

The Adoption of Korean Slang on X by Indonesian Students: A Social Identity Approach

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

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Social media has become an essential platform for cultural exchange, allowing Indonesians to engage deeply on a global scale. This study examines how the exposure to Korean culture (K-Culture) on X influences the adoption of Korean slang among Swiss German University students. Using Henri Tajfel's Social Identity Theory as a foundation, the research explores whether adopting common Korean terms reflects a sense of belonging and affects perceptions of national identity. This qualitative study collects data through direct interviews and observations with university students who interact with Korean culture content on X. Findings suggest that while some students experience a subtle shift or blending in cultural self-identification, others maintain a strong attachment to their Indonesian identity. Many view their use of Korean slang as a way to express admiration for Korean culture and connect with global communities, rather than a rejection of their Indonesian roots. This highlights the role of social media in shaping linguistic behaviour and cultural influence, contributing to wider discussions on digital identity and language adaptation in Indonesia.

1. Introduction

In today's globalized world, social media has become one of the most prominent and influential tools for communication. It has revolutionized how people connect by enabling real-time, multi-directional interactions that transcend traditional geographic and cultural boundaries. For Generation Z, social media is more than just a tool for communication, it's a space where identities are constructed, explored, and developed (Putri et al., 2025).

Building on this idea, Palfrey & Gasser (2011) explored how Gen Z, often termed 'digital natives', lives their life online and are always connected. What makes them unique is their seamless integration online and offline identities, with tendencies to think of their identity as one, just spread among different spaces and environment. By blurring the lines between their online and offline personas, it allows them to adopt new ways of speaking, behaving and presenting themselves based on the media they consume.

Beyond personal identity, social media has evolved into an interactive arena for cultural exchange. Platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok are not just spaces for entertainment, they're hubs where global and local cultures connect. Through trends, viral content, and algorithmic exposure, users are constantly introduced to foreign cultures, humour, and expressions. For Indonesian youth, this often translates into a growing familiarity with other cultures, particularly those that dominate the digital sphere. The frequent nature of this interaction allows foreign culture to become enclosed in everyday digital experiences, normalizing and blurring the line between foreign and local cultural influences. Digital platforms often encourage people to shift from their authentic selves and adopt identities that align more closely with their idealized desires (Siibak, 2010).

X is chosen as the digital platform for this study because Twitter, as a social networking platform, enables users to form online communities based on shared interests rather than physical proximity or offline connections. Unlike traditional social gatherings, these digital groups bring together people who might not otherwise interact. A key feature of Twitter is its use of 'tweets' - brief posts that can contain text, images, or video clips. This microblogging format distinguishes Twitter from other social media platforms (Pearson, 2010). According to Khaerinnisa (2022) from July 2020 to June 2021, Indonesia emerged as the nation with the most K-pop-related tweets. Globally, K-pop discussions have dominated Twitter, with 7.5 billion tweets. Furthermore, with so many features, X has made it possible for users to communicate with one another and get latest news in an efficient manner (Ezani, 2019).

It is seen that the most prominent examples that are advancing in recent years is Korean media, especially Korean Pop (Khaerinnisa, 2022). The rise of K-pop, K-dramas, and Korean variety shows has not only captured the attention of global audiences but has also introduced new linguistic elements into everyday speech among teenagers. Phrases like 'aigoo', 'daebak', 'saranghae', or even reaction memes featuring Korean idols are increasingly used in online conversations by Indonesian students. These borrowed expressions often go beyond surface-level mimicry. A study by Alruwaili (2017) discusses how interaction with a wide range of global cultures and societies has played a key role in shaping how individuals construct, sustain, and modify their self-identity as they encounter different worldviews, values, norms, and emotional frameworks. In online spaces where physical presence and direct interaction are minimal, K-pop fans frequently develop and adjust their self-identities by creating alternative personas, often using another alias to represent themselves.

Previous studies have examined the various aspects of this phenomenon. For instance, *Personal Identity and the Self in the Online and Offline World* (Hongladarom, 2011) address how social media changes the way we understand personal identity. As people spend more time online, the line between their online and offline selves becomes less clear. Another example is *Identity Construction Of Kpop Fandom On Twitter* (Ezani, 2019) looks at how K-pop fans in Malaysia build their identities on Twitter. It highlights how social media can influence personal identity, especially among young people in digital fan communities. These online identities often reflect their love for Korean pop and even shape how they behave offline. Additionally, *K-Pop, Language, and Online Fandom: An Exploration of Korean Language Use and Performativity Amongst International K-Pop Fans* (Crow, 2019) discusses how non-Korean K-pop fans incorporate Korean language into their online interactions to express identity and belonging. It highlights how fans use words, phrases, and social media to create a sense of community. Using trending Korean words would signal authenticity in identity as "true" stans, distancing themselves from casual listeners.

