



Intergenerational Dharma Negotiation and Hindu Ethical Identity Reconstruction in Rapidly Transforming Social Environments

I Made Wiguna Yasa^{1*}, I Wayan Darna², Luh Dewi Pusparini³

Universitas Negeri Hindu I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa

Corresponding Author: I Made Wiguna Yasa wigunayasa16@gmail.com

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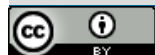
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ABSTRACT

Rapid social transformation is reshaping how Hindu communities understand, practice, and transmit Dharma, generating intergenerational negotiation between inherited traditions and contemporary social demands. This study examines how Dharma is negotiated across generations and how Hindu ethical identity is reconstructed within rapidly transforming social environments. Using qualitative constructivist grounded theory, data were collected from 28 informants representing younger, adult, and older generations, as well as religious and customary leaders, through in-depth interviews, focus groups, observation, and documentation. Data were analyzed through initial coding, focused coding, constant comparison, and theoretical integration. Findings indicate that Hindu ethical identity is reconstructed through selective retention, reinterpretation, and adaptation of Dharma. Hindu ethical continuity is therefore sustained through adaptive intergenerational negotiation.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid social transformation has altered the ways religious values are understood, practiced, and transmitted across generations. Globalization and digital communication increasingly expose younger generations to multiple sources of knowledge and values beyond family and traditional religious institutions (Butler, 2024). Religious identity is therefore formed through interactions among family, education, peers, digital media, and broader social environments (Wei, 2024). Within Hindu communities, this transformation is particularly significant because Dharma functions as an ethical framework that guides moral conduct, social responsibility, and individual behavior. Consequently, Hindu identity should not be understood merely as the inheritance of fixed traditions, but as a dynamic process shaped by the encounter between religious values and contemporary social realities.

This phenomenon is particularly evident among Hindu communities in Bali, Indonesia, where religious life is closely connected with customary traditions, family obligations, community structures, and cultural identity. Modernization, tourism, urbanization, and global cultural influences have gradually transformed social practices and interpretations of religious obligations (Palar & Hewat, 2024). Nevertheless, these transformations do not necessarily result in the abandonment of Hindu traditions, as communities may adapt religious and cultural practices while maintaining their fundamental values. Hindu traditions in Bali continue to demonstrate forms of resilience and adaptation within modern social environments (Subawa, 2024). Traditional religious and cultural practices may therefore function simultaneously as mechanisms of cultural preservation and as spaces where contemporary meanings are reconstructed (Sudirga et al., 2024).

Previous studies of intergenerational religion have largely focused on the transmission of beliefs, religious participation, and practices from parents to children. Family remains one of the most influential social environments in shaping religious commitment and the transmission of religious values across generations (Smith, 2021). However, religious transmission cannot always be understood as the direct reproduction of parental beliefs because younger generations develop religious identities through diverse personal and social experiences. Empirical evidence indicates that parental influence remains important, yet different dimensions of religiosity may be transmitted with varying levels of consistency (Gemar, 2023). Differences in education, digital exposure, social networks, and contemporary lifestyles can consequently encourage younger generations to selectively accept, reinterpret, negotiate, or question inherited religious teachings.

Despite these developments, an important research gap remains concerning how Dharma itself becomes an object of intergenerational negotiation and how such negotiation contributes to the reconstruction of Hindu ethical identity. Previous studies have examined religious transmission, cultural adaptation, moral reasoning, and youth identity, but these issues have generally been treated as separate analytical domains. Hindu individuals may actively distinguish between religious expectations, moral principles, and conventional social norms rather than perceiving every inherited rule as equally binding (Srinivasan & Dahl, 2024). This finding suggests that ethical identity involves processes of interpretation and moral evaluation rather than passive acceptance of religious norms. However, the ways in which younger, adult, and older Hindu generations negotiate disagreements, reinterpret Dharma, and develop shared or contested ethical meanings remain insufficiently examined.

