

Community-Based Digital Tourism

Communication: Strategies for Promoting Tourism

Destinations in Buton Regency

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ABSTRACT

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The rapid expansion of digital communication technologies has transformed the way tourism destinations are promoted and represented. In contemporary tourism contexts, digital platforms not only function as promotional tools but also shape destination narratives and influence tourist perceptions. This study aims to analyze the implementation of community-based digital tourism communication strategies in Buton Regency and to examine the role of local communities in supporting tourism promotion in the digital environment.

This research employed a qualitative case study approach to explore communication practices within the tourism governance structure of Buton Regency. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with key tourism stakeholders, digital observation of social media activities, and analysis of relevant documentation. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving stages of initial coding, focused coding, and theme development to identify patterns in digital tourism communication practices.

The findings reveal that digital tourism communication in Buton Regency is primarily conducted through social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and official tourism websites. Government institutions play an important role in establishing policy frameworks and coordinating promotional activities, including the regulation of posting frequency and content production processes. At the same time, local communities contribute to tourism promotion through participatory activities, independent social media communication, and collaboration in promotional content production. This interaction creates a hybrid communication ecosystem in which institutional promotion and community-generated narratives complement each other.

The study concludes that community participation enhances the authenticity and credibility of digital tourism communication, thereby supporting destination visibility and strengthening the potential for sustainable tourism development. These findings highlight the importance of collaborative digital communication strategies that integrate government initiatives with community-based participation in tourism promotion.

1. Introduction

Over The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the way tourism destinations communicate with potential visitors. Traditional promotional approaches such as brochures, printed advertisements, and tourism exhibitions are increasingly being replaced by digital platforms that enable interactive, participatory, and network-based communication. Social media platforms, travel review websites, and electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) have become primary sources of information for tourists seeking travel inspiration, evaluating destinations, and making travel decisions. In this digital environment, tourism communication functions not only as a promotional tool but also as a mechanism for constructing destination image, shaping tourist perceptions, and influencing behavioral intentions (Ameen et al., 2023; Baber & Baber, 2022). The expansion of digital media ecosystems has therefore significantly altered the dynamics of tourism marketing and communication strategies worldwide.

The growing reliance on digital communication has also reshaped the role of various actors involved in tourism promotion. Tourists are no longer passive recipients of promotional messages but actively participate in the production and dissemination of tourism-related content through social media and other digital platforms. User-generated content (UGC), online reviews, travel vlogs, and social media posts contribute to the collective construction of destination narratives and influence how potential visitors perceive tourism destinations (Chu et al., 2020; Morrison et al., 2023). Previous studies indicate that electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) and user-generated content significantly influence destination image and tourist intention to visit, often exerting stronger persuasive power than official promotional campaigns (Ameen et al., 2023; Setiawan et al., 2021). As a result, tourism communication has evolved into a multi-actor process in which governments, industry stakeholders, tourists, and local communities all contribute to shaping the image and credibility of destinations.

Despite these developments, the practice of digital tourism communication in many destinations remains dominated by institutional actors such as government agencies and tourism industries. In many cases, promotional messages are produced through a top-down communication model in which authorities control the narrative and distribute standardized promotional content. Such approaches often prioritize visual promotion and one-way information dissemination while overlooking the experiential and cultural dimensions that define local destinations (Kaul et al., 2025; Parisi, 2025). Consequently, tourism messages may become homogeneous and fail to reflect the diversity of local experiences, potentially weakening the perceived authenticity of the destination. In an era where modern travelers increasingly seek authentic and meaningful experiences, the absence of local voices in digital communication can undermine tourist trust and reduce the credibility of promotional messages.

