



Digital Storytelling for Cultural Resilience: Revitalizing the Can Macanan Kadduk Performance in Arjasa Tourism Village

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ABSTRACT

Traditional performing arts in rural tourism destinations are increasingly threatened by declining participation, limited institutional support, and weak digital visibility, creating an urgent need for adaptive strategies that sustain cultural continuity in the digital era. This study examines how digital storytelling can enhance cultural resilience and empower local communities in revitalizing the Can-Macanan Kadduk performance, a centuries-old traditional art from Arjasa Tourism Village, East Java. The research aims to analyze the role of narrative-driven digital media in strengthening community participation, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and cultural identity. Employing a qualitative descriptive case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with cultural practitioners, Pokdarwis members, and local digital creators, supported by observations and content analysis of Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. Findings reveal that digital storytelling increases cultural visibility, fosters cultural pride, improves collaboration between youth and elders, and transforms traditional performances into dynamic cultural narratives accessible to wider audiences. The study also shows that participatory digital practices encourage shared ownership of heritage, bridge gaps between tradition and modernity, and support community-driven governance of cultural tourism. These results demonstrate that digital storytelling functions not only as a communication tool but also as a mechanism of empowerment that strengthens cultural resilience by enabling communities to adapt, innovate, and sustain their intangible heritage. The study concludes that integrating digital literacy, collaborative governance, and creative content development is essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of traditional performing arts within Indonesia's evolving digital tourism landscape.

Keyword: Digital Storytelling, Cultural Resilience, Community-Based Tourism



INTRODUCTION

Tourism in Indonesia has evolved into a multidimensional sector that serves not only as an economic driver but also as a medium for cultural transmission and community identity formation. In rural destinations, traditional performing arts embody local wisdom, historical continuity, and collective memory that define the cultural landscape of tourism villages. Yet, in the era of digital transformation,

these art forms face significant challenges. The expansion of modern entertainment media, urban migration, and declining youth participation have contributed to the marginalization of traditional performances (Goodwin, 2017; Hapsari et al., 2022). Without adaptive strategies, these cultural expressions risk losing both audience relevance and intergenerational continuity.

A striking example is the *Can-Macanan Kadduk* performance, a centuries-old traditional art rooted in Arjasa Tourism Village, East Java. Historically performed during rituals and community festivals, it symbolized strength, unity, and spiritual protection. Today, however, performances occur less frequently and depend on aging artists, with minimal involvement from younger generations. Promotion and documentation efforts remain limited, confined to word-of-mouth communication and small-scale events (Rohman, 2021). Despite its recognition as local intangible heritage, *Can-Macanan Kadduk* has not yet been integrated into broader cultural tourism strategies or digital promotional ecosystems.

The decline of traditional performing arts in rural destinations reflects a broader governance and policy gap in cultural tourism management. While Indonesia's national tourism strategy (RIPPARNAS) promotes sustainable and community-based tourism, cultural promotion remains fragmented and institutionally dependent (Handayani & Setyawan, 2024). Local art communities often lack digital infrastructure, marketing capacity, and cross-sectoral collaboration, creating a gap between cultural potential and its visibility in the digital tourism marketplace.

Addressing this issue requires not only policy intervention but also innovative communication strategies that empower communities to become storytellers of their own heritage. The urgency of this study lies in bridging the gap between cultural preservation and digital participation. Tourism scholars have recognized the power of digital storytelling, the use of narrative-driven multimedia to convey cultural meaning, foster emotional engagement, and attract visitors (Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2019; Silalahi et al., 2023). However, existing studies tend to emphasize destination branding rather than its role in cultural resilience, defined as the ability of communities to adapt, innovate, and maintain their identity amid rapid socio-technological change (Berkes, 2018). Accordingly, this study addresses a critical question: How can digital storytelling enhance cultural resilience and empower local communities in revitalizing traditional performing arts?

