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Construction of Sustainable Tourism Image through Digital Narrative on the Website of Penglipuran Tourism Village, Bali

Tri Wahyuti[1*], Prasetya Yoga Santoso[2], Andi Mirza Ronda[3]

[1,2,3]*Doctoral Program in Communication Studies, Universitas Sahid Jakarta, Indonesia*

[*]*Corresponding author. Email: 2024630011@usahid.ac.id*

ABSTRACT

The development of sustainable tourism increasingly depends on digital communication to construct destination image and disseminate environmental, cultural, and social values. Tourism village websites function as official communication platforms that present narratives reflecting sustainability principles. However, studies examining how digital narratives construct sustainable tourism image in Indonesian tourism village websites remain limited. This study aims to analyze the construction of sustainable tourism image through digital narratives presented on the official website of Penglipuran Tourism Village, Bali, an internationally recognized sustainable tourism destination. This research employs a qualitative approach using narrative analysis to examine storytelling structures, symbolic meanings, and sustainability messages embedded in website content. Data were collected from textual narratives, visual descriptions, and promotional storytelling published on the official Penglipuran Tourism Village website. The analysis focuses on how cultural heritage preservation, environmental sustainability, and community participation are narratively framed to shape tourism identity and destination branding. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on digital narrative construction within official tourism village websites as strategic communication tools for sustainable tourism promotion. The findings are expected to demonstrate that digital storytelling not only serves as promotional content but also plays a significant role in shaping public understanding of sustainability values. This study contributes to tourism communication scholarship and provides practical insights for tourism stakeholders in designing effective digital communication strategies that support sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: *Sustainable Tourism Communication, Digital Storytelling, Destination Branding, Tourism Village, Narrative Analysis*

.1. INTRODUCTION

The advancement of sustainable tourism in the digital era has fundamentally transformed the way tourism destinations construct and communicate their image to global audiences. Official websites of tourism destinations have emerged as central platforms of strategic communication, integrating environmental, cultural, and social values into a coherent digital presence that extends far beyond the limitations of traditional printed materials [1]. Within this context, digital narratives serve not merely as promotional tools, but as meaning-making constructs that actively shape public perception of a destination's identity and unique appeal [2].

Indonesia, endowed with extraordinary cultural and natural heritage, has positioned community-based tourism villages—desa wisata—as one of its primary strategies for sustainable tourism development. By 2023, more than 4,674 registered tourism villages were operating across the country [3]. Among these, Penglipuran Tourism Village in Bangli Regency, Bali, stands as a particularly distinguished example. In 2023, Penglipuran was awarded the title of "Best Tourism Village" by UN Tourism (formerly UNWTO), a recognition that underscores its exemplary integration of cultural heritage preservation, environmental sustainability, and active community participation [4].

Penglipuran is celebrated for its meticulously preserved traditional spatial layout, distinctive Balinese vernacular architecture, and expansive bamboo forests. Beyond its physical attributes, however, the village embodies the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana—a Balinese

concept of harmony encompassing the relationship between humans and God, among people themselves, and between humans and the natural environment [5]. With visitor arrivals reaching 608,133 in 2022 alone, Penglipuran has firmly established itself as a nationally and internationally acclaimed model of sustainable tourism [6].

The success of Penglipuran as a tourism destination is inseparable from its capacity to communicate sustainability values effectively to diverse audiences. In the digital age, an official tourism website functions as a critical communication interface—representing the digital identity of a destination and presenting structured narratives that shape visitor expectations and public understanding [7]. Through its official website, penglipuran.com, the village presents a rich body of narrative content encompassing its history, culture, natural environment, and community life. This curated digital storytelling constitutes a deliberate communicative construction designed to establish and reinforce the image of Penglipuran as a sustainable tourism destination.

In the field of tourism communication, digital narratives have been increasingly recognized as powerful instruments for constructing destination image and promoting sustainability values [8]. Digital technologies—ranging from social media and official websites to multimedia content—enable destinations to engage directly and authentically with global audiences [9]. Recent research demonstrates that narrative-based communication strategies not only enhance the attractiveness of tourism destinations, but also play a pivotal role in fostering public awareness and understanding of sustainable tourism values and practices [10].

