

Cultural Identity Preservation in the Age of Global Streaming Platforms

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Abstract

Purpose: This study critically investigates how global streaming platforms influence the preservation or erosion of cultural identity. It examines whether the proliferation of internationally curated content homogenizes local cultural expressions or whether audiences actively negotiate, adapt, and preserve indigenous cultural narratives in a digital media environment dominated by global streaming services.

Methodology: A quantitative research design was adopted, utilizing content consumption data from top global streaming platforms. Mathematical analysis included descriptive statistics, correlation matrices, and regression modeling to assess the relationship between platform exposure and indicators of cultural identity retention among diverse audience groups.

Findings: Results indicate a complex duality: global streaming platforms both threaten and enable cultural identity preservation. While dominant international content tends to overshadow local media, targeted platform algorithms, community-driven content curation, and transnational collaborations support cultural continuity. Statistical analyses reveal that audiences with higher engagement in culturally specific content exhibit stronger markers of identity retention, suggesting active resistance against cultural homogenization.

Value: This study contributes to critical media studies by integrating quantitative modeling with cultural theory, moving beyond descriptive analysis to empirically examine cultural preservation mechanisms in globalized digital media environments.

Keywords: Cultural identity preservation, global streaming platforms, cultural globalization, media consumption

1.0 Introduction

The rapid expansion of global streaming platforms has transformed not only the modes of media consumption but also the frameworks through which cultural identities are expressed and negotiated. Platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ offer audiences unprecedented access to transnational content, creating both opportunities and threats for the preservation of local cultural identities. While some scholars argue that the global circulation of media promotes intercultural understanding and diversity, others critically emphasize the risk of cultural homogenization, where dominant narratives overshadow indigenous and minority cultures. Cultural identity, traditionally rooted in local customs, language, and shared narratives, is increasingly mediated by digital platforms that operate across cultural and national boundaries. The algorithms governing content recommendation on streaming platforms are not neutral; they favor content with global appeal, which often marginalizes culturally specific productions. This raises pressing questions: To what extent do global streaming platforms erode or sustain cultural identity? How do audiences negotiate their cultural preferences in the face of globalized content offerings? Can quantitative measures of media engagement reliably indicate levels of cultural preservation? Existing literature highlights a dual effect. On one hand, the international visibility of certain local productions can strengthen cultural pride and global recognition. On the other hand, prolonged exposure to globally dominant content can normalize cultural standards alien to local contexts, potentially diminishing the perceived value of indigenous traditions. Furthermore, diaspora communities increasingly rely on digital media to maintain connections with their cultural heritage, introducing new dynamics of identity negotiation in the digital sphere. This study addresses these gaps by applying a quantitative, data-driven approach to assess cultural identity preservation across multiple audience groups. By examining measurable interactions with both local and global content, the research moves beyond descriptive commentary to identify statistically significant relationships between media exposure and cultural retention. The study is guided by the critical premise that cultural identity is neither static nor monolithic; rather, it is actively constructed and maintained through complex negotiations with global media. The contribution of this research is twofold. First, it provides an empirical framework for understanding the impact of global streaming on cultural identity, bridging theoretical discourse with quantitative evidence. Second, it offers insights into strategic interventions for content creators, policymakers, and platform designers to foster cultural sustainability while leveraging the benefits of global media circulation.

2.0 Literature Review

The literature on *cultural identity* in the context of global media environments reveals a field marked by theoretical contestation rather than consensus. At the core of these debates are divergent perspectives on whether global streaming platforms function as agents of cultural homogenization or as sites of hybrid cultural production and identity negotiation. Early globalization theory foregrounded media as vectors of cultural imperialism—a process that privileges dominant cultural exports at the expense of local traditions. Empirical studies have reinforced aspects of this concern, noting that media globalization can erode culturally specific practices and norms

when local populations disproportionately consume foreign content (Kerubo, 2023). Yet, this perspective risks oversimplification because it treats cultural identity as static and media exposure as unidirectional, ignoring audience agency and mediated negotiations. More recent contributions emphasize the dual and paradoxical nature of global media engagement. Heuman and Gambarato (2023) situate streaming platforms within a *post-digital cultural memory* framework, arguing that while global services like Netflix and Amazon Prime facilitate unprecedented circulation of audiovisual content, they also reshape cultural memory and sustainability in nuanced ways. They demonstrate that streaming platforms do not merely transmit content but actively archive, curate, and recontextualize cultural narratives, thereby influencing what is remembered and what is forgotten in collective consciousness. This aligns with broader cultural memory scholarship which underscores media's role in social and historical meaning-making and situates global distribution mechanisms as central to identity formation in digitally mediated societies. A critical dimension in the literature concerns how platform logics and industrial discourses shape representations of authenticity. Wayne and Castro (2025) leverage the concept of *televisuality* to illustrate how platform-driven solutions to “cultural authenticity” often serve corporate strategies rather than genuine cultural representation. Their analysis problematizes industry narratives that claim to advance diversity while subordinating local specificity to global audience tastes. In this view, authenticity becomes an industrial performance—a marketable trait rather than a cultural end in itself.

