



Human Resource Digital Readiness for Sustainable Ecotourism Development: A Conceptual Framework Linking Digital Literacy, Training, Knowledge Sharing, and Community-Based Tourism Performance

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ABSTRACT

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Purpose of the study — This study aims to develop a conceptual framework of Human Resource Digital Readiness for Sustainable Ecotourism Development by linking digital literacy, training, knowledge sharing, human resource digital readiness, and community-based tourism performance. The study addresses the need to explain how local human resources transform digital capabilities into sustainable ecotourism value.

Research Methodology: This study uses a conceptual review design with an integrative literature review approach. Literature was synthesized from peer-reviewed journals, academic books, and institutional reports related to human resource management, digital transformation, sustainable tourism, ecotourism, and community-based tourism. The analysis was conducted through theory-driven thematic synthesis using the resource-based view, knowledge-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, and ability-motivation-opportunity theory.

Result— The study proposes that digital literacy, training, and knowledge sharing strengthen human resource digital readiness. Human resource digital readiness is then positioned as a mediating capability that transforms human resource development practices into community-based tourism performance. The framework explains that digital transformation in ecotourism does not depend only on technology adoption, but also on the readiness of local actors to understand, accept, use, share, and develop digital technology for sustainable destination management.

Conclusion— This study concludes that sustainable ecotourism development requires digitally ready local human resources who are able to integrate digital skills, service capability, conservation knowledge, and community collaboration. The framework provides practical guidance for tourism village managers, ecotourism operators, local governments, and community facilitators in designing digital literacy programs, training models, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms.

Limitations: This study contributes to tourism management, sustainable ecotourism, community-based tourism, human resource management, and digital transformation studies by positioning human resource digital readiness as a community-level capability



that bridges human resource development practices and sustainable ecotourism performance.

Contribution: This study contributes to tourism management, sustainable ecotourism, community-based tourism, human resource management, and digital transformation studies.

Keywords

: *human resource digital readiness; sustainable ecotourism; digital literacy; knowledge sharing; community-based tourism performance.*

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism requires destinations to manage economic value, the quality of tourist experiences, environmental conservation, and social benefits for local communities simultaneously (Lee & Jan, 2019; OECD, 2024). Ecotourism provides a strategic space for these demands because nature-based tourism activities can connect conservation, environmental education, community participation, and the strengthening of local economies (Rismayadi et al., 2026; World Economic Forum, 2024). Community-based tourism positions local residents not merely as operational complements, but as owners of local knowledge, service providers, resource guardians, and beneficiaries of destination development (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018; Lee & Jan, 2019). However, the performance of community-based tourism often weakens when local human resource capabilities are unable to keep pace with changes in tourist behavior, digital promotion patterns, online reservation systems, and data-driven service demands (OECD, 2021; World Economic Forum, 2024).

Digitalization has transformed the way tourism destinations manage information, market experiences, build tourist engagement, and read market needs more rapidly (OECD, 2021; World Economic Forum, 2024). These changes require tourism workers to possess digital literacy, online communication skills, basic data security awareness, business application skills, and adaptive competencies in order to work productively within a digital tourism ecosystem (OECD, 2021; van Laar et al., 2017). In the ecotourism sector, digital needs do not stop at social media promotion, because destination managers must also communicate conservation values, educate tourists, regulate visitor capacity, and maintain relationships with local communities (Rismayadi et al., 2026; Lee & Jan, 2019). Therefore, destination digital transformation should not be understood merely as platform adoption, but as a process of strengthening human resource readiness to use technology to generate learning, collaboration, service innovation, and sustainable tourism performance (OECD, 2021; Teece, 2007).

The human resource management literature explains that training can improve knowledge, skills, work attitudes, individual performance, team performance, and organizational outcomes when it is designed according to work-related needs (Aguinis &



Kraiger, 2009). Digital literacy provides workers with the technical, cognitive, social, and problem-solving capabilities needed to use technology productively in information-based work (van Laar et al., 2017). Knowledge sharing helps organizations circulate experience, skills, and learning among individuals so that knowledge does not remain confined to one actor, one group, or one work unit (Wang & Noe, 2010; Grant, 1996). In community-based ecotourism destinations, the relationship among training, digital literacy, and knowledge sharing becomes increasingly important because service quality depends on the ability of residents, managers, MSME actors, guides, and local stakeholders to work in an interconnected manner (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018; Rismayadi et al., 2026).

