

The Relevance of *the Traditional Land of Sorcerer's Land* in Gen Z's Social Interactions in Dolok Masihul District

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Article	Abstract
<p>Article History : Received: April 16, 2026 Reviewed: April 30, 2026 Accepted: May 29, 2026 Published: June 4, 2026</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Sacred Land, Generation Z, traditional values, social interaction.</i></p>	<p>This study aims to analyze the relevance of the values of Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat in the social interactions of Generation Z in Dolok Masihul Subdistrict, Serdang Bedagai Regency. A qualitative descriptive method with ethnographic and Islamic theological approaches was employed to understand the comprehension, appreciation, and application of customary values by the younger generation. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation with Gen Z, customer leaders, religious figures, and community leaders. The findings reveal that Gen Z recognizes Tanah Bertuah Beradat symbolically, yet the internalization of its values in daily behavior remains low. Influencing factors include digital technology, limited customary education in families, and peer pressure. Strengthening these values can be achieved through the roles of family, schools, digital technology, integration of customary values with Islamic teachings, and supportive social environments. This research underscores the importance of local wisdom and Islamic teachings as moral guides for Gen Z to foster courteous, responsible, and civilized character.</p>

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country consisting of many islands and boasts a rich cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity. There are more than 300 ethnic groups living across thousands of islands. Therefore, Indonesia has a very diverse cultural heritage. Each ethnic group in Indonesia has its own unique traditions, customs, language, and local knowledge (Djenap Zamilummi *et al.*, 2025). Local wisdom, known as *local wisdom*, is part of culture that emerges from the interaction between society and its physical, social, and spiritual environment. Thus, local wisdom not only serves as a sign of identity but also plays a vital role in shaping the way people act and interact socially. These values not only reflect the cultural identity of a community group but also serve as guidelines in daily activities, including when making decisions and resolving social problems (Afriansyah *et al.*, 2025).

Serdang Bedagai Regency is one of the regions in North Sumatra Province that has a strong Malay cultural heritage. Serdang Bedagai Regency, often abbreviated as Sergai, has the motto "*Land of Fortune, Country of Traditions*." This motto means that Serdang Bedagai Regency is a fortunate area and its residents are people of noble character (Fitri, 2025). This motto should be a moral principle that underlies the formation of harmonious, moral, and religious-based social relations, in accordance with Malay traditions that make customs and religion two things that support each other. Values such as justice, balance, and wisdom are clearly evident in the way customs are regulated to protect the harmony between the development of the times and the preservation of culture (Syahputra *et al.*, 2025).

One of the sub-districts located in Serdang Bedagai Regency is Dolok Masihul. As a vital part of Sergai, Dolok Masihul reflects the principles of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* in the way of life of its people. Culturally, the residents of Dolok Masihul interact with people from various ethnicities and social backgrounds, yet remain steadfast in upholding Malay customary values that prioritize balance between tradition and religion. Therefore, normatively, values such as politeness, respect for elders,

social responsibility, and religious observance should be reflected in how the community interacts, including with the younger generation.

Current social changes create new challenges, especially for Gen Z. Gen Z, often referred to as the *digital generation* or *internet generation*, This generation grew up in an era of rapid digital technology development, so from an early age they have been accustomed to the internet, social media, and various electronic devices. Gen Z generally refers to individuals born around 1997-2012. Gen Z is known for their daily lives that are always connected to electronic devices such as *gadgets* and ways of communicating that are dominated by social media. However, their relationship with the virtual world also often makes them less connected to real life (Cindy *et al.* , 2024)

Previous studies from various studies have shown that research on shifting cultural values and the role of the younger generation in maintaining local wisdom has been widely conducted. Several previous studies support the understanding of this phenomenon, such as those by Nanda Aprilianda, Muhammad Syahminan, and Rohland Maury, who showed that the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* are beginning to change among adolescents due to the influence of modernization and social media (Aprilianda *et al.* , 2023) . On the other hand, Muhammad Fauzi Swarna emphasized the importance of Gen Z's contribution to maintaining local culture amidst globalization by highlighting individual motivation, family support, and the role of digital media (Swarna *et al.* , 2024) . Mawaddah Sitorus, Indra Harahap, and Ismet Sari also revealed that social interactions between tribes influence the understanding of traditional values in Dolok Masihul (Sitorus *et al.* , 2023) . In the social life of Gen Z, the values contained in *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* have a very significant role as an ethical basis in shaping polite behavior and social relationships. This concept emphasizes the importance of a balance between good values, social responsibility, and religious teachings within the community, thus serving as a moral guide for the younger generation in their activities within society. These values not only reflect local culture but also serve as ethical guidelines that guide individual attitudes and actions to align with Islamic traditions and principles.

