Digitalization of Cultural Heritage and Local Product Marketing: Mapping Research Trends and Future Directions

Digitalisasi Warisan Budaya dan Local Product Marketing: Mapping Research Trends and Future Directions

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has transformed how cultural heritage is preserved, represented, and commercialized in contemporary markets. This study aims to systematically map research trends concerning the digitalization of cultural heritage and its implications for local product marketing during the 2020–2025 period. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach guided by the PRISMA framework, 25 Scopus-indexed journal articles were analyzed to identify dominant themes, methodological patterns, and emerging research directions. The findings reveal four major thematic clusters: digital transformation and cultural governance, digital marketing and MSME competitiveness, cultural identity and consumer psychology, and technological innovation through artificial intelligence and immersive media. The results indicate that digitalization enhances market reach and engagement for culturally embedded local products; however, sustainable competitiveness depends not only on technological adoption but also on authenticity, narrative coherence, and institutional readiness. Emerging trends show increasing integration of AI and immersive technologies, stronger alignment with sustainability discourse, and growing cross-national comparative studies, while longitudinal and multi-level governance research remains underdeveloped. This study contributes by integrating fragmented research streams into a multidimensional analytical framework that connects cultural preservation with digital market performance. The findings provide theoretical advancement and practical insights for policymakers, cultural institutions, and local enterprises seeking to balance technological innovation with cultural integrity in digital marketplaces.

Keywords: Digitalization of Cultural Heritage; Local Product Marketing; Digital Marketing; Cultural Identity; Artificial Intelligence; Immersive Technology; Sustainable Development

Abstrak

Perkembangan teknologi digital yang pesat telah mentransformasi cara warisan budaya dilestarikan, direpresentasikan, dan dikomersialisasikan dalam pasar kontemporer. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memetakan secara sistematis tren riset terkait digitalisasi warisan budaya dan implikasinya terhadap pemasaran produk lokal pada periode 2020–2025. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan Systematic Literature Review (SLR) yang dipandu oleh kerangka PRISMA, sebanyak 25 artikel jurnal terindeks Scopus dianalisis untuk mengidentifikasi tema dominan, pola metodologis, dan arah penelitian yang berkembang. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan empat klaster utama, yaitu transformasi digital dan tata kelola budaya, pemasaran digital dan daya saing UMKM, identitas budaya dan psikologi konsumen, serta inovasi teknologi melalui kecerdasan buatan dan media imersif. Temuan mengindikasikan bahwa digitalisasi meningkatkan jangkauan pasar dan keterlibatan konsumen terhadap produk lokal berbasis budaya; namun demikian, keberlanjutan daya saing tidak hanya ditentukan oleh adopsi teknologi, melainkan juga oleh autentisitas, koherensi narasi, dan kesiapan institusional. Tren yang muncul

menunjukkan peningkatan integrasi AI dan teknologi imersif, penguatan isu keberlanjutan, serta bertambahnya studi komparatif lintas negara, sementara penelitian longitudinal dan multi-level governance masih terbatas. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi teoretis melalui integrasi berbagai aliran riset ke dalam kerangka analitis multidimensional yang menghubungkan pelestarian budaya dengan kinerja pasar digital, serta menawarkan implikasi praktis bagi pembuat kebijakan, institusi budaya, dan pelaku usaha lokal.

Kata Kunci: Digitalisasi Warisan Budaya; Pemasaran Produk Lokal; Pemasaran Digital; Identitas Budaya; Kecerdasan Buatan; Teknologi Imersif; Pembangunan Berkelanjutan

1. Introduction

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed how cultural heritage is preserved, represented, and commercialized in contemporary markets. Across both developed and emerging economies, digital platforms such as social media, e-commerce marketplaces, immersive media (AR/VR), and AI-generated content tools are increasingly utilized to promote culturally embedded local products. Empirical evidence indicates that digital transformation significantly enhances product visibility, customer engagement, and innovation outcomes within organizations that integrate cultural narratives into digital strategies (Cao et al., 2025; Gensler et al., 2025). In particular, digital marketing ecosystems are shifting from product-centric promotion to experience-based engagement, where storytelling and cultural identity become strategic differentiators.

