MULTICULTURAL AND TOLERANT COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA: THE CASES OF THE SALO KARAJAE FESTIVAL IN PAREPARE AND THE KALUPPINI ENREKANG CULTURAL FESTIVAL, INDONESIA

MUHAMMAD QADARUDDIN[1*]
NINING ARTIANASARI[2]
WAHYUDDIN[3]

[1,2,3]*State Islamic Institute of Parepare,*
Parepare, 91131, Indonesia
Corresponding Author[*]: muhammadqadaruddin@iainpare.ac.id

ABSTRACT This study examines the role of social media in constructing and promoting multicultural and tolerant communication through two cultural festivals in South Sulawesi, Indonesia: the Salo Karajae Festival in Parepare and the Kaluppini Cultural Festival in Enrekang. Amid growing concerns about declining cultural literacy and increasing intolerance, particularly in Parepare ranked lowest in Indonesia's 2024 Tolerant City Index this research explores how digital platforms can serve as symbolic arenas for preserving local wisdom and fostering social cohesion. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach with a media ethnography design, the study draws on in-depth interviews, participatory and non-participatory observations, digital documentation, and netnographic analysis. Data were collected from festival organisers, government officials, local content creators, micro-entrepreneurs, and online community members across platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. Findings reveal that social media significantly contributes to the social construction of cultural identity by enabling participatory narratives, user-generated content, and visual storytelling. Digital campaigns and inclusive communication strategies effectively mobilise community engagement, shape cultural perception among youth, and extend the festivals' reach beyond their geographic boundaries. Furthermore, social media functions not only as a promotional tool but also as a discursive space where traditional values are renegotiated, performed, and recontextualised in contemporary digital culture. The study concludes that strategic digital communication can foster inclusive cultural representation, strengthen local identity, and promote tolerance in diverse societies. It underscores the need for sustainable, community-driven cultural communication practices that integrate traditional values with digital innovation in the era of globalisation.

Keywords: cultural identity, social media, multicultural communication, local wisdom, digital ethnography, tolerance.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country with many ethnic groups, religions, cultures, and customs (Abdussamad et al., 2015; Amali & Katili, 2018; Cahaya et al., 2019, 2019; Frinaldi, 2021; Yunus et al., 2016). There are several provinces. In South Sulawesi Province, there are many different ethnic groups that intermingle with one another (Ahmad, 1997; Andaya, 1995). However, the largest ethnic groups in South Sulawesi are the Bugis, Makassar, Mandar, and Toraja. These ethnic groups have spread and settled in South Sulawesi, each using their local language to communicate with their supporting communities.

Indonesia, as the largest archipelagic country in the world, has a very high cultural diversity, with more than 1,300 ethnic groups spread across more than 17,000 islands (Andiani et al., n.d.). This richness is not only reflected in language and customs, but also in the values of local wisdom that have been passed down from generation to generation. However, amid the increasingly massive tide of globalisation and digitalisation, local wisdom faces major challenges in the form of neglect, marginalisation, and the dominance of global popular culture, especially among the younger generation.

In the 2024 Tolerant City Index (IKT) report released by the SETARA Institute, Parepare City ranked lowest out of 94 cities assessed, with a final score of only 3.945 on a scale of 1 to 7. This ranking reflects the very weak state of tolerance in Parepare. This low score is not solely due to the prevalence of intolerant incidents, but rather the absence of vision and innovation on the part of the city government in building an inclusive social life that upholds the value of diversity. Almost all indicators measured, ranging from government regulations, civil society dynamics, to concrete actions taken by the city government, show stagnant and non-progressive performance. There are no promotional policies or legal products that support tolerance, while religious social inclusion also received a low score.

Several ways to overcome the symptoms of intolerance are by increasing knowledge through education based on multiculturalism and pluralism, increasing individual awareness, and other traditional local solutions. In this context, multicultural communication strategies and social media tolerance play a crucial role in promoting understanding, reducing prejudice, and fostering inclusive interactions among diverse cultural groups (UNESCO, 2009). However, of course, this must also be supported by a strong legal system and clear law enforcement. One way to instil the ideology of tolerance is through cultural traditions, such as festivals. King (2016) describes how music and festivals can and have promoted peace between religious communities.

Morocco's Festival of World Sacred Music successfully attracted audiences from various religions, including Muslim, Christian, and non-religious, to enjoy music. The same thing happened in Lebanon. Muslim and Christian musicians and clerics gathered on one stage to play Arabic classical music along with readings of scripts, poetry, and holy books. Shinde (2015) saw how tourism and festivals can improve religious relations and tolerance in India.

So far, most festivals held in Indonesia have emphasised locality, such as one region that represents efforts to preserve local cultural values in the digital age is the city of Parepare and the district of Enrekang in South Sulawesi Province. Parepare and Enrekang are known as cultural cities that still maintain Bugis traditions in the form of traditional rituals, dances,

cuisine, and other symbolic expressions. The Salo Karajae Festival and the Cultural Festival have become annual cultural icons that not only showcase culture directly but also adopt social media as the primary medium for disseminating cultural messages. The Salo Karajae Festival in Parepare and the Kaluppini Cultural Festival in Enrekang are two prominent cultural celebrations in South Sulawesi that represent the richness of Bugis local wisdom and heritage. The Salo Karajae Festival showcases various coastal arts and maritime cultural expressions through decorated boat parades, traditional dances, regional music, micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) exhibitions, and Bugis culinary displays, reflecting the identity of the coastal Bugis community and strengthening local tourism. Meanwhile, the Kaluppini Cultural Festival highlights the ancestral traditions of the Kaluppini community through sacred rituals, cultural processions, traditional music and dances, as well as exhibitions of local crafts. Both festivals serve not only as platforms for preserving local culture but also as spaces for strengthening social harmony, promoting cultural identity, and engaging the community through digital media in the contemporary era.

This situation shows that political, bureaucratic, and community leaders in Parepare have not demonstrated a real commitment to making tolerance an integral part of the city's development agenda. While other cities are competing to create regulations, spaces for dialogue, and inclusive interfaith programmes, Parepare is lagging behind. As a city with historical multicultural potential, this position is ironic and a serious warning. Parepare risks becoming fertile ground for the growth of intolerant practices if strategic changes and political courage are not immediately implemented to make tolerance the foundation of regional development. However, this low score is not the end. With bold leadership and active community participation, Parepare still has the opportunity to transform into a more tolerant and inclusive city in the future (Ihsani & Yosarie, 2023).