Based on this research gap, the present study aims to examine how Dharma is understood, interpreted, negotiated, and reformulated across generations and how these processes contribute to the reconstruction of Hindu ethical identity in rapidly transforming social environments. The study specifically focuses on how inherited understandings of Dharma encounter contemporary social influences and generate processes of selective retention, reinterpretation, adaptation, and rejection. By moving beyond a linear understanding of religious transmission, this study conceptualizes religious continuity as a negotiated and dynamic process of ethical identity formation. Theoretically, the research is expected to contribute to the sociology and anthropology of religion by developing a process-oriented perspective on intergenerational Dharma negotiation and Hindu ethical identity reconstruction. Practically, the findings may provide insights for Hindu families, religious leaders, educators, and community institutions in maintaining fundamental ethical values while responding constructively to contemporary social transformation.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach using a constructivist grounded theory design to examine how Dharma is interpreted, negotiated, and reconstructed across generations within rapidly transforming Hindu social environments. This design was selected because the study seeks to understand an evolving social process rather than test predetermined causal relationships or hypotheses. Constructivist grounded theory recognizes that meanings are developed through interaction between participants, their social contexts, and the researcher, while theoretical explanations are progressively constructed from empirical data. Accordingly, data collection and analysis were conducted iteratively so that emerging concepts could guide subsequent inquiry and contribute to the development of a process-oriented explanation of intergenerational

Dharma negotiation and Hindu ethical identity reconstruction (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021).

Participants and Sampling

The study population comprised Hindu community members from selected communities in Bali, Indonesia, representing different generational positions and social roles relevant to the transmission and interpretation of Dharma. A non-probability purposive sampling strategy was initially employed because participants were required to possess direct experience of Hindu religious life and intergenerational interaction, followed by theoretical sampling as analytical categories developed. A total of 28 informants participated, comprising 10 younger-generation Hindus aged approximately 18–30 years, eight adults aged 31–59 years, six older-generation participants aged 60 years or above, and four religious or customary leaders. Generational diversity was intentionally incorporated to capture contrasting experiences of religious inheritance, contemporary social change, and ethical interpretation. Theoretical sampling subsequently directed attention toward participants and experiences capable of refining emerging categories because grounded theory sampling is driven progressively by conceptual development rather than statistical representativeness (Foley et al., 2021).

The selection of 28 informants was considered appropriate for the analytical scope and heterogeneity of the study; however, participant adequacy was determined primarily through theoretical saturation rather than a fixed numerical threshold. Data collection continued while new interviews contributed meaningful properties, relationships, or variations to emerging categories and was concluded when additional data no longer substantially extended the conceptual explanation of the central process. This principle is important because qualitative sample adequacy depends on study objectives, participant heterogeneity, data richness, and the level of conceptual depth required. Empirical methodological evidence indicates that saturation can often be reached with relatively modest qualitative samples, although more

heterogeneous populations and theoretically oriented studies may require additional participants to adequately develop categories (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, non-participant observation, and document analysis. The interview guide was developed from the research objectives and conceptual literature rather than adapted from a standardized quantitative instrument; therefore, it focused on open-ended questions concerning understandings of Dharma, intergenerational differences, experiences of value negotiation, responses to contemporary social change, and perceptions of Hindu ethical identity. The interview guide remained flexible and was progressively refined as new analytical categories emerged, consistent with the iterative logic of grounded theory. Focus group discussions were used to examine similarities, disagreements, and collective interpretations among generational groups, while observations documented relevant religious and community interactions and documents provided contextual information regarding teachings, practices, and community norms. Using multiple forms of evidence enabled methodological and source triangulation, which strengthens the credibility and contextual depth of qualitative findings (Johnson et al., 2020).

Trustworthiness of the Data

Because this study did not employ standardized scales or quantitative measurement instruments, conventional statistical tests of validity and reliability, such as internal-consistency coefficients, were not considered appropriate. Instead, methodological rigor was established through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was strengthened by comparing interview, focus group, observation, and documentary evidence, while an audit trail was maintained to document sampling decisions, modifications to interview questions, coding

decisions, category development, and analytical memos. Reflexive notes were also maintained to identify possible researcher assumptions and distinguish participants' interpretations from analytical constructions. Selected interpretations and emerging conceptual summaries were returned to participants through structured member checking to assess whether the analysis adequately represented their experiences and meanings, since systematic member checking can provide a stronger basis for qualitative credibility than merely asking participants to review raw transcripts (McKim, 2023).

