

## Population Dynamics in Digital Communication Transformation: Kajang Community in Bulukumba Regency

Zelfia<sup>1</sup>, Hafied Cangara<sup>2</sup>, Dwia Aries Tina Pulubuhu<sup>3</sup> and Andi Alimuddin Unde<sup>4</sup>

### Abstract

*In the rapid digital transformation, the urgency of understanding the population dynamics of the Kajang community in Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi, has become increasingly important. Kajang is a unique example of a community that maintains its cultural traditions while interacting with modernity, highlighting the complexity between cultural values and technology adoption. This research aims to fill gaps in knowledge about how the population dynamics of the Kajang community interact with digital communication transformation, as well as how cultural values are maintained. This research used qualitative methods, such as the Nvivo 12 Plus analysis tool, to organize, analyze, and explore qualitative data from interviews, documentation, and observations. The findings of this research indicate that technology adoption patterns among the Kajang community are influenced by the balance between traditional values and modernity, with factors such as technology accessibility, cultural values, and the influence of the social environment playing an important role in determining adoption rates. Kajang Luar tends to adopt technology more quickly than Kajang Dalam, reflecting the complexity of cultural dynamics and the influence of the social environment on technology adoption patterns within the community. Despite adjustments to the use of technology, especially in dealing with educational needs and emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kajang community still maintains their commitment to traditional values by not using it openly within their customary area, which reflects a skeptical attitude towards the use of technology communication, which could disrupt the balance of nature or threaten their cultural heritage..*

**Keywords:** Digital Communications, Technology Adoption, Digital Transformation.

### INTRODUCTION

Population dynamics are becoming increasingly complex and interesting in the digital transformation era that is developing rapidly. This phenomenon is triggered by changes in how humans interact and communicate via digital platforms (Debeljak & Dečman, 2022; Norling et al., 2022). Now, with increasingly sophisticated technology, it is possible to easily connect with people worldwide without the limitations of space and time (García de Velazco et al., 2024; Seignani, 2022). In the emerging era of digital transformation, changes in the way humans interact via digital platforms have influenced population dynamics in complex ways, giving rise to changes in global communication and connection patterns that are not limited by geographic or time boundaries.

Digital communication technology has provided various benefits for communities in the context of population. First, communication technology enables the fast and easy exchange of information between individuals in various locations, allowing them to connect and collaborate efficiently without being limited by geographic boundaries (Fung et al., 2023). Additionally, digital communication platforms such as social media enable communities to share experiences, knowledge, and support, strengthening social bonds and solidarity among their members (Ostertag & Ortiz, 2017; Stewart & Schultze, 2019). This technology also facilitates access to health services, education, and other information, improving the quality of life and empowering society (Martin

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Communication, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia, [zelfia.zelfiaa@gmail.com](mailto:zelfia.zelfiaa@gmail.com). <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-7281-3816>. (Corresponding author)

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Department of Communication, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia, [cangara\\_hafied@yahoo.com](mailto:cangara_hafied@yahoo.com). <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-6058-5973>

<sup>3</sup> Professor, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia. [dwiatn@unhas.ac.id](mailto:dwiatn@unhas.ac.id). <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6065-2412>

<sup>4</sup> Professor, Department of Communication, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia. [undealimuddin@yahoo.co.id](mailto:undealimuddin@yahoo.co.id). <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9619-9004>

et al., 2020; Wohlfart et al., 2023). Thus, communication technology has become a powerful instrument in strengthening communities and improving social welfare in the population context.

However, there are still obstacles, including technology acceptance (AlDreabi et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2023). Although digital transformation in communications offers many opportunities, not all individuals or communities accept these technologies quickly or have a sufficient understanding of how to use them effectively (Hasebrook et al., 2023; Thanomsing & Sharma, 2024). Inequalities in technology acceptance can strengthen social inequalities, limit participation in the digital economy, and exacerbate population disparities (Dutot, 2014; Ma et al., 2021). In addition, the growth of technology also raises ethical and security questions regarding privacy, data security, and technology use that can influence population dynamics in unexpected ways (Holtz et al., 2022; Ibrahim et al., 2023).

