

Social media as a space of global cultural transformations

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Abstract. The aim of the study was to determine how digital platforms shaped new cultural identities and became a space of global cultural transformations. The methodology was based on a qualitative approach using discourse analysis, case study, and comparative analysis. The research considered examples of digital identity (virtual avatars, memes, biographical practices), the functioning of virtual communities (diaspora groups, open communication platforms, communities of practice), and global cultural trends that emerged on social media. The results established that digital identities were formed through the combination of individual self-presentation and algorithmically generated data, creating multidimensional representations that differed from offline personalities but had social significance. The phenomenon of multicultural hybridity was identified, manifested in the combination of linguistic codes, content stylistics, and symbolic markers from different cultural contexts. It was demonstrated that virtual communities performed the functions of transcultural contact: diaspora groups preserved and adapted traditions, open communication platforms contributed to the creation of collective narratives, and professional and academic networks ensured collective knowledge and cooperation in multicultural environments. It was established that global cultural trends such as That Girl, Italian Brainrot and Aura Farming spread through algorithmic amplification and mass user replication, rapidly transcending local contexts and gaining worldwide circulation. The practical significance of the study was that the results could be used for the development of strategies of digital cultural policy, educational programmes on media literacy and intercultural communication, as well as for further investigation of the long-term effects of digital trends on the processes of identity and cultural memory

Keywords: digital identity; hybridity; transcultural interaction; community of practice; replication; cultural diffusion; aspirational identity

INTRODUCTION

In the twenty-first century, social media became a key driver of global cultural change. They not only transmitted information but also shaped new identity practices, facilitated transcultural contacts, and generated viral trends that spread faster than traditional forms of cultural exchange. The relevance of the study is determined by the fact that digital platforms have turned into environments where local practices merge with global narratives, and new models of cultural identity are formed on an unprecedented scale. The research problem lies in the lack of a holistic understanding of how exactly social media functions as a space of cultural transformation.

Scholars have shown strong interest in the ways social media reshape cultural practices and identities. E. Arya (2024) argued that digital platforms contribute to

a shift from collective models of unity to individualised self-expression, offering opportunities to construct identity beyond traditional social structures. Similarly, C.P. Pande & K.B. Asthana (2024) demonstrated that social networks foster hybrid identities that combine local cultural features with global narratives, thus creating conditions for multicultural identity formation. The issue of intercultural interaction is central in the work of F. Helm (2024), who showed that virtual exchange fosters competences of mutual understanding and supports new approaches to cooperation in multicultural environments.

Philosophical perspectives also play a crucial role in the discussion of cultural globalisation. H. Fang (2020) emphasised that expanding global flows inevitably produce hybrid identities, revealing a dialectic between

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homogenisation and the preservation of difference. He argued that globalisation not only unifies cultural practices but also revives attention to cultural memory as a resource of resistance. A. Rojas (2025) analysed identity formation through the lens of axiological philosophy, suggesting that digital infrastructures create multidimensional identities where individual self-construction intersects with collective value systems. Cultural memory, in this view, is continuously reinterpreted in the digital sphere and becomes a foundation for negotiating identity. Complementing these approaches, R. Bentley *et al.* (2023) conceptualised cultural evolution in digital environments, demonstrating how disinformation and fragmented networks both intensify social divisions and simultaneously enable the emergence of new, digitally mediated identities.

The reviewed studies highlight significant progress in understanding the cultural impact of social media. However, important gaps remain: there is no integrated framework that would simultaneously address the emergence of new cultural identities, transcultural interactions within virtual communities, and the mechanisms underlying global trend formation on digital platforms. These aspects define the focus of this research. The aim of the study was to clarify how social media contribute to the formation of new cultural identities, create spaces for transcultural interaction, and generate global cultural trends. To achieve this aim, the study sets the following objectives: to identify the features of new cultural identities in digital environments, particularly the phenomena of digital identity and multicultural hybridity; to analyse virtual communities as spaces of transcultural contact and mechanisms for preserving cultural memory; and to investigate global cultural trends arising on digital platforms, tracing their dynamics of dissemination and their influence on different cultural contexts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was conducted within the framework of cultural and media studies, applying a qualitative methodology aimed at identifying patterns of cultural transformation in the digital environment. The methodological basis combined elements of discourse analysis, case study, and comparative analysis, which made it possible to examine both specific examples of digital content and broader processes of intercultural interaction on social media platforms.

