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Cultural Resilience in Print Media: The Case of Djaka Lodang Magazine in Preserving Javanese Language and Local Wisdom

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Abstract

Djaka Lodang Magazine, a Javanese-language print medium established in 1971, represents a rare case of cultural resilience amid the dominance of globalized digital media. While existing scholarship on media globalization predominantly emphasizes cultural homogenization, digital disruption, and the decline of local traditions, insufficient attention has been given to how regional-language print media strategically negotiate market pressures while actively sustaining cultural identity. Drawing on the political economy of media and medium theory, this study examines Djaka Lodang as an intrinsic case of local media resilience in preserving the Javanese language and cultural values within a digitized media ecosystem. Using a qualitative intrinsic case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis, and analyzed thematically to identify patterns in editorial practices, institutional strategies, and cultural narratives. The findings reveal that Djaka Lodang operates not merely as a cultural archive but as an institutionalized mechanism of cultural transmission, sustained through linguistic authenticity, value-driven editorial policies, and community-based networks that selectively engage with, rather than submit to, commercial media logic. This study advances the political economy of media by demonstrating that regional-language print media can function as strategic sites of cultural resistance within contemporary media capitalism. The novelty of this research lies in its theoretical reconceptualization of local print media not as passive victims of digital transformation, but as adaptive actors that reshape media-market relations through cultural capital and community embeddedness. These findings contribute to broader debates on media resilience, cultural sustainability, and the future of minority-language media in the digital era.

KEYWORDS

global media; javanese language; local culture; regional magazine.

Introduction

The expansion of global media networks and the rapid development of digital communication technologies have fundamentally transformed the production, circulation, and consumption of culture. In societies characterized by extensive cultural and linguistic diversity such as Indonesia, these transformations generate structural tensions between global media flows and the sustainability of local identities. The digitization of media accelerates cross-border exchanges of information, ideology, and symbolic goods, positioning culture within a global marketplace where visibility, distribution, and legitimacy are increasingly determined by technological infrastructure and market logic. While digital media offer new opportunities for cultural dissemination, they simultaneously privilege dominant languages and commercially viable cultural forms, often marginalizing localized traditions and minority-language expressions.

From the perspective of the political economy of media, global media systems operate primarily according to principles of market expansion, commodification, and profit maximization (Longan et al., 1997). Steven Ross (in Longan et al., 1997) argues that political-economic decisions within global media industries are largely

shaped by calculations of market potential, frequently neglecting considerations of cultural preservation. This orientation contributes to unequal cultural exchange, where dominant cultures from economically powerful regions circulate more widely and gain structural advantages over local cultural forms. Longan et al. (1997) describe this condition as part of a broader process of cultural imperialism, in which global media flows reinforce cultural hierarchies and intensify homogenization. McQuail (2010) further emphasizes that minority cultures and identities often face systematic pressures within global communication systems that prioritize economic efficiency over cultural plurality. In this framework, media institutions are not neutral channels but key actors in shaping cultural environments through ownership patterns, distribution networks, and content selection.

In addition to economic structures, technological transformation also reshapes the cultural ecology in which media operate (Purkis, B., 2023). Medium theory highlights that changes in communication technology do not merely affect the speed or reach of messages but fundamentally alter patterns of perception, interaction, and meaning-making (Soetrisno-Van Eymeren et al., 2010). McLuhan's proposition that "the medium is the message" underscores how shifts from print to digital platforms reorganize the social environment in which culture is experienced. Hjarvard's (2008) concept of mediatization further explains how social institutions increasingly adapt to media logic, integrating media formats, rhythms, and values into their operations. Similarly, Jenkins (2006) describes convergence culture as a condition in which traditional and digital media intersect, generating new forms of interaction but also intensifying competition for attention and resources. These perspectives collectively suggest that the transition to digital media reconfigures not only economic structures but also symbolic authority and cultural legitimacy.