Nevertheless, previous research still shows several limitations. Most studies only highlight the shift in cultural values, the moral crisis of the younger generation, or the role of the younger generation in cultural preservation in general, without explaining how local cultural values are understood, negotiated, and internalized by Gen Z in the context of everyday social interactions. Furthermore, previous research tends to position *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* as merely a symbol of regional identity or a cultural slogan, thus lacking extensive study as a system of social and moral values embedded in community behavior. Previous studies also have not in-depthly connected digital cultural transformation, Gen Z interaction patterns, and the sustainability of traditional values integrated with Islamic values in local social life.

Based on these conditions, there is still a gap in the literature regarding how Gen Z interprets the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* , the factors that influence the process of interpretation, and the form of its implementation in social interactions amidst social change and the development of digital technology. Therefore, this study offers novelty not only in the aspect of the research context, but also in the conceptual aspect. This study positions *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* as a cultural and moral value system analyzed through the perspective of Gen Z's social meaning, so that it is able to explain the relationship between local wisdom, the social identity of the younger generation, and the dynamics of digital culture. In addition, this study also provides a theoretical contribution to the development of local wisdom studies and character education based on local culture by showing that the internalization of customary and Islamic values can be the foundation for the formation of Gen Z's social character in the modern era.

Based on the background description above, there are three things that will be the problem in this research, namely: (1) What are the meanings of the values contained in the motto *Tanah Bertuah Beradat* ? (2) How does Gen Z interpret the value of *the Traditional Land of the Sorcerer's Land* in social interactions in Dolok Masihul District? (3) What factors influence the meaning and implementation of the value of *the Traditional Land of the Sorcerer's Land* among Gen Z in Dolok

Masihul District? (4) How are efforts to strengthen the value of *the Traditional Land of the Sorcerer's Land* so that it remains relevant and can be applied in the social life of Gen Z amidst technological developments and social changes in society? This research aims to analyze the meaning of the values contained in *the Traditional Land of the Sorcerer's Land*, analyzing the relevance of the values of *the Traditional Land of the Sorcerer's Land* in the social interactions of Gen Z in Dolok Masihul District, Serdang Bedagai Regency. This study is aimed at understanding how Gen Z interprets the values of *the Traditional Land of Sorcerers* in their daily social life, as well as the extent to which these values are reflected in their attitudes and behavior.

In addition, this study also aims to identify various factors that influence the interpretation and application of the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* among Gen Z, such as the influence of digital technology and social media, family environment, and peer interactions. Furthermore, this study analyzes various efforts to strengthen the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* through the role of the family, formal education in schools, the use of digital technology, and the integration of traditional values with Islamic teachings. Thus, this study is expected to contribute to strengthening the character formation of Gen Z based on local wisdom and Islamic values amid the dynamics of social change in modern society.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a field research *using* qualitative descriptive methods to explore in depth the relevance of the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* in the social interactions of Gen Z in Dolok Masihul District, Serdang Bedagai Regency. Qualitative descriptive methods were used because this research seeks to understand the social realities, interaction patterns, and life practices of Gen Z in interpreting and implementing local wisdom values amidst the social changes of modern society.

This research uses an ethnographic approach and an Islamic Theological Approach. The ethnographic approach is used to understand the social life patterns of the community, cultural practices, and interactions of Gen Z in their social environment directly through field observations. This approach allows researchers to see how the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* are understood, negotiated, and applied in the daily lives of the Dolok Masihul community. Meanwhile, the Islamic Theological approach is used to analyze the relationship between Malay customary values and Islamic values as the basis for morals and social ethics in shaping Gen Z behavior.

The research was conducted in Dolok Masihul District, Serdang Bedagai Regency for approximately three months, namely from January to March 2025. The selection of the research location was based on the characteristics of the Dolok Masihul community who still have ties to Malay culture and the motto *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat*, but on the other hand experience social changes due to the development of digital technology and cultural globalization.

