

Mapping Sustainable Bilingual Digital Innovation through University-Local Government Collaboration in Tourism Education

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The rapid development of digital technology in the tourism sector needs to be balanced with the provision of globally accessible information by bilingual languages, particularly Indonesian and English. This study aims to examine the importance of sustainable bilingual digital information in tourism education, supported by collaboration between universities and local governments. **Method :** This study uses a mixed-method with convergent parallel design. Data collection techniques in the form of observation and semi-structured interviews. The research subjects consisted of 62 respondents, including government officials staff, language lecturers, teachers, and the community of bilingual digital applications user . **Results:** The results show 83% respondents stated that bilingual digital applications, such as Tangerang Gemilang application contributes significantly to increase the effectiveness of tourism promotion and expand access to information for users. In addition, collaboration between universities and tourism agencies is considered crucial in supporting comprehensive and internationally oriented local tourism development. **Novelty:** This study confirms that sustainable bilingual digital innovation, through institutional synergy, has a strategic role in strengthening tourism education and the competitiveness of tourist destinations.

INTRODUCTION

The university contribution in sustainability and innovation is highly demanding in this digital era. It is not only transferring the knowledge, creating the educational policy and target, but also playing an essential role in encouraging social transformation and sustainable innovation for real life and generation (Fitriah & Fitriati, 2023). In the context of tourism education, these demands are getting stronger along with the development of digitalization, globalization, and the need for multilingual competencies.

The ability to communicate bilingually through digital media is an important aspect in preparing tourism human resources that are adaptive, competitive, and relevant to local and global needs (Danial et al., 2024; Parthama et al., 2018; Rachmi et al., 2025). In the context of tourism education, it is not only understood as a recreational activity, but also as a means of learning that encourages knowledge exchange, improvement of language competence, and understanding of local culture for tourists and the community. Although digital innovations in tourism education have been widely developed, most of them are still partial and focus on educational institutions only. Many digital innovations are designed by universities without the active involvement of local governments, thus facing obstacles in terms of sustainability, policy support, and integration with regional tourism development programs (Pujiati et al., 2024; Rogers, 2014). On the other hand, local governments have a strategic interest in developing education-based and digital tourism as part of strengthening regional identity and destination competitiveness but often do not have a strong academic foundation in

designing effective and contextual learning media. This condition emphasizes the importance of synergistic cooperation between universities and local governments to integrate academic expertise, public policy, and local needs in the development of sustainable tourism education digital innovations.

Previous studies on the use of digital media in education have generally focused on aspects of technology, application design, or user satisfaction (Karnedi & Utami, 2024; Mamom, 2020; Rachmi et al., 2025; Saad & Alnuiami, 2023). Meanwhile, research on bilingual education focuses more on improving students' language skills. However, there is still limited research that examines bilingual digital innovation from the perspective of institutional collaboration, especially those involving cooperation between universities and local governments. Therefore, a research gap exists regarding how collaboration between these institutions contributes to the sustainability of bilingual digital innovation in tourism education.

Hence, to fill this gap, this study examines the sustainable development of bilingual digital innovation through collaboration between universities and local governments in the context of tourism education. Sustainable bilingual education in this study is defined as systematic and continuous efforts to develop bilingual competence that is not only oriented towards short-term linguistic achievement, but also towards pedagogical sustainability, local contextual relevance, and policy and institutional support that enables its long-term implementation. Otherwise, the indicators to be assessed will be adopted based on UNESCO Educational sustainable developments model which refers to cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral learning (UNESCO, 2020).

The uniqueness of this study lies in its integrative approach, which combines aspects of digital innovation, sustainable bilingual education, and institutional collaboration within a single analytical framework. Furthermore, this study views innovation not only as a technological product but also as a social and institutional process involving various stakeholders.

The contribution of this research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of educational digital innovation studies that are oriented towards sustainability and collaboration (Sumardiyani & Ambarini, 2025). Practically, the results of this research can be a reference for universities and local governments in designing and implementing sustainable bilingual digital innovations to support tourism education and regional development. In addition, this research also has policy implications in strengthening the role of universities as agents of social change through cross-sectoral collaboration.