This study addresses a gap in current research by exploring how Indonesian students adopt Korean slang through social media and what that says about their identity. Unlike earlier studies that focus on fandom behaviour or online self-image, this research shows how language use reflects cultural connection and belonging. It also reveals how social media influences both online and offline communication. By focusing on language and cultural identity in an Indonesian context, the study offers new insights into how Indonesian international student shape who they are in a globalized, digital world.

This study fills a research gap by examining how Indonesian international university students navigate cultural identity through their use of Korean slang on X (Twitter). Previous studies have explored identity in offline settings (Hongladarom, 2011), Twitter fan communities (Ezani, 2019), or global fans' language use (Crow, 2019). This research specifically examines how language use reflects cultural connection and identity among Indonesian students at Swiss German University. These students, who are typically fluent in English and highly exposed to global media, present an interesting case study of how global digital culture interacts with local identity. By using the Social Identity Theory, this study aims to show how students use Korean slang to connect with global communities and balancing it with their Indonesian identity.

This study seeks to understand how Indonesian university students' use of Korean slang on X influences their cultural identity. The research aims to determine how the adoption of Korean slang

shapes their sense of Indonesian national identity, whether strengthening, weakening, or leaving it unchanged. It examines which Korean terms students adopt most frequently and how they justify using them despite having local equivalents. The study also investigates how students react to peers who excessively use trendy Korean words, whether they view it as something up to date, neutral, or threatening to local culture. These questions explore the intersection of digital language practices, global influences, and national identity among Indonesian youth.

This study focuses on that question. It uses Henri Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, which explains how people define who they are by the social groups they belong to. Language can be one way of showing group identity. By looking at the international Indonesian students at Swiss German University who use Korean slang on X, this research explores whether their language choices reflect admiration for Korean culture or even a change in how they see themselves.

2. Method

Qualitative research is an interpretive approach that explores complex social issues by analysing non-numerical data. Instead of focusing on statistics, it prioritizes participants' personal experiences, behaviours, and the meanings they attach to them (Lewis, 2015). Involving interviews, this study seeks to understand the motivations behind Korean slang usage, how students feel about incorporating foreign terms into their language, and whether this reflects a distancing from or coexistence with their Indonesian cultural identity. The findings of this study are intended to contribute to wider academic discussions on digital identity, language adaptation, and cultural influence in Southeast Asia.

This exploratory study examined how Indonesian university students use Korean slang on X through a focused analysis of three participants. We selected 4 undergraduate students from Swiss German University who met three criteria: (1) they often use Korean slang in X (2) they self-identify as fans of Korean culture/K-pop, and (3) they are Indonesian.

Data collection consisted of 10 minute direct interviews conducted over a two-day period, focusing on two key questions: why participants preferred Korean slang over Indonesian or English equivalents in their online communication, and how they perceived this linguistic choice might influence their connection to Indonesian cultural identity. Interviews were audio-recorded and participants were encouraged to provide specific examples of slang usage and describe contextual factors affecting their language choices.

The questions were designed to elicit detailed responses about participants' experiences, attitudes, and perceptions, while also allowing space for personal narratives and reflection. Each question corresponds to a core construct of the theory.

3. Result and Discussion

In response to the first interview question, whether they feel part of a community when using Korean slang or engaging with Korean content on X, Participants generally expressed a strong sense of belonging when using Korean slang or engaging with Korean content on X. All four individuals described feeling a shared connection that developed through the use of culturally specific expressions, even with users they had never met in person. Oei explained that she feels "like a part of the community" when talking about her favourite Korean entertainment on X, especially because her mutuals—other users who follow her—understand and engage with her posts.

"I do feel like a part of the community whenever I engage with Korean content and slangs in X, especially if it's about my favourite K-pop idols or my favourite K-dramas because my mutuals, which is other users that follow me on X would definitely understand what I'm talking about and they would also engage in a conversation. It feels that I'm sort of included and belong to a community where we share the same interests." (Interview with Oei, 2025).

