



DINAMIKA GOVERNANCE JURNAL ILMU ADMINISTRASI NEGARA

<http://ejournal.upnjatim.ac.id/index.php/jdg/index>

GOVERNANCE OF EXPERIENCE-BASED TOURISM NARRATIVES: REPRESENTATION OF NUSA PENIDA TOURISM PRODUCTS IN DIGITAL MARKETPLACES

I Gede Gian Saputra¹, Putu Wira Parama Suta²

^{1,2}, Program Studi Sarjana Pariwisata Fakultas Pariwisata Universitas Udayana

*Email Corresponding: igedegiansaputra@unud.ac.id

ARTICLE INFORMATION ABSTRACT

Article history:

Received date: 4 Juli 2025

Revised date: 11 Juli 2025

Accepted date: 16 Juli 2025

The rise of digital platforms has transformed the governance of tourism narratives, particularly in experience-based tourism where storytelling, visuals, and platform algorithms shape destination representation. This study investigates the governance dynamics behind digital representations of tourism products in Nusa Penida, Bali, across five major marketplace platforms: Klook, Viator, GetYourGuide, Traveloka Experience, and Airbnb Experience. Using qualitative digital observation and content analysis of 450 tourism experiences, the study identifies a dominant trend of narrative and visual homogenization, limited community involvement, and minimal integration of sustainability principles. These patterns are driven by platform-curated algorithms and commercial imperatives that marginalize local voices and reduce diverse cultural contexts into standardized visual products. Drawing on frameworks of collaborative and algorithmic governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Zuboff, 2019), the study highlights power asymmetries between global platforms and local tourism actors, revealing a regulatory gap in digital tourism content management. The findings underscore the need for inclusive, participatory governance mechanisms that enable ethical, context-sensitive representation of tourism destinations in the platform economy.

Keyword: digital governance; platformization; experience-based tourism; narrative representation; Nusa Penida

INTRODUCTION

The global tourism industry has undergone a significant shift with the rise of digital platforms that mediate not only bookings and transactions but also how destinations are narrated, visualized, and experienced. This transformation is especially pronounced in the experience-based tourism sector, where tourist consumption is shaped less by infrastructure and more by curated narratives and visual representations that promise cultural immersion and personal transformation (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). In this context, the governance of tourism narratives—

particularly how they are produced, curated, and circulated online—has become a crucial dimension of destination management, with implications for cultural authenticity, sustainability, and equity.

A growing body of literature has addressed the implications of digital tourism platforms for market dynamics and consumer behavior (Xiang et al., 2015; Buhalis & Law, 2008). Recent studies have drawn attention to the role of algorithms and commercial logic in shaping visibility and desirability of tourism products (Zuboff, 2019; Ert & Fleischer, 2019), often leading to homogenized representations and exclusion of local perspectives

(Farmaki & Kaniadakis, 2020). Moreover, the platformization of tourism—where global digital intermediaries structure the flow of information, bookings, and user-generated content—has raised concerns about asymmetric power relations between corporate actors and local tourism stakeholders (Gretzel et al., 2020; Zajácz, 2021).

Despite these insights, there remains limited research that explicitly connects platform-based representation practices with the concept of governance, particularly in terms of content control, narrative legitimacy, and community voice. Much of the existing work focuses on user behavior or marketing strategies rather than exploring the systemic governance mechanisms (or lack thereof) that determine which narratives are amplified and which are suppressed. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of empirical studies that analyze how different platforms construct and differentiate representations of the same destination, and how this affects the sustainability and inclusivity of tourism development at the local level.

This article addresses that gap by investigating how experience-based tourism products in Nusa Penida, Bali, are represented on five global and regional digital marketplace platforms: Klook, Viator, GetYourGuide, Traveloka Experience, and Airbnb Experience. The study focuses on how narratives are curated, whose voices are amplified, and what governance mechanisms—implicit or explicit—are at play in shaping digital destination discourse. The novelty of this research lies in framing digital tourism representation as a governance issue, rather than merely a marketing or design challenge. By bridging literature on platform governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Zuboff, 2019) with tourism narrative studies, this article contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how digital power structures shape cultural visibility and destination equity in the Global South.