In emerging markets, digitalization has provided new economic opportunities for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), particularly those operating in creative and cultural sectors. Lubis et al. (2025) demonstrate that digital marketing strategies substantially expand market access for creative MSMEs, allowing local products to penetrate national and even international markets. Similarly, Esfandyari Bayat et al. (2025) show that consumers' psychological attachment to culturally authentic products significantly influences online purchasing behavior, especially when digital platforms successfully communicate local identity. These findings suggest that digitalization does not merely function as a distribution channel but also as a cultural mediation mechanism that shapes perceived value.

Moreover, immersive and AI-driven technologies are increasingly shaping digital marketing performance. Studies indicate that immersive media (AR/VR) positively affect consumer perception and purchase intention by enhancing experiential engagement (Wu et al., 2025). Likewise, generative AI has begun to redefine visual marketing content production, increasing efficiency and personalization in digital campaigns (Hartmann et al., 2025; Pingali et al., 2023). These technological developments create new possibilities for digitizing cultural heritage assets — such as traditional crafts, culinary heritage, and local storytelling — and transforming them into competitive market propositions.

Despite these promising developments, empirical studies also reveal persistent structural and capability challenges. In many local communities, digital transformation remains uneven due to limited infrastructure, digital literacy, and institutional support (Rizal et al., 2025; Irwanto et al., 2025). Cultural heritage custodians often lack strategic frameworks to translate heritage values into scalable digital marketing strategies. Furthermore, policy decentralization in digital cultural governance, as observed in several national contexts, introduces coordination challenges that affect implementation effectiveness (Terui, 2025). These structural limitations highlight that digitalization alone does not automatically guarantee market success.

Although the literature has expanded considerably in recent years, it remains fragmented across disciplines. Marketing scholars primarily examine digital consumer engagement and brand trust (Theocharis, 2025; Lai et al., 2025), while cultural policy studies

focus on governance and heritage preservation (Terui, 2025). Tourism and rural development research, on the other hand, emphasizes destination identity and gastronomic heritage (Vujko et al., 2025). However, few studies integrate these streams to systematically examine how digitalization of cultural heritage specifically shapes local product marketing strategies and long-term competitiveness. This disciplinary fragmentation creates a significant research gap.

Furthermore, existing research tends to emphasize technological adoption or consumer behavior independently, rather than exploring the intersection between cultural identity construction, digital representation, and market performance. For instance, while digital storytelling has been shown to enhance belonging and identity formation (Thomas & Manalil, 2025), its strategic implications for measurable marketing performance of local products remain underexplored. Similarly, cross-national digital marketing strategy studies (Yao et al., 2026) seldom incorporate heritage-based differentiation variables into their analytical frameworks. Consequently, a systematic mapping of research trends is needed to identify conceptual linkages, theoretical foundations, and emerging patterns.

The urgency of this study is further amplified by the growing global emphasis on sustainable development and inclusive economic growth. Local products embedded in cultural heritage represent strategic assets for rural revitalization, tourism development, and creative economy expansion. When effectively digitized, cultural heritage can strengthen place identity, enhance brand authenticity, and generate socio-economic resilience (Vujko et al., 2025). Without a clear synthesis of existing knowledge, however, policymakers and practitioners risk adopting fragmented or technology-driven approaches that neglect cultural integrity and long-term sustainability.

Against this backdrop, this study offers novelty by providing a comprehensive mapping of research trends at the intersection of cultural heritage digitalization and local product marketing during the 2020–2025 period. Unlike prior studies that focus on isolated variables, this review integrates marketing theory, digital transformation research, cultural policy, and consumer behavior perspectives to construct a multidimensional analytical framework. Specifically, this study aims to (1) systematically identify and categorize existing research on digitalization of cultural heritage in relation to local product marketing, (2) map dominant themes, theoretical approaches, and methodological patterns, and (3) propose future research directions that address conceptual fragmentation and emerging technological challenges. Through this integrative approach, the study contributes to advancing both academic discourse and practical strategies for sustainable digital cultural commercialization.