On the other hand, culture in a community has a very significant role in adopting and using digital communication technology. How individuals and groups view technology and cultural norms regarding its use can influence the level of technology adoption in a society (Choi & Chung, 2013; Fernández Robin et al., 2014). For example, in a technology-savvy culture, where social media and digital platforms are integral to daily life, the adoption of digital communication technologies may be higher. In contrast, adoption may be slower or limited in cultures that are more traditional or skeptical of new technology. Therefore, to understand how digital communication technologies influence population dynamics, it is important to consider the role of culture in their adoption and use within communities.

The Kajang people in Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi, firmly maintain their rich culture and traditions. Located in Tana Toa Village, they maintain the authenticity of their traditional customs, which are reflected in a simple lifestyle and respect for the natural environment (Megawaty, 2018). *Kajang Dalam*, one part of this community, upholds belief in their ancestral values, thus avoiding modern technology, which disturbs the balance with nature. They believe using technology can damage the sustainability of natural resources and human relations with the environment (Ichwan et al., 2021).

On the other hand, some parts of Kajang society, such as *Kajang Luar* or tau Lembang, are more open to change and modernization (Sashari & Alam, 2022). Although still deeply rooted in their culture, they accept some aspects of modern life, such as electricity use. However, these differences in views show the complexity of cultural dynamics in the region. Nevertheless, in the context of South Sulawesi, the Kajang community in Bulukumba Regency remains an example of a group that is persistent in maintaining its cultural heritage while showing varying degrees of acceptance of modernization.

Although many studies have been conducted to examine population dynamics in the digital communication transformation, there are still significant research gaps, especially in the context of the Kajang community in Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi. Existing research generally focuses on the general population or specific ethnic groups. At the same time, the Kajang community in Bulukumba is an interesting example because they maintain their strong traditions and culture while interacting with modernity. Through simultaneous and comprehensive research on the Kajang community, it is possible to understand better population dynamics in the context of digital transformation and how their traditional cultural values influence technology adoption and use patterns. Thus, it is hoped that this research can fill existing knowledge gaps and provide valuable insights for further understanding the relationship between population, culture, and technology in the digital era.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Kajang People

The Kajang Bulukumba People in South Sulawesi adhere to their rich traditions and culture and are firmly rooted in traditional values and close relationships with the surrounding environment. As a nature-loving ethnic group, they regard the forest as a revered and protected mother, reflecting a deep spiritual connection with nature. Implementing customary law, which is still in force today, indicates their determination to maintain local wisdom and a distance from modernization (Kambo, 2021; Sashari & Alam, 2022). Despite this, modern technological advances have entered their area. However, Kajang people tend to allow the use of electronic

devices that are a necessity for modern society, such as cell phones, even though they have limitations. This indicates that despite a push towards modernization, they still uphold their traditional values in daily life (Sashari & Alam, 2022; Zelfia et al., 2024).

In Kajang society, there are significant differences between *Kajang Luar* and *Kajang Dalam* regarding technology adoption and interaction with the outside world. *Kajang Luar*, more open to change and modernization, tends to adopt digital communication technology more quickly. Active interaction with the outside world, through formal education or contact with communities more open to technology, encourages them to adopt it. On the other hand, *Kajang Dalam*, which maintains more of its traditions and cultural values, faces challenges in adopting technology (Ichwan et al., 2021; Megawaty, 2018; Sashari & Alam, 2022).

Harmony with nature and respect for ancestral values make them more skeptical of technology that could disrupt the balance with nature or threaten their cultural heritage. These differences create digital inequality within the Kajang community, where *Kajang Luar* can better access digital economic opportunities and related information resources. At the same time, *Kajang Dalam* is at risk of being marginalized in the digital era. Therefore, understanding the internal dynamics between *Kajang Luar* and *Kajang Dalam* is important in designing strategies to reduce digital inequality and ensure that digital communications transformation considers both parts of society's unique needs and values.

## **Digital Communications**

Digital communication is exchanging information and interaction between individuals or groups using digital technology. With technological advances, digital communication has experienced rapid development, changing how humans interact, share information, and build relationships (Canale et al., 2022; Reyes, 2019). One of the main benefits of digital communication is the ease of conveying messages quickly and efficiently without being constrained by geographic distance. Through social media, email, and instant messaging applications, individuals can communicate instantly and in real-time with anyone worldwide. This enables faster exchange of information, more efficient collaboration, and expanded social networks globally (Nie, 2023; Rodrigues da Cunha Palmieri, 2023; Sevignani, 2024).