Despite this growing body of literature, studies that specifically examine the construction of digital narratives within official tourism village websites in Indonesia—particularly in relation to sustainable tourism image formation—remain scarce. Existing research tends to focus on social media platforms, general digital marketing campaigns, or the physical and socio-cultural dimensions of tourism destinations, thereby leaving a significant academic gap concerning the strategic role of official websites as narrative platforms [11]. This gap provides the primary justification for the present study, which seeks to address it through an in-depth analysis of how digital narratives on the official website of Penglipuran Tourism Village construct and communicate a sustainable tourism image.

This research employs a qualitative approach grounded in narrative analysis to examine storytelling structures, symbolic meanings, and sustainability messages embedded in the website's content. Theoretically, the study draws on a social constructionist framework, which regards narratives as fundamental mechanisms through which social realities—including destination image and identity—are actively produced and disseminated [12]. The analysis is organized around three core dimensions of sustainability: (1) cultural heritage preservation, (2) environmental sustainability, and (3) community participation.

The novelty of this study resides in its specific focus on the digital narrative construction within an official tourism village website as a strategic communication instrument for sustainable tourism promotion. Unlike previous studies that predominantly examine social media content or general destination branding campaigns, this research positions the official website as the primary text of analysis—a methodological choice grounded in the recognition that destination websites constitute one of the most critical and systematically structured channels for online destination branding and identity communication [13].

This focus on the official website is further justified by its fundamental communicative differences from Penglipuran's social media presence. While platforms such as Instagram and YouTube—associated with the village—tend to disseminate fragmented, visually-driven, and user-generated content that prioritizes immediacy and audience interaction, the official website presents a curated, institutionally authored, and historically grounded narrative that integrates cultural heritage, environmental stewardship, and community participation into a coherent and authoritative whole. Unlike social media content, which is shaped by algorithmic logic and co-produced by visitors and followers, the website functions as a deliberately controlled communicative space in which the village's sustainability identity is systematically constructed and officially endorsed. This structural distinction underscores why the official website constitutes an irreplaceable—and underexamined—platform for sustainable tourism communication.

Accordingly, this study aspires to make a dual contribution: academically, it enriches the scholarship on sustainable tourism communication by centering on website-based digital narratives; practically, it offers actionable guidance for tourism village managers, communication planners, and policy stakeholders in designing authentic and effective digital communication strategies that advance sustainable tourism development in Indonesia.

1.1. Sustainable Tourism and Digital Communication

Sustainable tourism is defined by UN Tourism as tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities [1]. Over the past decade, this concept has become increasingly intertwined with digital communication strategy, as online platforms are harnessed both to propagate sustainability values and to shape tourist perceptions at scale [14].

A systematic review conducted by Alhaddar and Kummitha [9] synthesizing 60 peer-reviewed articles found that digital technologies—including social media, augmented reality, mobile applications, and artificial intelligence—play an increasingly dominant role in enhancing destination image, promoting authenticity, and supporting sustainability narratives. Their study emphasizes that digital platforms serve as bridges facilitating multi-stakeholder participation, enabling transparent communication, and disseminating sustainable practices to global audiences in real time.

Beyond mere information dissemination, digital communication in the context of sustainable destination branding functions as a constructive force—actively shaping the image and identity of a destination in the minds of prospective tourists long before any physical visit occurs [15]. Official websites, as arguably the most authoritative form of a destination's digital presence, possess a unique capacity to present comprehensive and layered narratives that integrate cultural, environmental, and community dimensions into a coherent and persuasive whole.

1.2. Digital Storytelling in Tourism Destination Marketing

Digital storytelling has emerged as one of the most effective strategies in tourism destination marketing and branding. Conceptually, it is defined as a technique that employs digital media to craft narratives integrating multiple elements—text, images, audio, and video—to produce rich and memorable communicative experiences [16]. In the tourism context, this approach enables destinations to move beyond the promotion of physical attractions, instead building deep emotional connections between prospective visitors and the values and identity of the destination.

