

Exploring Padanglawas Culture Through an Online Comic Model Based on Wedding Local Wisdom

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ABSTRACT:

This study analyzes the need to develop an online comic construction model based on the local wisdom embedded in traditional wedding ceremonies in Padanglawas as a strategy for cultural preservation through digital media. The study was motivated by the declining understanding among younger generations of the symbolic meanings and ritual stages of traditional weddings, alongside the increasing dominance of digital media in youth culture. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach supported by quantitative data during the needs analysis stage. Data were collected through interviews with traditional leaders, observations of wedding ceremonies, questionnaires distributed to young people, and documentation studies. The findings show that more than 80% of respondents have limited understanding of Padanglawas traditional wedding customs. However, more than 85% expressed strong interest in learning local culture through digital comic media. Traditional leaders also supported cultural digitalization provided that the authenticity of cultural values and ritual structures is maintained. Based on these findings, the study formulates the conceptual need for an online comic model that integrates ritual sequences, authentic cultural symbols, communicative language, and accessible digital formats. The study highlights online comics as an innovative medium for strengthening cultural literacy and youth cultural identity in the digital era.

Keywords: Cultural Preservation; Local Wisdom; Online Comics; Padanglawas Culture; Traditional Wedding Ceremony; Digital Media.

1. Introduction

Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped how communities access, interpret, and transmit cultural values. In the era of Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0, digital media functions not merely as a communication tool but also as a space for producing meaning, identity, and cultural representation. This shift presents a dual implication for local cultural sustainability: while

technology offers new opportunities for preservation and dissemination, accelerated globalization simultaneously risks displacing, diluting, or even eroding local wisdom that has historically been transmitted through intergenerational oral tradition and communal practice (Polnaya et al., 2023). Within this tension, the present study examines online comics as an alternative medium for revitalizing and disseminating the local wisdom embedded in

Padanglawas traditional wedding ceremonies—an approach positioned at the intersection of cultural continuity and contemporary digital literacy (Irianto, 2017; Rayhan et al., 2025).

Padanglawas is culturally rich, particularly in its traditional wedding rituals, which operate not only as a formal union between two individuals but also as a socio-cultural event loaded with symbolic meanings, moral values, kinship structures, and local philosophies. Each stage of the ceremony—from early family deliberation and customary negotiation to the ritual procession and closing practices—reflects a worldview that frames relationships among humans, the divine, social networks, and the natural environment. However, despite this cultural depth, the symbolic and philosophical dimensions of these rituals are not always documented or transmitted through media formats that are accessible and attractive to younger audiences. As narratives and local myths increasingly migrate into digital platforms, traditional storytelling that once lived through communal oral performance now competes with diverse online content ecosystems (Fauzi et al., 2025). Consequently, the sustainability of cultural memory depends not only on preservation efforts, but also on how effectively cultural knowledge is represented, packaged, and circulated in today's media environment.

This challenge becomes more pressing given the dominance of global popular culture and the media preferences of digital-native youth. Younger generations tend to engage more with visual and interactive content—such as online comics, animation, and social media—rather than lengthy descriptive texts or conventional documentation. This suggests an urgent need to translate local cultural values into formats that align with contemporary patterns of learning and information consumption. Online comics, as visual-narrative media, offer a promising pathway to communicate complex cultural meanings through integrated panels, dialogue, and story arcs that can simplify intricate concepts without stripping away essential cultural significance. Such potential supports the argument that online comics can function as a culturally grounded yet

contemporary medium, enabling local traditions to remain relevant and competitive within modern narrative landscapes (Putra et al., 2024; Zahrani et al., 2025). Prior research also indicates that digital media—particularly comics and other narrative-based formats—can effectively convey local wisdom and customary stories to modern audiences, especially youth (Amelia & Purwaningsih, 2021; Senoprabowo et al., 2021; Safitri & Krismayani, 2023).

