

Communication Channel Effectiveness in Digital Tourism Communication: A Media Ecology Theory Perspective on Karuing Tourism Village

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ABSTRACT

Advances in digital technology have transformed communication patterns in the promotion of tourist destinations, including in tourism villages that highlight local wisdom as their main attraction. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of communication channels in promoting the Karuing tourism village from the perspective of media ecology theory. The study employed a descriptive quantitative approach using a survey method involving 50 respondents, consisting of tourists and local residents familiar with the promotional activities of the Karuing tourism village. Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire with five indicators of communication channel effectiveness: accessibility, immediacy, interactivity, cultural resonance, and engagement. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 to describe the level of effectiveness for each indicator. The results show that all indicators fall into the “effective” category. The Engagement indicator received the highest average score (4.45), followed by Cultural Resonance (4.36), Accessibility (4.28), Immediacy (4.20), and Interactivity (4.05). These findings indicate that authentic representations of local culture and the ability of digital media to foster emotional engagement are key factors in the success of tourism communication in Karuing Tourism Village. From the perspective of media ecology theory, digital media not only serves as a means of conveying information but also shapes a communication environment that connects communities, culture, and tourists within a sustainable communication ecosystem. This study makes a conceptual contribution by deepening the understanding of the effectiveness of communication channels based on local culture as a strategy for the sustainable development of tourism villages.

Keywords: effectiveness of communication channels, media ecology theory, tourism village, local wisdom, tourism communication.

I. Introduction

Tourism villages have become a key strategy for rural development through the integration of economic growth, cultural preservation, and community empowerment. Indonesia widely promotes tourism villages as a model of sustainable tourism that leverages local cultural and natural resources as its main

attractions. These villages not only generate economic benefits but also serve as a means to preserve local traditions and strengthen community identity. Despite their significant potential, many tourism villages face challenges in effectively communicating their unique identities. The main issue is not a lack of tourism resources, but rather the inability to transform those resources into meaningful communication narratives. As a result, many destinations suffer from low visibility, weak branding, and limited engagement with potential tourists.

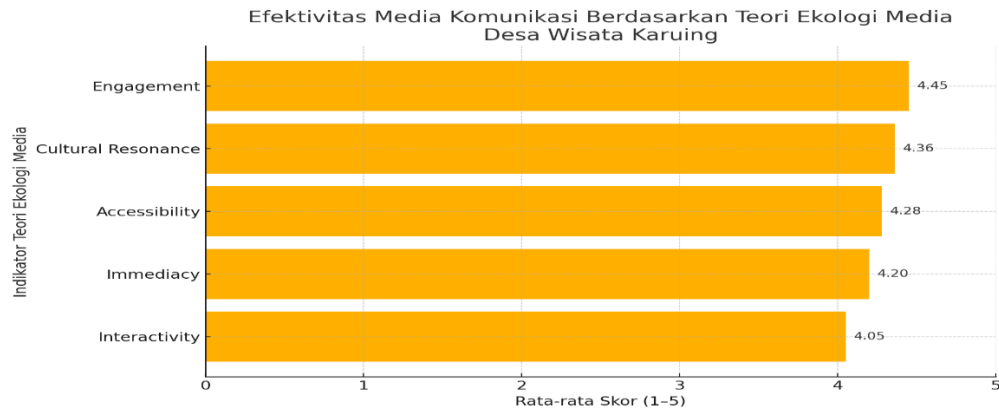
Communication in the digital age has shifted to digital platforms such as social media, websites, and online content. These platforms enable destinations to reach a wider audience and foster interactive engagement. However, many rural tourism destinations still face limitations in effectively utilizing digital communication, particularly in integrating cultural narratives into their promotional strategies. From the perspective of media ecology theory, media is not merely a channel for conveying information, but rather an environment that shapes human perceptions, meanings, and experiences (Postman; Nugroho, 2020). Digital media in tourism serves as a symbolic environment that influences how destinations are perceived. Therefore, the effectiveness of tourism communication depends on how messages are crafted and conveyed within that media environment.

Tourism villages, as a model for tourism development, offer authentic experiences that allow tourists to interact directly with local culture and communities. A tourism village is a concept for the development of rural areas that showcases the authenticity of local customs, sociocultural practices, traditional architecture, daily life, and the village's spatial structure, all integrated with tourism components such as attractions, accommodations, and supporting facilities (Darsono, 2005; Mumtaz & Karmilah, 2022). A tourism village is an area associated with a specific region or various forms of local wisdom (customs, culture, and potential), managed as a tourist attraction according to its capabilities, and intended to serve the social and economic interests of the community (Hermawan, 2016). "Community" refers to the general public residing in a tourist destination or location, as the rightful owners of various resources that constitute tourism capital, including culture (Pitana & Gayatri, 2005; Wilantari, 2024).