Quantitative examinations of consumption patterns reveal persistent cultural anchors despite increased global flows. Lee et al. (2025), using network analysis of VOD consumption data across seventy-plus countries, show that geographic, linguistic, and historical affinities continue to structure viewing patterns, challenging assumptions that streaming inevitably homogenizes taste cultures. Their findings demonstrate that local and regional content clusters remain robust, with audiences displaying sustained engagement with culturally proximate media forms even within a globalized digital infrastructure. These patterns illustrate that cultural identity operates as a dialogical process: audiences integrate, resist, or reframe global content through the lens of local cultural schemas. Complementary research interrogates how streaming content itself represents cultural diversity. Korneev, Lenevsk, and Abdullayev (2023) critically assess the *representation of cultural identity* in global streaming services, observing that stereotype reduction and nuanced portrayals are uneven across platforms. They argue that the presence of culturally specific narratives does not automatically translate into deep cultural resonance unless mediated by audience interpretation and socio-political literacy. This resonates with broader critiques in media studies that emphasize *reception practices* over content inventories when assessing cultural impact.

Salsabila's (2021) analysis of Netflix underscores this complexity by interrogating whether the platform's claim of cultural diversity masks a persistence of American-centric narrative structures. From this vantage point, global platforms may appear inclusive by featuring non-Anglophone content—but the underlying cultural logics often remain governed by transnational capitalist imperatives that privilege market-friendly narratives over explorations of indigenous social complexity. Other researchers draw attention to audience agency and identity negotiation in the digital

age. Panchal and Mago (2024) examine diaspora communities' use of social media and streaming platforms for cultural preservation, noting that these technologies can reinforce cultural pride and continuity when audiences actively curate and share culturally meaningful content. Their work highlights the importance of user-driven practices in counteracting homogenizing tendencies inherent in media globalization. Similarly, literature on youth and digital identity suggests that hybrid identities emerge not as erasures of tradition but as negotiated integrations of global and local influences, particularly when audiences participate actively in cultural production and dissemination. Notably, cross-disciplinary studies extend these discussions to other domains of digital culture, reinforcing the idea that identity negotiation is neither confined to film and television nor reducible to passive consumption. Research on algorithmic curation and platform infrastructures illustrates how algorithms mediate cultural visibility and circulation, potentially amplifying certain narratives while suppressing others. This points to the need for critical algorithm studies within cultural identity research, as platform architectures increasingly determine content exposure and audience engagement.

Existing literature therefore, frames cultural identity preservation in global streaming environments as a contested terrain characterized by tensions between homogenizing forces and resilient forms of cultural specificity. While global platforms undeniably reshape media consumption landscapes, they also provide spaces for localized meaning-making, hybrid cultural expressions, and strategic audience agency. The literature thus demands analytical frameworks that go beyond simplistic binaries of preservation versus erosion and instead examine the *mechanisms by which cultural identity is actively constructed*, contested, and transformed in the digital era.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between exposure to global streaming platforms and cultural identity preservation. Quantitative methods allow for systematic measurement of variables and statistical analysis to identify patterns, correlations, and causal inferences, aligning with the study's goal of moving beyond descriptive assessments toward rigorous, replicable findings.

The research operationalized cultural identity preservation as a composite variable incorporating three dimensions:

- 1) **Local content engagement (LCE)** – frequency and duration of viewing content produced within the participant's culture.
- 2) **Cultural participation (CP)** – reported engagement in cultural practices, festivals, or rituals linked to their identity.
- 3) **Representation recognition (RR)** – the extent to which participants identify with characters, narratives, or themes in streamed content that reflect their cultural background.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The population consisted of 1,200 participants aged 18–45 across five countries with diverse media landscapes (Nigeria, India, South Korea, Brazil, and Germany). A stratified random sampling technique ensured representation across age, gender, and urban/rural location. Participation criteria included:

- Access to at least one global streaming platform.
- Regular consumption of audiovisual content (≥ 5 hours/week).

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected using a standardized digital survey comprising three sections:

Demographics and platform usage patterns.

Viewing preferences: local versus global content ratio.

Cultural identity indicators measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

3.4 Analytical Approach

All data were analyzed using **SPSS v28**. Analytical steps included:

Descriptive statistics – mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions for variables.

Correlation analysis – Pearson's r to assess relationships between platform exposure and identity preservation.

Multiple regression analysis – evaluating the predictive effect of global content exposure and local content engagement on cultural identity preservation.

The **significance threshold** was set at $p < 0.05$.

4.0 Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for key study variables.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Local Content Engagement (LCE)	1,200	3.72	0.84	1	5
Cultural Participation (CP)	1,200	3.55	0.91	1	5
Representation Recognition (RR)	1,200	3.68	0.87	1	5
Global Content Exposure (GCE)	1,200	4.12	0.76	1	5
Cultural Identity Preservation (CIP)	1,200	3.65	0.79	1	5

Observation: Participants exhibited high global content exposure while still maintaining moderate to high engagement in local cultural content and activities, suggesting a potential for hybridized cultural identity retention.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine relationships among variables (Table 2).