A systematic review by Phung et al. [17] analyzing 86 studies published between 2012 and 2024 confirmed that storytelling in tourism destination branding has demonstrated consistent growth as a research domain. These studies collectively reveal that well-crafted narratives can establish strong brand identities, cultivate emotional engagement among tourists, and ultimately stimulate visit intention. In the digital sphere specifically, website-based storytelling offers distinct advantages: broad and scalable reach, the capacity for real-time updating, and the ability to present multi-layered narratives tailored to diverse audience segments.

Furthermore, an exploratory study on youth engagement with cultural heritage tourism digital content confirms that cultural authenticity stands as the most critical element that determines the success of a digital narrative in attracting and sustaining tourist interest [23]. Destinations that embed genuine cultural values and lived community experiences into their digital storytelling are substantially better positioned to engage audiences who seek meaningful, experiential travel that transcends conventional mass tourism.

1.3. Penglipuran Tourism Village: Context and Significance

Penglipuran Tourism Village is situated in Bangli District, Bangli Regency, Bali Province, at an elevation of 600 to 650 meters above sea level. Established in the fourteenth century during the Bangli Kingdom, the village has maintained its traditional spatial organization, architectural heritage, and cultural practices for over seven centuries [6]. The name "Penglipuran" itself derives from the words pengeling—meaning to remember—and pura—denoting the ancestral homeland—thus signifying a place of ancestral remembrance. This etymology encapsulates the profound bond between the community and its cultural inheritance [4].

The distinctive character of Penglipuran lies in the harmonious integration of tradition and sustainability. The extensive bamboo forests surrounding the village serve not only as a vital ecological buffer, protecting watersheds and biodiversity, but also as a powerful symbol of the community's enduring commitment to environmental stewardship [5]. The village's awig-awig—customary law still rigorously enforced by the community—ensures that all activities, including physical construction and tourism operations, must conform to traditional values and community-based sustainability principles [18].

Research by Sumartini et el. [18] identifies four primary modes of community participation in Penglipuran's tourism management: contributing ideas to tourism planning processes, providing financial support for tourism initiatives, producing and marketing local cultural products, and direct operational involvement as tour guides, homestay managers, and local business operators. This high degree of community ownership renders Penglipuran a compelling model of community-based tourism (CBT) that successfully reconciles economic interests with the preservation of culture and the natural environment.

The international recognition accorded to Penglipuran—most notably its designation as a "Best Tourism Village 2023" by UN Tourism—reflects not only the quality of its on-the-ground sustainable tourism practices, but also its capacity to communicate these values compellingly to the world. In this regard, the official website penglipuran.com represents a strategic arena in which the village's sustainability narrative is constructed, curated, and disseminated to global audiences, making it a highly pertinent subject for the study of sustainable tourism communication.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Narrative Construction Theory in Tourism Communication

The social constructionist perspective provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding how digital narratives shape tourism image. Within this framework, the image of a tourism destination is not a passive reflection of physical reality, but rather an active construction produced through communicative processes—including the narratives presented on official digital platforms such as websites [12]. Narratives function as the primary mechanism through which meaning, values, and destination identity are created and transmitted to public audiences [2].

In the context of destination branding, Escobar-Farfán et al. [10] conducted a bibliometric mapping analysis of 295 studies published between 1995 and 2022, identifying eight principal intersecting themes: tourist destinations, digital technologies, co-creation, place branding, cultural identity, sustainability, dimensionality, and destination satisfaction. These findings affirm that a strong and coherent destination identity is built through the integration of multiple dimensions, with digital narratives functioning as the connective tissue that binds these dimensions into a unified and persuasive communicative whole.

More specifically in the context of tourism websites, earlier research demonstrates that narrative content within digital platforms possesses the capacity to transport audiences into imaginary encounters with a destination—a psychological process known as narrative transportation theory [19]. Through this mechanism, compelling narratives foster deep cognitive and emotional engagement among audiences, ultimately contributing to the formation of positive destination images and stronger intentions to visit.