Karuing Tourism Village in Central Kalimantan is a rural destination with strong cultural and ecological potential. However, its communication strategies remain limited, particularly in terms of digital engagement and narrative construction. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of digital communication in promoting Karuing Tourism Village and to identify the key factors that influence the effectiveness of such communication.

II. Discussion

The communication channels used in the promotion of the Karuing tourism village have generally been classified as effective. Based on a descriptive statistical analysis of five indicators adopted from media ecology theory—namely, accessibility, immediacy, interactivity, cultural resonance, and engagement—all indicators were analyzed using SPSS version 26 and yielded an average score above 4.00. These findings indicate that the communication media utilized in the promotion of the tourism village have been able to fulfill their primary function as a means of conveying information while also serving as a medium for building relationships between tourism village managers, the local community, and tourists. Overall, the engagement indicator received the highest score (4.45), followed by cultural resonance (4.36), accessibility (4.28), immediacy (4.20), and interactivity (4.05). These differences in scores indicate that the success of Karuing's tourism village promotion is determined more by the media's ability to create emotional engagement and present local cultural representations than by simply conveying information quickly. The effectiveness of tourism communication is measured not only by the technical aspects of information dissemination but also by the media's ability to create meaningful communication experiences for tourists.



These findings show that tourism communication has undergone a paradigm shift. Initially, promotional media were more focused on conveying information about tourist attractions, facilities, and destination accessibility. The development of digital media has transformed the function of communication into a more complex one—namely, as a space that facilitates social interaction, cultural experiences, and emotional connections between tourists and tourist destinations. Social media and digital platforms in the Karuing tourism village serve not only as promotional tools but also as spaces for representing the cultural identity of the local community, accessible to a broader audience. This phenomenon aligns with the perspective of media ecology theory developed by Marshall McLuhan (1964; Laksono, 2023). This theory asserts that media should not be understood merely as tools for conveying messages but as an environment that influences how humans think, interact, and construct social meaning. “The medium is the message” explains that the characteristics of the medium often have a greater influence than the content of the message being conveyed. The digital media used by the Karuing tourism village not only showcase its tourism potential but also shape tourists’ perceptions of cultural identity, the lives of the local community, and the values that thrive within it.

This perspective shows that the effectiveness of a communication channel cannot be measured solely based on the amount of information received by the audience. Effectiveness is also determined by the media’s ability to create a communication environment that facilitates the exchange of meaning between the communicator and the recipient. Digital media, in the promotion of the Karuing tourist village, has become a space where the local community introduces its

traditions, customs, and cultural richness to tourists through photos, videos, stories, and documentation of cultural activities. Media no longer functions as a linear communication channel but has evolved into a social space that enables a more participatory communication process.

The research findings also show that the success of promotional communication is influenced by the media's ability to integrate cultural elements into the content presented. The high score on the "cultural resonance" indicator suggests that tourists are not only attracted to the natural beauty of the Karuing tourist village but also to the cultural narrative behind it. The representation of local culture in promotional media helps build the perception that this destination possesses characteristics distinct from other tourist destinations. Culture is no longer positioned as a mere complement to promotion but has become a key element in shaping a destination's identity. From a tourism communication perspective, a destination's identity is one of the factors that determine the competitiveness of a tourist area. Destinations that can present a strong identity will be more easily recognized by tourists and have a greater chance of building visitor loyalty. Presenting local culture through digital media holds strategic value because it not only introduces tourist attractions but also builds an authentic image of the destination. The findings of this study show that content featuring community cultural activities, local traditions, and social interactions receives a more positive response compared to content that only contains information about tourist facilities.

In addition to strengthening the destination's identity, the use of digital media also creates opportunities for a broader communication process. Before the development of social media, the promotion of tourism villages was generally carried out through conventional media such as brochures, billboards, or word-of-mouth communication. This communication model had a relatively limited reach because it depended on geographical proximity and the social networks of the community. In contrast, digital media enable information about Karuing Tourism Village to reach people in various regions without being limited by space and time. This transformation shows that the development of communication technology has changed the pattern of tourism promotion from local communication to global communication. The effectiveness of digital media is not determined solely by the

wide reach of information. More importantly, it is determined by the ability of media to create communication experiences that influence tourists' perceptions of the destination. The high engagement score indicates that the published content is able to attract attention, generate interest, and even foster tourists' emotional involvement. This finding shows that the promotional strategy of Karuing Tourism Village has moved toward the concept of experience based communication, namely communication that seeks to create an experience before tourists actually visit the destination.