Against this background, developing a local wisdom-based online comic construction model for Padanglawas traditional wedding ceremonies becomes both relevant and strategic. This study is not limited to cultural documentation; it also aims to formulate a systematic model for culturally grounded media construction that is adaptive to digital environments. The intended construction model includes needs analysis, cultural element identification, narrative and character design, integration of customary symbols, and media feasibility testing. This approach aligns with literature emphasizing the strategic role of digital media in revitalizing and promoting local culture amid globalization pressures (Nurjanah & Srihilmawati, 2025). Importantly, needs analysis is positioned as a critical foundation to ensure that the developed media reflects “real needs” rather than researcher assumptions, particularly regarding cultural authenticity and audience relevance (Eliza et al., 2022).

Three interrelated needs justify the urgency of this study. First, there is a need for innovative cultural preservation media capable of reaching youth audiences more effectively than traditional documentation formats (e.g., academic texts, printed books, or limited-scope audiovisual records). Second, there is a need to bridge the intergenerational gap in cultural understanding, as the transmission of customary knowledge increasingly becomes ceremonial rather than educative—leaving younger participants present in rituals but not fully engaged as cultural meaning-makers. Third, there is a broader need to strengthen local identity amid cultural homogenization, as youth exposure to global content via social media can lead to identity

disorientation and reduced sense of belonging to local heritage (Apriyani et al., 2022; Darmastuti et al., 2018; Sholihah et al., 2023). Within this context, culturally grounded online comics may act as a tool for value internalization, because narratives can embed local principles in relatable storylines, encouraging youth not only to consume culture but also to participate in its continuity.

The Padanglawas wedding tradition contains multiple symbolic elements suitable for visual representation—for instance, kinship structures reflected in customary roles, deliberative values expressed through family negotiation, and material symbols employed in specific ritual stages. These elements may be translated into narrative scenes that are not merely informative but also emotionally resonant and reflective. Yet, without systematic needs analysis and cultural validation, there is a risk that digital representation becomes superficial, inaccurate, or culturally insensitive. Therefore, this study incorporates triangulated data collection to ensure that cultural representation remains authentic while the media form remains attractive and accessible to the intended audience (Ramadhania et al., 2022).

Accordingly, this research aims to analyze the needs for developing an online comic construction model based on the local wisdom of Padanglawas traditional wedding ceremonies as a digital cultural preservation strategy. Specifically, the study investigates: (1) the level of youth understanding of the symbolic meanings and stages of the wedding ritual; (2) youth preferences and acceptance of online comics as cultural learning media; and (3) essential cultural, narrative, visual, linguistic, and technical components required for a culturally authentic and digitally accessible comic model. By doing so, the study seeks to contribute not only a media product direction but also a replicable conceptual–methodological framework for local wisdom–based digital media development that can be adapted across other Indonesian cultural contexts (Abduh et al., 2023). Ultimately, this work positions online comics not as mere entertainment artifacts, but as adaptive cultural strategies that connect tradition and technology,

intergenerational knowledge and digital practice, and local values with the contemporary public sphere.

Literature Review

Local wisdom refers to a system of knowledge, values, and practices that evolve within a community and are transmitted across generations through social interaction, ritual practices, and collective memory. In many traditional societies, local wisdom functions as a normative framework that regulates relationships between humans, the environment, and spiritual beliefs (Affandy, 2019; Setiadi, 2019). Within the Indonesian cultural context, local wisdom is embedded in various cultural expressions such as rituals, oral traditions, customary laws, and social institutions. These cultural forms serve not only as symbolic heritage but also as mechanisms for maintaining social cohesion and moral order within communities (Farida & Andalas, 2019; Haryanto, 2022).

However, globalization and digital transformation have introduced significant shifts in the transmission of cultural knowledge. Traditional knowledge systems that were historically passed down through oral narratives and communal participation are increasingly challenged by the dominance of global digital culture. As younger generations spend more time interacting with digital media, the continuity of local cultural knowledge depends on how effectively it is adapted to contemporary communication platforms (Suciartini et al., 2022). Scholars argue that integrating cultural heritage into digital formats can provide a sustainable strategy for preserving local identity while maintaining relevance in modern society (Nugraha et al., 2017; Sutarto, 2016).

