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TOURISM DIGITAL COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT BASED ON ISLAMIC VALUES: REPRESENTATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH TOURIST CONTENT ON LEMUKUTAN ISLAND

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Abstract

Purpose*: This study analyses how tourism digital communication is managed on Lemukutan Island, West Kalimantan, by examining how tourist-produced content represents the local Muslim community and which Islamic values are visible in that representation.* ***Design/methodology/approach****: A qualitative case study within a constructivist paradigm was conducted. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with tourists, residents, tour guides, homestay managers and business actors, together with observation and documentation of digital content, and were analysed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman and Saldaña. Findings were interpreted through Hall's constructionist theory of representation and four Islamic communication values: amanah, tabayyun, qaulan sadidan and ta'awun.* ***Findings****: Instagram, TikTok and word of mouth are the main channels through which the island is encountered, and tourists, rather than residents or managers, produce most of the content. Informants judged this content consistent with, and sometimes below, the realities they experienced. The community is represented through hospitality, mutual cooperation, a sense of security and care for the environment, portraying an open and friendly Muslim community without overt religious symbols. Community-led promotion remains passive and unplanned.* ***Research limitations/implications****: The single-case design supports analytical rather than statistical generalisation; future studies should compare other island destinations and analyse content at scale.* ***Practical implications****: Destination managers and local government should invest in community capacity for content production, co-production guidelines with tourists and verification routines.* ***Originality/value****: The study extends Da'wah Management into tourism digital communication management and proposes a community-centred, value-based framework that treats residents as communicators rather than objects of representation.*

Keywords: *Digital communication management, Islamic values, community representation, tourist-generated content, Lemukutan Island*

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Tourists' photos, videos and reviews now shape how outsiders see island communities, often without those communities' involvement. This study shows how residents of Lemukutan Island, West Kalimantan, are portrayed in such content: as hospitable, cooperative, safe and caring toward the environment, reflecting everyday Islamic values rather than religious symbols. Residents rarely produce this content themselves. The findings help local governments, tourism managers and community groups design digital communication that is

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accurate, respectful and community-led, so that residents become storytellers of their own place rather than silent subjects of other people's posts.

INTRODUCTION

Digitalisation has changed how tourist destinations are introduced, perceived and remembered. Social media no longer merely transmit information; they are spaces in which the images, narratives and identities of places are produced and contested by many actors at once (Liu et al., 2026; Li et al., 2023). Photographs, short videos and reviews posted by travellers shape destination image, travel intention and loyalty (Gholamhosseinzadeh et al., 2023; Gan et al., 2023; Han et al., 2022), and platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have turned everyday travel experience into a form of public communication (Filieri et al., 2021; Jamshidi et al., 2023). Marine and island destinations are especially exposed to this dynamic because their appeal is highly visual and their communities live close to the attractions on display (Winchenbach et al., 2022). Lemukutan Island in Bengkayang Regency, West Kalimantan, illustrates the phenomenon. The island has begun to use digital media to introduce its natural, cultural and community life to wider audiences (Wahyudi et al., 2023), and in 2025 it recorded 51,684 tourist visits, the second highest among the twenty tourist objects and attractions registered by the Bengkayang Regency Youth, Sports and Tourism Office (2025). The Muslim community that forms the majority of the island's residents is not only a provider of tourism services but also a collective actor whose hospitality, tolerance, cleanliness and service orientation are encountered, photographed and narrated by visitors (Tricahyono et al., 2026). How this community is represented therefore affects both the image of the destination and the identity of the community itself (Rizzo et al., 2020).

A substantial body of research examines these processes. Studies of destination branding show that social media enhance image formation, competitiveness and promotional reach (Marchesani et al., 2026; Lee et al., 2026), and that digital storytelling and virtual endorsers construct meaning and trust as well as awareness (Sun et al., 2026; Zhao & Agyeiwaah, 2025). Work on user-generated content demonstrates that visual material posted by travellers influences destination image across cultures and platforms (Li et al., 2023; Lee & Park, 2023; Arefieva et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2021; Nautiyal et al., 2022), that short videos affect attitudes and visit intentions (Cao et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2024), and that co-creation among tourists, destination organisations and residents blurs the boundary between producer and audience (Huang et al., 2024; Camilleri & Kozak, 2022; Yang et al., 2023). Indonesian studies at village and city level report comparable patterns of tourism digitalisation and destination branding (Murti et al., 2022; Subekti et al., 2023; Nurhidayanti, 2026; Julian et al., 2026). The literature is, however, not unanimous. Some studies treat traveller-generated content as more credible than official promotion (Zulfiqar et al., 2026; Casali et al., 2021), whereas others show that images circulating on social media can be staged, edited or commercially shaped, so that authenticity is negotiated rather than given (Zhou et al., 2023; Gardiner et al., 2022; Bulchand-Gidumal, 2024). In the Muslim-friendly and halal tourism stream, research has identified Islamic attributes of destinations and their effects on satisfaction, image and intention (Basendwah et al., 2024; Rostiani et al., 2024; Fajriyati et al., 2022; Aji et al., 2021; Mursid, 2023; Ekka, 2024; Battour et al., 2023, 2024), including in non-Muslim destinations (Soonsan & Jumani, 2024; Jumani, 2024; Chang & Amalina, 2026; Linando et al., 2026; Nguyen, 2026). Muslim identity in these studies is typically treated as a tourist characteristic or a bundle of destination facilities, not as an identity that host communities enact and that others re-present.

Reading these streams together reveals four gaps. First, digital branding, community-based tourism and halal tourism are mostly examined separately, so little is known about how digital communication shapes the identity of a Muslim host community (Jin et al., 2025; Olğun & Akarsu, 2026). Second, studies of Muslim-friendly tourism rely predominantly on surveys

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of tourist intention and satisfaction; the perspective of the people being represented, and the content through which they are represented, is seldom examined. Third, research on Lemukutan Island has concentrated on marine tourism potential, waste management and community economic development (Wahyudi et al., 2023), leaving its digital communication largely unexplored. Fourth, communication is usually evaluated by its reach and effectiveness, while communication management as a process that asks who produces a message, who is allowed to speak, who is represented and by what values the process is guided receives much less attention (Fedji et al., 2026; Gato et al., 2022). Where community voice has been studied in tourism, it is framed mainly as empowerment and partnership in governance rather than as authorship of one's own digital image (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022; Hu et al., 2022).