The informants in this study numbered 15 people consisting of 8 Gen Z informants aged 17–25 years, 2 traditional leaders, 2 religious leaders, 2 teachers, and 1 community leader. Informants were selected using a *purposive sampling* technique, namely the deliberate selection of informants based on certain considerations according to research needs. The criteria for Gen Z informants include individuals who actively use social media, live in Dolok Masihul District, and are involved in the social life of the community. Meanwhile, traditional leaders, religious leaders, teachers, and community leaders were selected because they are considered to have knowledge and experience related to the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* in the social life of the local community.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly through in-depth interviews and observations of research informants. Secondary data was obtained from books, scientific journals, documents, archives, and other written sources relevant to this research (Arifa & Harahap, 2025).

Data collection techniques were conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted in a participatory manner by observing the social interaction patterns of Gen Z in their daily lives, both within the community and in socio-religious

activities. Interviews were conducted semi-structured to explore the informants' understanding, views, experiences, and social practices related to the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat*. Documentation was used to supplement the research data in the form of activity photos, archives, field notes, and other supporting documents related to the research focus.

The data analysis process was conducted using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting, focusing, and simplifying data from observations, interviews, and documentation. The data was then presented in descriptive narrative form to facilitate researchers' understanding of the patterns of relationships among the data. The final stage involved drawing conclusions gradually based on the findings obtained in the field.

To maintain the validity and *trustworthiness* of the research, researchers used source triangulation and technical triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from Gen Z, traditional leaders, religious leaders, teachers, and community leaders. Meanwhile, technical triangulation was conducted by comparing data from observations, interviews, and documentation. Furthermore, researchers also conducted *member checking* with several informants to ensure the accuracy of the interview results with the informants' actual experiences and views. Thus, the data obtained is expected to have a stronger level of credibility and validity (Arifa & Harahap, 2025).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Meaning of the Values of the Traditional Land of the Sorcerer's Land

In Malay society, customs are not only understood as traditions or customs that are passed down from generation to generation, but also as a value system that regulates social relations, ethics and the behavior of society in everyday life. (Aprilianda *et al.* , 2023) . The motto "*Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat*" in Serdang Bedagai Regency represents the cultural identity of the community, which places the values of politeness, respect, religiosity, and social concern as the foundation for building community life. Therefore, the motto serves not only as a regional symbol but also as a moral guideline that shapes the social interaction patterns of the Malay community (Riswan *et al.* , 2022) .

From the perspective of Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory, cultural values are formed through a continuous process of socialization within the family, community, and social institutions. Customary values then become a social reality that is considered normal and serves as a guideline for action. Through this process, society forms a shared understanding of behavior that is considered good, polite, and in accordance with prevailing social norms. Thus, the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* are essentially the result of social construction in Malay society, passed down from generation to generation through social interaction and cultural familiarity.

In Islam, serving one's parents is not only seen as a moral obligation, but also as a form of worship that brings one closer to Allah (Herman, 2025) . This is reinforced by QS. Al-Isra: 24.

وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ إِيمَانٍ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ اذْرَحْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْتَنِي صَغِيرًا

"Humble yourself towards both of them with great affection and say, "O my Lord, love them both as they both (loved me when) educating me when I was little.

This verse emphasizes that respecting parents is a moral and spiritual obligation that cannot be separated from the values of community life (Hamid, 2024) . Research in Dolok Masihul District found that the community still views *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* as an important value in maintaining social harmony. Values such as respecting parents, maintaining polite speech, being responsible, and caring for others are still understood as part of the Malay community's identity.

Mr. Ahmad Sauri as a traditional leader in Dolok Masihul District stated: "*The Land of the Sorcerer of the Indigenous Land is not just a regional motto, but a teaching of life for the Malay people.*

Malay people must maintain good manners, respect their parents, and maintain good relations with the community."

This statement indicates that customary values are understood as ethical guidelines that govern social relations in society. In everyday life, these values are reflected through the use of polite language, respect for elders, and involvement in community social activities such as mutual cooperation and religious activities (Suci & Ainur, 2024). However, research results show that the meaning of the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* is beginning to change among Gen Z. Some informants admitted that they still consider the values of politeness and respect as important, but their implementation has undergone adjustments to the communication patterns and culture of the digital generation (Wulandari & Fatimah, 2022).

