

Preserving Tradition and Social Interaction in the Era of Digitalization: A Study of the Kampung Naga Community in Tasikmalaya

Samsul Arip¹, Saifudin Asrori²

^{1,2}UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia

Email: samsularip24@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id

Abstract

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to various aspects of social life, including indigenous communities. Digitalization provides easier access to information and communication; however, it simultaneously poses challenges to the sustainability of traditional values, cultural practices, and long-established patterns of social interaction. This article aims to analyze how the indigenous community of Kampung Naga maintains its traditions and social interactions amid the increasingly strong wave of digitalization, particularly in the post-Covid-19 pandemic era. This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study method. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, religious leaders, youth representatives, and local community members of Kampung Naga, as well as supported by documentation studies. The data were analyzed interactively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the Kampung Naga community does not entirely reject digitalization; instead, they implement a strategy of selective adaptation. Digital technology is utilized in a limited manner for specific purposes, such as communication and education, without disrupting customary structures and traditional values. Traditions, mutual cooperation, and adherence to ancestral values remain the primary foundations in maintaining social integration. These findings reinforce Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism perspective, particularly the AGIL scheme, which emphasizes that a social system can survive by adapting to change without losing its value integration.

Keywords: *Indigenous Community, Tradition, Social Interaction, Digitalization, Kampung Naga.*

A. INTRODUCTION

Digitalization has become one of the inevitable global phenomena in modern society (Giddens, 2006). The rapid development of information and communication technology has transformed the ways individuals work, interact, and establish social relationships. Within indigenous communities, these transformations often generate tensions between the preservation of traditional values and the necessity to adapt to contemporary developments (Koentjaraningrat, 1999). The internet, social media, and digital devices have increasingly become integral parts of everyday life, including in rural areas. Such transformations bring both positive and negative consequences, particularly for communities that strongly uphold traditional values and cultural systems, such as indigenous societies.

The indigenous community of Kampung Naga in Tasikmalaya is widely recognized as a traditional community that consistently preserves ancestral traditions in daily life. Social conditions continuously evolve in accordance with the

development of the times, and such changes inevitably influence various aspects of community life (Putra & Ratmanto, 2019). A simple lifestyle, obedience to customary rules (pamali), and strong communal solidarity constitute the defining characteristics of the Kampung Naga community. For decades, this community has relatively succeeded in maintaining distance from the influence of modernization that potentially threatens the preservation of cultural values.

A modest way of life, adherence to customary regulations, and strong social solidarity remain the distinctive features of the community (Clifford Geertz, 1976; Sunarno Sastro Atmodjo, Dkk. 2023). Nevertheless, the increasing penetration of digital technology in the post-Covid-19 pandemic era has introduced new social dynamics, particularly among the younger generation. The growing need for digital technology, especially for educational purposes, communication tools, and broader access to information, has encouraged the youth of Kampung Naga to gradually adapt to and interact with digital devices and media, although still under customary supervision. This condition has generated new social dynamics that deserve academic examination.

This phenomenon is particularly important to investigate because it demonstrates that social change does not occur in a linear manner, but rather through mechanisms of selective adaptation (Piotr Sztompka, 2010). Therefore, this study seeks to explain how the Kampung Naga community maintains its traditions and social interactions amid the growing wave of digitalization. For researchers, the study of indigenous communities and digitalization is essential because it provides insight into how traditional communities respond to social change. This article specifically addresses the following research question: how does the Kampung Naga community preserve its traditions and social interactions in the midst of digitalization? By understanding the adaptation strategies employed by the community, this study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the discourse on cultural sociology and social change.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Tradition and Indigenous Communities

Tradition can be defined as a set of customs inherited from generation to generation that continues to be practiced and preserved within society and transmitted to subsequent generations (Saebani, 2012). The emergence of tradition originates from patterns of social regularity within a community. Initially, traditions and customary practices develop from repetitive and organized behaviors performed by individuals or groups within society. Over time, these repeated behaviors become socially recognized norms and eventually evolve into rules, values, and social principles that regulate community life.

Tradition represents a set of values, norms, and social practices transmitted across generations and serves as a guideline for social life (Gobel et al., 2025). For indigenous communities, tradition functions not merely as a cultural heritage but also as a mechanism of social control and a foundation for collective identity formation

(Hermawan et al., 2025). Tradition regulates interpersonal relationships, human interactions with nature, and the relationship between humans and transcendent or spiritual forces.

Indigenous communities generally possess strong value systems that are relatively resilient to external influences and social change. However, such resilience does not necessarily imply complete resistance to transformation. Many indigenous societies undertake gradual and selective adjustments in order to remain relevant amid contemporary developments. In this context, tradition functions as a value system that regulates individual behavior and maintains social order within the community (Koentjaraningrat, 1999).

