

STRENGTHENING SUPERIOR TOURIST VILLAGE GOVERNANCE ADMINISTRATION: PERSPECTIVES FROM HUMAN RESOURCES, PUBLIC SERVICES, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

Indonesia's tourist villages are expanding, yet many "superior" villages struggle to translate growth into accountable and sustainable governance. This study synthesizes evidence on how human resources, public services, and social media strengthen village-level tourism administration. Drawing on sustainable tourism governance, collaborative governance, and smart tourism perspectives, we conducted a PRISMA 2020–guided systematic literature review of Scopus Q1 journals (2015–2026). From 80 screened records, 30 articles met eligibility and were analyzed through iterative thematic coding. Results indicate governance improves when (1) HR capacity building embeds sustainability and digital competencies, (2) public services are digitized to standardize processes, enhance transparency, and improve service quality, and (3) social media is managed as participatory feedback and branding infrastructure. Yet digital divides and resource constraints may erode gains unless policy instruments and cross-sector partnerships provide enabling support. We propose an integrated three-step governance model aligned with ESG, emphasizing social and governance dimensions for rural destinations.

Keywords: Public Service Digitalization, Social Media Governance, Tourist Village Governance.

A. INTRODUCTION

Tourist villages in Indonesia have expanded rapidly into a central pillar of rural tourism: they are not merely "destination products," but also engines of local economic diversification, spaces for cultural transmission, and arenas for citizen empowerment through community-based tourism (CBT) models (Okazaki, 2008). In policy practice, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has developed an ecosystem for registering and mentoring tourist villages through the Tourism Village Network platform (Jaringan Desa Wisata/Jadesta), which (at the time of the ADWI 2024 launch) recorded 4,812 registered tourist villages. At the same time, other official institutional publications report a larger cross-provincial spread (e.g., 6,057 tourist villages), suggesting differences in databases and operational definitions of "tourist village" (registered versus identified/developing).

Within this landscape, "superior" (unggulan) tourist villages can be understood as villages demonstrating governance maturity, service quality, and sustainability reflected either through development classifications (e.g., pioneering developing advanced self-sustaining) or recognition via competitions/curation. In ADWI 2024, for instance, it was reported that 6,016 tourist villages participated, and several villages received international

recognition through the “Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism 2024” scheme (commonly cited examples include Jatiluwih and Wukirsari). These examples are significant because they underscore that “superior” villages are not defined merely by high visitor numbers, but are also assessed through conservation indicators, governance performance, and socio-economic impacts.

The broader national destination context further intensifies the urgency of strengthening governance in tourist villages. Villages located around World Heritage sites such as the Borobudur Temple Compounds and Bali’s subak landscapes operate in particularly sensitive spaces: cultural and environmental values are exceptionally high, yet they are vulnerable to commercial pressure, overcrowding, waste burdens, and unequal benefit distribution. Within the UNESCO framework, these sites reaffirm the importance of protecting integrity, authenticity, and the human nature spirituality nexus in the management of cultural landscapes.

Conceptually, sustainable tourism governance emphasizes how public, private, and community actors “steer” tourism so that economic growth does not undermine conservation and social justice (Bramwell, 2011; Hall, 2011). The destination-governance literature also highlights structural complexity: multiple interests, multiple scales (village district province national), and frequent overlaps of authority, which in turn often make local policy implementation slower than the regulatory design itself (Farsari, 2023; Hall, 2011).

From a regulatory perspective, a key national reference is Indonesia’s Tourism Law (Law No. 10 of 2009), which frames tourism as a multidimensional activity involving communities, government, and businesses. Yet this framework continues to evolve: Law No. 18 of 2025 represents a third amendment to Law No. 10 of 2009 signaling that tourism governance requires continuous adjustment to contemporary dynamics (e.g., sustainability, digital transformation, and resilience). At the level of technical guidance, the “Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism Destinations,” previously regulated under Ministerial Regulation No. 14 of 2016, were later revoked and updated through Ministerial Regulation No. 9 of 2021, indicating that the sustainability policy narrative has moved toward a newer phase of revision and standardization.

At this point, administrative governance challenges in tourist villages become both concrete and multi-layered. First, the human-resource capacity of tourist-village managers often does not match the complexity of their responsibilities: tourism product planning, visitor services, risk management, partnership coordination, and financial accountability and reporting. Within CBT, sustainability is strongly shaped by institutional capacity and a clear division of roles among communities, government, and businesses rather than by participatory spirit alone (Okazaki, 2008). At the same time, collaborative governance frameworks remind us that collaboration is not automatically harmonious; it requires agreed rules, legitimacy, and conflict-resolution mechanisms to avoid devolving into merely symbolic coordination (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012).