To determine the features of the emergence of new forms of cultural identities in the digital environment, several case studies were selected. The article by E. Petrarca (2018) was used as an empirical foundation for analysing the CGI-influencer Lil Miquela. This source was chosen because it provided a comprehensive account of the construction of a virtual personality that had gained recognition equivalent to real media figures. The analysis of E.G. Ellis (2024) was employed to investigate the Dolly Parton meme, as this example offered clear evidence of how individuals consciously adapted identity presentation to the specific norms of different platforms. The text by

L. Hendrickson (2024) was included to conceptualise the dual structure of digital identity (active and passive), providing a theoretical framework for understanding the algorithmic dimension of identity formation. N. Allen (2024) was used to illustrate the role of short biographical descriptions on Twitter, which allowed for the identification of strategies of multidimensional self-presentation. These materials were selected because they represented complementary perspectives: virtual avatars, memes, algorithmic identities, and biographical narratives, thereby covering diverse manifestations of digital identity and multicultural hybridity.

The second stage of the research focused on analysing the functioning of virtual communities as spaces for transcultural contact and mechanisms of preserving cultural memory. The Facebook group Ukrainians in USA (Ukrainian Diaspora in USA, 2025) was selected as an illustrative case of diaspora communities. This case was used to examine the mechanisms through which cultural traditions are transmitted and sustained in digital environments. K. Raouna (2024) provided a typology of online communities, which allowed for the analysis of platforms such as Reddit (n.d.), Discord (n.d.), and Twitch (n.d.) as spaces for global communication and exchange. The website Stack Overflow (Newest Questions Stuck OverFlow, 2025) was studied as a large-scale community of practice, illustrating the role of collective knowledge exchange among programmers worldwide. Finally, ResearchGate (n.d.) was included to represent international academic collaboration in digital environments. These materials were chosen because they reflected different functions of virtual communities: heritage preservation, everyday interaction, professional cooperation, and academic exchange.

The third research stage was devoted to investigating global cultural trends that originated on digital platforms, tracing their dissemination dynamics and their influence on cultural environments. The video of TikTok (n.d.) about morning routine (The ideal morning routine for 2022, 2022) was analysed as the origin of the That Girl trend, which provided insight into the construction of aspirational lifestyles. The source Best brainrot characters (2025) was employed to investigate the Italian Brainrot trend, as it offered a clear example of the use of AI-generated content and the transcultural circulation of humour. The video of Rayyan Arkan Dikha (Aura Farming Rayyan arkan dikha, 2025) was selected to illustrate the Aura Farming trend, which exemplified how local cultural expressions could gain worldwide recognition through replication and algorithmic amplification. These cases were chosen because they reflected different mechanisms of trend formation: lifestyle aesthetics, absurdist creativity, and performative authenticity. The selection of materials was guided by the principle of representativeness, as each case provided an illustrative and widely recognised example within its category. The use of diverse platforms and content types made it possible to examine digital cultural processes from multiple perspectives, covering identity construction, community functioning, and trend dissemination.

RESULTS

New forms of cultural identities in the digital environment. The concept of cultural identity in academic discourse was traditionally associated with the idea of belonging to an ethnic, national, or religious community. In the classical approach, identity was defined through shared values, traditions, language, and social practices that shaped a sense of collective unity. However, with the spread of digital technologies and interactive platforms, the focus shifted:

the concept of identity began to be seen as a dynamic construct arising from constant interaction in digital spaces.

The concept of digital identity encompasses a wide range of components that extend beyond traditional notions of personal identity. It integrates unique user markers, socio-cultural aspects of interaction, and algorithmically generated data. These elements jointly construct a complex representation of an individual in the digital environment (Fig. 1).

