cultural knowledge.

Theoretically, this positions TikTok not simply as a channel for transmitting local culture but as a mediated environment in which cultural visibility and social participation intersect. Algorithmic recommendation creates opportunities for local cultural elements to enter Generation Alpha's everyday media environment, while children and their peer networks shape whether those elements are recognized, reproduced, and circulated. Local cultural integration therefore emerges from the interaction between platform-mediated visibility and children's agency and social participation, rather than from algorithmic recommendation alone. This finding highlights the role of digital communication in making local cultural elements part of everyday youth media practices while also demonstrating the limits of exposure as an indicator of deeper cultural understanding.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that local cultural integration among Generation Alpha in Jakarta occurs through the interaction between algorithmic visibility and children's digital and social participation. TikTok's recommendation system creates opportunities for regional songs, sounds, and linguistic elements to repeatedly enter children's everyday media environments. Repeated exposure can foster familiarity and cultural recognition, which may develop into participation through imitation, content creation, and peer interaction. However, these processes are not linear or uniform, as exposure does not necessarily lead to cultural understanding or participation. Thus, algorithmic mediation supports local cultural integration primarily by creating opportunities for visibility and repeated exposure, while children's agency and social relationships shape how cultural elements are recognized, reproduced, and circulated.

Theoretically and practically, the findings extend Algorithmic Mediation Theory by positioning algorithmic mediation as an entry condition for cultural exposure rather than a direct determinant of cultural meaning or responses. Its influence interacts with children's interests, interpretations, and peer relationships, highlighting the interplay between algorithmic visibility and user agency in local cultural integration. Practically, digital cultural preservation can leverage platforms and formats embedded in children's everyday media practices by presenting regional songs, sounds, and languages through short-form content that encourages recognition, participation, and sharing. However, digital visibility should be accompanied by accessible cultural context to bridge the gap between recognizing cultural elements and understanding their linguistic, historical, and cultural significance.

This study is limited by its qualitative exploratory design, eight informants, and focus on Generation Alpha TikTok users in Jakarta. Four Generation Alpha participants also took part in one group interview, where peer presence may have influenced some responses. The study further focused primarily on regional songs, sounds, and linguistic elements and examined only TikTok as the digital platform. Future research could therefore use larger, more diverse samples across Indonesian regions, compare multiple digital platforms, and examine other forms of cultural practice. Mixed-method or longitudinal studies could also investigate whether repeated digital exposure and participation are associated with longer-term cultural knowledge, attitudes, or cultural engagement. Such research would further clarify the relationship between algorithmic mediation, children's agency, and the sustainability of local cultural practices in digital environments.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author expresses sincere gratitude to the academic advisor for the guidance, valuable feedback, and support provided throughout the research process. The author also appreciates all informants who willingly contributed their time, experiences, and perspectives to support this research. The author also acknowledges all parties who contributed to completing this research, both directly and indirectly.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Nabilla Maharani: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data curation, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

FUNDING STATEMENT

This research received no external funding.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

P-ISSN: 2339-2681
E-ISSN: 2621-2579

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

During the revision process in 2026, the author used ChatGPT (GPT-5 & GPT-6), developed by OpenAI, to assist with manuscript revision, provide editorial suggestions, and identify grammatical errors and language structure issues requiring correction. The author limited the tool to language refinement, grammar correction, and editorial suggestions during the manuscript revision process. All AI-assisted outputs were critically reviewed, verified, and revised by the author. The author takes full responsibility for the manuscript's accuracy, originality, integrity, and ethical compliance.

REFERENCES

Ahmad, M., & Wilkins, S. (2024). Purposive sampling in qualitative research: a framework for the entire journey. *Quality & Quantity*, *59*(2), 1461–1479. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-024-02022-5

Al-Jbouri, E., Volk, A. A., Spadafora, N., & Andrews, N. C. Z. (2024). Friends, followers, peers, and posts: adolescents' in-person and online friendship networks and social media use influences on friendship closeness via the importance of technology for social connection. *Frontiers in Developmental Psychology*, *2*, 1419756. https://doi.org/10.3389/fdpys.2024.1419756

Alam, M. M., Rahman, M., Arif, M. M. I., & Hossan, M. J. (2025). The power of social media in the digital era in keeping cultural traditions alive. *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review*, *8*(10), 68–88. https://doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v8i10.2933

Altınok, N., Over, H., & Carpenter, M. (2023). Young children use imitation communicatively. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *231*, 105654. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2023.105654

Azhar, M. J., & Aesthetika, N. M. (2024). Celebrification process of celebrity children on TikTok: A study on media exposure, personal characteristics, and public engagement. *CHANNEL: Jurnal Komunikasi*, *12*(2), 152–161. https://doi.org/10.12928/channel.v12i2.985