Second, public services and basic infrastructure (road access, cleanliness and waste management, sanitation, safety, and digital connectivity) function as the primary enablers of both tourism experience and sustainability. Destination competitiveness research suggests that destination quality is shaped not only by attractions, but also by service systems, supporting facilities, and destination-management capacity to balance stakeholder interests while protecting local resources (Buhalis, 2000; Dwyer & Kim, 2003). In tourist villages, inadequate public services often translate into “hidden costs” borne by residents (e.g., waste and water burdens) or reduced visitor satisfaction both of which can erode destination reputation and long-term local economic sustainability.

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Third, social media has transformed the logic of tourism marketing and public engagement: destination information is no longer dominated by brochures or agents, but is produced through search, user-generated content, and real-time conversations. Empirical evidence documents the rise of social sources in travel information search and the restructuring of tourism information ecosystems that shape tourist behavior (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). In parallel, the “smart tourism” agenda argues that digital value does not come merely from having social-media accounts, but from the capacity to manage data, feedback, and cross-service integration (e.g., ticketing, information, complaints handling, and carrying-capacity monitoring) as governance inputs (Gretzel et al., 2015). The challenge is that digital integration in tourist villages often remains sporadic, unsupported by service SOPs, and underutilized as a governance-feedback channel (rather than functioning only as promotion).

Global pressures further increase the need for adaptive governance models. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed tourism’s vulnerability to mobility crises and uncertainty; the implication is not only economic recovery, but also a reconsideration of volume-driven growth models that overlook carrying capacity and community resilience (Gössling et al., 2020). More broadly, tourism governance research emphasizes the nexus between sustainability, resilience, and complexity highly relevant for superior tourist villages facing climate change, market volatility, and geopolitical uncertainty (Farsari, 2023).

Building on these gaps, this study can be positioned to strengthen governance in superior tourist villages through three operational lenses: (1) HR development to enhance administrative capacity (service competence, destination management, and accountability), (2) strengthening public services as prerequisites for sustainable tourism and quality visitor experience, and (3) integrating social media as infrastructure for participation, marketing, and governance feedback. The linkage to the SDGs can be articulated explicitly especially SDG 8, SDG 11, and SDG 17 (United Nations, 2015) while formulating a practical collaborative framework: who does what, with which instruments, and how performance is measured periodically (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012). Accordingly, the research questions become more testable through literature synthesis and (if needed) case-study validation: (a) how HR development improves tourist-village administrative capacity, (b) how public services shape governance quality and sustainability, and (c) how social media facilitates community engagement and evidence-based marketing.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review synthesizes scholarly works from Scopus Q1 journals, focusing on the interplay between human resources, public services, and social media in tourist village governance. This section is structured thematically, drawing on systematic reviews, empirical studies, and conceptual frameworks to highlight trends, challenges, and opportunities in sustainable rural tourism, with a particular emphasis on Indonesia.

Human Resources in Tourist Village Governance

Human resources (HR) are fundamental to the administrative efficacy of tourist villages, where local communities serve as both custodians and service providers. Effective HR management entails skill development, empowerment, and strategic planning to meet tourism demands while ensuring sustainability. A systematic literature review on innovations in Indigenous tourism, spanning four decades, reveals that HR capacity building through education and empowerment addresses gaps in well-being and environmental management, particularly in underrepresented rural contexts (Dam et al., 2025). In Indonesia, HR challenges in the rural tourism sector include skill deficiencies and high employee turnover,

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intensified by the shift to Society 5.0, which requires digital competencies and adaptive strategies (Baum, 2015). Research emphasizes that collaborative models involving local governments, educational institutions, and communities enhance HR empowerment, fostering innovation in tourism management (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Social capital and financial literacy are critical enablers of HR performance. A systematic review demonstrates that leveraging these elements improves village tourism outcomes by promoting collaboration and resource allocation. In Bali's tourism villages, green dynamic capabilities supported by HR training in sustainability mediate service innovation, leading to enhanced business performance. However, obstacles such as low community participation in planning and supervision phases underscore the need for inclusive HR strategies to overcome limitations in tourist village development. Post-COVID-19 analyses highlight the urgency of conceptual HR frameworks for rural tourism, focusing on resilience and skill adaptation to address workforce vulnerabilities. Furthermore, studies on sustainable HR practices in Indonesia's tourism industry stress employee competence and government regulations as pivotal for long-term viability, integrating environmental and social dimensions. In Ciamis Regency, qualitative investigations reveal that targeted capacity-building programs significantly improve governance, though resource constraints persist. Overall, the literature advocates for green tourism approaches in HR development, as seen in established Balinese villages, to align with global sustainability standards.