Within this broader transformation, local-language print media occupy a particularly complex position. Historically, regional-language publications have functioned as cultural institutions that sustain linguistic heritage, transmit local knowledge, and cultivate community identity (Tomaselli, 2016). In Indonesia, where hundreds of regional languages coexist alongside the national language, print media have played a crucial role in maintaining regional literacy ecosystems and reinforcing cultural continuity (Rohmawati et al., 2024). However, the rise of digital media challenges this role by shifting audience habits toward speed, visual immediacy, and algorithm-driven content circulation. Print media, especially those operating in regional languages, face declining readership, limited advertising revenue, and restricted access to digital infrastructure.

Existing scholarship has extensively analyzed digital transformation, media convergence, and the decline of print journalism at macro levels (Smith, 2018). Studies have demonstrated how globalization intensifies cultural homogenization and how digital platforms restructure communication ecologies. Research in the Indonesian context has also examined digital strategies for cultural dissemination and national media dynamics. Nevertheless, limited empirical attention has been directed toward long-standing regional-language print media as institutional actors navigating these structural shifts. What is known is that market-driven media systems tend to marginalize minority-language publications and that technological change alters patterns of cultural consumption. What remains insufficiently explored is how regional-language print media strategically negotiate political-economic constraints, technological adaptation, and cultural responsibility simultaneously within a digitized environment.

In particular, there is a lack of in-depth case studies

focusing on Javanese-language print media as sites where economic logic, technological change, and cultural preservation intersect. Regional print publications are often framed either as declining legacy media or as passive victims of digital disruption. Such perspectives risk overlooking their adaptive strategies, institutional resilience, and cultural agency. Understanding how these media operate requires integrating political-economic analysis with attention to medium-specific characteristics and cultural practices.

Addressing this gap, this study examines Djaka Lodang Magazine, a Javanese-language publication established in 1971, as an intrinsic case of local media resilience. For more than five decades, Djaka Lodang has functioned as a platform for the circulation of Javanese language, literature, and cultural reflection within Yogyakarta and beyond. Drawing on the political economy of media and medium theory, this research analyzes how Djaka Lodang navigates market limitations, media convergence, and institutional constraints while sustaining linguistic authenticity and cultural values. This study focuses on Djaka Lodang's cultural strategies, political-economic constraints, and its role in maintaining local identity in a globalized media environment. By positioning the magazine not merely as a declining print artifact but as an adaptive cultural institution operating within contemporary media capitalism, this research contributes to broader debates on media resilience, minority-language sustainability, and the cultural consequences of digital transformation.

Methods

Research Design

This study adopts an interpretive paradigm and employs a qualitative intrinsic case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of *Djaka Lodang* Magazine as a local-language cultural medium. An intrinsic case study was selected because the research focuses on the uniqueness and specificity of the case itself, rather than using it to illustrate broader theoretical generalizations (Ridder, 2017). This approach allows for a contextual and nuanced exploration of cultural preservation practices within a regional-language media institution (Tellis, 1997).

This study adopts a qualitative intrinsic case study approach to examine Djaka Lodang Magazine as a form of local-language media resilience in the context of globalization and digital media transformation (Stake, 1995). The case was purposively selected due to its long-standing commitment to using the Javanese language and its value-driven editorial orientation, which are central to the issues discussed in the results and discussion sections.

Data Collection

Data were collected through multiple qualitative techniques, including in-depth interviews with *Djaka Lodang* editorial staff, direct observation of editorial activities, and document analysis of selected magazine editions. The use of multiple data sources enabled methodological triangulation, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of editorial strategies, cultural positioning, and adaptation processes within the magazine's operational context (Yin, 1987).

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with two key informants who are directly involved in the management and editorial decision-making processes of the magazine. To ensure ethical protection, the informants' specific institutional positions are not disclosed. In addition, document analysis was conducted on Djaka Lodang magazine editions published over a six-month period (February–July 2025) to examine recurring themes related to cultural preservation, language use, educational content, and editorial ideology. Non-participant

observation supported the analysis by providing contextual understanding of editorial routines and publication practices.