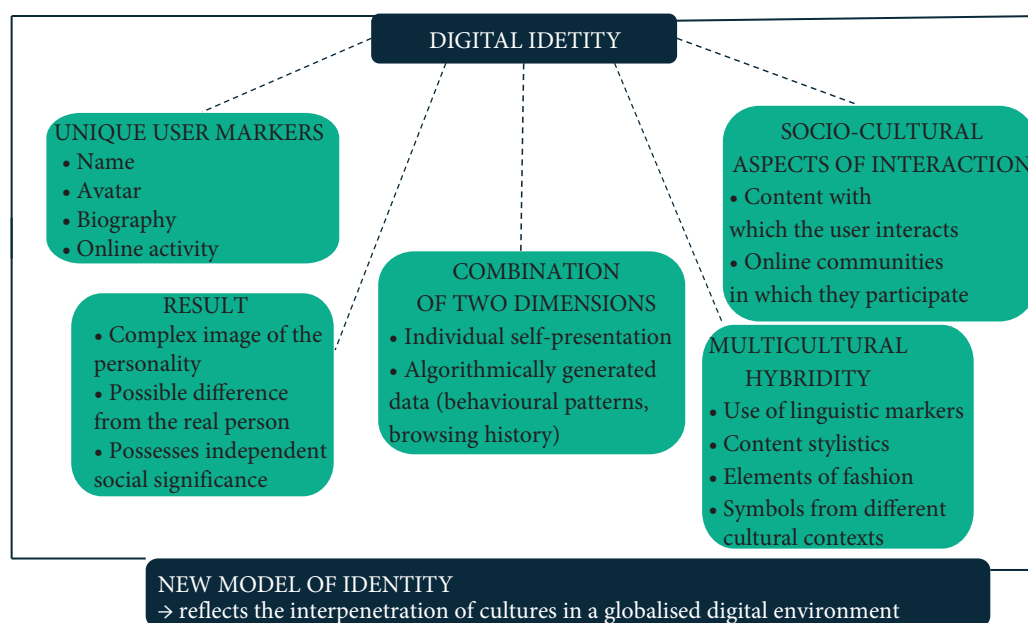


Figure 1. Scheme of the coverage of the term “Digital Identity”

Source: compiled by the author based on M.M.F. Majeed *et al.* (2020) and M. Robles-Carrillo (2024)

The scheme from Figure 1 demonstrates that digital identity is not confined to explicit user self-presentation but also involves data generated through interaction and algorithmic processing. As a result, digital identity functions as a hybrid construct that merges personal, cultural, and technological dimensions. This complexity enables the

emergence of multicultural hybridity and the development of new identity models reflecting the interpenetration of cultures in a globalised digital environment. An example of digital identity was the virtual character Lil Miquela (Miquela Sousa), created as a CGI-influencer on the Instagram platform (Fig. 2).

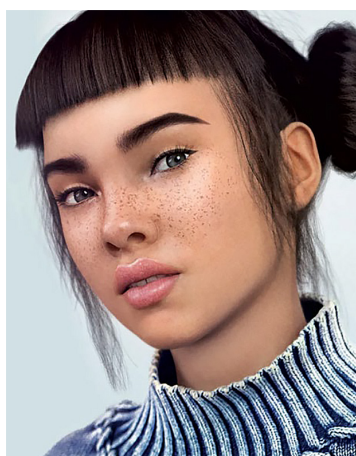


Figure 2. Lil Miquela

Source: E. Petrarca (2018)

She had more than one million followers and demonstrated activity characteristic of real media figures: publications with fashion brands, music releases, participation in social discussions. This example confirmed that identity could exist independently of a physical person, and its social significance was determined by interaction with the audience. Lil Miquela combined an invented Brazilian-American background with contemporary cultural practices, showing that even virtual constructions were able to represent multicultural hybridity. This phenomenon expanded the boundaries of understanding identity: users interacted with the character as with a real person, confirming that digital presence in social media could acquire the status of a social fact (Petrarca, 2018).

Another evidence of the transformation of cultural identity was the well-known Dolly Parton meme, published in 2020. The singer presented herself in four versions – LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram (n.d.), and Tinder – each of which corresponded to the specificity of the platform (Ellis, 2024). This example demonstrated that users consciously formed different variants of their own digital identity, adapting it to the norms of a particular social network. On LinkedIn, identity reproduced a professional image, on Facebook – social and family belonging, on Instagram – visual aesthetics, on Tinder – a romantic component. In this way, in the digital environment a multiplicity of identities arose, coexisting in one user but realised in different communicative contexts. This confirmed that social media stimulated the process of differentiation of personality and the simultaneous existence of several models of self-presentation.

Digital identity was not limited only to what the user consciously demonstrated in their profiles. It was also formed algorithmically – through the analysis of browsing history, behavioural patterns, and interaction data. In the article *Understanding Your Digital Identity* (Hendrickson, 2024), two levels of digital identity were distinguished: active and passive. The active level encompassed profiles, publications, and biographical information provided by the user independently. The passive level was formed on the basis of data on views, likes, and communication. Together, these two levels created a complex image of the personality, which became the basis for targeted content and algorithmic behaviour prediction. This indicated that digital identity was determined not only by the user's self-presentation but also by the result of systematic data analysis carried out by platforms.