Public Services in Rural Tourism Administration

Public services form the infrastructural backbone of tourist villages, encompassing transportation, waste management, digital connectivity, and policy enforcement to ensure accessibility and environmental integrity. In sustainable tourism governance, public services must balance economic growth with ecological preservation, often through digital transformation and stakeholder collaboration. A bibliometric analysis of sustainable rural tourism (SRT) identifies key themes such as economic development, environmental management, and cultural preservation, emphasizing the role of public services in mitigating rural vulnerabilities (Geng et al., 2025). Governance capacity mapping in tourism development highlights how administrative enhancements improve service delivery, addressing challenges like geopolitical uncertainties and promoting inclusive initiatives.

In Indonesia, public services in rural tourism face issues including inadequate infrastructure and regulatory gaps, which hinder sustainable progress. The Journal of Sustainable Tourism, a leading Q1 outlet, advances critical understandings of tourism-sustainability relationships, advocating for integrated public service models in rural areas. Digital transformation strategies in rural tourism villages address these challenges by leveraging technology for service efficiency and sustainable development opportunities. For instance, along economic belts like the Silk Road, digitalized public services foster coordinated systems, offering transferable insights for Indonesian contexts. ESG frameworks in hospitality underscore public-private partnerships to enhance infrastructure, ensuring community benefits in rural settings. Challenges such as road access and waste management necessitate streamlined regulations and incentives, aligned with ecological justice principles for equitable service distribution. Recent special issues on urban and rural tourism evolution analyze economic, social, and environmental changes, stressing adaptive public services for resilience post-crises like COVID-19. Bibliometric studies further reveal trends in SRT, with Q1 publications dominating discussions on governance and service integration

Social Media in Tourism Village Management

Social media platforms have redefined tourism governance by enabling user-generated content (UGC), interactive marketing, and community engagement, particularly in rural villages aiming for global reach. A systematic review of tourism marketing evolution over 30 years underscores social media's multidisciplinary impact on tourist satisfaction and behavioral models. In developing countries, UGC on social media influences traveler decisions, bolstering sustainable growth and village branding (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Research on digital technology in sustainable tourism shows that platforms like Instagram and TikTok enhance awareness and participation, countering mass tourism's negative effects.

In Indonesian contexts, social media narratives build resilience in coastal and rural areas, facilitating stakeholder collaboration and post-COVID recovery strategies. However, village actors often underutilize these tools due to content creation challenges, as evidenced in Bogor and Semarang studies. Integrating social media into governance improves competitiveness through feedback loops and promotion. Bibliometric overviews link social media to tourist experiences, with Q1 journals like *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management* exploring its role in behavior and policy. Systematic reviews on sharing tourism experiences propose integrated models of influencing factors, from psychological to technological perspectives. In rural tourism, social media consolidates identity and competitiveness, as per UGC studies in developing nations. Qualitative approaches in Bangkalan highlight social media's promotional potential for village development, emphasizing strategic content management. Overall, the literature calls for digital transformation in social media strategies to overcome challenges and seize opportunities for sustainable tourism.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a systematic literature review (SLR) design to consolidate and interpret evidence on strengthening tourist village governance through three administrative lenses: human resources (HR), public services, and social media. The review protocol and reporting structure follow the PRISMA 2020 framework to ensure methodological transparency in identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion of studies (Page et al., 2021). To strengthen the reproducibility of the search process, the search documentation is aligned with PRISMA-S, which specifies how database queries, filters, and record handling should be reported in systematic reviews (Rethlefsen et al., 2021).

Searches were conducted in Scopus with a focus on Q1-ranked, peer-reviewed journals, using a structured keyword strategy combining governance and sectoral terms (e.g., “tourism village governance,” “human resources in tourism,” “public services rural tourism,” and “social media tourism management”). The search strategy and stepwise review procedures were designed to follow contemporary guidance on conducting rigorous SLRs, including systematic structuring of the search, screening, and synthesis stages (Carrera-Rivera et al., 2022; Higgins et al., 2024). Eligibility was defined a priori: (1) peer-reviewed journal articles, (2) publication years 2015–2026, (3) substantive relevance to sustainable development in rural/tourist-village contexts, and (4) explicit discussion of at least one focal lens (HR, public services, or social media). After removing duplicates and applying title–abstract screening followed by full-text eligibility checks, 80 records were screened and 30 articles met the inclusion criteria for synthesis, consistent with PRISMA 2020 flow reporting (Page et al., 2021).