Similarly, another participant shared that using Korean slang online immediately creates a sense of connection with others, describing it as a "shared language" that brings fans together across

different backgrounds. She emphasized how natural it feels to interact with others who understand the slang and inside jokes.

“It’s like a shared language that instantly connects me with other fans, no matter where we’re from. It’s not just the words or the language, it’s the way we hype each other up. There’s this silent understanding, like we’re all part of one big and sometimes chaotic friend group. Even if we’ve never met, it still feels like a bond” (Interview with Surya, 2025).

Another participant also highlighted feeling understood among his friends and mutuals on X. He noted that his online circle is familiar with his use of Korean slang and his frequent K-pop-related posts. He explained:

“I definitely feel connected. Most of my friends on X, also known as my mutuals, understand when I tweet things using romanised Korean characters like ‘mian’ or ‘omo otteokeh,’ and they’re already used to me retweeting or commenting on K-pop-related stuff” (Interview with Anwar, 2025).

Finally, the fourth participant mentioned that using Korean slang online helps her feel accepted, even by people she has never met in real life. She described the experience as comforting and uplifting.

“Yes, to some people using Korean slangs are considered funny so I feel accepted. Even if I never meet them in real life, it’s great to know that people out there understand what I’m talking about and my references when using slangs. It feels nice” (Interview with The, 2025).

In short, Korean slang on X helps people feel less alone and more connected. For these participants, it made online spaces feel like real communities where they could share, laugh, and belong.

In response to whether their love for Korean culture and slang affects how they see themselves as Indonesian, participants had mixed but thoughtful answers. Their responses show different ways of balancing, questioning, and embracing multiple cultural influences.

Oei shared that her love for Korean culture has not affected her Indonesian identity at all. She explained that this interest is purely for enjoyment, and it has never made her feel distant from her Indonesian roots.

“I don’t think my love for Korean culture has affected my Indonesian identity in any way. I still love and appreciate Indonesian culture and I have never felt both identities clash because I only love Korean culture for entertainment purposes, and not something I love so much to the point that it clashes with my Indonesian identity” (Interview with Oei, 2025).

Another participant, however, expressed a more complex experience. She shared that while she is proud of her Indonesian roots, Korean culture has shaped how she expresses herself both online and offline. She admitted that there are moments of inner conflict, especially when using Korean slang makes her wonder if she is drifting from her own culture. She emphasized that her Indonesian and Korean influences are not in competition with each other, but instead represent different sides of who she is depending on the context.

“Sometimes I do feel like my love for Korean culture and slang has shaped how I see myself as Indonesian. I’m proud of my roots, but the way I express myself, both online and offline, is heavily influenced by Korean media and culture. It’s like living in an in-between space, balancing two worlds. There are moments when the two identities clash. Like when I casually use Korean slang in conversations or tweets and people comment on it, I start wondering if I’m losing touch with my own culture... Still, I’ve come to realize both sides can exist at the same time.” (Interview with Surya, 2025).

A third participant reflected on the social judgment that sometimes comes with using Korean slang. He mentioned that while some people criticize or even mock him for it, he does not let it change how he sees himself.

"Sometimes I do wonder how others judge me, like do they think, 'This guy is kind of cringe,' or question why I use those words instead of just speaking in Indonesian. But honestly, I don't let it bother me. Even when I use Korean slang or phrases into my speech, I still identify as Indonesian. At the end of the day, I'm Indonesian and Indonesian language is the language I'm most comfortable with, and that's what matters most to me" (Interview with Anwar, 2025).

Finally, the fourth participant described a fluid approach to identity. She explained that while she often uses Korean expressions in digital spaces, she sees her Indonesian and Korean influences as separate but coexisting.

"For me, I think identity is not a fixed thing. I use Korean expressions a lot online, but I don't see my Indonesian and Korean influences as conflicting. They coexist with each other. Even if I use a Korean persona in a digital space, my Indonesian identity is still strong and grounded in my everyday life. I believe identity is something flexible, not something fixed" (Interview with The, 2025).

To sum it up, participants showed that their relationship with Korean culture can bring up questions about identity, but for most, it does not erase or threaten their sense of being Indonesian. Instead, it adds another layer to how they see and express themselves.

When asked if their interest in Korean slang and culture had changed how they view or feel about Indonesian culture, participants gave a range of responses, revealing the different ways Korean influence shaped their perspectives.