An example of multidimensional digital identity was also illustrated in the format of short biographies on Twitter. As examples show, users in their bios simultaneously indicated profession, hobbies, and cultural orientations: "Writer|Sharing thoughts on literature, writing tips, and my journey as an author. Lover of books and coffee" or "Chef | Delicious recipes, cooking tips, and kitchen hacks. Bringing gourmet cooking to your home" (Allen, 2024). Such biographies performed the function of a compact representation of a multifaceted identity, which combined the

professional sphere, creative interests, and personal hobbies. In this way, users created a cross-platform image that easily adapted to different digital environments. This underlined that contemporary cultural identity was increasingly defined not by belonging to a single tradition but by the ability to integrate different cultural markers into one's own self-presentation.

All the considered examples confirmed that digital platforms had formed new approaches to the construction of cultural identity. The historical development of the concept indicated a transition from a collective to an individual paradigm, as well as from homogeneity to hybridity. Personalised avatars such as Lil Miquela demonstrated the possibility of identity existing independently of a physical person, the multiplicity of self-presentations in social networks revealed the ability to adapt the image to different communicative environments, and the distinction between active and passive identity emphasised the algorithmic dimension of this process. Examples of Twitter bios showed that even short self-presentations could reproduce the multidimensionality of contemporary identity. The development of the digital environment led to the emergence of models of identity characterised by plasticity, multidimensionality, and openness to cultural interaction. These models reflected a new phase of cultural transformations, in which individuality was defined not only by belonging to a community but also by the ability to integrate different cultural codes into a personal digital image.

Virtual communities as spaces of transcultural interaction. The phenomenon of virtual communities emerged in the late twentieth century with the development of digital communication platforms that enabled interaction without geographical proximity. Early forums, mailing lists, and online chats provided the first opportunities for individuals to gather around shared interests. Over time, these forms of communication transformed into complex social ecosystems, where cultural exchange occurred on a global scale. In contemporary scholarship, a virtual community is defined as a network of individuals connected through digital platforms, whose communication is structured around shared practices, values, and goals. Unlike traditional communities limited by physical or cultural boundaries, virtual communities bring together participants from different backgrounds, allowing them to create collective identities beyond territorial borders. These environments are characterised by openness, accessibility, and the possibility of constant interaction, which make them favourable for transcultural contact. The role of such communities is not confined to the exchange of information. They serve as spaces where knowledge is preserved, cultural practices are transmitted, and new hybrid forms of identity are shaped. The emergence of global platforms has amplified these functions, making virtual communities a central element in understanding contemporary cultural transformations.

One of the most illustrative cases of how virtual communities support transcultural exchange is the activity of diaspora groups on Facebook. An example is the group Ukrainians in USA, where members actively share videos of traditional songs, photographs of embroidered shirts, and recipes for national dishes such as “borscht” and “varenyky” (Ukrainian Diaspora in USA, 2025). Such practices are not limited to cultural nostalgia; they create a dynamic channel of cultural continuity, allowing traditions to be preserved and adapted in new environments. Through comments and discussions, older generations transmit knowledge about symbolism, rituals, and traditional techniques, while younger participants integrate these elements into their everyday lives in a foreign context. As a result, diaspora communities form a digital bridge that ensures the survival of cultural practices across borders and fosters interaction between participants with diverse experiences of migration and cultural adaptation.

A similar function is evident in open platforms such as Reddit (n.d.), Discord (n.d.), and Twitch (n.d.), which have become universal spaces for communication across cultural boundaries. Reddit, with its system of thematic subreddits, enables users from various countries to participate in discussions ranging from popular culture to specialised professional topics. The decentralised structure encourages users to present their cultural perspectives, which leads to the formation of collective narratives that transcend national contexts. Discord servers operate as spaces of continuous dialogue, often uniting people around gaming, education, or cultural projects. The format of voice and text channels promotes direct interpersonal contact, where language and cultural barriers are mitigated through shared interests. Twitch, originally a platform for streaming video games, has expanded into a broader cultural medium where live broadcasts create a sense of co-presence. Viewers from different parts of the world simultaneously participate in events, exchange comments, and influence the development of online subcultures (Raouna, 2024). These platforms illustrate how virtual communities facilitate the formation of transcultural practices, transforming entertainment and communication into sources of collective cultural experience.