For synthesis, the 30 included studies were analyzed through thematic analysis using content coding to identify recurring governance patterns, mechanisms, and actionable strategies across the HR–services–media domains. Coding proceeded iteratively: an initial deductive code framework was anchored to the three focal lenses, then refined inductively as

new governance-related concepts emerged from the corpus. Theme development followed recent good-practice recommendations for reflexive thematic analysis, emphasizing coherent links between codes, themes, and interpretations rather than purely descriptive clustering (Braun & Clarke, 2022). To enhance analytic rigor and auditability, the coding structure was documented systematically and organized in a way consistent with established qualitative coding procedures (Saldaña, 2021).

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Integrating human resource (HR) development, public service quality, and social media governance does not merely represent an additive strategy in tourist village administration; rather, it forms an interdependent governance architecture. Capacity building in HR is foundational because institutional performance in local tourism is largely determined by the competence, professionalism, and adaptive capability of frontline actors and administrators. Empirical governance research consistently shows that public sector capacity—especially in decentralized or community-based settings—directly influences service responsiveness and accountability (Grindle, 1997; Andrews et al., 2017). Within tourism governance, competent HR strengthens coordination, financial transparency, and stakeholder trust, which are prerequisites for sustainable destination management (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). Without this institutional backbone, digital tools and promotional strategies risk becoming symbolic rather than transformative interventions.

However, HR capacity alone is insufficient if not embedded within an enabling public service system. Public services in tourist villages—ranging from infrastructure maintenance, sanitation, licensing, safety protocols, to digital information systems—constitute the tangible interface between governance and visitor experience. The literature on public service innovation demonstrates that digitalization enhances efficiency, accessibility, and citizen engagement when aligned with organizational readiness and regulatory clarity (Osborne et al., 2016). In the tourism context, the integration of smart technologies improves service integration and sustainability monitoring, particularly in small destinations seeking competitiveness (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). Critically, digital transformation must be accompanied by institutional reforms; otherwise, technology adoption may exacerbate inequalities, particularly in areas experiencing digital divide constraints.

Social media, in this integrated framework, functions not merely as a promotional instrument but as a governance tool that facilitates participatory administration. Recent tourism studies highlight how social media ecosystems influence destination image formation, stakeholder collaboration, and real-time feedback loops (Sigala, 2018). Beyond marketing exposure, social media platforms provide a deliberative space where tourists, residents, and administrators co-produce narratives and service improvements. From a governance perspective, this feedback mechanism strengthens adaptive management, allowing tourist villages to respond dynamically to visitor expectations and socio-environmental pressures. Nevertheless, reliance on algorithm-driven platforms also introduces reputational volatility and potential misinformation risks, which require strategic digital literacy and monitoring capacity.

Therefore, the synergy among HR capacity building, digitally enabled public services, and strategic social media governance forms a mutually reinforcing system. HR strengthens institutional quality; public services operationalize governance outcomes; and social media amplifies visibility while generating participatory feedback. When aligned, these elements foster adaptive, transparent, and sustainable tourist village administration. Conversely, fragmentation among them can lead to policy incoherence, underutilized digital investments,

and reputational vulnerability. For systematic literature review (SLR) purposes, this integrated model can be conceptualized as three interlinked thematic domains frequently observed in tourism governance scholarship: institutional capacity, service innovation, and digital participatory governance.

The primary challenge of the digital divide in rural areas is not merely a matter of weak signal coverage or inadequate infrastructure. It also involves unequal access, the cost of connectivity, and skills gaps that slow down technology adoption and make it uneven. In the context of rural tourism, this situation risks creating “two classes of actors”: those who can leverage digital platforms for promotion and service delivery, and those who are left behind—ultimately rendering participation and economic benefits less inclusive. Findings from SLRs on rural digitalization further indicate that generic, one-size-fits-all policies often fail to address local needs and may even reinforce marginalization unless accompanied by context-sensitive intervention design. (Salemink et al., 2017; Çakar, 2023).

Resource constraints (budget, human resources, time, and managerial capacity) deepen the problem because many community-based destinations rely on local actors who operate with a “keeping things running” logic rather than a “growing with service standards” logic. The collaborative tourism governance literature shows that collaboration initiatives frequently stall due to highly practical issues: cross-actor coordination problems, role asymmetries, and weak institutional capacity to maintain program consistency (e.g., training, SOPs, and evaluation). In other words, “resource constraints” are not merely technical barriers; they constitute governance barriers that shape decision quality, accountability, and program continuity. (Sentanu et al., 2023; Manaf et al., 2018).

