

# The Role of Organizational Digital Transformation in Strengthening Local Cultural Identity and Digital Literacy of the People of Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi

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## ABSTRACT (10 PT)

Digital transformation not only changes organizational service and communication systems but also opens up new opportunities for preserving local culture and increasing community digital capacity. In Mamuju Regency, the use of technology by local governments, universities, cultural communities, and social institutions has not been fully integrated with strategies for strengthening Mandar culture and digital literacy education. This study aims to analyze the influence of organizational digital transformation on local cultural identity and community digital literacy and examine the mediating role of digital literacy in the relationship between organizational digital transformation and local cultural identity. The study used a quantitative approach with an explanatory survey method. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire from 250 respondents consisting of government officials, lecturers and students, cultural community administrators, and people aged 17–35 who actively use digital media. The sample was determined using proportionate stratified random sampling. Data analysis was carried out through instrument testing and modeling of relationships between variables. The results of the validity test showed that all 24 statements were valid, with corrected item-total correlation values ranging from 0.685–0.792 and higher than the table  $r$  value of 0.124. The results of the model testing indicate that organizational digital transformation has a positive and significant impact on digital literacy and local cultural identity. Digital literacy also positively influences local cultural identity and has been shown to mediate the influence of organizational digital transformation on strengthening community cultural identity. These findings emphasize that the digitalization of services, communication, information, and cultural promotion must be accompanied by an increase in community capacity to critically access, evaluate, create, and disseminate digital content. Digital transformation based on participation and local wisdom can be a sustainable strategy for maintaining the existence of Mandar culture amidst technological developments and globalization.

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## I. Introduction

Digital transformation has evolved from the conversion of analog documents to electronic formats to overarching changes in strategy, structure, work culture, human resource competencies, service processes, and organizational relationships with society. Vial (2019) explains that digital transformation occurs when a combination of digital technologies triggers significant changes and new strategic responses. In the public sector, the change is directed at process updates, improved service quality, transparency, efficiency, and public value creation (Mergel et al., 2019). Therefore, its success is not measured simply through the availability of websites, applications, social media, or databases, but through the organization's ability to integrate technology with leadership, adaptive



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culture, information governance, and citizen needs. Digital transformation is a sociotechnical change that demands a rearrangement of organizational capabilities and value-creation models (Gong & Ribiere, 2021; Hanelt et al., 2021; Verhoef et al., 2021).

In the context of Mamuju Regency, digital transformation has administrative as well as socio-cultural urgency. Government organizations, educational institutions, cultural communities, local media, and community organizations are required to improve services, communication, information management, and public participation. At the same time, these organizations need to maintain local cultural identity in the midst of global popular cultural circulation. Mamuju has cultural richness related to Mandar culture, such as the Mandar language, Patuddu Dance, Sayyang Pattuquduq, maritime traditions, performing arts, traditional rituals, mutual cooperation, and respect for ancestors. However, the proximity of the younger generation to digital platforms does not automatically strengthen cultural understanding. Without targeted documentation, curation, education, and communication, the digital space has more potential to become a channel for global cultural consumption than a means of local cultural inheritance.

The next problem lies in the gap between access to technology and the depth of digital literacy. Digital literacy does not only mean being able to use social devices and media, but also includes the ability to access, understand, assess, create, and communicate information critically, ethically, safely, and responsibly. Van Laar et al. (2017) connect digital skills with information, communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Spante et al. (2018), Polizzi (2020), Falloon (2020), and Audrin and Audrin (2022) emphasize the need for the ability to check the credibility of sources, maintain privacy, understand the socio-technological consequences, and produce valuable content. The UNESCO framework (2018) also places the ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, evaluate, communicate, and create information as interconnected competencies.

Thus, the problem of this research is not only whether organizations in Mamuju Regency have used technology, but the extent to which the organization's digital transformation is able to increase digital literacy while strengthening local cultural identity. Transformations that are only oriented towards administrative efficiency risk ignoring the socio-cultural dimension, while cultural digitalization without community literacy can result in consumptive, ceremonial, and unsustainable participation.