Research Location

The research was conducted in Yogyakarta, the city where *Djaka Lodang* was founded and continues to be published and distributed. As a recognized center of Javanese culture, Yogyakarta provides a critical socio-cultural context for examining the role of regional-language media in sustaining linguistic and cultural traditions amid ongoing media transformation.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to cultural preservation, editorial decision-making, and media adaptation strategies. The analysis followed an iterative process of coding, categorization, and interpretation, allowing themes to emerge inductively from the data while remaining informed by the study's theoretical framework. Data analysis employed thematic analysis, focusing on identifying patterns that reflect strategies of cultural preservation, institutional challenges, and adaptive responses to digitalization. The analytical process involved initial coding, thematic categorization, and interpretation informed by the political economy of media and medium theory, ensuring coherence with the theoretical framework applied in the discussion. Research credibility was strengthened through method triangulation across interviews, documents, and observation. Ethical considerations included informed consent, confidentiality, and the use of data exclusively for academic purposes.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied several strategies. First, data triangulation was employed by cross-checking interview data, observations, and documentary evidence. Second, a clear chain of evidence was maintained, linking research questions, data sources, analytical procedures, and conclusions. Third, detailed documentation of the research process and contextual descriptions enhanced transparency and analytical rigor. These measures collectively strengthen the validity and reliability of the qualitative findings. Researchers employed methodological triangulation to enhance the credibility of the findings by combining multiple data sources and data collection techniques. Triangulation was conducted through source triangulation, involving different informants, and technique triangulation, integrating in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Data from interviews were cross-checked with observational notes and archival materials from *Djaka Lodang* magazine to ensure consistency and reduce interpretive bias. All data were systematically transcribed, organized, and analyzed to allow for comparison across sources and methods, thereby strengthening the validity of the case study findings.

Result and Discussion

Language and Ideology: Linguistic Authority as Cultural Strategy

The findings reveal that *Djaka Lodang*'s survival is deeply rooted in its ideological commitment to linguistic authenticity. Since its establishment in 1971, the magazine has consistently employed refined and standardized Javanese (*Krama* and *Madya*), signaling a deliberate effort to preserve linguistic hierarchy, politeness norms, and ethical values embedded in Javanese culture. This choice is not merely stylistic but ideological, positioning language as a form of cultural authority.

Rather than adapting to simplified or hybrid language forms commonly found in digital communication, *Djaka Lodang* maintains linguistic rigor as a cultural stance. In this sense, language functions as both medium and message, reinforcing McLuhan's proposition that the characteristics of a medium shape cultural perception (Soetrismo -Van Eymeren et al., 2010). The magazine's consistent linguistic standardization reflects resistance to mediatization processes that often encourage cultural dilution (Hjarvard, 2008).

This ideological orientation is also historically rooted. Founded during a politically sensitive period, *Djaka Lodang* was shaped by its founder's background as a Javanese language educator, embedding educational and cultural preservation goals into its institutional identity. Supporting Kunandar and Hukaimah (2020), the findings suggest that founder idealism plays a decisive role in sustaining local-language media when commercial incentives are weak. This demonstrates that minority-language media resilience is not merely economic but ideological. Linguistic consistency becomes a strategic mechanism of cultural reproduction within a globalized media system (Eista & Abrar, 2013).

Economic Model: Cultural Idealism and Institutional Restraint

From a political economy perspective, *Djaka Lodang* operates outside dominant commercial media logic. The magazine deliberately limits commercial advertising, particularly advertisements written in Javanese, due to concerns over linguistic commodification. While this reinforces ideological coherence, it simultaneously constrains revenue streams and intensifies financial vulnerability.

This institutional restraint illustrates a tension between cultural idealism and economic sustainability. Unlike profit-driven media outlets oriented toward audience maximization, *Djaka Lodang* prioritizes cultural reproduction over market expansion. This positioning aligns with McQuail's (2010) argument that global media systems often subordinate cultural considerations to economic logic. However, *Djaka Lodang* represents a counter-model, where cultural integrity is prioritized even at the expense of financial growth.