This study therefore aims to analyse how tourism digital communication is managed on Lemukutan Island through the representation of the local Muslim community in tourist-produced content, and how Islamic values are reflected in that process. Three research questions guide the inquiry. RQ1: How is tourism digital communication about Lemukutan Island produced, circulated and managed by tourists, residents and tourism actors? RQ2: How are the island and its local community represented in tourist content? RQ3: How are Islamic values, specifically amanah, tabayyun, qaulan sadidan and ta'awun, reflected in the communication practices and representations observed?

The study makes three contributions. Theoretically, it treats tourists as producers of digital content and the local community as the subject of representation, and it integrates Hall's (1997) constructionist theory of representation with Islamic communication ethics, thereby extending Da'wah Management into the management of tourism digital communication. Empirically, it provides qualitative evidence from a small, marine, Muslim-majority island destination that is not branded as halal tourism, a setting that differs from the Muslim-friendly destinations and tourist-intention surveys that dominate the literature. Practically, it derives a community-centred and value-based framework for managing digital communication, which local governments, destination managers and community groups can use to ensure that residents are communicators of their own place and not only objects of other people's gaze.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

In this study, tourism digital communication management refers to the planning, production, curation, verification and evaluation of messages about a destination across digital channels, involving multiple actors with unequal capacities to speak. It extends the notion of destination branding, which in digital environments is understood as participatory and co-created rather than controlled by one organisation (Huang et al., 2024; Zhao & Agyeiwaah, 2025). Digital storytelling and social media content shape not only awareness but also the meaning, value and identity of destinations (Lee et al., 2026; Sun et al., 2026), and their effectiveness depends on integrating local potential with consistent messages (Gato et al., 2022). A management perspective adds questions of authorship, verification and responsibility to those of reach and engagement (Fedji et al., 2026).

The grand theory is Hall's (1997) constructionist theory of representation, according to which meaning is not inherent in people or places but is produced through language, images and practices that stand for them within shared cultural codes. Applied to tourism, a photograph or video of a host community does not simply reflect it; it selects, frames and gives it meaning for an audience, so that identities are constructed through representation (Winchenbach et al., 2022; Zou et al., 2026). Identity itself is a social process formed through interaction, communication and shared experience (Rizzo et al., 2020), and in destinations shaped by Muslim communities it is often expressed through friendliness, trust, cleanliness, service ethics and respect for norms rather than through religious attributes (Culcasi, 2026; Nguyen, 2026).

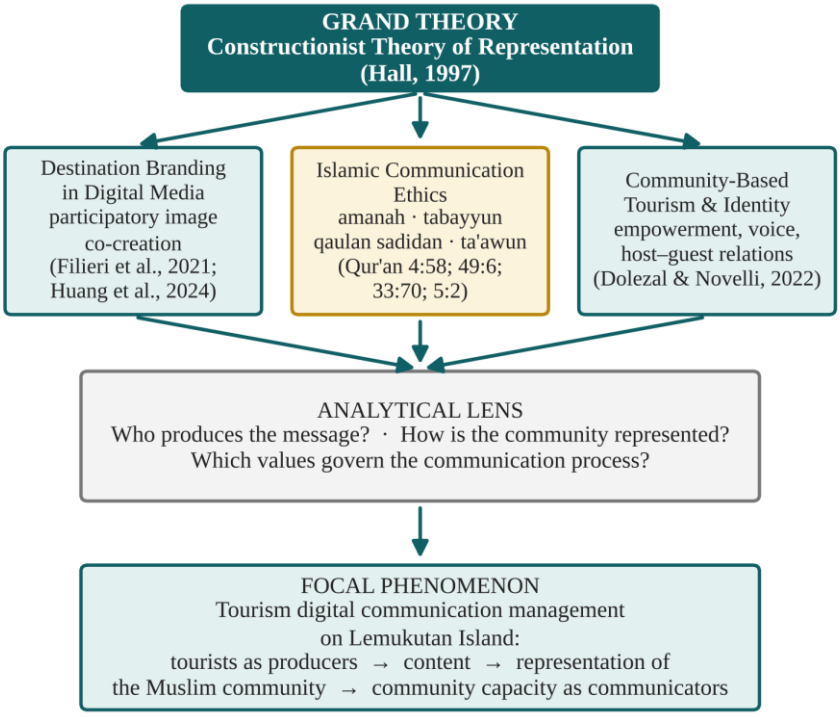
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Digital media therefore function as representational spaces in which this social character is displayed to outsiders and in which it may be reproduced, simplified or distorted (Olğun & Akarsu, 2026; Jin et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2026).

Hall's theory explains how meaning is made but not by what standard the making should be judged. Islamic communication ethics supplies this normative lens, operationalised through four values. Amanah denotes trustworthiness and responsibility in carrying information and in treating those who are its subject (Qur'an 4:58). Tabayyun denotes verification before information is accepted and circulated (Qur'an 49:6). Qaulan sadidan denotes speech that is truthful, accurate and not misleading (Qur'an 33:70; 4:9). Ta'awun denotes cooperation in goodness (Qur'an 5:2). These values are not competing theories but analytic categories that allow the study to ask whether representation is accurate, responsibly produced and cooperative. Research in Muslim-friendly tourism shows that Islamic attributes shape tourists' emotional value and scepticism (Rostiani et al., 2024) and that online trust is built through credible and transparent communication (Nasrolahi Vosta & Jalilvand, 2023), which supports using these values to judge communication practice.

Finally, community-based tourism research frames residents as participants whose empowerment depends on capacity, partnership and voice (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022; Hu et al., 2022), and whose support for tourism rests on solidarity and the quality of host–guest relations (Erul & Woosnam, 2022; Erul et al., 2023). Applied to digital communication, this literature suggests that visibility alone does not empower; what matters is who controls the narrative. Research on small islands further links community participation to waste and environmental stewardship (Fakfare et al., 2024; Ferronato et al., 2024), which is relevant where growing visits strain waste management, as on Lemukutan Island (Wahyudi et al., 2023). Figure 1 summarises the theoretical framework.