Recent studies show that digital transformation is shaped by the interaction of technology, strategy, leadership, organizational culture, agility, and human resource readiness. Warner and Wäger (2019) explain the importance of dynamic capabilities to sense change, seize opportunities, and transform resources. Wessel et al. (2021) distinguish digital transformation from ordinary information technology-based changes because digital transformation can change an organization's identity, value proposition, and work logic. Empirically, Tangi et al. (2021) found that managerial vision, planning, and employee engagement are important drivers of digital governance transformation. AlNuaimi et al. (2022) also show that digital transformational leadership and organizational agility support the process.

Kraus et al. (2022) and Plekhanov et al. (2023) place structural changes, strategies, and work models at the core of the digital transformation agenda. Pfaff et al. (2023) show that digital transformation and organizational culture evolve interchangeably so that values, communication patterns, and work habits need to be adapted to the demands of the digital environment. Elia et al. (2024) offer a multidimensional framework for planning and leading transformation, while Butt et al. (2024) affirm the importance of organizational culture design as a lever for change. The findings suggest that technology only produces impact when supported by human readiness, consistent governance, and an organizational learning culture.

In the realm of digital literacy in Indonesia, Kurnia and Astuti (2017) show that the digital literacy movement involves various actors, target groups, activities, and partnerships, but still requires coordination and continuity. Limilia and Aristi (2019) found that the definition and method of measuring digital media literacy in Indonesia are still diverse, so their implementation tends to be fragmented. Wibowo and Basri (2020) further show the relevance of digital literacy design based on local wisdom for rural communities. These findings are important because digital literacy practices do not take place in a neutral cultural space, but are always influenced by language, norms, social experiences, and values of the local community.

Cultural heritage studies also show that digital technologies can expand community documentation, interpretation, promotion, and participation. Van der Hoeven (2019) explains that digital narratives can reshape people's meanings of cultural heritage, while Li et al. (2020) affirm the importance of community participation in sustainable cultural management. Vidaurre-Rojas et al. (2024) found that local government social media can expand the dissemination of cultural resources. Zhang et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of youth digital participation, Banda et al. (2024) placed the community as the owners of cultural knowledge, and Ginzarly et al. (2025) demonstrated the role of social media in the documentation of collective memory, the formation of digital archives, and the co-construction of cultural heritage values.

Although the literature on digital transformation, digital literacy, and cultural preservation is growing rapidly, the three are still often studied separately. Digital transformation studies generally emphasize organizational performance, service innovation, efficiency, agility, and governance. Digital literacy studies mostly discuss education, individual competence, media use, and resilience to problematic information. Meanwhile, digital culture studies tend to focus on documentation, tourism promotion, digital museums, social media narratives, or community participation. Thus, there is still limited research that places organizational digital transformation as an institutional factor that simultaneously strengthens people's digital literacy and local cultural identity.

The second gap is contextual because empirical evidence is still dominated by business organizations, national governments, educational institutions, big cities, major tourist destinations, or cultural communities outside Indonesia. Studies on the people of Mamuju Regency with Mandar cultural characteristics, variations in digital access, and involvement of local organizations have not received adequate attention. The third gap is conceptual-operational, namely the limited research that measures digital transformation through service, communication, information management, human resource competence, collaboration, and cultural digitalization, then relates it to digital literacy and cultural understanding, belonging, pride, and participation.

Based on these gaps, a research model is needed that not only assesses the level of use of technology by organizations, but also evaluates the capacity of organizations to direct technology to produce social change. In the context of Mamuju, digital transformation needs to be seen as an organization's ability to build two-way communication, provide credible cultural information, facilitate local content production, engage the younger generation, and develop people's ability to use digital space safely and productively.

This study aims to analyze the role of organizational digital transformation in strengthening the local cultural identity and digital literacy of the people of Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi. In particular, the study examines the extent to which changes in services, communication, information management, organizational competence, collaboration, and utilization of digital platforms contribute to people's ability to use technology critically and responsibly, while increasing understanding, belonging, pride, and participation in the preservation of Mandar culture.

The novelty of the research lies in the use of a digital transformation perspective that is oriented towards culture-based public values. The results of the transformation are not limited to organizational efficiency, speed of service, or ease of access to information, but are expanded into two complementary social outputs, namely the digital capacity of the community and the resilience of local cultural identity. This approach places the community not only as users of digital services, but as knowledge producers, content creators, guardians of collective memory, and cultural preservationists.