Oei described that her feelings toward Indonesian culture remained unchanged. She emphasized that while she enjoys Korean culture, it is purely for entertainment, and it has not affected how she values her own heritage.

"No, I think Indonesian culture is just as unique as Korean culture. It is just not as popular or known compared to Korean culture. Although I love Korean culture, once again, it is only for my source of fun and entertainment and does not change my perspective about Indonesian culture. In fact, I think that Indonesian culture has so much more to offer compared to Korean culture" (Interview with Oei, 2025).

Surya shared that initially she felt drawn to the polish and expressiveness of Korean culture, which made her question why Indonesian culture did not feel as modern or exciting. However, over time, this contrast deepened her appreciation for Indonesia's cultural richness. She explained that she does not value Korean culture more than Indonesian culture but has learned to admire both for different reasons.

"There were times when Korean culture felt 'cooler' or more modern than Indonesian culture. I was really into Korean music, drama, fashion, and even the way they spoke. It made me wonder why Indonesian media didn't feel the same. But over time, that contrast made me appreciate Indonesia more. I started noticing how rich our slang, humor, and languages are, and how diverse our culture really is. Korean culture shapes how I interact online and engage as a fan, but Indonesian culture shapes who I am and how I express that love like how I joke, think, and live" (Interview with Surya, 2025).

Anwar expressed a simple but firm view. He stated that he sees both cultures equally and that his interest in Korean slang does not diminish his respect for Indonesian culture.

"Nope, I see both cultures as equal. Every time I use a Korean slang, it doesn't mean that I lose my 'respect' or 'feeling' towards my Indonesian culture" (Interview with Anwar, 2025).

The fourth participant gave a different perspective, admitting that Korean culture feels more dominant in her life now. She felt that compared to Korean entertainment, Indonesian entertainment often seemed outdated and overly focused on controversy.

"Yes, for me, it feels like Korean culture is more dominating Indonesian culture. From the entertainment aspect, I feel like Indonesian entertainment is just full of gossip and

controversy, whereas the form of entertainment in Korea is more 'serious' and 'healthy.' I feel like Indonesians have to step up their game because it's outdated. I feel like I resonate better with Korean culture than Indonesian" (Interview with The, 2025).

In summary, participants' responses showed that while Korean culture's influence is undeniable especially in a digital space however, it does not necessarily replace their appreciation for Indonesian culture. For many, it actually led to a deeper reflection and, in some cases, an even stronger pride in their Indonesian roots. However, a few participants did feel that Korean culture has become a more dominant force in their daily lives.

In response to whether or not Korean slang is used differently on X compared to how they speak in person with classmates, family, or in public, participants consistently indicated that their use of Korean slang varies significantly depending on the setting. Online platforms like X were overwhelmingly viewed as safer, more natural spaces to use Korean terms. In contrast, participants tended to be more selective or cautious about using them in real-life conversations with family, classmates, or the general public.

Oei explained her choice to limit Korean slang use to online spaces, emphasizing that it wasn't a matter of shame, but of clarity and comfort. Her response reflected her awareness of the audience. Over time, she naturally limited her use of Korean expressions to online settings, where the shared cultural knowledge space made communication smoother.

"Yes, when talking to my classmates, family or in public, I refrain from using Korean slangs because I'm afraid they would not understand what I'm saying, unless they are also a fan of Korean culture. So, I do feel more comfortable using it online. I don't exactly hide it, I would just not use it because they would not understand me anyways" (Interview with Oei, 2025).

Another participant shared a more nuanced perspective. She actively code-switches based on who she's with, viewing her use of Korean slang as flexible rather than fixed. She also highlighted how her use has evolved over time—from being a light-hearted online habit to a deeper part of her self-expression.

"I use Korean slang pretty differently depending on where I am. On X, it feels totally normal and fun to say things like 'daebak' or 'mijeotda' when reacting to content or chatting with fellow fans, everyone there just gets it, so I don't have to explain myself or feel weird about it. But in real life, I'm more careful. With friends who are into K-culture, I'll use Korean phrases casually. But around classmates, teachers, or family who aren't into it, I usually tone it down—not out of shame, but because they might not understand the context. So yeah, I guess I do adjust depending on who I'm with—not in a secretive way, but more like adjusting to the vibe. Now it's just a part of how I express myself, one mode for online, one for offline, and both feel true to me" (Interview with Surya, 2025).