Figure 1
Theoretical Framework of the Study



Source: Authors' elaboration based on Hall (1997), Dolezal and Novelli (2022), Huang et al. (2024) and Islamic communication ethics.

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Research Propositions

Because the study is qualitative, research propositions rather than hypotheses guide the exploration. They are derived from theory and prior evidence and are assessed against the findings in the Discussion.

P1. Where tourists produce most destination content, digital branding becomes participatory but uneven, and the host community appears mainly as the object rather than the subject of representation unless it has the capacity to communicate for itself. This follows from co-creation research showing that many stakeholders shape destination images (Huang et al., 2024; Zhao & Agyeiwaah, 2025; Camilleri & Kozak, 2022) and from community-based tourism research showing that participation without capacity remains partial (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022; Hu et al., 2022).

P2. The identity of a Muslim host community is represented through everyday social practices such as hospitality, cooperation and care rather than through religious symbols, and these practices carry Islamic values in tourism encounters. This follows from Hall's (1997) view that identity is produced through signifying practices and from evidence that Muslim-friendliness is experienced through service, trust and attitude as well as facilities (Fajriyati et al., 2022; Aji et al., 2021; Ekka, 2024; Rizzo et al., 2020).

P3. The credibility of tourist-produced content depends on its congruence with field realities; communication that is verified (tabayyun), truthful (qaulan sadidan) and responsibly produced (amanah) sustains trust, whereas staged, edited or selective content erodes it. This follows from research on authenticity, credibility and misaligned representations on social media (Zhou et al., 2023; Gardiner et al., 2022; Nasrolahi Vosta & Jalilvand, 2023; Gan et al., 2023).

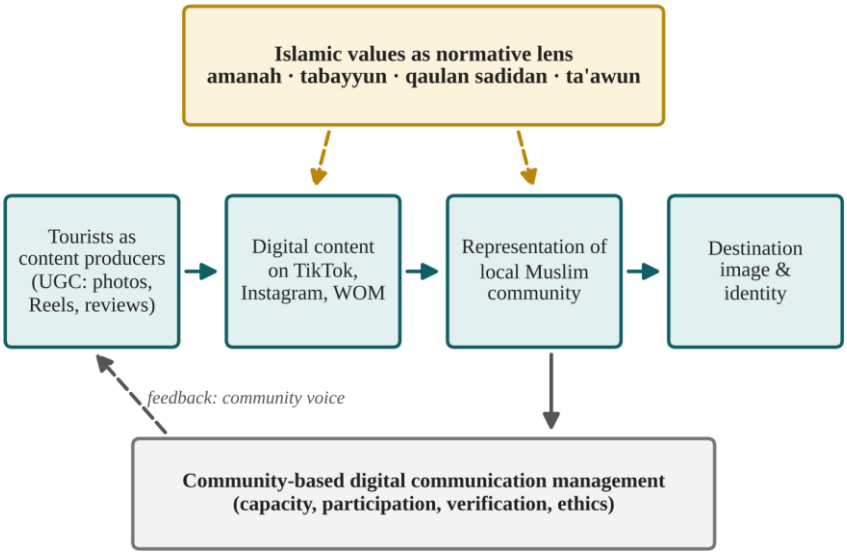
P4. Strengthening community capacity and cooperation (ta'awun) in content production moves residents from objects to communicators and supports destination representation that is authentic, participatory and sustainable. This follows from solidarity and empowerment research (Erul & Woosnam, 2022; Erul et al., 2023; Dolezal & Novelli, 2022) and from evidence that destination communication benefits from local organisation and creativity (Gato et al., 2022; Fakfare et al., 2024).

Research Model

Figure 2 presents the conceptual model that translates these assumptions into an analytical framework. Tourists, as content producers, generate digital content that circulates through TikTok, Instagram and word of mouth; this content represents the local Muslim community and contributes to destination image and identity. Islamic values operate as a normative lens on the first three links, and community-based digital communication management is positioned as the response that feeds the community's own voice back into production. The model aligns the research questions with the propositions: RQ1 corresponds to P1, RQ2 to P2, and RQ3 to P3 and P4. It thereby links the research objectives, the theoretical framework and the empirical analysis described in the following section.

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Figure 2
Conceptual Model of Tourism Digital Communication Management



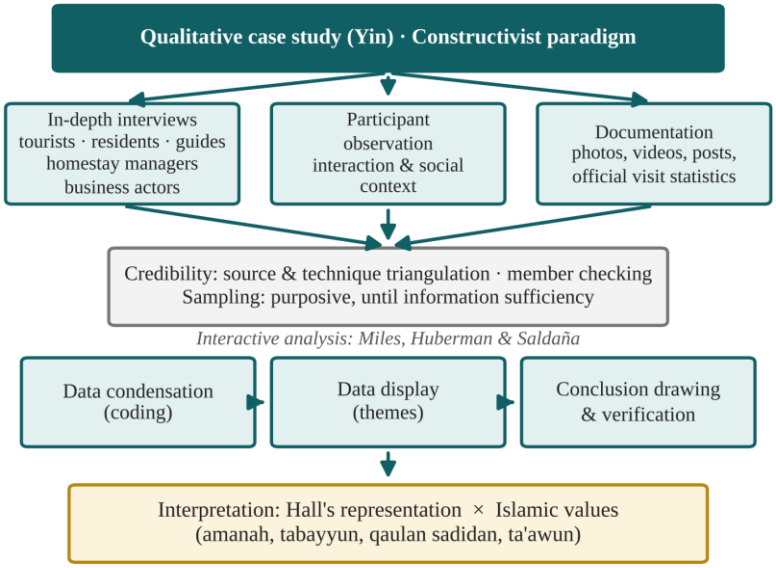
Source: Authors' elaboration.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design (Yin, 2018) to understand tourism digital communication management based on Islamic values in the representation of local communities through tourist content on Lemukutan Island, Bengkayang Regency, West Kalimantan. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research concerns experience, interaction, meaning and communication processes between tourists and local communities. The study rests on a constructivist paradigm that views social reality as the outcome of interactions and processes of meaning-making among individuals and groups. The case study design allows the phenomenon to be examined in its real-life context, in particular how tourists' experiences with the community are turned into digital content that forms particular representations. The focus is on the production of tourist content, the representation of the local community and the meaning of Islamic values in tourism digital communication practice, following Yin's case study perspective. Figure 3 summarises the research design.

