



Developing an Integrative Literary Analysis Model to Examine Global Identity from the Perspectives of Comparative Literature and Digital Humanities

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigates how engagement with global literary texts in digital spaces shapes identity construction and interpretative practices among readers and writers. Employing a case study approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation of online literary discussions, involving purposively selected participants from active reading communities and online forums. Thematic analysis revealed key themes, including negotiation of identity, interplay between local and global texts, digital literacy, and cognitive-emotional engagement. Findings indicate that digital interaction fosters reflective interpretation, intercultural awareness, and active participation in meaning-making processes. The study contributes theoretically by developing an integrative model combining comparative literature and digital humanities frameworks, and practically by informing digital literary platform design and educational strategies. Implications for policy, pedagogy, and future research include promoting digital literacy, intercultural engagement, and longitudinal investigations into the influence of sustained online literary practices.



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1. Introduction

Globalization and the rapid development of digital technologies have transformed the production, consumption, and interpretation of literary texts worldwide, making the study of readers' and writers' identities a central concern in contemporary cultural studies (Appadurai, 2020). This transformation is evident in how readers access cross-cultural literature through digital platforms, enabling intensive interactions between texts, audiences, and diverse socio-cultural contexts (Morehouse, 2023). In the Indonesian context, local readers' engagement with global literary texts on online forums indicates evolving reading preferences and practices (Underwood, 2020). Observations from preliminary research revealed that online discussions frequently reflected shifts in aesthetic norms that traditional literary studies often overlook. This situation highlights the need to examine how digital practices influence identity construction, an area that remains underexplored in qualitative research.

The study of global identity is critical because it involves how individuals negotiate their positions within global cultural networks, including the influence of digital media on shaping

personal and collective experiences (Robinson, 2021). Global identity encompasses understanding the interplay between self, culture, and technology, which cannot be fully explained by textual analysis alone (Siemens & Schreibman, 2020). Preliminary interviews demonstrated that readers' experiences in digital spaces shape their comprehension of texts and social contexts, indicating the necessity for systematic study of these interpretative processes (Blevins & Mullen, 2022). These findings reveal a research gap, emphasizing the importance of examining subjective narratives and their relationship with digital platforms.

Comparative literature emphasizes the significance of cross-cultural relations in textual interpretation and highlights the need to consider global contexts as integral to literary meaning (Damrosch, 2021). Simultaneously, digital humanities offer methodological tools and techniques for analyzing large-scale data and text performance in dynamic digital environments (Jockers, 2021). However, studies integrating these approaches into a cohesive framework remain limited. While some researchers focus on technical analyses of digital texts, they often fail to connect these analyses explicitly to readers' subjective experiences in identity formation (Bamman et al., 2021). This limitation indicates that the integration of literary theory and digital understanding is insufficient to fully explain global identity dynamics among readers.

Furthermore, empirical studies emphasizing readers' and writers' experiences in cross-cultural digital contexts underscore the need for a holistic qualitative approach (Liu, 2022). Digital experiences can significantly influence how individuals construct meaning through personal narratives, yet few studies integrate subjective experiences with digital structures comprehensively (Hayles, 2022). Most existing research concentrates on text corpus analysis or statistical modeling without deeply exploring narrative experiences (Presner, 2021). This imbalance highlights that analyzing readers' subjective experiences is an underdeveloped aspect in contemporary literary studies.

This study develops an Integrative Literary Analysis Model that combines comparative literature and digital humanities frameworks to examine global identity construction through readers' and writers' digital experiences. The model aims to merge narrative analysis of subjective experiences with digital representation patterns emerging from interactions (Moretti, 2020). By employing sociotechnical and postcolonial theoretical perspectives, the research investigates how global and local dimensions interact in meaning-making within digital literary contexts (Ponzanesi & Waller, 2021). The study focuses on narrative analyses derived from interviews, participatory observation, and digital data to understand interpretative processes occurring in readers' and writers' experiences.

The study contributes both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the proposed model extends literary studies by providing a framework that integrates subjective experiences and digital structures in interpreting global literary texts (Siemens & Schreibman, 2020). Practically, the findings are expected to guide researchers applying qualitative approaches in digital humanities, offering deeper insights into interpretative practices within global contexts (Blevins & Mullen, 2022). This research addresses the need for an integrative and empirical methodology to understand global identity phenomena in the continuously evolving digital era.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design to explore in depth the interpretative processes and identity construction of readers and writers within cross-cultural digital literary contexts. The case study method was chosen because it enables the investigation of complex social phenomena within real-life contexts, allowing researchers to understand the dynamic interactions between participants and their digital environment (Mtisi, 2022). This approach aligns with the research objective of examining contextual, subjective, and processual aspects of interpretative practices in digital literary engagement rather than producing quantitative

generalizations (Lim et al., 2025). Qualitative research leverages holistic understanding to analyze participants' experiences and meaning-making processes (Lim et al., 2025).