Research Procedure

The research procedure was implemented sequentially but iteratively. First, the study problem, participant criteria, and preliminary interview domains were established based on the literature and research objectives, followed by recruitment of initial participants from the identified generational and leadership categories. After informed consent was obtained, in-depth interviews were conducted and transcribed verbatim, while observational notes and relevant documents were organized alongside the interview corpus. Initial interviews were analyzed before subsequent data collection was completed, allowing emerging categories to influence follow-up questions, theoretical sampling, and the focus of subsequent interviews and group discussions. Data collection, coding, constant comparison, memo writing, category refinement, and further sampling therefore proceeded concurrently until theoretical saturation was achieved, reflecting the systematic yet flexible character required in constructivist grounded theory research.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the constructivist grounded theory procedures of initial coding, focused coding, constant comparison, memo writing, category development, and theoretical integration. During initial coding, interview transcripts and field notes were examined closely to identify actions, meanings, tensions, and experiences expressed by participants; focused coding subsequently selected the most analytically significant codes and organized them into higher-order categories. Constant comparison was conducted across individual accounts, generational groups, religious and customary leaders, data sources, and emerging categories to identify similarities, variations, conditions, and relationships. Analytical memos were used throughout the process to document conceptual development and progressively connect categories into an explanatory model of intergenerational Dharma negotiation and Hindu ethical identity reconstruction. NVivo qualitative data analysis software was employed to organize transcripts, codes, categories, memos, documentary materials, and relationships among emerging concepts; however, interpretive decisions remained the responsibility of the researchers rather than being automatically generated by the software, consistent with the role of digital tools as supports for systematic qualitative analysis (Allsop et al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participant Characteristics

The analysis was based on data collected from 28 Hindu informants representing different generational positions and social roles. The participants consisted of 10 younger-generation Hindus aged approximately 18–30 years, eight adult participants aged 31–59 years, six older-generation participants aged 60 years or above, and four religious or customary leaders. This composition enabled the analysis to compare how Dharma was understood across generations while also incorporating perspectives from individuals who held religious or customary authority within the community.

Table 1. Characteristics and Distribution of Research Participants

Participant Group	Number	Percentage
Younger generation	10	35.7%
Adult generation	8	28.6%
Older generation	6	21.4%
Religious/customary leaders	4	14.3%
Total	28	100%

The grounded theory analysis organized the empirical material through initial coding, focused coding, constant comparison, memo writing, category development, and theoretical integration. Comparison was conducted across individuals, generations, leadership roles, and different data sources to identify recurring patterns and variations in the interpretation of Dharma. Three interrelated processes emerged as the principal findings: selective retention of Dharma, reinterpretation of Dharma, and adaptation of Dharma to changing social environments. These processes collectively formed the basis of Hindu ethical identity reconstruction identified in the study.

Selective Retention of Dharma

The first major finding was selective retention, referring to the continued acceptance of particular dimensions of Dharma that participants considered fundamental to Hindu ethical life. The findings indicate that rapid social transformation did not result in a complete rejection of inherited Hindu values. Instead, ethical continuity was maintained by distinguishing between principles viewed as essential and forms of religious or social practice that were regarded as more context dependent. In this process, continuity was therefore selective rather than absolute. Dharma remained an important ethical reference point, although the manner in which its principles were prioritized could differ across generational positions.

The analytical pattern suggests that the reconstruction of Hindu ethical identity began not with the abandonment of tradition but with the identification of ethical elements considered worthy of preservation. This category is important because it shows that social change and religious continuity were not mutually exclusive within the analyzed process. The preservation of particular ethical orientations provided a foundation from which subsequent reinterpretation and adaptation could occur.

"For me, Dharma should not change in its basic values. Honesty, responsibility, respect for parents, and caring for others must remain, even though the way we practice them today may be different from the past." (YG-01, 18 January 2026).

"There are traditions that may adjust to the times, but the ethical principles behind them should not disappear. What needs to be maintained is the awareness that every action has responsibilities toward oneself, the family, and the community." (OG-02, 24 January 2026).

These statements indicate that participants distinguished between the core ethical principles of Dharma and the forms through which those principles are practiced. Both younger and older participants emphasized the importance of preserving values such as honesty, responsibility, respect, and social concern, even when particular religious or customary practices undergo adjustment. The similarity between these generational perspectives suggests that rapid social transformation does not necessarily weaken commitment to Dharma. Instead, participants maintained ethical continuity by selectively preserving principles regarded as fundamental while allowing flexibility in their practical expression. This pattern was identified in the analysis as selective retention, which became the first mechanism through which Hindu ethical identity remained connected to inherited religious values.