Another challenge in digital tourism promotion lies in the limited integration of community participation in communication processes. Although many tourism policies emphasize community based tourism and participatory development, the practical implementation of community involvement in digital communication remains inconsistent. Several studies have shown that local communities often face limitations related to digital literacy, technological access, and communication capacity, which hinder their ability to participate effectively in tourism promotion (Noviana et al., 2025; Wantara et al., 2024). At the same time, insufficient coordination between government institutions and local actors can further restrict opportunities for collaborative communication strategies. These limitations highlight the need to explore alternative approaches that integrate institutional promotion with community-driven narratives in order to strengthen the credibility and sustainability of tourism communication.

Scholarly literature increasingly emphasizes the importance of participatory communication and community-based tourism (CBT) as mechanisms for creating authentic and credible tourism narratives. Community-based tourism places local communities at the center of tourism development, enabling them to actively participate in planning, management, and communication processes related to tourism activities (Quang et al., 2025). Within this framework, communities serve not only as beneficiaries of tourism but also as key communicators who share local knowledge, cultural stories, and experiential narratives about destinations. Such narratives can enhance the

authenticity of tourism messages and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable tourism development.

The emergence of social media platforms further strengthens the potential for community participation in tourism communication. Through social media, local communities can produce and distribute user-generated content that reflects real experiences and local perspectives, thereby contributing to the formation of electronic word-of-mouth networks. Research suggests that information originating from community members and fellow travelers is often perceived as more credible and trustworthy than official promotional messages (Muda & Hamzah, 2021; Vidosavljević & Djuric, 2025). The authenticity and relatability of community narratives can therefore play a significant role in shaping destination image and influencing tourists' intention to visit.

Nevertheless, the existing literature reveals several limitations regarding the integration of community participation in digital tourism communication. Many studies focus primarily on the impact of social media marketing, destination image, or influencer marketing on tourist behavior, while the role of local communities as communicators remains relatively underexplored. Research on community-based tourism often concentrates on governance structures, economic benefits, or sustainability outcomes, rather than examining how community narratives function within digital communication ecosystems. Consequently, there is a need for further empirical research that investigates how community actors contribute to the production and dissemination of tourism communication in digital environments.

This research addresses these gaps by examining the implementation of community-based digital tourism communication in the context of tourism destinations in Buton Regency, Indonesia. The region possesses a variety of natural and cultural attractions, including beaches, waterfalls, and community-based tourism villages. However, the effectiveness of digital promotion for these destinations remains uncertain due to challenges related to governance coordination, community engagement, and the consistency of digital narratives. The case of Kali Lakua tourism destination illustrates these challenges, as unclear management structures and limited communication strategies have contributed to weak digital visibility and inconsistent promotional narratives.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze how community-based digital tourism communication strategies are implemented in tourism destinations in Buton Regency and to examine the role of local communities as communicators in shaping digital tourism narratives. By focusing on the interaction between institutional actors and local communities in the production of tourism communication, this research seeks to provide new insights into how collaborative digital communication strategies can strengthen tourist trust and increase intention to visit. The study contributes to the literature on tourism communication by highlighting the importance of community participation in digital promotion and by proposing a more inclusive approach to tourism communication that integrates institutional strategies with authentic community narratives.

2. Method

This employed a qualitative research approach to explore the implementation of community-based digital tourism communication strategies and their role in shaping tourist interest and trust in tourism destinations in Buton Regency, Indonesia. Qualitative research is particularly appropriate for examining complex social phenomena that involve human interpretation, meaning

making processes, and interactions among multiple actors. In tourism communication studies, qualitative approaches enable researchers to investigate how communication strategies are constructed, negotiated, and interpreted by stakeholders within specific socio-cultural contexts. Previous research in tourism communication and community-based tourism has also emphasized the importance of qualitative inquiry to capture experiential narratives, social relationships, and symbolic meanings embedded in tourism practices (Bakri et al., 2022; Quang et al., 2025). By adopting a qualitative approach, this study seeks to understand the processes through which digital communication strategies are developed and implemented by local actors rather than merely measuring their outcomes quantitatively.

