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The threat of animated films to national disintegration in the dimension of character formation of alpha generation: A Study in Mataram City

Bagdawansyah Alqadri *
* Universitas Mataram, Indonesia
bagda_alqadri@unram.ac.id

Nurlatifa
Universitas Mataram, Indonesia
nurlatifa@staff.unram.ac.id

Rispawati
Universitas Mataram, Indonesia
rispa64@gmail.com

Lianda Dewi Sartika
Universitas Mataram, Indonesia
liandadewi@staff.unram.ac.id

M. Samsul Hadi
Universitas Mataram, Indonesia
samsulhadi123@staff.unram.ac.id

Rizky Wahyuni
Universitas Mataram, Indonesia
rizkywahyuni105@gmail.com

Maria Grace Putri Edi
Universitas Mataram, Indonesia
graceedi@staff.unram.ac.id

*Corresponding Author

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Abstract

This research departs from the growing urgency of the high consumption of foreign animated films among Generation Alpha in Mataram City, which may weaken national identity and character. The selection of Mataram City as the research site is grounded in its role as a heterogeneous social laboratory; it serves as a strategic case study to examine the tension between deeply rooted local traditions and the pervasive influence of global digital media. This study aims to explore how foreign animation shapes children's perceptions and to gain a profound understanding of potential shifts in national integration values in their everyday lived experiences. The primary subjects are Generation Alpha children (aged 4–12 years), purposively selected to provide deep insights, with parents and teachers serving as secondary informants for data triangulation. The specific object of the study is the phenomenon of identity construction and the potential erosion of national character resulting from prolonged media exposure. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were obtained through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The findings reveal that intensive daily exposure to foreign animation leads to the internalisation of global values, manifested in the imitation of foreign accents and a shift toward individualistic behaviour, thereby challenging traditional social cohesion. Conversely, local animations such as Nussa & Rara are found to reinforce religiosity, cooperation, and manners. These results underline that without media literacy and support for local content, foreign animation poses a challenge to national identity. Systematic synergy between schools, families, and the government can transform animation into a strategic tool for strengthening character education and national integration.

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Introduction

Indonesia is one of the world's largest multicultural countries, encompassing diverse ethnicities, races, religions, languages, and cultures. Modern society has undergone significant changes, particularly in behavioural development. This is due to global modernisation, which has influenced the nation's character in all aspects. One factor influencing the character, culture, and customs of Indonesian society is the variety of media available. The public consumes a wide variety of content across social media, television, YouTube, and other platforms.

According to the 2023 Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) survey, Indonesia's internet penetration has reached 78.19%, with the 5–12 age group (Generation Alpha) showing a significant surge in digital activity (APJII, 2024). Globally, screen-based media consumption remains a dominant daily activity for over 90% of children, shifting from traditional television to digital streaming platforms (Swider-Cios et al., 2023; Unicef, 2025). This pervasive digital exposure demonstrates the profound influence of media on public attitudes and behaviour, necessitating urgent government and parental intervention to filter globalised content. If left unaddressed, the unchecked consumption of foreign animated films, which often carry cultural values dissonant with local norms, poses a tangible threat to the national identity and character of future generations.

Historically, animated content was primarily perceived as a pedagogical tool for moral and social development. However, children's consumption of contemporary animation has undergone a radical shift due to the prevalence of Over-the-Top (OTT) media services and social video platforms (Flew & Martin, 2022). According to Livingstone & Blum-Ross (2020), children's screen time has shifted from regulated, scheduled television broadcasts to on-demand, algorithm-driven consumption that often bypasses traditional gatekeeping mechanisms. This shift facilitates the unmediated influx of global cultural narratives that may conflict with local socio-cultural norms (Livingstone & Third, 2017; Saud et al., 2025; Yao, 2025). Furthermore, the lack of rigorous curation in digital media environments underscores a gap in national media policy, leaving children, particularly in regions such as Mataram, vulnerable to global content that often lacks local cultural grounding.

Moreover, those who watch animated films are generally young children, the next generation of the nation that will carry on the legacy of our previous heroes. Through this phenomenon, animated films threaten the nation's future disintegration. National disintegration has been one of the weapons that has had a powerful effect since the beginning of the Indonesian people's fight for independence, the maintenance of independence, and the achievement of independence.