2.2. Sustainability as a Narrative Construction

In the context of sustainable tourism, digital narratives function not only as marketing instruments, but also as vehicles for public education and awareness-building. Gonçalves et al. [20] argue that digital storytelling can contribute to tourism sustainability through three interconnected pathways: raising awareness of local cultures, encouraging responsible tourist behavior, and supporting community development. Within this framework, the narratives presented on the official websites of sustainable tourism destinations should ideally be both promotional and educational—engaging audiences while simultaneously cultivating an appreciation for sustainability values.

Research on rural tourism destinations in Bali highlights that effective cultural narratives must harmoniously integrate the three pillars of sustainability: the environmental dimension (conservation of natural landscapes and ecosystems), the cultural dimension (safeguarding of heritage and traditional practices), and the social dimension (community empowerment and participatory governance) [21]. These three dimensions are the very essence of the Balinese philosophy of Tri Hita Karana—a form of indigenous wisdom that resonates strongly with global sustainable development principles and lends Penglipuran's narrative a distinctive cultural authority.

Recent research applying multimodal analysis to digital tourism content further reveals that successful sustainability narrative construction relies not solely on verbal text, but on the strategic integration of visual, symbolic, and contextual elements [22]. In the context of a tourism village website, this means that sustainability is communicated through a layered combination of textual description, destination imagery, cultural symbolism, and content architecture—all working in concert to convey a coherent and authentic message of environmental, cultural, and community sustainability.

3. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with narrative analysis as its primary methodological strategy for data collection and interpretation. Narrative analysis was selected for its distinctive capacity to examine storytelling structures, symbolic meanings, and embedded messages within textual and visual content—a capability that is highly congruent with the study's research object, namely the narrative content published on the official website of Penglipuran Tourism Village.

Primary data were gathered from the official website of Penglipuran Tourism Village (penglipuran.com), encompassing textual narratives, visual descriptions, and officially published promotional storytelling. Data collection was conducted through systematic documentation and in-depth content analysis of all website pages containing narratives pertaining to the village's identity, cultural heritage, natural environment, and community life. Data source triangulation was applied by integrating material from the website with academic literature and official reports related to Penglipuran.

Data analysis proceeded through three sequential stages: (1) identification and categorization of the primary narrative elements; (2) analysis of storytelling structures and symbolic meanings; and (3) interpretation of how these narratives construct the three dimensions of sustainability—cultural heritage preservation, environmental sustainability, and community participation. Data validity was ensured through theoretical triangulation and analytical consistency throughout the interpretive process.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The narrative analysis of the official Penglipuran Tourism Village website (penglipuran.com) reveals a richly layered digital communication strategy through which the village constructs and projects its image as a world-class sustainable tourism destination. The website content, published predominantly in June 2024, encompasses a broad range of narrative forms—including historical accounts, cultural activity descriptions, testimonials from international visitors, gastronomic storytelling, recognition narratives, and experiential tourism invitations. Taken together, these narratives do not merely inform; they actively construct a multidimensional identity for Penglipuran that integrates cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, and community participation into a coherent and persuasive whole. The findings are organized around four interrelated themes that emerged from the analysis [6].

The following table presents the complete mapping of visual content (figures) identified on the official website of Penglipuran Tourism Village (penglipuran.com), as used in this analysis. All images are sourced from the official website and were published on 19–27 June 2024.

Table 1. Mapping of Visual Content on the Official Penglipuran Tourism Village Website

Fig	File	Article Title on Website	Description / Content
Fig 1		Explore the Rich Culture and Beauty of Penglipuran Village in Bali	Village overview, stone-paved main street, traditional gates
Fig 2		Visiting moment of The Exchange KSST Nepal-Indonesia-Jerman delegation	International delegation visit — SSTC DRE cooperation event
Fig 3		Visiting moment of ASEAN Ports Association	47th APA Meeting delegation visit to Penglipuran
		Delegation Meeting	
Fig 4		World Tourism Day 2022 Penglipuran	UNWTO Secretary General and G20 Tourism Ministers visiting the village
Fig 5		World Tourism Day 2022 (continued)	Minister Sandiaga Uno and UNWTO Secretary General Zurab at the village
Fig 6		World Tourism Day 2022 (continued)	Signing of the plaque honoring Indonesia as 2022 World Tourism Day host
Fig 7		World Tourism Day 2022 (continued)	UNWTO Secretary General Zurab's appreciation of the village atmosphere
Fig 8		Pasar Pelipurlara	Traditional market inside bamboo forest; bamboo-coin payment system
Fig 9		Loloh Cem-Cem	Traditional herbal drink produced and marketed in Penglipuran Village