The research is guided by the following questions: (1) What types of experience-based tourism activities are promoted in Nusa Penida's digital marketplaces? (2) How are these products narrated and visualized across different platforms? (3) To what extent do the representations incorporate local cultural values and sustainability principles? (4) What governance challenges arise

from the dominance of global platforms in shaping tourism narratives?

Accordingly, the main objective of this article is to analyze the governance of digital tourism narratives in Nusa Penida by examining how experience-based tourism products are curated, represented, and differentiated across multiple marketplace platforms. Through this lens, the study aims to offer empirical insights and normative reflections on the need for inclusive, context-sensitive, and ethically governed tourism representation in the era of platform capitalism.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative exploratory research design to examine how experience-based tourism products in Nusa Penida are represented on major digital marketplace platforms, and how these representations reflect underlying patterns of narrative governance. The qualitative approach is chosen to allow for an in-depth interpretive analysis of the content, structure, and thematic nuances of digital tourism offerings, which cannot be adequately captured through quantitative metrics alone.

Data were collected through digital observation of five leading tourism marketplace platforms: Klook, Viator, GetYourGuide, Traveloka Experience, and Airbnb Experience. These platforms were selected based on their popularity among international and regional travelers, their active listings in Nusa Penida, and their contrasting business models—ranging from large-scale corporate aggregators to host-driven platforms. The observation was conducted between March and April 2025, during which a total of 450 tourism activities were identified and cataloged.

The primary data sources consist of publicly accessible content on the selected platforms, including activity titles, descriptions, promotional narratives, visual imagery, and available metadata (e.g., duration, pricing, location, service provider). To ensure compliance with ethical research practices, only content available without user login or purchase was collected, using a combination of manual browsing and automated web-scraping tools

such as BeautifulSoup. Activities were included based on three selection criteria: (1) they are located within the administrative area of Nusa Penida, (2) they involve direct tourist participation (e.g., workshops, guided tours, cultural immersion), and (3) they are framed as experiential offerings rather than transactional or purely logistical services.

To analyze the data, a thematic content analysis was conducted, comprising several iterative steps. First, duplicate entries and irrelevant listings were removed through data reduction. Second, open coding was applied to extract recurring narrative elements, keywords, and visual motifs from the promotional content. Third, the coded data were organized into thematic categories such as cultural tourism, adventure, wellness, nature-based activities, and culinary experiences. Fourth, inter-platform comparisons were carried out to identify narrative patterns, visual strategies, and indicators of local engagement or sustainability. Particular attention was paid to the use of storytelling devices, cultural references, and algorithm-friendly language such as “hidden gems,” “authentic experience,” or “Instagram-worthy.”

To enhance the credibility of the analysis, data triangulation was performed by cross-referencing platform narratives with external sources such as tourism statistics from the Klungkung Tourism Office, peer-reviewed literature on Nusa Penida, and user-generated content (e.g., reviews, blogs). In addition, keyword-matching techniques were employed to identify semantic clusters within the dataset, while reflexive interpretation guided the synthesis of empirical patterns with theoretical constructs from governance and tourism studies.

Overall, this methodological framework enables a contextualized understanding of how digital platforms function as gatekeepers of tourism narratives, and how their curation practices reflect broader issues of power, participation, and representational justice in destination governance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide a multi-dimensional analysis of how experience-based tourism in Nusa Penida is represented across five

major digital marketplace platforms. By examining the types of activities promoted, the language and imagery used, the presence (or absence) of local and sustainability values, and the platform-specific governance dynamics, this section highlights how digital platforms play a critical role in shaping not only tourist expectations but also the symbolic construction of the destination itself. These findings are organized thematically to address the core research questions and to unpack the governance implications of narrative control, content asymmetry, and representational justice in platform-mediated tourism.