This research builds on earlier findings from the Majapahit Tourism Village study in Bejijong, Trowulan (Nanita, 2021), which demonstrated that heritage-based tourism can strengthen community pride while also generating cultural tensions through commercialization. Nanita (2021) emphasized that sustainable cultural tourism depends on maintaining local participation and ownership of heritage processes. Extending this insight, the present study explores how digital media, rather than physical reconstruction, can serve as an adaptive mechanism for cultural transmission in rural tourism settings.

This shift from tangible heritage management to intangible heritage communication defines the originality of this research. Whereas the Kampung Majapahit case represented transformation through conservation and policy intervention, the present study focuses on cultural revitalization through narrative mediation, where communities convey meaning via digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. Using the *Can-Macanan Kadduk* case, this research positions digital storytelling as both a communication strategy and a participatory governance tool for sustaining local culture. Theoretically, the study

is grounded in the Collaborative Cultural Governance (CCG) perspective, which integrates collaborative governance theory (Ansell & Gash, 2007) into the domain of cultural policy. This framework assumes that sustainable cultural management relies on trust-based cooperation among government, communities, and private stakeholders (Emerson et al., 2012). Within this context, digital storytelling operates as a dialogical space where local actors co-create, negotiate, and represent their cultural narratives, fostering inclusivity and shared ownership.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design with a case study approach, focusing on the *Can-Macanan Kadduk* performance in Arjasa Tourism Village, East Java. The qualitative approach was chosen to capture the social meanings, cultural narratives, and participatory communication processes shaping community-based efforts to preserve traditional performing arts. The study explores how digital storytelling functions as a mechanism of cultural resilience by examining the perspectives and practices of local stakeholders involved in the digital promotion and revitalization of traditional culture.

A qualitative case study approach was considered appropriate as it enables an in-depth understanding of a contemporary cultural phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2018). This design facilitates a holistic interpretation of interactions among community members, cultural practitioners, and digital creators as they co-construct cultural narratives through digital media. The study adopts an interpretivist paradigm, assuming that cultural meaning is socially constructed and best understood through participants' lived experiences and subjective interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The research was conducted in Arjasa Tourism Village, Jember Regency, East Java, an area renowned for its deep-rooted cultural traditions and its signature performance art, *Can-Macanan Kadduk*. The target population included three primary stakeholder groups: 1. Local government representatives and tourism officers engaged in cultural programming; 2. Cultural practitioners and members of the *Can-Macanan Kadduk* troupe; and 3. Community-based tourism organization (POKDARWIS) members and digital content creators active in local promotion. These groups represent the key actors within the village's cultural governance ecosystem, where the interplay between tradition and digital innovation unfolds. Purposive sampling was applied to identify participants with direct experience relevant to the study's objectives.

The sample comprised 15 informants, distributed as follows: five local government and Pokdarwis members, six cultural practitioners and artists, and four digital media volunteers promoting local culture via platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Selection criteria included: (1) active involvement in *Can-Macanan Kadduk* promotion; (2) familiarity with digital media storytelling or marketing; and (3) at least two years of participation in village tourism initiatives.

To strengthen credibility, the study employed data triangulation, combining insights from interviews, observations, and digital content analysis. Ethical integrity was upheld throughout all research phases. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their involvement, and their right to withdraw at any time. Informed consent was obtained before data collection, and all personal identifiers were anonymized.

Ethical approval was secured from the Department of Tourism Studies, Universitas Gadjah Mada. Furthermore, all digital materials analyzed were publicly available and used solely for academic purposes, with full respect for intellectual

property and community ownership rights. To ensure trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the study applied four key criteria Credibility: through data triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking; Dependability: through transparent documentation of procedures and coding processes; Confirmability: via an audit trail of analytical decisions; and Transferability: through detailed contextual descriptions of the research setting and cultural environment. This methodological rigor ensures that the findings accurately reflect the lived experiences and digital practices of the *Can-Macanan Kadduk* community and provide a reliable foundation for future comparative research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. General Overview of Can-Macanan Kadduk

Can-Macanan Kadduk is a traditional cultural performance originating from Madura, Indonesia, particularly associated with rural community celebrations, harvest rituals, and festive public gatherings. The performance features dancers who wear large, dramatically crafted masks resembling mythical tiger-like creatures, symbolizing both protection and strength. Historically, this art form was performed as part of rituals meant to ward off misfortune and cultivate communal harmony during important social transitions. Over time, the tradition has evolved into a vibrant cultural attraction that merges spirituality, entertainment, and community identity.