Fig	File	Article Title on Website	Description / Content
Fig 10		Making Penjor	Cultural activity: crafting the Penjor sacred bamboo pole for Galungan
Fig 11		Menari (Balinese Dance)	Cultural performance: Balinese dance tradition at the village
Fig 12		Authentic Breakfast	Experiential tourism: traditional Balinese breakfast package in the village
Fig 13		Authentic Dinner	Experiential tourism: traditional Balinese dinner package in the village
Fig 14		Bamboo Painting	Cultural activity: keben painting at Wantilan Tugu Pahlawan
Fig 15		Cooking Class	Cultural activity: Balinese cooking class guided by local instructor
Fig 16		Weaving Bamboo	Cultural activity: bamboo weaving at Wantilan

Fig	File	Article Title on Website	Description / Content
			Tugu Pahlawan
Fig 17		Making Klepon	Cultural activity: traditional rice cake (klepon) making in the village
Fig 18		Making Canang Sari	Cultural activity: sacred offering (Canang Sari) making at Wantilan
Fig 19		Making Gebogan	Cultural activity: sacred tower offering (Gebogan) making in the village
Fig 20		Accommodation	Penglipuran Homestay Hotel: traditional-style accommodation offering
Fig 21		Bamboo Caffe Penglipuran	Café inside the bamboo forest — sensory tourism experience space
Fig 22		Penglipuran Bali Village Enters the List of the Best	Aerial/promotional image accompanying Best Tourism

Fig	File	Article Title on Website	Description / Content
		Tourist Villages in the World	Village 2023 award news

Source: penglipuran.com (accessed March 2026) [6].

4.1. Narrative Structure of the Website: The Multi-Layered Storytelling Architecture

The most fundamental finding of this study concerns the website's deliberate deployment of a multi-layered storytelling architecture. Rather than presenting a single linear narrative about Penglipuran, the website constructs destination identity through the accumulation of multiple short, thematically distinct narratives that together form a comprehensive and immersive portrait of the village. This approach corresponds to what Phung et al. [17] describe as multi-channel narrative accumulation, whereby storytelling is built incrementally across different content formats to maximize audience engagement and reinforce a consistent brand identity.

At the macro level, the website establishes Penglipuran's identity through a foundational historical narrative. The opening content introduces the village as a place established in the fourteenth century during the Bangli Kingdom, with traditions preserved over seven centuries. This temporal framing—anchoring the village's identity in deep historical time—functions as a narrative legitimation strategy, lending the destination an aura of authenticity and continuity that is difficult to replicate. The historical narrative is further enriched through etymological storytelling: the website offers two complementary interpretations of the name 'Penglipuran,' one rooted in ancestral remembrance (from pengeling and pura), the other in emotional comfort and royal benevolence (from pelipur and lara). By presenting both etymologies without resolving the ambiguity between them, the website deepens the symbolic richness of the village's name, inviting readers to inhabit the destination imaginatively even before arriving.

At the meso level, the website employs a series of activity-based narratives to translate abstract cultural values into concrete, participatory experiences. Content sections devoted to Balinese dance (Menari), bamboo painting (Bamboo Painting), bamboo weaving (Weaving Bamboo), traditional cooking (Cooking Class), and the making of sacred offerings such as Canang Sari, Gebogan, and Penjor collectively construct a narrative of living culture—a destination where heritage is not merely observed but actively experienced. This participatory framing is a distinctive feature of the website's storytelling strategy and aligns with Green and Brock's [19] narrative transportation theory: by inviting prospective visitors to imagine themselves as active participants rather than passive spectators, the website maximizes psychological transportation and deepens emotional investment in the destination.