This emotional engagement has significant implications for tourist behavior. Various studies in tourism communication show that tourists tend to be more interested in visiting destinations that can provide authentic experiences compared to those that merely offer information about facilities or natural beauty. Digital media serves as a bridge connecting virtual experiences with real-world experiences. Tourists who have positive experiences through digital media will have higher expectations when visiting the destination in person. The effectiveness of communication channels not only increases the dissemination of information but also contributes to greater interest in visiting and the formation of the destination's image.

The findings of this study also show that the development of tourism communication in the Karuing tourism village has led to a more participatory communication paradigm. Digital media enables local communities to not only be the subjects of promotion but also to become producers of information who actively introduce their culture and social life to the public. This situation reflects a shift in the function of media, as explained in media ecology theory, namely that media is part of a social ecosystem that shapes the relationship between technology, culture, and society. The success of Karuing's tourism promotion is determined not only by the sophistication of the technology used but also by the community's ability to utilize media as a space for building cultural identity and strengthening the sustainability of tourism based on local wisdom.

Accessibility as the Foundation of Communication Channel Effectiveness

The accessibility indicator scored an average of 4.28 and fell into the “effective” category. This finding indicates that the communication channels used in promoting the Karuing tourism village are relatively accessible to both the local community and tourists. This ease of access is a key factor supporting the dissemination of information about tourist destinations, given that the communication channels used are not limited to conventional media but also leverage digital media with a broader reach. Media accessibility in tourism communication is not merely about the ease of obtaining information but also relates to a medium’s ability to reach diverse community groups with varying backgrounds. Today’s tourists tend to rely on digital media as their primary source of information before deciding to visit a destination. They search online for tourist attractions, facilities, transportation options, and reviews from other travelers. The easier it is to find information about a destination, the greater the likelihood that it will be considered as a travel destination.

Kondisi tersebut memperlihatkan bahwa aksesibilitas merupakan tahap awal dalam proses komunikasi pariwisata. Informasi yang berkualitas sekalipun tidak akan memberikan dampak apabila sulit ditemukan oleh calon wisatawan. Efektivitas promosi sangat bergantung pada kemampuan pengelola destinasi dalam menyediakan saluran komunikasi yang mudah diakses, memiliki navigasi yang jelas, serta menyajikan informasi yang lengkap dan mudah dipahami. Nilai aksesibilitas yang tinggi menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat telah mulai memanfaatkan perkembangan teknologi komunikasi untuk memperluas jangkauan promosi. Pemanfaatan media sosial maupun platform digital memungkinkan informasi mengenai desa wisata dapat diakses kapan saja tanpa dibatasi ruang dan waktu. Transformasi ini menjadi perubahan yang signifikan dibandingkan pola promosi konvensional yang selama ini mengandalkan komunikasi tatap muka, brosur, atau informasi dari mulut ke mulut.

This perspective aligns with media ecology theory, which states that changes in communication media will alter the way communities obtain information and build social relationships. McLuhan (1964; Laksono, 2023) explains that media are not merely tools for conveying messages but also shape a new communication environment (media environment) that influences human behavior. The existence

of digital media has created an information environment that allows the community of the Karuing tourism village to interact with potential tourists without having to meet in person. Information about the culture, tourist activities, and the village's potential can be accessed quickly through various digital platforms, thereby reducing the geographical barriers that previously hindered communication.

Media accessibility is also linked to the concept of visibility in destination marketing communications. A destination that is easily found across various communication channels will have a higher level of exposure compared to a destination that relies on only one type of media. A destination's presence on various platforms—such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and its official website—is part of a strategy to boost the destination's visibility in the digital space. The more frequently a destination appears in search results and on social media, the greater the opportunity to build brand awareness (destination awareness) among tourists. The results of this study indicate that the Karuing tourism village has shown positive progress in building its digital visibility. Although this study did not specifically measure the performance of each social media platform, the high accessibility score suggests that respondents found information about the tourism village relatively easy to obtain. This condition serves as a key asset in strengthening the destination's competitiveness, particularly amid increasing competition among tourism villages that are all leveraging digital media as a promotional tool.

High accessibility does not mean that communication management has reached an optimal state. Information technology is evolving so rapidly that travelers' demand for information is also increasing. Travelers need not only information about destination locations but also more detailed information regarding tour package prices, schedules of cultural activities, supporting facilities, availability of tour guides, accommodation options, and online reservation systems. Improving accessibility requires more than just increasing the number of communication channels; it must also be accompanied by an improvement in the quality of information available through each channel. Accessibility must also be understood from the perspective of local communities as key players in tourism communication. Easier access to digital media will provide greater opportunities for communities to engage in promotional activities. They can document cultural

activities, share travel experiences, and showcase the creative economy products unique to their villages. Accessibility not only broadens the reach of promotions to travelers but also strengthens community participation in shaping the destination's image.