Virtual communities of practice (VCoP) illustrate a further manifestation of transcultural interaction. These are groups of professionals and enthusiasts who share expertise and develop collective knowledge through constant interaction. Stack Overflow, a global community of programmers, where millions of users exchange advice, problem-solving strategies, and best practices, serves as an illustrative case (Newest Questions Stuck OverFlow, 2025). The specificity of this community lies in the fact that knowledge is created collectively, while norms of communication and problem-solving become elements of a shared professional culture. New participants learn from the experience of more advanced members, and the culture of mutual assistance spreads across national and cultural groups. This confirms that professional identity can be formed in a transcultural

context, where competence and contribution outweigh geographical belonging. Another example of a virtual community of practice is ResearchGate (n.d.), an international network of scientists designed for the exchange of articles, research results, and methodological approaches. This platform allows researchers from different countries to communicate directly, comment on each other's work, and establish collaborations. The exchange of knowledge in this context is not only academic but also cultural, as participants bring diverse perspectives, traditions of scientific communication, and methodological approaches. The result is the formation of a global research environment where cultural differences are not obstacles but resources for creating new ideas and practices.

The examples considered demonstrate that virtual communities serve different functions depending on their structure and purpose, but they all contribute to transcultural interaction. Diaspora groups support cultural continuity and adaptation in new contexts; universal communication platforms expand opportunities for exchange in everyday and professional domains; communities of practice create conditions for the collective construction of knowledge. Each of these forms illustrates how digital environments transform communication into a process of cultural integration, fostering the emergence of new hybrid models of identity and collective experience. The development of virtual communities has shown that cultural contact in the digital age is no longer limited by geographical or linguistic boundaries. Social media groups of diasporas demonstrate how traditions can be preserved and transmitted in conditions of global mobility. Platforms such as Reddit, Discord, and Twitch show that shared interests and interactive communication create new cultural forms that go beyond national frameworks. Communities of practice, such as Stack Overflow and ResearchGate, prove that professional and academic collaboration takes place in a transcultural environment, where knowledge is enriched by the diversity of participants. Virtual communities have become key spaces for the formation of transcultural contacts, as they combine preservation of heritage, everyday communication, and professional cooperation. Their functioning confirms that in the globalised digital environment, identity and cultural belonging are constructed not only through individual self-presentation but also through participation in collective practices that integrate diverse cultural codes. This process reflects the transition to a new stage of cultural transformations, where virtual interaction plays a decisive role in shaping global cultural dynamics.

Global cultural trends emerging on digital platforms.

The phenomenon of cultural trends has long been associated with processes of diffusion, when innovations, styles, or practices spread from one group to another through interaction and imitation. Traditionally, these processes required significant time and relied on physical contact, mass media, or institutional mediation. With the rise of digital platforms, the mechanisms of cultural diffusion acquired

new characteristics. Social media created an environment where cultural patterns could be generated, shared, and transformed within extremely short timeframes. The combination of algorithmic recommendation systems and user-generated content accelerated the speed of dissemination, while the global accessibility of platforms allowed trends to transcend national and linguistic boundaries. The concept of a “global cultural trend” in the digital context refers to practices or aesthetic codes that originate in specific online interactions but rapidly achieve worldwide visibility. Such trends are not limited to entertainment; they influence lifestyle practices, patterns of socialisation, and even economic activities. Platforms such as TikTok (n.d.), Instagram (n.d.), and YouTube (n.d.) have become central in this process due to their technical architecture, which prioritises visual storytelling, brevity of content, and virality. The interaction of these factors results in the emergence of cultural practices that shape not only digital communication but also offline behaviours. The logic of cultural trend formation on digital platforms is based on a triadic mechanism: initial creative impulse, replication by users, and amplification through algorithms. The initial impulse may be a video, meme, or performance. Replication occurs when users adapt the practice to their own contexts, while amplification is ensured by platform algorithms that prioritise popular content. This triadic mechanism explains the rapid transformation of local expressions into global cultural phenomena.

