INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIETY, CULTURE & LANGUAGE

The Impact of Media Literacy and Social Identity on Teachers' Lifestyle

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Abstract This study examined the impact of media literacy and social identity on physical education (PE) teachers' life styles in Surabaya, Indonesia. Drawing on social identity and cultural capital theories, this study interrogated how teachers juggle global media powers and local customs. Data were collected from 189 PE teachers in high schools using three measures: 1) Falsafi and Niroomand's (2015) 20-item Media Literacy Questionnaire, 2) Yazıcı's (2016) 28-item Identity Scale, and 3) an adapted version of Wilson's (1983) FANTASTIC Lifestyle Inventory. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis confirmed that media literacy significantly boosted social identity and had a significant impact on lifestyle choices. Social identity forecasted lifestyle signigficantly and mediated the media literacy-lifestyle relationship as well. Findings indicated that greater media literacy improved social identity, which in turn nurtured lifestyles with blends of local values and global teaching models. The results identify PE teachers as cultural mediators and emphasize the necessity of comprehensive professional development programs.

Keywords: *Media literacy, Social identity, Lifestyle, Sports teachers, Women and men*

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Received: May 2025
Revised: July 2025
Accepted: July 2025
Published: August 2025

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1. Introduction

During the past decades, the concept of "lifestyle" has been the most important concept for social and market research. Lifestyle is considered by researchers as a mix of behavior, cultural consumption patterns, and leisure activities determined by social, economic, and cultural forces (Adler, 2010; Herdiana & Usman, 2019). With this in mind, the media, as one of the most crucial cultural aspects, plays an imperative role in defining and redefining lifestyles within modern society (Leban et al., 2021). The information revolution and the rise of communication technologies have exposed societies to a condition of media message saturation, messages that affect not only beliefs and emotions but also social individuals' identities (Dunas & Vartanov, 2020).

https://doi.org/10.22034/ijscl.2025.2008415.3121

Social identity, as one's own idea of his or her place in social groups, is shaped by geographical, historical, and educational conditions, but today, global media have changed this process by providing non-local models (Abidin et al., 2023). Fujita et al. (2018) illustrate that the consumption of foreign media reconstructs social identity by spreading new lifestyles. In this context, "media literacy" acts as a mediator through a bundle of analytical and critical skills in comprehending media content. Media literacy makes it possible to construct hybrid or subculture identities in globalized media environments (Livingstone, 2010; Sivrikaya, 2020). Especially in cultures such as Indonesia, it is important since digital media are transforming education and way of life at a very rapid pace. However, despite previous studies on the global interaction of social identity, media literacy, and lifestyle (e.g., Fujita et al., 2018; Aini et al., 2023), the position of physical education (PE) teachers as "cultural mediators" within it has been disregarded. This could be due to the fact that they play a two-fold role of PE instructors and lifestyle role models. PE teachers are overloaded with opposing mass media messages: the media, on the one hand, promulgates hedonistic principles of flawless physical appearance and out-of-scale competition (Sivrikaya, 2020), while, on the other hand, the education system appeals to communalist and non-hierarchical principles of schooling (Aini et al., 2023). This struggle reflects the need to examine the process through which media literacy intervenes in the reception of these discourses and builds PE teachers' social identity. Moreover, within Indonesia, as an extremely culturally diversified society, PE teachers go through a tension of maintaining indigenous customs (e.g., pencak silat) and complying with international media trends. Yet, the dynamic was not empirically addressed in metropolitan places like Surabaya, which is a center of aquatic sports activities and vocational instruction.

The following hypotheses are grounded in previous theoretical and empirical work and address gaps in current knowledge about the intersection of media literacy, social identity, and lifestyle among Indonesian physical education teachers. Although previous research, such as Abbasi Moghaddam et al. (2020), offers the overall relationship between social identity, media literacy, and lifestyle within sports organizations, their emphasis on macro organizational models overlooks human-level details of PE teachers as cultural and pedagogical change agents. In contrast to their organization-level interest, this research shifts the focus back to micro-level lives of Surabaya sports educators in Indonesia, a context where globalization, saturation of digital media, and local traditions interact with each other uniquely. The hypotheses collectively aim to contribute to an understanding of how physical educators negotiate their twin roles as cultural guardians and media consumers with implications for culturally responsive education interventions.