The next novelty is the integration of institutional, technological, literacy, and cultural dimensions in one empirical model based on the Mamuju context. In this model, regional organizations are placed as orchestrators of the digital-cultural ecosystem through local knowledge documentation, content production and curation, public education, youth participation, digital security strengthening, and cross-sector collaboration. This approach is expected to explain how digital transformation produces change that remains rooted in local values and does not simply replicate the generalized digitalization model.

Organizational digital transformation in Mamuju Regency needs to be understood as an institutional change that produces administrative as well as socio-cultural benefits. Technology becomes meaningful when it is able to expand access to information, increase the critical power of

the community, open up space for participation, and keep the Mandar culture alive and relevant for the next generation. Therefore, testing the relationship between organizational digital transformation and digital literacy and local cultural identity is needed as an empirical basis for local government policies, education programs, cultural community strategies, and the development of an inclusive, safe, participatory, and sustainable digital ecosystem.

## II. Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory survey design to test the influence of organizational digital transformation on digital literacy and local cultural identity of the people of Mamuju Regency. The design was chosen because it allows testing of causal relationships between latent variables based on numerical data collected simultaneously from a representative sample. This approach is in line with Creswell and Creswell (2018), who place explanatory surveys as a relevant design to test interconstruct relationship models. Digital transformation is operationalized as changes in services, communication, information management, human resource competence, collaboration, and the use of technology for cultural preservation, referring to Vial (2019), Mergel et al. (2019), and Gong and Ribiere (2021). Digital literacy includes the ability to access, evaluate, create, communicate, and use information safely and ethically based on Van Laar et al. (2017), Law et al. (2018), and Falloon (2020). Local cultural identity is measured through understanding, belonging, pride, and participation in the preservation of Mandar culture by considering the community participation approach of Li et al. (2020).

The research was carried out for six months in Mamuju Regency on government organizations, universities, and cultural communities that have utilized technology in services, education, or cultural preservation. The population includes local government officials who handle cultural digitalization, lecturers and students involved in digital-based cultural activities, administrators of the Mandar cultural community, and people aged 17–35 years who actively use digital media. Samples were selected through proportionate stratified random sampling so that each group obtained representation according to its proportions. The initial sample count was calculated using the Slovin formula, namely  $(n=N/(1+Ne^2))$ , at an error rate of 5%, then allocated to each strata using the formula  $(n_h=(N_h/N)n)$  and confirmed through statistical power analysis.

Data were collected using a five-level Likert scale closed questionnaire. Item preparation was carried out through theoretical review, content validation by experts, and limited trials. The validity and reliability of the instruments were examined following Taherdoost (2016). Respondents were provided with an explanation of the research objectives, data confidentiality, right to refuse, and voluntary consent before filling out the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling because it was able to test measurement and structural models simultaneously, including predictive relationships between constructs. Model evaluation included outer loading, AVE, composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, discriminant validity, path coefficient,  $R^2$ ,  $f^2$ ,  $Q^2$ , and bootstrapping at a significance level of 5% as recommended by Hair et al. (2019).

## III. Results and Discussion

### Results

#### *Testing Results of Research Instruments*

Before testing the relationship between variables, the research instrument was first tested to ensure that each statement item was able to measure the construct that had been determined. The instrument test at this stage was carried out through a validity test using the *Corrected Item-Total Correlation* (CITC) value obtained through data processing using the SPSS program. The validity

test involved 250 respondents consisting of local government officials, lecturers and students, administrators of the Mandar cultural community, and the people of Mamuju Regency who actively use digital media.

With a total of 250 respondents, the degree of freedom used was ( $df=N-2=248$ ). At a significance level of 5% with double-sided testing, the value ( $r$ ) of the table was obtained of 0.124. Based on the criteria set in this study, an item is declared valid if the value ( $r$ ) of the calculation or CITC is greater than the value ( $r$ ) of the table. On the other hand, an item is declared invalid if the value of the CITC is less than 0.124.

#### Test the Validity of Organizational Digital Transformation

The variables of organizational digital transformation consist of eight indicators that describe the use of digital technology, digitization of services, use of social media, information transparency, access to information, digital administration, collaboration, and service innovation.