Gen Z informant with the initials RA (20 years old) stated: *"With parents you still have to be polite, but with friends you are usually more relaxed, especially on social media."*

These findings suggest that Gen Z is not completely abandoning traditional values, but is experiencing a process of value negotiation in their social practices. In social interaction theory, changes in individual behavior can be influenced by the ever-changing interaction environment. The presence of social media as a new interaction space then creates freer, more informal, and faster communication patterns, thus influencing the standards of politeness and social etiquette of the younger generation (Rizal *et al.*, 2025).

Furthermore, observations also indicate a shift in Gen Z's social interaction patterns, moving from communal to more individualistic. Some Gen Z members are more active on social media than directly involved in community social activities such as community service, neighborhood meetings, or traditional ceremonies.

One community leader stated: *"Children today are more often busy with their cell phones than participating in community activities."*

This phenomenon indicates that the process of cultural transmission is facing challenges due to changes in communication patterns and lifestyles among the younger generation. Traditional values previously passed down through direct interaction within families and communities are beginning to weaken as traditional social interaction spaces diminish.

From an Islamic theological perspective, the values embodied in *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* (*The Land of the Blessed, Land of Tradition*) are linked to the Islamic concept of *morality*. Values such as respecting parents, maintaining good manners, and caring for others are part of Islamic teachings that govern interpersonal relationships (*hablum minann s*). However, research shows that the development of digital culture has transformed the way Gen Z understands and applies these moral values in their daily lives.

Thus, the results of this research show that the main challenge in maintaining the relevance of *the Traditional Land of the Sorcerer's Land* does not lie in the loss of cultural values themselves, but in changes in the way the younger generation interprets and implements these values amidst the development of digital technology and social changes in modern society.

Gen Z's Meaning of the Land of Traditional Lands in Social Interactions

Changing social interaction patterns among Gen Z in the digital era have also influenced how the younger generation understands local cultural values in their daily lives. In the context of the Malay community in Dolok Masihul District, the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* fundamentally encompass the principles of politeness, respect for others, social awareness, and a balance between tradition and religion. However, the development of digital technology and changes in the lifestyles of the younger generation have led to shifts in the interpretation of these values.

Based on interviews, most Gen Z informants admitted to being familiar with the slogan "*Land of the Fortunate, Land of Tradition*," but did not yet deeply understand the social and moral values it embodied. Informants generally learned about the slogan through school, government offices, or regional ceremonial activities, rather than through in-depth cultural learning within the family or community.

The informant with the initials MF (19 years old) stated: *"I often hear that slogan from school and on the writing in government offices, but I have never had its meaning explained in detail."*

This statement indicates that Gen Z's understanding of *the Land of the Blessed Land of Tradition* is still at a symbolic level. In the theory of internalization of values, a cultural value is not enough to be simply recognized as a symbol or social identity, but must be understood, internalized, and practiced repeatedly in everyday life to become part of an individual's behavior. However, research results show that this internalization process has not occurred optimally among some Gen Z in Dolok Masihul District (Sarni & Sri Mardiyati, 2025).

This phenomenon is evident in changes in the social communication patterns of the younger generation, particularly in language use and communication etiquette on social media. Based on observations and interviews, some informants consider the use of informal language, crude jokes, and more free communication to be normal within digital friendships.

An informant with the initials NA (20 years old) stated: *"On social media, people are usually more free to speak. Sometimes, if you're too formal or polite, your friends will think you're weird."*

These findings indicate that social media has created a new interactive space with communication standards that differ from the prevailing social culture. From the perspective of Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory, social reality is formed through a continuous process of interaction. Social media then becomes a new social space that shapes the communication patterns, ways of thinking, and behavioral standards of the younger generation. As a result, the values of politeness, previously a key characteristic of Malay culture, have adapted to the faster, freer, and more informal digital communication culture.

In addition to changes in communication patterns, research also shows a shift in Gen Z's social engagement patterns within the community. Some informants admitted to spending more time on social media than participating in community activities such as community service, traditional activities, and neighborhood meetings.

One community leader stated: *"Nowadays, young people are more often busy with their cell phones than participating in community activities like before."*

This phenomenon indicates a shift in social interaction patterns from communal to more individualistic. According to *cultural transmission theory*, cultural values are primarily passed down through direct interactions between generations within families and social environments. However, as the intensity of direct social interactions declines, the process of cultural value transmission also weakens. This situation has led some Gen Z members to be more familiar with global digital culture than with local cultural values within their own communities.