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Figure 3
Research Design and Analytical Procedure



Source: Authors' elaboration based on Yin (2018) and Miles et al. (2014).

The research was conducted on Lemukutan Island, Bengkayang Regency, West Kalimantan, which was selected because it is developing as a marine tourism destination and shows active tourism communication through digital media. Informants were selected through purposive sampling according to their involvement in, and experience of, tourism activities and digital communication on the island. They comprise tourists who had visited Lemukutan and obtained or produced digital information about it, local residents, tour guides, homestay managers and business actors who interact directly with tourists (Table 1). Selection considered informants' ability to speak about tourism experience, forms of interaction with the community, digital content production and the correspondence between social media representations and conditions in the field. Informants were added in stages until the information obtained showed sufficiency and no substantively different information emerged. Adequacy was therefore judged by information sufficiency, consistent with the view that saturation is a context-dependent judgement about sample adequacy rather than a fixed number (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022; Wutich et al., 2024). Transferability rather than statistical generalisation is the relevant standard.

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Table 1
Informant Categories and Focus of Inquiry

Informant category	Role in the study	Focus of inquiry	n
Tourists	Recipients and producers of digital content	Sources of information; content production and sharing; interaction with the community; correspondence between content and field conditions	[…]
Local residents	Subjects of representation	Views on being represented in tourist content; involvement in digital communication; suitability of digital information	[…]
Tour guides	Mediators of the tourist experience	Interaction with tourists; information provided; perceptions of representation	[…]
Homestay managers	Service providers and promoters	Promotion practices; use of social media; tourist interaction	[…]
Business actors	Service providers (transport, equipment, culinary, MSMEs)	Direct interaction with tourists; economic activity; perceived effects of digital exposure	[…]

Source: Authors' research design. The number of informants per category (n) is to be completed by the authors from the fieldwork record.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation and documentation studies. Interviews with tourists explored their experiences of obtaining, creating and disseminating content about Lemukutan Island and of interacting with the local community. Interviews with community members explored how they view their representation in tourist content, their involvement in digital tourism communication and the fit between digital information and field conditions. Observation was used to understand directly the forms of interaction between tourists and the community and the social context of content production. Documentation covered relevant digital content, such as photographs, videos, social media posts and other forms of digital communication related to Lemukutan Island, together with official visit statistics. Fieldwork was carried out [during (month–month year)], and informed consent was obtained before each interview [authors to confirm]. The credibility of the data was strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques and through member checking to ensure that the researchers' interpretations matched informants' experiences.

Operationalisation of Analytical Concepts

Because the study is qualitative, concepts were operationalised as analytic categories with observable indicators rather than as measurement scales (Table 2). Digital communication management and representation were derived from the research questions, and the four Islamic values were derived from the normative sources cited above. Coding treated theme development as an interpretive and reflexive practice rather than a search for coding reliability (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

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Table 2
Operationalisation of Analytical Categories

Analytic category	Definition	Indicators in the data
Digital communication management	Production, circulation and handling of messages about the island across digital channels	Channels used (TikTok, Instagram, word of mouth); who produces content; community promotion practices; correspondence between content and field
Representation of the local community	How residents and their social life are depicted and interpreted	Behaviours and activities shown; what is highlighted or omitted; residents' views of their depiction
Amanah	Trustworthiness and responsibility in service and in conveying information	Dependability in assisting visitors; honesty in service; perceived security and trust
Tabayyun	Verification of information	Tourists' comparison of online information with field experience
Qaulan sadidan	Truthful, accurate, non-misleading messages	Consistency between content and reality; perceived exaggeration or omission
Ta'awun	Cooperation in goodness	Collective service provision; mutual help among guides, homestays and MSMEs; assistance beyond commercial service

Source: Authors' operationalisation based on Hall (1997) and Qur'an 4:58, 49:6, 33:70 and 5:2.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Analysis ran continuously alongside data collection by identifying information on tourists as content producers, experiences of interaction with local communities, forms of community representation, the suitability between digital content and field reality, and relevant Islamic values in communication practice. Data were coded and grouped into analytical themes, namely amanah in the delivery of information, tabayyun in ensuring the correctness of information, qaulan sadidan in delivering correct and non-misleading messages, and ta'awun in the relationship and cooperation between tourists and local communities. The results were interpreted using Hall's (1997) theory of representation and Islamic values to explain how tourist content produces meaning about the local community and how tourism digital communication can be managed more responsibly and to the benefit of local communities.

RESULTS

The digitalisation of communication has changed how Lemukutan Island is introduced, perceived and interpreted as a marine tourism destination and as a social space for a Muslim community (Murti et al., 2022). Digital media widen the reach of information on tourism potential and open space for tourists and residents to produce, disseminate and give meaning to the destination through content. Tourist experiences, community activities, social values and the cultural and religious characteristics of residents become part of the narrative that shapes the island's image in the digital public space (Julian et al., 2026). The findings are organised around three interrelated themes: digital communication management, the representation of Lemukutan Island as a marine tourism destination, and Islamic values in the community's daily practice. The empirical material combines interview findings with field documentation (Figures 5 to 8) and official visit statistics (Table 3 and Figure 4). [Insert one or two anonymised interview excerpts per theme from the transcripts to strengthen the empirical evidence.]