One of the defining characteristics of Can-Macanan Kadduk is its unique combination of dance, rhythmic movement, and exaggerated physical expressions designed to emulate the agility and ferocity of a wild tiger. The performers often undergo physical training to master the heavy mask and costume, which require balance and strength. The mask, typically carved from wood and decorated with bold colors, fur-like elements, and distinctive facial features, is not only an artistic object but also a cultural symbol representing ancestral protection and supernatural power.

Musical accompaniment plays a crucial role in shaping the atmosphere of the performance. Instruments such as kendang, gong, and saron provide a dynamic rhythm that guides the dancers' movements and heightens the dramatic tension of the narrative. The tempo shifts between fast, energetic beats and slower, more suspenseful rhythms, allowing the performance to oscillate between excitement and contemplation. This musical arrangement reflects a deep-rooted philosophy that life contains both chaos and harmony, mirrored through the dance.

Within the community context, Can-Macanan Kadduk functions as a medium of social cohesion. The preparation process involves craftsmen, musicians, young dancers, elders, and other community members who collectively contribute to bringing the performance to life. These collaborative efforts reinforce intergenerational bonds and ensure that cultural knowledge is preserved and transmitted across time. The performance also provides young people with avenues for learning discipline, artistry, and respect for cultural heritage.

The narratives featured in Can-Macanan Kadduk often draw from local myths and folklore. Stories typically center on the battle between human resilience and the symbolic forces of nature, portrayed through the majestic yet intimidating figure of the macan (tiger). These narratives highlight moral lessons about courage, humility, respect for nature, and the importance of maintaining balance within the community. In many cases, comedic interludes are added to entertain the audience and make the cultural messages more accessible.

As modernization continues, Can-Macanan Kadduk has become a key element within local tourism and cultural revitalization initiatives. Cultural villages, festivals, and tourism-based community groups—such as Pokdarwis—frequently highlight this performance as part of their efforts to promote regional identity. The digital era has also contributed to its visibility, with social media, short documentaries, and digital storytelling enabling the tradition to reach broader audiences and inspire cultural pride among younger generations.

Despite growing recognition, the continuity of Can-Macanan Kadduk relies heavily on sustained community engagement, institutional support, and structured cultural governance. Some challenges persist, including limited funding, inconsistent documentation, and a lack of formal educational platforms for training new performers. Nevertheless, ongoing collaborations between local governments, cultural organizations, and creative communities offer promising pathways for safeguarding this heritage. Strengthening these collaborative governance structures will ensure that this traditional art form continues to thrive.

Table 1. Key Cultural Elements of Can-Macanan Kadduk

Cultural Element	Description	Community Role
Mask & Costume	Large wooden tiger mask with symbolic decorations	Represents ancestral protection and identity
Musical Ensemble	Kendang, gong, saron, and rhythmic instruments	Guides performance rhythm and dramatic flow
Mythical Narrative	Stories of courage, nature, and moral values	Transmits cultural teachings and folklore
Performer Training	Physical movement, mask handling, endurance	Builds discipline and intergenerational learning
Community Involvement	Craftsmen, musicians, youth groups, elders	Ensures cultural sustainability and collaboration

Source: Author, 2025

In contemporary cultural governance, Can-Macanan Kadduk embodies a living heritage that bridges tradition and innovation. Its survival demonstrates the resilience of local cultural identity amid rapid socio-economic changes. Through strategic documentation, creative adaptation, and participatory cultural management, this performance has the potential to become a model of how traditional arts can thrive in the digital age while maintaining authenticity. Ultimately, its continued practice strengthens communal solidarity and preserves the cultural richness that defines the heritage landscape of Madura and Indonesia as a whole.