Tolerance data in Enrekang regency shows the efforts made by the local government and the Religious Community Forum (FKUB) to strengthen interfaith harmony. Several activities have been carried out by the government, such as hearings, meetings, and religious lectures involving various elements of society, both religious leaders and the general public, demonstrating a commitment to maintaining harmony and dialogue between religious communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have been conducted on festivals, most of which are contemporary studies focusing on how festivals affect social and cultural life. When combined with tourism, festivals can increase civic pride and participation (Wood & Thomas, 2006). They can even help build local businesses (Thomas & Wood, 2003). According to Lee et al. (2014), festivals with high community participation and strong relationships will enhance the reputation of a region. This is because information will spread positively. Local sociological methods have been used by sociologists to study festivals in recent years (see Delgado, 2016; Wynn, 2015).

In festivals, various elements of uncertainty, multivocality, and carnivalism provide opportunities for different individuals and groups to promote their different agendas under the umbrella of tolerance and togetherness (Yeoh, 2001). Festivals can be described as the democratisation of public space, where they encourage people from other cultures to become and participate in cultural activities.

Festivals become a place for discussion where people can express their opinions on broader cultural, social, and political issues. This shows that during festivals there will always be conflict between two different poles: the pole that supports change and the pole that wants to preserve "traditional" or "local" culture in the face of modernisation and globalisation. However, there will always be negotiation and hybridisation between these two poles, which in ideal conditions will result in harmonisation (Crespi-Vallbona & Richards, 2007).

The development of social media has brought significant changes to cultural communication practices. According to a report by We Are Social (2024), Indonesia has more than 167 million active social media users (Choirin et al., 2024). Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok have become new spaces for people to interact, produce, and distribute cultural meanings more broadly, instantly, and participatively (Gushevinalti et al., 2020) . This is where the urgency of this research lies: how social media is not only a means of cultural promotion but also an arena for the social construction of local wisdom values.

Previous studies have shown the contribution of social media in promoting local culture and tourism. Kurniawati (2020) shows that social media plays an important role in the branding process of culture-based tourist destinations (Kurniawati et al., 2022). Susanti (2021) emphasises that the success of cultural promotion is largely determined by the strength of the visual and narrative content presented. The findings of the study titled *"Chronotope and Syncretism: A Dialogical Study of Culture and Religion in the Rambu Solo Ceremony of the Tana Toraja Community"* show that the Rambu Solo ceremony serves as a dialogical space where the traditions of Aluk Todolo and the teachings of Abrahamic religions interact within the chronotopic framework of space and time. The results indicate that the syncretism that emerges is not a meaningless fusion but a dynamic process of symbolic negotiation, in which ancestral values passed down through generations are preserved while adapting to state-recognized religious teachings. The customary spaces with their clearly defined territorial boundaries function as social and spiritual stages that facilitate encounters between local cultural traditions and formal religious practices, while the temporal dimension links the collective memory of the past with the evolving values of the present. Through this interplay, the Toraja community successfully maintains both cultural and religious identity, resulting in a form of syncretism that safeguards the sacredness of tradition while remaining relevant to contemporary socio-religious developments (Nurhakki, 2025).

Intercultural Communication Theory by Hall, Gudykunst and Kim (1966) explains how individuals from different cultural backgrounds interact and understand the meanings used to see how these festivals manage messages to be inclusive of various ethnicities, religions, and cultures in South Sulawesi. Meanwhile, Cultural Performance Theory (Schechner, 2003) understands culture as a performative act displayed in the form of symbolic performances. Cultural festivals, in this case, are understood as spaces for articulating values and identities that can be studied through digital representations (Schechner, 2003). On the other hand, Media Convergence Theory and Uses & Gratifications helps explain how individuals are not only passive consumers but also active producers of content in constructing cultural meaning through social media to fulfil their needs for self-expression, entertainment, and social connection.

However, these studies tend to view social media as merely a promotional tool and have not yet thoroughly examined how local wisdom values are socially constructed in the digital space. In addition, there has not been much research examining how cultural digital communication practices occur specifically in the context of Bugis society, particularly through

cultural events such as the Salo Karajae Festival and the Cultural Festival. This study presents a novel approach by combining cultural communication analysis, digital media studies, and intercultural communication theory to disseminate information on social media. The focus on the Salo Karajae Festival also provides a strong local context for analysing the dynamics of participatory and contemporary cultural communication.

There is a gap in academic literature regarding the understanding of social media not only as a channel for cultural communication, but also as a symbolic arena that reshapes narratives of identity and local wisdom. Previous studies have not revealed much about the role of social actors (government, committees, communities, influencers) in shaping cultural representations in the digital space in an interactive and collaborative manner. Thus, this study fills this gap by viewing social media as a living and layered space of social construction, as well as part of a cultural promotion ecosystem that is reflective, emotional, and strategic.

Based on theory and the gaps in the literature described above, this study aims to analyse how social media is used to construct narratives and representations of local wisdom in the Salo Karajae Festival in Parepare City and the Cultural Festival in Kaluppini Enrekang; reveal the digital communication strategies used by organisers and the government in disseminating local cultural messages; examine how the online community receives, interprets, and helps shape these cultural narratives through digital practices; and contribute theoretically and practically to the development of local cultural communication strategies based on community participation and digital media.

With this focus, this research is expected to enrich the academic discourse on the role of social media in preserving local culture and to develop an inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable approach to cultural communication in the digital age.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a media ethnography study design. Virtual ethnography is an ethnographic method used to observe the social and cultural phenomena of users in cyberspace (Nugraha et al., 2015) . This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply understand the social and cultural processes that occur in the construction of local wisdom through social media, particularly in the context of the Salo Karajae Festival in Parepare City and the Cultural Festival in Enrekang Regency. The media ethnography design allows research to be conducted not only on cultural activities directly but also on representations, interactions, and the production of meaning that take place in digital spaces such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook.

The location of this research focuses on Parepare City and Enrekang Regency, South Sulawesi, which are the areas where the Salo Karajae Festival and Cultural Festival are held. This city was chosen because it shows strategic efforts in promoting local culture digitally and has an active community involved in the production and dissemination of cultural content on social media. The research subjects consisted of various actors involved in the process of digital cultural communication, namely the festival organising team (including the Tourism Office), local content creators, MSME actors participating in the festival, and the general public who are social media users. Informants were selected purposively in the hope of obtaining information from the right sources according to what the informants knew (Noorhayati Sutisno & idayat Afendi, 2018) . This was done by considering their involvement in festival activities, both directly and through digital platforms. The selection of informants was continued using

the snowball sampling technique until the data reached saturation point (Triane & Syahputra, n.d).