Table 1. Results of the Validity Test of Organizational Digital Transformation Variables

| No. | Code | Indicator                               | r Count | r Table | Remarks |
|-----|------|-----------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1   | X1   | Utilization of digital technology       | 0,732   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 2   | X2   | Digitization of organizational services | 0,748   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 3   | X3   | Social media use                        | 0,695   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 4   | X4   | Digital information transparency        | 0,714   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 5   | X5   | Access digital information              | 0,781   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 6   | X6   | Digital administration system           | 0,755   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 7   | X7   | Digital collaboration                   | 0,688   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 8   | X8   | Digital service innovation              | 0,769   | 0,124   | Valid   |

Source: Research data processed using SPSS, 2026.

Table 1 shows that the CITC value on the organization's digital transformation variable is in the range of 0.688–0.781. The highest value is found in the digital information access indicator at 0.781, while the lowest value is found in the digital collaboration indicator at 0.688. Despite having the lowest value, the digital collaboration indicator still far exceeds the table value ( $r$ ) of 0.124. Thus, all eight indicators are declared valid and can be used to represent the organization's digital transformation.

#### Testing the Validity of Local Cultural Identity

The variables of local cultural identity were measured through people's understanding of Mandar culture, pride in local culture, preservation participation, use of regional languages, involvement in cultural activities, use of digital media, appreciation for local wisdom, and support for digital cultural promotion.

Table 2. Results of the Validity Test of Local Cultural Identity Variables

| No. | Code | Indicator                                | r Count | r Table | Remarks |
|-----|------|------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1   | Y1.1 | Understanding Mandar culture             | 0,746   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 2   | Y1.2 | Pride in local culture                   | 0,792   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 3   | Y1.3 | Participation in cultural preservation   | 0,718   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 4   | Y1.4 | Use of regional languages                | 0,685   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 5   | Y1.5 | Participating in cultural activities     | 0,754   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 6   | Y1.6 | Leveraging digital media for culture     | 0,733   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 7   | Y1.7 | Appreciate local wisdom                  | 0,771   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 8   | Y1.8 | Support the promotion of digital culture | 0,748   | 0,124   | Valid   |

Source: Research data processed using SPSS, 2026.

The validity value of the local cultural identity variable was in the range of 0.685–0.792. The indicator of pride in local culture obtained the highest value of 0.792. These results show that pride is the strongest indicator of its relationship with the overall construct of local cultural identity. Meanwhile, the use of regional languages obtained the lowest value of 0.685. However, the value is

still greater than the (r) table so that the indicator is still worth maintaining. Based on these results, all items in the local cultural identity variable are declared valid.

#### Test the Validity of Community Digital Literacy

People's digital literacy is measured through the ability to search and evaluate information, the use of digital applications, the application of media ethics, digital security, content creation, digital communication, and the responsible use of technology.

Table 3. Results of the Validity Test of Community Digital Literacy Variables

| No. | Code | Indicator                           | r Count | r Table | Remarks |
|-----|------|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1   | Y2.1 | Ability to find information         | 0,784   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 2   | Y2.2 | Ability to evaluate information     | 0,771   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 3   | Y2.3 | Ability to use digital applications | 0,729   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 4   | Y2.4 | Digital media ethics                | 0,742   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 5   | Y2.5 | Digital security                    | 0,703   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 6   | Y2.6 | Digital content creation            | 0,694   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 7   | Y2.7 | Digital communication               | 0,731   | 0,124   | Valid   |
| 8   | Y2.8 | Responsible use of technology       | 0,768   | 0,124   | Valid   |

Source: Research data processed using SPSS, 2026.

Based on Table 4.3, the CITC value of the digital literacy variable of the community ranges from 0.694 to 0.784. The ability to find information obtained the highest score of 0.784. This finding shows that the ability to find information through various digital sources has a strong relationship with the level of digital literacy of the community as a whole. The lowest value is found in the digital content creation indicator of 0.694. Although relatively lower than other indicators, this value still meets the validity criteria.

#### Validity Test Summary

Table 4. Summary of Instrument Validity Test Results

| Variabel                              | Number of Items | Item Valid | Invalid Items | Valid Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|---------------|------------------|
| Organizational Digital Transformation | 8               | 8          | 0             | 100%             |
| Local Cultural Identity               | 8               | 8          | 0             | 100%             |
| Digital Literacy of the Community     | 8               | 8          | 0             | 100%             |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>24</b>       | <b>24</b>  | <b>0</b>      | <b>100%</b>      |

Source: Research data processed, 2026.