Comparable challenges are observed in other regional-language publications such as *Manglé* in the Sundanese context (Rosmana, 2017), suggesting that structural marginalization of minority-language media is not an isolated case but part of a broader pattern within media capitalism (Natanael, 2024). The findings highlight that local media sustainability cannot be understood solely through profitability metrics. Instead, cultural commitment functions as an alternative economic rationale, reshaping how survival is conceptualized in the political economy of media.

Digital Strategy: Selective Adaptation Rather than Full Convergence

Digital transformation presents significant structural challenges for *Djaka Lodang*, including declining readership, limited regeneration of Javanese-language writers, and competition from digital platforms. While Jenkins (2006) describes convergence culture as the integration of traditional and digital media, *Djaka Lodang* demonstrates only partial convergence.

Its digital initiatives remain limited and cautious, reflecting institutional conservatism. This contrasts with newer cultural magazines that actively target younger audiences through aggressive digital engagement (Suseno & Wahyudi, 2020). *Djaka Lodang*'s approach can be described as selective adaptation: digital exposure is considered necessary for relevance, yet full transformation is restrained to preserve editorial identity (Raaziqin et al., 2022)

Yusuf (2023) notes that digital literacy initiatives may serve as bridges for minority-language sustainability, and *Djaka Lodang*'s initial steps toward digital publication indicate

awareness of this necessity. However, digitalization is treated as an extension of cultural mission rather than a strategy for market expansion. Saragih (2025) suggests that when guided by ethical commitments, digital journalism can function as a tool for language revitalization rather than commodification. Djaka Lodang's trajectory reflects this cautious reinterpretation of digital media. The case complicates deterministic assumptions that digital adaptation automatically ensures survival. Instead, it demonstrates how selective digital engagement may coexist with cultural conservatism.

Community Relations: Educational Networks as Cultural Infrastructure

Although Djaka Lodang does not operate a formal community organization, its collaboration with Javanese language teachers and schools forms an informal cultural network. These partnerships position the magazine as an educational extension, embedding it within local literacy ecosystems. Rianda et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of educational networks in sustaining minority-language media, and Djaka Lodang exemplifies this dynamic. Rather than relying on mass-market appeal, the magazine cultivates relational legitimacy through pedagogical alignment. This strategy reinforces its identity as a cultural steward rather than a commercial platform.

The content structure, including Pawiyatan (educational columns), cerbung (serialized fiction), Crita Cekak (short stories), Mesem Selawe (humor), and Jakading Lelembut (mystical narratives)—illustrates an integrative pedagogical approach (Mulyani, 2005). Cultural transmission is embedded within accessible narrative forms, sustaining engagement without compromising ideological goals. Budiharga et al. (2015) support the interpretation that Djaka Lodang consistently integrates Javanese ideology across textual dimensions.

Why it matters: Community-based cultural transmission strengthens institutional legitimacy and compensates for limited market power, demonstrating that minority-language media survival depends on relational embeddedness as much as economic strategy. The results demonstrate that Djaka Lodang's survival is shaped by the intersection of ideological commitment, institutional restraint, selective digital adaptation, and community-based cultural networks. Rather than functioning as a conventional commercial outlet, the magazine operates within a value-driven media logic that prioritizes linguistic integrity and cultural authority.

This case illustrates that local language print media resilience cannot be reduced to technological adaptation alone. Instead, survival emerges from the strategic negotiation of political-economic pressures, cultural responsibility, and media transformation. Djaka Lodang's experience therefore provides empirical grounding for understanding how minority-language media operate as active cultural institutions within globalized and mediated communication systems.

Cultural Idealism, Market Logic, and Structural Sustainability

One of the central tensions emerging from this study concerns whether Djaka Lodang's anti-advertising idealism strengthens cultural authority or undermines long-term sustainability. From a political economy perspective, the magazine's refusal to accept commercial advertisements, particularly in Javanese constitutes a deliberate rejection of commodification logic. This position reinforces symbolic legitimacy and aligns with McQuail's (2010) argument that ownership and market orientation fundamentally shape media practice. However, the findings indicate that such idealism simultaneously restricts financial flexibility, limits human resource regeneration, and constrains technological

innovation.