Data collection was carried out using four main techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, documentation, and netnographic studies. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the experiences, views, and strategies of informants regarding the role of social media in promoting local culture. Observations were carried out in a participatory and non-participatory manner, both during the actual festival and its online activities on social media. In addition, the researchers also collected various forms of digital documentation such as screenshots of social media posts, videos, captions, hashtags, and engagement statistics from relevant accounts. All of this data was supplemented with supporting documents from the local government, such as activity reports, press releases, and tourism statistics.

The collected data was analysed using thematic analysis techniques. The initial step began with the transcription of interviews and open coding to identify units of meaning. Next, the codes are grouped into interrelated themes (axial coding), such as digital communication strategies, community participation, representation of local wisdom, and cultural identity construction. In-depth interpretation is carried out at the selective coding stage to understand the dynamics of meaning within the framework of the theories used, namely social construction theory, cultural performance theory, and media convergence theory. To enhance validity, this study employed triangulation of sources, techniques, and time.

Ethical aspects were strictly maintained throughout the research process. The researchers first sought consent from each informant (informed consent) before conducting interviews. The identities of the informants were kept confidential and were not included in the publication unless explicit permission was obtained. The researchers also ensured that the data was used solely for academic purposes and maintained sensitivity to the local cultural context being studied. With this approach, this study is expected to produce a rich and reflective understanding of how social media has become a space for the social construction of local wisdom in the digital age.

RESULTS

This study found that social media plays a strategic role in shaping social constructions of local wisdom promoted through the Salo Karajae Festival in Parepare City and the Cultural Festival in Enrekang Regency. Through platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, festival organisers and city governments have successfully packaged and conveyed cultural messages in attractive visual and narrative forms, which in turn shape public perceptions of local cultural values.

Digital Communication Strategies in Festival Promotion

Digital communication strategies in festival promotion are now a crucial element in expanding reach, increasing public participation, and shaping perceptions of local culture. Both the Salo Karajae Festival in Parepare City and the Cultural Festival in Enrekang Regency demonstrate how social media can be optimised as the main medium for conveying cultural messages in an effective, inclusive, and participatory manner.

Both festivals actively utilise various platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook to disseminate information, display visual content, and reach a wide audience.

Table 1. Festival Information Dissemination on Social Media

No.	Figure	Source	Content uploaded
1	Figure 1.1 (Salo Karajae Parepare Festival)	*Instagram: salokarajaefest*	Traditional art performances
2	Figure 1.2 (Enrekang Cultural Festival)	TribunEnrekang.com/Erlan Saputra	
3.	Figure 1.3 (Salo Karajae Parepare Festival)	https://eventdaerah.kemenparekraf.go.id/cerita-ken/cerita/festival-salo-karajae	Regional Speciality Food Show
4.	Figure 1.4 (Enrekang Cultural Festival)	https://kaluppini.digitaldesa.id/berita/festival-budaya-kaluppini-enrekang-hadirkan-ragam-kuliner-tradisional	
5.	Figure 1.5 (Salo Karajae Parepare Festival)	https://eventdaerah.kemenparekraf.go.id/cerita-ken/cerita/festival-salo-karajae	

6	Figure 1.6 (Enrekang Cultural Festival)	https://makassar.tribunnews.com /2022/08/27/permainan-tradisional-maggasing-meriahkan-festival-budaya-kaluppini-enrekang	Various Traditional Competitions

The visual content published covers various aspects of local culture, including: Photos and videos of traditional Bugis clothing worn by participants in the cultural carnival. Traditional dances performed at the opening of the festival. Parepare and Enrekang specialities such as barongko, songkolo, and various market snacks sold at MSME stalls and various traditional competitions. The panorama of Salo Karajae, which is the main backdrop for the festival activities, shows the beauty of the river, the rainbow bridge, and the bustling community.

Visual description: a group of teenagers dancing on the Salo Karajae festival stage, smiling while dancing, with the festival banner in the background. Based on an interview with Sulvinajayanti, a digital media expert, she explained: *"We are aware that young people today are more connected through social media. Therefore, we upload posters, create Instagram reels, TikTok challenges, and countdown content to increase enthusiasm".*

The statement "that young people today are more connected through social media. Therefore, uploading posters, creating Instagram reels, TikTok challenges, and countdown content to increase enthusiasm" reflects a strategy towards the communication characteristics of the digital generation, especially young people as the main target audience. In the context of Uses and Gratifications theory, this demonstrates an awareness that social media is not only used to convey information but also to fulfil users' needs for self-expression, entertainment, social engagement, and self-actualisation (Nurdiantara et al., 2024).

More deeply, the practice of using features such as *Instagram reels*, *TikTok challenges*, and *countdown content* can be understood as a form of digital cultural performance (Schechner, 2003), where cultural promotion is no longer passive and one-way, but interactive and participatory (Nurdiantara et al., 2024) . By involving the public in challenges or countdowns, festivals are constructed not only as annual cultural events but also as digital experiences that can be enjoyed before, during, and after the event.

Furthermore, this approach highlights the dimension of media convergence, where organisers not only transfer cultural content to the digital realm but also *adapt formats* according to platform logic and user preferences. In this case, social media becomes more than just a promotional tool; it functions as a symbolic space that enables the dynamic and collaborative construction of cultural identity (Narendra, 2000). By creating engaging and "trendy" content, the organisers indirectly shape the perception of local culture as something relevant, interesting, and worth celebrating by the younger generation.

From the perspective of Social Construction Theory (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), the digital content produced by organisers reflects the process of externalising cultural values into modern visual media. When this content is shared, responded to, and imitated by social media

users, it undergoes objectification, i.e. it is accepted as a legitimate representation of local culture. This online social interaction ultimately results in a process of internalisation, where the community (especially the younger generation) begins to identify local culture as part of their digital identity (Hadiwijaya, 2023).

The festival promotion strategy carried out through creative social media features is not merely a form of technical communication, but part of the social construction process of local culture. This strategy demonstrates the organisers' critical understanding of changes in the communication landscape and cultural engagement in the digital age, while also marking a shift in how people understand and celebrate local wisdom in the context of the convergence of technology and popular culture. Through cultural education, collaboration between the government, academics, and local communities, the use of technology, active community participation, as well as festivals and cultural events, culture can continue to develop and inspire future generations (Agustin, 2024). In addition, H.M Iskandar Nusu, Head of the Youth, Sports and Tourism Office, said: *"Social media is currently the main tool in our promotional strategy. Not only because of its wide reach, but platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook are highly effective in reaching the younger generation. We not only post event information but also strong visual content such as parade videos, traditional dances, or local cuisine to make the community feel involved"* (Interview, 5 July 2025).