The proliferation of foreign animated content in Indonesian mass media, such as the Malaysian series Upin & Ipin, presents a complex challenge to local cultural preservation. While the imitation of the Malay language by Indonesian children may seem superficial, it signifies a deeper internalisation of foreign socio-cultural norms. According to Hall (1994), language is a primary representational system through which meaning and cultural identity are produced. When children adopt foreign linguistic styles, they also, unconsciously, adopt the cultural habitus—including the etiquette, social hierarchies, and worldviews—embedded in those dialogues. This linguistic mimicry often results in a hybrid identity that distances children from their local vernacular and traditional social structures. Similarly, the popularity of mythological or fantasy-based animations like Little Krishna or One Piece on platforms like YouTube introduces metaphysical and philosophical concepts that may diverge from the national ideological framework. Without robust cultural mediation, this continuous exposure fosters a sense of cultural alienation, in which the youngest generation becomes more conversant with foreign narratives than with its own national history and local wisdom.

Motion picture media, encompassing both feature-length animated films and episodic animated series, have a profound impact on children's psychological development. These media

forms serve as digital socialisation agents, broadcasting a spectrum of social interactions—from associative behaviours (prosocial values such as altruism, cooperation, and tolerance) to dissociative behaviours (conflict, aggression, and cultural nonconformity). While traditional television once served as the primary medium, the current shift toward video-on-demand (VOD) and social media platforms has intensified children's exposure to unregulated foreign content. Social interaction is the fundamental prerequisite for social life; however, when foreign values mediate these interactions, they may disrupt the formation of national character. Mataram City provides a critical context for this study, given its status as a transitioning urban hub with a high level of ethnic and religious diversity. In such a social laboratory, the unmediated influx of foreign animated narratives—whether through television broadcasts or digital streaming—threatens to erode the local social glue and traditional communal values, potentially leading to a fragmentation of national identity at the grassroots level.

Method

This study employs a qualitative, phenomenological design to capture the lived experiences of Generation Alpha in Mataram City as they engage with foreign animated media (Creswell, 2018). Phenomenology is methodologically appropriate here because the research seeks to uncover the subjective meanings and behavioural internalisations that arise when children interact with global narratives in their daily lives. Rather than merely measuring media effects, this approach allows the researcher to explore the essence of the phenomenon, how the habitus of watching foreign animation shifts children's self-perceptions and social relational patterns within the Indonesian cultural context. By examining these lived experiences in depth, the study can identify subtle signs of cultural distancing—a precursor to national disintegration—where children feel more connected to foreign cultural symbols than to their own national identity. Thus, phenomenology provides the necessary depth to understand how macro-level issues, such as national disintegration, manifest at the micro-level of individual consciousness and daily behaviour.

This research on the threat of animated films to national disintegration, in the dimension of character formation of the Alpha generation in Mataram City, is structured into three main stages. In the pre-research stage, the initial steps focus on problem identification, mapping relevant management units in Mataram City, and preliminary data collection. Subsequently, the ongoing research stage focuses on instrument development, in-depth primary and secondary data collection, and data analysis to formulate appropriate strategies to mitigate any negative influences. Finally, as a post-research follow-up, the framework concludes with the implementation, evaluation, and improvement of these character formation strategies, the dissemination of research findings to stakeholders, and continuous development efforts to ensure that the national integration values of the Alpha generation in Mataram City are sustained in the long term.