The trend known as *That Girl* illustrates how a lifestyle practice, initially tied to individual creativity, can turn into a global cultural phenomenon. In January 2021, TikTok user published a video showing her morning routine demonstrated a structured morning routine associated with discipline, productivity, and minimalist aesthetics (*The ideal morning routine for 2022*, 2022). This format resonated with audiences seeking aspirational content and quickly became viral. The hashtag #*ThatGirl* accumulated more than two billion views by the summer of 2022. The appeal of the trend lay in its presentation of self-discipline, productivity, and minimalist aesthetics, which were visualised through short, aesthetically structured videos. As the practice spread, it generated multiple derivative variations that adapted the core idea of aspirational self-presentation to diverse cultural codes. Each of these variations adapted the core idea of self-presentation to different cultural codes, which indicates the flexibility of digital trends in accommodating diverse aesthetic traditions. The case of *That Girl* illustrates the construction of aspirational digital identity, showing how replication and aesthetic standardisation transform individual lifestyle practices into globally recognisable cultural models.

A more recent example, Italian Brainrot, illustrates the role of absurd humour and generative technologies in the creation of transcultural trends. In the summer of 2024, TikTok was flooded with videos showing AI-generated hybrid creatures combining animal forms with human features and pseudo-Italian names (Best brainrot

characters, 2025). The most popular figure became *Tralalero Tralala*, AI-generated hybrid creatures combined animal and human features, accompanied by synthetic voices, exemplifying a form of absurdist humour as symbolic play (Fig. 3)



Figure 3. Most popular figure *Tralalero Tralala*
Source: Best brainrot characters (2025)

A single video with this character reached more than twenty million views in one week, initiating a wave of replications and modifications. The dissemination of this trend extended beyond TikTok: Instagram Reels hosted similar videos, Reddit communities produced fan art, and NFT (Non-fungible tokens) collections based on the characters emerged. The case demonstrates how playful absurdity and visual experimentation, supported by artificial intelligence, can achieve global resonance. The integration of Italian linguistic elements, albeit parodic, introduced cultural references that were reinterpreted in diverse contexts. Italian Brainrot demonstrates the hybridity of digital culture, where algorithmic creativity and absurdist humour operate as mechanisms of transcultural symbolic adaptation.

The trend called *Aura Farming* provides another perspective on the dynamics of digital cultural practices. In August 2024, an eleven-year-old Indonesian boy, Rayyan Arkan Dikha, uploaded a video where he calmly danced on a boat to a popular Indonesian song (*Aura Farming Rayyan arkan dikha*, 2025). This practice, later labelled as ‘aura farming’, functioned as a symbolic performance of authenticity and calm confidence, which was replicated and amplified by algorithms and adapted by global celebrities. The video reached millions of views, and the practice was quickly adopted by global celebrities. Jungkook, a member of the Korean band BTS (Bangtan Sonyeondan), recorded a similar video, American football players incorporated the movement into performances on the field, and even the Singapore Navy produced an official clip in this style. The trajectory of *Aura Farming* demonstrates how local cultural expressions can achieve worldwide diffusion when amplified by algorithms and adapted by influential figures. The trend combined elements of music, dance, and

performative identity, which allowed it to be reinterpreted in multiple contexts without losing recognisability. *Aura Farming* exemplifies how local cultural expressions can be globalised through replication and algorithmic amplification, confirming that authenticity functions as a transferable symbolic resource in digital environments.

The analysis of these three cases reveals different mechanisms of cultural trend formation. *That Girl* illustrates how lifestyle practices structured by visual aesthetics and discipline become models of aspirational identity. *Italian Brainrot* shows the potential of technological creativity and absurd humour to generate shared cultural codes. *Aura Farming* demonstrates how localised expressions, grounded in everyday performance, can become global through replication by celebrities and institutions. Despite their differences, all three trends share the characteristic of trans-cultural adaptability: they can be reinterpreted in diverse cultural contexts while retaining their recognisable core. This adaptability explains why digital platforms function as key incubators of global cultural practices. The emergence of global cultural trends on digital platforms reflects a new stage of cultural dynamics, where practices generated by individual creativity acquire global resonance through algorithmic amplification and user replication. Historical analysis demonstrates that while cultural diffusion has always been a feature of human societies, its contemporary form is distinguished by unprecedented speed, scale, and flexibility. The examples of *That Girl*, *Italian Brainrot*, and *Aura Farming* confirm that platforms such as TikTok (n.d.) operate as laboratories of cultural experimentation, where visual aesthetics, humour, and everyday practices are transformed into globally recognised cultural codes. These trends illustrate different dimensions of cultural transformation: the pursuit of aspirational lifestyles, the creation of shared symbolic frameworks through parody and absurdity, and the elevation of local expressions to the status of global phenomena. The study of global cultural trends highlights that digital platforms not only mediate cultural exchange but also actively shape the content, form, and dynamics of contemporary culture. They create conditions for the continuous emergence of hybrid practices that integrate elements from diverse traditions and contexts. As a result, global cultural trends are not merely transient phenomena but indicators of structural transformations in the ways identity, communication, and cultural belonging are constructed in the digital age.