Traditional wedding ceremonies represent one of the most significant cultural expressions within many Indonesian communities. Anthropologically, such ceremonies function as rites of passage that mark transitions in social status and reinforce community identity (Izzi et al., 2021). In the Padanglawas cultural context, the wedding ceremony embodies complex symbolic structures that reflect kinship systems, collective

decision-making processes, and ethical norms guiding social relationships.

Each stage of the ceremony from initial family negotiations to ritual performances—contains symbolic meanings that emphasize values such as mutual respect, social responsibility, and communal solidarity (Ramanta & Samsuri, 2020; Waruwu et al., 2019). These rituals also reaffirm the cultural principle of collective deliberation, which strengthens the social fabric within the community (Fanggidae & Boimau, 2023). The symbolic richness of traditional wedding ceremonies thus provides an important cultural resource for educational and cultural preservation initiatives.

Nevertheless, modern social changes have gradually reduced the depth of cultural understanding among younger generations. While many young people may still participate in traditional ceremonies, their comprehension of the underlying philosophical meanings is often limited. Consequently, documenting and representing ritual practices through innovative media has become an important strategy for sustaining cultural memory (Lattu, 2019; Ranteallo et al., 2021).

Comics are widely recognized as a powerful medium of visual storytelling that combines textual narratives and sequential imagery. Through the integration of images, dialogue, and symbolic representation, comics can convey complex messages in a simplified and engaging manner. In educational contexts, comics have been shown to enhance comprehension, motivation, and emotional engagement among readers (Puspitorini et al., 2014).

From a cognitive perspective, the effectiveness of comics can be explained through dual coding theory, which posits that information presented simultaneously through visual and verbal channels improves memory retention and understanding (Clark & Paivio, 1991). This theoretical foundation highlights the potential of comics as an educational medium capable of bridging abstract cultural concepts and accessible storytelling formats.

When applied to cultural education, comics provide an effective mechanism for translating traditional narratives into contemporary visual language. Cultural symbols, rituals, and social values can be visually illustrated through characters, scenes, and storylines that resonate with modern audiences. This narrative flexibility makes comics particularly suitable for introducing local cultural traditions to younger generations who are accustomed to visual media environments (Sanjaya & Rahardi, 2021).

The transition from printed comics to digital platforms has expanded the reach and accessibility of visual storytelling. Online comics allow creators to distribute content globally, interact directly with audiences, and publish narratives in episodic formats that sustain reader engagement. Digital platforms also enable cultural narratives to circulate within broader digital ecosystems, including social media and mobile applications.

For younger audiences, digital comics align with contemporary patterns of media consumption. Studies indicate that young people prefer interactive and visually rich digital content that can be accessed easily through smartphones and internet platforms (Kwando et al., 2021; Lubis et al., 2023). Consequently, online comics offer a promising medium for presenting cultural knowledge in ways that are both accessible and appealing. Furthermore, digital comics can incorporate diverse design elements, including dynamic panel layouts, color schemes, and multimedia integration, which enhance narrative immersion. When cultural authenticity is maintained, online comics can function as a hybrid platform that simultaneously preserves traditional knowledge and adapts it to modern digital communication environments (Gunaepi et al., 2023).

The development of digital cultural media requires a systematic design framework to ensure both cultural authenticity and media effectiveness. Media construction models typically involve sequential stages such as needs analysis, design planning, product development, implementation, and evaluation. These stages allow researchers and

designers to align media production with both cultural content requirements and user preferences.

In the context of local culture-based media development, the needs analysis stage plays a critical role in identifying cultural elements that should be preserved and determining how they can be translated into digital narratives (Pratiwi et al., 2020; Wahyutiar et al., 2023). This stage also involves understanding the characteristics of the target audience, particularly their digital habits, visual preferences, and learning styles.