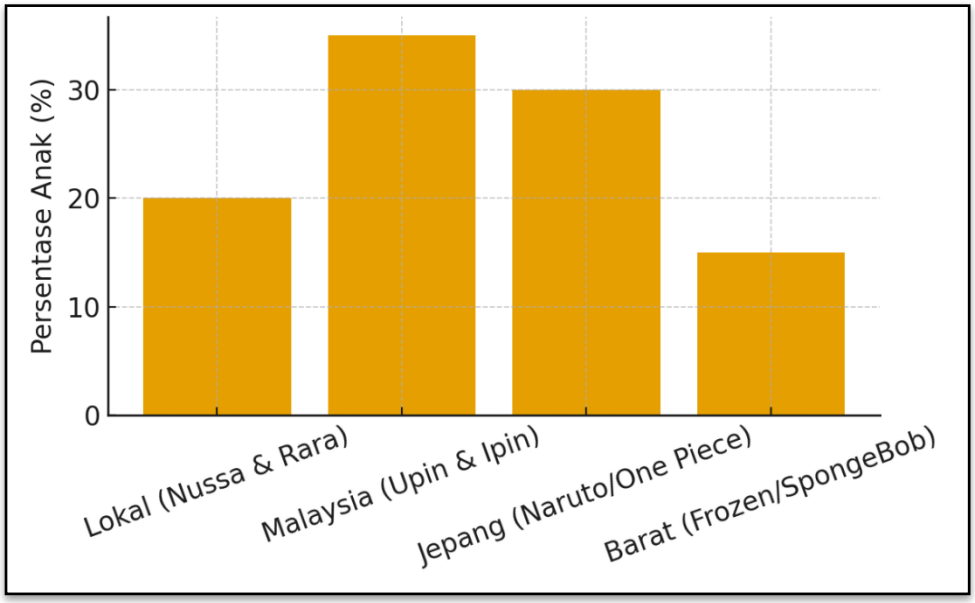
Results and Discussion

The core research phase involved interviews with approximately 30 children from various levels (early childhood education, kindergarten, and elementary school) in Mataram City, involving teachers and parents as data triangulation tools. Questions focused on children's attitudes, behaviours, and habits before and after watching the animation. The interviews revealed that children tend to imitate the foreign languages spoken in animated films, such as Malay, Japanese, or English, and incorporate them into their daily interactions. Furthermore, new habits emerged, such as increased screen time and decreased reading or playing traditional games. Teachers and parents observed a decline in discipline, manners, and healthy social interactions. These findings support the initial assumption that animated films have a significant impact on children's character development.

Based on observations and interviews with children in early childhood education (PAUD), kindergarten, and elementary schools in Mataram City, it was found that most children access

foreign animated films more frequently than local animation. Viewing intensity ranges from 2–4 hours per day, accessed via television, YouTube, and digital streaming apps. The following table summarises the distribution of animated film consumption:

Figure 1.
Graphic Visualisation of Animation Consumption



Source: Research Data, 2025.

Interviews with teachers and parents revealed changes in children's behaviour before and after watching animated films. Some examples of field findings in Table 1.

Table 1.
Impact of Animated Films

Types of Animation	Impact on Children
Upin & Ipin	Imitating the Malaysian accent in daily conversation
Naruto/One Piece	Imitating clothing styles, the use of foreign languages, and aggressive behaviour
Frozen	Increase consumer behaviour (merchandise, toys)
Nussa & Rara	Improving manners, cooperation, and religious values

Source: Research Data, 2025.

In cartoons such as Upin & Ipin, children tend to imitate the Malay accent in everyday conversation. This illustrates the phenomenon of media primacy, in which the media becomes the primary reference point in the formation of linguistic habits (Gökçearslan, 2010; Praveen & Srinivasan, 2022; Sabardila et al., 2023). In this context, there is a potential shift in local linguistic identity, particularly if this is not balanced by the promotion of the national or regional language. In Naruto and One Piece, the use of foreign languages (Japanese/English) indicates a broader penetration of global culture. This suggests that children not only imitate language sounds but also absorb global cultural symbols as part of their identity (Sabardila et al., 2023).

Action-packed anime such as Naruto and One Piece also encourage aggressive behaviour. This aligns with social learning theory (Bandura), which holds that children learn through observation and imitation of role models they perceive as appealing or heroic. In this context, strong and dominant characters may be interpreted by children as legitimising aggressive behaviour. Nussa & Rara demonstrate positive effects, including improved manners, cooperation, and religious values. This shows that content based on local-religious values can

serve as a counter-narrative to the dominance of global culture, whilst simultaneously strengthening children's character.

Films such as Frozen encourage increased consumerism, particularly through merchandise and spin-off products. This demonstrates that modern animation serves not only as a cultural product, but also as part of a global capitalist industry that instils consumer preferences from an early age. Children are not merely spectators; they are also a target market(Anderson et al., 2017; Gökçearslan, 2010; Praveen & Srinivasan, 2022).

The Lived Experience of Generation Alpha in Mataram

To maintain phenomenological rigour, the researcher applied bracketing (epoche) to set aside preconceived notions about foreign media. The following findings are not statistical measurements of impact but a thematic synthesis of the children's life-world (lebenswelt) in Mataram, derived from in-depth interviews and field observations.

Internalisation of Local Religious Values through Native Narratives

In the daily lives of children in Mataram, local animations such as Nussa & Rara function as a digital extension of traditional religious socialisation. The study found that children do not merely watch these shows; they embody the characters' virtues through intentional engagement.

Observations in several Mataram kindergartens showed that children spontaneously replicate the *salam* (greeting) and adab (etiquette) depicted in the series. For these children, Nussa & Rara provide a familiar cultural mirror that aligns with Mataram's identity as the City of a Thousand Mosques. This internalisation reinforces their sense of belonging to a religious-communal society, suggesting that when media content resonates with local contexts, it strengthens social cohesion.