DISCUSSION

The results of the present study confirmed that social media had become a key environment for the construction of digital identities, the functioning of transcultural communities, and the dissemination of global cultural trends. These findings resonated with, but also extended, the results of earlier research. The conclusion that digital identity was formed through the combination of self-presentation and algorithmically generated data correlated with the broader reflections of I. Levin & D. Mamlok (2021). Their work

demonstrated that cultural and social life in the digital era was mediated by technological infrastructures, which reshaped traditional models of belonging. The results of this study specified their findings by illustrating that algorithmic data did not only mediate communication but actively produced new layers of identity. C. Davison (2024), in turn, conceptualised digital self-presentation as a structured practice embedded in everyday life. Compared to her conclusions, the present research added an empirical dimension by demonstrating how these practices manifested in concrete cases such as virtual avatars and memes.

While C. Davison highlighted theoretical aspects of identity construction, this study revealed the mechanisms through which hybrid identities gained social significance in different online environments. At the same time, the results complemented the argument of E. Michalkiewicz-Kadziela & E. Milczarek (2021), who examined the legal boundaries of identity creation. They proved that regulation influenced how identities could be formed or recognised. This research did not focus on legal aspects, but its findings suggested that algorithmic and user-generated elements of identity already functioned as socially acknowledged facts, regardless of legal codification. Thus, the present study extended the perspective by showing how cultural practices outpaced legal definitions. C. Sullivan & S. Tyson (2023) proposed a global framework for digital identity as a universal category. While their results were oriented towards institutional design, the current findings indicated that in practice globalised identity emerged not through top-down models but through everyday self-presentation and replication across platforms. The comparison confirmed that theoretical and institutional perspectives required supplementation by empirical evidence of user practices.

The phenomenon of multicultural hybridity identified in this study was closely linked to the theoretical shift from intercultural to transcultural communication analysed by W. Baker (2022). His results demonstrated that cultural interactions could no longer be understood as dialogue between separate traditions, but as the emergence of fluid hybrid forms. The present study confirmed this by showing that users integrated multiple cultural codes into self-presentation, memes, and biographical practices. However, while author's conclusions remained largely conceptual, this research supplied empirical validation through case studies such as Twitter biographies or the Dolly Parton meme. Similarly, M. Shonfeld *et al.* (2021) highlighted how learning in digital environments demanded cross-cultural alignment. Their results showed that interaction in online education promoted mutual adaptation of practices. The findings of this study broadened their framework: hybridity appeared not only in formal learning but also in informal communication, lifestyle trends, and community participation. A. Hillary (2020) added another dimension by exploring how neurodiversity intersected with intercultural communication. Compared to her work, the present research extended the scope from individual cognitive specificities to collective cultural hybridity, yet both results converged

in demonstrating that online environments expanded the boundaries of participation.

The analysis of virtual communities as spaces of transcultural contact aligned with the results of E. Zolduoarati *et al.* (2025), who studied how regional cues shaped practices on Stack Overflow. Their findings revealed that global communities of practice were influenced by local cultural elements, which shaped interaction styles and problem-solving norms. The present study confirmed their observations by showing that communities of practice produced hybrid professional cultures in which contributions from diverse participants were integrated into shared norms. At the same time, it demonstrated that such transcultural mechanisms were not confined to professional platforms but also characterised diasporic and leisure-oriented communities. S. Ponzanesi (2020), analysing digital diasporas, underlined the role of affect and postcolonial perspectives in shaping online belonging. The results of this research converged with hers by showing that diaspora groups preserved cultural traditions through digital practices. However, this study expanded the focus beyond affective ties, emphasising that diasporic communities simultaneously performed adaptation and innovation, creating dynamic forms of cultural continuity.