Unlike commercially adaptive local media such as Ancas Banyumasan (Suseno & Wahyudi, 2020), Djaka Lodang operates within a self-limiting economic structure. While this reinforces cultural authenticity, it creates structural vulnerability within a capitalist media ecosystem dominated by platform-based advertising economies. Similar tensions have been observed in Manglé (Rosmana, 2017) where prioritizing cultural preservation over market expansion reduces adaptive capacity. Thus, anti-commercial positioning functions both as cultural resistance and as an economic constraint (Tabroni & Sanusi, 2020). This finding extends political economy theory by illustrating how editorial idealism can operate simultaneously as symbolic capital and structural weakness within unequal media markets.

Linguistic Authority and Generational Accessibility

A second critical issue concerns the consistent use of standardized Javanese (Krama and Madya). While this practice sustains linguistic hierarchy and ethical values embedded in Javanese culture (Siregar, 2019), it raises the question of accessibility for younger generations whose daily communication patterns increasingly favor simplified or hybrid language forms (Dani, 2025).

From a mediatization perspective (Hjarvard, 2008), media not only transmit culture but also reshape linguistic norms through technological environments. By resisting linguistic simplification, Djaka Lodang positions itself against the informalization typical of digital communication cultures. This preserves authority but may simultaneously narrow generational reach. The issue, therefore, is not whether Krama preserves culture, it clearly does but whether strict linguistic preservation without adaptive mediation risks transforming the magazine into a symbolic archive rather than a living communicative space.

Educational collaboration with teachers and schools (Kunandar & Hukaimah, 2020) partially mitigates this limitation by institutionalizing readership within formal learning contexts. However, reliance on institutional networks rather than participatory youth engagement suggests a vertical rather than horizontal model of cultural transmission. Compared to more digitally interactive initiatives (Supratman, 2021), Djaka Lodang's approach reflects controlled preservation rather than negotiated cultural hybridity.

Digitalization: Symbolic Presence or Strategic Transformation?

The third reflective question concerns whether Djaka Lodang's digitalization is strategic or merely symbolic. While efforts to develop a digital version of the magazine have begun, the findings indicate that digital expansion remains cautious and limited. Social media utilization is minimal, and digital engagement strategies are not yet fully integrated into editorial workflows.

Research on digital cultural preservation emphasizes that sustainability requires technological integration, community participation, and institutional innovation (Cuikitalia, 2024). In Djaka Lodang's case, digital presence appears more defensive than transformative an attempt to maintain relevance rather than reconfigure audience interaction (Alamsyah, F. F. et, 2024). This contrasts with studies suggesting that redesign, visual adaptation, and platform optimization enhance youth engagement (Harnandy et al., 2024).

However, interpreting limited digitalization solely as weakness risks techno-determinism. As Couldry (2012) argues, everyday media practices shape belonging beyond technological sophistication. Djaka Lodang's cautious adaptation may reflect institutional culture, aging human resources, and founder-driven editorial ideology rather than technological incapacity. The lack of consistent governmental support further compounds structural limitations.

Thus, digitalization in Djaka Lodang operates within a paradox: it is necessary for intergenerational transmission (Anistya Ori, & Susanti, 2023), yet constrained by economic, institutional, and ideological boundaries. The magazine's transformation can therefore be understood as selective mediatization rather than full platform integration.

Reframing Local Media Resilience

Rather than portraying Djaka Lodang simply as a “guardian of tradition,” the findings suggest a more complex configuration of local media resilience. The magazine survives not because it has successfully commercialized or fully digitized, but because it maintains coherence between ownership structure, editorial ideology, and cultural mission. This coherence generates trust and legitimacy, particularly among educators and diaspora communities (Arifin, 2020).