Anwar gave a shorter but pointed answer that aligned with this general pattern. He also found online spaces more free of judgment. This suggests that online environments, especially platforms like X, where Korean pop culture is often a shared norm, allow users to communicate freely without needing to explain or adjust their language.

"I prefer using slangs online to be honest. This is because nobody is going to bat an eye over the language I use. It's also because X users typically use these slangs as well so it's viewed as something normal" (Interview with Anwar, 2025).

Another participant expanded on this point, offering a reflective account of how her use of Korean slang has matured over time. She pointed out how there is a noticeable personal growth and shift towards when and where she would use Korean slang. She mentioned how it was once seen as "cool" across all settings, but now has become something she now reserves for spaces where it feels natural and accepted.

"I rarely use Korean slangs when I'm talking in person, whether it is with my classmates or in public, because I feel like that's weird since I live in Indonesia. So I typically lean towards Indonesian language. I do hide it from certain people because people normally see it as weird.

If I'm talking to someone who isn't familiar with Korean slang, I would not use it. I think my usage has changed over time. I used to think it was cool to use it online and offline, but as I grew, it changed. Now I never use it with my friends or in an offline setting. But I still typically use it in an online setting, just not as heavily as before" (Interview with The, 2025).

Participants tended to use Korean slang more freely in online spaces like X, where shared knowledge and community made it feel natural. In offline settings, their usage was more restrained—not out of embarrassment, but due to social awareness and contextual appropriateness. For most, the use of Korean slang has evolved over time into a flexible, selective practice, demonstrating a growing sensitivity to audience and setting.

Community Formation

This study examined how Indonesian university students' use of Korean slang on X fosters a sense of belonging and influences their cultural identity, using Tajfel and Turner's (2004) Social Identity Theory (SIT) as a framework. The findings reveal that participants experienced strong in-group connections through shared linguistic practices, though their negotiation of Korean and Indonesian identities ranged from harmonious coexistence to occasional tension.

Social Identity Theory presumes that group membership fosters belonging through shared identity markers (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). In this study, participants felt this sense of belonging within global K-culture communities by adopting Korean slang, a linguistic practice that signalled in-group membership. For instance, Oei and Anwar emphasized feeling "understood" by peers online, demonstrating how shared language facilitates social cohesion.

While Social Identity Theory often examines how group belonging can lead to negative views of outsiders (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Our findings show participants formed connections through shared interests, not by rejecting others. As Surya described, the community resembled "one big chaotic friend group," aligning with Tajfel and Turner's (2004) lesser-cited argument that positive group distinctiveness need not entail conflict. This challenges conventional SIT frameworks, suggesting that digital communities—and their boundaries and fluid identities—may operate differently than offline groups.

In short, the participants' experiences demonstrate that language adoption acts as a symbolic practice that fulfils the psychological processes of Social Identity Theory: categorization, emotional investment, and self-definition through group affiliation. The widespread use of Korean slang cultivated belonging while subtly influencing cultural self-perceptions among Indonesian youth.

Identity Negotiation

Participants revealed complex ways of balancing their Korean cultural interests with their Indonesian identity. While Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner (2004) suggests people typically prioritize one group identity over others, most participants demonstrated more fluid negotiation. While this study initially drew upon Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) as a framework, participant responses revealed patterns more closely aligned with Berry's acculturation strategies and Bhabha's concept of hybridity. Therefore, supplementary theoretical perspectives were integrated during the analysis phase to better capture the complexity of identity negotiation observed.

Oei and Anwar adopted separation, framing Korean culture as either 'entertainment' (Oei) or a communicative tool (Anwar) that left their Indonesian identity unaffected. They both emphasized that it didn't affect their Indonesian identity. This aligns with the separation acculturation strategy introduced by Berry (1971), where individuals are seen wanting to maintain cultural heritage while engaging with other groups (Ward & Kus, 2012).

However, Surya and The's experience was different. They shared how they believe identity is more fluid which fits better with Bhabha's (1994) concept of *third-space hybridity*, a concept from postcolonial studies that describes a mixed cultural identity, where two cultures mix to form a new identity, rather than one replacing the other (Bhandari, 2020). Their story challenges traditional SIT assumptions by showing how global and local identities can blend equally, without one being seen as superior.