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Destination Context: Tourist Visits in 2025

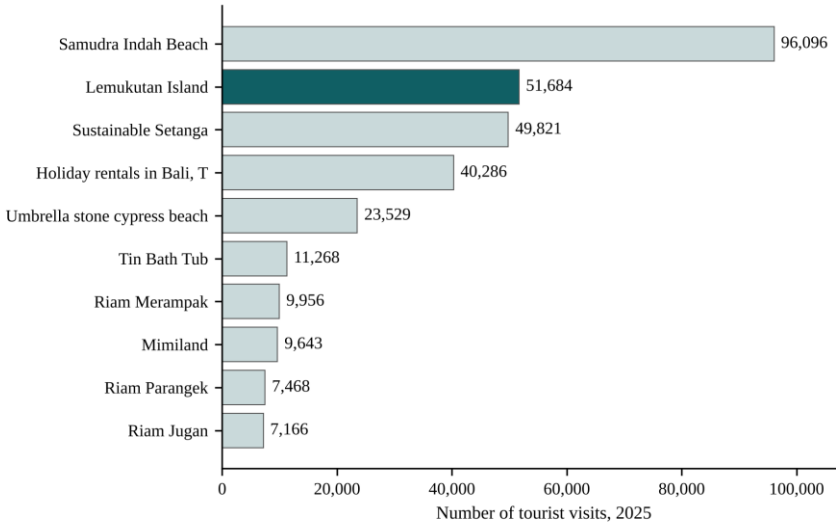
Official statistics place Lemukutan Island second among the twenty tourist objects and attractions (ODTW) recorded in Bengkayang Regency in 2025, with 51,684 visits (Table 3, Figure 4). By the authors' calculation, this equals about 14.9% of the 347,635 visits recorded across all twenty listed objects, behind Samudra Indah Beach (96,096 visits) and ahead of the third-ranked object by a small margin (49,821 visits). The figures show that the island is a prominent destination in the regency and therefore a consequential site of digital representation.

Table 3
Tourist Visits to Tourist Objects and Attractions (ODTW) in Bengkayang Regency, 2025

Rank	ODTW	Number of visits	Share of total
1.	Samudra Indah Beach	96,096	27.6%
2.	Lemukutan Island	51,684	14.9%
3.	Sustainable Setanga	49,821	14.3%
4.	Holiday rentals in Bali, T	40,286	11.6%
5.	Umbrella stone cypress beach	23,529	6.8%
6.	Tin Bath Tub	11,268	3.2%
7.	Riam Merampak	9,956	2.9%
8.	Mimiland	9,643	2.8%
9.	Riam Parangek	7,468	2.1%
10.	Riam Jugan	7,166	2.1%
11–20	Ten other ODTW combined	40,718	11.7%
	Total (20 ODTW)	**347,635**	**100.0%**

Source: Bengkayang Regency Youth, Sports and Tourism Office (2025). Shares and the combined row were calculated by the authors. ODTW names are reproduced as in the source data.

Figure 4
Tourist Visits to the Ten Most Visited ODTW in Bengkayang Regency, 2025



Source: Bengkayang Regency Youth, Sports and Tourism Office (2025); visualisation by the authors.

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Digital Communication Management

The digitalisation of marine tourism communication on Lemukutan Island develops through digital media that involve tourists, the community and destination managers in building a tourism image. According to the interviews, most informants first learned of the island through social media, especially TikTok and Instagram, and through recommendations from friends who had previously visited. Digital media have thus become the main channel for introducing the island to prospective tourists and extend promotional reach without full reliance on conventional marketing media (Fedji et al., 2026). The travel experiences shared by users (user-generated content) strongly influence public perception of destinations (Yang et al., 2023). Branding therefore does not take place only through managers' official accounts but also through the active participation of tourists who voluntarily share their experiences (Figure 5).

Figure 5
Tourist Posts and Documents of Marine Recreation Activities



Source: Instagram posts by tourists visiting Lemukutan Island (account anonymised), documenting recreational marine activities such as banana boat riding.

Digital content circulating on social media generally represents the real conditions of Lemukutan Island. Most tourists stated that the sea panorama, water clarity, snorkelling and natural atmosphere they saw on social media matched what they experienced on arrival, and some said the island's beauty exceeded its visual representation online (Figure 6). Digital communication formed through tourist uploads has therefore built expectations that are relatively consistent with the reality of the destination (Jin et al., 2025). This congruence is an important basis for tourists' trust in information circulating on social media and strengthens the island's reputation as a marine destination.

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Figure 6
Field Interview Documentation: A Place Visited by Tourists with a Panoramic View of the Blue Sea



Source: Authors' field documentation (2026).

Tourists also act as communication actors who build destination branding through uploads. Photos, videos, Reels and travel reviews published after a visit are a form of public communication that extends the island's exposure to other potential tourists. Destination branding in the digital era is thus no longer fully controlled by tourism managers but proceeds collaboratively through tourists as information producers (Yang et al., 2026). This reflects participatory digital communication in which every social media user can shape the image and reputation of the destination, and it strengthens the digital identity of the island as an attractive and authentic marine destination (Wang et al., 2026).

However, the use of digital media by the community and destination managers is still not optimal. Some homestay managers admitted that promotion through social media is passive and not managed in a planned or sustainable way. Most promotion comes from tourist uploads and word-of-mouth recommendations that develop after visits. The island's branding power therefore depends heavily on tourists' positive experiences rather than on professionally managed digital communication strategies, and strengthening community capacity in digital media management, creative content production and marketing communication is an important step (Gato et al., 2022).

Representation of Lemukutan Island as a Marine Tourism Destination

Marine tourism is the main identity attached to Lemukutan Island as a destination in Bengkayang Regency (Winchenbach et al., 2022). Almost all informants described the island through clear seawater, coral reefs that are still preserved, snorkelling, fishing, sunsets, and a calm and natural atmosphere. This perception arose among first-time and repeat visitors alike. The beauty of underwater nature and an environment that remains attractive were the main reasons for choosing the island. The characteristics of marine tourism thus form an image that is built consistently from direct experience and from information obtained before visiting (Bachtiar, 2025; Telelepta, 2024), and marine tourism is understood not only as natural potential but also as a destination identity that distinguishes Lemukutan from other areas. Table 3 shows that the island is among the most visited objects in the regency.

Beyond natural resources, the marine identity is built through a holistic tourism experience. Informants described snorkelling, enjoying coral reefs, fishing, exploring the China Bay and Melanau Bay areas and watching the sunset as different from experiences at other

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destinations. Many tourists interpreted the island as a place of tranquillity away from urban bustle, offering a recreational experience that is also reflective, reinforced by cool air and minimal pollution. The marine identity is therefore built through emotional experience as well as physical attraction (Anaya & Lehto, 2023).