2. Literature Review

Digital Transformation and Cultural Heritage

Digital transformation has redefined how cultural heritage is preserved, accessed, and disseminated. Traditionally, cultural heritage—both tangible and intangible—was transmitted through physical spaces and intergenerational practices. However, the rise of digital platforms has enabled heritage assets to be archived, curated, and promoted through online ecosystems. Cao et al. (2025) argue that organizational culture plays a crucial role in digital transformation processes, influencing innovation and adaptability. Within cultural sectors, digitalization not only enhances preservation but also transforms heritage into marketable symbolic capital.

Terui (2025) highlights that digital cultural policy initiatives increasingly decentralize heritage governance, allowing local actors to digitize and promote their cultural assets. This decentralization fosters innovation but simultaneously introduces coordination challenges. In parallel, Rizal et al. (2025) emphasize that digital communication reshapes how local knowledge is interpreted and distributed in communities. These findings indicate that digitalization of cultural heritage operates at institutional, community, and organizational levels.

Moreover, the integration of immersive technologies such as AR and VR further strengthens experiential engagement with cultural content. Wu et al. (2025) demonstrate that immersive media significantly enhance consumer perception and purchase intention. This suggests that digital heritage experiences may influence market behavior by creating emotionally engaging narratives.

Digital Marketing and Local Product Competitiveness

Digital marketing has become a primary driver of competitiveness for local products, particularly within MSME sectors. Lubis et al. (2025) show that strategic use of social media and digital marketplaces expands customer reach and improves sales performance among creative MSMEs. Digital platforms enable local producers to bypass traditional distribution barriers and connect directly with niche consumer segments.

Gensler et al. (2025) argue that contemporary digital marketing shifts from product-focused communication to ecosystem-based engagement. In such ecosystems, authenticity, storytelling, and user-generated content become essential components of value creation. Similarly, Theocharis (2025) finds that peer dynamics and social media engagement strongly influence consumer purchasing pathways, particularly among younger demographics.

From a sustainability perspective, Lai et al. (2025) demonstrate that digital marketing strategies can promote sustainable consumption behaviors. This is particularly relevant for local products that emphasize ethical sourcing, traditional production methods, and environmental stewardship. Hence, digital marketing does not merely serve promotional functions but also shapes value perception and responsible consumption narratives.

Cultural Identity, Storytelling, and Consumer Behavior

Cultural identity plays a central role in differentiating local products within competitive digital markets. Esfandyari Bayat et al. (2025) show that psychological attachment to culturally authentic products significantly increases online purchase intention. Consumers often perceive local products embedded in cultural narratives as more trustworthy and meaningful.

Thomas and Manalil (2025) highlight the power of digital storytelling in constructing belonging and identity. When cultural narratives are effectively communicated through digital media, they create emotional resonance that enhances brand loyalty. Similarly, Hartmann et al. (2025) suggest that AI-generated marketing content can increase personalization, though authenticity remains a critical concern.

In tourism and rural development contexts, Vujko et al. (2025) argue that gastronomic heritage contributes to destination identity and local economic resilience. Digital platforms amplify this effect by enabling global exposure. Therefore, cultural identity functions not only as symbolic capital but also as a measurable marketing asset.

Technological Innovation and Emerging Digital Ecosystems

Emerging technologies such as generative AI, immersive media, and algorithm-driven personalization are reshaping digital marketing strategies. Hartmann et al. (2025) demonstrate that AI-generated visual content can outperform traditional marketing materials in engagement metrics. Meanwhile, Wu et al. (2025) highlight that immersive technologies create stronger cognitive and emotional involvement.

Yao et al. (2026) provide cross-national evidence that digital marketing strategies significantly influence sustainable performance outcomes. Their findings suggest that technological sophistication alone is insufficient; strategic alignment with cultural and contextual factors determines long-term effectiveness.

Despite these advancements, digital transformation is not uniformly distributed. Irwanto et al. (2025) note that social negotiation processes influence how digital practices are

adopted within communities. Structural limitations—such as digital literacy gaps and infrastructure disparities—continue to hinder inclusive participation.