From the perspective of sustainable tourism development, a high level of media accessibility is a crucial asset in enhancing the competitiveness of tourist villages. Easily accessible media will accelerate the dissemination of information, expand the reach of promotional efforts, and open up opportunities for collaboration with various stakeholders, such as the government, academics, communities, and tourism industry players. Efforts to improve media accessibility should not only focus on increasing the use of digital technology but also on developing an inclusive, user-friendly communication system capable of connecting all actors involved in the development of the Karuing tourism village. Overall, the findings of this study confirm that accessibility is the cornerstone of effective tourism communication channels. Ease of access to information increases the likelihood that tourists will become familiar with a destination, while for local communities, accessibility serves as a means to actively participate in shaping the identity and image of the tourism village. According to media ecology theory, these conditions indicate that media has evolved into a communication environment that expands the space for social interaction, strengthens connectivity among stakeholders, and supports the sustainable development of tourism based on local wisdom.

Immediacy (Speed and Timeliness of Information) in Building a Destination's Competitiveness

The Immediacy indicator received an average score of 4.20 and fell into the "effective" category. These results indicate that respondents assessed the communication channels used in promoting Karuing Tourism Village as capable of conveying information quickly, relevantly, and in a sufficiently up-to-date manner. The speed of information delivery is one of the key characteristics of digital media that distinguishes it from conventional communication media, as it allows destination managers to update information regarding tourist activities, cultural

events, and destination conditions in real time. The speed of information delivery in tourism communication has a significant influence on tourists' decision-making processes. Before traveling, tourists generally seek the latest information regarding destination conditions, schedules of cultural activities, tour package prices, transportation access, and available facilities. Information that is not updated regularly can create uncertainty and reduce prospective tourists' trust in the destination. The aspect of immediacy is not only related to the speed of message distribution but also to the ability of destination managers to provide information that is accurate, relevant, and consistent with actual on site conditions.

Digital media has made it easier for the managers of the Karuing tourism village to expedite the flow of information to the public and tourists. Through social media and other digital platforms, changes to activity schedules, the holding of cultural festivals, or information about tourist attractions can be published immediately without having to wait for the distribution process, as is the case with print media. This situation demonstrates that digital media can improve communication efficiency while bridging the gap between destination managers and tourists. From the perspective of media ecology theory, this change is a logical consequence of the development of communication technology. McLuhan (1964; Laksono, 2023) explains that every media innovation changes the way humans communicate and build social relationships. The presence of digital media has created a communication environment characterized by the speed of information exchange, so that people have become increasingly accustomed to obtaining information instantly. Tourists no longer rely on brochures, pamphlets, or travel agencies as their primary sources of information but instead rely more on digital media, which can provide continuous updates.

The speed of information also plays a role in enhancing the competitiveness of tourist destinations. In the digital age, destinations that can respond quickly to new information tend to retain public attention more easily than those that rarely update their content. Social media algorithms generally prioritize accounts that actively update their information, giving them a greater chance of reaching a wider audience. Consistency in conveying information is a crucial part of a destination's communication strategy. For the Karuing tourism village, this situation

demonstrates that digital media has been utilized as a tool to maintain ongoing communication with tourists. Regular posts about cultural events, natural attractions, community activities, and local products ensure the destination remains visible in the digital space. This consistent presence not only boosts the destination's visibility but also fosters the perception that the tourism village is dynamic and continuously evolving.

Although the Immediacy indicator was categorized as effective, the research findings also indicate that there is room for improvement in the quality of communication. The speed of information delivery must be balanced with accuracy, consistency, and credibility. In the practice of digital communication, the overly rapid dissemination of information without a verification process can lead to misunderstandings or information that does not align with actual conditions. Tourism village managers need to implement structured content management mechanisms to ensure that every piece of published information truly reflects on-the-ground conditions. Neil Postman explains that while the development of modern media does accelerate the flow of information, it can simultaneously reduce the depth of understanding if communication is focused solely on speed. This perspective is relevant to the development of tourism communication, as tourists need not only timely information but also information that provides meaning and context regarding local culture. Thus, every information update should not merely consist of activity announcements but should also be accompanied by narratives explaining the cultural value, history, and significance of the promoted activities.

The speed at which information is disseminated also has implications for sustainable destination management. Regularly updated information allows tourists to plan their visits more effectively, while also helping managers regulate the flow of tourist visits. For example, announcements regarding visitor capacity, changes to cultural event schedules, or weather conditions can reduce uncertainty, thereby making the travel experience more comfortable. In this context, digital media serves not only as a promotional tool but also as a destination management instrument.