H1: Media literacy significantly influences Indonesian teachers' social identity.
H2: Media literacy significantly influences Indonesian teachers' lifestyle choices.
H3: Social identity significantly influences Indonesian teachers' lifestyle choices.
H4: Social identity mediates the relationship between media literacy and lifestyle choices among Indonesian teachers.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Media Literacy

Media literacy, one of the essential competencies of the digital era, enables individuals to read, analyze, and deconstruct media messages from diverse sources (Kellner & Share, 2007). The competencies are even more necessary considering the velocity with which knowledge, typically erroneous or sensationalized, is shared through political, social, and cultural networks (Trültzsch-Wijnen, 2020). For instance, selective editing of information in media networks can alter public opinion, potentially leading to ill-informed decisions with social consequences (Lanx, 2008). In education, media literacy can allow them to identify credible material, dispel misinformation, and critically consume digital narratives.

Several studies have shown that media literacy, as a critical, analytical, and productive competency, is essential in variously interpreting the messages in media as well as in combating disinformation (Abuín-Penas et al., 2024; Antoliš, 2024; Singh & Kumar, 2025). Butler (2019), Gammon and White (2011), and De Abreu (2010) emphasize the imperative of media literacy education in schools,

especially among educators who, as the students' models, need the competencies of media analysis, detecting biases, and enabling students to face the challenges of the information age. For example, curriculum units in active teaching methods, such as critical analysis of misinformation in news, have helped improve learners' ability to evaluate sources of information (Allaire-Duquette et al., 2025; Oanh et al., 2024). Studies also show that media literacy enhances not only technical but also socio-emotional skills, such as empathy and critical thinking, which are essential for a democratic society (Polanco-Levicán & Salvo-Garrido, 2022; Tsortanidou et al., 2020; Mezei, 2020). These trainings have been hampered, however, by issues such as inadequate time (Fedorov et al., 2016), lack of standardized curricula (Žarić, 2024), and unequal access to technology (Moreno-Gil, 2024). Overall, these findings call for the inclusion of media literacy in school curricula to promote knowledge-based decision-making and critical thinking.

2.2. Social Identity and Media

Social identity, the cornerstone of psychosocial development, is the way in which one identifies oneself within groups of people in relation to others (Abrams & Hogg, 2010). It emerges as a consequence of one's awareness of position within social groups influenced by history, culture, and media (Ananyeva, 2025; Nugraeni, 2024; Pangesti et al., 2024). Such identity is dynamic instead of being static, with the ongoing revision by social environment and interpersonal interaction (Sugimura et al., 2024). Social identity was theorized by Jenkins (1996) as a dynamic equilibrium of differences and similarities in which group identities are created through shared values, symbols, and traditions. National identity, for example, will transcend sub-identities and lead to a singular yet hierarchical structure.

Social identity formation is more complex with media consumption. Adolescents facing identity crises are able to adopt or reject ideals from media, as evidence shows the connection between media consumption and self-perception changes (Segre, 2012). In sports settings, media discourses celebrating outstanding athleticism are able to interfere with local cultural values, disrupting the identities of coaches and players (Abbasi Moghaddam et al., 2020). This tension underscores the need to investigate how media literacy mediates identity construction in globally networked but culturally diverse settings.

Several studies have emphasized this concept in scientific research. The media have been shown through research to change local identities, introducing the formation of hybrid or subculture identities by demonstrating global patterns of behavior and values (Basri & Afifulloh, 2025; Nedashkivska et al., 2024; Lu & Chu, 2012). Especially in nations with rich cultural diversity, like Indonesia, experience with international media among teachers has created conflicting demands between preserving local heritage and accepting modern lifestyle (Hamdiah & Ahnaf, 2024; Mukti et al., 2024; Hiswara et al., 2023). Educational case studies also show evidence that education curricula involving the teaching of media analysis allow learners to understand the power of the media in structuring individual and collective identity and reassess their own identity through the analysis of racial, gender, and class representation (Lind, 2019; Dines et al., 2018; Parker et al., 2017). This process not only increases social awareness but also helps in the reduction of stereotypes and reinforcement of intercultural communication (Ajisafe & Dada, 2025; Popoola et al., 2023; Mamzer, 2018).