The research design applied in this study is a case study approach focusing on the tourism communication practices in Buton Regency, Southeast Sulawesi, with particular attention to the Kali Lakua tourism destination. A case study design allows researchers to examine contemporary phenomena within their real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly defined. Tourism communication strategies are shaped by institutional structures, local culture, community participation, and digital media environments, making them suitable for in-depth case study investigation. The case study approach therefore enables a holistic examination of how government institutions, tourism communities, and local stakeholders interact in producing and disseminating tourism-related communication in digital spaces. This approach is also consistent with research on community-based tourism, which often relies on contextual and interpretive methods to analyze participatory tourism development and communication practices (Hamid et al., 2025; Suherman et al., 2025).

The selection of Buton Regency as the research setting is based on its diverse tourism potential and the ongoing development of community-based tourism initiatives in the region. The area possesses a variety of natural and cultural attractions, including beaches, waterfalls, historical sites, and emerging tourism villages. Despite this potential, the digital promotion of these destinations remains uneven and faces several governance and coordination challenges. The Kali Lakua tourism area represents a particularly relevant case because of the ambiguity surrounding its management structure and the limited consistency of digital promotion efforts. These conditions provide an opportunity to investigate how communication strategies emerge through the interaction between institutional actors and community groups in the absence of fully centralized management structures.

The informants in this research were selected using purposive sampling, a technique commonly used in qualitative research to identify participants who possess relevant knowledge and direct experience with the phenomenon being studied. Purposive sampling enables researchers to focus on individuals who are directly involved in tourism communication practices and therefore able to provide detailed and contextually rich information (Suherman et al., 2026). The selection criteria focused on actors who participate in the production, management, or dissemination of tourism related information. Informants were therefore drawn from two main categories of stakeholders: internal institutional actors and external community actors.

Internal informants included representatives from the Tourism Office of Buton Regency who are responsible for designing policies and coordinating tourism promotion strategies. These participants provided insights into institutional perspectives regarding digital tourism communication, policy frameworks, and the management of official promotional channels such as government social media accounts and tourism websites. In addition to institutional actors, the research also involved external informants consisting of community members who actively participate in tourism-related activities. These included members of local tourism communities, tour guides, and individuals involved in community-based tourism initiatives. Community informants were selected because they play an important role in producing user-generated content and disseminating tourism narratives through social media platforms (Hastuti et al., 2025).

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources to ensure a comprehensive understanding of tourism communication practices. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews and digital observations, while secondary data were derived from policy documents, digital archives, and academic literature related to tourism communication and community-based tourism. The combination of multiple data sources allows for triangulation, which enhances the reliability and credibility of qualitative research findings.

Primary data collection involved semi-structured interviews with selected informants. Semi structured interviews allow researchers to explore predetermined research topics while maintaining flexibility to follow emerging themes during the conversation. This method is widely used in tourism and communication studies because it enables participants to express their experiences and perspectives in their own words. Interview questions focused on several key aspects, including strategies used by the local tourism office to promote destinations through digital media, the processes involved in producing promotional content, and the ways in which community members contribute to tourism promotion activities. Interviews also explored perceptions regarding the effectiveness of digital communication strategies in shaping tourist trust and interest.

In addition to interviews, the research incorporated digital observation as a method for examining the actual practices of tourism communication on social media platforms. Digital observation involved monitoring official tourism accounts and community-generated content across platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and websites used for tourism promotion. The observation focused on identifying the types of content shared, the frequency of postings, the visual and narrative characteristics of promotional materials, and the forms of interaction between content creators and online audiences. Digital observation is particularly relevant in tourism communication research because social media platforms serve as central arenas where destination narratives are constructed and circulated among potential tourists (Chu et al., 2020; Morrison et al., 2023).

Document analysis was also conducted to complement the primary data. Relevant documents included tourism development plans, government reports, promotional archives, and digital content produced by tourism institutions and communities. Document analysis provides contextual information regarding the policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, and development strategies that shape tourism communication practices. The inclusion of documentary sources also allows researchers to compare official narratives with community-generated narratives circulating in digital media environments.