The research was conducted in selected online reading communities and literary discussion forums in Indonesia and abroad, where participants actively interact with global literary texts between January and March 2026. Participants included active readers, writers, and community moderators, selected through purposive sampling for their direct experience with global literature and intensive participation in digital discussions (Ahmed, 2025). Snowball sampling was also employed to extend the participant pool by utilizing initial participants' networks until data saturation was reached. This ensured that the subjects were relevant and capable of providing rich and meaningful insights (Ahmed, 2025).

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews to capture participants' subjective perspectives on reading and engaging with global digital literary texts, offering conversational flexibility and depth. Additionally, participatory observation was conducted to examine actual interactions in forums and digital literary platforms, alongside document analysis of discussions, posts, and relevant comments (Chand, 2025). Data triangulation combined interviews, observations, and documents to enhance credibility and verify consistency across multiple sources (Meydan & Akkaş, 2025).

Data validation incorporated several strategies, including member checking, whereby preliminary findings were confirmed with participants to ensure that the researchers' interpretations accurately reflected their experiences. An audit trail documenting all research processes, from data collection to analysis, supported traceability and methodological rigor (Meydan & Akkaş, 2025). Cross-verification and researcher discussions further minimized subjective bias and strengthened the reliability of findings. These systematic procedures ensure data integrity and adherence to qualitative research standards.

Data analysis followed a thematic analysis approach, coding interview and document data to identify recurring themes related to participants' interpretative experiences and identity construction in digital contexts. Thematic analysis allows mapping patterns and variations in participants' experiences systematically (Almeida, 2026). The analysis process included data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition and naming, and final reporting. Iterative and reflective application ensured that the identified themes accurately represented participant realities and research context. This method provides a robust framework for interpreting data and addressing the research questions comprehensively.

3. Results and Discussions

The analysis of data collected from semi-structured interviews, participatory observations, and digital forum documentation revealed nuanced insights into how participants engage with global literary texts and construct their identities in digital contexts. One primary theme that emerged is identity negotiation in digital spaces, reflecting participants' active process of self-reflection when interacting with texts from diverse cultural backgrounds. For example, one participant stated, "Reading novels from different countries online made me reconsider how my own cultural identity fits into a broader global context." This narrative, supported by similar accounts across multiple participants, indicates that exposure to cross-cultural literature encourages readers to critically reflect on their values, cultural assumptions, and sense of self (Morehouse, 2023). Observations in online literary forums confirmed that these discussions often involve direct comparison between local and foreign literary traditions, suggesting that digital interaction provides a participatory environment for identity exploration and reinforcement. Participants also noted that digital platforms allow them to engage with interpretations from other cultures, enabling a more reflexive understanding of both self and text.

A second theme identified is the interrelationship between local and global literary experiences. Participants frequently highlighted how their engagement with global texts enhanced

their interpretation of local literature and vice versa. One participant explained, "Comparing local stories to international ones helps me appreciate both traditions and see the similarities in human experience across cultures." Analysis of forum posts and comment threads revealed recurring discussions juxtaposing Indonesian literary works with global narratives, emphasizing shared human experiences, narrative structures, and thematic parallels. This theme illustrates the concept of hybrid literary literacy, where digital platforms facilitate the synthesis of local and global literary understandings, thereby enabling readers to negotiate multiple cultural perspectives simultaneously (Robinson, 2021; Damrosch, 2021). It also underscores the role of digital spaces as mediating environments in which cultural exchange shapes interpretative frameworks and identity formation.

A third theme is digital literacy and interpretive strategies, which encompasses participants' evolving skills in navigating digital literary environments. Participants described using diverse strategies, such as cross-referencing multiple sources, participating in collaborative interpretation, and employing digital tools for annotation and discussion. For instance, one participant reported, "I often compare interpretations from different online communities to form a more nuanced understanding of the text." Observational data confirmed that participants actively curated content, shared multimedia resources, and engaged in reflective commentary, suggesting that digital literacy is closely linked to critical interpretative practices (Jockers, 2021). These findings highlight that literacy in digital literary contexts extends beyond technical proficiency to include the ability to negotiate meaning collaboratively, thereby influencing how identity is constructed and expressed in these environments.