Despite this, research results show that Gen Z hasn't completely abandoned the values of *Tanah Bertaub Negeri Beradat (Tribal Land of the Land of Tradition)*. Some informants still consider respecting parents, maintaining good manners, and caring for others to be important in social life. However, the application of these values has undergone adjustments to modern lifestyles and the communication characteristics of the digital generation.

From an Islamic theological perspective, this phenomenon demonstrates that changes in Gen Z's social behavior cannot be understood solely as a decline in the morals of the younger generation, but as part of a social transformation resulting from changes in the cultural and communication environment. Islam views moral formation as influenced not only by the individual but also by the social environment in which they interact. Therefore, the shift in social interaction from a communal environment to a digital one also influences the process of forming moral and social values among the younger generation.

Thus, the results of this research indicate that Gen Z's meaning of *the Traditional Land of the Sorcerer* is in a negotiation process between local cultural values, religious teachings and modern digital culture. The main challenge faced does not lie in the total loss of cultural values, but in changes in the way the younger generation understands and applies these values in contemporary social life.

Factors that Influence the Interpretation of the Value of the Land of Sorcerer's Land in Gen Z

Gen Z's understanding of the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* is not formed singly, but is influenced by various social, cultural, and technological factors that shape the interaction patterns of the younger generation in everyday life. Based on the results of research in Dolok Masihul District, it was found that there are several main factors that influence the process of internalizing cultural values in Gen Z, namely the influence of social media and digital culture, weak inheritance of values in the family, and the influence of the friendship environment (Dinihari *et al.* , 2024) .

1. The Influence of Social Media and Digital Culture

Research results show that social media is the most dominant factor influencing how Gen Z understands and applies social values in their daily lives. Most informants reported interacting more through digital media than in person in their communities. Social media serves not only as a means of communication but also as a space for shaping the lifestyle, thought patterns, and social behavior of the younger generation (Sriyono & Sri, 2024) .

An informant with the initials AN (21 years old) stated: "*Now, we communicate more often via social media than in person. Sometimes, the way we speak is also influenced by the content we frequently see on TikTok or Instagram.*"

This statement indicates that social media has become a new socialization agent for Gen Z. In Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory, social reality is formed through a continuous process of interaction. The presence of digital media then forms a new social reality that influences how the younger generation understands politeness, communication ethics, and social relationships. As a result, local cultural values previously inherited through direct interaction are beginning to shift as Gen Z absorbs more global digital popular culture (Muhammad Haqiqi *et al.* , 2024) .

Furthermore, observations indicate that social media use has also influenced Gen Z's communication patterns, which tend to be more free, fast, and informal. The use of coarse language in jokes, communication without age restrictions, and a decrease in the intensity of direct interaction are starting to be considered normal in the social circles of the younger generation. This condition indicates that digital culture has created new communication standards that differ from the interaction patterns of Malay society, which previously emphasized politeness and respect in communication (Apriliana *et al.* , 2025) .

However, this study also found that social media does not always negatively impact the sustainability of local cultural values. Several informants admitted to still obtaining religious content, motivation, and social values through digital platforms. This suggests that digital media can essentially become a new space for the transmission of cultural and religious values if utilized appropriately.

2. Weakness of Value Inheritance in the Family

In addition to the influence of social media, this study also found that families have not fully fulfilled their function as the primary space for internalizing cultural and religious values. Some informants admitted to rarely receiving explanations about the meaning of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* from their parents or family at home (Antika *et al.* , 2025) .

An informant with the initials RS (18 years old) stated: "*At home, we rarely discuss Malay customs or culture. Parents are more often focused on school or work.*"

This statement indicates that the process of intergenerational cultural transmission is weakening. In *cultural transmission theory* , families play a crucial role in passing on social, cultural, and moral values to younger generations through daily habits and interactions. However, changes in modern lifestyles have led to a decline in cultural communication within families.

A similar thing was also conveyed by one of the traditional figures in Dolok Masihul District: "*Now children are closer to their cellphones than chatting with their parents about customs and culture.*"

This phenomenon suggests that changing communication patterns within families have contributed to Gen Z's weakened understanding of local cultural values. When the family is no longer the primary forum for transmitting traditional values, the younger generation is more easily influenced by outside cultures acquired through digital media and social circles.