2. Digitalization and Social Change

Digitalization refers to the transformation of data from physical forms into digital formats that can be processed through information technology (Irfan, 2023). More broadly, digitalization also refers to the increasing utilization of technology in various aspects of social life. Within contemporary society, individuals are able to access information freely and rapidly, allowing them to engage with continuous developments occurring across different sectors. Consequently, digitalization significantly influences the ways individuals communicate, interact, and establish social networks. These transformations often occur rapidly and massively, potentially triggering social disorganization when they are not balanced by the readiness of existing values and social norms.

Indigenous communities that strongly uphold traditional values and norms may experience difficulties in adapting to such rapid transformations, resulting in the emergence of a digital divide. This digital divide indicates that not all social groups possess equal access to or capability in utilizing digital technology. Marginalized groups, women, indigenous communities, and people living in remote areas are frequently left behind in the process of digital transformation (Aryani et al., 2025). Such conditions may gradually shift the interaction patterns within indigenous communities, particularly from direct face-to-face communication toward media-based digital interaction. If digital transformation is not managed appropriately, it may weaken social solidarity and the sense of togetherness that traditionally characterizes indigenous societies.

As a form of social change, digitalization carries significant implications for social interaction patterns and social structures within society (Martono, 2016). The presence of digital technology has contributed to the weakening of direct social interaction, particularly among younger generations who are increasingly oriented toward modern lifestyles and digital culture. Similar conditions can also be observed within the indigenous community of Kampung Naga. Children and adolescents have increasingly begun using smartphones in their daily activities, including for online gaming. In some cases, digital device usage continues even during the implementation of traditional rituals and communal activities.

This phenomenon requires particular attention from customary leaders and traditional authorities within indigenous communities. Uncontrolled social change may not only threaten cultural integrity but also weaken the social bonds that have long been maintained through ritual practices and collective traditions (Aptasari et al., 2024). Transformations originating gradually from external influences outside the Kampung Naga community itself demand careful consideration from traditional leaders regarding whether such changes should be accepted, restricted, or rejected. At the same time, there remains the possibility of creating a balanced relationship between digital development and the preservation of traditional ritual practices.

3. Talcott Parsons' Structural Functionalism Theory

Talcott Parsons explains that society constitutes a social system composed of interconnected and interdependent elements. Through the AGIL scheme Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency Parsons emphasizes that the sustainability of a social system depends on its ability to fulfill these four functional prerequisites. This theoretical framework is highly relevant for analyzing how the Kampung Naga community adapts to digitalization without losing the integration of its customary values.

According to Parsons, 2005, every social system requires four functional imperatives, commonly referred to as AGIL: Adaptation (A), Goal Attainment (G), Integration (I), and Latent Pattern Maintenance (L). Through this framework, Parsons argues that social systems are capable of adapting to change while maintaining structural and functional stability within a dynamic society.

From the structural functionalist perspective, a social system can only survive when it successfully performs the functions of Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency (AGIL). This framework provides an appropriate analytical lens for understanding the strategies employed by the Kampung Naga community in responding to digitalization. Therefore, this study adopts Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism theory as the primary analytical framework.

C. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study method. The research was conducted in Kampung Adat Naga, located in Neglasari Village, Salawu District, Tasikmalaya. The selection of this location was based on the uniqueness of Kampung Naga as an indigenous community that continues to preserve its traditional values amid the ongoing pressures of modernization.

A qualitative case study approach was considered appropriate for examining social phenomena comprehensively within a specific socio-cultural context (Bickman, 2003). Data collection techniques included participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies (Wijaya, 2014). Through these methods, the researcher was able to obtain an in-depth understanding of the community's social dynamics, cultural values, and adaptation strategies toward digitalization.

The research informants consisted of customary leaders, religious leaders, youth representatives, and members of the Kampung Naga community. Participatory observation was conducted to directly examine daily social interactions and traditional practices within the community. In-depth interviews were carried out to explore participants' perspectives regarding the influence of digitalization on social life and cultural preservation. In addition, documentation studies were utilized to support and strengthen the research findings through written records, photographs, and related documents.

The data were analyzed inductively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. To ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, the study applied source triangulation and methodological triangulation. These techniques were employed to enhance the trustworthiness and reliability of the research results.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Tradition as a Social Cohesion Mechanism

The Kampung Naga community practices a traditional ritual commonly referred to as Hajat Sasih. This ritual is a customary ceremonial tradition conducted periodically by the indigenous community to clean and honor the ancestral graves at specific times of the year (Darmawan, Kampung Naga Guide, interview conducted on December 12, 2021, at 09:25 WIB). Traditions in Kampung Naga, including Hajat Sasih and the customary pamali regulations, function as social cohesion mechanisms that strengthen solidarity among community members.