Based on the research background, this research is formulated in three research questions as follows: 1) How is sustainable bilingual digital innovation developed through collaboration between universities and local governments in tourism education?, 2) What is the role of universities and local governments in supporting the sustainability of bilingual digital innovation in tourism education?, and 3) How does the use of bilingual digital learning platforms influence students' understanding and interpretation of tourism-related information in tourism education contexts?

Therefore, to answer the question of the research, the purpose of this study is to examine the development of sustainable bilingual digital innovation in tourism education through collaboration between universities and local governments. This study aims to understand the collaborative process carried out by the two institutions in designing, implementing, and maintaining bilingual digital innovation as a tourism

learning medium (UNESCO, 2022, 2018). In addition, this research aims to identify the role and contribution of each party, both universities and local governments, in supporting the sustainability of digital innovation from academic, policy, and institutional aspects.

This research also aims to analyze the impact of bilingual digital innovation on strengthening the quality of tourism education as well as on institutional synergy that supports education-based tourism development. Through this research, it is hoped that an effective and sustainable model of collaboration between universities and local governments can be formulated as a reference for the development of digital innovations in tourism education in a broader context.

RESEARCH METHOD

This mixed methods research is specifically use convergent parallel design to gain a comprehensive understanding of sustainable bilingual digital innovation development in the context of tourism education through collaboration between universities and local governments (Creswell, 2014; UNESCO, 2022). This approach was chosen because it allows the combination of quantitative and qualitative data to simultaneously assess the effectiveness of innovation, the dynamics of institutional collaboration, and the sustainability of program implementation. Convergent parallel design is implemented by collecting and analyzing both data simultaneously, then integrating them at the interpretation stage.

The research subjects consisted of 62 informants who were selected through purposive sampling techniques based on direct involvement in the development and utilization of tourism education digital applications. Informants include university lecturers who play a role in the development of bilingual digital media, representatives of the Tourism Office as local governments involved in the policy and implementation of the program, as well as users of tourism education digital applications from students, students, and the public. This composition of information allows for the exploration of diverse perspectives relevant to the research objectives.

The research instruments were adjusted to the characteristics of mixed research, including questionnaires, interviews, and observations. The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data on respondents' perceptions of continuous bilingual education, digital innovation, program sustainability, educational and social impacts. This instrument was compiled using a five-point Likert scale and has gone through validity and reliability tests. Qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with lecturers and representatives of the Tourism Office to explore the meaning, practices, and sustainability program strategies, as well as through non-participatory observation to observe the use of bilingual implementation in the context of tourism education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on the interviews with 12 respondents consisting of lecturers, English teachers and media as well as the tourism staff, the quantitative findings clearly show high support (86%) for the application's benefit in regional tourism development. It means a positive attitude towards the development of sustainable bilingual education based on tourism is represented. This can be seen from the following graph of responses:

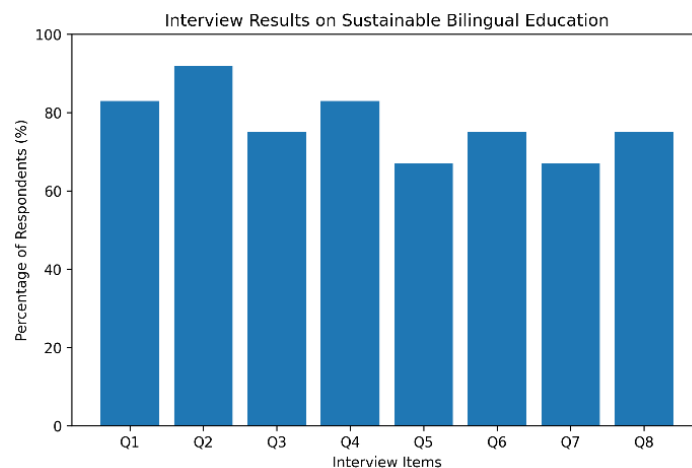


Figure 1. Interview result related to Bilingual digital and collaborative governance

A total of 83% of respondents interpreted continuous bilingual education as a strategy to improve the competitiveness of tourism human resources that is globally oriented but still rooted in the local context. Furthermore, 92% of respondents stated that bilingual education is an urgent need in the development of the tourism sector, especially in dealing with international tourists.