Research on educational media development has demonstrated that integrating local cultural elements into digital storytelling can enhance contextual understanding and cultural identity among learners (Maharani et al., 2025; Wibowo et al., 2021). Consequently, developing an online comic construction model grounded in local wisdom represents a promising approach to bridging cultural preservation and digital innovation.

Overall, the literature suggests that combining local wisdom, cultural rituals, visual storytelling, and digital media development frameworks provides a strong theoretical basis for designing culturally responsive digital content. This study therefore builds upon these theoretical foundations to develop a culturally authentic and digitally accessible model of online comics based on the traditional wedding rituals of Padanglawas.

This study contributes to the fields of cultural studies, digital media communication, and cultural preservation in several ways.

First, theoretically, the study expands scholarly discussions on the integration of local wisdom into digital storytelling. By conceptualizing an online comic construction model grounded in cultural authenticity, this research provides a framework for understanding how digital media can serve as a bridge between traditional cultural knowledge and contemporary communication practices.

Second, methodologically, the study demonstrates the value of combining qualitative cultural exploration with quantitative needs analysis in

developing digital cultural media. This mixed approach enables the identification of both cultural authenticity requirements and user-centered design considerations.

Third, practically, the research offers an alternative strategy for cultural preservation through digital media. The proposed online comic model provides an innovative medium for communicating the values embedded in Padanglawas wedding traditions to younger audiences who are more familiar with digital visual content.

Finally, socially and culturally, the study supports efforts to strengthen cultural identity among younger generations by presenting traditional knowledge in a format that is engaging, accessible, and relevant to contemporary digital environments. Through this approach, local cultural heritage can remain meaningful and sustainable within the evolving landscape of global digital culture.

2. Methodology

This study employs a Research and Development (R&D) approach aimed at developing an online comic construction model based on the local wisdom of Padanglawas traditional wedding ceremonies. The use of an R&D framework is appropriate because the research not only investigates cultural phenomena but also produces a digital cultural media model designed to support cultural literacy and preservation. The research integrates qualitative cultural exploration with quantitative needs analysis to ensure that the proposed model reflects both cultural authenticity and user-centered media design.

The research procedure adapts systematic stages commonly applied in media development models, including: (1) needs analysis, (2) model design, (3) product development, (4) expert validation, and (5) limited user testing. These stages ensure that the resulting online comic model is culturally grounded, technologically feasible, and relevant to the intended audience.

Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted in Padanglawas, a

region known for its rich cultural traditions, particularly the traditional wedding ceremony that continues to be practiced within the community. Participants in this study consisted of three main groups. The first group included five traditional leaders and cultural practitioners, who served as key informants due to their deep knowledge of the symbolic meanings and ritual structures of the Padanglawas wedding tradition. The second group consisted of three cultural practitioners and observers, who contributed contextual perspectives regarding cultural preservation and community practices. The third group comprised forty young participants aged 16–23, representing the primary target audience of the online comic media.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a method commonly applied in qualitative research to identify individuals who possess relevant knowledge or experience related to the research topic. Traditional leaders and cultural practitioners were selected because of their authority and expertise regarding customary practices, while the younger participants were selected to represent potential users of the digital comic media.

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using multiple methods to ensure methodological triangulation and enhance the validity of the findings.

In-depth interviews were conducted with traditional leaders and cultural practitioners to explore the symbolic meanings, ritual stages, and philosophical values embedded within the Padanglawas wedding ceremony. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing researchers to follow a prepared guideline while maintaining flexibility for deeper exploration of cultural narratives.

Participant observation was also carried out during traditional wedding ceremonies. Through direct observation, the researchers documented ritual sequences, cultural symbols, social interactions, and ceremonial attributes that could potentially be visualized within the comic narrative. Field notes and visual documentation were used

to capture contextual cultural information.

Questionnaires were distributed to the group of younger participants in order to examine their level of cultural understanding, digital media preferences, and perceptions regarding online comics as a medium for cultural learning. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and descriptive items designed to measure familiarity with traditional rituals and interest in digital storytelling media.