Baumann, F., Arora, N., Rahwan, I., & Czaplicka, A. (2026). Dynamics of algorithmic content amplification on TikTok. *EPJ Data Science*, *15*, 18. https://doi.org/10.1140/epjds/s13688-026-00629-2

Cao, H. (2025). Exploring the promotion of musical intangible cultural heritage under TikTok short videos. *Scientific Reports*, *15*, 21772. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-09723-3

Chu, H. L., Zhou, Y. X., Ni, K. W., Li, F. W., & Zhao, Y. M. (2021). Consideration of sample size in qualitative interviews based on information power. *Chinese General Practice*, *24*(10), 1274–1276. https://doi.org/10.12114/j.issn.1007-9572.2020.00.415

Dahal, N., Neupane, B. P., Pant, B. P., Dhakal, R. K., Giri, D. R., Ghimire, P. R., & Bhandari, L. P. (2024). Participant selection procedures in qualitative research: experiences and some points for consideration. *Frontiers in Research Metrics and Analytics*, *9*. https://doi.org/10.3389/frma.2024.1512747

Daniel, E., Döring, A. K., & Cieciuch, J. (2023). Development of intraindividual value structures in middle childhood: A multicultural and longitudinal investigation. *Journal of Personality*, *91*(2), 482–496. https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12742

Dekker, C. A., Baumgartner, S. E., & Sumter, S. R. (2025). For you vs. for everyone: The effectiveness of algorithmic personalization in driving social media engagement. *Telematics and Informatics*, *101*, 102300. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2025.102300

Desiana, R. (2024, July 3). *Krisis etika penggunaan media sosial Gen Alpha*. Balai Diklat Keagamaan Jakarta. https://bdkjakarta.kemenag.go.id/krisis-etika-penggunaan-media-sosial-gen-alpha

Dias, A. F., Dias, P., & Andrade, J. G. (2025). Generation Alpha and music: The influence of TikTok on music consumption. *Opus*, *31*, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.20504/opus2025.31.32

Donkoh, S., & Mensah, J. (2023). Application of triangulation in qualitative research. *Journal of Applied Biotechnology & Bioengineering*, *10*(1), 6–9. https://doi.org/10.15406/jabb.2023.10.00319

Haque, A. B., Islam, N., & Mikalef, P. (2025). To explain or not to explain: An empirical investigation of AI-based recommendations on social media platforms. *Electronic Markets*, *35*, 2. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12525-024-00741-z

Haryono. (2025). Local Wisdom and Social Resilience: Humanities Studies in the Face of Global Crises. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, *3*(2), 173–178. https://doi.org/10.55681/ijssh.v3i2.1511

Ionescu, C. G., & Licu, M. (2023). Are TikTok algorithms influencing users' self-perceived identities and personal values? A mini review. *Social Sciences*, *12*(8), 465. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12080465

Kasemsarn, K., & Nickpour, F. (2025). Digital storytelling in cultural and heritage tourism: A review of social media integration and youth engagement frameworks. *Heritage*, *8*(6), 200. https://doi.org/10.3390/heritage8060200

Khatout, R., Barkat, A., & Baali, M. (2025). Digital socialization: Understanding the role of influencers on child behavior. *Annals of the "Constantin Brâncuși" University of Târgu Jiu. Letter and Social Science Series*, *1*(2025), 327–338. https://alss.utgjiu.ro/mdocs-posts/26-ramdhane-khatout-et-al-digital-socialization-understanding-the-role-of-influencers-on-child-behavior/

Li, Q., & Qiu, Y. (2025). Research on Traditional Cultural Communication Based on Digital Humanities. *Proceedings of the 2025 6th International Conference on Mental Health, Education and Human Development (MHEHD 2025)*, 236–242. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-460-0_27

Lin, H.-C. K., Lu, L.-W., & Lu, R.-S. (2024). Integrating digital technologies and alternate reality games for sustainable education: Enhancing cultural heritage awareness and learning engagement. *Sustainability*, *16*(21), 9451. https://doi.org/10.3390/su16219451

Liu, R. W., Lapinski, M. K., Kerr, J. M., Zhao, J., Bum, T., & Lu, Z. (2022). Culture and social norms: Development and application of a model for culturally contextualized communication measurement (MC3M). *Frontiers in Communication*, *6*, 770513. https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2021.770513

Lukitowati, S., Hanum, A. N., & Yuliono, A. (2023). Nurturing Healthy Media Consumption Habits in Early Childhood: A Social Campaign Approach. *CHANNEL: Jurnal Komunikasi*, *11*(2), 178–189. https://doi.org/10.12928/channel.v11i2.549

Madsen, D. Ø. (2026). Generation alpha speaks in memes: a conceptual framework for platformed language. *Frontiers in Communication*, *11*, 1695863. https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2026.1695863

McDonnell, T. E. (2023). Cultural Objects, Material Culture, and Materiality. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *49*, 195–220. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-031021-041439

