

Students' Understanding of Philosophical and Cultural Values of Yogyakarta's Special Status

Victor Novianto^{1*}, Fitri Mahmudhah², Novianto Ari Prihatin³, Sharifah Zannierah Syed Marzuki⁴

^{1*,3}Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta

^{1*,3}Email: victor@upy.ac.id, noviantoari29@gmail.com

²SMP Negeri 5 Wates Yogyakarta

²Email: v3ferrari.setiawan@gmail.com,

⁴Universiti Teknologi Mara Malaysia, Malaysia

⁴Email: szannierah@uitm.edu.my



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Abstract. This study investigates how well junior high school students in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) comprehend the philosophical and cultural principles that support the region's special autonomy. The 2024 study across four regencies and one city in DIY implemented a quantitative survey using structured questionnaires to gather data from around 200 participants. The study discovered that students show limited understanding of important cultural principles like Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana and Manunggaling Kawula Gusti that form the core of Yogyakarta's identity. Students generally lacked knowledge about the region's governance since many participants did not recognize key historical and cultural aspects. Students' lack of knowledge provides a threat to traditional values, while modernisation and democratic concepts increase their sway. According to this study, in addition to teaching about local governance, schools ought to integrate Yogyakarta's philosophical underpinnings and historical history through their cultural curricula. The plan proposes community involvement programs to help young people deepen their connection to their cultural roots. Future generations risk losing connection to the region's distinct cultural identity if educational and preservation efforts remain ineffective, thereby threatening Yogyakarta special status.

Keywords: Modernisation, Yogyakarta, Philosophical Values, Cultural Education, Generational Gap

INTRODUCTION

The challenges posed to the preservation of local culture and identity by rapid Modernisation and globalization are particularly significant among youth. It is evident that contemporary youth, influenced by modern developments, frequently underestimate the significance of nationalism and cultural identity (Yulianto, 2016). In Indonesia, this phenomenon is contributing to the erosion of national identity. Consequently, traditional norms are being neglected and replaced by new values that conflict with long-standing cultural ideals (Supriatna, 2009). The pervasive influence of global culture exerts a homogenising pressure that has the potential to dilute local traditions. Young people must carefully balance Modernisation to prevent losing their cultural roots due to civilisation's advancement as they seek progress (Ibrahim & Sundawa, 2023). Research demonstrates that Indonesian youth view foreign cultures as more appealing than their own according to (Isfianadewi et al., 2022), which results in a sharp decline in their interest towards local customs and reveals an urgent identity crisis in Indonesia. Patterns of cultural alienation that exist in Indonesia also represent a widespread phenomenon across the world. Modernisation processes have been shown to create negative impacts on passing traditional values to future generations (Kurniawan et al., 2023). Studies demonstrate that young people who consume globalized media extensively experience a weakening of their national identity. Generation Z students in East Java showed stronger national identity when they did

not suffer from internet addiction according to a survey. The research shows that young people's cultural appreciation decreases when they are exposed to unfiltered online content (Yulianto, 2016). Our discoveries reveal how modernisation leads to cultural erosion and demonstrate the need for immediate actions to strengthen cultural identity in Indonesian youth.