Immediacy also provides opportunities for local communities to participate in the dissemination of information. Cultural activities, traditional crafts, and the daily

lives of communities can be documented and published directly through social media. This participation enriches the variety of promotional content while presenting a more authentic view of community life. Communication is no longer centralized around village administrators but has evolved into a collaborative process that involves the community as producers of information. From the perspective of community-based tourism, this development is a positive indicator, as it demonstrates that communication technology has expanded the scope of community participation in shaping the destination's image. The speed of information dissemination, supported by community participation, will result in communication that is more dynamic, responsive, and aligned with on-the-ground developments. Overall, the research findings indicate that the aspect of immediacy has made a significant contribution to the effectiveness of communication channels in the Karuing tourism village.

The ability of digital media to convey information quickly and in real time not only improves tourists' access to information but also strengthens a destination's competitiveness within the digital communication ecosystem. From the perspective of media ecology theory, the speed of information is part of the changing communication environment that shapes new patterns of interaction among destination managers, local communities, and tourists. Efforts to enhance immediacy should focus not only on increasing the frequency of information publication but also on presenting content that is accurate, meaningful, and capable of reinforcing the cultural identity of the Karuing tourism village.

Interactivity (Two Way Interaction) as a Catalyst for Participatory Communication

The interactivity indicator received an average score of 4.05, placing it in the "moderately effective" category. Compared to the other four indicators, this score was the lowest. Nevertheless, this result does not indicate that communication by the managers of the Karuing tourism village is ineffective; rather, it suggests there is still room to improve the quality of two-way communication between destination managers, the local community, and tourists. Interactivity is one of the key characteristics of digital media that distinguishes it from conventional communication media. In traditional media, communication is linear, with

information flowing from the communicator to the recipient and relatively limited opportunities for feedback. In contrast, digital media allows every user to not only be a recipient of information (audience) but also a creator of information (content creator). Therefore, the effectiveness of communication in the digital age is no longer determined solely by the volume of information published but also by the media's ability to create a space for dialogue that enables a continuous exchange of ideas.

The fact that the interactivity score remains below that of other indicators in the promotion of Karuing as a tourism village suggests that digital media has been utilized as a means of disseminating information but has not yet fully evolved into a space for participatory communication. Most communication activities remain focused on conveying information about tourist attractions, cultural activities, and the village's potential, while opportunities for tourists to provide feedback, share experiences, or engage in conversation have not yet been optimally utilized. This situation presents both a challenge and an opportunity in developing a digital media-based tourism communication strategy. This perspective aligns with the media ecology theory proposed by McLuhan (1964; Laksono, 2023), which states that media are not merely channels for conveying messages but shape the communication environment that influences patterns of human interaction. The relationship between communicators and recipients in the digital media environment has become more equal because both have the same opportunity to produce, disseminate, and respond to information. The success of tourism communication is measured not only by the media's ability to convey promotional messages but also by its ability to build sustainable social relationships among all actors involved in destination development.

Neil Postman (1970; Strate, 2002) also asserts that every change in media brings about changes in a society's communication culture. In the digital media era, people no longer expect one-way communication. They want the opportunity to express their opinions, ask questions, provide reviews, and share experiences. Changes in tourism behavior are evident in the growing role of online travel reviews, social media comments, travel vlogs, and user-generated content as trusted sources of information for prospective travelers. Travelers are no longer merely consumers

of information but have become an integral part of the destination's communication ecosystem. The findings of this study indicate that the Karuing tourism village has significant potential to strengthen interactivity by leveraging the communication features available on digital media. Various platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube provide features like comments, live streaming, polls, Q&A sessions, and discussion forums that enable direct, two-way communication. Utilizing these features will strengthen the emotional bond between destination managers and travelers while increasing public trust in the information provided.

These findings further indicate that the relatively lower score for Interactivity compared with the other dimensions should not be interpreted as a fundamental weakness, but rather as an opportunity to enhance future communication strategies. Strengthening two-way communication through digital media would complement the success of Karuing tourism village in fostering engagement and cultural resonance, ensuring that communication effectiveness is reflected not only in the broad dissemination of information but also in the establishment of meaningful relationships between the destination and its visitors. Overall, the Interactivity dimension demonstrates that the success of tourism communication in the digital era no longer depends solely on the ability to disseminate information rapidly, but increasingly on the capacity to create dialogic communication environments that encourage the active participation of all stakeholders. Enhancing interactivity through social media, developing participatory digital content, and strengthening the capacity of local communities to manage the village's digital communication are therefore essential strategies for reinforcing local wisdom-based tourism promotion while supporting sustainable tourism development.