Linguistic Mimicry and the Phenomenon of Cultural Distancing

A significant theme emerged regarding the use of foreign dialects, particularly from the Malaysian series Upin & Ipin. Rather than a superficial imitation, this linguistic mimicry indicates a shift in the child's primary communication identity.

In Mataram, where the Sasak language and Indonesian are standard, children were found to consistently use Malay particles and accents in their internal talk and play sessions. This signifies a cultural blurring, in which the distinction between their native identity and their screen identity fades. Interviews with parents revealed concerns that children feel more connected to the linguistic world of the animation than to their local vernacular, marking the early stages of cultural alienation from their national roots.

The Erosion of National Symbols in the Child's Consciousness

A profound finding in this phenomenological study is the displacement of national figures by global icons. When asked about heroes, children in Mataram were more likely to identify characters like Elsa or Naruto than national independence figures.

This identity displacement occurs because foreign animations offer a more vivid and emotionally engaging reality than the abstract national history taught in schools. This signifies a threat to national disintegration at the grassroots level: a weakening of the emotional and symbolic bond that ties the youngest generation to the Indonesian nation-state. In the long term, this cultural distancing creates a generation that, while physically residing in Indonesia, psychologically inhabits a globalised space devoid of national character.

Character Education and the Challenges of Generation Alpha

Character education in the context of globalisation cannot be separated from the influence of media, which increasingly dominates children's daily lives. Arifin (2017) emphasises that character education is not simply a process of transferring moral values through formal

instruction, but also requires the inculcation of consistent behaviour in real life. This means that character education requires the active involvement of families, schools, and the social environment to create a space for habituation that supports the internalisation of values. However, in today's digital era, this habituation process is often disrupted by mass and digital media, which act as second teachers after the family, sometimes even more influential in shaping children's behaviour than parents and teachers.

Generation Alpha, children born since 2010, have grown up in a digital ecosystem saturated with technology, gadgets, and unlimited media access. Their adaptability, visual nature, and quick receptivity make them more susceptible to the influence of the content they consume daily. Santrock (2019) emphasises that young children tend to learn through imitation. They readily imitate the behaviour, language style, and even emotional expressions of characters they find appealing. This explains why animated films featuring visually appealing characters have a significant influence on children's attitudes and habits. In many cases, animated characters even become role models whom children idolise more than teachers, parents, or community leaders.

The basis of this argument lies in Bandura's (1977) work, which posits that children learn behaviours more effectively through continuous observational modelling rather than abstract pedagogical instructions. In the context of Mataram's Generation Alpha, intensive and repetitive exposure to foreign animation creates a high-frequency modelling effect that often outweighs the limited duration of formal character education in schools. Furthermore, McCombs and Valenzuela (2020) and Aelst et al. (2017), suggests that when media narratives are more emotionally engaging and visually stimulating than educational curricula, they become the primary source of a child's construction of reality. Consequently, the noble values of the Pancasila Profile—such as cooperation and noble character—are frequently marginalised by the more vivid, individualistic, or foreign cultural norms presented in animated series, creating a symbolic struggle between state-led identity formation and commercially driven global socialisation.

The alpha generation is now facing a paradox; on the one hand, they are required to be part of the Indonesian nation that upholds the values of Pancasila, but on the other hand, they are internalising a more global culture that is not always in line with local values (Heryanto, 2014; Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017). For example, the foreign language they imitate from animated films can replace their mother tongue; the clothing styles of animated characters often conflict with local politeness norms, and interaction patterns in digital broadcasts sometimes prioritise individualism over cooperation.

Thus, the challenge of character education for Generation Alpha is not only about how schools teach national values, but also about developing media literacy for children, parents, and teachers so they can filter and guide digital media consumption wisely. Character education must be more progressive, not only instilling values normatively but also presenting adaptive strategies appropriate to the context of Generation Alpha's digital lives. Without such strategies, Pancasila values risk being marginalised by the hegemony of global culture, which continues to permeate animated films and digital media.