From an Islamic theological perspective, the family plays a central role in shaping the morals and character of the younger generation. Islam places the family as the primary educational environment for shaping children's social, ethical, and moral behavior. Therefore, weak communication of values within the family also impacts the social character formation of Gen Z.

3. The Influence of Friendship Environment

Peer interaction is a very important aspect in character formation because for some individuals interacting with peers will definitely make someone influenced by their friendship environment, both positive and negative influences (Aulia *et al.*, 2024). In the adolescent to adult phase, individuals tend to spend more time with peers than with family, so that the values and norms that develop in social groups often become the main reference in acting.

Based on interviews with informants, it was found that peer influence can encourage someone to follow the behavior of their group. One informant stated that when he was hanging out with his friends and they were drinking alcohol, he felt forced to join in because he felt embarrassed if he refused the invitation. This indicates the existence of social pressure (*peer pressure*) within friendship groups that causes individuals to follow group behavior to remain accepted in their social environment.

Furthermore, informants revealed that peers not only exert a negative influence but can also influence a person's decision to provide assistance to others. In some situations, when informants wanted to help a friend in need, other friends reminded them that such assistance was not always necessary. This situation indicates that within friendship groups, there is a process of mutual influence in social decision-making. These findings indicate that peers play a significant role in shaping individual behavior patterns, both in daily actions and in social decision-making. Therefore, the friendship environment is a crucial factor that can strengthen or weaken a person's social values.

Efforts to Strengthen the Value of the Traditional Land of Sorcerers in Gen Z

Changing patterns of social interaction and the development of digital culture that influence Gen Z's understanding of the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* indicate that strengthening local cultural values requires a more adaptive and contextual approach. Research shows that strengthening cultural values is not sufficient through symbolic or ceremonial communication alone, but requires an internalization process involving families, schools, communities, and digital media as a new social space for the younger generation.

Interview results showed that most Gen Z informants still consider values such as good manners, respect for elders, and social awareness to be important in social life. However, they felt that the current method of conveying cultural values tends to be formal and less aligned with the communication patterns of the younger generation.

An informant with the initials NA (20 years old) stated: *"If you're just told to uphold traditions, it's usually less interesting. But if it's explained through social media content or everyday life examples, it's easier to understand."*

This statement suggests that Gen Z is more receptive to social and cultural values through communication approaches that align with the characteristics of the digital generation. In social construction theory, the process of value formation is inextricably linked to the media and interaction environments individuals use in their daily lives. Therefore, digital media, previously considered a contributing factor to shifting cultural values, can actually be utilized as a new tool in the process of transmitting traditional and social values.

The research also shows that families play a crucial role in strengthening Gen Z's understanding of the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat (Tribal Land of the Land of Tradition)*. However, some parents are deemed to be suboptimal in instilling cultural values in their children due to limited interaction time and changing communication patterns in modern families.

One religious figure stated: *"Children today can actually still be guided, but families must be more active in setting an example and instilling good manners from a young age."*

This statement demonstrates that the process of internalizing cultural values requires role models and familiarization within the family environment. From an Islamic theological perspective, the family is the primary educational environment for shaping a child's morals and social character. Values such

as respecting parents, maintaining ethical speech, and caring for others are part of the formation of *noble character* that must be instilled through daily life practices, not just verbal advice.

Besides family, schools also have an important role in strengthening local cultural values in Gen Z. Based on the results of interviews with teachers and community leaders, local culture-based character education is considered necessary to be developed so that the younger generation not only understands culture as a symbolic identity, but also as a guideline for social ethics.

One teacher stated: "*Malay cultural values can actually be included in character education at school so that students are closer to their own regional culture.*"

These findings suggest that integrating local cultural values into education can be a strategy for strengthening the social identity of the younger generation amidst the tide of cultural globalization. According to the theory of value internalization, character formation will be more effective if individuals are consistently accustomed to values across various social environments, including family, school, and community.

Furthermore, research shows that community social activities such as mutual cooperation (gotong royong), religious study groups, traditional activities, and neighborhood deliberations can also serve as important social spaces for strengthening Gen Z's connection to local cultural values. However, the younger generation's involvement in these activities is currently declining due to the dominance of digital activities and changes in modern lifestyles.