In addition, document analysis was conducted to review cultural literature, archival records, and visual materials related to Padanglawas wedding traditions. These documents were used to support the cultural accuracy of the data and to complement information obtained from interviews and observations.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data obtained from interviews and observations were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis followed several stages, including data reduction, categorization, theme identification, and interpretation. Through this process, key cultural themes such as kinship structure, ritual symbolism, and social values were identified and later incorporated into the conceptual design of the comic narrative. Quantitative data derived from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, particularly percentage distribution, to identify patterns of cultural understanding and media preferences among younger participants. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data allowed the researchers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of both cultural content requirements and user expectations for digital cultural media.

Expert Validation

After the initial comic model was designed and developed, the prototype underwent expert validation to ensure both cultural authenticity and media quality. The validation process involved three types of experts: cultural experts, media design experts, and language experts. Cultural experts evaluated the accuracy of ritual representation and symbolic elements, media

experts assessed visual design and narrative structure, and language experts reviewed the clarity and communicative effectiveness of the dialogue and text.

Validation was conducted using structured evaluation sheets containing qualitative rating scales covering four aspects: content accuracy, linguistic clarity, visual design, and usability. Feedback from experts was analyzed and used to refine the comic prototype before it was introduced to the target users.

Limited User Testing

The final stage involved limited user testing with the younger participant group to evaluate the usability and cultural communication effectiveness of the developed comic model. Participants were invited to read the digital comic prototype and then provide feedback through questionnaires and short interviews. The evaluation focused on three aspects: comprehension of cultural content, level of engagement with the narrative, and overall relevance of the comic format as a medium for cultural learning.

The results from the user testing phase were analyzed descriptively to assess the effectiveness of the proposed construction model. Suggestions and responses from participants were then used to produce final revisions to the comic model.

Research Validity

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the research findings, this study applied methodological triangulation and source triangulation. Data obtained from interviews with traditional leaders were cross-checked with observational findings and document analysis. Similarly, the perceptions of younger participants collected through questionnaires were compared with qualitative insights obtained during interviews and discussions.

Through this triangulation process, the study ensures that the resulting online comic construction model is grounded in authentic cultural knowledge while simultaneously addressing the practical needs of digital media users.

3. Results

The findings of this study reveal a significant gap between the practice of cultural traditions and the depth of cultural understanding among younger generations. Although the majority of respondents have participated in or attended traditional wedding ceremonies in Padanglawas, only a small proportion demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the symbolic meanings embedded within these rituals. This phenomenon reflects a broader challenge in cultural transmission, where participation in ritual practice does not necessarily translate into internalized cultural knowledge. From the perspective of cultural transmission theory, the sustainability of cultural heritage depends not only on the continuity of ritual practices but also on the effectiveness of knowledge transfer across generations. When cultural knowledge is transmitted primarily through observation without interpretative mediation, younger participants may engage with rituals as spectators rather than as active cultural interpreters. This situation highlights the importance of interpretative media capable of translating cultural symbols into narratives that are accessible to contemporary audiences. Semiotic theory provides an important framework for understanding this process. Cultural rituals function as systems of signs in which objects, gestures, costumes, and sequences of actions operate as signifiers that convey deeper cultural meanings. In traditional wedding ceremonies, symbolic elements such as clothing, ritual objects, kinship roles, and ceremonial stages communicate values related to social harmony, collective responsibility, and respect for elders. However, without contextual interpretation, these signs may remain opaque to younger observers. Visual narrative media such as comics can act as semiotic translators by transforming symbolic cultural practices into structured visual storytelling that clarifies relationships between signifiers and their underlying meanings.

The strong preference among respondents for visual digital content further reinforces the potential of comics as an effective medium of cultural interpretation. More than eighty percent of

participants indicated that visual storytelling helps them understand cultural narratives more easily than textual explanations. This finding aligns with the principles of visual semiotics and cognitive communication theory, which suggest that meaning-making becomes more effective when symbolic representations are supported by visual and narrative cues. Through sequential panels, character expressions, and contextual dialogue, comics can illustrate not only what happens in a ritual but also why it occurs and what values it represents. In this sense, online comics function not merely as entertainment media but as interpretative cultural platforms that mediate between traditional symbolism and contemporary cultural literacy.