Digital Media as an Agent of Socialisation: Voices from Mataram

In the lived experiences of Generation Alpha in Mataram, digital media is no longer an external tool but an integral part of the life-world (lebenswelt) that rivals traditional socialisation agents. The following themes emerge from the deep engagement with participants:

The Displacement of Family and Peer Interaction

The daily reality of children in Mataram shows a significant shift from communal play to screen-based isolation. During observations in several Mataram neighbourhoods, the

researcher noted that even when children are physically together, their intentionality is directed toward digital devices. One 7-year-old participant stated, "I would rather watch Naruto's battle than play outside because the moves are cooler." This narrative confirms a shift in which social values—previously learned through physical friction of group play—are now replaced by passive observation of animated behaviours. The life-world of these children is increasingly populated by pixels rather than peers, leading to a socialisation process that prioritises individual gratification over communal cooperation (gotong royong).

The Narrative Preoccupations of the Child's Consciousness

When engaging in bracketing (epoche) to listen to the children's stories, a striking pattern appeared: their mental landscape is dominated by foreign iconography. In Mataram, children did not identify through local folklore like Putri Mandalika, but through the heroic tropes of One Piece or the familial structures of Upin & Ipin.

One teacher in Mataram remarked, "They do not just watch; they inhabit those worlds. They speak to me using Malaysian particles like 'cikgu' or 'betul, betul, betul' without realising they are doing it." This lived experience demonstrates that socialisation through digital media is not passive consumption but an active, subconscious reconstruction of identity, in which foreign cultural symbols become the primary reference point for their social reality.

The Struggle for Local Resonance: The Case of Nussa & Rara

While Nussa & Rara provide a cultural counter-narrative, its presence in the children's consciousness is often overshadowed by the high-frequency exposure of global content. Participants who engaged with Nussa & Rara showed a distinct affective resonance with the religious values presented. For instance, a mother in Mataram described how her child started mimicking Rara's politeness: "She started saying *'Bismillah'* before everything because she saw Rara do it." However, this phenomenon remains a minority experience in the broader Mataram context. The phenomenology of these children's daily lives suggests that local animation is often viewed as educational homework while foreign animation is "pure play." This dichotomy creates a tension in their character formation: local values are respected, but foreign values are desired and emulated.

Animated Films and the National Identity Crisis

National identity is a social construct formed through interaction, the internalisation of values, and the transmission of cultural symbols across generations (Tilaar, 2017). When foreign animated films are more widely accessed than local animation, the cultural symbols internalised by children also come more from abroad. This process slowly forms the perception that foreign culture is more interesting, more modern, and more worthy of following than local culture.

The dominance of foreign culture in animated content can create an identity crisis among children (Al Rujaibi et al., 2025). This crisis arises when children are more familiar with, idolise, and imitate global animated characters such as Naruto, Upin & Ipin, or Elsa from Frozen. At the same time, they are unable to name national heroes such as Cut Nyak Dien, Pattimura, or local legendary figures such as Malin Kundang and Sangkuriang. The loss of familiarity with one's own culture's symbols is an early symptom of the erosion of pride in national identity.

Field findings also support this phenomenon. Pratama (2021) found a significant correlation between the intensity of watching foreign animation and a decrease in children's learning motivation in Mataram. Children who consume foreign animation too often tend to spend more time discussing the storyline, characters, or lifestyles depicted in the animation, thereby reducing their focus on formal learning activities. In fact, some children tend to imitate the language, gestures, or clothing styles of animated characters, which may not always align with local norms. This shows that animation is not just entertainment but also an agent in shaping social and cultural identities.

This national identity crisis is not only about the ability to recognise cultural symbols but also about a sense of pride in one's own culture. Pride is the foundation of nationalism and the glue that cements national integration. If children take more pride in imitating foreign animated characters than in admiring national heroes or folklore, the foundations of national integration could be fragile in the long run. Sense of national togetherness and solidarity could weaken, replaced by a global orientation that often aligns with Indonesia's noble values (Angeningsih & Astuti, 2014; Lemish, 2015).

Thus, animated films play a significant role in the dynamics of national identity formation. The challenge is not only to limit the dominance of foreign animation but also to strengthen the presence of local animation, which can serve as a means of internalising national values. Local animated works such as Nusa and Rara should not only be produced but also widely promoted to compete with global animation. This way, children have viewing options that are not only entertaining but also strengthen their national identity.

National Disintegration in Theoretical Perspective

National disintegration does not always manifest as overt physical conflict, such as war, riots, or intergroup clashes. Disintegration can also manifest in more subtle forms, namely the erosion of social solidarity and the weakening of collective awareness as a nation. These symptoms are often difficult to detect in their early stages, as they are not characterised by violence, but rather by changes in people's mindsets, attitudes, and behaviours. If left unchecked, this condition can slowly erode the foundations of national unity (Jia et al., 2025; Khurana et al., 2019).