The identity also cannot be separated from community life. Tourism has created economic opportunities through homestays, sea transport, snorkelling equipment rental, guide services, culinary businesses and the sale of processed seafood and MSME products (Winchenbach et al., 2022; Figure 7). Several informants explained that rising visits directly raise income, especially during holiday seasons such as Christmas, New Year, Eid al-Fitr and Chinese New Year. Marine tourism has thus become an important livelihood and strengthens the relationship between the community and coastal resources (Guha et al., 2026).

Figure 7
Field Documentation of Handicrafts Produced and Sold by the Lemukutan Community



Source: Authors' field documentation (2026).

The sustainability of the marine identity nonetheless faces challenges. Informants reported that uncertain weather often affects the tourist experience, that rising visits create waste management problems at several locations, and that uneven development of facilities and promotion leaves some attractions little known. Even so, the community continues to maintain the authenticity of the coastal environment by providing supporting facilities and taking part in tourism services. The identity is thus built not only by natural beauty but also by the community's commitment to sustaining the destination as a shared social, cultural and economic asset (Wahyudi et al., 2023).

Islamic Values in the Community's Daily Practice

The Muslim community on Lemukutan Island is reflected not only through religious symbols but through daily social practice that tourists experience directly. Almost all informants described residents as friendly, open and caring. This was evident from arrival, when the community welcomed visitors warmly, helped with travel, supplied needs and offered conveniences at tourist locations. Some tourists said homestay owners lent them vehicles and helped them choose the best locations, and that service was given regardless of the visitor's background. Hospitality is thus not merely a service but part of the community's social character, consistently represented to every tourist (Zou et al., 2026; Culcasi, 2026). The

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identity of the community is built through practices of mutual respect, care and service to others (Figure 8).

Figure 8
Field Documentation of Community Religious Life: Nightly Yasinan Recitation on Fridays and Congregational Prayers



Source: Authors' field documentation (2026).

Togetherness and mutual help further strengthen the community's identity. Informants explained that residents act not only as service providers but as partners for tourists on the island. Guides, homestay owners, MSME actors and neighbours work together to provide information, meet visitors' needs and create a safe and comfortable atmosphere. These interactions build closer relations between residents and tourists, so that the experience is oriented to the quality of social relationships as well as to natural beauty. The identity is built through a culture of mutual cooperation, social concern and service based on human values.

A sense of security is another important element. Informants said residents care about environmental safety and the safety of tourists, and mutual care and trust create a conducive atmosphere. Tourists reported ease of getting help when facing obstacles, ease of accessing services and no conflicts during their visits. Security is therefore an integral part of the image of the Muslim community, formed through daily interaction and tourists' direct experience.

Finally, the identity of the community is not built only through direct interaction but is reproduced through digital communication. After their trips, most tourists share photos, videos, travel stories and reviews on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram that highlight community friendliness, service quality, a safe atmosphere and social life open to newcomers (Telelepta, 2024). These uploads form a collective narrative of the island as a friendly, open destination that upholds social values, and digital media become a representation space that extends the community's identity to a wider public (Olğun & Akarsu, 2026). The identity of the community is thus the product of interaction between social experience in the field and digital representation continually produced through tourists' participation.

Synthesis of Findings

Table 4 and Figure 9 synthesise the three themes and map them onto the analytic categories. Digital communication is dominated by tourists and community promotion is passive; the island is represented through marine identity and livelihoods; and the community is represented through hospitality, cooperation, security and care, which correspond to the values of amanah and ta'awun, while the consistency between content and field supports the ethical criteria of tabayyun and qaulan sadidan.

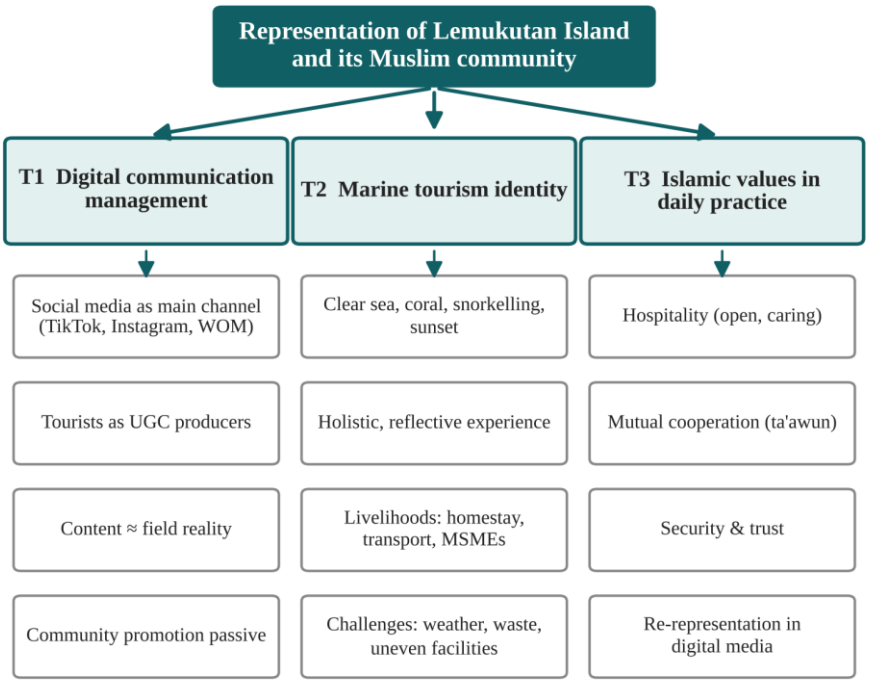
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Table 4
Thematic Matrix: Findings and Analytic Interpretation

Theme	Key findings	Analytic interpretation
T1 Digital communication management	TikTok, Instagram and word of mouth are the main channels; tourists produce most content; content matches field conditions; community and homestay promotion is passive and unplanned	Participatory but uneven branding; consistency supports tabayyun and qaulan sadidan as outcomes, though no formal verification routine was reported
T2 Marine tourism identity	Clear sea, coral, snorkelling, sunset and tranquillity; livelihoods from homestays, transport, equipment rental, guides, culinary and MSMEs; weather, waste and uneven facilities as challenges	Identity as experience and livelihood; community stewardship of the coastal environment as shared asset
T3 Islamic values in daily practice	Hospitality, mutual cooperation, security and trust, and digital re-representation by tourists	Values carried by social practice rather than symbols: amanah (trust, security) and ta'awun (cooperation)

Source: Authors' analysis. The mapping to Islamic values is an analytic interpretation of the findings.