According to H.M Iskandar Nusu, social media is not only used to disseminate technical information about the festival, but also to convey messages of multiculturalism and tolerance. The Salo Karajae Festival is designed as an inclusive cultural space, where narratives of diversity and collaboration between communities take centre stage. He said, *"Every year we compile inclusive cultural narratives. In the Salo Karajae Festival, for example, we invite communities of different religions and ethnicities to perform together. On social media, we promote messages of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and appreciation for other cultures"*.

Two-way digital communication strategies were also revealed as an important factor in the effectiveness of cultural campaigns. Disporapar (Dinas Pemuda, Olahraga, dan Pariwisata) acknowledged that user-generated content often has a greater impact than official content, *"We feel that user-generated content is much more effective because it is more authentic. We encourage them to create vlogs, reels, or photos during the festival and tag them with official hashtags such as #SaloKarajae2024. This creates a participatory atmosphere, where culture is promoted by the community itself"*.

The main challenges faced by institutions in developing digital-based cultural communication are sustainability and the digital divide. To that end, Disporapar plans to form a special team that will continuously manage cultural content and bridge the digital access gap in several regions as stated, *"The euphoria only happens during festivals. After that, digital activity usually declines. We want to form a special creative team that can manage social media throughout the year. Also, we see that there are still digital limitations in villages that must be bridged"*.

In closing, H.M. Iskandar Nusu emphasised the importance of making local culture part of the identity of the younger generation through a participatory and contextual digital approach: *"We want local culture to not only be presented on stage or in ceremonial spaces, but also to be present on social media as the identity of the younger generation. The hope is that Parepare will be known as a tolerant and open city of culture"*.

The presentation of social media content that contains philosophical meanings of cultural elements not only strengthens the quality of digital festival promotion, but also plays an important role in the process of collective identity construction, cross-cultural education, and local cultural diplomacy in the global digital space. This strategy marks an important shift from culture as "something to be displayed" to culture as "something to be interpreted and discussed together," emphasising that social media is not only a communication channel but also a new social space where culture is negotiated and strengthened in a participatory manner. social media does not merely reproduce religious meanings, but also becomes a discursive arena where religious authority is challenged and negotiated (Mukhroman, 2025). The narrative content included in social media posts contains educational and persuasive messages, for example: "*Let's celebrate our cultural heritage together! The Salo Karajae Festival is a space for all of us to learn more about Bugis traditions and local wisdom. Don't just be a spectator, be part of the culture*!".

Through this approach, the digital communication that is built is not merely promotional, but also shapes a broad understanding of culture. The style of language used is interactive and inviting, for example by inserting invitations such as "tag your friends who must come to Parepare!" or "follow the festival ticket giveaway, check the bio for details!".

In addition to institutional promotion, the general public also participates in disseminating content through their personal accounts. Popular hashtags such as #SaloKarajae2024 and #ParepareBerbudaya became local trends, demonstrating the high level of public participation.

Figure 1. Cultural Promotion
(Source: https://www.instagram.com/disporapar_parepare)

The Kaluppini Cultural Festival is one of our efforts to showcase the rich traditions of the Enrekang community. In recent years, we have begun to seriously utilise social media as our primary promotional tool. We use Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to disseminate cultural content in a contemporary style.

According to Achmad Faisal, social media provides a great opportunity to expand the festival's reach to audiences outside Enrekang. Moreover, visual promotions and digital narratives have proven to attract the interest of tourists, students, and the South Sulawesi diaspora community. He said, *"We want Kaluppini culture to be enjoyed not only on location, but also on people's mobile screens. Young people from outside the region can learn that Enrekang has unique traditions, such as traditional games, cultural rituals, and local cuisine"*.

In the context of multicultural values and tolerance, the Tourism Office emphasised that an inclusive approach was strongly emphasised, both in the organisation of the festival and in the preparation of digital content as they stated, *"We deliberately showcased diversity. For example, we invited students from different schools, youth communities of different religions, and MSMEs from various ethnic backgrounds. This became a symbolic message that culture belongs to everyone. On social media, we promote hashtags such as #KaluppiniUntukSemua (Kaluppini is for everyone)"*.

The promotional strategy carried out by the organisers also adapts to digital trends. The festival's creative team is empowered to produce reels, short videos, and live broadcasts through official accounts and accounts belonging to local influencers. They shared, *"We collaborate with local youth who are active on TikTok and Instagram. They create behind-the-scenes content, cultural challenges, and even traditional cooking tutorials. This is more popular with audiences than formal content"*.

Regarding the challenges in managing digital communication, Zainal said that limited human resources and digital infrastructure remain obstacles in some villages. However, collaboration with local communities is an important solution. He said, *"Our challenges are human resources and internet networks in mountainous areas. But we are working with Karang Taruna, schools, and content creator communities to fill that gap. These young people are extraordinary; they are creative and very enthusiastic about promoting their own culture"*.

According to Achmad Faisal, the hope for the future is to form a participatory and sustainable "digital cultural ecosystem". He emphasised that the Kaluppini Cultural Festival is not only a celebration, but also a means of education and local cultural diplomacy as he shared, *"We want to form a digital cultural ecosystem. It should not only go viral during the festival, but the content should live on throughout the year. Our hope is that Kaluppini culture will become widely known, a source of pride for the community, and encourage sustainable, culture-friendly tourism"*.

Thus, the digital communication strategy in the Salo Karajae Festival and the Klauppini Cultural Festival successfully combines visual power, cultural narratives, and online public participation in an effective cultural communication ecosystem. This shows that social media is not just a tool for disseminating information, but also a space for the construction of cultural meaning that is dialogical and participatory.

Construction of Local Cultural Identity

Social media indirectly shapes the cultural identity of the Parepare community in the eyes of the public, both locally and nationally. This identity is built through visual depictions and stories that show local wisdom as something that is alive, dynamic, and has economic and social value. This construction also strengthens the local residents' sense of belonging to their cultural heritage and increases their pride in showcasing Bugis culture in public forums.

The Salo Karajae Festival and the Kaluppini Cultural Festival are annual cultural events in Parepare City and Enrekang Regency that showcase a variety of local cultural treasures, such as dance, traditional music, Bugis cuisine, and traditional parades. In the last decade, the existence of these festivals has not only grown directly through community participation, but also digitally through social media. Official government accounts, local media, cultural communities, and even ordinary citizens have shared documentation of the festival in the form of photos, videos, and digital narratives.