2.3. Lifestyle and Media

Lifestyle, as a habitual way of day-to-day activity that is shaped by culture, economy, and society (Corbett et al., 2024), is a model for explaining individual and collective choice. Adler (2010) believed that lifestyle was set early in life and affects lifelong habits and decision-making processes. More recent research adds to this by highlighting how globalization and digital media usher in hybrid lifestyles, which mix local norms with global norms (Deal et al., 2014).

Lifestyle decisions are most apparent in sports education (Ferry & Lund, 2018). Social media health programs demonstrate how online media can reinforce or challenge habituated lifestyles depending on the users' critical engagement (Allman-Farinelli & Nour, 2021). The findings confirm Adler's (2010)

hypothesis that lifestyle is both a construct specific to an individual and a sociocultural fact, which calls for interdisciplinarity of research.

Lifestyle has been explained in various studies as a collection of conduct, consumption habits, and recreational activities that are influenced by socio-economic and cultural circumstances, including the media (Budhathoki, 2025; Zheltukhina, 2015). Digital media have been shown to have transformed people's lifestyles, especially in urban communities, to promote beauty, success, and consumerism values (Delicia et al., 2025; Kukreja, 2025; Morais et al., 2024). For example, Indonesian research has shown how powerful groups of sports educators switch between local habits (e.g., traditional sports) and global media habits (e.g., commercial fitness) and how this affects their professional and personal lives (Ling & Zhao, 2024; Simanjuntak et al., 2025). In other studies, increasing teachers' media literacy has enabled them to campaign for healthier lifestyles based on educational values by criticizing commercial messages and making better choices (Bergsma, 2011; Bergsma & Carney, 2008; Scull et al., 2018). However, evidence from studies indicates that digital inequalities and lack of access to learning materials in some regions are the main obstacles to the revolution of media-literate practices (Chai, 2025; Menggo, 2024; Lubis et al., 2024; Robinson et al., 2020; Van Dijk, 2017).

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

Two hundred male and female sports teachers working in high schools in Surabaya, Indonesia, aged between 25 and 45 (M = 32.50), were selected as the statistical population of this study. Participants were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure representation across gender, school type (public/private), and geographic zones within Surabaya. To qualify, all participants held a bachelor's degree in PE, Sports Science, or related fields, with teaching experience ranging from 2 to 20 years (M = 8.5 years, SD = 4.2). Teachers specializing in aquatic sports (e.g., swimming and traditional boat racing) constituted 30% of the sample, reflecting Surabaya's prominence in water-based athletics.

From an initial pool of 230 eligible teachers, 30 were excluded due to:

1. Incomplete demographic or consent forms (n = 18),
2. Less than 2 years of teaching experience (n = 10),
3. Non-participation in digital media platforms (e.g., Instagram, YouTube) for professional purposes (n = 2).

The exclusion criteria ensured participants were actively engaged in both pedagogical and media-driven aspects of sports education. In addition to that, the data for 11 teachers were excluded from the analysis due to incompleteness. Finally, the data from 189 participants were used as the basis for the analysis.

3.2. Instruments

All scales were translated into Bahasa Indonesia using back-translation and validated for cultural relevance. The construct validity of the three translated scales was rigorously tested. For all three scales, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) corroborated their dimensional structure, with factor loadings exceeding the threshold of ≥0.50. All scales demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.82$), providing support for their reliability in assessing the targeted constructs in Surabaya's physical education teacher population.

3.2.1. Media Literacy Questionnaire

Falsafi and Niroomand's (2015) Media Literacy Questionnaire was applied to assess media literacy. The scale contains 20 items in 5 dimensions: Understanding the contents of media message (4 items), knowing the hidden objectives of a media message (4 items), deliberate choices of media messages (4 items), critical view on media messages (4 items), and analysis of media messages (4 items). Reliability was very high in the original study (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.91$) and was replicated in the current sample ($\alpha = 0.89$).

3.2.2. Identity Scale

Social identity was assessed with Yazıcı's Identity Scale (2016), which mainly focuses on the social aspect of identity (Demir & Tuzcuoğlu, 2023). A 28-item scale that reflects people's self-concept as members of social groups and is applied in the measurement of attitudes towards variations in collective identity. The scale has five subscales: gender identity (6 items), national identity (5 items), ethnic identity (6 items), political identity (6 items), and religious identity (6 items). Internal consistency was high in the original study (α = 0.93) and was likewise high in this study (α = 0.90).