Data analysis in this research employed thematic analysis to identify patterns of meaning within the collected qualitative data. Thematic analysis is widely used in qualitative research because it allows researchers to systematically organize and interpret complex textual data. The process of thematic analysis in this study followed (Chu et al., 2020; Morrison et al., 2023) several iterative stages. The first stage involved familiarization with the data through repeated reading of interview transcripts and observation notes. This stage enabled the researcher to develop an overall understanding of the communication practices described by participants.

The second stage consisted of initial coding, in which segments of data were labeled according to key ideas, actions, or concepts relevant to tourism communication practices. Initial coding helped identify recurring patterns in how informants described digital promotion activities, government policies, and community participation in tourism communication. In the third stage, the initial codes were grouped into broader categories through a process known as focused coding. Focused coding allows researchers to synthesize related codes into analytical categories that represent significant aspects of the phenomenon being studied.

Based on the focused coding process, several thematic categories emerged that describe the structure of digital tourism communication practices in Buton Regency. These categories include digital tourism promotion strategies, government policy and institutional roles in tourism communication, the production process of promotional content, collaboration between government institutions and tourism communities, and the promotion of tourism villages and emerging destinations. These thematic categories served as the foundation for the development of broader analytical themes that explain how community-based digital tourism communication operates within the local tourism ecosystem.

The final stage of the analysis involved interpreting the identified themes in relation to existing theoretical frameworks on digital tourism communication, user-generated content, and community-based tourism. By linking empirical findings with relevant theoretical perspectives, the analysis aimed to explain how digital communication strategies contribute to the formation of destination image, tourist trust, and intention to visit. This interpretive stage also allowed the research to highlight the role of community participation in producing authentic tourism narratives that complement institutional promotional efforts.

The research was conducted in Buton Regency with fieldwork and digital observation carried out over a three-month period between December 2025 and February 2026. During this period, the researcher conducted interviews with key stakeholders, collected documentary materials, and observed digital communication practices across multiple social media platforms. The combination of field-based and digital data collection reflects the hybrid nature of contemporary tourism communication, which occurs simultaneously in physical tourism spaces and online media environments. Through this methodological approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how community-based digital tourism communication strategies are implemented

and how they influence tourist perceptions and engagement with tourism destinations in Buton Regency.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Overview of Research Findings

This study examines the implementation of community-based digital tourism communication strategies in Buton Regency. The findings are derived from thematic analysis of interview data, digital observations, and supporting documents related to tourism promotion practices conducted by the local tourism office and community actors. The analysis followed several stages, including initial coding, focused coding, and theme development, which enabled the identification of patterns in how digital tourism communication is practiced in the region. The results reveal that tourism promotion in Buton Regency involves a combination of institutional communication managed by the Tourism Office and participatory communication generated by local communities. This hybrid communication structure reflects broader developments in digital tourism communication, where multiple actors contribute to shaping destination narratives and influencing tourist (Chu et al., 2020; Morrison et al., 2023).

Based on the thematic analysis process, five major themes emerged from the data: digital tourism promotion strategies, government policy and institutional roles in digital promotion, the production process of promotional content, collaboration between government institutions and tourism communities, and the promotion of tourism villages and emerging destinations. These themes collectively illustrate how digital communication practices are organized, implemented, and supported by different actors within the tourism ecosystem in Buton Regency. The thematic structure derived from the coding process is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Thematic Structure of Digital Tourism Communication in Buton Regency

Initial Codes	Focused Categories	Analytical Themes
Digital promotion practices	Digital tourism promotion strategy	Digital tourism communication strategy
Institutional regulations	Government policy in digital promotion	Institutional governance of tourism communication
Content production activities	Promotional content production process	Digital storytelling and destination representation
Community involvement	Government–community collaboration	Participatory tourism communication
Tourism village promotion	Destination and tourism village development	Strategic destination visibility