Reinterpretation of Dharma Across Generations

The second major finding was reinterpretation, which describes changes in how inherited Dharma was understood and given meaning in relation to contemporary circumstances. The findings indicate that continuity of Hindu identification did not necessarily produce identical interpretations across generations. Rather than treating Dharma solely as a body of inherited obligations, the analytical categories suggest that participants engaged with its ethical meaning through their own generational experiences and social contexts. This made reinterpretation a central mechanism connecting religious inheritance with contemporary ethical identity.

Intergenerational differences therefore appeared within the process of interpretation rather than simply as a binary division between maintaining and rejecting religion. Younger, adult, and older generations occupied different social environments, creating possibilities for different understandings of how Dharma should be applied. The analytical importance of this category lies in showing that Hindu ethical identity can remain connected to inherited religious foundations even when the practical meanings attached to those foundations undergo reformulation.

"My parents often understand Dharma through obligations that have been practiced for generations. I still respect those obligations, but I understand Dharma more as how I behave responsibly, honestly, and fairly in my daily life." (YG-05, 7 February 2026).

"Young people today ask more questions about why a tradition must be carried out. In the past, we tended to follow what our parents taught us. Now they want to understand the meaning first, and I think that does not always mean they are rejecting Dharma." (AG-04, 14 February 2026).

The interview data reveal differences in the way Dharma is interpreted across generations. Younger participants tended to emphasize the ethical meaning underlying religious obligations, while adult participants recognized that younger generations increasingly seek explanations and personal understanding before accepting inherited practices. This difference did not necessarily indicate rejection of Hindu teachings, but rather a shift from primarily practice-oriented obedience toward more reflective ethical interpretation. The data therefore show that intergenerational differences occur mainly in the meaning attributed to Dharma and the reasons for practicing it, rather than in the complete acceptance or rejection of Hindu identity. This process was categorized as reinterpretation of Dharma, through which inherited religious values were reformulated in accordance with contemporary experiences and modes of reasoning.

Adaptation of Dharma to Rapid Social Transformation

The third category identified was adaptation, referring to the ways Dharma was positioned in relation to rapidly changing social environments. The study was explicitly designed to examine the encounter between inherited understandings of Dharma and contemporary social influences, including broader changes in social interaction and everyday life. The findings summarized in the manuscript indicate that Hindu ethical identity was reconstructed partly through adapting the application of Dharma rather than maintaining all inherited forms without modification.

Adaptation differed analytically from reinterpretation. Reinterpretation concerned changes in the meaning attributed to Dharma, whereas adaptation concerned adjustments in how Dharma was applied within contemporary circumstances. In this sense, participants could retain particular ethical principles while modifying how those principles were enacted. This distinction provides an important empirical basis for understanding why Hindu ethical continuity can persist despite substantial changes in social context.

"Because of work and study, I cannot always participate in every religious activity in the same way as my parents. However, I still try to fulfill my responsibilities in other ways because, for me, the important thing is not only being physically present but also maintaining the values taught by Dharma." (YG-08, 23 February 2026). "Dharma does not require people to live exactly as previous generations did. Social conditions change, so the way religious responsibilities are carried out can also change, as long as the fundamental ethical values are not lost." (RL-02, 6 March 2026).

These accounts demonstrate how contemporary conditions such as education, employment, mobility, and changing daily routines influence the practical implementation of religious obligations. Younger participants described difficulties in reproducing all religious activities in exactly the same manner as previous generations, while religious leaders acknowledged that changes in social conditions may require adjustments in practice. Importantly, these adjustments were not understood as the abandonment of Dharma. Participants instead attempted to preserve the underlying ethical responsibility while modifying the way it was enacted. This finding represents adaptation, whereby the practical expression of Dharma changes in response to contemporary circumstances while its perceived ethical foundation remains relatively stable.

Intergenerational Negotiation as the Connecting Process

Constant comparison across generational groups positioned intergenerational negotiation as the process connecting selective retention, reinterpretation, and adaptation. The available findings suggest that the ethical reconstruction process was not adequately represented as straightforward religious transmission from older to younger generations. Instead, Hindu ethical continuity emerged through interactions in which inherited meanings encountered different generational experiences and contemporary conditions. This finding is consistent with the study's

central focus on examining Dharma as something understood, interpreted, negotiated, and reformulated across generations. The analytical structure can be summarized as follows:

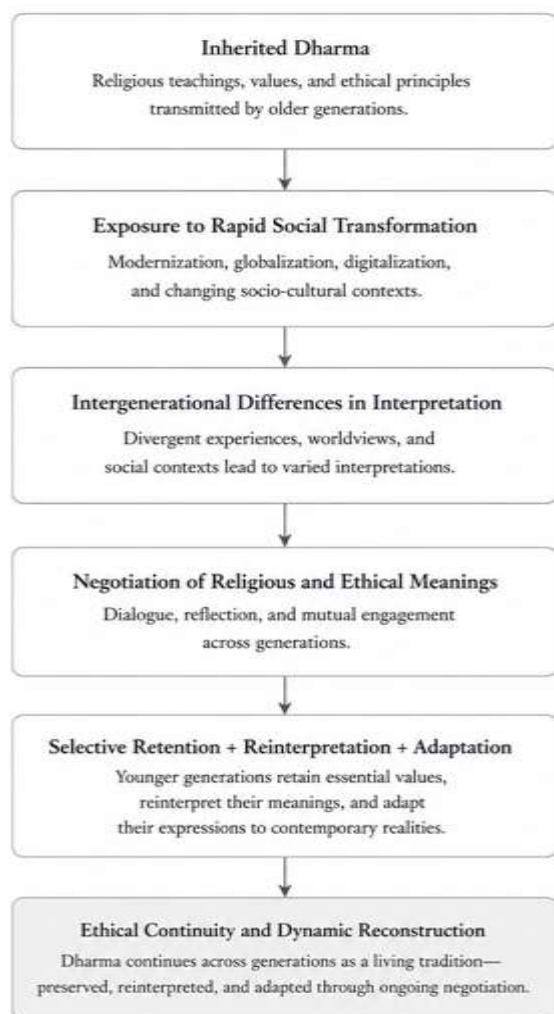


Figure 1. Intergenerational Negotiation as a Process of Ethical Continuity and Adaptation

Reconstructed Hindu Ethical Identity

The three categories should not be interpreted as completely separate or sequential stages in every participant's experience. Rather, they represent interconnected forms of negotiation identified through the grounded theory analysis. Selective retention maintained ethical continuity, reinterpretation allowed inherited meanings to be reconsidered, and adaptation enabled their application within changing circumstances.

The central result of the analysis was that Hindu ethical identity was reconstructed through the interaction of selective retention, reinterpretation, and adaptation of Dharma. This finding corresponds directly with the principal result stated in the study abstract. Ethical identity reconstruction therefore did not signify the disappearance of Dharma from participants' lives; rather, it represented a transformation in how inherited ethical values were selected, interpreted, and applied within contemporary social environments.

The results further indicate that continuity and change operated simultaneously. Continuity was visible through the preservation of Dharma as an ethical reference, whereas change occurred through variation in its interpretation and application. Intergenerational negotiation provided the mechanism through which these two tendencies were connected. The resulting pattern can therefore be summarized as adaptive intergenerational continuity, in which Hindu ethical identity remains rooted in Dharma while being continually reconstructed through generational interaction and social transformation.

"The younger generation should not simply abandon tradition because life has changed, but we also cannot force them to practice everything exactly as it was done in the past. Dharma must remain the foundation, while its application should consider the realities people face today." (RL-04, 19 March 2026).

This statement summarizes the central empirical pattern identified in the study. Hindu ethical identity was not reconstructed through a complete separation from inherited religious traditions, nor was it maintained through the unchanged reproduction of past practices. Instead, reconstruction occurred through an interaction between continuity and transformation. Participants retained selected ethical principles, reinterpreted their meaning according to contemporary experiences, and adapted their practical application to changing social conditions. The resulting form of Hindu ethical identity therefore remained rooted in

Dharma while becoming increasingly contextual, reflective, and adaptive.

Summary of Emergent Findings

Table 2. Emergent Processes of Intergenerational Dharma Negotiation and Hindu Ethical Identity Reconstruction

Core Finding	Empirical Meaning in the Analysis	Role in Ethical Identity Reconstruction
Selective Retention	Maintaining dimensions of Dharma considered ethically fundamental	Provides continuity with inherited Hindu values
Reinterpretation	Reformulating the meaning of Dharma according to generational and social experiences	Enables new ethical meanings without necessarily abandoning Hindu identity
Adaptation	Adjusting the practical application of Dharma to contemporary circumstances	Maintains relevance within rapidly changing social environments
Intergenerational Negotiation	Interaction among generational perspectives concerning the meaning and application of Dharma	Connects continuity and transformation
Ethical Identity Reconstruction	Reconfigured Hindu ethical self-understanding emerging from the preceding processes	Represents the central outcome of the grounded theory analysis

Overall, the results identify intergenerational negotiation as the central process through which Hindu ethical continuity is maintained under conditions of rapid social transformation. Rather than producing either complete continuity or complete religious discontinuity, the analyzed process resulted in a reconstructed ethical identity characterized by the selective preservation, reinterpretation, and adaptive application of Dharma.