3.2.3. Lifestyle Assessment Inventory

Lifestyle was tested using Wilson's (1983) Lifestyle Assessment Inventory (FANTASTIC), which was adapted in this study to suit the scenario of contemporary PE teachers. This 28-item tool measures three subscales: physical, emotional, and social lifestyle factors. The word "FANTASTIC" is the acronym of the names of the nine indices in which 28 items are distributed: F = Family and friends (2 items); A = Activity and Associativity (3 items); N = Nutrition (3 items); T = Tobacco (2 items); A = Alcohol and other substances (6 items); S = Sleep and stress (3 items); T = Type of personality (3 items); I = Introspection (3 items); and C = Control of health (3 items) (Wilhelm et al., 2016). Reliability in Wilson's original study was moderate (α = 0.78), and in this study, it improved to α = 0.82 after adaptation.

The original version of the inventory was developed over forty years ago, yet it is important to note that the FANTASTIC Lifestyle Assessment has undergone multiple adaptations and validations in various populations and contexts over the years, including recent studies (e.g., Wilhelm et al., 2016). In our research, we specifically adapted the items and language of the inventory to reflect the contemporary realities and lifestyle factors relevant to today's physical education teachers, including aspects of digital media use, modern stressors, and current health behaviors. The construct validity of the adapted version was substantiated using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

3.3. Procedure

The required data was collected through different scales. The scales were distributed among 200 teachers. Finally, 189 scales were used as the basis for the analysis. The data analysis followed a structured procedure to test the hypothesized relationships. First, normality assumptions were assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, which confirmed normal distribution for all variables ($p > 0.05$). Then, Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to find any probable relationship between the variables. To evaluate the direct and mediated effects hypothesized, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was performed using LISREL 8.8. Path coefficients (β) and t-values were analyzed to test significance ($t > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$). For mediation (H4), bootstrapping with 1,000 resamples confirmed indirect effects. Results were visualized in a path diagram (Figure 1) and summarized in tables (Tables 1–3), ensuring transparency in hypothesis validation.

4. Results

The determination between parametric and nonparametric statistical tests is contingent upon the evaluation of data distributional assumptions. A critical step in this process involves assessing adherence to normality, for which the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed alongside complementary analyses (e.g., Shapiro-Wilk test) to rigorously verify Gaussian assumptions.

Table 1
The Normality of the Data

Research Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Media Literacy	.059	189	.200	.985	189	.396
Social Identity	.091	189	.164	.972	189	.152
Life Style	.078	189	.200	.981	189	.213

These tests quantify deviations from normality by comparing observed data distributions against theoretical expectations, ensuring methodological alignment with parametric test prerequisites. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicates that the data distribution is normal (Table 1). According to the findings of the analysis, if the sig is greater than 0.05, parametric tests should be used to analyze the data.

In order to find the correlations between the variables, Pearson's product-moment correlation was used. As Table 2 shows, all the variables correlated significantly. The pattern maintains that media literacy is positively correlated with social identity ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.01$) and lifestyle ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$). Between the two variables, media literacy is more strongly associated with social identity than with lifestyle. Social identity is also correlated with lifestyle ($r = 0.86$, $p < 0.01$). In fact, social identity has stronger associations with lifestyle domains ($r = 0.86$, $p < 0.01$) than with media literacy factors ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 2