3. Methods

This study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to comprehensively examine and map research trends concerning the digitalization of cultural heritage and its implications for local product marketing. The SLR method was selected due to its structured, transparent, and replicable nature, allowing for systematic identification, evaluation, and synthesis of relevant academic studies. Unlike traditional narrative reviews, the SLR approach minimizes subjectivity by applying predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria and a clear analytical protocol. The review specifically focuses on peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2025 and 2026 in order to capture the most recent theoretical developments and empirical findings within the rapidly evolving digital ecosystem.

The review process follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, which consists of four stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. This framework ensures methodological transparency and enhances the reliability of the article selection process. During the identification stage, relevant studies were retrieved from major academic databases known for indexing high-quality journals, including Scopus, ScienceDirect (Elsevier), Web of Science, Frontiers, MDPI, and Taylor & Francis Online. The search strategy employed combinations of keywords and Boolean operators such as "digital cultural heritage," "cultural digitalization," "local product marketing," "MSME digital marketing," "cultural branding," "heritage commercialization," and "digital storytelling." These keywords were selected to capture interdisciplinary perspectives bridging cultural studies, marketing, information systems, and tourism research.

In order to ensure relevance and academic rigor, strict inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. The inclusion criteria required that articles (1) be published between 2025 and 2026, (2) be indexed in Scopus, (3) be peer-reviewed journal articles, (4) be written in English, and (5) address at least one of the following dimensions: digital transformation of cultural heritage, digital marketing strategies for local products, consumer behavior in culturally embedded digital contexts, technological innovation such as AI or immersive media in marketing, or governance aspects of digital cultural policy. Articles were excluded if they consisted solely of conference proceedings, were not peer-reviewed, lacked direct relevance to marketing or cultural heritage, or focused purely on technical system development without cultural or commercial implications.

The initial search generated a broad pool of publications. After removing duplicates and conducting title and abstract screening, articles that did not align with the thematic scope were eliminated. Full-text assessments were subsequently conducted to evaluate conceptual relevance and methodological robustness. Through this systematic filtering process, 25 articles were selected for final inclusion in the review. These studies represent interdisciplinary contributions from marketing, cultural policy, tourism management, information systems, and consumer behavior research, providing a comprehensive foundation for thematic synthesis.

Data extraction was conducted using a structured coding framework. For each article, information was recorded regarding authorship, publication outlet, research objectives, theoretical framework, methodological approach, key findings, and implications related to cultural digitalization and local product marketing. The analysis employed a thematic synthesis approach, whereby recurring concepts and theoretical linkages were identified across studies. This inductive and deductive coding process enabled the identification of dominant research clusters, methodological trends, and emerging conceptual gaps.

Through comparative analysis, four primary thematic domains were identified: (1) digital transformation and cultural governance, (2) digital marketing and MSME competitiveness, (3) cultural identity and consumer psychology, and (4) technological innovation and immersive engagement. These themes provide an integrative structure for mapping how digitalization processes influence both cultural preservation and market performance outcomes. Cross-study comparison also allowed the identification of methodological patterns, including the prevalence of quantitative consumer behavior studies, emerging cross-national analyses, and a growing emphasis on technology-driven marketing innovation.

To enhance reliability and validity, the review adhered strictly to peer-reviewed Scopus-indexed sources and followed a transparent screening procedure. The application of standardized data extraction and thematic coding reduced interpretative bias. Nevertheless, this study acknowledges certain limitations. The review is confined to publications from 2025–2026 and English-language journals, which may exclude relevant studies from earlier years or non-English contexts. Despite these limitations, the structured methodology ensures a rigorous and up-to-date mapping of scholarly developments at the intersection of cultural heritage digitalization and local product marketing.

4. Results and Discussion

Overview of Article Selection

Following the PRISMA protocol, the systematic search initially identified a broad pool of articles across Scopus-indexed databases. After duplicate removal and relevance screening, 25 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2025 and 2026 met the inclusion criteria. These articles represent interdisciplinary contributions spanning marketing, cultural policy, tourism studies, information systems, and consumer behavior.