Cultural Resonance: Local Cultural Connectedness as the Identity of Tourism Communication

The cultural resonance dimension achieved a mean score of 4.36, ranking second only to the engagement dimension. This score falls within the highly effective category, indicating that the communication channels employed in promoting Karuing Tourism Village have successfully represented local cultural values to tourists. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of communication media is determined not only by their ability to disseminate destination-related information

but also by their capacity to communicate cultural identity as a central element of tourism communication. Within the context of tourism villages, culture constitutes the primary asset that distinguishes one destination from another. While natural landscapes may be found in many regions, cultural values, traditions, rituals, language, artistic expressions, and community lifestyles represent unique characteristics that cannot be easily replicated. Consequently, effective tourism communication extends beyond showcasing the physical beauty of a destination; it also connects visitors with the cultural meanings and lived experiences embedded within the local community. The findings of this study indicate that the promotional communication of Karuing tourism village has adopted this approach by presenting content that authentically represents the village's local cultural identity. Rather than focusing exclusively on visual attractions, the communication strategy emphasizes the cultural narratives, traditions, and community values that shape the destination's uniqueness. This approach enables tourists not only to obtain information about the destination but also to develop a deeper understanding of its cultural significance, thereby fostering stronger emotional and experiential connections with the destination.

This perspective is consistent with Media Ecology Theory proposed by Marshall McLuhan. According to McLuhan (1964; Laksono, 2023), media are not merely channels for transmitting messages, but also constitute a media environment that shapes how people understand social and cultural realities. In Karuing Tourism Village, digital media have evolved into a digital cultural space that enables the local community to introduce its traditions, local values, and collective identity to a broader audience. Through social media, the village website, and audiovisual content, culture is no longer transmitted solely through oral traditions within the local community; instead, it is presented in a global communication environment that can be accessed by tourists from different regions and even from abroad.

These findings demonstrate that digital media function as a bridge between local culture and the global community. Prior to the development of digital technology, information about local community culture was generally disseminated through direct interactions or documented in forms with limited reach. Today, this

process has undergone a significant transformation. Traditional rituals, cultural performances, traditional cuisine, local handicrafts, and even the daily activities of the community can be documented through photographs and videos and subsequently disseminated to a wider audience within a relatively short period of time. This transformation expands the space for cultural communication while strengthening the position of tourism villages as part of the global communication network.

From the perspective of tourism communication, these findings indicate a shift from a product-oriented tourism communication approach to a culture-oriented tourism communication approach. Whereas destination promotion previously emphasized tourist attractions and supporting facilities, culture has now become the primary element shaping the destination's image. Modern tourists no longer seek merely beautiful places to visit; they also seek authentic and meaningful experiences that provide a deeper understanding of the local community's way of life. Consequently, the representation of culture in communication media has become one of the key factors determining a destination's attractiveness. The high Cultural Resonance score also indicates that the community of Karuing Tourism Village has successfully maintained its local character throughout the process of digitalizing communication. This phenomenon is particularly noteworthy because the development of digital media is often accompanied by concerns about cultural homogenization, namely the tendency for local cultures to lose their uniqueness due to the dominance of global culture. However, the findings of this study demonstrate that digital media have been utilized as a means of strengthening cultural identity rather than replacing it. The communication content produced continues to reflect local characteristics, thereby positioning culture as the primary identity in destination promotion.

The successful development of cultural resonance also indicates that the communication strategy of Karuing Tourism Village has integrated the concept of storytelling into its information delivery. Cultural content presented through narratives about the village's history, the origins of local traditions, the philosophy underlying traditional rituals, and the daily lives of the community has a greater

capacity to establish emotional connections than information presented in a purely descriptive manner. Storytelling provides context for each tourist attraction, enabling visitors not only to observe an attraction but also to understand the meaning embedded within it. This approach has become increasingly important in the digital era, as audiences tend to be more interested in authentic stories than in direct promotional messages. In addition to its impact on tourists, the representation of culture through communication media also has implications for the local community. When their culture is promoted as the primary identity of the destination, community members develop a greater awareness of the importance of preserving their cultural heritage. Digital media function not only as tools for external promotion but also as a medium of reflection that strengthens the community's sense of belonging toward its local culture. Consequently, tourism communication contributes to cultural preservation by enhancing community pride in its own identity.

From the perspective of Media Ecology Theory, the high Cultural Resonance score indicates that digital media have become an integral part of the cultural ecosystem of Karuing Tourism Village. Media are not merely technologies used to disseminate information; rather, they have evolved into social spaces where culture is produced, represented, learned, and transmitted to future generations. The relationship among people, technology, and culture within this ecosystem is dynamic, resulting in a form of communication that adapts to contemporary developments without losing its local character. Overall, the findings of this study confirm that Cultural Resonance is one of the principal strengths of the communication strategy employed by Karuing Tourism Village. The ability of communication media to authentically represent cultural identity not only enhances the effectiveness of destination promotion but also strengthens destination differentiation amid increasingly intense tourism competition. These findings further reinforce the argument that local wisdom-based tourism communication plays a strategic role in supporting the sustainable development of tourism villages, as it successfully connects promotional objectives with cultural preservation and the empowerment of local communities.