Even though it has various benefits, digital communication has several challenges that must be overcome. One of them is the privacy and data security risk, which increases with digital technology. Misuse of personal data, hacking attacks, and identity theft are real threats in the digital communications environment. In addition, the adoption of digital technology can also increase digital inequality, where individuals or groups with limited access to technology may need to include terms of access to information, economic opportunities, and social empowerment. Other challenges include social media addiction, the spread of false information or hoaxes, and the degradation of the quality of interpersonal communication due to dependence on technology (Ibrahim et al., 2023; Leite et al., 2024).

Overall, the development of digital communications has significantly impacted how humans interact and share information in the modern era. Despite providing benefits in terms of convenience and efficiency, some challenges need to be overcome, such as data privacy and security risks, digital inequality, and negative impacts on mental health and the quality of interpersonal communication. Therefore, it is important for individuals and society to thoroughly understand the dynamics of digital communications and develop the skills necessary to manage risks and maximize its benefits responsibly.

## **METHOD**

This research used qualitative methods to gain an in-depth understanding of population dynamics in the digital communication transformation among the Kajang community in Bulukumba Regency. A qualitative approach allows researchers to explore individuals' views, experiences, and attitudes within the context of their culture and environment. Data sources were obtained through interviews, documentation and observation, with the key informants being the community in the area. Through interviews, researchers got direct views from the Kajang people about how they understand and interact with digital technology daily. Documentation and observations also provide additional insight into their practices and life patterns related to technology use. The

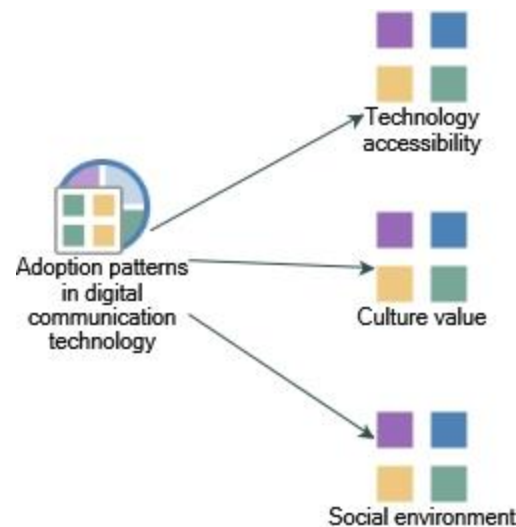
data obtained was transcribed and analyzed using the Nvivo 12 Plus analysis tool, which helps identify patterns, themes and trends that emerge from the qualitative data.

Nvivo 12 Plus is qualitative data analysis software that allows researchers to organize, analyze, and explore data more efficiently. It involves transcribing data from interviews, field notes, or other documents into the platform, where researchers can tag, categorize, and group the data according to specific themes or concepts. Additionally, Nvivo 12 Plus provides various analysis tools, including text search, data visualization, and report generation, that help researchers explore and interpret data in greater depth. Data validation is carried out through triangulation techniques, namely by comparing findings from various data sources, such as interviews, documentation and observations, to ensure the consistency and validity of the findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Technology Adoption Patterns Among the Kajang Community

The pattern of technology adoption, such as digital communication technology, among the Kajang community reflects the cultural dynamics and traditional values they adhere to. Although there are variations in technology adoption among individuals and groups, the Kajang people generally maintain a balance between tradition and modernity. Several factors influencing technology adoption patterns among the Kajang community include technology accessibility, cultural values, and the influence of the social environment.



**Figure 1.** Technology Adoption Patterns Among the Kajang Community

Source: Processed by researchers with Nvivo 12 Plus, 2023

Technology accessibility is a key factor in technology adoption patterns among the Kajang community. For example, the remote geographical location of Tana Toa Village, where the Kajang traditional community lives, can be an obstacle to obtaining stable and reliable access to telecommunications infrastructure. This obstacle can slow the adoption of digital technology, especially in terms of using the internet and other digital platforms that require good connectivity. Furthermore, cultural values and traditions significantly influence technology adoption patterns among the Kajang community. A culture steeped in values such as harmony with nature and simple living can influence their views on modern technology. This can encourage a sceptical tendency towards using technology contrary to traditional values, such as technology that can disrupt the balance of nature or simple life.