Although previous studies have discussed digital platforms, smart tourism, human resource empowerment, ecotourism education, and sustainable tourism, the mechanism through which local human resources convert digital capabilities into community-based ecotourism performance remains insufficiently explained. Prior studies on tourism digitalization tend to emphasize technology adoption, digital platforms, and market access, while paying less attention to the readiness of local actors as the central mechanism that enables technology to produce service, learning, conservation, and community value. This creates a theoretical gap because the resource-based view explains the importance of strategic resources, yet it does not fully clarify how digital skills, training, and knowledge sharing become community-level capabilities in ecotourism destinations. A conceptual gap also emerges because digital literacy, training, knowledge sharing, and readiness for change have often been discussed separately, but have not been integrated into a framework that explains human resource digital readiness as a mediating capability. A contextual gap is evident in community-based ecotourism destinations in developing countries, where digital infrastructure, local governance, community participation, and human resource capacity are often uneven. In such destinations, technology adoption does not automatically improve destination performance unless local human resources are ready to understand, accept, use, share, and develop digital technology for sustainable ecotourism purposes.

This conceptual study offers the concept of Human Resource Digital Readiness as the capability of local human resources to understand, accept, use, share, and develop digital technology for the creation of sustainable ecotourism value (van Laar et al., 2017; Teece, 2007). The proposed framework positions digital literacy and training as the main drivers of human resource digital readiness, knowledge sharing as a mechanism of collective learning, and community-based tourism performance as a managerial outcome that reflects service quality, local participation, economic benefits, and sustainability orientation (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Wang & Noe, 2010; Lee & Jan, 2019).

The theoretical contribution of this article lies in the integration of the resource-based view, knowledge-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, and ability-motivation-opportunity theory to explain how local human resources can transform digital capabilities into ecotourism destination value (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1996; Teece, 2007; Appelbaum et al., 2000). The practical contribution of this article lies in providing a framework for tourism village managers,



ecotourism actors, local governments, and community facilitators to design digital training that does not stop at application use, but moves toward strengthening services, conservation education, community collaboration, and destination performance (OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026).

This article offers three contributions. First, it advances the tourism digital transformation literature by shifting the analytical focus from technology adoption to human resource digital readiness as a community-level capability. Second, it contributes to sustainable ecotourism and community-based tourism literature by explaining how digital literacy, training, and knowledge sharing can support service quality, local participation, economic benefit, and sustainability orientation. Third, it contributes to human resource management literature by integrating the resource-based view, knowledge-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, and ability-motivation-opportunity theory into a conceptual framework that explains how local human resources transform digital and learning capabilities into sustainable destination performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND PROPOSITION DEVELOPMENT

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable Ecotourism and Community-Based Tourism Performance

Sustainable ecotourism places nature conservation, environmental education, local economic benefits, and community participation as the foundation of destination management (Lee & Jan, 2019; Rismayadi et al., 2026). Community-based tourism expands the role of local residents from being merely recipients of tourism impacts to becoming key actors in planning, service delivery, resource management, and the distribution of destination benefits (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018; Lee & Jan, 2019).

Community-based tourism performance cannot be measured solely by the number of tourist visits, because destination success also includes service quality, resident involvement, economic benefits, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability (Lee & Jan, 2019; World Economic Forum, 2024). In ecotourism, destination performance depends on the community's ability to transform natural resources and local knowledge into valuable, responsible, and long-term sustainable tourism experiences (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018; Rismayadi et al., 2026).

Digital Transformation in Tourism

Digitalization has transformed the structure of tourism work through the use of online platforms, social media, reservation systems, tourist data, and destination communication technologies (Buhalis & Law, 2008; OECD, 2021). Digital transformation in tourism not only



changes work tools, but also reshapes promotional patterns, relationships with tourists, experience design, and service governance (Gretzel et al., 2015; Vial, 2019).

Smart tourism shows that digital technology can transform data, connectivity, and tourist interactions into new value for destinations and tourism businesses (Gretzel et al., 2015). However, the benefits of technology do not emerge automatically, because destinations require human resources who are able to understand, select, use, and adapt technology to service needs and local characteristics (OECD, 2021; Vial, 2019).

Human Resource Digital Readiness

In this study, human resource digital readiness is understood as the readiness of local human resources to understand, accept, use, share, and develop digital technology in ecotourism management (van Laar et al., 2017; Weiner, 2009).

Human resource digital readiness combines technical capability, confidence to change, willingness to use technology, and collective capacity to apply digital practices in destination-related work (Weiner, 2009; OECD, 2021). In community-based ecotourism, human resource digital readiness becomes important because destination management involves residents, local guides, MSMEs, tourism village managers, local governments, and supporting partners (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018; Rismayadi et al., 2026).

Human resource digital readiness also determines whether technology is used merely for promotion or develops into an instrument for learning, service coordination, conservation education, and destination innovation (OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026).