At the same time, this coherence limits scalability and generational diversification. The case therefore challenges binary assumptions that survival depends either on commercialization or digital innovation. Instead, it demonstrates that cultural sustainability in regional-language media emerges from negotiated trade-offs between ideological consistency and adaptive flexibility.

By integrating political economy theory with mediatization analysis (Hjarvard, 2008), this study shows that local-language media resilience cannot be reduced to technological adoption alone. Structural ownership patterns, editorial authority, linguistic ideology, and policy environments collectively shape adaptive capacity. Djaka Lodang exemplifies a form of principled resilience stable yet constrained within a globalized media system increasingly governed by platform capitalism.

Limitations and Cautions

This study is limited by its single-case qualitative design focusing on *Djaka Lodang* magazine in Yogyakarta, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. The data, drawn from interviews and textual analysis, represent specific institutional perspectives rather than audience interpretations. Temporal differences between the 2017 and 2025 interviews may also affect data consistency. Therefore, the results should be viewed as context-specific insights into Javanese language and cultural mediation rather than universal conclusions.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies could extend this research by examining other regional-language media in Indonesia to compare strategies of linguistic and cultural preservation across contexts. Audience reception studies would also provide valuable insights into how readers interpret and engage with local-language publications in the digital age. In addition, longitudinal and digital ethnographic approaches could deepen understanding of how media institutions like *Djaka Lodang* evolve in response to generational change and technological transformation.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Djaka Lodang Magazine functions as a vital cultural institution in preserving the Javanese language and local identity amid globalization and digital media pressures. Its cultural resilience is sustained through consistent use of the Javanese language, educational-oriented content, and community-based distribution networks, positioning the magazine beyond a purely market-driven media model. This research contributes to media and cultural studies by extending debates on local media sustainability through the integration of media political

economy and medium theory within a regional-language print context. It shows that resistance to commercial advertising operates simultaneously as a cultural preservation strategy and a structural constraint, offering a nuanced understanding of how cultural idealism shapes media resilience.

The findings indicate that Djaka Lodang's sustainability is challenged by limited editorial regeneration, declining readership, and constrained digital adaptation. While its rejection of commercial advertising reinforces linguistic and ideological integrity, it also restricts financial flexibility and institutional innovation. Remedial efforts require policy support, intergenerational regeneration of cultural practitioners, and strategic digital integration to strengthen the magazine's reach and relevance, in line with global calls to safeguard linguistic and cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2015). Djaka Lodang magazine has preserved Javanese language and culture for over five decades and remains an important cultural reference despite challenges in regeneration, readership decline, and digital adaptation. Compared to other regional-language media such as *Manglé* and *Ancas Banyumasan*, Djaka Lodang represents a distinctive model of cultural resilience rooted in strong editorial idealism and linguistic consistency, contributing to broader discussions in cultural studies, media theory, and Southeast Asian communication research. Future studies should undertake comparative analyses of regional-language media across Indonesia to identify diverse models of cultural resilience. Audience reception research and longitudinal digital ethnography would further clarify how younger generations engage with local-language media within Indonesia's ongoing digital transition.

Local governments and educational institutions are expected to provide tangible support, both through policy frameworks and facilitation of distribution, to ensure the sustainability of Djaka Lodang. In addition, strengthening its digital presence is essential to enhance relevance among younger audiences. Although a digital magazine version of Djaka Lodang already exists, the optimization of its website and social media platforms remains crucial for broader engagement. Furthermore, efforts to maintain the quality of the editorial team should include structured training programs and regeneration strategies for Javanese language experts, ensuring the continuity and development of linguistic and editorial competencies.

Author contributions

Etik Anjar Fitriarti was primarily responsible for the conception and design of the study, data collection, analysis, and the overall writing of the manuscript. She led the development of the theoretical framework, interpretation of findings, and finalization of the article. Zahrotus Saidah contributed to the organization of data, literature review assistance, and manuscript preparation under the supervision of the main author. Both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

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