Regarding the use of technology, 75% of respondents considered bilingual digital media to be effective in expanding access to learning and increasing motivation to learn, although 25% of respondents emphasized the limitations of digital literacy and infrastructure. In addition, 83% of respondents emphasized the importance of the active role of local governments in supporting bilingual education policies and funding.

In the context of institutional collaboration, 67% of respondents perceived that cooperation between universities and local governments remains largely administrative in nature and has not yet generated substantial impact. This finding highlights a gap between existing administrative collaboration and the need for more strategic partnerships. Furthermore, 75% of respondents emphasized the importance of stronger and more sustainable synergy to support the successful implementation of bilingual education innovation in the tourism sector.

Data from 50 bilingual digital users through a survey shows that the bilingual digital tools currently used by the community are relevant to existing needs, and that these tools are also capable of supporting students' independent English language learning. The results of the study show that the use of bilingual digital learning platforms has a positive effect on students' understanding of tourism information. As many as 58% of respondents stated that bilingual digital media helped them understand the learning content independently. The presentation of information in two languages makes it easier for students to grasp the meaning, context, and terms of tourism, thereby supporting a more accurate and flexible understanding of digital-based learning materials. This can be seen from the following graph.

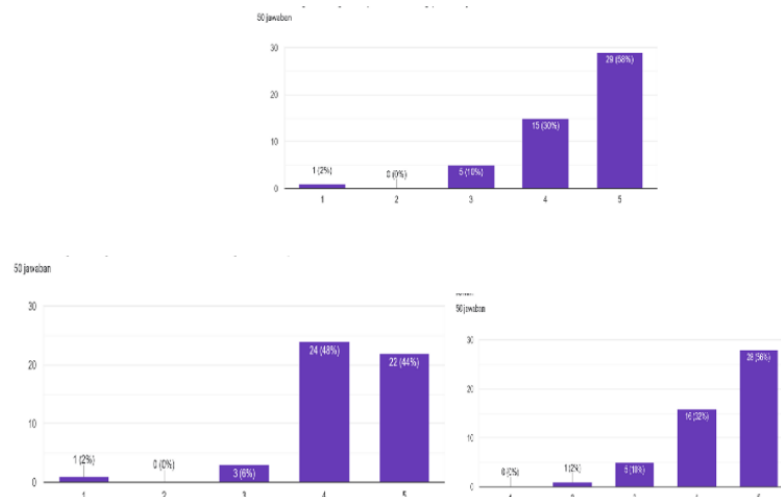


Figure 2. Observation of data related to bilingual digital tourism and integrating local culture

In detail, it can be said that most of respondents gave a positive response to the use of bilingual digital media in tourism education. As many as 88% of respondents stated that bilingual digital media supports independent learning. Furthermore, 92% of respondents rated bilingual digital content as interesting and relevant to tourism education. In addition, 88% of respondents stated that they are not only understanding the bilingual digital as bilingual user, but also as a technology-based learning and tourism information dissemination ecosystem. This understanding reflects a paradigm shift from conventional bilingualism to contextual, adaptive digital bilingualism oriented towards the needs of tourism information users, both domestic and international tourism.

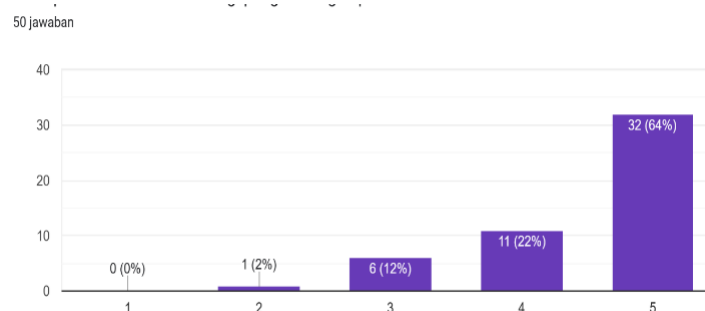


Figure 3. Observation data related to the benefit of bilingual digital application

Based on responses to the statement “This application is beneficial for regional tourism development,” the majority of respondents reported positive perceptions. Out of the 50 respondents, 32 participants (64%) strongly agreed and 11 participants (22%) agreed with the statement. In total, 86% of respondents acknowledged that the digital application has considerable potential to support and enhance regional tourism development.