The summary results showed that all 24 instrument items were valid. Not a single statement was found that had a CITC value below 0.124 so no items had to be removed or corrected before entering the next stage of testing.

To give a more concise picture of the strength of the item's relationship with its construct, the average CITC value of each variable is presented in Table 4.5.

Table 5. Summary Statistics of CITC Values of Each Variable

| Variabel                              | Minimum Score | Maximum Value | CITC Average |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Organizational Digital Transformation | 0,688         | 0,781         | 0,735        |
| Local Cultural Identity               | 0,685         | 0,792         | 0,743        |
| Digital Literacy of the Community     | 0,694         | 0,784         | 0,740        |
| <b>Overall instruments</b>            | <b>0,685</b>  | <b>0,792</b>  | <b>0,740</b> |

Source: Research data processed, 2026.

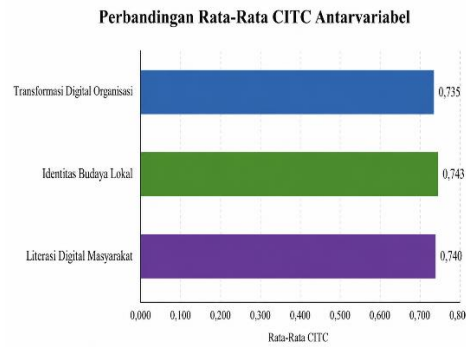


Figure 1. Comparison of CITC Mean Between Variables

The graph shows that the three variables have a relatively balanced average of CITC. Local cultural identity obtained the highest average of 0.743, followed by people's digital literacy of 0.740 and organizational digital transformation of 0.735. The small difference indicates that the quality of interconnectedness between items in the three constructs is relatively consistent.

#### A. Interpretation of Validity Test Results

Based on the overall test results of 250 respondents, the CITC values of the 24 research items ranged from 0.685 to 0.792. All of these values were greater than the (r) of the table of 0.124. These results provide evidence that each statement has an adequate relationship with the total score of the variables it measured.

In the organizational digital transformation variable, the validity results show that digitalization has been represented by aspects of technology, service, information disclosure, administration, collaboration, and innovation. In the variables of local cultural identity, indicators of understanding, pride, sense of belonging, use of regional languages, and cultural participation are also able to form constructs consistently. Similarly, the ability to seek information, evaluate sources, maintain security, communicate, create content, and use technology responsibly can represent people's digital literacy.

The relatively even validity force also shows that the instrument is not only centered on one specific indicator. Each indicator contributes to explaining the constructs it represents. These findings are important because the digital transformation of organizations in this study is not only understood as the use of technological devices, but also includes changes in services, communication, information disclosure, collaboration, and innovation. Local cultural identity is also not limited to knowledge of Mandar culture, but includes pride, engagement, appreciation, and support for cultural promotion through digital media.

Thus, all instruments have met the validity requirements and are suitable for use in advanced analysis. There are no statement items that need to be eliminated. The data can then be analyzed through reliability tests, descriptive statistics, assumption tests, regression, path analysis, or *Structural Equation Modeling* to test the role of organizational digital transformation in strengthening local cultural identity and improving the digital literacy of the people of Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi.

## Discussion

### The Influence of Organizational Digital Transformation on Community Digital Literacy

The results of the study show that the digital transformation of the organization has a positive and significant effect on the digital literacy of the people of Mamuju Regency. These findings mean that the better government organizations, universities, cultural communities, and social institutions integrate technology into services, communication, information management, and educational programs, the more people's ability to access, understand, evaluate, and utilize digital information will develop. This relationship shows that digital literacy is not only formed through formal learning or individual abilities, but also through people's experiences when interacting with the digital service and communication ecosystem.