Social media plays a role as a symbolic space that allows the cultural identity of the Parepare community to be constructed and distributed to a wide audience. Posts during the Salo Karajae Festival show cultural elements as something that is: (i) Alive: Continually practised in a contemporary context. (ii) Dynamic: Undergoing aesthetic and functional adaptations in the digital era. (iii) Contributing economically and socially: Boosting the tourism sector and MSMEs.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural communication strategies implemented by the local government, the researcher conducted interviews with the Parepare City Tourism Office. This institution plays a central role in designing, managing, and promoting various cultural and tourism agendas, including the Salo Karajae Festival, which has become one of the city's cultural icons. The interview aimed to explore how the Tourism Office utilises social media as part of its public communication strategy, as well as how it frames local culture in the context of city branding. From an institutional perspective, the interviews also revealed the government's views on community participation in the digital dissemination of cultural messages. The following is an excerpt from a statement by Nahrul, a lecturer in communication studies, explaining the Tourism Office's strategic approach to using social media as a means of building the city's cultural figure and promoting the local identity of Parepare.

> "*Using social media is not just for documentation, but for building a brand. The Salo Karajae Festival is a showcase of Bugis culture in Parepare*" (Nahrul, Lecturer in Communication Studies).

Nahrul's statement reflects a cultural communication strategy that utilises the power of social media as a convergent space to disseminate, showcase, and frame local culture. Based on the analysis that the government does not only act as an administrator of cultural events but also as an active communication actor in producing cultural representations through digital media. This approach is not only effective in promoting tourism but also in strengthening cultural identity and community ownership of their cultural heritage.

As part of mapping the role of the community in digital cultural communication, the researcher interviewed Ahmad, a local content creator who is active on the TikTok platform with the account @parepareheritage. In his interview, Ahmad revealed that, *"Posts about Salo Karajae often go viral. Videos of cultural parades and traditional dances are widely viewed. This is proof that local culture can enter the popular algorithm."* This statement confirms how local cultural content is now not only consumed by the surrounding community, but is also able to reach a wider audience through popular digital platforms.

> "*Posts about Salo Karajae often go viral. Videos of cultural parades and traditional dances are widely viewed. This is proof that local culture can enter the popular algorithm*". (Ahmad Rijal, TikTok creator @parepareheritage)

Through Media Convergence Theory, we see how digital technology enables the convergence of traditional cultural practices with new media. TikTok, as a short-video-based platform with an algorithm, has become a new distribution channel for local cultural expressions. Ahmad Rijal not only records culture but also adapts it into a format that aligns with the preferences of dynamic digital users: short, visual, and easy to share. This process demonstrates that media convergence is not only technological but also cultural whereby local culture transforms into content that can be consumed within a global digital context.

From the perspective of Uses and Gratifications Theory, Ahmad's activities as a content creator can also be interpreted as fulfilling the need for self-expression, social achievement, and the desire to educate and entertain his audience. On the other hand, viewers who consume videos of cultural parades and traditional dances derive satisfaction in the form of knowledge, entertainment, and emotional closeness to their local identity. This interaction creates a reciprocal relationship between the creator and recipient of messages in a needs-based digital media ecosystem. Surahmat, a local culinary entrepreneur said,

> *"Every time there is a festival, we post barongko, gogos, and onde-onde for sale on Instagram. We get many orders from outside the city after people see them on social media".*

Surahmat's statement illustrates how local economic practices, in this case the sale of traditional culinary items such as *barongko*, *gogos*, and *onde-onde,* have undergone a transformation due to the use of social media as the main promotional channel. From the perspective of Media Convergence Theory, as developed by Henry Jenkins (2006), this phenomenon shows an important shift from a location-based economy (physical locality) to a digital network-based economy, where the boundaries between producers, distributors, and consumers are becoming increasingly blurred.

Media convergence in this context refers not only to the integration of various forms of media (text, Figures, video, online interaction), but also to the convergence of traditional cultural practices with digital technology. Local culinary products that were previously only accessible directly at the festival venue can now be reached by audiences and consumers from outside the city through platforms such as Instagram. This shows that social media has become a bridge between physical space (the festival venue) and virtual space (online communities), enabling the distribution of economic and cultural value beyond geographical boundaries.

Culinary posts by MSME players such as Surahmat are not only informative, but also participatory and promotional. The food photos displayed, accompanied by narratives such as the origin of the food or the traditional ingredients used, make these posts part of the cultural narrative ecosystem. This content has symbolic and cultural value, as well as a real economic function. When audiences from outside the city see this content and then place orders, a process of convergence between cultural production and digital consumption occurs, which reinforces each other.

Furthermore, social media such as Instagram acts as an interactive platform that allows local MSMEs to practise two-way communication. With features such as comments, direct messages, and tags, customers can interact directly, provide testimonials, or order products in real-time. This creates a hybrid business model: traditional in terms of products (local cuisine

based on cultural heritage), but modern in terms of marketing and distribution (digital and cross-regional).

This convergence also influences how consumers perceive products. Barongko or gogos are no longer seen merely as Bugis specialities, but also as representations of local culture that are "worthy of appearing" on social media and entering the competitive *visual culinary* ecosystem. This means that social media not only expands distribution reach, but also elevates the Figure of cultural value through the aesthetic appearance and visual appeal of these products.

Thus, the quote shows that media convergence has transformed the role of social media from merely a communication channel into an interconnected space for economic and cultural production. MSME actors such as Surahmat have become cultural actors who actively utilise digital spaces to expand market access, promote traditional products, and strengthen local identity narratives in a broader context. Egi, a student from Parepare said,

"I used to be less interested in attending cultural events. But after seeing my friends' posts, I became curious and finally attended. Now I participate every year".

Egi's statement shows how social media acts as a catalyst for the transformation of young people's cultural participation, from apathy to activism, through a process of social construction that takes place in the digital space. Within the framework of social construction theory (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), Irfan's friends' posts about the Salo Karajae Festival act as an externalisation of culture that brings local values into his consciousness, which are then internalised as part of his identity. Through the lens of Uses and Gratifications Theory, Irfan derives cognitive and affective satisfaction from the content, which arouses curiosity and the need for social connection. Meanwhile, in the context of media convergence, cultural experiences are no longer purely physical, but also digital in the form of stories, short videos, or visual posts that are integrated into the daily lives of social media users. Thus, Irfan's involvement in the festival from year to year is the result of the interaction between digital exposure, social encouragement, and the reinterpretation of local culture in a new media landscape that is participatory and personal.

A range of communication theories and models play an important role in explaining how cultural messages are constructed, disseminated, and received by multicultural communities, especially through social media. Through Media Convergence Theory, the dissemination of local culture such as the Salo Karajae Festival and Bugis culinary traditions can be understood as the intersection between traditional cultural practices and digital technology, enabling cultural messages to reach audiences across regions and identities. Meanwhile, Uses and Gratifications Theory helps explain the motivations of users in producing and consuming cultural content, whether as a form of self-expression, information seeking, entertainment, or to fulfil the need for social identity. Social Construction Theory illustrates how cultural representations shared on social media whether by the government, content creators, or the general public serve as a process of externalisation that is later internalised by the audience, shaping new meanings of local culture. In the context of multicultural communities. Thus, the combination of these theories shows that delivering cultural messages to diverse communities requires communication strategies that are adaptive, dialogical, and sensitive to cultural differences, while also leveraging digital technology to broaden reach and strengthen the acceptance of local culture.