3.2. Digital Tourism Communication Strategy

The first theme identified in the research findings concerns the digital communication strategies used by the Tourism Office of Buton Regency to promote tourism destinations. The findings indicate that social media platforms constitute the primary communication channels for

tourism promotion. Informants explained that digital promotion activities rely heavily on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and official tourism websites. One informant stated that the tourism office utilizes “social media such as Instagram, website, and TikTok” as the main platforms for disseminating tourism information. This finding reflects broader trends in tourism communication, where social media platforms function as dynamic spaces for visual storytelling and destination branding (Chu et al., 2020).

The preference for visually oriented platforms such as Instagram and TikTok reflects the importance of visual representation in tourism promotion. These platforms enable tourism managers to present attractive images and videos of natural landscapes, cultural attractions, and tourism activities. Previous studies suggest that visual content shared through social media significantly influences destination image and tourist intention to visit (Ameen et al., 2023; Baber & Baber, 2022). In the context of Buton Regency, visual storytelling through short videos and images is used to capture the aesthetic appeal of tourism destinations and communicate the experiential aspects of visiting these locations.

Another important element of the digital tourism communication strategy involves monitoring tourism trends through social media analytics and digital surveys. Informants noted that promotional priorities are often determined by observing which destinations receive high levels of attention on social media. As one informant explained, promotional decisions are influenced by “which destinations attract the most interest on social media.” This approach indicates that digital data plays an increasingly important role in guiding tourism communication strategies. By observing online engagement patterns, tourism managers can identify emerging travel trends and adjust promotional strategies accordingly.

3.3. Government Policy and Institutional Roles in Digital Promotion

The second theme concerns the role of government institutions in managing and regulating digital tourism promotion activities. The findings reveal that the Tourism Office of Buton Regency functions primarily as a policy-making and coordinating institution rather than as the sole producer of tourism content. According to the interview data, the head of the tourism office emphasized that his role is primarily at the policy level, stating that he is involved “only at the policy level” while technical promotional activities are managed by the promotion division. This division of responsibilities reflects the organizational structure of tourism governance in which strategic decisions are separated from operational tasks.

One of the most important institutional policies identified in the findings is the establishment of a minimum frequency for social media postings. Informants reported that the tourism office requires at least one promotional post per week on official digital channels. This policy is designed to ensure the continuity and visibility of tourism information in digital spaces. Regular content publication is widely recognized as an essential component of digital marketing strategies because it maintains audience engagement and increases algorithmic visibility on social media platforms (Lin et al., 2020).

practice, however, the frequency of promotional content may exceed the minimum requirement when tourism events or community activities occur. Informants explained that the number of posts can increase to two or three per week when there are special tourism events or festivals. This flexible approach to content scheduling allows the tourism office to respond to dynamic tourism activities and maintain relevance within rapidly changing digital environments.

3.4. Promotional Content Production Process

The third theme identified in the research findings relates to the process of producing digital promotional content. The analysis reveals that content production follows a structured workflow that includes planning, field production, editing, and verification. According to informants, the production process typically begins with internal meetings among the promotion team to determine the theme and destination to be featured in upcoming promotional materials. These planning meetings enable team members to coordinate their roles and establish a clear narrative direction for the content.

After the planning stage, a small production team consisting of three to four members travels to the selected destination to capture visual materials. Informants described how the team records videos and photographs of tourism attractions, natural scenery, and visitor activities. These visual materials are later processed and edited to produce short videos suitable for social media platforms such as Instagram Reels or TikTok. The use of short-form video formats reflects contemporary digital communication trends in tourism marketing, where short, visually engaging content is more likely to capture audience attention (Datu et al., 2025).

An important aspect of the content production process is internal verification before publication. Informants explained that promotional materials must undergo internal review to ensure that they comply with ethical guidelines and accurately represent tourism destinations. This verification process is intended to prevent misinformation and avoid content that may negatively affect individuals or communities associated with tourism activities. Quality control mechanisms such as internal review contribute to maintaining the credibility and professionalism of official tourism communication.