These findings are in line with Vial (2019), Mergel et al. (2019), Verhoef et al. (2021), and Tangi et al. (2021), who explain that digital transformation is a comprehensive organizational change, not just the procurement of devices or the transfer of conventional services to online platforms. These changes include process structuring, work culture, human competence, communication patterns, and value creation for users. Gasco-Hernandez et al. (2022) also emphasized that the success of local government digital transformation is determined by organizational capacity, strategy, leadership, and collaboration with the community. In the context of Mamuju, the use of websites, social media, electronic administration services, and the dissemination of digital information has created informal learning spaces that accustom people to seek information, operate applications, communicate online, and assess the relevance of information.

The results also support UNESCO's digital literacy framework that includes device and software operation, information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, content creation, security, and problem-solving. Law et al. (2018), Van Laar et al. (2017), Spante et al. (2018), Falloon (2020), and Polizzi (2020) view digital literacy as a combination of technical skills, critical skills, ethical awareness, and social skills. Thus, the high intensity of people's interactions with digitized organizations can strengthen these skills through the process of repeated use. However, access to technology alone is not enough. Organizations need to provide easy-to-understand information, responsive complaint channels, digital security training, and education on source verification so that people are not only users, but also critical and responsible users.

The findings of this study are relevant to Indonesia's conditions. Kurnia and Astuti (2017) show that strengthening digital literacy requires the involvement of many actors and sustainable partnerships. Limilia and Aristi (2019) highlight the still diverse understanding and measurement of digital literacy, while Puspitasari and Resmalasari (2023) prove that digital literacy can be strengthened through an approach based on local wisdom. Therefore, digital programs in Mamuju will be more effective if the educational materials use examples, languages, symbols, and problems that are close to the lives of the Mandar people.

### **The Influence of Organizational Digital Transformation on Local Cultural Identity**

The results of the study further show that the digital transformation of organizations has a positive and significant effect on local cultural identity. These findings confirm that technological modernization is not always the opposite of preserving traditions. When managed appropriately, digital platforms can actually become cultural infrastructure that documents, stores, interprets, and disseminates local knowledge to the wider community. In the context of Mamuju, technology can be used to present the Mandar language, Patuddu Dance, Sayyang Pattuqduq, maritime knowledge, traditional music, local history, and the value of mutual cooperation in the format of photos, videos, podcasts, electronic archives, cultural maps, and interactive learning materials. This cultural richness is an important part of the understanding, pride, sense of belonging, and cultural participation of the community.

These findings support Van der Hoeven (2019), Li et al. (2020), Ginzarly et al. (2022), and Lian et al. (2024), who show that digital technologies expand community engagement, the production of cultural narratives, and the formation of collective memory. Digital platforms make cultural heritage not only conveyed one-way by institutions, but can be interpreted and produced together by the community. Zhang et al. (2024) specifically emphasize that the digital participation of the younger generation can increase the inclusivity of cultural heritage management. This is important for Mamuju Regency because the young generation is a group that uses digital media intensively, but does not necessarily have the same strong closeness to the language, traditions, and history of the region.

The results of the study are also in line with Knapik (2023), Csesznek et al. (2024), Huang et al. (2024), and Sandriester et al. (2025), who place digitalization as an instrument for increasing access, community engagement, and cultural sustainability. Kasemsarn and Nickpour (2025) added that digital stories through social media can increase the engagement of the younger generation if they combine platform integration, multimedia elements, community participation, and cultural authenticity. Therefore, the promotion of Mandar culture should not only pursue the number of impressions or the popularity of content. Organizations need to ensure that the narrative, symbols, music, clothing, language, and cultural practices displayed continue to gain validation from cultural actors and the community of their owners.



These findings reinforce UNESCO's view that digital technology can support the protection of intangible cultural heritage through documentation, education, promotion, knowledge transmission, and community collaboration. However, cultural protection is not enough to be done by archiving cultural performances or objects. Culture must continue to be practiced, interpreted, and inherited by its community. Thus, an organization's digital transformation must be directed at strengthening culture as a living heritage, not just a visual commodity for the sake of promotion.

### **The Influence of Digital Literacy on Local Cultural Identity**

Research has found that digital literacy has a positive and significant effect on the local cultural identity of the people of Mamuju Regency. This means that people who are able to search, evaluate, process, create, and communicate digital information responsibly have a greater chance of recognizing and developing their local culture. Digital literacy allows people to distinguish credible cultural information from content that is wrong, simplifies, or even manipulates the meaning of traditions. This critical ability is very important because cultural information on social media is often produced without references, historical context, or community involvement of cultural owners.