2. The Socio-Cultural Context of the Can-Macanan Kadduk Tradition

The *Can-Macanan Kadduk* performance is a traditional art deeply embedded in the historical and social fabric of Arjasa Village. Traditionally performed during religious festivals and communal rituals, it symbolized protection, unity, and collective strength. However, modernization and the shift toward commercialized tourism have contributed to its gradual decline. Interviews with local elders and art practitioners revealed that performances have become increasingly rare, largely due to reduced youth involvement and the absence of structured institutional support.

- Cultural Decline and Regeneration Challenges; As one village elder observed, "In the past, every child wanted to learn *Can-Macanan Kadduk*, but now they prefer to watch performances on their phones rather than participate." This

sentiment encapsulates the challenge of cultural regeneration and how traditional expressions struggle to coexist with digital entertainment and modern lifestyles.

b. Institutional Gaps and Governance Issues; Findings also indicate that local cultural initiatives are mostly event-based and lack continuity. Government programs focus on tourism promotion but often exclude capacity-building for cultural actors. This reflects Handayani and Setyawan's (2024) findings that rural tourism management in Indonesia frequently neglects cultural capacity as a sustainability dimension. These insights underscore the need to integrate cultural preservation, digital innovation, and governance reform to ensure the continuity of local traditions.

Can-Macanan Kadduk performance faces a critical juncture as cultural decline, limited youth participation, and governance gaps threaten its continuity, yet the community's awareness of these challenges also reveals opportunities for renewal. The findings demonstrate that the tradition's survival depends not only on cultural enthusiasm but also on the presence of structured institutional support, long-term capacity-building, and adaptive strategies that integrate digital media with cultural preservation. Without sustained governance reform and inclusive community participation, the art form risks further marginalization; however, with collaborative efforts, digital innovation, and strengthened cultural policy, Can-Macanan Kadduk holds the potential to be revitalized as both a symbol of local identity and a dynamic component of contemporary cultural expression.

3. Community-Based Digital Storytelling Practices

A major theme emerging from the data is the community's effort to revitalize Can-Macanan Kadduk through digital storytelling and the creation and sharing of multimedia narratives that convey local culture and values.

a. Emergence of Local Digital Creators; During the fieldwork, youth groups and Pokdarwis members were observed producing short videos and photo essays narrating the meanings, symbols, and history of *Can-Macanan Kadduk*. These were disseminated through Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, reaching hundreds or even thousands of viewers. The content integrated local dialects, traditional music, and behind-the-scenes visuals, making the tradition more relatable and visually engaging to younger audiences.

b. Participatory Narratives and Co-Creation; Digital storytelling in Arjasa is collaborative rather than top-down. Young creators routinely consult senior performers to ensure authenticity, while elders view technology as a tool to engage new audiences. This co-creation model exemplifies the collaborative governance principles of Emerson et al. (2012) built on trust, shared understanding, and mutual benefit.

c. Digital Platforms as Cultural Arenas; Social media has evolved into a "cultural arena" that enables intergenerational dialogue and creative reinterpretation. Unlike traditional performances restricted to local audiences, digital platforms extend cultural visibility and participation. This aligns with Silalahi et al. (2023), who observed that digital storytelling fosters inclusivity and participatory branding in heritage tourism.

d. Relevance to Sustainable Tourism Promotion; Digital storytelling enhances both cultural identity and destination appeal. As shown in Nanita et al. (2025), narrative-based promotion significantly increases visitor engagement in eco-luxury destinations. While the Paisupok case emphasized environmental storytelling, the current study demonstrates a similar effect in a cultural

context, where digital narratives operate as vehicles for empowerment and intergenerational learning rather than mere marketing tools.