The study also demonstrates that digital media environments play a crucial role in shaping how cultural knowledge circulates in modern societies. The widespread use of mobile devices and online platforms among younger generations indicates that digital spaces have become primary arenas for cultural interaction and identity formation. Within the framework of digital heritage studies, digital technologies are increasingly recognized as tools for preserving and disseminating intangible cultural heritage. Digital heritage does not simply replicate cultural artifacts in electronic form; rather, it involves recontextualizing cultural knowledge within interactive and accessible media environments. In this context, online comics represent a form of digital heritage practice in which traditional narratives are reconstructed through digital storytelling to maintain their relevance in contemporary cultural ecosystems.

The development of an online comic model based on the local wisdom of Padanglawas wedding ceremonies can therefore be interpreted as a form of cultural mediation between tradition and technological modernity. Instead of viewing digital technology as a threat to cultural authenticity, this study positions digital media as a potential partner in cultural revitalization. The results show that both traditional leaders and younger participants support the idea of cultural digitalization as long as the core values and symbolic structures of the rituals remain intact. This convergence of

perspectives suggests that digital adaptation can occur without undermining cultural authenticity, provided that the representation of cultural elements is guided by community knowledge and validated by cultural authorities.

Another important insight emerging from this study relates to the relationship between cultural identity and digital representation. In an era characterized by the rapid circulation of global media content, local cultural narratives often struggle to compete with dominant global cultural industries. As a result, younger audiences may become more familiar with external cultural narratives than with their own cultural heritage. By transforming traditional rituals into engaging digital narratives, online comics can contribute to strengthening local cultural identity. Through relatable characters, culturally grounded storylines, and authentic visual symbolism, comics can encourage younger readers to reinterpret their cultural heritage as part of their contemporary identity rather than as distant historical tradition.

From a cultural studies perspective, this process can be understood as a form of cultural negotiation in which traditional knowledge is rearticulated within new media contexts. Cultural preservation in the digital era does not necessarily imply static reproduction of tradition; rather, it involves adaptive reinterpretation that allows cultural values to remain meaningful within evolving social environments. Online comics therefore function as a cultural interface where traditional values, digital creativity, and youth cultural practices intersect.

The construction model proposed in this research further demonstrates the importance of integrating cultural authenticity with user-centered digital design. The model developed through needs analysis combines three essential dimensions: cultural validation, narrative accessibility, and digital engagement. Cultural validation ensures that all symbolic representations originate from authentic cultural knowledge verified by traditional authorities. Narrative accessibility focuses on transforming complex cultural concepts into relatable storylines

that resonate with younger audiences. Digital engagement emphasizes visual aesthetics, episodic storytelling, and mobile-friendly formats that align with contemporary media consumption patterns. The integration of these dimensions creates a culturally grounded yet technologically adaptive media model capable of facilitating effective cultural communication.

Furthermore, the findings contribute to the growing discourse on digital cultural sustainability. Sustainable cultural preservation requires not only safeguarding traditional knowledge but also ensuring that such knowledge remains visible and meaningful in modern cultural environments. When cultural narratives are absent from digital spaces, they risk becoming marginalized within the cultural consciousness of younger generations. By introducing culturally grounded narratives into widely accessible digital platforms, communities can maintain the presence of their cultural heritage within contemporary communication networks.

In this regard, online comics can be conceptualized as cultural knowledge infrastructures within the broader digital heritage ecosystem. They provide an accessible entry point for cultural education while simultaneously supporting the documentation and dissemination of intangible cultural practices. The episodic nature of digital comics also allows cultural narratives to evolve over time, enabling continuous engagement with audiences and opportunities for expanding cultural representation.