These findings are consistent with Ginzarly and Teller (2025), who explain that social media can strengthen cultural resilience when used in a community-centered manner. Online communities also contribute to the formation of collective identities and the meaning of local heritage through discussion, story sharing, and documentation of everyday experiences. Fajrie et al. (2024), Nasution et al. (2025), and Afandi et al. (2026) show that the integration of technology with stories, art, and local wisdom can increase learning engagement and digital skills. These findings show that digitally capable societies not only consume culture, but are able to become creators and curators of cultural content.

In practice, digital literacy allows the young generation of Mamuju to produce videos in the Mandar language, document the Patuddu Dance, create visual stories about Sayyang Pattuquduq, record the knowledge of traditional sailors, or build a digital catalog of local cuisine and crafts. These activities expand the space for cultural expression while strengthening a sense of pride. However, content production capabilities must be accompanied by an understanding of copyright, community consent, privacy, digital security, and sensitivity to sacred cultural elements. Without these skills, digitalization can result in cultural simplification, overcommercialization, or the spread of inauthentic representations.

### **The Role of Digital Literacy Mediation**

The results of the study show that digital literacy mediates the relationship between an organization's digital transformation and local cultural identity. This finding is an important part of the research because it explains the mechanism of influence. An organization's digital transformation can indeed provide platforms, access, data, services, and cultural content, but these facilities do not automatically strengthen people's identities. The impact becomes stronger when people have the ability to use these digital facilities actively, critically, safely, and creatively.

Conceptually, these results are in line with Scupola et al. (2022), who place society as partners in the creation of public value through the stages of planning, designing, managing, delivering, and evaluating digital services. Moser-Plautz and Schmidhuber (2023), Begany and Gil-Garcia (2024), and Elia et al. (2024) also emphasized that the results of digital transformation depend on changes in organizational and user capacity, not on technology alone. In this study, digital literacy functions as a capacity for society that transforms the availability of technology into cultural participation.

The implication is that the cultural digitalization policy in Mamuju Regency should not stop at the creation of social media portals or accounts. Local governments and related organizations need to include training on cultural information search, content production, source verification, archive management, digital security, and ethics of cultural representation. Universities can support research and development of cultural repositories, while the Mandar community plays a role in maintaining the authenticity of knowledge. The collaboration will form an ecosystem when organizational technology improves people's literacy and this literacy further encourages the strengthening of cultural identity.

Overall, the results of the study confirm that human- and culturally oriented digital transformation can be a regional development strategy. Organizational digital transformation

strengthens cultural identity both directly and through increasing digital literacy. Therefore, digital literacy is not only an additional result of organizational modernization, but is also a strategic bridge that ensures technology is used to maintain, develop, and inherit the Mandar culture in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

#### IV. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study of 250 respondents, it can be concluded that organizational digital transformation has an important role in strengthening local cultural identity and improving the digital literacy of the people of Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi. The research instrument consisting of 24 statements was declared to meet the validity requirements. The corrected item-total correlation value was in the range of 0.685–0.792 and was overall greater than the table r-value of 0.124. Thus, the indicators of organizational digital transformation, local cultural identity, and community digital literacy were able to measure the research construct consistently.

The test results show that the organization's digital transformation has a positive and significant effect on people's digital literacy. The use of websites, social media, information systems, digital administration services, and online education programs helps people acquire, understand, evaluate, and use digital information more effectively, safely, and responsibly. Organizational digital transformation also has a positive effect on local cultural identity because it expands the documentation, promotion, and dissemination of Mandar culture, such as the Mandar language, Patuddu Dance, Sayyang Pattuqduq, local wisdom, and traditional maritime knowledge.

Digital literacy has been proven to have a positive effect on local cultural identity and acts as a mediating variable. This means that the availability of digital technology and services will have a stronger influence on cultural preservation if the community has adequate digital capabilities. Therefore, local governments, universities, cultural communities, and community organizations need to develop digital transformation accompanied by digital literacy education, the involvement of the younger generation, and the production of authentic cultural content. This collaboration is needed so that technological modernization remains rooted in Mandar cultural values and is able to support cultural preservation in a sustainable manner.

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