“The Kajang proverb states that guarding your eyes, guarding your tongue, and maintaining your behaviour are the main keys. However, the presence of modern technology may affect commitment to these values. Therefore, this message must always be conveyed by its name, "Pasang Ri Kajang". This emphasizes the importance of maintaining and maintaining traditional values consistently” (Interview, 22 October 2022).

Culture and traditions significantly influence technology adoption patterns among the Kajang community. Values such as harmony with nature and simple living, a strong part of their culture, influence their views on modern technology. This can encourage a sceptical tendency towards using technology contrary to traditional values, such as technology that can disrupt the balance of nature or simple life. The Kajang proverb states that guarding your eyes, guarding your tongue, and maintaining your behaviour are the main keys. However, the presence of modern technology may affect commitment to these values. Therefore, this message must always be conveyed by its name, "Pasang Ri Kajang". This emphasizes the importance of maintaining traditional values consistently.

The influence of the social environment also plays an important role in the pattern of technology adoption in the Kajang community. Interaction with communities that are more open to modernity or with individuals from outside their community, such as those pursuing formal education, can encourage adopting digital communication technologies.

“Since 2019, when the COVID-19 outbreak spread, peoples have also been forced to use technology, especially for their children's education. In this context, traditional leaders agreed to allow the use of technology as long as it was not done openly within traditional areas” (Interview, 12 December 2022).

The influence of the social environment plays an important role in technology adoption patterns in the Kajang community. Interaction with communities more open to modernity and children's increasingly urgent educational needs, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, has encouraged digital communication technology among them. Despite adjustments to the use of technology, especially for educational purposes, the Kajang community maintains an agreement not to use it openly within their customary area, reflecting their commitment to traditional values.

In the context of technology adoption patterns among the Kajang community, cultural factors, technological accessibility, and social-environmental influences play a key role. Cultures strong with traditional values, such as harmony with nature and simple living, tend to influence their views on modern technology. Although there is a need for technology, especially regarding children's education, this community shows scepticism towards using technology, which is considered to disrupt traditional values. In addition, technological accessibility is also a barrier, especially due to remote geographical locations. On the other hand, the influence of the social environment, especially interactions with communities that are more open to modernity, can encourage technology adoption among the Kajang community. Even though there have been adjustments to the use of technology, especially in dealing with educational needs and emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kajang community continues to maintain their commitment to traditional values by not using it openly within their customary area.

This analysis illustrates the complex dynamics between cultural, environmental and technological factors in technology adoption patterns among the Kajang community. Even though technology is needed for certain purposes, such as education, this community still tries to maintain their identity and cultural values. This reflects the dynamics in many communities where modernity and tradition clash. In this regard, further research could delve deeper into how these communities manage technology integration with their traditional values and its impact on cultural and environmental sustainability in the future.

## **Digital Communication Transformation on Population Dynamics**

The transformation of digital communications has had a different impact on population dynamics between two parts of Kajang society, namely *Kajang Luar* and *Kajang Dalam*. *Kajang Luar*, more open to change and modernization, is experiencing faster adoption of digital communications technology. More active interaction with the outside world, including through formal education or contact with communities more open to technology, can incentivize adopting the technology. In contrast, *Kajang Dalam*, which maintains more of its traditions and cultural values, may experience greater challenges in adopting technology. Harmony with nature and respect for ancestral values may make them more sceptical of technology that disrupts the balance with nature or threatens their cultural heritage.

However, differences in technology adoption patterns between *Kajang Luar* and *Kajang Dalam* can also create digital inequality within the Kajang community. Parts more open to modernization can better access digital economic opportunities and information resources related to digital communications transformation. Meanwhile, parts that maintain more tradition may risk being marginalized or marginalized in the digital era. Therefore, in formulating policies related to digital communication transformation in the Kajang community, it is important to pay attention to the internal dynamics between *Kajang Luar* and *Kajang Dalam* and efforts to reduce digital inequality within the community.

Even in the context of the social environment, such as formal education activities, or situations that worsen social aspects, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the pattern of technology adoption among the Kajang community is still reflected in the dynamics of the culture and traditions they adhere to. Although formal educational activities can provide additional impetus for technology adoption, especially amid the COVID-19 pandemic when distance education has become essential, cultural values and views towards technology still play an important role in determining adoption rates. For *Kajang Luar*, which may be more open to change and modernization, situations like the pandemic can accelerate the adoption of technology as a solution to meet education and communication needs. However, for *Kajang Dalam*, who are more steadfast in maintaining tradition and harmony with nature, this situation may strengthen their sceptical attitude towards technology contrary to their cultural values.