From an Islamic theological perspective, strengthening the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat (Tribal Land)* is fundamentally related not only to cultural preservation but also to the formation of social morals in the younger generation. Islam views good social relations, respect for others, and concern for the community as part of religious values that must be embodied in daily life. Therefore, the integration of Malay traditional values and Islamic values is crucial in shaping the character of Gen Z, who are able to adapt to current developments without losing their social and moral identity (Fahira, 2023).

Thus, the results of this research indicate that strengthening the value of *the Traditional Land of the Sorcerer* in Gen Z requires a more adaptive approach to digital social and cultural change. Strengthening cultural values cannot be done only through normative and symbolic approaches, but must be realized through an internalization process involving family, school, community and digital media as the main interaction space for today's young generation (Kadek *et al.*, 2024).

Research Analysis and Implications

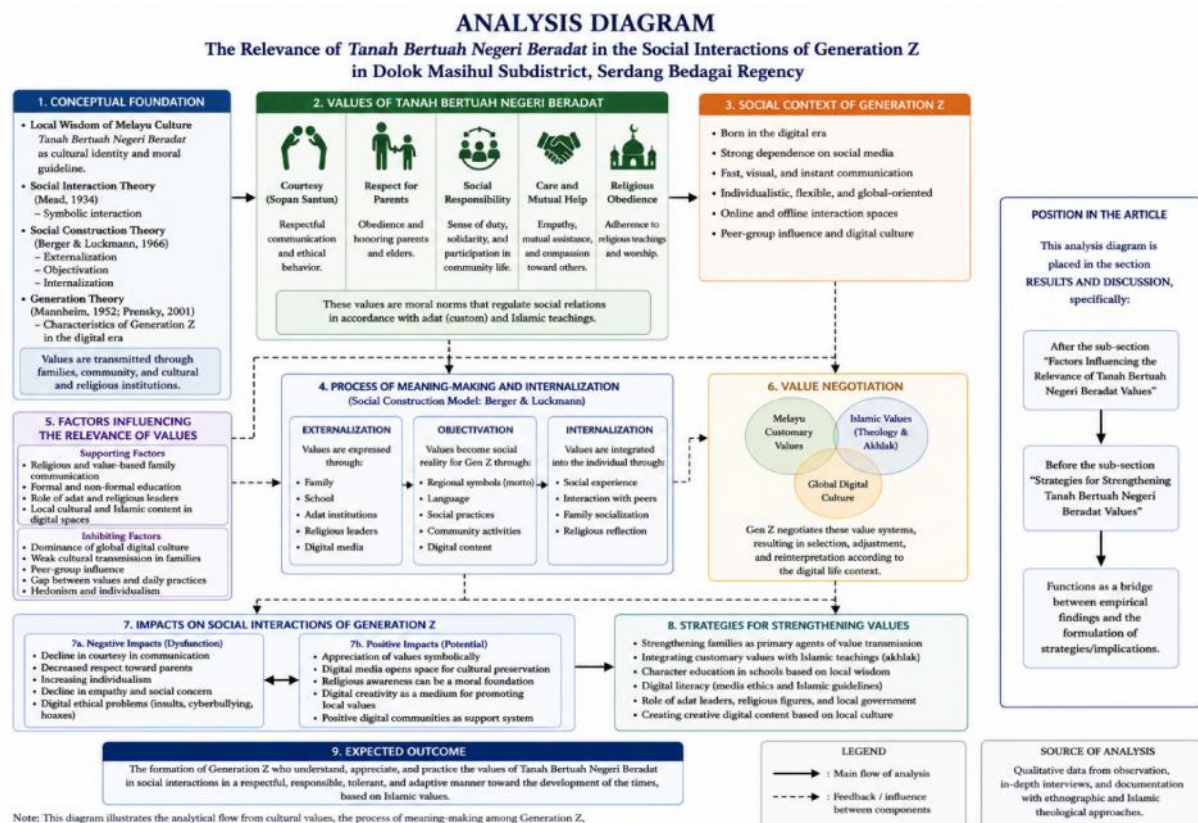
The results of the study indicate that the values contained in *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* still have relevance in the social life of the Malay community in Dolok Masihul District, especially as moral guidelines that emphasize politeness, respect for parents, social responsibility, concern for others, and religiosity. However, among Generation Z, these values tend to be understood at the symbolic level and cultural identity alone, not yet fully internalized into consistent social behavior. This finding indicates a gap between cultural awareness *and* cultural practice, so that customary values are still recognized as important but have not become the main foundation in daily social interactions.