Indonesia's efforts to balance modern progress with cultural preservation are exemplified by the unique case of Yogyakarta (Handayani, 2022). Yogyakarta functions as a Special Region with its own special autonomy. National legislation formally recognizes this principle according to Law No. 13 of 2012. The legislative document recognizes Yogyakarta's distinctive historical and cultural system of governance (Sakti et al., 2024). Yogyakarta's distinct standing as a legacy of its Sultanate history and critical contribution to Indonesia's formation allows it special authority in cultural and educational areas not available to other provinces (Asri, 2018; Novianto et al., 2023). Research indicates that the 2012 Special Privileges Law greatly enhanced Yogyakarta's capacity to protect and advance its local culture throughout its region and across (Ariwibowo & Fibiona, 2025). The region stands as a benchmark for cultural progress with its unique focus on maintaining Javanese traditions throughout Indonesia (Vinco et al., 2019). The central government awards the regional government an annual privilege fund for supporting their autonomous functions which cover cultural preservation programs and educational initiatives (Hasanah et al., 2025; Sidiq, 2021). Local policy aims to balance traditional values with current needs as a central goal. Modern research shows how Yogyakarta strives to integrate historic preservation into its city planning during globalisation (Ibrahim & Sundawa, 2023). The city's approach is unambiguous: the safeguarding of cultural heritage is not merely a matter of nostalgia. The objective is to reinforce the community's identity in the face of change (Manurung et al., 2022). However, the implementation of special autonomy is not without its challenges. The effective utilisation of privilege funds has, on occasion, been impeded by bureaucratic inefficiencies and limited public awareness (Kurniawan et al., 2023). Experts are unanimous in their assertion that augmenting community outreach and enhancing comprehension of Yogyakarta's autonomy programmes is imperative (Sakti et al., 2024). It is imperative for younger generations to fully comprehend the significance of Yogyakarta's special status and the responsibilities that come with it if they are to become the future custodians of the region's heritage. It is therefore crucial to evaluate the extent to which junior high school students comprehend Yogyakarta's unique autonomy, as their awareness will shape their role in perpetuating the region's legacy in an era of rapid transformation (Isfianadewi et al., 2022).

Education is the key to addressing cultural erosion. In Indonesia, the education system is explicitly tasked with instilling philosophical values that strengthen national and local identity (Fitriasari et al., 2020). The civic and character education curricula are based on the state ideology of Pancasila, with the clear objective of instilling values in students to produce responsible citizens upholding Indonesia's fundamental values (Yulianto, 2016). Social studies and history courses in junior high schools are designed to impart knowledge and reinforce character traits such as discipline, social care, religiosity, and love for the homeland (Ariwibowo & Fibiona, 2025; Safitri & Novianto, 2019). This approach is designed to counteract moral degradation by cultivating virtues and patriotism in the classroom (Supriatna, 2009). The emphasis on character education is a key part of a broader philosophy championed by Indonesian educational thinkers, such as Ki Hadjar Dewantara, who believed in preserving cultural heritage through education (Sakti et al., 2024). Dewantara understood education to be a means of empowering students, giving them the freedom to express their cultural identity whilst respecting others (Ibrahim & Sundawa, 2023). These philosophical values underscore the importance of modern education in Indonesia. It should function as a "mirror of cultural values," reflecting local wisdom and moral principles even as it incorporates global knowledge (Manurung et al., 2022). Recent policy initiatives emphasise the integration of local content into the curriculum. The existing curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) strongly endorses regional history, languages, and arts. The objective is explicit: to guarantee that students acquire knowledge of global topics while also cultivating a profound appreciation for their own culture and philosophy. This integration is essential for avoiding youth from losing their cultural identity in an increasingly modernised culture (Ibrahim & Sundawa, 2023). Culturally based education can manifest in diverse forms. This entails integrating indigenous knowledge, local literature, folklore, traditional arts, and community values into educational curricula. Research indicates that character education grounded on local culture effectively instills national values, including mutual cooperation and pride in one's background (Aristiyanto et al., 2023). Education serves as a primary instrument for cultural preservation. It "immunises" the younger generation against the adverse impacts of cultural globalisation by anchoring them in ethical and cultural frameworks that honour Indonesia's variety (Supriatna, 2009).

It is now essential to reinforce cultural identity through educational initiatives in the modern era, which is marked by the influence of modern factors. Scholars have proposed that if intentional efforts are not made, the younger generation's sense of local identity will continue to erode as social media and global consumer culture take center stage in their lives (Yulianto, 2016). Schools and communities in Yogyakarta and beyond are experimenting with curricula aimed at reestablishing students' cultural ties in order to address this problem. Ethnopedagogy, an educational paradigm that centers learning around local knowledge and community involvement, is one promising strategy. Incorporating local customs into everyday lessons can greatly increase children's awareness of local culture and character values, according to a recent study done in a preschool in Yogyakarta (Ibrahim & Sundawa, 2023). The researchers discovered that teaching with local cultural artifacts and involving community elders enhanced students' understanding of their heritage and promoted a feeling of pride and community ownership (Sakti et al., 2024). Similarly, history education pedagogy is changing to include pluralistic and local perspectives. To foster an understanding of the region's multicultural heritage, teachers are embracing local historical studies, such as the history of Chinese-Javanese harmony in Yogyakarta, as an alternative to solely emphasizing national narratives (Venco et al., 2019). These methods encourage students to take an active role in conserving and sharing cultural knowledge by utilizing public history (e.g., student-made digital history projects and visits to local heritage sites) (Sidiq, 2021). According to the literature currently in publication, these approaches may be effective in helping young people develop their cultural intelligence and critical awareness, which will help them negotiate the conflict between tradition and modernity. It is now considered an educational imperative to provide students with what Venco et al., (2019) refer to as "21st-century cultural intelligence." This is the capacity to interact with the contemporary world while comprehending and appreciating cultural differences. It has been demonstrated that the idea of culturally responsive education can enable students to act as both contemporary and grounded people.