Table 2. Cultural Aspects, Representation on Social Media, and Their Impact

Cultural Aspects	Representation on Social Media	Social & Cultural Impact
Traditional Dance & Music	Video of the *Padduppa* dance parade, *Gandrang Bulo*	Increasing young people's interest in the arts
Bugis Traditional Attire	Photo of young men and women wearing *bodo shirts* and *jackets*	Fostering pride in cultural heritage
Local Cuisine	Posting content about Bugis specialities (gogos, barongko, palopo)	Enhancing the economic value of traditional cuisine
Bugis Language & Expressions	Captions using the Bugis language or distinctive expressions	Promoting the preservation of local languages
Rituals & Cultural Symbols	Visualising traditional ceremonies (mapacci, mappadendang)	Enhancing public understanding of cultural significance

Figure 2. Screenshot of the Salo Karajae Festival website post

(Description: Cultural parade at the 2024 Salo Karajae Festival uploaded by the @pareparetourism account).

Online Community Response and Participation

Community participation in promoting the Salo Karajae Festival can be seen through high interaction on social media, such as reposting festival content, giving positive comments, and creating personal content related to the festival. This shows that social media is not only used unilaterally by the organisers, but also becomes a collaborative arena between managers and the public in shaping cultural discourse.

The Salo Karajae Festival is not only a space for direct (offline) cultural interaction, but also creates an online participatory ecosystem through social media platforms. The people of Parepare and the wider public responded to this event very actively, not only as spectators, but also as co-creators of culture through various forms of digital interaction. Online community participation includes the following main activities:

Table 3. Online Community Response and Participation

Form of Participation	Activity Description
Reposting/sharing content	Residents reposted official festival content to their personal accounts with supportive captions
Creating original content	Festival visitors create vlogs, TikTok dances, and behind-the-scenes videos of the festival
Interacting through comments/likes	Positive comments, testimonials, constructive criticism on the festival's implementation
Hashtag Campaign	Using hashtags such as #SaloKarajae2024 #BudayaParepare in personal posts
Live streaming & live broadcasts	Broadcasting festival activities live spontaneously from the location

To gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions, experiences, and participation of the community in local cultural activities, researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with a number of informants involved in the Salo Karajae Festival. These interviews aimed to explore the subjective views of participants and visitors on the role of media, communication, and cultural promotion in the local context. The information gathered provides a concrete picture of how individuals interpret their involvement in cultural events, as well as how they use digital media as a means of expression and communication. The following interview excerpt is taken from Novita Sari, a local vlogger, who shares her experience of documenting and sharing moments from the festival through digital platforms. She said, *"I made a vlog about the Salo Karajae event and it turned out that many people watched it. Some people asked questions about Parepare. I am happy to be able to introduce my own village"*.

Novita's statement, a local vlogger who captures and shares moments from the Salo Karajae Festival through vlogs, can be analysed from a communication theory perspective, specifically the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Based on Uses and Gratifications Theory, Novita's actions show that she actively utilises digital media to fulfil her needs for self-expression, strengthening her local identity, and social integration. By creating vlogs, she not only gains personal satisfaction from being able to introduce her hometown, but also builds communication relationships with audiences who show an interest in Parepare.

As part of efforts to understand the dynamics of digital communication in promoting local culture, researchers also interviewed a number of social media observers. These interviews were intended to obtain analytical perspectives on the role of social media in shaping public perception, disseminating cultural information, and building online community engagement. Social media observers are considered to have a reflective, view of the communication patterns of the digital community, including how local content such as cultural festivals is produced, disseminated, and received by a wide audience. Their views are important in assessing the effectiveness of social media-based communication strategies and in understanding their long-term impact on cultural identity and regional representation in the digital space. The following is an excerpt from an interview with a social media observer who provided an analysis of the digitalisation of culture by local content creators. *"The current trend is that community-generated content is more effective in spreading cultural messages because it is more authentic and relatable"* (Alfiansyah, Lecturer in Digital Communication, IAIN Parepare).

Alfiansyah's statement that "*the current trend is that user-generated content is more effective in spreading cultural messages because it is more authentic and relatable*" can be

analysed through Media Convergence Theory, which shows how the boundaries between media producers and consumers are becoming blurred. The public is no longer merely a passive audience but also actively produces content, particularly in the form of videos, photos, or digital narratives circulating on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok. This process enables the dissemination of cultural messages in a more horizontal and participatory manner, differing from the one-way communication model of mainstream media. Content created by the public tends to be considered more authentic because it comes from direct experience, and is more easily accepted because it uses language and symbols that are familiar to the audience's daily lives.

In order to understand how cultural communication strategies are applied in local cultural promotion policies and practices, the researchers also conducted interviews with representatives from local governments. The government's perspective is very important because they have a role as facilitators and policy makers in cultural preservation and promotion. These interviews aimed to explore how the government responds to community involvement in the production of cultural content through social media, and how this participation is viewed in the context of public communication. The views of the local government show recognition of the active role of the community as part of a more inclusive and sustainable communication strategy. One interesting statement came from H. Makmur Husaein, Head of the Parepare City Education and Culture Office, who highlighted the importance of organic community participation in introducing local culture to the digital space. The following is an excerpt from an interview that reflects the government's appreciative attitude towards citizens' initiatives in producing and disseminating cultural content*: "We are actually happy when the community creates its own content. It means that there is a sense of ownership of our culture. This kind of participation cannot be paid for by formal promotion"* (Hj. Nurul Wahida, Head of Culture at the Parepare Tourism, Youth and Sports Agency).