From the perspective of Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory, this phenomenon indicates that the processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization of cultural values are undergoing changes due to the transformation of social space. While previously the family and community were the primary agents of cultural value inheritance, currently social media and digital culture have taken on a significant role in shaping the ways Generation Z thinks, communicates, and behaves. As a result, a process of value negotiation occurs between local culture, Islamic teachings, and global digital culture. The values of politeness, respect, and social concern are not completely abandoned, but are being adjusted to suit the faster, freer, and more informal nature of digital communication.

This study also found that social media is the most dominant factor influencing the interpretation of cultural values among Generation Z. On the one hand, digital media has the potential to weaken the process of cultural inheritance by reducing the intensity of direct social interactions and encouraging more individualistic lifestyles. However, on the other hand, digital media can also be a strategic tool for

introducing and disseminating local cultural values if utilized creatively and educationally. In addition to social media factors, weak inheritance of values within the family and the strong influence of peer groups also determine the success or failure of the process of internalizing cultural values in the younger generation.

From an Islamic theological perspective, the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* (Tribal Land of Tradition) are closely related to the concept of *akhlakul karimah* (good character), such as *birrul walidain* (devotion to parents), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), manners in communication, and social awareness. Therefore, the main challenge found in this study is not the loss of local cultural values, but rather changes in the pattern of inheritance and their implementation in the context of modern social life. This finding suggests that the sustainability of local cultural values will be more effective if integrated with universal Islamic values so that they remain relevant for Generation Z amidst the currents of globalization and digitalization.



Note: This diagram illustrates the analytical flow from cultural values, the process of meaning-making among Generation Z, factors influencing relevance, negotiation of values, impacts on social interaction, to strengthening strategies and expected outcomes.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the view that the sustainability of local wisdom is determined not only by the existence of cultural values themselves, but also by the effectiveness of the internalization process that occurs through family, school, community, and digital media. This study also expands the study of the relationship between local culture, Generation Z social identity, and digital cultural transformation by showing that the process of cultural meaning occurs dynamically through negotiations between traditional and modern values. Furthermore, the research findings contribute to the development of Islamic Aqidah and Philosophy studies by emphasizing that local cultural values can function as instruments for forming social character in line with Islamic moral principles.

Practically, this research implies that strengthening the values of *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* cannot be achieved solely through ceremonial approaches or cultural slogans, but must be realized through more contextual and adaptive internalization strategies. Families need to be re-strengthened as the primary space for the inheritance of cultural and religious values through role models and habits. Schools need to integrate local cultural values into character education and learning activities. Local governments and traditional leaders can utilize digital media as a means of cultural education that is in line with the characteristics of Generation Z. Thus, local cultural values will not only survive as symbols

of regional identity, but also become the foundation for the character formation of a young generation that is moral, responsible, and able to adapt to current developments without losing its cultural roots and Islamic values.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that *Tanah Bertuah Negeri Beradat* is still seen as an important cultural value in the lives of the Malay community in Dolok Masihul District because it contains values of politeness, respect, social responsibility, care, and religiosity that are closely related to Islamic teachings. However, Gen Z's interpretation of these values tends to be at a symbolic level and has not been fully internalized in everyday social behavior. Changes in interaction patterns due to the development of social media, weak inheritance of values within the family, and the influence of the friendship environment are the main factors influencing the process of internalization of cultural values in the younger generation. These findings indicate that the development of digital culture is not only changing Gen Z's communication patterns but also influencing how they understand, negotiate, and apply local cultural values in modern social life.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of local wisdom studies, social interactions of the younger generation, and the study of Islamic Aqidah and Philosophy by showing that local cultural values and Islamic values have a mutually reinforcing relationship in the formation of Gen Z's social character. Practically, the results of this study can be used as consideration for local governments, educational institutions, families, and community leaders in designing character education reinforcement based on local culture that is adaptive to the development of digital technology. Further research is recommended to examine the internalization of local cultural values in the younger generation with a wider scope, different research approaches, or focus on the role of digital media and educational institutions in the process of inheriting cultural values in the modern era.

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