This is accomplished by making it easier for people to function in a globalized society without losing their sense of place. In Yogyakarta, where the ethos of *Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana* (Javanese for "embellishing the world's beauty") highlights the community's philosophical commitment to maintaining cultural dignity in the face of progress, this balance is particularly pertinent. Educational institutions can strengthen young people's resistance to the forces of cultural homogenization by fostering these values early on. Research conducted in indigenous communities in Indonesia has shown that cultural alienation and identity loss can be lessened by implementing local context-sensitive curricula (Kurniawan et al., 2023). Students are more likely to value their own culture and behave in ways that reflect its ideals when they believe that it is being respected in the classroom. Education serves as both a bridge and a safeguard, preserving cultural identity while enabling youth to interact with the outside world with assurance.

METHOD

1. Research Approach

Widely accepted in educational research for its ability to gather data from a large sample in a reasonably short period of time, the present study uses a quantitative research design employing a survey methodology (Creswell & J. David Creswell, 2018). Students' comprehension of Yogyakarta's philosophical and cultural values at a given moment was evaluated using a cross-sectional design. This method helps one to acquire insightful analysis of modern attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs on local cultural values (Bryman, 2008).

2. Participants And Sampling

Two variables, first, students' exposure to modernism; second, the students' knowledge of Yogyakarta's cultural and philosophical values, were investigated using a descriptive and correlational research strategy. While correlational study helped to find possible relationships between variables including education, media consumption, and knowledge of local culture, descriptive research was used to compile students' knowledge (Field, 2006). With an eye toward Yogyakarta's particular autonomy and philosophical values, a comparative approach was taken to examine the variations in knowledge between younger and older generations.

3. Data Collection

The study's target population is junior high school students (SMP) in Yogyakarta, more especially from four regencies and one city: The areas of Yogyakarta, Sleman, Bantul, Kulon Progo, and Gunungkidul

particularly pique interest. Different regions and school types in the sample were guaranteed proportional representation using a stratified random sampling method (Taherdoost, 2018). There were 200 students in all, evenly distributed across age groups and educational background. This stratification approach was applied to guarantee the sample reflected the larger young population of Yogyakarta.

A structured questionnaire created in response to a review of the body of existing research on cultural identity, Modernisation, and education helped to gather the data (Supriatna, 2009). The questionnaire consisted of open-ended and closed-ended questions, so enabling the gathering of both qualitative and quantitative data. While open-ended questions gave students a chance to explain their knowledge of Yogyakarta's particular autonomy and philosophical roots, closed-ended questions used a Likert scale to measure participants' agreement or disagreement with statements about cultural values.

Using both paper-based and online survey tools, the three-month period of data collecting (September to November 2024) Online surveys were administered using educational tools and school websites in order to guarantee inclusivity and a greater spectrum of participant involvement (Fink, 2017). Surveys were distributed in educational establishments across Yogyakarta. The surveys were administered by trained research assistants to ensure consistency in the administration process.