The mechanisms of virality identified in the current study were strongly connected with the works of C. Ling *et al.* (2021). They dissected the factors determining the virality of memes, establishing indicators such as humour, relatability, and visual form. The results of this research confirmed their conclusions by showing that absurd creativity and humour, as in the Italian Brainrot case, became the key to global resonance. Yet this study added nuance by emphasising the role of algorithmic amplification, which C. Ling *et al.* addressed only marginally. A. Siddiqui (2021) analysed viral videos from the perspective of societal impact, stressing that they influenced collective behaviour. The current research supported this claim through the example of Aura Farming, which moved from an individual performance to institutional adoption by celebrities and even official organisations. Thus, the results highlighted that virality was not only a technical or aesthetic phenomenon but also a cultural mechanism of transformation.

The interpretation of digital platforms as cultural artefacts, proposed by S. Vicari & D. Kirby (2023), also found confirmation in this study. Their work showed that platforms themselves shaped cultural practices through technical design. The present research demonstrated how this influence was realised in practice: the architecture of TikTok or Instagram determined the triadic mechanism of trend formation (impulse – replication – amplification). The empirical analysis provided evidence of how socio-technical affordances structured cultural diffusion. G. Jolia & N. Jolia (2022) described digital culture as a global phenomenon of the technological world. Their results provided a broad conceptual background, while the current study clarified the specific forms of cultural transformations – identity, communities, and trends that together defined the

structure of digital culture. Similarly, R.N. Chawla & P. Goyal (2022) identified emerging patterns of digital transformation through bibliometric analysis. Their work mapped the field, while the present research gave detailed content to these patterns, demonstrating how transformation unfolded in specific cultural practices.

In summary, the comparison of results showed that the current study both confirmed and advanced existing scholarship. It confirmed theoretical assumptions about hybridity, transculturality, and virality, while advancing them by demonstrating concrete mechanisms and case studies. It diverged from some institutional and normative perspectives by showing that cultural practices often developed independently of legal or policy frameworks. Finally, it integrated dispersed findings into a holistic model of digital cultural transformations. The results thus contributed to the academic discourse by bridging conceptual, empirical, and practical dimensions, and by providing a comprehensive picture of how social media operated as a space of global cultural change.

CONCLUSIONS

The conducted research demonstrated that the digital environment substantially transformed the processes of identity formation, intercultural communication, and cultural trend dissemination. It was established that the emergence of new cultural identities was characterised by the integration of personal self-presentation with algorithmically generated behavioural data. This interaction produced complex digital identities that could diverge from offline identities yet retained independent social significance. Within these identities, multicultural hybridity manifested through the combination of linguistic codes, visual aesthetics, fashion elements, and symbolic markers originating from diverse cultural traditions. Such hybridity confirmed the shift from collective models of identity towards fluid and multidimensional forms adapted to global digital environments.

The analysis of virtual communities revealed their role as crucial spaces for transcultural contacts. It was shown that diaspora groups in social networks contributed to the preservation and transmission of cultural memory, while simultaneously enabling the adaptation of traditions in new sociocultural contexts. Universal communication platforms such as Reddit, Discord, and Twitch facilitated the creation of transcultural interactions based on shared interests and practices that transcended national and linguistic boundaries. Communities of practice, exemplified by Stack Overflow and ResearchGate, functioned as global spaces of knowledge production, where professional and academic collaboration was enriched by cultural diversity. These findings confirmed that virtual communities operated not only as channels of information exchange but also as mechanisms of collective identity construction and intercultural learning.

The investigation of global cultural trends demonstrated that digital platforms had become incubators of cultural experimentation, where local practices rapidly

acquired global resonance. The case of That Girl illustrated how lifestyle aesthetics structured around discipline and minimalism turned into aspirational identity models. The trend of Italian Brainrot revealed the potential of generative technologies and parody in creating transcultural symbolic frameworks. The diffusion of Aura Farming confirmed that localised cultural expressions could achieve worldwide recognition through replication and algorithmic amplification. Collectively, these examples proved that global cultural trends functioned as indicators of structural cultural transformations, distinguished by unprecedented speed, scale, and adaptability. Overall, the study established that digital platforms shaped cultural processes by generating hybrid identities, supporting transcultural communities,

and producing global cultural practices that redefined the parameters of belonging and interaction in the twenty-first century. Further research should be directed towards examining the long-term effects of digital trends on the processes of identity and cultural memory.

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