Community-based digital storytelling has become a transformative mechanism for revitalizing Can-Macanan Kadduk, as local youth and Pokdarwis members collaboratively produce culturally grounded multimedia content that blends traditional knowledge with contemporary digital expression. Through participatory co-creation with elders, these narratives maintain authenticity while fostering trust, shared understanding, and collective benefit consistent with collaborative governance principles. Social media functions as an inclusive cultural arena that amplifies cultural visibility, supports intergenerational engagement, and enables creative reinterpretation of tradition beyond its local setting. Moreover, aligning with recent studies, digital storytelling not only strengthens cultural identity but also enhances sustainable tourism appeal by positioning cultural narratives as tools for empowerment, learning, and community-driven promotion.

4. Digital Storytelling and Cultural Resilience

Digital storytelling has emerged as a strategic approach for strengthening cultural resilience, particularly in communities navigating modernization and rapid digital transformation. Through visual and narrative media, local traditions are not only documented but also re-presented in formats that resonate with younger audiences, allowing cultural values to be creatively reinterpreted without losing their historical essence. This approach creates space for intergenerational dialogue, where long-standing cultural knowledge meets contemporary innovation in the collaborative production of digital narratives. Moreover, digital storytelling provides communities with a platform to assert their identity and share their heritage with broader audiences

- a. Reinforcing Local Identity and Cultural Pride; Digital storytelling fosters cultural pride and strengthens local identity. One participant remarked, "Now when people see our videos, they say 'this is our culture,' and young people want to be part of it again." This illustrates what Berkes (2018) defines as cultural resilience and the ability of communities to innovate while preserving cultural integrity.
- b. Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer; The creation of digital stories has become an informal mechanism for knowledge exchange. Youths learn performance values and cultural meanings while editing videos or interviewing elders, whereas older generations gain recognition for their expertise. This dynamic supports Goodwin's (2017) argument that community participation is central to sustainable and responsible tourism.
- c. Narrative Authenticity and Adaptation; A recurring challenge is maintaining authenticity while appealing to digital audiences. Some elders feared that online adaptations could trivialize spiritual elements, though most acknowledged innovation as necessary for survival. This reflects Vestheim's (2019) argument that effective cultural policy must balance authenticity with adaptation to ensure long-term relevance.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that digital storytelling serves as a powerful catalyst for cultural resilience by enabling communities to creatively preserve, reinterpret, and share their heritage in ways that remain authentic while engaging younger generations. Through collaborative content production, digital storytelling reinforces local identity and cultural pride, facilitates intergenerational knowledge transfer, and negotiates the balance between maintaining narrative

authenticity and embracing necessary adaptation. These dynamics affirm that digital storytelling is not merely a technological practice but a participatory cultural strategy that strengthens community cohesion, sustains cultural continuity, and positions tradition as a living, evolving resource within contemporary cultural and tourism landscapes.

2. Governance Dynamics and Collaborative Cultural Management

Governance dynamics in cultural management have become increasingly important as communities navigate the intersection of tradition, creativity, and digital transformation. The rise of community-led cultural initiatives demonstrates that effective cultural governance is no longer limited to administrative oversight, but instead relies on multi-actor collaboration, shared responsibility, and adaptive policy environments. Digital storytelling, in particular, has reshaped how cultural assets are managed, promoted, and sustained by enabling participatory decision-making and strengthening the role of local actors such as Pokdarwis, creative practitioners, and cultural authorities. Within this evolving landscape, governance is understood not merely as regulation, but as a coordinated process that empowers communities, enhances institutional support, and ensures that cultural heritage remains relevant across generations