4. Pre-Test And Reliability

Before beginning the primary data collection, a pilot test was implemented to evaluate the questionnaire's reliability, validity, and clarity. A small sample of students from schools that were not included in the primary study participated in the pre-test. Cronbach's alpha was computed to evaluate the questionnaire's internal consistency, with a value of 0.7 or higher being considered satisfactory for reliability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

5. Data Analysis

The collected data were then subjected to analysis using SPSS software. The demographic characteristics of the sample were summarised using descriptive statistics (e.g., means, frequencies, and percentages), and the overall level of understanding of cultural values was assessed. Chi-square tests and t-tests among other inferential statistics were used to investigate relationships between students' demographic variables e.g., age, education level and their perspective of Yogyakarta's special autonomy (Creswell & J. David Creswell, 2018).

Factor analysis was used to help find important trends and themes in the qualitative data. This methodical approach helped to find the main elements influencing students' understanding of philosophical values and local government (Black & William, 2009). The interpretation of the correlation between several variables was guided by the factor analysis results. Moreover, the predictive value of elements including media consumption and school curriculum exposure on students's awareness of cultural values was assessed using regression analysis (Field, 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Overview Of The Data

The results of 200 respondents from different junior high schools in Yogyakarta showed notable variations in the perspective of younger and older generations on the fundamental philosophical ideas. With an eye towards the five pillars of Yogyakarta's special autonomy, the survey used a structured questionnaire consisting of sixty multiple-choice questions. Land, Spatial Planning, Governance, Institutions, Culture. With 59% of the total responses being false, the study of the answers revealed a low literacy rate among students in understanding the particular autonomy of Yogyakarta. Responders showed a general lack of competency across all five variables; percentages of correct responses ranged from 36.4% in Kulon Progo to 44% in Gunungkidul.

a. Generational Differences:

Younger respondents demonstrated a certain degree of awareness but exhibited a lack of depth in their understanding of the complete cultural implications of Yogyakarta's autonomy and its philosophical principles. In contrast to the contemporary generation, previous generations exhibited a stronger attachment to these principles and a more comprehensive understanding of their cultural, social and governance-related implications.

b. Modernisation's Influence:

The responses of the younger generation clearly showed the effects of globalisation and urbanisation, especially in cities like Kota Yogyakarta where cultural traditions seemed less important in relation to modern influences. The results of the study show a difference in opinions about globalised values: respondents from urban schools show more inclination for such values, while those from rural areas show more respect of local cultural practices.

The graphical depiction below offers insightful analysis of the responses younger and older generations have given to questions on the philosophical foundations of Yogyakarta's autonomy. This study exposes notable differences depending on geographical location and degrees of urbanisation.

c. Role of Education:

According to the current research, keeping awareness of Yogyakarta's cultural values depends much on formal education. Still, its influence was noted to be more important in older generations. Older students—especially those from rural areas—have been given more exposure to local history, culture, and government in their course of study. Younger students, on the other hand, said that their education either lacked or gave less importance cultural education.

The study also underlined how better older generations received instructional materials stressing local government, cultural legacy, and traditional values. This strengthens the case for reviewing the curriculum to better include Yogyakarta's unique autonomy into learning environments.

A survey collected from 200 junior high school students from different parts of Yogyakarta exposed notable variations in the knowledge of the fundamental philosophical ideas. Questions on government, institutions, culture, land, and spatial planning-core elements of Yogyakarta's special autonomy comprised the survey. With 59% of the answers wrong overall, a thorough analysis of student responses to these questions reveals a low literacy rate in knowledge of the special autonomy concept (Supriatna, 2009; Yulianto, 2016).