Overall, the findings of this study highlight the transformative potential of integrating local cultural knowledge with digital storytelling media. The development of an online comic construction model based on Padanglawas wedding traditions demonstrates how digital media can function as a bridge between traditional cultural practices and contemporary digital culture. By translating symbolic rituals into accessible visual narratives, online comics contribute not only to cultural preservation but also to the revitalization of cultural meaning within the lived experiences of younger generations. In doing so, the study underscores the broader role of digital media as an

adaptive cultural strategy capable of sustaining local heritage within an increasingly interconnected digital world.

4. Discussion

This study aimed to identify the needs for developing an online comic construction model based on the local wisdom of Padanglawas traditional wedding ceremonies. Data were collected from 40 young respondents aged 16–23, five traditional leaders, and three cultural practitioners through questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings are organized into three main areas: the level of cultural understanding among younger generations, the need for digital media as a cultural learning tool, and the identification of essential cultural elements for the construction of the online comic model.

Level of Cultural Understanding Among Younger Generations

The survey results reveal that although traditional wedding ceremonies remain socially visible, the depth of cultural understanding among younger participants is relatively limited. A large majority of respondents (85%) reported that they had attended at least one traditional wedding ceremony in Padanglawas. However, participation did not necessarily correspond to a deep understanding of the ritual meanings. Approximately 62% of respondents indicated that they understood the ceremony only in general terms without fully comprehending the symbolic significance of each stage. Another 25% stated that they possessed partial knowledge of the meanings associated with several ritual stages, while only 13% reported a comprehensive understanding of the symbolic and philosophical meanings embedded within the ceremony.

These findings suggest that while cultural rituals continue to be practiced, the transmission of cultural knowledge has become increasingly superficial. The younger generation tends to participate in rituals as observers rather than as interpreters of cultural meaning. As a result, many symbolic elements of the ceremony are perceived as procedural activities rather than

meaningful cultural expressions.

When respondents were asked about their familiarity with specific cultural values embedded within the ceremony, the results showed varying levels of awareness. Approximately 70% of respondents recognized the importance of deliberation and collective decision-making within the wedding process. About 58% identified the presence of communal cooperation and mutual assistance, while only 40% understood the symbolic meaning of traditional clothing and ritual objects. A smaller proportion, around 35%, demonstrated awareness of the kinship philosophy underlying the customary social structure involved in the ceremony. These findings indicate that the symbolic and philosophical dimensions of the ritual remain the least understood aspects among younger participants.

Need for Digital Cultural Learning Media

The second set of findings concerns the media preferences of younger audiences regarding cultural learning. The questionnaire results show a strong preference for visual and digital media formats. Approximately 90% of respondents indicated that they prefer visual content rather than lengthy textual explanations. Similarly, 87% of respondents expressed interest in reading online comics that present local cultural stories. Around 82% reported that illustrated storytelling helps them understand cultural narratives more easily than written descriptions alone.

The data also indicate that digital technology plays an important role in the daily information consumption patterns of young people. About 78% of respondents reported accessing digital content every day through mobile devices such as smartphones or tablets. This suggests that digital platforms provide a highly relevant channel for delivering cultural knowledge to younger audiences.

When asked about the preferred characteristics of cultural media, respondents highlighted several key features. Approximately 88% preferred simple and communicative language, while 85% emphasized the importance of

attractive and colorful illustrations. Around 80% indicated that cultural stories should be connected to situations relatable to young people's everyday experiences. Additionally, 76% preferred episodic storytelling formats that present narratives gradually rather than in a single long narrative. These results demonstrate that visual storytelling formats such as online comics are highly compatible with the media consumption habits of younger generations.

Cultural Content Needs for Comic Construction

Interviews with traditional leaders and cultural practitioners provided deeper insights into the cultural elements that should be incorporated into the online comic model. According to the informants, the Padanglawas traditional wedding ceremony consists of approximately twelve main ritual stages, each carrying specific symbolic meanings related to kinship, social responsibility, and community values. However, the survey results indicate that younger participants are generally familiar with only four of these stages, suggesting that many cultural components remain unknown to younger generations. Despite this limited understanding, respondents expressed strong support for cultural preservation efforts. Approximately 95% of respondents agreed that local cultural traditions should be preserved, while 89% believed that digital media could contribute significantly to cultural preservation. Furthermore, 92% of respondents supported the idea of developing an online comic based on traditional wedding ceremonies as a cultural learning medium.