During the implementation of Hajat Sasih, the indigenous community collectively engages in mutual cooperation, social interaction, and communal gatherings at the langgar (mosque). The tradition also serves as a medium for the internalization of cultural values among younger generations and for maintaining balance in social relationships. Through these collective activities, the community reinforces social awareness among youth and minimizes the potentially disruptive influence of smartphones and digital technology that may gradually shift attention away from traditional practices such as Hajat Sasih.

The findings indicate that traditions in Kampung Naga function effectively as mechanisms of social integration. Through customary rituals and pamali regulations, the community is able to preserve social solidarity and maintain social harmony (Soerjono Soekanto, 2010). This perspective is further reinforced by statements from religious leaders in Kampung Naga, who emphasized that rituals and customary prohibitions serve as strengthening values in the implementation of the Hajat Sasih tradition (I'in Solihin, Religious Leader, interview conducted on December 8, 2021, at 14:08 WIB).

2. Digitalization and the Dynamics of Social Interaction

The introduction of digital technology has brought noticeable changes to communication patterns, particularly among younger generations. Nevertheless, face-

to-face interaction and collective social activities continue to remain the primary priorities within the social life of the Kampung Naga community. The initial emergence of digitalization in Kampung Naga was closely associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. During this period, community members were compelled to purchase smartphones to support distance learning and online educational activities (Iting & Ina, members of the Kampung Naga community, interview conducted on December 14, 2021, at 08:45 WIB). As a consequence, children began to gain access to smartphones from an early age.

Despite the increasing use of digital devices, the Kampung Naga community continues to prioritize direct social interaction through communal gatherings, traditional ceremonies, and collective activities rooted in customary values. This condition demonstrates that digitalization has not entirely displaced conventional patterns of social interaction, but rather coexists with traditional forms of communication and social engagement within the indigenous community.



Figure 1. Documentation of Kampung Naga Youth

The people of Kampung Naga initially found it difficult to purchase smartphones; however, the need to support education forced the community to make efforts to buy them. This condition also caused changes in the level of social interaction within the Kampung Naga community, especially among the youth. Young people in Kampung Naga began to develop activities such as charging smartphones outside Kampung Naga (Mardiana: Kampung Naga Youth, Interview, January 27, 2026, at 15:13 WIB). In this context, they tended to have different activity patterns compared to the broader Kampung Naga community. This is reinforced by Karmadi (Relative of the Kuncen, Interview, December 10, 2021, at 12:47 WIB), who stated that the houses in Kampung Naga must be painted white and that the community is not permitted to use electricity because of the potential fire hazards in Kampung Naga.



Figure 2. Documentation of Television in Kampung Naga

However, behind these conditions, traditional patterns of interaction have not been entirely eliminated. On the contrary, the Kampung Naga community has carried out selective adaptation by limiting the use of technology so that it does not interfere with customary values (Nasrudin & Nusari, 2025). On several occasions, the community also organizes communal television viewing using a tube television, allowing people to continue interacting and gathering together in open fields. Although changes in interaction patterns have occurred, this indicates that the Kampung Naga community has experienced adaptation to the changes taking place.

3. Analysis of Talcott Parsons' AGIL Theory

In Talcott Parsons' perspective on structural functionalism theory, commonly known as AGIL (Parsons, 2005), Adaptation refers to how the Kampung Naga community responds to changes, particularly changes in social interaction within the community. When the Kampung Naga community experiences change, the action taken by the community is adaptation. This includes the changes occurring in Kampung Naga related to the entry of digitalization.

Goal Attainment refers to the objective of the Kampung Naga community to preserve and maintain the sustainability of customary traditions as a priority that must continue to be protected. Integration refers to the customary norms within the Kampung Naga community that function as social harmony within the community environment. Meanwhile, Latency refers to the ancestral values that must continue to be consistently passed down to younger generations in the future.

Within the AGIL framework, adaptation to digitalization is carried out without sacrificing integration and the maintenance of latent values. This demonstrates that the Kampung Naga community is able to maintain the stability of its social system amid the social changes occurring within the community.

E. CONCLUSION

The Kampung Naga Indigenous community is able to preserve its traditions and social interactions through a strategy of selective adaptation toward digitalization. Digitalization is not perceived as an absolute threat, but rather as a tool that can be utilized in a limited manner. The role of customary leaders and the strong internalization of cultural values become the key factors in sustaining the social system of Kampung Naga. Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the Kampung Naga Indigenous community is capable of maintaining its traditions and social interactions through a strategy of selective adaptation toward digitalization. These findings are consistent with the view that social change is not always destructive, but can instead be managed constructively when supported by a strong value system.

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