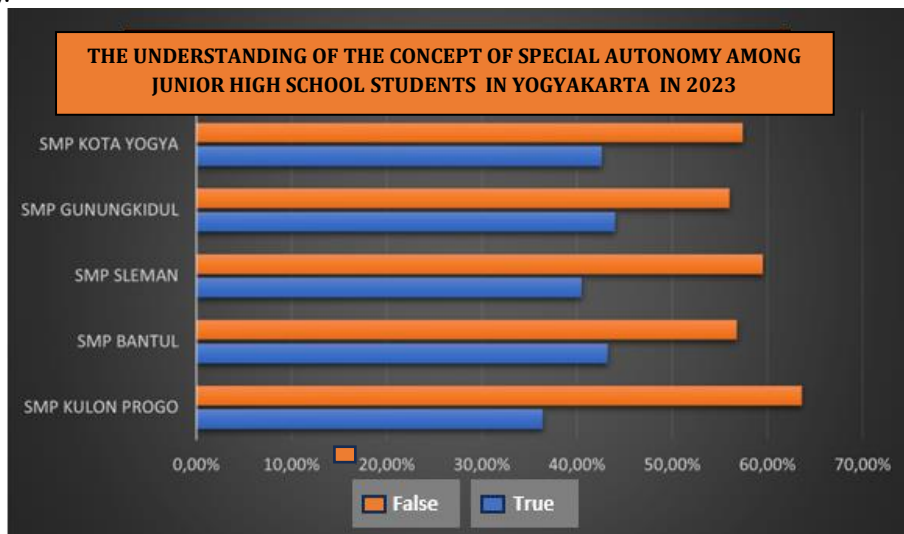


Figure 1. Illustrates the general level of understanding among junior high school students regarding the concept of special autonomy in Yogyakarta in 2023.

Research demonstrates that most students only have a basic awareness of basic ideas including Manunggaling Kawula Gusti (unity of servant and the Creator) and Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana (harmony between nature and society). This graphic depiction reflects the differences in knowledge across Yogyakarta's several areas.

The data clearly demonstrated a clear generational divide: older respondents clearly understood Yogyakarta's philosophical values far more than their younger colleagues. This result is consistent with earlier research showing older generations' more inclination towards cultural preservation (Isfianadewi et al., 2022). The improved understanding displayed by the previous generation can be ascribed to their increased exposure to cultural instruction during their formative education, a period which placed a significant emphasis on local governance and established values (Sakti et al., 2024).

The present author suggests that the younger generation's perspective of cultural values has been shaped in great part by modernism—especially urbanisation and globalisation. Urban students, such those from Yogyakarta City, showed a tendency to value local cultural practices and values less than their rural counterparts, where local traditions kept more importance (Giddens, 2017; Hutington, 2016). This division fits the results of earlier research suggesting that a change in cultural attitudes usually results from urbanisation and globalisation (Supriatna, 2009).

Preserving cultural values depends mostly on education, thus it was noted that older students encountered more local cultural values in their course of study. According to (Yulianto, 2016) and (Ariwibowo & Fibiona, 2025), younger students—especially those living in metropolitan areas—cited a lack of emphasis on cultural education as indicated. Students' knowledge varies significantly across many facets of special autonomy, including governance, institutions, and spatial planning, as Figure 2 demonstrates (Supriatna, 2009). Students clearly showed a more advanced grasp of some ideas, such governance, than others, including spatial planning.

DISCUSSION

Particularly among younger generations, the results of the present study provide strong confirmation of the theory that the process of modernisation influences the depth of understanding of Yogyakarta's philosophical values significantly (Giddens, 2017; Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Younger respondents, according to expectation, showed a general awareness of these values but did not really understand their relevance. As Figure 1 shows, there is clearly a difference in understanding among Yogyakarta's several districts. Comparatively to their urban counterparts, students from more rural areas show somewhat better comprehension (Ibrahim & Sundawa, 2023).

Moreover, the statistics show that the way younger generations understand conventional values depends much on modernisation. Younger students have been seen to show a link between the time-honoured Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana concept and modern ideas including environmental sustainability and social justice movements. This implies that younger generations are reevaluating traditional values inside a modern context rather than ignoring them (Hall, 1990; Hutington, 2016).

The study shows that although urbanisation and globalisation greatly affect how younger generations interact with traditional cultural values, they do not cause their entire extinction. On the other hand, younger generations are changing these ideals to fit modern issues. This result fits the ideas of Cultural Adaptation Theory, which holds that rather than being totally replaced by outside influences, civilisations change and adapt over time (Smith, 1991). Consequently, it can be said that younger generations are not renouncing their cultural roots; rather, they are modifying traditional principles so that they may be included into the modern, worldwide setting (Ibrahim & Sundawa, 2023).