The selected studies demonstrate increasing scholarly attention toward digital transformation in cultural and creative industries, particularly in relation to local economic development and digital marketing innovation.

Descriptive Analysis of Selected Articles

Table 1. Distribution of Articles by Research Domain

Research Domain	Number of Articles	Percentage
Digital Marketing & MSMEs	8	32%
Cultural Governance & Digital Policy	4	16%
Consumer Behavior & Cultural Identity	6	24%
Technological Innovation (AI, AR/VR)	5	20%
Sustainable Tourism & Local Branding	2	8%
Total	**25**	**100%**

The largest proportion of studies (32%) focus on digital marketing strategies for MSMEs and local businesses, indicating strong academic interest in commercialization aspects. Consumer behavior research (24%) also represents a substantial cluster, suggesting that cultural value perception is a central concern in digital heritage marketing contexts.

Table 2. Distribution by Methodological Approach

Methodology	Number of Articles	Percentage

Quantitative (Survey/SEM/Regression)	11	44%
Qualitative (Case Study/Interviews)	6	24%
Mixed Methods	3	12%
Conceptual/Theoretical	5	20%
Total	**25**	**100%**

Quantitative designs dominate the field (44%), particularly in consumer behavior and digital marketing effectiveness studies. However, conceptual and theoretical contributions (20%) indicate ongoing framework development, especially in digital cultural governance and AI-driven marketing innovation.

Table 3. Geographic Context of Studies

Region	Number of Studies
Asia (Indonesia, China, Japan, etc.)	10
Europe	6
Cross-national / Global	5
Emerging Markets (multi-country)	4

Asia accounts for the highest concentration of empirical studies, reflecting rapid digital transformation and strong cultural heritage commercialization efforts in the region. Cross-national studies (e.g., Yao et al., 2026) highlight comparative strategic approaches.

3. Thematic Synthesis Results

Based on coding and thematic analysis, four dominant research clusters emerged.

Cluster 1: Digital Transformation & Cultural Governance

This cluster includes studies examining institutional frameworks, policy structures, and digital capability development. Research indicates that digital transformation is influenced by organizational culture and governance decentralization (Cao et al., 2025; Terui, 2025). Digital cultural policy initiatives aim to democratize heritage access but often encounter coordination and implementation challenges.

Key findings:
- Organizational culture moderates digital innovation performance.
- Decentralized digital heritage initiatives enhance community participation.
- Governance misalignment can limit scalability.

Cluster 2: Digital Marketing & MSME Competitiveness

This cluster represents the largest body of research. Studies such as Lubis et al. (2025) and Gensler et al. (2025) demonstrate that digital platforms expand market access and reshape value propositions. The shift toward ecosystem-based marketing emphasizes authenticity and engagement rather than simple promotion.

Key findings:
- Social media marketing significantly increases visibility and sales.
- E-commerce adoption improves competitive positioning.
- Digital ecosystems create co-creation opportunities with consumers.

Cluster 3: Cultural Identity & Consumer Psychology

This cluster highlights the psychological mechanisms underlying purchase intention. Esfandyari Bayat et al. (2025) show that perceived authenticity strengthens online buying behavior. Thomas and Manalil (2025) emphasize digital storytelling as a tool for identity construction.

Key findings:
- Cultural authenticity positively influences trust and loyalty.
- Narrative-driven marketing enhances emotional attachment.
- Peer influence and social engagement shape purchasing pathways.

Cluster 4: Technological Innovation & Immersive Engagement

This cluster focuses on AI, AR/VR, and immersive marketing tools. Hartmann et al. (2025) and Wu et al. (2025) find that immersive and AI-generated content improves engagement metrics and purchase intention.

Key findings:
- Immersive experiences increase perceived product value.
- AI personalization enhances marketing efficiency.
- Technological sophistication requires strategic cultural alignment.