Conceptual Distinction of Human Resource Digital Readiness

Human resource digital readiness differs from digital literacy, digital capability, and readiness for change. Digital literacy mainly refers to the ability of individuals to access, evaluate, communicate, and use digital information and technology. Digital capability refers to a broader capacity to mobilize digital resources for organizational or business purposes. Readiness for change refers to the psychological and collective willingness to accept and implement change. Human resource digital readiness integrates these elements, but is more specific because it refers to the readiness of local human resources to understand, accept, use, share, and develop digital technology for ecotourism management and community-based destination performance.

In community-based ecotourism, human resource digital readiness is not limited to individual technical skills. It also includes confidence to adopt digital practices, willingness to collaborate, ability to share knowledge, and collective capacity to apply technology in service delivery, conservation education, tourist communication, and destination governance. Therefore, this construct is positioned as a bridging capability that connects human resource development practices with sustainable ecotourism outcomes.



Table 1. Conceptual Distinction of Human Resource Digital Readiness

Construct	Main Meaning	Difference from Human Resource Digital Readiness
Digital literacy	Individual ability to access, evaluate, communicate, and use digital technology	More focused on individual digital skills and information use
Digital capability	Capacity to mobilize digital resources for organizational or business purposes	Broader and often located at the organizational level
Readiness for change	Psychological and collective willingness to accept and implement change	Not always specific to digital transformation or tourism work
Human resource digital readiness	Readiness of local human resources to understand, accept, use, share, and develop digital technology for ecotourism value creation	More specific to local human resources, community-based tourism, for digital adaptation, and sustainable ecotourism performance

Digital Literacy

Digital literacy includes technical, cognitive, social, and adaptive abilities that enable individuals to use technology to search for information, communicate, collaborate, solve problems, and innovate (van Laar et al., 2017). In the tourism sector, digital literacy helps human resources manage tourist communication, digital content, online reviews, basic data security, and the use of service-supporting applications (OECD, 2021).

Digital literacy in ecotourism needs to be linked to the ability to explain conservation values, manage destination narratives, and convey environmental information to tourists accurately (Rismayadi et al., 2026; Lee & Jan, 2019). Therefore, digital literacy becomes an initial foundation for the formation of human resource digital readiness in community-based ecotourism destinations (van Laar et al., 2017; OECD, 2021).

Training

Training is a human resource development mechanism that improves knowledge, skills, attitudes, and individual performance when it is designed based on clear work-related needs (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). In digital tourism, training is needed to close the skills gap between technological demands and the actual capabilities of destination workers (OECD, 2021).

Effective ecotourism training does not only teach the use of digital tools, but also integrates tourist services, environmental interpretation, conservation, digital marketing, and community participation (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Rismayadi et al., 2026). Training strengthens human resource digital readiness because it provides practical capabilities and confidence to apply technology in destination-related work (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Weiner, 2009).

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is the process of exchanging information, experience, skills, and work practices that helps individuals and groups use knowledge productively (Wang & Noe, 2010). From the knowledge-based view perspective, knowledge becomes a source of advantage when it can be combined, disseminated, and used to solve organizational or community problems (Grant, 1996).

In community-based destinations, knowledge sharing is important because knowledge about local culture, conservation, service, and technology is often distributed among different actors (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018; Wang & Noe, 2010). Knowledge sharing reduces dependence on particular individuals and strengthens the collective ability of the community to manage technology, services, and destination innovation (Grant, 1996; OECD, 2021).

Theoretical Synthesis

This study integrates the resource-based view, knowledge-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, and ability-motivation-opportunity theory to explain human resource digital readiness in sustainable ecotourism development. The resource-based view is used to explain digital literacy and human resource digital readiness as strategic resources when they are valuable, embedded in local knowledge, and organized within destination practices. The knowledge-based view explains knowledge sharing as a mechanism through which local, service, conservation, and digital knowledge are transferred among community actors. Dynamic capabilities theory explains how digitally ready human resources enable communities to sense digital opportunities, seize tourism market changes, and transform destination practices. Ability-motivation-opportunity theory explains how training strengthens the ability, motivation, and opportunity of local actors to apply digital skills in ecotourism work.

The integration of these theories clarifies that digital literacy, training, and knowledge sharing do not directly produce sustainable destination performance unless they are converted into human resource digital readiness. Human resource digital readiness therefore functions as a mediating capability that links human resource development inputs with community-based tourism performance.