At the micro level, the website employs a recurring call-to-action formula—phrases such as 'Come on… try the tour packages in Penglipuran Village, of course you will get a sensation that you will only get if you visit Penglipuran Village, the Cleanest Village in the World'—that functions simultaneously as promotional content and as an affirmation of the destination's irreplaceable uniqueness. This formula appears consistently across multiple content sections, establishing a narrative chorus that reinforces core brand values (uniqueness, cleanliness, experiential richness) while creating a sense of urgency and exclusivity around the visitor experience**.**

4.2. Constructing Cultural Heritage Preservation: Narrative Framing of Identity and Tradition

The second major finding concerns the sophisticated manner in which cultural heritage preservation is narratively framed on the website. The analysis reveals that cultural heritage is not presented as a static museum artifact to be protected and displayed, but rather as a dynamic, living system of practices and values that continues to shape community life in the present. This framing is consistent with the constructionist perspective adopted in this study [12]: heritage identity is actively produced through narrative rather than simply inherited from the past.

The website's treatment of Tri Hita Karana—the Balinese philosophy of harmonious relationships between humans and God, among human beings, and between humans and the natural environment—is particularly instructive. Rather than presenting this philosophy in abstract theological terms, the website embeds it within tangible, observable aspects of village life: the uniform architectural layout of houses, the arrangement of gates facing one another across the central stone-paved street, and the maintenance of sacred spaces within each family compound. The CNN Indonesia content republished on the website states explicitly that the physical arrangement of the village structure is a form of cultural heritage that continues to uphold the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana. By grounding this philosophical concept in the visible materiality of the village landscape, the website makes it accessible and comprehensible to international audiences who may have no prior familiarity with Balinese cosmology.

The narrative framing of sacred cultural practices—the sections devoted to making Penjor, Canang Sari, and Gebogan—further illustrates how the website constructs heritage as a participatory encounter rather than a spectacle. The Penjor section explains that the bamboo pole is a symbol of Naga Basuki meaning welfare and

prosperity, and situates its installation within the spiritual logic of Galungan—the Balinese celebration of the triumph of dharma over adharma. This level of explanatory depth signals that the website's intended audience seeks genuine cultural understanding rather than mere entertainment, and it positions Penglipuran as a destination capable of delivering authentic, educational heritage experiences [16].

The website also constructs a narrative of culinary heritage through its treatment of Loloh Cemcem—a traditional Balinese herbal drink produced and marketed almost exclusively in Penglipuran Village. The narrative traces the drink's origins to colonial times, describes its artisanal production process (pounding and blending cemcem leaves, filtering the juice, mixing with rujak seasoning and young coconut), and highlights its traditional medicinal properties. By embedding this product within a genealogy of local knowledge and community practice, the website transforms a simple beverage into a vehicle for cultural heritage storytelling—a narrative strategy that differentiates Penglipuran's gastronomic identity and deepens the perceived authenticity of the destination [22].

4.3. Constructing Environmental Sustainability: The Bamboo Forest as Central Narrative Symbol

The third major finding concerns the centrality of the bamboo forest as the dominant environmental narrative symbol in the website's construction of Penglipuran's sustainable image. The bamboo forest does not appear merely as a scenic backdrop; it functions as the primary symbolic anchor for the village's environmental identity, carrying multiple layers of ecological, cultural, and experiential meaning simultaneously.

Ecologically, the bamboo forest is implicitly positioned as evidence of the community's long-standing commitment to environmental conservation. The website's description of Penglipuran as a highland village surrounded by bamboo forests, combined with the reference to its recognition as the third cleanest tourist village in the world according to the Green Destinations Foundation, constructs a narrative of environmental excellence that is both locally grounded and internationally validated. The juxtaposition of indigenous ecological practice (bamboo forest preservation) with global recognition (Green Destinations Foundation award, UN Tourism Best Tourism Village 2023) is a deliberate narrative strategy that translates local environmental knowledge into the language of international sustainability standards—a form of what González-Reverté [8] describes as sustainability narrative translation, wherein local ecological identities are made legible to global audiences through the mediation of recognized certification frameworks.