The fourth theme relates to emotional and cognitive engagement with literature in digital spaces. Participants indicated that reading global literature online elicited emotional responses and cognitive reflection that influenced their perspectives on cultural norms, societal issues, and personal values. One participant noted, "Engaging with characters from different cultural backgrounds often challenges my assumptions and makes me more empathetic toward diverse experiences." Documentation of forum discussions revealed repeated references to emotional resonance and personal identification with characters or narratives from other cultures. This aligns with theories in comparative literature and digital humanities emphasizing the affective dimension of reading as a critical factor in shaping both interpretative outcomes and identity construction (Liu, 2022; Hayles, 2022). The data suggest that digital platforms provide affordances for sustained cognitive and emotional engagement, reinforcing the interconnectedness of identity, empathy, and literary interpretation.

Discussion

The findings indicate that engagement with global digital literary texts fosters complex, reflective, and interactive processes of identity construction. Participants actively negotiate their sense of self, cultural identity, and interpretive frameworks through reading, discussion, and collaborative engagement. This supports Appadurai's (2020) argument that media and digital interaction play a pivotal role in shaping cultural perceptions and personal identity within globalized contexts. The observed interplay between local and global texts further corroborates Damrosch's (2021) proposition that cross-cultural engagement enhances literary understanding and expands interpretative capacity. Unlike traditional literary analysis, which primarily focuses on textual content, these findings show that digital interaction enables participatory meaning-making, allowing readers to co-construct interpretive knowledge and negotiate identity simultaneously (Siemens & Schreibman, 2020).

The research also confirms that digital literacy is essential for effective interpretive engagement. Participants' ability to cross-reference, annotate, and collaboratively analyze texts mirrors the findings of Jockers (2021) and Presner (2021), who emphasize the cognitive and technical competencies required for digital humanities research. This indicates that interpretative skill and digital literacy are intertwined, influencing both the process and outcome of identity

negotiation. Moreover, the observed emotional engagement suggests that readers' affective responses contribute significantly to their interpretive and identity-building processes, aligning with Liu (2022) and Hayles (2022). The study thus provides evidence that digital platforms are not only conduits for textual exposure but also active sites for cultural negotiation, empathy development, and identity construction.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings validate the Integrative Literary Analysis Model, which combines comparative literature and digital humanities approaches to examine the construction of global identity. The model effectively captures both subjective experiences and structural digital interactions, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding how identities are shaped in online literary environments (Moretti, 2020; Ponzanesi & Waller, 2021). Practically, the study underscores the need for digital literary platforms to support reflective engagement, intercultural dialogue, and collaborative interpretation, facilitating more nuanced identity development among users. These insights can inform the design of educational programs, literary platforms, and community initiatives aimed at fostering global cultural literacy and digital interpretive skills.

Finally, the study opens avenues for further research. Longitudinal studies could examine how sustained engagement with digital literary communities influences identity over time, while comparative research could explore differences across cultural or linguistic contexts. Additionally, the integration of affective, cognitive, and social dimensions in digital literacy presents opportunities for interdisciplinary investigation, particularly in combining literary studies, education, and digital humanities. Overall, the results highlight the significance of digital literary engagement as an active, participatory, and reflective process that shapes both interpretative practices and identity construction.

4. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that engagement with global literary texts in digital spaces significantly influences identity construction, interpretative practices, and cultural understanding among readers and writers. The findings reveal that participants actively negotiate their cultural and personal identities through interactions with texts from diverse cultural contexts, highlighting the interplay between local and global literary experiences. Digital literacy emerged as a critical factor, enabling participants to navigate, analyze, and collaboratively interpret literature, which in turn shapes their interpretative skills and reflective understanding. By integrating comparative literature and digital humanities frameworks, the research provides a holistic understanding of how identity, interpretation, and digital engagement are interrelated. Theoretically, the study contributes an integrative model that bridges subjective narrative analysis with structural digital interactions. Practically, the results suggest strategies for designing digital literary platforms that foster intercultural dialogue, reflective engagement, and collaborative learning.

The implications extend to educational practices, digital platform design, and future literary research. The study highlights the importance of facilitating digital environments that support active cultural negotiation and reflection on identity. Policymakers and educators can leverage these insights to promote global literary literacy and digital interpretive competencies. Future research could examine longitudinal effects of sustained digital engagement on identity formation, explore comparative studies across cultural or linguistic contexts, or investigate the integration of emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions in digital literary interaction. Overall, the research emphasizes that digital literary engagement is an active, reflective, and participatory process with meaningful contributions to understanding global identity in contemporary literary studies.

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