3.5. Collaboration Between Government and Tourism Communities

The fourth theme highlights the role of collaboration between government institutions and local tourism communities in digital promotion activities. The findings show that community actors an increasingly important role in promoting tourism destinations through both formal and informal communication channels. Informants indicated that local communities often conduct tourism-related activities at destinations, such as guiding visitors, organizing recreational activities, and producing digital content about their experiences. These community activities indirectly contribute to the visibility of tourism destinations in digital spaces.

Community members also participate in the production of promotional materials by assisting in video recording and providing information about tourism sites. In some cases, community representatives accompany the promotion team during field visits and help identify attractive locations or tourism activities to be featured in promotional content. This collaborative approach reflects the principles of community-based tourism, which emphasize the active participation of local communities in tourism development and communication processes (Quang et al., 2025).

In addition to collaborating with government institutions, local communities independently produce promotional content through their own social media accounts. These community-generated posts often include practical information such as contact details, tour packages, or recreational activities available at the destination. While official government promotions tend to focus on general information about tourism attractions, community posts are often more oriented toward marketing specific services or experiences. This complementary relationship between institutional and community communication contributes to a more diverse and dynamic digital tourism ecosystem.

3.6. Promotion of Tourism Villages and Emerging Destinations

The final theme identified in the analysis concerns the promotion of tourism villages and emerging destinations in Buton Regency. Informants explained that tourism villages represent a strategic focus for regional tourism development. For example, the village of Wasuemba has gained national recognition by being included among the top tourism villages in Indonesia. Such recognition increases the visibility of local destinations and encourages further promotional efforts by both government institutions and local communities.

Tourism villages often operate their own digital communication channels, including social media accounts managed by village administrators or community groups. Informants noted that these village-based channels can sometimes be more active than official government accounts because community members frequently share local events, cultural activities, and tourism experiences. This decentralized communication structure enables tourism information to circulate more widely across digital networks.

Another factor influencing promotional priorities is the emergence of tourism trends identified through digital monitoring. Informants explained that destinations experiencing increased visitor interest or viral social media attention are more likely to be prioritized in promotional campaigns. For instance, dolphin-watching activities in Bonetro Barat have recently attracted significant attention due to their unique tourism appeal. The ability to identify such emerging attractions allows tourism managers to adapt promotional strategies to changing visitor preferences.

Overall, the findings indicate that digital tourism communication in Buton Regency operates through a hybrid model that combines institutional governance with community participation. Government institutions provide policy frameworks, promotional infrastructure, and official communication channels, while local communities contribute authentic narratives and content. This collaborative communication structure enhances destination visibility and strengthens the credibility of tourism information shared through digital media.

3.7 Create a Discussion

3.7.1 Digital Tourism Communication Strategy

The findings of this study demonstrate that digital communication has become the central mechanism through which tourism destinations in Buton Regency are promoted and represented in contemporary tourism discourse. The reliance on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and official tourism websites reflects broader global transformations in tourism marketing and communication. Tourism communication is no longer limited to static promotional materials but has evolved into dynamic digital storytelling that combines visual representation, interaction, and networked dissemination of information. Previous studies have emphasized that social media plays a decisive role in shaping destination image, influencing tourist perceptions, and ultimately affecting intention to visit. Visual platforms in particular allow destinations to present immersive representations of landscapes, cultural experiences, and tourism activities that are capable of capturing the imagination of potential travelers.

The empirical evidence from Buton Regency confirms this theoretical perspective. Social media functions not only as a promotional tool but also as an analytical instrument through which tourism managers monitor audience engagement and emerging tourism trends. The practice of observing which destinations gain attention on social media indicates that digital communication strategies are increasingly guided by data-driven insights derived from online interactions. This approach aligns with contemporary tourism marketing practices in which digital analytics are used to identify tourist preferences, evaluate promotional performance, and adapt communication strategies accordingly.