This section presents the main findings of the study and discusses them in relation to the four research questions:

- (1) What types of experience-based tourism activities are promoted in Nusa Penida’s digital marketplaces?
- (2) How are these products narrated and visualized across different platforms?
- (3) To what extent do the representations incorporate local cultural values and sustainability principles?
- (4) What governance challenges arise from the dominance of global platforms in shaping tourism narratives?

1. Categorization of Tourism Activities in Digital Marketplaces

From the 450 tourism products analyzed, the five most frequent activity categories were: water-based adventure (41.3%), cultural tourism (15.7%), nature exploration (13.1%), photography and social-media-oriented tours (11.6%), and culinary/creative workshops (8.4%). The remaining 9.9% were mixed-category tours.

Water-based activities such as snorkeling, diving, and boat trips dominated the listings, particularly on GetYourGuide (80 listings) and Viator (62 listings), indicating a commercial prioritization of visually appealing marine landscapes. Cultural tourism products, including temple visits and village experiences, appeared in only 71 listings—primarily on Airbnb Experience and Traveloka. This distribution reveals that high-visibility products tend to favor visuality over

cultural depth, aligning with earlier studies on commodified tourist gaze (Urry & Larsen, 2011).

2. Narrative Structures and Platform-Specific Framing

Analysis of promotional text revealed that 87% of products used emotionally evocative, visual-centered language such as “breathtaking,” “authentic,” “hidden paradise,” and “Instagram-worthy.” These descriptors were especially concentrated on Viator and Klook, which adopt a commercial tone optimized for rapid consumption. Airbnb Experience was the only platform where narratives included host voices and local stories, such as “learn to cook with a Balinese family” or “join our seaweed farming community.”

These differences reflect platform-specific governance mechanisms. While Klook and Viator act as algorithm-driven content brokers, Airbnb enables peer-to-peer narrative autonomy. This distinction is significant in digital governance, as it reveals who has control over the production and dissemination of destination meaning—corporate curators or local storytellers (Zuboff, 2019; Salazar, 2012).

3. Visual Representation and Inclusion of Local and Sustainability Values

Visual analysis of promotional images showed that 79% of listings used wide-angle landscape shots with minimal human presence. Coastal cliffs (e.g., Kelingking Beach), dramatic waves, and aerial photography were dominant. Activities involving people—particularly local hosts or cultural interaction—comprised only 11% of image content and were almost entirely confined to Airbnb Experience.

These visual patterns support previous critiques (Farmaki & Kaniadakis, 2020) that digital platforms prioritize aesthetic value over socio-cultural context. In governance terms, this reflects a lack of representational equity where community narratives are marginalized in favor of algorithm-friendly visuals.

Only 14% (63 out of 450) of listings explicitly referenced sustainability, community participation, or local empowerment. Of these, 43

were on Airbnb Experience, 14 on Traveloka, and the remaining six were scattered across GetYourGuide and Viator. Common sustainability claims included “eco-friendly,” “support local,” or “organic lunch,” but most lacked transparency or detail about implementation—raising the risk of greenwashing (Delmas & Burbano, 2011).

Meanwhile, none of the platforms provided ethical labeling or sustainability verification mechanisms. This absence reveals a regulatory blind spot in digital tourism governance where sustainability is optional, unstandardized, and subject to market discretion.

4. Platform Power and Governance Gaps

The comparative data also indicate stark disparities in listing quantity: GetYourGuide had 234 listings, Viator 136, Traveloka 148, Klook 76, and Airbnb Experience 58. The two largest platforms accounted for over 70% of all listings—suggesting a concentration of narrative influence.

These findings point to significant governance challenges. In the absence of public policy frameworks or participatory mechanisms for content curation, digital platforms act as *de facto* governors of tourism narratives. The prioritization of engagement metrics (clicks, bookings) over ethical or cultural value further exacerbates power imbalances and undermines local agency.