Online community participation demonstrates a shift in the cultural communication paradigm from monologue (top-down) to dialogue and collaboration. Communities are no longer passive recipients of information, but actively select, produce, and distribute their own cultural narratives. This means that social media has become: A collaborative cultural arena a place where cultural identity and pride are negotiated between the government, cultural communities, and the general public. An inclusive space for cultural expression All groups from students to the diaspora can contribute to strengthening local cultural discourse.
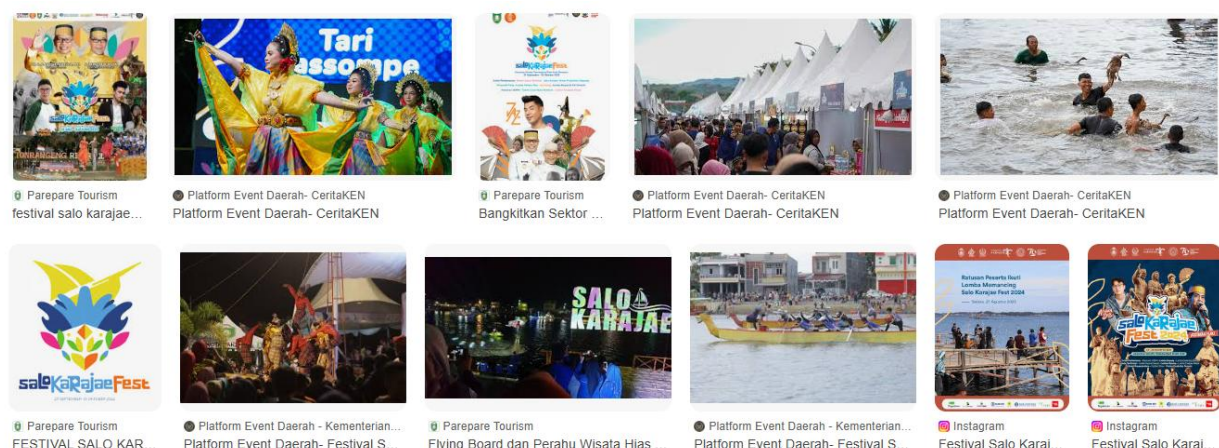

Figure 3. Compilation of Instagram Stories from Parepare Residents

(Description: *Residents uploaded the atmosphere of the Salo Karajae Festival through Instagram Stories with various visual narrative styles).*

Table 4. Social Media Activity Statistics

Social Media Activity Indicators	Number/Figure (2024 Festival)
Number of posts with the hashtag #SaloKarajae2024	4,300+ posts
Accounts sharing official festival content	1,800+ accounts
Number of views on the cultural parade video on TikTok	>1 million views
Positive comments on Tourism Department posts	2,300+ comments
Number of vlogs and YouTube content themed around festivals	150+ videos

(Description: The number of uses of the hashtag #SaloKarajae2024 increased dramatically during the three days of the festival. The online participation of the Parepare community in the Salo Karajae Festival not only reflects enthusiasm for local culture, but also confirms that social media has become a democratic means of building cultural discourse and identity. Collaboration between residents, content creators, and organising institutions opens up new opportunities for cultural preservation *that is adaptive to the times).*

Social Construction in Digital Media

In line with Berger and Luckmann's Social Construction Theory, the cultural reality formed through social media is the result of a process of repeated interaction and communication between various parties: the city government, festival organisers, and the general public. Social media here becomes a symbolic space that allows for the formation of a new social reality about local wisdom that is not only consumed locally but also widely recognised.

The development of communication technology, particularly social media, has changed the way people shape, understand, and disseminate cultural reality. In the context of the Salo Karajae Festival, digital media has become a new arena where local wisdom is not only displayed but also socially shaped through a constructive process involving various actors.

According to Berger and Luckmann in 'The Social Construction of Reality' (1966), social reality is not objective or fixed, but is shaped through three processes in the context of the Salo Karajae Festival: (i) Externalisation: The government, artists, the community, and netizens share festival content (photos, videos, narratives) on social media. (ii) Objectification: The content is viewed, shared, and receives public validation in the form of comments, likes, and media coverage. (iii) Internalisation: The community begins to identify local culture as part of a modern, attractive, and proud identity.

The collective visual narrative of Instagram posts from the @pareparetourism account features a cultural parade with the caption: *"Culture is our face in the eyes of the world. Let's celebrate #SaloKarajae2024 together."* This post was then reposted by residents, accompanied by comments such as "*Proud to be Bugis!"* or "*Cool, Parepare is progressing!"* This shows the internalisation of cultural values as a collective social identity. Local culture is not only seen as an ancestral heritage, but also a symbol of modernity and prestige.

Emotional and participatory narratives residents uploaded photos with their families while attending the festival with captions *such as*: *"We come to Salo Karajae every year. This is how we introduce our children to Bugis culture."* The presence of this emotional content shows that social media enables the transmission of cultural values in a personal and affective way—a dimension that strengthens social construction as part of everyday life.

The Salo Karajae Festival is a concrete example of how social media acts as a symbolic space where social construction of local culture takes place. Using Berger and Luckmann's approach, we can see that the cultural reality of Parepare presented in digital media is not static, but rather the result of a dynamic and collaborative social process. Social media not only conveys culture, but also shapes and revives it in the modern narratives of digital society.

Strengthening the Appeal of Cultural Tourism

Through social media, the Salo Karajae Festival is not only constructed as a celebration of local culture, but also as a cultural tourism asset. This digital promotion increases the appeal of Parepare City as a destination that not only has natural beauty, but also a wealth of cultural values. Thus, social media-based promotion contributes to building a tourism ecosystem rooted in local wisdom.

The Salo Karajae Festival has transformed into more than just a local cultural event. With the support of social media, this festival has undergone a transformation in meaning, from a cultural celebration to a cultural tourism attraction that is integrated with city promotion and the strengthening of the creative economy. Massive and strategic digital promotion has made Parepare City known not only for its geographical position and history, but also for its vibrant and dynamic cultural strength.

Social media acts as a bridge between local culture and potential tourists. Through platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok, the wider community can access real-time visualisations of the Salo Karajae Festival activities without having to be physically present. This opens opportunities for domestic and international tourists to learn about Bugis-Parepare culture, strengthening the city's figure as a culture-based tourist destination, increasing the economic value of the MSME, culinary, and craft sectors involved in the festival. The content uploaded on social media typically highlights the following elements:

Table 5. Tourism Promotion

Visual or Narrative Elements	Tourism Promotion Function	Example Content
Traditional attire and cultural parades	Showcasing traditional uniqueness and aesthetics	Photo of Bugis traditional costume parade
Traditional music and dance	Attracting tourists through cultural entertainment	Video of *Padduppa* dance performance
Local cuisine (live cooking)	Stimulating culinary interest and encouraging direct visits	Reels "How to make barongko"
Festival-themed photo spots	Encouraging tourists to capture their travel moments	"Instagrammable spots" in the festival area
Interviews with traditional figures/artists	Adding cultural depth for digital audiences	TikTok or YouTube shorts

The impact of digital promotion on tourism in Parepare, increase in tourist visits, according to the Parepare Tourism Office (2024). The number of visits during the Salo Karajae Festival increased by 38% compared to the previous year, with most visitors coming from outside the city, such as Makassar, Sidrap, and Palopo.