Pearson Correlations Among Constructs and Subconstructs

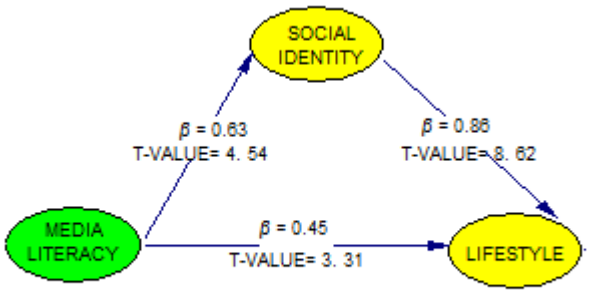
Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Media Literacy	1															
2. Understanding Messages	.82**	1														
3. Identifying Objectives	.79**	.71**	1													
4. Deliberate Choices	.76**	.62**	.69**	1												
5. Critical Evaluation	.85**	.73**	.75**	.68**	1											
6. Message Analysis	.83**	.70**	.74**	.66**	.79**	1										
7. Social Identity	.63**	.52**	.55**	.48**	.59**	.57**	1									
8. Gender Identity	.41**	.38**	.36**	.32**	.42**	.40**	.74**	1								
9. National Identity	.57**	.49**	.51**	.44**	.54**	.52**	.82**	.63**	1							
10. Ethnic Identity	.60**	.51**	.53**	.47**	.58**	.56**	.86**	.59**	.71**	1						
11. Political Identity	.44**	.40**	.42**	.37**	.46**	.43**	.77**	.68**	.62**	.65**	1					
12. Religious Identity	.58**	.50**	.52**	.46**	.56**	.54**	.83**	.57**	.67**	.78**	.61**	1				
13. Lifestyle	.45**	.38**	.40**	.36**	.44**	.42**	.86**	.65**	.72**	.75**	.70**	.74**	1			
14. Physical Lifestyle	.42**	.36**	.38**	.34**	.41**	.39**	.68**	.58**	.61**	.63**	.59**	.62**	.85**	1		
15. Emotional Lifestyle	.40**	.35**	.36**	.32**	.39**	.37**	.72**	.61**	.65**	.67**	.63**	.66**	.89**	.65**	1	
16. Social Lifestyle	.47**	.41**	.43**	.39**	.46**	.44**	.80**	.63**	.69**	.71**	.67**	.70**	.92**	.63**	.59**	1

Note. N = 189; **p < .01

To examine all the research hypotheses, SEM was used in the LISREL software. For this purpose, this method uses two statistics, p and t-value. If the p-value between two variables is positive, the relationship between the two variables is also positive. And if the p-value between two variables is negative, the relationship between the two variables is also negative. However, to evaluate the significance of this relationship, we turn to the t-value. If the t-value is greater than 1.96 or less than -1.96, this relationship is positive and significant, and negative and significant, respectively.

Figure 1

A Schematic Representation of the Research Hypotheses



Based on Figure 1 and Table 3, the hypotheses have been confirmed. In addition, to test the fourth hypothesis, we used LISREL software to examine indirect effects. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
The Results of the Hypotheses

NO	Hypotheses	*β*	T-value	Results
1	Media Literacy➔ Social Identity	0.63	4.54	Confirmed
2	Media Literacy➔ Lifestyle	0.45	3.31	Confirmed
3	Social Identity ➔ Lifestyle	0.86	8.82	Confirmed
4	Media Literacy➔ Social Identity➔ Lifestyle	0.54	4.21	Confirmed

Table 3 indicates strong correlations among the three main constructs: social identity, media literacy, and lifestyle. Specifically, media literacy has a strong positive effect on social identity ($\beta = 0.63$, $t = 4.54$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that those who have higher levels of media literacy possess stronger social identity. Furthermore, lifestyle is positively predicted by media literacy ($\beta = 0.45$, $t = 3.31$, $p < 0.001$), which means individuals with higher media literacy are likely to exhibit healthier and more adaptive lifestyle patterns. Social identity is also used to predict lifestyle significantly ($\beta = 0.86$, $t = 8.82$, $p < 0.001$), showing that social identity is a significant predictor of lifestyle. Finally, the mediating function of social identity between lifestyle and media literacy is ensured ($\beta = 0.54$, $t = 4.21$, $p < 0.001$), showing that media literacy has not only a direct effect on lifestyle but also an indirect effect by making social identity salient. In general, all four hypotheses are supported by these findings and emphasize the interdependence of lifestyle, social identity, and media literacy within the proposed model.

5. Discussion

The results highlight the central role of social identity and media literacy in shaping the lives of Indonesian physical education teachers. The findings not only confirm the four research hypotheses but also represent a new contribution to the literature of educational sciences and media studies on teachers as "cultural mediators." The findings are subsequently interpreted within the theoretical framework in the article, in particular highlighting practical implications for physical education teachers.