Culturally, the bamboo forest is woven into the narrative of heritage and ancestral connection. The website's section on the Pelipurlara market—a traditional market established within the bamboo forest, where visitors pay using bamboo coins and consume traditional foods in the shade of dense bamboo canopy—exemplifies how the website constructs the natural environment not merely as an ecological asset but as a cultural space imbued with community meaning and experiential value. The market's location within the bamboo forest is not incidental; it is narratively framed as a deliberate act of place-making that honors the relationship between the community, its cultural practices, and the landscape they inhabit.

Experientially, the bamboo forest is narrated as an immersive sensory environment that differentiates Penglipuran from conventional tourism destinations. The Bamboo Caffe section invites visitors to rest under the thick bamboos which makes relaxing sounds when ruffled by the winds, constructing an auditory and atmospheric experience that is inseparable from the forest setting. This sensory narrative strategy positions the bamboo forest not merely as a sight to be seen but as an environment to be inhabited—a space where tourism experience, cultural encounter, and ecological immersion are deliberately merged. Such multi-sensory narrative construction aligns with recent research demonstrating that layered narratives combining verbal, visual, and contextual elements are among the most effective instruments for constructing sustainability imaginaries in digital tourism content [22].

4.4. Constructing Community Participation: Narratives of Collective Agency and Economic Empowerment

The fourth and most distinctive finding concerns the website's sophisticated construction of community participation as both a cultural value and a competitive tourism advantage. The analysis reveals that community agency is not presented merely as a background condition of village life but as an active narrative protagonist—a defining characteristic that distinguishes Penglipuran from other tourism destinations and constitutes the primary guarantor of its sustainability.

This narrative of collective agency is most vividly expressed in the website's coverage of the Pelipurlara market. The operational manager I Ketut Nuriada is directly quoted explaining that the market was established to facilitate local residents who do not have a location to sell, so it is hoped that the whole community can enjoy the cake of tourism. This statement is narratively significant for several reasons. First, it positions the market not as a top-down management decision but as a community-responsive initiative addressing an identified social need. Second, the phrase 'enjoy the cake of tourism' constructs economic

participation as a form of shared communal entitlement rather than a competitive market opportunity—a framing that emphasizes solidarity and inclusivity as core community values. Third, the direct quotation of a named community member lends the narrative authenticity and accountability, signaling that decisions about tourism development are made by and for the community. This corresponds directly to what Sumartini [18] identify as the community's capacity for participatory governance in tourism management.

The website's coverage of international recognition events—particularly the World Tourism Day 2022 visit by UNWTO Secretary General Zurab Pololikashvili and the announcement of the Best Tourism Village 2023 award—constructs community participation in a different but complementary register: as an internationally validated collective achievement. The direct quotation of the village's Customary Head I Wayan Budiarta is particularly revealing: 'This award is one of our motivations, the Penglipuran community, to continue to maintain and preserve traditions and culture so that tourism in Penglipuran tourism village can be sustainable.' This statement performs a crucial communicative function, framing international recognition not as an external validation imposed from above but as a community-owned motivation for continued sustainable practice—a narrative that positions the community as the active custodian, rather than the passive beneficiary, of its tourism success.

The website's experiential tourism content—homestay accommodation, authentic breakfast and dinner packages, cooking classes, and cultural activity programs—further reinforces the community participation narrative by constructing the village as a destination where tourism revenue is distributed across a wide range of community members. Homestay operators, food producers, cultural instructors, and market vendors all appear as participants in the tourism economy, collectively forming what Alhaddar and Kummitha [9] describe as a multi-stakeholder digital communication ecosystem. By making this economic diversity visible through narrative, the website communicates a model of tourism that is intrinsically sustainable: one in which the broad distribution of benefits simultaneously incentivizes cultural preservation and reduces vulnerability to over-dependence on any single actor or attraction.