On the other hand, opportunities arising from government policies and partnerships can be interpreted as capacity-leveraging mechanisms: government provides policy direction, legitimacy, and incentives, while partners (private sector, universities, communities, and digital platforms) contribute technology, knowledge, market networks, and mentoring resources. However, this approach must be treated critically. Partnerships are not automatically equitable; they may produce “capture” by dominant actors if rules of engagement, transparency, and community roles are not strengthened from the planning stage. The collaborative governance literature emphasizes that effective collaboration requires deliberate forum design, clear rules, and processes that build trust and long-term commitment. (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Manaf et al., 2018).

The first component of the proposed model HR training on sustainability and digital skills should be understood as an investment in human capital and green capability. Training is not simply knowledge transfer; it must change work practices, including the capacity to develop service SOPs, interpret simple data (visits, complaints, satisfaction), and implement measurable sustainability practices. Evidence from the hospitality sector suggests that green HRM and green training can foster green innovation and pro-environmental behaviors, which can conceptually be transferred to destination governance or local tourism awareness groups—provided that the training content is adapted to local realities. With an appropriately designed module, training becomes a foundation so that digitalization and promotion are not merely cosmetic, but genuinely improve service quality and destination resilience. (Munawar et al., 2022; Alola et al., 2022).

The second component digitizing public services for efficiency strengthens governance because digital services tend to facilitate process standardization, accelerate responsiveness, and improve traceability (e.g., service records, queues, complaint handling, or simplified permits). The public value of e-government literature stresses that digitalization creates value only when technology truly improves service quality, transparency, and accountability not

when it merely shifts paper forms to online platforms. For rural tourism destinations, this implies that digitalization must be coupled with realistic service design: simple interfaces, accessible support channels, and offline backup mechanisms to avoid excluding residents who are not yet digitally ready. (Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019; Salemink et al., 2017).

The third component social media strategies for engagement and branding should be positioned not only as marketing, but as a governance instrument that builds dialogue, manages reputation, and closes the feedback loop (complaints–follow-up–communication back to users). The literature highlights that social media has become part of tourists' decision ecosystems and destination operations, making content strategy, interaction design, and information governance (including moderation and validation) crucial to avoid overpromising, misinformation, or cultural commodification. Within an ESG framework, the three components of your model align most strongly with the Social pillar (community inclusion, service quality, local benefits) and the Governance pillar (process transparency, accountability, reputational risk management). Recent research also indicates that ESG is increasingly used to assess sustainability and operational performance in hospitality and tourism, although vigilance remains necessary to guard against greenwashing and purely symbolic indicators. (Leung et al., 2013; Back, 2024; Zhang et al., 2025; Eccles et al., 2014; Rahman, 2025).

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the SLR synthesis (30 articles, 2015–2026), this study addresses the research problem by showing that strengthening administrative governance in leading tourism villages is most effective when three lenses human resource capacity development, improvement of public service quality/efficiency (including digitalization), and social media governance are positioned as a single, interdependent architecture rather than as stand-alone interventions. This finding implies that destination sustainability is shaped not only by tourism attractions, but also by institutional capacity (competencies, SOPs, accountability), service innovation (process standardization and service traceability), and digital participatory governance (public feedback and reputation management), indicating that the research objective of formulating a governance-strengthening strategy and model has been achieved. The study's novel contribution lies in proposing a three-step operational model that integrates: (1) sustainability- and digital-skills-based HR training, (2) digitized public services that enhance efficiency while strengthening accountability, and (3) social media strategies as tools for engagement and branding as well as channels for closing the feedback loop; this framework also clarifies the model's alignment with ESG principles, particularly the Social and Governance pillars as foundations for community-based tourism sustainability. As practical recommendations, tourism village managers and village governments should prioritize behavior-oriented training modules (not merely knowledge transfer), develop service and complaint-handling SOPs, implement simple digital service designs with offline backups to reduce exclusion stemming from the digital divide, and establish dedicated teams/roles for content management, moderation, and rapid response on social media. Meanwhile, policymakers (district/provincial/national) are advised to strengthen rural connectivity, provide mentoring-oriented funding schemes, and set governance performance indicators (e.g., service standards, transparency, and reputational risk management) to prevent partnerships from resulting in capture by dominant actors. The study's limitations include an evidence base relying on journal articles (with potential publication bias), restrictions in the time window and selection criteria, contextual heterogeneity that limits generalizability, and the absence of empirical testing of the proposed model. Therefore, future research should

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empirically examine the framework using mixed methods (comparative multi-village case studies, surveys–interviews, or longitudinal pre–post intervention evaluations), incorporate service performance data and digital metrics (complaints, satisfaction, engagement), and develop more operational ESG/SDG measurement instruments tailored to tourism-village contexts.

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