The principal finding of this study demonstrates that Hindu ethical identity is not transmitted unchanged from older to younger generations, but is continuously reconstructed through intergenerational negotiation involving selective retention, reinterpretation, and adaptation of Dharma. This process indicates that differences between generations do not necessarily represent a breakdown of religious continuity, because younger participants remained connected to Hindu ethical principles while developing different ways of understanding and applying them. From the perspective of identity negotiation, religious continuity can therefore coexist with interpretive diversity when family members accommodate differences and maintain communication across generations. This interpretation is consistent with Communication Accommodation Theory as applied by Bernhold et al. (2022), who found that accommodation of religious identity within parent–child and grandparent–grandchild relationships was associated with relational outcomes even when family members differed in their beliefs. The present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that accommodation is not merely a communication strategy but also an ethical mechanism through which the meaning and application of Dharma are negotiated across generations.

The finding of selective retention further shows that rapid social transformation does not necessarily produce the abandonment of Hindu ethical values, because participants distinguished fundamental ethical principles from religious practices that were considered more dependent on social context. Values related to responsibility, honesty, respect, and concern for others remained significant, whereas particular forms of religious participation could be adjusted according to contemporary circumstances. This pattern is consistent with the concept of lived religion, which emphasizes how religious identity is experienced and expressed within concrete everyday contexts rather than solely through formal doctrines. Chadwin (2023) similarly found that Hindu teenagers in England experienced their Hindu identity differently across home and school environments, demonstrating that religious identification can remain meaningful even when its expression varies considerably according to context. However, whereas Chadwin primarily identified contextual differences and cognitive dissonance among Hindu adolescents, the present study reveals how such differences may be managed through selective preservation of ethical principles, suggesting that continuity is maintained not through identical practice but through sustained commitment to the ethical orientation of Dharma.

Reinterpretation represents a second important mechanism because younger participants tended to approach inherited religious obligations through questioning, reflection, and evaluation of their ethical meaning rather than unquestioned replication. Such reinterpretation should not automatically be understood as declining religiosity, since religious identity formation involves varying degrees of exploration and commitment even among individuals sharing similar religious backgrounds. Ortiz and Costigan (2022) demonstrated that young people may develop substantially different religious identity patterns despite belonging to the same cultural and religious community, supporting the view that exploration can constitute an important component of identity formation. A comparable

process was identified by Kibria et al. (2021), who found that religious identities among South Asian Hindu and Muslim women were negotiated through interconnected family, community, transnational, and social environments. The present findings are similar in demonstrating the contextual and negotiated character of religious identity, but differ by locating Dharma itself as the ethical object of negotiation and identifying reinterpretation as a mechanism through which inherited Hindu values are reformulated without necessarily losing their religious foundation.

Adaptation, meanwhile, explains how ethical principles are translated into practice when contemporary conditions make the exact reproduction of inherited religious patterns difficult. Education, employment, mobility, changing family routines, social relationships, and digital communication expose younger generations to contexts substantially different from those experienced by their parents and grandparents. De Bruin-Wassinkmaat et al. (2021) demonstrate that religious identity development among emerging adults is strongly influenced by contextual experiences and by whether particular environments support or constrain religious identity. Similarly, Mehta (2022) shows that Hindu communities in Oman strategically negotiate religious identity and religious performance in response to the opportunities and limitations provided by their surrounding social environment. The present research converges with these studies in demonstrating contextual adaptation, but it differs by showing that adaptation among Hindu generations in Bali occurs through a distinction between relatively stable ethical foundations and flexible modes of application, meaning that changing practice does not necessarily imply changing commitment to Dharma.