In this study, national disintegration is understood in more subtle yet significant forms—*first,* language. Generation Alpha children are beginning to show a shift in their use of Indonesian to foreign languages or accents they imitate from animated films, such as the Malaysian accent of Upin Ipin or the distinctive expressions of Japanese characters from anime. This shift is not merely a linguistic phenomenon, but also reflects an identity orientation that leans more towards foreign cultures.

Second, culture. Children's interest in regional arts, folklore, and local legends is declining, replaced by a fascination with global animated narratives. They are more familiar with fictional characters from other countries than with local cultural figures. This situation has the potential to reduce the regeneration of the nation's cultural knowledge and weaken the roots of national culture.

Third, identity. The loss of pride in national symbols is one of the most obvious indicators. Children are more enthusiastic about discussing the attributes of foreign animated characters, from their clothing to their speaking style, than about appreciating flags, national anthems, or national heroes. If left unchecked, this trend will erode the younger generation's nationalism.

Fourth, social interaction. Individualistic consumption of global media encourages children to spend more time on their devices than interacting directly with their peers. As a result, the values of cooperation, empathy, and togetherness, which are characteristic of the Indonesian nation, are increasingly being replaced by individualism.

Thus, animated films are a highly strategic medium for socialisation, due to their strong visual appeal and proximity to children's daily lives. However, animated films are also highly vulnerable if not appropriately managed. Instead of strengthening national character, animation can actually become a gateway for cultural disintegration, slowly eroding the sense of unity. Therefore, a media management strategy is needed that not only limits the penetration of foreign culture but also strengthens the presence of local content capable of instilling national values in the alpha generation.

The Urgency of Media Literacy and Character Education

Character education in schools also needs to be transformed. Traditional methods such as lectures or normative teaching are often less effective at reaching Generation Alpha, which is more accustomed to visual and digital media. Therefore, character education must utilise popular media, including local animation, to instil values. The animation Nussa and Rara, for example, can be used as an engaging learning medium while conveying religious messages, social ethics, and family values (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020; Livingstone & Third, 2017). Thus, character education is not only cognitive but also touches the affective and psychomotor domains through media closely related to children's daily lives. Synergy between families and schools is a key factor in ensuring that media literacy truly serves as a protector of the nation's character.

The Ministry of Education and Culture provides a policy framework relevant to this urgency. This strategy emphasises the importance of developing a young generation with strong character, competitiveness, and a sense of national identity amidst globalisation. However, its implementation at the local level, particularly in Mataram City, requires a focus on developing media literacy, monitoring animation consumption, and fostering cross-sector collaboration. Schools, families, creative communities, and local governments must work together to create a healthy viewing ecosystem that balances entertainment and education.

With this collaborative approach, media literacy and character education can go hand in hand. Media literacy serves as a filter, while character education serves as a foundation of values. The two complement each other, ensuring that Generation Alpha is not only intelligent in its thinking but also strong in its identity and resilient in the face of the rapid flow of global culture.

Socio-Cultural Conditions of Mataram City: A Strategic Analytical Context

The selection of Mataram City as the research site is not based solely on its administrative status, but on its unique position as a contested cultural space between deep-seated traditional values and rapid digital modernisation. The following socio-cultural factors provide the analytical link to the phenomena of character shifting and national disintegration:

The Plurality of Mataram as a Miniature "Social Laboratory."

Mataram is a multi-ethnic hub where the Sasak majority coexists with Balinese, Javanese, Chinese, and Arab ethnicities. In the context of national disintegration, Mataram represents a miniature version of Indonesia. The social glue that maintains harmony in this city has historically been a blend of local wisdom and national identity (Buckingham, 2019). However, in such a diverse city, Generation Alpha begins to adopt foreign cultural identities (mimicking accents and behaviours from foreign animation), eroding the shared local and national symbols that previously unified these diverse ethnic groups. Mataram is therefore a critical case to observe whether foreign media acts as a de-socialising agent that weakens the cross-cultural social cohesion necessary for national integration.

The Conflict of "The City of a Thousand Mosques" vs Global Digital Influx

Mataram is famously dubbed the City of a Thousand Mosques, reflecting a strong communal-religious foundation. This creates a sharp cultural contrast (friction) with the liberal-individualistic values often embedded in Western or East Asian animations.