Meanwhile, 6 respondents (12%) gave a neutral rating, indicating that a small number of respondents have not yet fully felt the direct impact of using the application or need more time and experience in using it. Respondents who disagreed were minimal, with only 1 respondent (2%) expressing disagreement, and no respondents expressing strong disagreement (0%). This indicates a very low level of rejection regarding the benefits of the application.

This finding suggests that most respondents see digital bilingual media such as tourism information available in local and foreign languages as an important tool in supporting the growth and promotion of the tourism sector at the local level. This benefit is in line with research showing that digital media plays a strategic role in the development of local tourism through wider promotion, faster access to information, and increased competitiveness of destinations. For example, the use of digital media as part of a tourism marketing strategy has been proven to effectively introduce the tourism potential of a region to a wider target market, including domestic and international tourists (Banks et al., 2019; Maulana et al., 2025a).

Discussion

The sustainability of bilingual digital innovation developed through collaboration between universities and local governments in tourism education

The findings show that most of respondents interpret continuous bilingual education as a strategy to improve human resources (HR) competitiveness in tourism (83%). This result suggests that bilingual digital platforms function as cognitive scaffolds support students accessing and interpreting tourism-related information. Through these platforms, students' literacy expands not only in linguistic competence but also in digital and critical literacy, which are essential for navigating information in the contemporary tourism industry.

Otherwise, This is reinforced by the high percentage of respondents who consider bilingual education a strategic necessity in facing global tourism (92%). This data indicates a strong awareness that the sustainability of digital bilingualism is not merely a pedagogical innovation, but a structural necessity in preparing graduates who are adaptive to the demands of the international tourism industry (Jirapong et al., 2021; Kusumastuti et al., 2024; Maulana et al., 2025b). Sustainability in this context is understood as the consistent application of bilingualism integrated with digital technology, enabling a sustainable response to changing market needs and global dynamics.

The need for synergy between universities and local governments emphasizes the importance of a collaborative governance approach in the development of sustainable bilingual tourism education. The findings show that most respondents view digital bilingual education as a strategic necessity in facing global tourism and consider bilingual digital media to be effective in expanding access to information and supporting tourism promotion. However, the sustainability of this innovation still faces challenges, particularly in relation to policy consistency and the quality of inter-institutional collaboration (Adu-Ampong, 2017; Johnson & Johnson, 2015).

Higher education institutions have a strategic role as centers for research and development of collaboration educational innovation, particularly in designing bilingual learning models that are integrated with digital technology and the needs of the tourism industry. The innovations produced by universities have the potential to significantly improve the quality of tourism human resources. However, without sustainable policy support from local governments, these innovations risk not being optimally implemented or only being short-term in nature. The findings also show that collaboration between universities and local governments is currently still largely administrative in nature, thus not yet fully promoting strategic partnerships oriented towards long-term development.

In line with that the sustainability of bilingual digital innovation in tourism education is largely determined by the consistency of local government policies and the strength of collaboration with universities (Hyland-Wood et al., 2021; Syaepudin & Nurlukman, 2022). Synergy that is still administrative in nature needs to be upgraded to strategic partnerships so that the integration of curriculum, digital technology, and global tourism industry needs can be sustainable.

On the other hand, local governments play a key role in providing policy frameworks, funding, and integrating educational innovation into regional tourism development strategies. Strong collaboration with universities enables local governments to develop bilingual digital tourism that is more structured, relevant, and globally competitive. Without clear synergy, the development of bilingual tourism has the potential to be partial and less integrated.

Thus, this study emphasises that ongoing collaboration between universities and local governments is a key prerequisite for the development of bilingual tourism education. This synergy not only supports the sustainability of digital innovation but also strengthens the competitiveness of local tourism through the development of competent and internationally oriented human resources.