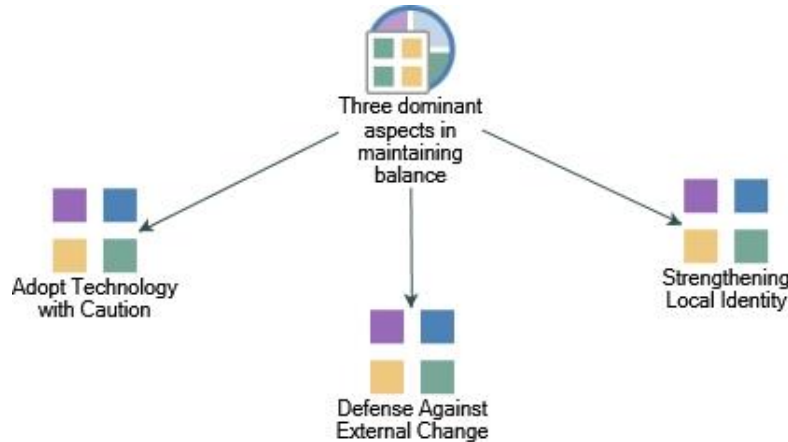
In the COVID-19 pandemic, especially where the need for technology to address communication and education challenges has become increasingly urgent, it is important to understand how cultural and social environmental factors influence technology adoption patterns among the Kajang community. While technology adoption can bring benefits in overcoming challenges such as the pandemic, it is also important to note that the Kajang community has unique needs and traditional values that must be respected and considered in designing appropriate technology solutions. Thus, further research on the interactions between cultural factors, social environment, and technology adoption among the Kajang community could provide valuable insights for designing context-sensitive and sustainable policies.

Population dynamics in the context of digital communication transformation in Kajang society reveal the complexity of the interaction between cultural, technological and social-environmental factors. Changes in technology adoption patterns reflect the challenges and opportunities faced by various groups in society. By understanding these dynamics in more depth, it is possible to identify patterns of change in population and their impact on social inequality and gaps in access to digital resources. Therefore, it is important to view this dynamic critically, not only as a purely technological phenomenon but also as an integral part of a wider social process, which requires a holistic and responsive approach to the needs and aspirations of the Kajang community.

### **Population Dynamics: The Balance between Modern Technology and Traditional Values**

In the digital transformation era, which is increasingly penetrating various aspects of life, especially with the emergence of modern technology, there is an interesting dynamic between technological progress and traditional values that a society upholds. The balance between modern technology and traditional values is a relevant conversation in many social and cultural contexts. Even though technology brings convenience and efficiency in various aspects of life, traditional values also play an important role in maintaining a culture's identity, harmony and sustainability. Therefore, exploring these dynamics is important to understanding how a society adapts to modern technology without losing its cultural roots.

In the context of population dynamics related to the balance between modern technology and traditional values in the Kajang traditional community, three dominant aspects need to be considered:



**Figure 2.** Dominant aspects that need to be considered

Source: Processed by researchers with Nvivo 12 Plus, 2023

Careful adoption of technology is characteristic of the behavioural patterns of the Kajang community, which tends to consider its impact on traditional values preserved for centuries. They tend to maintain traditional practices that are an integral part of their cultural identity while remaining open to the benefits of technology that can improve their overall well-being. This selective approach reflects their efforts to balance cultural heritage and modern technological advances in everyday life.

Defence against external change is an important aspect of the identity of the Kajang people, who often use traditional values as a bulwark against external cultural influences that could threaten the continuity of their culture and identity. In this context, maintaining a balance between introducing new technology and maintaining traditional values is key in maintaining their population dynamics. By maintaining the values of their ancestral heritage while utilizing modern technology, they strive to maintain the continuity of their culture while still adapting to changing times.

Strengthening local identity is the main focus for the Kajang community in facing the increasingly strong currents of globalization and modernization. They recognize the importance of maintaining their traditional cultural values while integrating modern technology to strengthen local identity. With this approach, they maintain their ancestral heritage and adopt technology as a tool to stay connected to the outside world holistically and responsively with great care.