Taken together, these four narrative dimensions—multi-layered storytelling architecture, cultural heritage framing, environmental symbolism, and community participation construction—reveal that the official website of Penglipuran Tourism Village functions as a sophisticated instrument of sustainable tourism communication. The website does not simply describe what Penglipuran is; it actively constructs what Penglipuran means—as a cultural sanctuary, an ecological exemplar, a community-governed destination, and an internationally recognized model of sustainable tourism excellence. This finding aligns with and extends the argument of Chronis [2] that the construction of a tourism destination is fundamentally an act of narrative meaning-making, transforming a physical space into a symbolically rich and experientially compelling story.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to analyze how the official website of Penglipuran Tourism Village, Bali, constructs a sustainable tourism image through digital narratives. Grounded in social constructionist theory and narrative analysis methodology, the analysis of content published on penglipuran.com reveals that the website functions not merely as an informational platform, but as a sophisticated instrument of strategic communication through which Penglipuran's identity as a world-class sustainable tourism destination is actively constructed, curated, and disseminated to global audiences.

The findings demonstrate that this construction operates through four interrelated narrative dimensions. First, the website deploys a multi-layered storytelling architecture that works simultaneously at the macro level (historical and etymological legitimation), the meso level (participatory cultural activity narratives), and the micro level (a recurring call-to-action chorus reinforcing core brand values). Second, cultural heritage preservation is narratively framed not as a static museum artifact but as a living, participatory system—embodied through the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana, the crafting of sacred offerings, and the genealogy of indigenous culinary traditions such as Loloh Cemcem. Third, environmental sustainability is anchored in the bamboo forest as a central symbolic resource, communicating ecological commitment through three registers simultaneously: the ecological (international clean-village recognition), the cultural (the Pelipurlara market as a bamboo-embedded place-making act), and the experiential (the Bamboo Caffe as a multi-sensory immersive environment). Fourth, community participation is constructed as the primary guarantor of the village's sustainable tourism model, expressed through direct community voices, inclusive economic narratives, and the reframing of international awards as community-owned motivations rather than externally imposed validations.

Taken together, these four dimensions confirm that digital storytelling on an official tourism village website is far more than promotional content. It is, as Chronis [2] argues, a fundamental act of narrative meaning-making—one that transforms a physical destination into a symbolically rich, emotionally compelling, and sustainability-legitimated identity. The website of Penglipuran Tourism Village exemplifies how indigenous wisdom, communal governance, and ecological stewardship can be strategically translated into the language of global digital communication without sacrificing cultural authenticity [16][23].

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the growing body of scholarship on sustainable tourism communication and digital destination branding by demonstrating the applicability of narrative analysis as a method for examining official tourism websites as primary texts of identity construction. The findings extend the social constructionist framework [12] into the specific domain of community-based tourism villages in Indonesia, and corroborate the narrative transportation theory [19] as a useful lens for understanding how website content engages prospective visitors emotionally and cognitively prior to any physical encounter with the destination.

From a practical standpoint, this study offers actionable insights for tourism village managers, destination marketing organizations, and government policymakers. The Penglipuran case demonstrates that an effective digital communication strategy for sustainable tourism must be built on three pillars: narrative authenticity (grounding content in genuine local knowledge and community voices), narrative layering (combining historical, cultural, environmental, and experiential storytelling across multiple content formats), and narrative inclusivity (making community participation and economic equity visible and central to the destination's digital identity). These principles are transferable to other Indonesian tourism villages seeking to strengthen their digital presence while preserving cultural integrity.

This study is not without limitations. The analysis is based on a single official website and a specific snapshot of content published in June 2024, which may not fully represent the totality or temporal evolution of Penglipuran's digital communication. Furthermore, as a qualitative narrative analysis, the findings reflect interpretive judgments that, while grounded in established theoretical frameworks, are necessarily shaped by the researcher's analytical perspective. The study does not examine audience reception—that is, how actual or prospective tourists respond to, interpret, or are influenced by the narratives identified. These limitations point toward important directions for future research.

Future research should consider expanding the scope of analysis to include the social media platforms associated with Penglipuran—particularly Instagram and YouTube—to examine how sustainability narratives are adapted, extended, or contested across different digital environments. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in the website's narrative construction over time would also yield valuable insights into how destinations manage their digital identity in response to shifting tourism trends, environmental challenges, and community dynamics. Comparative studies examining the digital narratives of multiple Indonesian tourism villages would further enrich the field, enabling the development of evidence-based frameworks for sustainable tourism communication that are grounded in the diversity of Indonesia's cultural and ecological heritage.

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