Unlike in more secular metropolitan cities, the shift in Mataram's Generation Alpha—from religious-communal politeness to aggressive or individualistic traits modelled in foreign media—offers a clearer, more traceable cultural shift. This tension makes Mataram a distinctive case, as it allows the researcher to see exactly how global digital narratives penetrate and potentially displace a deeply rooted religious-traditional identity (Hjarvard, 2016).

The Essence of Consumption: Navigating the Animated Life-World

Rather than seeing consumption as a mere socioeconomic category, this study explores how children in Mataram subjectively experience and assign meaning to the animations they consume. The findings reveal phenomena of Identity Hybridisation and Linguistic Displacement that permeate their daily consciousness.

The Experience of Digital Elitism and Individualistic Identity

For children in middle- to upper-class families in Mataram, foreign animation is not just entertainment; it is an identity marker. Through Netflix and Disney+, they inhabit a life-world where the English language and Western individualistic tropes (such as the chosen one in Frozen or Moana) serve as their primary reference points for coolness.

During in-depth interviews, one 8-year-old child described their experience: "I feel like Elsa when I am alone; she does not need anyone to be strong." This reflects a subjective shift in which the traditional communal values of Mataram (collectivism) are perceived as outdated, while the solitary hero archetype is internalised as a modern ideal. Their lived experience is one of psychological migration—where they physically reside in a communal Mataram household but emotionally inhabit a self-centred global narrative.

The "Malay-Japanese" Vernacular: A Phenomenon of Linguistic Displacement

In lower-middle-class settings, the consumption of Upin & Ipin and Anime represents a phenomenon of Social Mimicry. For these children, the Malaysian accent or Japanese combat cries are not just funny sounds; they are tools for social belonging.

The researcher observed that children use the particle *"Betul, betul, betul"* to validate their social status among peers. One participant remarked, *"If I talk like Naruto, I feel brave."* This suggests that the animation's meaning for them is empowerment. However, this empowerment comes at the cost of displacing their native Sasak or Indonesian vernacular. In their consciousness, their own language is ordinary, while the animated language is extraordinary. This linguistic displacement is a subtle precursor to cultural disintegration, as the child's primary tool for expressing their soul (language) is no longer their own.

The Religious Sanctuary: The Lived Experience of Nussa & Rara

For the minority of children who engage with Nussa & Rara, the experience is one of Affective Resonance. Unlike the fantasy-heavy foreign shows, Nussa & Rara feels like an extension of home.

One child shared, "*Watching Nussa is like being with my mother at the mosque."* For this group, the animation provides a sense of peace and familiarity. The meaning they derive is moral security. Their polite behaviour is not just imitation but a conscious attempt to align their life-world with the religious ideals they value. This confirms that when animation resonates with the subject's local and religious identity, it serves as a stabilising force against the fragmentation of identity caused by global media.

The Role of the Family: Co-Constructing Reality in the Domestic Sphere

In the phenomenological sense, the family in Mataram is not merely a social unit but a primary space of intersubjectivity, where the child's consciousness is shaped through interaction with their parents. The findings suggest that the family's role is best understood through the lens of Mediation Consciousness rather than through a simple parenting classification.

The Lived Experience of Protective Engagement

For some families in Mataram, watching animation is an intentional act of co-experiencing. These parents do not merely limit time; they engage in a shared life-world with their children.

In one interview, a mother described her experience*: "When we watch Nussa & Rara, I am not just a spectator; I am translating the screen into our life. When Nussa prays, I look at my son, and we pray together. It makes the animation feel 'real' for us."*This lived experience shows that character education is not a top-down instruction but a shared meaning-making process. The parent acts as a bridge, ensuring the child's intentionality remains anchored in local and religious values, preventing the identity drift often caused by foreign narratives.

The Digital Babysitter as a Phenomenon of Absence

Conversely, in many households, the gadget serves as a presence in the absence of the person. For parents in Mataram struggling with economic pressures, the animation becomes a surrogate companion for their child.

This is not a passive choice but a lived reality of compelled detachment. One father shared his dilemma: *"I work until late, and when I am home, the TV is the only thing that keeps him quiet while I rest. I know he imitates Naruto, but I do not have the energy to explain that it is just a story."* Here, the phenomenology reveals a sense of guilt and loss of agency. The child's consciousness is left to be parented by foreign algorithms, leading to an unmediated state of internalisation in which the line between fictional aggression and real-world behaviour (e.g., school fights) becomes dangerously blurred.

Intersubjective Conflict: The Tension of Values

The research found a recurring theme of cultural friction within the home. Parents expressed bewilderment when their children used foreign accents (Malay or Japanese) that felt alien to the family's Sasak identity.