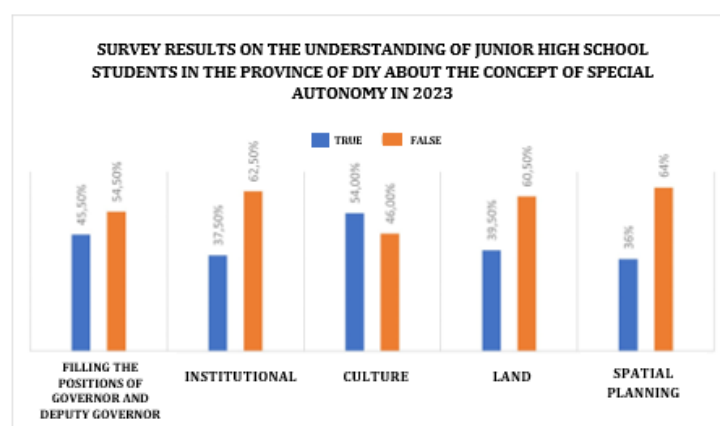


Figure 2. Survey Results on the Understanding of Junior High School Students in the Province of DIY About the Concept of Special Autonomy in 2023

Furthermore, Figure 2 shows the variations in knowledge among students, stressing that some of Yogyakarta's particular autonomy—such as institutions and government—are more commonly recognised than others, such spatial planning. This implies even more that educational systems should give more focus

on these under-represented elements to guarantee a comprehensive knowledge of Yogyakarta's cultural identity.

The findings of the study emphasise the need of reforms in the educational system that would successfully include the cultural values of Yogyakarta into the framework of instruction. As Figure 2 shows, although students generally know the idea of governance, areas like spatial planning and cultural preservation still get little attention. Educational reforms have to include more in-depth local content into the curriculum so that students grasp not only the philosophical ideas underlying Yogyakarta's autonomy but also their pragmatic consequences (Sakti et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the study suggests the need of community-based initiatives and cultural seminars in promoting more involvement among students from their own background. These initiatives should enhance official education by giving chances for experiential learning that link students directly to their cultural background, so making the learning process more interesting and significant.

At last, one should not undervalue the possibilities of digital channels to improve cultural education. The younger generation's growing participation with global media, digital tools, and social media offers a great chance for the promotion of local cultural education, catered to to fit with this demographic (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

CONCLUSION

The present research started with the aim of looking at how junior high school students' understanding of Yogyakarta's basic philosophical ideas is affected by modernisation process. The results show that although both younger and older generations know Yogyakarta's cultural values generally, their knowledge of them differs clearly. The current study clearly shows that older generations showed a more strong awareness of the traditional values of the area, which is probably related to their higher contact to local cultural education. On the other hand, younger generations, especially those from cities showered a more delicate awareness of traditional values. Many times, these principles were read differently to fit modern global issues. Figures 1 and 2 emphasise the regional differences and variations in students' understanding of basic ideas including governance, institutions, and spatial planning. Although students are generally aware of Yogyakarta's unique autonomy, the study reveals that there are still major gaps in understanding in some areas, especially in connection to local government and spatial planning.

The study underlines the need of curriculum changes that would help to include philosophical ideas and local cultural values into teaching strategies. Given the impact of modernisation and globalisation, it is essential to create instructional materials that help students recognise their local identity while also developing their capacity for critical involvement with world problems. This can mean a thorough review of the curriculum to include more specific material on Yogyakarta's unique autonomy, cultural legacy, and government style. Moreover, the curriculum should include community-based projects and cultural seminars to improve students' chances for experiential learning and enable a closer link with their background. Additionally used to make cultural education more interesting and easily available to today's tech-savvy young are digital platforms and social media.

Although the current research offers insightful analysis of how modernisation affects cultural understanding, several constraints have to be admitted. Although the sample size which illustrates junior high school students in Yogyakarta was small with 200 participants, may not adequately represent the variety of points of view present throughout Indonesia. Future studies could increase the sample size or concentrate on different areas to offer a more complete knowledge of how modernisation influences cultural values in many environments. Moreover, the present research focused on students' impressions taken at one moment. Tracking the development of students' awareness of local cultural values over time would help a longitudinal study. That is, one that follows the development of a particular phenomenon over an extended period of time, to offer a more complete picture of the consequences of globalisation and educational interventions. Future studies could have great worth in investigating whether or not various teaching approaches improve cultural preservation and help young people to develop a closer connection to local identity.

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