Engagement as the Dominant Factor in Communication Channel Effectiveness

The Engagement dimension achieved a mean score of 4.45, representing the highest score among all the dimensions measured in this study. This result indicates that the communication media used in promoting Karuing Tourism Village are highly effective in fostering tourists' engagement with the information presented. The high level of engagement suggests that the communication process extends beyond the mere delivery of messages; it is capable of attracting attention, stimulating curiosity, and encouraging the emotional involvement of prospective tourists with the destination. These findings indicate that the success of tourism communication in the digital era is no longer measured by the volume of information published, but by the extent to which that information is able to establish a meaningful relationship between the destination and its audience. In the promotion of Karuing Tourism Village, this engagement is reflected in the ability of communication media to create a pre-visit experience, enabling prospective tourists to imagine the atmosphere of the village, become familiar with the local culture, and understand the uniqueness of its tourist attractions before making an actual visit. Digital media therefore function not only as communication tools but also as platforms that create symbolic experiences, shaping tourists' perceptions of the destination before they experience it firsthand.

The high level of Engagement, from the perspective of Media Ecology Theory, indicates that media have evolved into an integral part of the social environment that shapes how individuals perceive reality. McLuhan (1964, as cited in Laksono, 2023) explains that media have the capacity to transform patterns of human interaction because each form of media provides a distinct communication experience. In digital media, this experience is visual, interactive, and simultaneous, enabling a higher level of engagement than conventional media. The success of the promotional communication of Karuing Tourism Village is therefore determined not only by the content of the messages conveyed but also by the characteristics of digital media, which enable tourists to interact with the content more intensively.

The high level of Engagement also reflects the success of the Karuing Tourism Village community in building value-based communication. The communication carried out does not merely promote tourist attractions, but also communicates the values of togetherness, respect for culture, harmonious relationships with nature, and the social life of the community. These values become the main distinguishing factor compared to destination promotion that only focuses on commercial aspects. Communication media function as a means of building an authentic destination image while strengthening the position of Karuing Tourism Village as a tourism village based on local wisdom. Overall, the Engagement dimension provides evidence that the success of tourism communication in Karuing Tourism Village lies in its ability to build an emotional relationship between tourists and the destination through the authentic representation of culture, the presentation of attractive content, and the use of adaptive digital media. From the perspective of Media Ecology Theory, digital media have transformed into a communication environment that not only conveys information but also shapes experiences, identity, and social meaning. Strengthening Engagement needs to be continuously pursued through the development of storytelling-based content, increasing community participation in the production of digital content, and optimizing interaction with tourists so that the promotion of Karuing Tourism Village becomes more effective and sustainable.

Communication Channel Effectiveness from the Perspective of Media Ecology Theory

The effectiveness of communication channels in promoting Karuing Tourism Village is not determined by a single indicator separately, but by the relationship among accessibility, immediacy, interactivity, cultural resonance, and engagement as an integrated communication ecosystem. These five indicators complement one another in shaping a tourism communication process that is not only oriented toward the dissemination of information, but also toward the creation of tourism experiences, the strengthening of cultural identity, and the enhancement of community participation. These findings show that digital media-based tourism communication has developed from an informative function to a transformational function, in which media serve as a social space that shapes the way people produce, distribute, and interpret information about tourism destinations.

From the perspective of media ecology theory, media are viewed as an environment that influences people's ways of thinking, behavior, and social relationships. McLuhan (1964; Laksono, 2023) explains that changes in media are always followed by changes in the way people interact with their environment. The findings of this study show that the digital media utilized by Karuing Tourism Village have created a new communication environment that enables interaction among local communities, tourists, the government, and digital communities within an interconnected communication space. The effectiveness of communication can no longer be understood solely through the successful delivery of promotional messages, but also through the ability of media to create social relationships that support sustainable destination development. The findings also show that accessibility serves as the initial foundation in the communication process. Easy access to information enables tourists to become familiar with Karuing Tourism Village through various digital platforms. However, accessibility alone is not sufficient to create effective communication unless it is accompanied by information that is timely, accurate, and relevant. The immediacy indicator complements the function of accessibility by providing information that is continuously updated according to the development of destination conditions. The combination of these two indicators forms the functional dimension of communication, ensuring that promotional messages are delivered to the audience in a timely manner and are easily accessible.