This study's findings both support and challenge Social Identity Theory (SIT). The way participants manage their identities shows that cultural identity is more flexible than SIT's original "us versus them" model suggests. Some participants kept their cultures separate (like Oei and Anwar), while others blended them together (like Surya and The), showing that identity in digital spaces exists on a wide spectrum. The findings suggest that online platforms allow people to combine different parts of their identities without conflict. This reflects the need to view identity not as fixed or singular, but as layered and dynamic, particularly within digital spaces. Furthermore, these findings highlight how global cultural flows encourage individuals to move beyond rigid identity categories, supporting more fluid forms of belonging that SIT's original models do not fully capture.

Shifting Perceptions

This study explored whether engagement with Korean culture influenced participants' views of Indonesian identity, directly testing Social Identity Theory's (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) idea that comparing groups shapes how people see themselves. The findings both support and challenge aspects of SIT.

Oei expressed pride in Indonesian culture, saying it had "more to offer" than Korean culture, but without criticizing the Korean group—showing in-group pride without out-group hostility. Similarly, Surya initially admired the polished look of Korean media but later developed a deeper appreciation for Indonesia's cultural richness. This challenges SIT's claim that group comparisons always lead to competition.

In contrast, The's perspective partly supports SIT. She felt Korean culture dominated her life more by describing how Korean entertainment was more 'positive' than Indonesian media, a judgment similar to what Tajfel and Turner described. However, her comparison was specific to media quality and did not extend to rejecting Indonesian identity overall. This suggests that while intergroup comparisons still happen online, they are often more specific and shaped by platform environments. For instance, The's experience on X, where algorithms promote Korean content, may have intensified perceived cultural differences.

These findings suggest that SIT needs updating for the digital age. Intergroup comparison does not automatically happen in online identity-building; participants like Oei and Surya found belonging without putting down other groups. Furthermore, identity judgments are often limited to certain areas, rather than rejecting whole cultures, something SIT's original model does not fully explain.

This study also highlights some limitations of applying SIT to digital spaces. Tajfel's early experiments didn't consider how algorithms personalize interactions between groups or how online platforms enable more fluid, flexible identities. Overall, while this study confirms SIT's relevance, it also emphasizes the need to update the theory to better explain non-competitive identity formation and the unique dynamics of digital platforms.

Recontextualizing Social Identity

This study reveals how digital platforms transform identity expression in ways that challenge traditional understandings of Social Identity Theory (SIT). Participants consistently demonstrated what we term *platform-dependent identity switching* - using Korean slang liberally on X while restricting it offline. Anwar's observation that slang felt "normal" online but "cringe" offline exemplifies this divide, highlighting how digital spaces create new rules for identity performance that SIT's original intergroup framework couldn't anticipate.

The findings suggest that platforms like X function as "identity workshops," offering users a space to actively experiment with and recalibrate their cultural affiliations. Oei's choice to avoid Korean slang in offline settings ("they wouldn't understand") illustrates how individuals adapt their self-presentation based on audience expectations, moving beyond the fixed group categories assumed in traditional SIT. This dynamic aligns with Köse, Veijalainen, and Semenov's (2016) argument that digital spaces such as Twitter enable users to selectively construct and manage their public personas in response to changing contexts. Similarly, Surya's selective use of slang, freely among K-pop friends but withheld around teachers, demonstrates how digital platforms dissolve in-groups into more fluid, situational communities.

These findings point toward a broader reimagining of Social Identity Theory in the digital age. As users move fluidly across platforms, tailoring their identities to shifting audiences and algorithms, traditional notions of stable group membership give way to more dynamic, performative models of belonging. Understanding identity today requires acknowledging the interplay between technological architectures and human self-expression—a relationship that continues to reshape what it means to belong. Future studies could explore how sustained participation in these digital identity workshops influences offline cultural identity stability over time, offering further insights into how digital environments transform self-concept and group affiliation.

4. Conclusion

This study explored how Indonesian international university students use Korean slang on X to express their identities in the digital age. Using Social Identity Theory as a framework, the findings show that online platforms encourage more flexible and layered forms of cultural belonging, rather than fixed group identities. Participants adjusted how they expressed themselves depending on the platform and audience, showing that identity today is more situational and dynamic. These results suggest that traditional models of identity need to be updated to better explain how digital spaces and algorithms influence belonging. This study adds to digital identity research by showing how language use online helps young people negotiate cultural influences in a globalized world.

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