The role of universities and local governments in supporting the sustainability of bilingual digital innovation in tourism education

The results of the study indicate that the role of local government is considered significant in supporting digital bilingual education, particularly through policy and funding (83%). However, the sustainability of innovation still faces challenges, especially in relation to policy consistency and cross-institutional collaboration. In addition, collaboration between universities and local governments currently tends to be administrative in nature (67%), not yet fully oriented towards long-term strategic partnerships (UNESCO Associated School, 2016).

Furthermore, this confirm that the sustainability of bilingual digital education cannot be achieved partially but requires strong and sustainable synergy between universities and local governments (Santoso & Tri Cahyani, 2022; Suparjo et al., 2024). Universities and local governments have complementary roles in building a bilingual tourism education ecosystem that is adaptive to global demands. Without structured and long-term collaboration, the innovations developed have the potential to be temporary and it is difficult to have a real impact on the development of sustainable tourism.

Universities play a strategic role as centers for academic innovation and scientific development, especially in designing and implementing bilingual curriculums that are integrated with digital technology (Adu-Ampong, 2017; Rybnicek & Königsgruber, 2019). Through research, development of teaching materials, and the use of digital media, universities can produce tourism learning models that are relevant to industry needs and able to bridge local and global contexts. This academic innovation includes the development of bilingual tourism content, the use of digital applications, as well as improving language competence and digital literacy of students as prospective tourism industry players.

On the other hand, local governments play an important role as policy facilitators, regulators, and providers of sustainable resource support. Consistent policy support allows educational innovations developed by universities to be integrated into regional tourism development strategies (O'Dwyer et al., 2023). In addition, clear funding and

regulatory support is a key factor in ensuring the sustainability of bilingual digital education programs, so that it does not stop at the pilot stage or short-term projects.

The sustainability of innovation is highly dependent on the quality of synergy between the two parties. Collaborations that are administrative or sporadic tend to be unable to address the long-term challenges in the development of bilingual digital tourism. On the contrary, synergy built consistently and with a long-term orientation allows for the realization of joint planning, clear division of roles, and continuous evaluation of program implementation. This is in line with the view that sustainable digital bilingual education requires collaborative governance that actively involves various stakeholders.

Thus, the findings of this study strengthen the argument that the success of bilingual digital tourism education is not only determined by the quality of academic innovation, but also by policy commitment and resource support from local governments. Strong and sustainable synergy between universities and local governments is the main foundation in building globally competitive tourism education and supporting sustainable tourism development.

The use of bilingual digital technology is in line with the concept of sustainable educational innovation, where learning takes place not only formally, but also contextually and adaptively to industry needs. However, challenges in digital literacy and human resource readiness indicate the technological innovation must be balanced with supporting policies and capacity building for educators (UNESCO Associated School, 2016; Vasconcelos & Melo, 2022).

The Use Of Bilingual Digital Learning Platforms Influence Students' Understanding And Interpretation Of Tourism-Related Information In Tourism Education Contexts

The use of bilingual digital learning platforms has been proven to not only improve students' understanding of tourism information, but also shape ways of thinking, interpreting, and reconstructing meaning in the context of complex tourism learning (Arjulayana & Rachmi, 2022; Pramesti et al., 2025). The finding that 58% of respondents found it helpful to understand the material independently shows that digital bilingual platforms function as cognitive *scaffolds* that allow students to manage their own learning process. In the framework of multiliteracies, students not only interact with verbal texts, but also with visual, digital, and contextual representations that are integrated with each other.

The presentation of tourism information in two languages encourages the cross-linguistic mapping process, which is the ability of students to compare terms, concepts, and meanings in two language systems simultaneously (Lapasau et al., 2025). This process enriches students' conceptual understanding of tourism terminology, which is often full of cultural and professional content. Thus, the understanding formed is not mechanical or memorized, but reflective and contextual. From a cognitive point of view, this condition increases students' cognitive flexibility in interpreting dynamic and multicultural tourism information.