This experience is a form of domestic displacement, in which the sounds on the screen replace the familiar sounds of the home. The family role here is a struggle to maintain communicative resonance; parents feel they are losing their children to a globalised world they cannot enter. This lived tension is the microfoundation of national disintegration—a gradual erosion of the shared linguistic and emotional bond that traditionally ties generations of parents to those of children.

Between Fragmentation and Cohesion: The Lived Dialectics of Mataram

In the phenomenological view, disintegration is not a future political event, but a present fragmentation of the we-relationship in the everyday life of Mataram. Conversely, integration is experienced as the resilience of shared symbols against the influx of global digital narratives.

The Lived Experience of Disintegration: The Fading Shared Horizon.

For many subjects in Mataram, the potential for disintegration is experienced as a loss of common ground between generations. In multi-ethnic neighbourhoods like Cakranegara or Ampenan, the shared life-world, traditionally built on local Sasak or Indonesian symbols, is being displaced.

During observations, a teacher expressed a sense of cultural grief: "*When I tell the story of Princess Mandalika, the children look at me with blank stares. However, when someone mentions 'Konoha' (from Naruto), they all brighten up. It feels like they live in a different world, even though they are sitting right in front of me."* This blank stare is a lived manifestation of disintegration—a state of symbolic poverty where the local environment no longer provides the primary meaning for the child's consciousness. The children are physically present in Mataram, but their intentionality is anchored in a globalised elsewhere, creating a psychological distance that weakens the communal bond essential for national integration.

Integration as Affective Resilience and Local Genius

Despite the digital influx, integration still occurs through affective anchors—moments when local traditions reclaim the child's attention. The research found that when local stories or Islamic animations like Nussa & Rara are introduced, there is a sense of familiar resonance.

One parent shared, *"My child imitates Naruto's fighting, but when he sees a local 'Peresean' (traditional Sasak stick fighting) performance, he stops and watches with a different kind of awe. He says, 'That is us, right, Dad?'"* This moment of That is us is the essence of integration. It is the re-awakening of the self-as-national within the child's consciousness. In Mataram, integration is not a government program but a lived experience of returning home to one's cultural symbols. The social capital of Mataram—its religious harmony and communal traditions—acts as a "latent consciousness" that can be activated when local narratives are given a digital voice.

From a sociocultural perspective, this phenomenon indicates that children's identities are shaped through the interplay between exposure to global media and meaningful local cultural experiences. A study published in a Scopus-indexed journal demonstrates that digital media plays a significant role in constructing cultural identity through symbolic representation and cross-cultural social interaction (Sugihartono et al., 2024; Yao, 2025).

The integration of local cultural values into media—including animation and traditional narratives—has been shown to strengthen identity awareness, a sense of belonging, and pride in one's own culture amidst the tide of globalisation (Sugihartono et al., 2024). In this context, community social capital, such as religious harmony and communal traditions, functions as a latent cultural consciousness that can be activated when children interact with relevant local symbols. Thus, cultural integration is not merely the result of structural intervention, but a lived experience born of the dialectic between global media and the revitalisation of local narratives in everyday life.

Conclusion

This phenomenological study reveals that for Generation Alpha in Mataram, animation consumption is not merely a leisure activity but a profound reconstruction of their life-world. By centring on the lived experiences of children, parents, and teachers, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The engagement with global animation creates a phenomenon of Identity Displacement, in which children subjectively internalise foreign cultural tropes—manifested in linguistic mimicry and individualistic archetypes—that distance them from local communal values. This is experienced not as a statistical impact, but as a shift in the child's daily intentionality toward globalised narratives.
2. The role of the family and school is experienced as a struggle for Communicative Resonance. Where unmediated digital consumption leads to a sense of cultural alienation, protective engagement by parents and teachers acts as a stabilising force. This mediation allows children to reclaim their local identity, transforming the screen from an alienating force into a shared space for meaning-making.
3. The integration of local narratives, such as Nussa & Rara or Sasak folklore, provides an Affective Anchor. When children encounter stories that resonate with their immediate religious and cultural environment, they experience a sense of homecoming. This local resonance proves vital in maintaining the symbolic bond required for national integration at the grassroots level.
4. National integration in the digital age is not a policy outcome but a continuous intersubjective effort. It is sustained by a local ecosystem that prioritises cultural presence over digital absence. In Mataram, the resilience of national identity depends on local agents'

ability to keep national and local life-worlds more emotionally compelling and meaningful than foreign digital alternatives.

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