At the same time, the prioritization of visually oriented platforms such as Instagram and TikTok highlights the growing importance of visual culture in tourism communication. Tourism destinations compete within a global digital environment where attractive imagery, short videos, and experiential narratives significantly influence audience engagement. The ability of visual media to evoke emotional responses and convey experiential value explains why tourism institutions tend to prioritize platforms that emphasize visual storytelling. In this sense, the findings support the argument that digital tourism communication is increasingly shaped by aesthetic representation and experiential narratives rather than purely informational messaging.

3.7.2 Institutional Governance and Government Roles in Digital Promotion

Another important insight emerging from the findings concerns the role of government institutions in organizing and regulating digital tourism communication. The results indicate that the Tourism Office in Buton Regency functions primarily as a policy and coordination body rather than as the sole producer of tourism content. This institutional arrangement reflects a governance model in which strategic direction is determined at the leadership level while operational activities are delegated to specialized teams responsible for promotion and content production.

The establishment of a minimum posting frequency for official social media channels represents an attempt to institutionalize consistency in digital communication. Consistency is widely recognized as a key factor in successful digital marketing because regular content publication

increases audience engagement and enhances algorithmic visibility on social media platforms. By setting a weekly posting standard, the tourism office attempts to maintain continuous interaction with online audiences and sustain the visibility of local destinations within competitive digital environments.

However, the findings also suggest that institutional tourism communication does not operate in isolation. Instead, government communication strategies interact with broader digital ecosystems in which multiple actors participate in producing and circulating tourism narratives. This observation resonates with the concept of destination governance, which emphasizes the importance of collaboration among government agencies, local communities, and tourism stakeholders in shaping development. In the context of Buton Regency, government institutions provide the structural framework for tourism promotion while other actors contribute complementary forms of communication that enrich the overall destination narrative.

3.7.3 Digital Content Production and Destination Representation

The structured process of promotional content production identified in this study highlights the professionalization of digital tourism communication practices at the local government level. Content production involves several stages, including planning meetings, field data collection, editing, and internal verification. This workflow demonstrates that digital tourism promotion is not merely spontaneous content sharing but rather a carefully managed communication process designed to ensure the quality and credibility of the information being disseminated.

The planning stage of content production plays a crucial role in shaping the narrative direction of tourism promotion. Through internal meetings, promotion teams determine the destinations to be featured, the visual themes to be emphasized, and the storytelling approaches to be used. This strategic planning enables tourism communicators to align promotional content with broader tourism development objectives, such as highlighting emerging attractions or promoting cultural experiences that represent the identity of the region.

The verification process prior to publication is another significant element revealed by the findings. Internal review mechanisms help ensure that promotional materials accurately represent tourism destinations and adhere to ethical communication standards. This is particularly important in digital environments where misinformation or misleading content can easily spread and damage the credibility of tourism institutions. By implementing verification procedures, the tourism office attempts to maintain the reliability and professionalism of its digital communication.

These findings contribute to the broader literature on digital tourism communication by illustrating how local government institutions operationalize digital marketing strategies in practice. While many studies focus on the impact of digital communication on tourist behavior, fewer studies examine the internal processes through which tourism organizations produce digital content. The present study therefore provides insight into the organizational dimension of digital tourism communication within local governance contexts.

3.7.4 Community Participation and the Emergence of Participatory Tourism Communication

One of the most significant contributions of this research lies in its identification of community participation as a key component of digital tourism communication in Buton Regency. The findings indicate that local communities are actively involved in tourism activities and frequently contribute to the production and dissemination of tourism-related content. Community members participate in various forms of tourism engagement, including guiding visitors, organizing recreational activities, and sharing digital narratives about their experiences at tourism destinations.