Figure 9
Thematic Map of the Findings



Source: Authors' analysis.

DISCUSSION

This section interprets the findings in relation to the research questions and the theoretical framework, compares them with prior studies, and sets out the theoretical contribution, practical implications and contextual insights. Digital media have changed the way destinations are introduced, perceived and interpreted through interaction and exchange of information in the digital space (Nurhidayanti, 2026). On Lemukutan Island, social media function not only as a means of promotion but as a communication space in which tourists and

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residents produce, distribute and give meaning to tourism potential and the community's socio-religious life. Branding is therefore not formed solely through designed promotional strategies but also through tourist experiences, community representation and participatory digital interaction (Subekti et al., 2023).

Participatory but Unevenly Distributed Communication Management

In answer to RQ1, the findings show that communication about the island is participatory in form but uneven in authorship. Most tourists encounter the island through TikTok, Instagram and recommendations from acquaintances, which is consistent with evidence that social media are effective channels for introducing destinations to wide audiences (Bonilla-Quijada et al., 2026) and that short-form visual content is influential in shaping destination perception (Gan et al., 2023; Han et al., 2022). Unlike conventional promotion centred on institutions, branding develops through the contributions of many stakeholders who interact in the digital space (Yang et al., 2026; Huang et al., 2024; Zhao & Agyeiwaah, 2025). Voluntarily shared experiences are considered more authentic, objective and credible than commercial promotion (Zulfiqar et al., 2026), which helps explain why tourist content carries so much weight.

The same mechanism produces an inequality of position. Content is produced more by tourists than by residents, although residents hold the experience and knowledge closest to the destination. The community is thus part of what is displayed without yet being a strong communicator. This confirms P1 and parallels community-based tourism research in which participation is frequently partial where capacity and control over narrative are unevenly held (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022; Hu et al., 2022). It also extends earlier work on co-creation, which has emphasised the plurality of producers (Huang et al., 2024; Camilleri & Kozak, 2022), by showing that plurality can coexist with the marginal authorship of the host community. Good communication management, in this light, does not mean restricting tourists' freedom to create content but building communication relationships that allow information to be conveyed proportionately, factually and with respect for residents' lives. The passive promotion reported by homestay managers further indicates a capacity gap that echoes findings on destination marketing communication (Gato et al., 2022).

Marine Identity as Experience and Livelihood

In answer to RQ2, the island is represented through clear seas, preserved reefs, snorkelling, fishing, sunsets and calm, and these elements are reproduced in travel stories, photographs and reviews. The identity is therefore constructed through the physical characteristics of the destination and through the emotional experience of visitors, in line with the constructionist view that meaning is produced through representation (Hall, 1997) and with work on marine tourism identity (Winchenbach et al., 2022) and memorable tourism moments (Anaya & Lehto, 2023). The economic findings, namely that income from homestays, transport, equipment rental, guiding, culinary and MSME activity rises with visits, show that representation has material consequences for the community (Guha et al., 2026). The reported pressures from weather, waste and uneven facilities reflect problems documented on other small tourism islands, where community participation and stakeholder collaboration are central to waste management and environmental behaviour (Ferronato et al., 2024; Fakfare et al., 2024; Wahyudi et al., 2023). Success on the island is thus not measured only by visits but by benefits that reach residents and by the stewardship of the environment on which the marine image depends.

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Islamic Values as Lived Communication Ethics

In answer to RQ3, Islamic values appear in the representation of the community mainly as social practice. Residents are described as friendly, open and caring, as lending vehicles and giving recommendations beyond commercial service, and as cooperating in transport, homestay management, food provision and tourist assistance. Interpreted through the analytic categories, these practices correspond to amanah, as trust and security in dealings with visitors, and to ta'awun, as collective work that allows tourists to receive better service. This supports P2: Islamic identity is not constructed through religious symbols alone but through mutual respect, care and service to others, a pattern consistent with studies showing that belonging and Muslim identity are enacted in everyday relations (Rizzo et al., 2020; Culcasi, 2026) and that Muslim-friendliness is experienced through attitude and service as well as facilities (Fajriyati et al., 2022; Aji et al., 2021; Rostiani et al., 2024; Ekka, 2024). Safety experienced as a social atmosphere also resonates with the view that safe spaces in destinations are socially constructed (Zou et al., 2026).

The values of tabayyun and qaulan sadidan are assessed differently, because the study did not observe formal verification routines. Rather, the findings show that tourists' own comparison of content with field experience found the content consistent, and sometimes understated, which indicates that the circulating representation was truthful and not misleading. This partly supports P3: congruence between representation and reality sustains trust, as authenticity research would predict (Zhou et al., 2023; Gardiner et al., 2022), but the congruence rested on the favourable character of the destination rather than on managed verification. Where destinations are less fortunate, or where content is edited and staged (Bulchand-Gidumal, 2024), tabayyun and qaulan sadidan would need to operate as deliberate management practices, in line with the role of credible communication in building online trust (Nasrolahi Vosta & Jalilvand, 2023; Sun et al., 2026). Table 5 summarises the assessment of the propositions.

Table 5
Assessment of Research Propositions against the Findings

No.	Evidence from the findings	Related RQ	Assessment
P1	Tourists produce most content; community promotion is passive; residents hold closer knowledge but are less active communicators	RQ1	Supported
P2	Identity represented through hospitality, cooperation, security and care rather than religious symbols	RQ2, RQ3	Supported
P3	Content judged consistent with field conditions; no formal verification routine reported	RQ3	Partly supported
P4	Capacity gap identified and community cooperation evident; effect of capacity building not tested	RQ1, RQ3	Plausible; not tested