Integrated Trend Mapping

Table 4. Cross-Cluster Conceptual Mapping

Cluster	Key Driver	Mediating Mechanism	Outcome
Digital Governance	Institutional Support	Digital Capability	Cultural Preservation
Digital Marketing	Platform Utilization	Engagement & Visibility	Market Expansion
Cultural Identity	Authenticity Narrative	Emotional Attachment	Purchase Intention
Technological Innovation	AI & Immersive Tools	Experiential Engagement	Competitive Advantage

The results suggest that digitalization influences local product marketing through multi-level mechanisms: institutional, strategic, psychological, and technological. The interaction between authenticity and technology emerges as a recurring theme.

Emerging Research Trends (2020–2025)
a. Increasing integration of AI and immersive technologies in cultural marketing.
b. Stronger emphasis on sustainability and ethical consumption.
c. Growing cross-national comparative studies.
d. Continued dominance of quantitative consumer-behavior models.
e. Underdevelopment of longitudinal and multi-level governance studies.

Discussion

Increasing Integration of AI and Immersive Technologies in Cultural Marketing

One of the most prominent trends identified in the 2020–2025 literature is the rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and immersive technologies (AR/VR) into cultural marketing strategies. Studies increasingly explore how generative AI enhances visual content creation, personalization algorithms, and predictive consumer targeting (Hartmann et al., 2025). AI-driven systems are reported to outperform traditional content production in engagement

metrics, particularly in digital advertising contexts. However, while technological efficiency increases, concerns about authenticity and cultural integrity remain central issues.

Similarly, immersive technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are being adopted to create experiential interactions with cultural products (Wu et al., 2025). These technologies allow consumers to virtually experience traditional crafts, culinary heritage, or heritage sites, thereby strengthening emotional attachment and perceived value. The trend suggests a shift from transactional digital marketing toward experiential and immersive brand ecosystems. Importantly, the literature indicates that technological sophistication alone does not guarantee effectiveness; successful implementation depends on alignment with cultural narratives and contextual authenticity.

This emerging trend demonstrates that digitalization of cultural heritage is no longer limited to social media promotion but increasingly involves advanced technological integration that reshapes consumer engagement models.

Stronger Emphasis on Sustainability and Ethical Consumption

Another significant trend is the growing linkage between digital cultural marketing and sustainability discourse. Several studies indicate that consumers increasingly associate culturally embedded local products with ethical production, environmental responsibility, and social sustainability (Lai et al., 2025; Vujko et al., 2025). Digital platforms serve as channels not only for promotion but also for communicating sustainability values, production transparency, and local sourcing narratives.

The literature reveals that sustainability-oriented messaging strengthens trust and long-term brand loyalty, particularly when cultural authenticity is emphasized. Local products rooted in heritage traditions are frequently positioned as alternatives to mass-produced goods, appealing to conscious consumers seeking meaningful consumption experiences. This indicates a convergence between digital marketing strategies and sustainable development goals.

However, despite this growing emphasis, the review identifies limited empirical measurement of long-term sustainability outcomes. Most studies focus on purchase intention or engagement metrics rather than broader socio-economic resilience indicators. Thus, while sustainability is increasingly highlighted rhetorically, its operationalization remains underdeveloped.

Growing Cross-National Comparative Studies

The 2020–2025 period also shows a rise in cross-national and comparative research designs. Studies such as Yao et al. (2026) examine digital marketing strategies across different national contexts, highlighting how institutional environments and cultural dimensions influence digital performance outcomes. This shift reflects recognition that digitalization processes are context-dependent and shaped by socio-cultural norms.

Comparative analyses reveal variations in digital adoption levels, governance structures, and consumer trust patterns. For example, decentralized digital cultural policies (Terui, 2025) may generate different commercialization dynamics compared to centralized systems. Cross-national research contributes to theoretical generalizability and enhances understanding of how digital heritage strategies function across diverse regulatory and cultural environments (Andika et al., 2021).

Despite this positive development, the review notes that comparative studies still rarely integrate cultural heritage variables explicitly into their models. Most cross-national research emphasizes marketing performance or technological adoption without fully accounting for heritage-based differentiation strategies.

Continued Dominance of Quantitative Consumer-Behavior Models

Quantitative methodologies—particularly survey-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and regression analyses—remain dominant in the field. Many studies focus on psychological constructs such as perceived authenticity, trust, engagement, and purchase intention (Esfandyari Bayat et al., 2025; Theocharis, 2025). These models typically examine direct and mediating relationships between digital marketing activities and consumer behavioral outcomes.