From a theoretical perspective, this phenomenon reflects the principles of community-based tourism, which emphasize the involvement of local communities as active stakeholders in tourism development. Community participation in communication processes allows tourism narratives to incorporate local knowledge, cultural perspectives, and experiential authenticity that may not be fully captured through institutional promotion alone. As a result, community-generated content can enhance the credibility and relatability of tourism communication.

The coexistence of institutional and community-generated communication also reflects the dynamics of electronic word-of-mouth and user-generated content in digital tourism environments. When community members share their experiences through social media, they create informal promotional networks that extend beyond official tourism channels. These networks contribute to the circulation of authentic narratives that influence how potential tourists perceive destinations. Because such content originates from individuals rather than institutions, it is often perceived as more trustworthy and relatable by online audiences.

Nevertheless, the findings also reveal that community participation in tourism promotion remains relatively informal and sometimes limited in scale. Many local communities operate without formal organizational structures, and their digital communication activities are often conducted independently. This condition suggests that while community participation already contributes to tourism promotion, there is still significant potential to strengthen collaboration between government institutions and community groups in order to develop more coordinated communication strategies.

3.7.5 Promotion of Tourism Villages and Emerging Destinations

The final theme identified in the research findings concerns the strategic promotion of tourism villages and emerging destinations. Tourism villages represent an important component of regional tourism development strategies because they combine natural attractions, cultural heritage, and community participation. In Buton Regency, tourism villages such as Wasuemba have gained recognition at the national level, which has increased their visibility and stimulated additional promotional efforts.

The prominence of tourism villages in digital promotion strategies reflects broader trends in sustainable tourism development. Tourism villages are often associated with authentic cultural experiences, local hospitality, and community-based management, all of which are increasingly valued by contemporary travelers. By promoting tourism villages through digital platforms, local governments seek to highlight these unique attributes and attract visitors interested in experiential tourism.

Another important aspect revealed by the findings is the role of digital monitoring in determining promotional priorities. Tourism managers observe online trends, visitor interest, and emerging attractions to decide which destinations should receive greater promotional attention. For example, destinations that become popular through social media exposure or unique tourism activities may quickly gain prominence in digital promotion campaigns. This adaptive approach allows tourism institutions to respond to changing visitor preferences and maintain the relevance of their promotional strategies.

Overall, the discussion of these findings suggests that digital tourism communication in Buton Regency operates through a hybrid model that combines institutional governance, professional content production, community participation, and adaptive promotional strategies. Such a model reflects the evolving nature of tourism communication in the digital era, where the effectiveness of destination promotion depends not only on institutional messaging but also on collaborative storytelling and participatory communication network

4. Conclusion

This study explored the implementation of community-based digital tourism communication strategies in Buton Regency and examined how these practices contribute to the visibility and development of tourism destinations. The findings demonstrate that digital communication has become an essential component of tourism promotion in the region, particularly through the use of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and official tourism websites. These platforms enable tourism stakeholders to disseminate visual narratives about destinations, monitor tourism trends, and interact with broader audiences in real time. The study also shows that the local government plays a strategic role in establishing policy frameworks and coordinating promotional activities, while operational tasks such as content production are carried out by specialized teams within the tourism office.

Another important finding is the growing role of community participation in tourism communication. Local communities contribute to tourism promotion through their involvement in tourism activities, the creation of digital content, and collaboration with government institutions during promotional campaigns. This interaction produces a hybrid communication model in which institutional promotion and community-generated narratives coexist and reinforce each other. Such a model strengthens the authenticity and credibility of tourism communication, as community generated experiences provide relatable and trustworthy representations of destinations.

Overall, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on digital tourism communication by highlighting the importance of collaborative communication structures that integrate institutional governance, professional content production, and community participation. The findings suggest that strengthening partnerships between government institutions and local communities can enhance destination visibility, build tourist trust, and support sustainable tourism development. Future research may expand this study by examining tourist perceptions of community-generated digital content, comparing communication strategies across multiple destinations, or integrating quantitative approaches to measure the impact of digital communication on tourist trust and intention to visit.

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