“The message I always remember from my grandmother is "Jagai adatta", or guard your traditions. Even though I am active on social media, I still adhere to this message by sharing information about traditional events and activities. This is part of our culture. Even though we use digital media, we are reminded not to be seen openly in traditional areas. This is also a message from grandmother and all traditional leaders inside” (Interview, 22 October 2022).

In the face of increasingly strong currents of globalization and modernization, the Kajang community emphasizes the importance of maintaining their local identity by adhering to traditional cultural values while carefully adopting modern technology. Messages passed down from generation to generation, such as "Jagai adatta", emphasize the importance of preserving their customs and traditions. Even though they are active on social media, they still adhere to the message by sharing information about traditional activities while avoiding appearing too open in traditional areas. In doing so, they maintain a balance between strengthening local identity and connecting with the outside world through technology, making technology a tool to strengthen, not replace, their traditional identity and culture.

Population dynamics in the Kajang traditional community reflect efforts to balance modern technology and traditional values. Careful adoption of technology, defence against external change, and strengthening local identity are the foundations for developing policies responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people of Kajang. However, the biggest challenge remains maintaining local identity while remaining connected to the

outside world. In this context, technology is not only a tool to strengthen traditional identity and culture but must also be directed at supporting the sustainability and survival of their cultural heritage.

This dynamic highlights the importance of maintaining a delicate balance between introducing modern technology and maintaining traditional values. By considering the messages inherited from their grandmothers, such as "Jagai adatta", the Kajang people recognize the importance of maintaining their customs and traditions. Even though they are active on social media, they still respect the message by sharing information about traditional activities while being careful not to be too open in traditional areas. In doing so, they emphasize that technology must strengthen, not replace, their traditional identity and culture.

The implications of population dynamics in the context of digital communication transformation for the Kajang community include the need for an approach sensitive to local cultural needs and values. Although adopting technology brings opportunities to connect with the outside world and increase access to information, it is important for digital communications policies and practices to exercise caution in introducing new technologies that may disrupt the balance between modernity and tradition. This emphasizes the importance of building technological solutions that can be well integrated with the culture and traditional values of the Kajang people, thereby strengthening their local identity and supporting the sustainability of their rich cultural heritage.

The transformation of digital communications in the Kajang community is a unique challenge closely related to population dynamics and traditional values. Adopting modern technology tends to be done cautiously, as the Kajang people are very concerned about its impact on their rich cultural identity. Although some of them are open to the benefits of technology in improving well-being, they are also determined to maintain traditional practices that have been an integral part of their lives for centuries. In this case, the balance between introducing new technology and maintaining traditional values is key to understanding how the digital communication transformation occurs among the Kajang community.

The approach taken by the Kajang community reflects their efforts to face the increasingly strong currents of globalization and modernization without losing their cultural roots. Strengthening local identity through integrating modern technology with traditional cultural values is a strategy taken to strengthen their identity in the digital era. Even though they are involved in digital communication, messages passed down from generation to generation about maintaining customs and traditions remain the guidelines that are firmly adhered to. Thus, the digital communication transformation among the Kajang community is not just about adopting technology but also about how that technology can be used to strengthen, not replace, their traditional identity and culture.

## **CONCLUSION**

The pattern of technology adoption, especially in using digital communication models among the Kajang community, shows that cultural factors, technological accessibility, and the influence of the social environment play a key role. Even though technology is needed for certain purposes, such as education or in crisis situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic, this community still tries to maintain their identity and cultural values. This reflects the dynamics in many communities where modernity and tradition clash. Population dynamics in the Kajang traditional community also highlight the importance of maintaining a balance between adopting modern technology and maintaining traditional values. To stay connected to the outside world without losing their cultural identity, these communities take a cautious approach to the use of technology. They consider the impact of technology on the values of their ancestral heritage while still upholding traditional practices that have become an integral part of their lives. Messages handed down from generation to generation about maintaining customs and traditions have become firmly adhered to guidelines, even in digital communication. Thus, the digital communication transformation among the Kajang community is not only about technology adoption but also about how it can strengthen their traditional identity and culture.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors state that there are no conflicts of interest related to the publication of this work. Furthermore, they have fully addressed ethical concerns such as plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and falsification, double publication or submission, and redundancy.



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