In terms of the growth of MSMEs and the creative economy, data shows that the income of culinary and MSMEs craft increased by 50–70% during the festival. This was due to the virality of local product content on social media. Meanwhile, as for city figure as a cultural destination, social media sentiment analysis shows a dominance of positive narratives with hashtags such as #WisataBudayaParepare, #SaloKarajaeFestival, and #ExploreParepare, which indirectly strengthen the city's brand.

Table 6. Impact of Social Media on Tourism Aspects

Aspect	Before Digital Promotion	After Digital Promotion
Domestic Tourist Visits	±8,000 people	±11,000 people
Festival SME Turnover	±75 million rupiah	±125 million rupiah
Social Media Engagement	±1,200 likes/post	±3,800 likes/post

Promoting the Salo Karajae Festival through social media has significantly strengthened Parepare's position as a cultural tourism destination. Engaging and participatory digital content has successfully fostered a positive Figure of tourism in the public's mind. Through this approach, the city not only showcases its physical beauty but also its values, stories, and identity—creating a tourism appeal rooted in local wisdom and sustainability.

DISCUSSION

Findings show that social media has become a very effective means of promoting local cultural festivals such as the Salo Karajae Festival in Parepare and the cultural festival in Enrekang. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook are used to their fullest potential to share a variety of visual and narrative content that showcases the richness of local culture, from traditional dances to regional cuisine. In addition, the use of creative features such as Instagram reels and TikTok challenges not only distributes information but also builds active public participation, especially among the younger generation. This practice proves that social media has become a participatory space that allows the community to be directly involved in cultural promotion. Social media not only conveys messages but also invites the audience to be part of the cultural process itself.

The digital communication strategies implemented in both festivals demonstrate that social media can change the way people consume and understand local culture. The content shared contains messages that are not only related to event promotion, but also to a dynamic local cultural identity that is relevant to everyday life. With the development of technology, cultural festivals that were previously only known at the local level are now able to reach a wider audience, even beyond the region. This underlines the importance of social media in strengthening local cultural identity and introducing local wisdom to a wider audience, while promoting tourism and the creative economy.

Furthermore, this study also reveals how social media plays a role in shaping and sharing socio-cultural realities. Content uploaded by the government and the public not only

depicts culture as an object to be displayed, but also as an identity that is formed collectively. Social media becomes a symbolic space that allows the community to engage in the construction of cultural meaning, which is then accepted as part of their collective social identity. This is in line with the concept of Social Construction Theory, which states that social reality, in this case local culture, is formed and maintained through repeated social interactions. Social media not only conveys messages, but also allows the community to actively participate in the process of negotiating cultural meaning.

This research is in line with Media Convergence Theory, which suggests that developments in digital technology enable the integration of various forms of media, including content, format, and structure, within a single platform (Dwyer, 2010; Jenkins, 2004) . Social media has successfully integrated visual information, text, and video within a single ecosystem, enabling audiences to consume culture more quickly, flexibly, and interactively. In the context of cultural festivals, this is reflected in the use of various platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, which enable the dissemination of cultural messages more widely and deeply. Digital communication strategies that optimise visual and narrative content on these platforms demonstrate a change in the way people consume cultural information. Information that was previously disseminated through traditional media can now be accessed globally via the internet, creating a more inclusive and open culture.

Meanwhile, in the context of Berger and Luckmann's Social Construction Theory, social media acts as a symbolic space that enables the formation of cultural meaning through the process of social interaction (Adoni & Mane, 1984; Stallings, 1990) . The content shared by festival organisers and the community is not merely promotional, but also a representation of culture that is accepted and internalised by the audience as part of their social identity. Through repeated interactions on social media, local culture is not only displayed, but also shaped together through the processes of externalisation, objectification, and internalisation. In this context, social media does not merely function as a means of information distribution but also as a space for the ongoing construction of cultural meaning.

The findings of this study on the use of social media in promoting cultural festivals, such as the Salo Karajae Festival and the Kaluppini Cultural Festival, show that digital platforms not only serve as tools for disseminating information but also as spaces for collectively and inclusively building and strengthening local cultural identities. This is in line with the research by Pradanna and Abdulkarim (2024) which reveals that social media can strengthen multicultural tolerance, provided it is used wisely and with appropriate digital literacy. In this context, social media not only facilitates event promotion but also builds dialogue between cultural groups, allowing audiences to better appreciate diversity. These findings also echo research by Koc-Damgaci and Aydin (2017), which shows how social media can be used to promote multicultural education. This is reflected in content that showcases cultural diversity and educates audiences about the values of inclusivity and tolerance, alongside increasing community participation in producing cultural content.

In addition, the findings of research by Mesa and Jacinto (2022), which show that digital skills can increase tolerance for diversity, are highly relevant to my findings, where active community participation in creating content such as vlogs and TikTok challenges not only introduces local culture but also strengthens social relationships between different groups. This is in line with the research results of Rahmawati and Haryati (2024) which emphasise the importance of multicultural communication through social media as a space for building dialogue between groups. As found in the study Muharis et al. (2024), social media is also a

platform that can be used to build a more inclusive and moderate cross-cultural understanding, strengthen tolerance and appreciation for differences, and reduce conflict. Thus, social media not only serves as a promotional channel but also as a strategic tool in building more harmonious and multicultural relationships between communities.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that social media plays a very strategic role in shaping and disseminating local cultural values and strengthening the spirit of multiculturalism and tolerance in the digital space. Through an inclusive, interactive, and participatory digital communication approach, the Salo Karajae Festival and the Kaluppini Cultural Festival not only serve as a venue for cultural preservation, but also as a space for dynamic identity negotiation and cultural diplomacy.

The use of platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook allows local governments, cultural actors, and the general public to become active participants in the construction of cultural narratives that are open, collaborative, and relevant to the younger generation. The digital communication strategies implemented, such as creative content creation, campaign hashtags, and collaboration with local creators, have proven to increase public participation and expand the reach of cross-regional cultural promotion.

The findings of this study also confirm that cultural communication practices through social media are not only technical and promotional in nature, but also rich in social meaning. Within the framework of Social Construction Theory, local cultural identity is formed through a process of interaction, objectification, and internalisation that takes place in the digital space. Meanwhile, Media Convergence Theory explains how traditional culture is able to adapt to the logic of new media, bridging local wisdom with global communication trends.

Thus, digital communication strategies in the context of local cultural festivals have proven effective in building a tolerant, multicultural, and sustainable cultural ecosystem. Local governments, cultural communities, and the younger generation have an important role to play in continuing to develop digital expression spaces as a medium for preserving values, public education, and strengthening local identity in the face of the challenges of globalisation and digital disruption.

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