As theorized by Ansell and Gash (2008), collaborative governance requires inclusion, trust, and shared authority. Yet, in the current digital ecosystem, platform operators monopolize control while local actors have limited voice and visibility

CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate how experience-based tourism products in Nusa Penida are represented across digital marketplace platforms, and how such representations reflect deeper dynamics of narrative governance. The findings confirm that digital platforms act as dominant narrative curators, shaping destination imagery through algorithm-driven content strategies. This process results in the predominance of aesthetic-oriented, standardized offerings, with

limited inclusion of local cultural values, community narratives, or sustainability principles. These patterns highlight an important governance gap, where narrative authority lies disproportionately in the hands of global platforms rather than local stakeholders.

From a governance perspective, the study reveals that content curation on digital platforms is not merely a technical or marketing issue, but a matter of representational justice. The lack of participatory mechanisms, ethical labeling, or community-based visibility frameworks reflects the absence of formal regulation in the digital tourism ecosystem. Addressing this issue requires rethinking destination governance to include the symbolic and cultural dimensions of how places are digitally constructed and consumed.

Suggestions:

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made for future action and research:

1. **Policy Development:** Regional tourism authorities should collaborate with platform operators to co-develop ethical content guidelines that promote the visibility of local culture, sustainability, and community-led experiences.

2. **Capacity Building:** Local tourism actors in Nusa Penida and similar destinations need targeted support to improve digital storytelling skills, content production, and algorithm-friendly visibility strategies.

3. **Participatory Governance Models:** Multi-stakeholder platforms should be established at the destination level to allow communities, SMEs, and public agencies to engage in curating and reviewing digital content representing their localities.

4. **Further Research:** Future studies should integrate user perspectives (tourists and hosts) to assess how digital representations influence travel behavior and local identity. Longitudinal and comparative studies between destinations would also help in understanding how governance frameworks evolve under different regulatory environments. By strengthening governance over digital narratives, destinations can reclaim agency in how they are represented globally, ensuring that tourism development remains not only

economically viable but also culturally just and socially inclusive.

REFERENCES

- Ansell, C., & Gash, A. (2008). Collaborative governance in theory and practice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 18(4), 543–571. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mum032>
- Buhalis, D., & Law, R. (2008). Progress in information technology and tourism management: 20 years on and 10 years after the Internet—The state of eTourism research. *Tourism Management*, 29(4), 609–623. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2008.01.005>
- Delmas, M. A., & Burbano, V. C. (2011). The drivers of greenwashing. *California Management Review*, 54(1), 64–87. <https://doi.org/10.1525/cmr.2011.54.1.64>
- Dinas Pariwisata Kabupaten Klungkung. 2025. Data Kunjungan Wisatawan ke Kabupaten Klungkung.
- Ert, E., & Fleischer, A. (2019). The evolution of trust in Airbnb: A case of home rental. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 75, 279–287. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2018.12.009>
- Farmaki, A., & Kaniadakis, A. (2020). Power in tourism stakeholder research: Addressing the epistemological gap. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 82, 102550. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.102550>
- Gretzel, U., Sigala, M., Xiang, Z., & Koo, C. (2020). Smart tourism: foundations and developments. *Electronic Markets*, 30(1), 7–18. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12525-019-00319-z>
- Mkono, M. (2016). The reflexive tourist. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 57, 206–219. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2015.12.019>
- Oh, H., Fiore, A. M., & Jeoung, M. (2007). Measuring experience economy concepts:

- Tourism applications. *Journal of Travel Research*, 46(2), 119–132. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287507304039>
- Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (1999). *The experience economy: Work is theatre & every business a stage*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.
- Salazar, N. B. (2012). Community-based cultural tourism: Issues, threats and opportunities. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20(1), 9–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2011.596279>
- Scheyvens, R. (1999). Ecotourism and the empowerment of local communities. *Tourism Management*, 20(2), 245–249. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(98\)00098-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(98)00098-7)
- Urry, J., & Larsen, J. (2011). *The tourist gaze 3.0*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Zajác, R. (2021). Tourism and the platform economy: The socio-spatial implications of Airbnb in tourist cities. *Geoforum*, 122, 55–64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2021.03.016>
- Zuboff, S. (2019). *The age of surveillance capitalism: The fight for a human future at the new frontier of power*. New York, NY: PublicAffairs.