The interviews also emphasized that cultural representation in digital media must maintain authenticity and respect for traditional values. Traditional leaders expressed support for digital cultural initiatives as long as the representation of rituals, symbols, and values remains consistent with customary knowledge. This perspective highlights the importance of involving cultural authorities in the process of designing digital cultural media.

Formulation of the Online Comic Construction Model

Based on the integration of quantitative survey results and qualitative cultural insights, this study formulated several key components required for the development of the online comic construction model. First, the content of the comic must be grounded in authentic cultural narratives derived from interviews with traditional leaders and validated cultural documentation. Second, the narrative structure should combine educational and emotional storytelling elements that allow readers to connect with cultural values through relatable characters and events.

Third, the visual design of the comic should incorporate authentic cultural symbols, including traditional clothing, ceremonial objects, and ritual settings that reflect the cultural identity of Padanglawas. Fourth, the comic should adopt a digital episodic format, enabling readers to follow the cultural narrative gradually while maintaining engagement through serialized storytelling. Finally, the language used in the comic should be communicative and accessible while incorporating key local cultural terms to preserve linguistic authenticity.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the need for developing an online comic construction model based on the local wisdom embedded in the traditional wedding ceremonies of Padanglawas. The findings demonstrate a notable gap between cultural participation and cultural understanding among younger generations. Although most respondents have attended traditional wedding ceremonies, only a small proportion possess a deep understanding of the symbolic meanings and philosophical values embedded within the ritual stages. This condition indicates that the transmission of cultural knowledge is increasingly procedural rather than interpretative, highlighting the need for innovative media capable of facilitating deeper cultural learning.

The results of the needs analysis also reveal a strong preference among younger audiences for

visual and digital learning media. The majority of respondents expressed greater interest in visual storytelling formats and demonstrated high levels of engagement with digital content accessed through mobile devices. These findings suggest that digital narrative platforms such as online comics offer significant potential as cultural communication tools capable of translating traditional knowledge into formats that are accessible, engaging, and relevant to contemporary audiences.

The qualitative findings further indicate that traditional leaders and cultural practitioners support cultural digitalization efforts as long as the representation of ritual elements remains culturally authentic. This support confirms that digital adaptation can function as a complementary strategy for cultural preservation rather than as a replacement for traditional practices. Through careful integration of cultural symbols, narrative storytelling, and digital design, online comics can serve as an interpretative medium that bridges traditional cultural knowledge and modern digital communication.

Based on the integration of empirical data and cultural insights, this study proposes an online comic construction model consisting of several key components: authentic cultural content derived from traditional authorities, narrative storytelling that combines educational and emotional elements, visual representation of cultural symbols, accessible digital formats suitable for episodic storytelling, and communicative language that incorporates local terminology. These components collectively form a framework for designing culturally grounded digital media that aligns with the learning preferences of younger audiences.

The study contributes to the field of cultural studies by demonstrating how digital storytelling media can support the preservation and revitalization of intangible cultural heritage. By transforming ritual knowledge into accessible visual narratives, online comics function as a cultural interface that connects traditional values with contemporary digital culture. In this way, cultural preservation is not limited to

documentation but extends to the active reinterpretation and dissemination of cultural knowledge within digital environments.

However, this research has several limitations. The study focuses primarily on the Padanglawas cultural context and involves a relatively limited number of participants. Future research may expand the scope by examining other cultural traditions or by conducting larger-scale implementation studies to evaluate the effectiveness of digital comic media in enhancing cultural literacy among broader audiences. Further studies may also explore the integration of interactive digital features, such as animation or multimedia storytelling, to strengthen audience engagement with cultural narratives.

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The authors certify that this manuscript is original, has not been published elsewhere, and is not under consideration by any other publication.

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