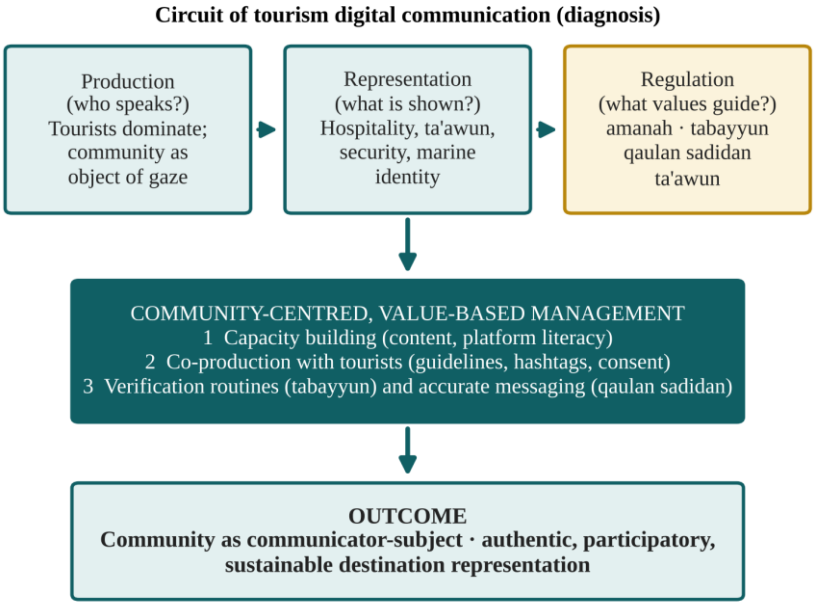
Source: Authors' analysis.

The study contributes to theory in three ways. First, it integrates Hall's (1997) constructionist theory of representation with Islamic communication ethics, using amanah, tabayyun, qaulan sadidan and ta'awun as analytic categories that supply the normative criteria the representation approach lacks. This moves the study of Da'wah Management from preaching organisations and religious messaging into the management of tourism digital communication. Second, by foregrounding who produces, who is represented and by what values communication is governed, it shifts destination communication research from

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effectiveness and image toward the ethics and authorship of representation, addressing the fourth gap identified in the Introduction (Fedji et al., 2026). Third, it refines community-based tourism theory by showing that voice in digital communication is a distinct dimension of empowerment: a community may be visible, admired and economically benefited while remaining a subject of other people's narratives (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022; Erul & Woosnam, 2022; Erul et al., 2023). Figure 10 consolidates these insights into a framework that diagnoses the communication circuit and prescribes community-centred management.

Figure 10
Community-Centred, Value-Based Framework for Tourism Digital Communication Management



Source: Authors' elaboration from the findings.

For destination managers and homestay operators, the findings imply a deliberate shift from passive to planned digital communication. Concretely, capacity building in content production, platform literacy and marketing communication should be prioritised (Gato et al., 2022). Managers can also develop co-production guidelines with tourists, for example shared hashtags, respectful photography of residents and religious activities, and consent practices, so that tourist-generated content reflects the community's own preferred self-presentation. Routine verification of information on official and community channels, including facilities, prices and conditions, would operationalise tabayyun and qaulan sadidan.

For local government and tourism authorities, the results suggest incorporating community-based digital communication into destination development strategies and linking it to infrastructure, waste management and facility planning, since the image on which tourism depends is sustained by environmental quality (Wahyudi et al., 2023; Ferronato et al., 2024). Support could take the form of training programmes, community-run official accounts and partnerships with creators. For religious and community institutions, the study indicates that Islamic values can be communicated through conduct and service that tourists experience and re-present, which is compatible with the wider Muslim-friendly tourism agenda (Battour et al., 2023; Battour et al., 2024).

The setting adds nuance to the Muslim-friendly tourism literature. Lemukutan is a small marine island in a Muslim-majority community that is not marketed as a halal destination, and

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its visitors come from heterogeneous backgrounds, as the peaks during Christmas, New Year, Eid al-Fitr and Chinese New Year suggest and as informants' reports that service was given regardless of background confirm. Islamic values here operate as a social ethos shared with all visitors rather than as a product attribute for Muslim tourists, contrasting with studies of Muslim travellers' intentions toward halal-friendly facilities (Soonsan & Jumani, 2024; Jumani, 2024; Chang & Amalina, 2026). The developing-country and island context also means that digital capacity, infrastructure and waste management are constraints that shape how far community-led communication can develop (Tricahyono et al., 2026; Fakfare et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that digital communication management plays an important role in shaping the representation of Lemukutan Island as a destination known not only for its natural beauty but also for the life and character of its community. Content produced by tourists on social media is a main channel that extends information about the island and shapes public perception. In this process tourists act not only as visitors but as communicators who help determine how the island and its people appear in the digital space. The representation of the local community in tourist content reveals Islamic values present in daily practice, especially hospitality, mutual respect, cooperation, concern for the environment and openness toward tourists. These values form the social identity of the Muslim community, which is recognised through tourists' experiences and re-communicated through digital media, and show that Islamic values in tourism are realised through behaviour and social relations as well as religious attributes.

The study contributes a theoretical integration of Hall's constructionist representation with Islamic communication ethics, qualitative evidence from a non-halal-branded Muslim-majority island, and a community-centred, value-based framework for managing tourism digital communication. Academically, the study indicates that authorship and ethics should complement reach and effectiveness as criteria for evaluating destination communication. Practically, management of digital communication must involve the community in producing, managing and disseminating tourism information so that representation becomes more authentic, participatory and sustainable, and so that residents are subjects who narrate themselves rather than only objects of representation.

The study has limitations. It is a single-case design, so its findings support analytical and not statistical generalisation, and the findings rely on informants' perceptions and on selected content rather than on a systematic sample of posts. Future research could compare other island destinations in Indonesia, apply large-scale content analysis of TikTok and Instagram posts, test the effect of community capacity-building interventions through action research, and examine the perspectives of non-Muslim residents and visitors to capture the plurality of the destination's social life.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, R., M.K.G., B.A., P.A.S. and F.A.; methodology, R., M.K.G., B.A., P.A.S. and F.A.; investigation (observation, interviews and documentation on Lemukutan Island), R., M.K.G., B.A., P.A.S. and F.A.; formal analysis, R., M.K.G., B.A., P.A.S. and F.A.; writing original draft preparation, R., M.K.G., B.A., P.A.S. and F.A.; writing review and editing, R., M.K.G., B.A., P.A.S. and F.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

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Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process
During the preparation of this work the authors used Claude (Anthropic) to structure the manuscript according to the journal template, to edit the English language, and to identify and format literature references. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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Conflicts of Interest
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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