Communication effectiveness is strengthened by the relational dimension through the interactivity indicator. Although it obtained the lowest mean score compared to the other indicators, interactivity holds a highly strategic position in building participatory digital communication. Social media essentially function not only as channels for disseminating information but also as spaces for dialogue that enable tourists, local communities, and destination managers to exchange experiences, provide feedback, and build closer relationships. These findings indicate that the future development of communication in Karuing Tourism Village should be directed toward strengthening two-way communication so that media truly function as spaces for social collaboration, as explained in media ecology theory. The synthesis of the research findings also shows that the effectiveness of

tourism communication in Karuing Tourism Village follows an interconnected communication process. Accessibility enables tourists to find information about the destination. Once the information has been received, immediacy ensures that the information remains relevant and up to date. Subsequently, interactivity provides opportunities for tourists to communicate with destination managers and the local community. This communication is then strengthened by cultural resonance, which presents local cultural identity as the main distinguishing characteristic of the destination. Finally, the entire process leads to engagement, namely the development of tourists' emotional involvement with Karuing Tourism Village. This sequence demonstrates that the effectiveness of communication channels is the result of the interaction among the communication dimensions rather than the dominance of any single indicator.

These findings provide a conceptual contribution to the development of tourism communication studies based on Media Ecology Theory. Most previous studies have still positioned digital media as destination marketing instruments that function to increase the dissemination of information and the number of tourist visits. This study presents a different perspective by viewing digital media as part of a cultural ecosystem that shapes the relationship between technology, society, and local identity. The effectiveness of media is not measured solely by its communication reach or the frequency of content publication (exposure), but also by its ability to create a digital cultural environment that strengthens the sustainability of tourism destinations. Overall, the synthesis of the findings confirms that the effectiveness of communication channels in promoting Karuing Tourism Village is the result of the formation of a digital communication ecosystem based on local culture. Digital media are no longer positioned merely as promotional tools, but as a communication environment that enables culture to be produced, learned, exchanged, and transmitted to a wider community. This perspective reinforces the ideas of McLuhan, Postman, and Strate that media have the power to shape the social and cultural environment of society. For Karuing Tourism Village, this communication environment serves as an important foundation for tourism development that is not only economically competitive but also culturally and socially sustainable.

III. Closing

This study shows that the communication channels used in promoting Karuing Tourism Village are generally categorized as effective in supporting the development of tourism based on local wisdom. Based on the five indicators analyzed, namely accessibility, immediacy, interactivity, cultural resonance, and engagement, all indicators received positive evaluations from the respondents. This indicates that the communication media utilized have been able to support the dissemination of destination information, accelerate the delivery of information, build interaction with tourists, represent local cultural identity, and create tourists' emotional engagement with the destination. The findings show that engagement is the indicator with the highest score, indicating that the communication carried out is able to attract attention and build an emotional relationship between tourists and Karuing Tourism Village. The high level of engagement is supported by strong cultural resonance, indicating that the representation of local culture has become the main element in shaping the attractiveness of tourism communication. In contrast, the interactivity indicator obtained the lowest score, although it still falls within the effective category. This condition indicates that two-way communication through digital media still needs to be optimized so that tourists and local communities have greater opportunities to participate in the destination communication process.

From the perspective of media ecology theory, the findings of this study show that digital media function not only as a means of disseminating information but have also developed into a communication environment that shapes the patterns of interaction among local communities, destination managers, and tourists. Communication effectiveness is determined not only by the ease of access to information or the speed of message delivery, but also by the ability of media to present local culture as the primary identity of the destination and to create meaningful communication experiences for tourists. This study also shows that the effectiveness of communication channels is the result of the integration of the five dimensions that support one another. Accessibility enables tourists to obtain information about the destination, immediacy ensures that the information remains

up to date, interactivity provides opportunities for participatory communication, cultural resonance strengthens the representation of local cultural identity, and engagement becomes the final outcome in the form of tourists' emotional involvement with the destination. Therefore, the effectiveness of tourism communication does not depend on a single aspect, but on the synergy of all communication dimensions in creating an authentic and sustainable tourism experience.

Theoretically, this study strengthens the application of media ecology theory in tourism communication studies by showing that digital media create a communication ecosystem that connects technology, culture, and society in the destination promotion process. Practically, the findings imply that the managers of Karuing Tourism Village need to continue developing digital communication strategies by improving the quality of content based on local culture, strengthening two-way communication with tourists, and enhancing the capacity of local communities in managing digital media. These efforts are expected to strengthen the competitiveness of Karuing Tourism Village as a sustainable tourism destination based on local wisdom while improving the quality of tourism communication in the digital era.

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