Media Literacy and Social Identity (H1): In line with research by Kellner and Scher (2007) which considers the role of media literacy as critical decoding of media messages, results show that the more media literate the teachers are, the better they are able to function as mediators between local models (e.g., Pencak Silat martial arts) and global trends (e.g., commercials for bodybuilding). This outcome supports Bourdieu's (1984) theoretical framework of "cultural capital," in which media literacy acts as a censor in selecting media messages and reaffirms teachers' social identity when dealing with global media. Particularly in Surabaya, noted for being the hub of water and traditional sports, physical education instructors have a double responsibility to uphold: to the left, they are tasked with the mission of transmitting local values to future generations, and to the right, they are being bombarded by Western lifestyles through the likes of Instagram and TikTok. These educators' critical examination of media messages (e.g., recognizing sports supplement commercials' hyperbole or critiquing hyperbolic representations of the ideal body) allows them to build their professional identities with globalized progress in mind, without sacrificing cultural authenticity.

Media Literacy and Lifestyle (H2): Consistent with Bawden and Robinson's research (2020) that identifies media literacy as a variable in alleviating anxiety caused by information overload, the educators in the study adopted a more conscious lifestyle through a heightened sense of how health and fitness messages work. For example, teachers who objectively analyzed social media data were less likely to be victims of imbalanced diets or over-exercising habits and opted for a combination of local exercises (such as Indonesian yoga) and modern trends (such as interval training) instead. This finding is relevant to physical education teachers in two ways: firstly, it ensures their own well-being, and secondly, it provides students with an example of overcoming media pressures in everyday life. Furthermore, as Adler (2010) emphasizes, lifestyle is more than a series of habits, but a demonstration of an individual's system of values. In the current study, teachers with high levels of media literacy organized their life in a way that was congruent with learning values based on physical and mental balance.

Social Identity and Lifestyle (H3): Social group membership (such as teacher communities or ethnic groups), as commanded by Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory, prescribes norms of behavior. In Indonesia's collectivist culture, teachers' social identity strongly influences their lifestyles. For example, teachers who feel a stronger sense of identity with the local context tend to substitute individual competition (e.g., conventional rowing competitions) for cooperative group work in school sporting schemes. This shows that social identity influences not only individual choices but also teachers' pedagogy. Therefore, collective identity among teachers may promote a social solidarity-based way of life and reduce radical individualism in schools.

The Mediating Role of Social Identity (H4): The key result of this research is the mediating role of social identity between media literacy and lifestyle. This observation supports Jenkins' (1996) theoretical model that envisions identity as a process that varies with the interaction of the individual with the environment. That is, media literacy alone cannot change lifestyles; it is social identity that determines how teachers apply their media knowledge. For example, teachers who build professional identity with cultural responsibilities (e.g., maintaining indigenous sports) favor maintaining traditional forms of nutrition and exercise in personal and working lives, even when confronted with knowledge of global advertising. Thus, media literacy development needs to happen alongside the development of the teachers' cultural and professional identities, so that the tension between "local" and "global" becomes a productive conversation.

Overall, this study suggests that social identity and media literacy are two wings that physical education teachers have to make it in the globalization era. In Indonesia, where digital media erodes cultural boundaries, the simultaneous strengthening of these two components will both empower teachers with better individual lives, as well as strong role models to guide the next generation towards an equitable and authentic society.

Practically speaking, based on the results, integrated education programs should be fostered. That is, courses should be designed that increase media literacy and cultural identity simultaneously. For example, besides having training courses for educators on how to critically evaluate media materials on health, awareness should be raised regarding the role of traditional sports in sustainable lifestyles. Moreover, the role of teachers should be reconceptualized as "cultural activists". Physical education teachers may use media literacy to make indigenous sports (such as pencak silat) mainstream on the cyberspace; this enhances national identity among students and balances global media-led cultural homogenization. Last but not least, support policies should be incorporated into education programs. That is, the state must invest in the development of integrated sports infrastructure (such as halls with ancient and modern amenities) to create the ground to embrace an original and innovative way of life.

Although this study has been conducted in the individual context of Surabaya, drawing from the results in rural environments or instructors in other disciplines must be based on comparison. Also, the longitudinal approach can follow transformations of teachers' identities according to media developments. Proposals are raised to consider the effects of other independent factors, such as gender or educational background, in further research.

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding

The research did not receive any specific grants from funding agencies.

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