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	LCE	CP	RR	GCE	CIP
LCE	1	0.62*	0.68*	-0.24*	0.71*
CP	0.62*	1	0.59*	-0.18*	0.65*
RR	0.68*	0.59*	1	-0.20*	0.73*
GCE	-0.24*	-0.18*	-0.20*	1	-0.21*
CIP	0.71*	0.65*	0.73*	-0.21*	1

*Note: $p < 0.01$

Interpretation:

Strong positive correlations exist between local content engagement, cultural participation, representation recognition, and overall cultural identity preservation.

Global content exposure negatively correlates with cultural identity preservation, albeit moderately, indicating that higher consumption of global content alone may marginally reduce cultural retention.

4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple regression model was constructed to evaluate predictive factors for cultural identity preservation (CIP) (Table 3).

Table 3: Multiple Regression Predicting Cultural Identity Preservation

Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	t	p
Local Content Engagement (LCE)	0.41	0.05	0.46	8.20	<0.001
Cultural Participation (CP)	0.32	0.04	0.35	7.85	<0.001
Representation Recognition (RR)	0.29	0.04	0.31	7.25	<0.001
Global Content Exposure (GCE)	-0.18	0.03	-0.21	-6.12	<0.001

Model Statistics:

$R^2 = 0.63$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.62$, $F(4, 1195) = 509.2$, $p < 0.001$

Interpretation:

Local content engagement is the strongest positive predictor of cultural identity preservation.

Cultural participation and representation recognition also significantly support identity retention.

Global content exposure negatively predicts cultural preservation, confirming critical perspectives in the literature that high exposure to dominant international content may marginally reduce local cultural identity, but the effect size is smaller than the positive effects of local engagement.

Discussion of findings

The quantitative analysis confirms that cultural identity preservation in the era of global streaming platforms is a complex, negotiated process, rather than a simple outcome of media exposure. The study's findings demonstrate that local content engagement (LCE) is the strongest positive predictor of cultural identity preservation, reinforcing the theoretical assertion that active interaction with culturally specific media serves as a primary mechanism for sustaining identity (Heuman & Gambarato, 2023; Panchal & Mago, 2024). This aligns with the critical literature suggesting that audiences are not passive consumers but actively curate their cultural experiences in

digitally mediated environments (Korneev et al., 2023; Wayne & Castro, 2025). Cultural participation (CP) and representation recognition (RR) were also significant positive predictors. These results support the argument that identity retention is mediated not only by what content is available but also by how audiences internalize and integrate cultural cues from streamed media into lived experience (Lee et al., 2025; Firmansyah et al., 2025). In other words, digital platforms may expose viewers to global content, but the preservation of cultural identity depends on the audience's agency and interpretive engagement. Conversely, global content exposure (GCE) showed a moderate negative effect on cultural identity preservation. This outcome echoes concerns in the literature regarding the homogenizing influence of international media and platform-driven algorithmic prioritization of globally marketable content (Salsabila, 2021; Lotz, 2022). However, the smaller effect size relative to local engagement indicators suggests that homogenization is not inevitable, audiences exercise selective engagement, and diasporic communities, in particular, actively leverage platforms to maintain cultural continuity (Panchal & Mago, 2024). These findings challenge the deterministic view of media globalization as purely erosive. Instead, they support a dual-process model in which global streaming platforms simultaneously present risks of cultural dilution and opportunities for reinforcement through localized, culturally meaningful content (Heuman & Gambarato, 2023; Manara & Weber, 2022). The data further illustrate the need for platform-aware cultural strategies: creators, policymakers, and streaming services can foster cultural sustainability by increasing the visibility of local productions, enabling participatory content curation, and designing recommendation algorithms that balance global appeal with local significance. The study also underscores the interdisciplinary importance of integrating cultural theory with quantitative media analytics. While critical media studies often rely on qualitative or theoretical approaches, this study demonstrates the value of mathematical modeling and statistical evidence to interrogate the nuanced relationship between streaming platforms and identity preservation. This methodological contribution advances research agendas in media globalization, digital culture, and audience studies.

5.0 Conclusion

The preservation of cultural identity amidst global streaming platforms is neither uniformly threatened nor passively maintained. Quantitative evidence confirms that audience engagement with local content, participation in cultural activities, and recognition of cultural representations are decisive factors in sustaining identity, outweighing the homogenizing tendencies of global content. Global streaming platforms, therefore, act as contested spaces simultaneously supporting and challenging cultural continuity depending on both platform design and audience agency.

This study contributes to scholarship by:

- Empirically validating theoretical debates on cultural globalization, hybridization, and media-mediated identity.
- Highlighting actionable strategies for content creators, policymakers, and platform designers to foster cultural sustainability.

- Demonstrating the utility of quantitative modeling in critically analyzing cultural phenomena in digital media environments.
- Future research should explore algorithmic interventions, cross-cultural comparisons beyond the sampled countries, and longitudinal analyses to assess the evolution of cultural identity over time. The findings affirm that cultural identity is dynamic, negotiated, and resilient even in a globalized streaming ecosystem.

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