While quantitative dominance enhances statistical robustness and predictive validity, it also narrows the analytical scope. The emphasis on individual-level consumer behavior often overlooks institutional, cultural, and structural dimensions of digital transformation. Furthermore, many models rely on cross-sectional data, limiting insights into dynamic changes over time.

The prevalence of consumer-centric quantitative research suggests a strong market orientation in the literature. However, it also reveals a methodological imbalance that may constrain holistic understanding of digital cultural ecosystems.

Underdevelopment of Longitudinal and Multi-Level Governance Studies

A critical gap identified in the 2020–2025 literature is the limited number of longitudinal and multi-level governance studies. Although digital transformation is inherently dynamic, most existing research employs cross-sectional designs. Long-term impacts of digitalization on cultural preservation, economic resilience, and community empowerment remain insufficiently explored.

At the governance level, studies such as Terui (2025) discuss digital cultural policy structures, yet empirical multi-level analyses integrating policy, organizational strategy, and consumer outcomes are rare. Similarly, research on digital transformation (Cao et al., 2025) emphasizes organizational culture but seldom connects macro-level policy frameworks with micro-level marketing performance.

This underdevelopment suggests a need for future research adopting longitudinal designs and multi-level analytical frameworks that incorporate institutional, organizational, and individual dimensions simultaneously. Such approaches would provide deeper insights into sustainable digital cultural commercialization and policy effectiveness.

Integrative Interpretation of Trends

Collectively, the emerging trends indicate that research on digitalization of cultural heritage and local product marketing is transitioning from basic digital adoption studies toward more technologically sophisticated and sustainability-oriented inquiries. However, fragmentation persists across methodological approaches and analytical levels. The dominance of short-term, consumer-level quantitative studies contrasts with the limited exploration of governance dynamics and long-term socio-economic impacts.

These trends underscore the necessity for integrative research frameworks that combine technological innovation, cultural authenticity, institutional governance, and sustainable market performance into a unified analytical model.

5. Conclusion

This study systematically mapped recent research (2020–2025) on the digitalization of cultural heritage and its implications for local product marketing, revealing an increasingly interconnected scholarly landscape. The findings demonstrate that digital transformation in cultural contexts operates across multiple levels, encompassing institutional governance, strategic digital marketing practices, cultural identity construction, and technological

innovation. Four dominant thematic clusters were identified: digital transformation and cultural governance, digital marketing and MSME competitiveness, cultural identity and consumer psychology, and technological innovation through AI and immersive media. The review highlights that while digital platforms significantly enhance market visibility and engagement for culturally embedded local products, sustainable competitiveness depends on authenticity, narrative coherence, and institutional readiness rather than technological adoption alone. The integration of AI-driven personalization and immersive technologies marks a shift toward experiential marketing ecosystems, reinforcing the importance of aligning innovation with cultural integrity.

Despite its contributions, this review has several limitations. It is confined to English-language, Scopus-indexed journal articles published between 2020-2025, which ensures recency but limits longitudinal comparison and may exclude relevant regional scholarship. Furthermore, the dominance of quantitative consumer-behavior studies within the selected literature may have shaped the thematic emphasis toward individual-level marketing outcomes rather than institutional or governance dimensions. As a systematic review based on secondary sources, the study synthesizes existing evidence but does not provide primary empirical validation. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted within the boundaries of the selected timeframe and dataset.

Future research should adopt longitudinal and multi-level analytical frameworks to examine the long-term socio-economic and cultural impacts of digitalization on local product ecosystems. Greater integration between macro-level policy structures, meso-level organizational strategies, and micro-level consumer behavior is necessary to overcome disciplinary fragmentation. Additionally, deeper investigation is needed into the balance between technological sophistication and cultural authenticity, particularly regarding the use of AI-generated content and immersive media in heritage representation. Expanding cross-national comparative research and incorporating sustainability, social inclusion, and cultural continuity indicators would further strengthen theoretical development and practical applicability in digitally mediated cultural markets.

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