Mensonides, D., Van Cauwenberge, A., Swart, J., & Broersma, M. (2025). TikTok as a peer playground: Understanding how children in middle childhood use TikTok to shape their peer relations. *New Media & Society*, *28*(9), 4449–4469. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448251362690

Pelealu, A. E., Manueke, A. Y., & Dasfordate, A. (2025). Between Local Wisdom and the Flow of Modernization: Legal Protection for the Mapalus Culture of the Tolour Tribe Amidst Social Change. *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, *10*(2), 793–798. https://doi.org/10.64753/jcasc.v10i2.1682

Pérez-Rodríguez, A., Jaramillo-Dent, D., & Alencar, A. (2022). Digital social media cultures: New models of creativity, (self)representation and participation. *ICONO 14*, *20*(2). https://doi.org/10.7195/ri14.v20i2.1928

 P-ISSN: 2339-2681
E-ISSN: 2621-2579

Pramono, S., Azmir, A. F., Aditia, Mahdania, H., & Rahmi. (2025). Arts and culture as a national competitive advantage in Indonesia: a systematic literature review. *Discover Sustainability*, *6*(1), 639. https://doi.org/10.1007/s43621-025-01215-8

Radesky, J., Bridgewater, E., Black, S., O'Neil, A., Sun, Y., Schaller, A., Weeks, H. M., & Campbell, S. W. (2024). Algorithmic content recommendations on a video-sharing platform used by children. *JAMA Network Open*, *7*(5), E2413855. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.13855

Rasidi, R., Istiningsih, G., Masithoh, R. F., & Rosyidi, M. I. (2025). Education based on local wisdom: An alternative model for the integration of cultural values in the school curriculum in Indonesia. *International Journal of Contemporary Studies in Education (IJ-CSE)*, *4*(2), 114–135. https://doi.org/10.56855/ijcse.v4i2.1521

Riyanto, G. P. (2025, August 8). *Jumlah pengguna internet di Indonesia tahun 2025 tembus 229,4 juta*. Kompas.Com. https://tekno.kompas.com/read/2025/08/08/16110007/jumlah-pengguna-internet-di-indonesia-tahun-2025-tembus-2294-juta

Roberts, S.-J., Saylor, M. A., Ivynian, S., & DiGiacomo, M. (2026). Data saturation and information power: sample size in qualitative research—when is enough and how to assess? *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*, *25*(5), 1069–1074. https://doi.org/10.1093/eurjcn/zvag046

Sakti, S. A., Endraswara, S., & Rohman, A. (2024). Integrating local cultural values into early childhood education to promote character building. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *23*(7), 84–101. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.7.5

Scalvini, M. (2023). Making sense of responsibility: A semio-ethic perspective on TikTok's algorithmic pluralism. *Social Media + Society*, *9*(2), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231180625

Setiawan, R. F., & Lestari, M. T. (2025). Humor Content and Media Credibility: An Analysis of Audience Engagement on the Instagram Account @simamaungcom. *CHANNEL: Jurnal Komunikasi*, *13*(2), 199–209. https://doi.org/10.12928/channel.v13i2.1375

Shahibah, A. (2025, December 15). *42% Anak Usia Dini Indonesia Sudah Gunakan Handphone*. GoodStats Data. https://data.goodstats.id/statistic/42-anak-usia-dini-indonesia-sudah-gunakan-handphone-EHoyX

Sina, E., Buck, C., Ahrens, W., Coumans, J. M. J., Eiben, G., Formisano, A., Lissner, L., Mazur, A., Michels, N., Molnar, D., Moreno, L. A., Pala, V., Pohlabeln, H., Reisch, L., Tornaritis, M., Veidebaum, T., & Hebestreit, A. (2023). Digital media exposure and cognitive functioning in European children and adolescents of the I.Family study. Scientific Reports, 13(1), 18855. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-45944-0

Šramová, B., & Pavelka, J. (2023). Generation Alpha media consumption during Covid-19 and teachers' standpoint. *Media and Communication*, *11*(4), 227–238. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i4.7158

Sukri, A., Shasrini, T., Saputra, H. H., & Hamsal. (2025). Socialization of digital media literacy in shaping positive behavior in adolescents. *ARSY: Aplikasi Riset Kepada Masyarakat*, *6*(2), 270–278. https://doi.org/10.55583/arsy.v6i2.1288

Sun, S., Liu, Z., & Waxman, D. (2025). A dynamical measure of algorithmically infused visibility. *Royal Society Open Science*, *12*(11), 242232. https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.242232

Wang, S., Yang, Y., & Shi, W. (2025). Configuring factors for effective dissemination of intangible cultural heritage on Douyin: An fsQCA approach. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, *12*, 979. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-05414-6

Zierock, B., Schulze, J., & Angar, S. (2025). From Gen Z to Generation Alpha: Navigating the evolution of communication in a digital age. *SCIREA Journal of Education*, *10*(2), 69–80. https://doi.org/10.54647/education880581