Furthermore, bilingual digital platforms expand students' literacy practices from just language literacy to digital, visual, and critical literacy simultaneously (Fahmi & Arjulayana, 2024; Yuliana, 2023). Students not only understand the content of information, but also learn to navigate, evaluate, and interpret tourism information in various digital formats. In the context of tourism education, this ability is crucial because

tourism information is multimodal and aimed at a diverse global audience. Therefore, bilingual digital learning contributes to the formation of multiliteracies competencies that are relevant to the needs of the contemporary tourism industry.

Strategically, these findings confirm that bilingual digital innovations developed through collaboration between universities and local governments act as a bridge between academic needs and industrial practices. The platform not only conveys knowledge but also shapes the way students understand and interpret tourism information critically and professionally (Pujiati et al., 2024; Pujiati & Arjulayana, 2024; Sumardiyan & Ambarini, 2025). Thus, the use of bilingual digital learning platforms has direct implications for the quality of sustainable tourism learning, as well as strengthening students' readiness to face the complexity of tourism communication at the global level.

Furthermore, increasing students' understanding of local culture confirms that bilingual digital media not only functions as a linguistic tool, but also as a medium of contextual and cultural learning (Metafani et al., 2020; Naibaho & Harahap, 2024; Rismiyo et al., 2023). Within the framework of collaboration between universities and local governments, these findings affirm the importance of synergy of policies, curricula, and institutional support to ensure the sustainability of bilingual digital innovation that is responsive to global and local tourism dynamics.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: This study substantiates that sustainable bilingual digital innovation constitutes a strategic imperative in tourism education amid intensifying global competition. The majority of respondents perceive sustainable bilingual education as a critical mechanism for enhancing the competitiveness of tourism human capital and regard its urgency as a strategic necessity within the global landscape. The integration of foreign language proficiency with digital technology is no longer considered supplementary; rather, it has become a foundational prerequisite for the advancement of the tourism sector. Furthermore, the findings reveal that bilingual digital media is perceived as effective in broadening access to tourism-related information and in elevating the quality of learning processes. Respondents conceptualize bilingual digital innovation not merely as the use of two languages, but as a holistic and integrative approach that synergizes linguistic competence, technological advancement, and the contextual needs of tourism information users. Nevertheless, the sustainability of this innovation continues to face structural challenges, particularly in relation to policy consistency and the robustness of multi-stakeholder collaboration. **Implication:** Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of tourism education studies by emphasizing the importance of integrating bilingualism and digital innovation within a framework of sustainability. The findings enrich our understanding of how collaboration between universities and local governments can serve as a strategic model for the development of bilingual digital-based tourism education. In practical terms, the results of this study imply the need for universities to actively integrate bilingual curricula with digital technologies relevant to the needs of the tourism industry. Higher education institutions are expected to not only act as education providers, but also as centers of innovation and strategic partners for local governments in the development of digital tourism. On the other hand, local governments need to strengthen consistent policies, provide funding support, and open more substantive and sustainable opportunities for

collaboration. In terms of policy, this study indicates the importance of formulating collaborative policies that are not merely sectoral or administrative in nature, but rather oriented towards the development of a sustainable bilingual digital tourism ecosystem. Strong synergy between universities and local governments is expected to produce innovations that are relevant, adaptive, and have a real impact on improving the quality of tourism human resources and the competitiveness of tourism destinations in a sustainable manner. **Limitation:** This study is constrained by the scope of its respondents, which may not comprehensively represent all stakeholders within the broader tourism education and industry ecosystem. Additionally, the research primarily captures perceptual data, thereby limiting its ability to empirically measure the tangible impact of bilingual digital innovation on graduate competencies, employability, or industry performance outcomes. **Future Research:** Future research should adopt longitudinal and mixed-method approaches to rigorously assess the measurable impact of bilingual digital innovation on learning outcomes, workforce readiness, and sectoral competitiveness. Subsequent studies may also explore scalable and policy-responsive collaboration models among higher education institutions, local governments, and tourism industry actors, with particular attention to governance mechanisms that ensure sustainability, adaptability, and long-term institutional integration.

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