Several factors help explain why these processes of retention, reinterpretation, and adaptation occurred simultaneously, including generational experience, family communication, education, broader social networks, religious authority, mobility, and exposure to digital environments. Younger generations encounter a wider range of cultural and religious information than previous generations, which can increase opportunities to compare interpretations and develop more individualized religious understandings. Sahoo and Shome (2021) found that South Asian youth identities are increasingly shaped through organizations, transnational relationships, and virtual networks, illustrating that contemporary identity construction operates across interconnected physical and digital social spaces. At the same time, differences in social context do not determine religious change in a uniform direction, because supportive family and community relationships may reinforce identification while restrictive or conflicting environments may encourage distancing or further reinterpretation. Thus, the results suggest that generational differences alone are insufficient to explain Hindu ethical identity reconstruction; rather, negotiation emerges from the interaction between generational position and the broader ecological environment within which Dharma is interpreted and practiced.

Because this study employed constructivist grounded theory, it did not formally test a predetermined hypothesis; nevertheless, the findings can be evaluated against the initial analytical expectation that rapid social change would generate differences in the interpretation of Dharma across generations. The findings support this expectation by demonstrating meaningful differences in how younger and older participants interpreted and enacted inherited religious responsibilities, but they contradict any assumption that these differences necessarily produce religious fragmentation or abandonment. Vikdahl and Liljestr nd (2020) similarly found that religious young people may experience tension between religious commitments and other dimensions of contemporary identity while

still intending to maintain their religion, indicating that identity conflict does not inevitably result in religious disengagement. The distinctive finding of the present study is that such tension can be transformed through selective retention, reinterpretation, and adaptation rather than remaining merely an unresolved identity conflict. This process may be conceptualized as adaptive intergenerational continuity, whereby Hindu ethical identity remains anchored in Dharma precisely because its meanings and applications are capable of being negotiated in response to changing circumstances.

The main theoretical novelty of this study therefore lies in explaining how Hindu ethical continuity is produced rather than merely determining whether religious values are successfully transmitted between generations. Previous research has demonstrated contextual variation in Hindu identity, strategic religious belonging, and multiple forms of youth identity negotiation, yet these studies have not sufficiently integrated inherited Dharma, intergenerational interaction, social transformation, and ethical identity reconstruction within a single explanatory process. The present study proposes that inherited Dharma encounters changing social environments, generates differences in interpretation, becomes subject to intergenerational negotiation, and subsequently produces selective retention, reinterpretation, and adaptation that reconstruct Hindu ethical identity. This model contributes to religious identity and intergenerational transmission research by conceptualizing continuity not as the absence of change but as continuity through negotiated change, while practically suggesting that Hindu families, religious educators, and customary institutions should provide spaces for explanation and intergenerational dialogue rather than relying exclusively on prescriptive transmission. Nevertheless, the study is limited by its purposively selected sample of 28 participants, its concentration on selected Hindu communities in Bali, possible social-desirability effects in interviews concerning religious obligations, and the inability of a cross-

sectional design to capture changes across the life course; future research should therefore employ longitudinal and comparative designs across urban and rural communities, socioeconomic groups, gender categories, and Hindu populations beyond Bali to test the transferability and further theoretical development of adaptive intergenerational continuity.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Hindu ethical identity in rapidly transforming social environments is not maintained through the unchanged transmission of inherited religious practices, but through an adaptive process of intergenerational negotiation. The findings demonstrate that younger, adult, and older generations continuously negotiate the meaning and application of Dharma through three interconnected mechanisms: selective retention, reinterpretation, and adaptation. Selective retention preserves ethical principles considered fundamental, reinterpretation allows inherited meanings to be reconsidered in relation to contemporary experiences, and adaptation enables Dharma to remain applicable within changing educational, occupational, technological, and social conditions. These processes collectively form what this study conceptualizes as adaptive intergenerational continuity, in which Hindu ethical identity remains rooted in Dharma while becoming increasingly contextual, reflective, and responsive to social transformation.

The findings have practical implications for Hindu families, religious leaders, educators, and customary institutions. Religious continuity may be strengthened by creating spaces for intergenerational dialogue in which younger generations are encouraged to understand the ethical foundations of Dharma rather than merely reproduce inherited practices without explanation. Religious education should therefore combine the preservation of fundamental Hindu ethical principles with opportunities for reflection, contextual interpretation, and responsible adaptation. Community and religious institutions are also

recommended to develop approaches that acknowledge contemporary realities such as education, employment, mobility, and digital communication while maintaining Dharma as the primary ethical reference. Such approaches can support Hindu communities in maintaining ethical continuity without treating social change as inherently incompatible with religious tradition.

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