- a. Institutional Facilitation and Policy Support; Local tourism authorities and Pokdarwis serve as facilitators, providing venues, equipment, and promotional support. Yet, formal policy frameworks for cultural digitization remain underdeveloped. This supports Suryani and Yuliani's (2022) observation that local cultural initiatives in Indonesia often rely on temporary projects rather than systemic governance mechanisms.
- b. Multi-Actor Collaboration in Cultural Promotion; The *Can-Macanan Kadduk* case illustrates an emerging model of Collaborative Cultural Governance (CCG), where government, communities, and creative actors share responsibility for cultural representation. Unlike top-down programs, the CCG approach thrives on shared ownership and mutual trust (Ansell & Gash, 2007). Through digital storytelling, cultural management transitions from bureaucratic administration to participatory governance.
- c. The Collaborative Cultural Governance (CCG) Model; The synthesized model derived from this study comprises four interlinked components: Institutional support, collaborative processes, socio-cultural empowerment, and sustainability outcomes collectively illustrate how cultural initiatives can thrive within community-driven frameworks. When policies and resources are aligned to promote cultural expression, stakeholders are better positioned to engage in meaningful joint decision-making grounded in trust and shared purpose. This cooperation fosters creativity, strengthens intergenerational learning, and gives communities greater agency in shaping their cultural narratives. Ultimately, these dynamics contribute to long-term sustainability by reinforcing cultural identity, ensuring the continuity of traditions, and enhancing social cohesion across generations. This structure aligns with Emerson et al. (2012) and extends collaborative governance principles into the realm of digital cultural tourism.



Figure 1. The Collaborative Cultural Governance (CCG) Integration Model in Cultural Tourism Development

Source: Author's conceptual design (2025).

The findings reveal that governance dynamics in cultural management are increasingly characterized by collaborative, community-driven practices that integrate institutional support, multi-actor participation, and adaptive digital strategies. Through the emergence of Collaborative Cultural Governance (CCG), cultural initiatives like Can-Macanan Kadduk demonstrate how shared responsibility between government, Pokdarwis, creative practitioners, and cultural authorities can strengthen cultural continuity, enhance community agency, and promote participatory decision-making. Digital storytelling plays a central role in this shift by transforming cultural management from a bureaucratic function into a cooperative process rooted in trust, shared purpose, and collective ownership. As a result, cultural heritage becomes more resilient, socially embedded, and sustainable, ensuring both its relevance to younger generations and its long-term contribution to cultural tourism development.

3. Comparative Insights and Theoretical Contribution

This study offers a meaningful contribution to the expanding discourse on the intersection between digital media and cultural governance. While previous works, such as the Paisupok Lake study by Nanita et al. (2025), emphasize how storytelling can increase tourist motivation within eco-tourism contexts, the present research redirects attention toward community-driven preservation rather than market-oriented promotion. This shift highlights the importance of cultural continuity, local agency, and the collective shaping of heritage narratives in digital environments.

By integrating Collaborative Governance Theory (Ansell & Gash, 2007) with Cultural Resilience Theory (Berkes, 2018), the study advances an interdisciplinary framework that connects administrative structures with grassroots creativity. This synthesis illustrates how cultural governance can move beyond hierarchical models to embrace more participatory, dialogical, and adaptive approaches. It also reveals how institutional support and community innovation can coexist in sustaining cultural practices in the digital era. Overall, the findings demonstrate that governance within cultural tourism is not solely an administrative function but also a communicative and relational process. Cultural sustainability is upheld

through trust-building, narrative exchange, and shared meanings that emerge organically from community interactions. In this sense, digital storytelling becomes both a strategic tool and a social practice that strengthens cultural identity while fostering long-term resilience.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how digital storytelling enhances cultural resilience and community participation in revitalizing traditional performing arts within Indonesia's rural tourism landscape. Using the Can-Macanan Kadduk performance from Arjasa Tourism Village, East Java, as a focal case, the research explored the processes of narrative creation, intergenerational collaboration, and participatory governance in the context of digital media. Through a qualitative descriptive approach and case study design, the study provided a nuanced understanding of how local stakeholders artists, community organizations, and digital creators jointly reinterpret cultural meanings and adapt traditional heritage to contemporary communication platforms.

The findings reveal that digital storytelling functions simultaneously as a communicative medium and an empowerment instrument for local cultural actors. Through collaboratively produced narratives shared on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, the community has been able to reintroduce Can-Macanan Kadduk to younger audiences while enhancing its visibility among wider publics. This process has cultivated cultural pride, intergenerational learning, and renewed social engagement, as digital creators and traditional performers collaborate to reframe cultural expressions for the digital age. Storytelling thus operates as a form of collaborative cultural governance, transforming hierarchical cultural management into participatory and trust-based practices grounded in creativity and inclusivity.

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