Table 2. Theoretical Foundation of the Conceptual Framework

Theory	Function in This Study	Construct or Relationship Explained
Resource-Based View	Explains digital skills and human readiness as strategic resources embedded in destination practices	Digital literacy → Human resource digital readiness; Human resource digital readiness → Community-based tourism performance
Knowledge-Based View	Explains knowledge as a collective asset that must be shared among destination actors	Knowledge sharing → Human resource digital readiness



Theory	Function in This Study	Construct or Relationship Explained
Dynamic Capabilities Theory	Explains the ability of communities to sense, seize, and transform digital opportunities into destination value	Human resource digital readiness → Community-based tourism performance; mediating role of human resource digital readiness
Ability-Motivation-Opportunity Theory	Explains how training improves ability, motivation, and opportunity to use digital skills in tourism work	Training → Human resource digital readiness

B. CONCEPTUAL PROPOSITION

This conceptual study develops a model based on the integration of the resource-based view, knowledge-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, and ability-motivation-opportunity theory to explain human resource digital readiness in sustainable ecotourism development (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1996; Teece, 2007; Appelbaum et al., 2000). This model positions Human Resource Digital Readiness as a bridging capability between digital literacy, training, knowledge sharing, and community-based tourism performance (OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026). A conceptual approach is adopted because the digital tourism literature still tends to emphasize technology adoption, while the mechanism of human readiness as a driver of ecotourism value has not been fully explained (Jaakkola, 2020; OECD, 2021).

Digital Literacy and Human Resource Digital Readiness

Digital literacy reflects an individual's ability to use technology to access information, solve problems, communicate, collaborate, and adapt to changes in digital-based work (van Laar et al., 2017). In community-based ecotourism, digital literacy helps local actors manage destination promotion, tourist communication, conservation education, and service coordination more effectively (OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026). From the perspective of the resource-based view, digital literacy can become a valuable resource when it is embedded in local knowledge, service experience, and the community's ability to create distinctive tourism experiences (Barney, 1991; Lee & Jan, 2019). Therefore, digital literacy is positioned as a foundation for developing human resource digital readiness in sustainable ecotourism development (van Laar et al., 2017; OECD, 2021).

Proposition 1: Digital literacy positively shapes human resource digital readiness in sustainable ecotourism development.

Training and Human Resource Digital Readiness

Training improves knowledge, skills, work attitudes, and individual adaptability when the training content is aligned with actual work needs (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). In the tourism sector, digital training is needed because service work, marketing, reservations, data management, and tourist communication increasingly depend on technology (OECD, 2021).



Training designed for ecotourism does not merely teach the use of applications, but also connects technology with environmental education, tourist services, conservation, and community participation (Rismayadi et al., 2026; Lee & Jan, 2019). Based on ability-motivation-opportunity theory, training strengthens work ability and creates opportunities for local human resources to use digital skills in destination activities (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

Proposition 2: Training positively shapes human resource digital readiness in sustainable ecotourism development.

Knowledge Sharing and Human Resource Digital Readiness

Knowledge sharing enables individuals to transfer experience, information, skills, and work practices to other members of a community or organization (Wang & Noe, 2010). In community-based destinations, knowledge about local culture, conservation, service, and technology needs to be shared so that digital capabilities are not concentrated among only a few actors (Grant, 1996; Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018). From the perspective of the knowledge-based view, knowledge becomes a source of advantage when it can be combined, disseminated, and used to generate collective action (Grant, 1996; Wang & Noe, 2010). Therefore, knowledge sharing strengthens human resource digital readiness through collective learning, joint problem solving, and the replication of successful digital practices (Wang & Noe, 2010; OECD, 2021).

Proposition 3: Knowledge sharing positively shapes human resource digital readiness in sustainable ecotourism development.

Human Resource Digital Readiness and Community-Based Tourism Performance

Human Resource Digital Readiness indicates the readiness of local human resources to understand, accept, use, share, and develop digital technology for the creation of ecotourism value (van Laar et al., 2017; Teece, 2007). This readiness is important because community-based tourism performance is not measured only by tourist visits, but also by service quality, resident participation, local economic benefits, resource preservation, and socio-cultural sustainability (Lee & Jan, 2019; Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018). From the perspective of dynamic capabilities theory, human resource digital readiness enables communities to recognize digital opportunities, make relevant service decisions, and adjust destination practices to changes in the tourism market (Teece, 2007; OECD, 2021). Thus, digitally ready local human resources are more capable of transforming technology into services, education, conservation, and tourism experiences that support community-based tourism performance (Rismayadi et al., 2026; World Economic Forum, 2024).

Proposition 4: Human resource digital readiness positively shapes community-based tourism performance in sustainable ecotourism development.

Mediating Role of Human Resource Digital Readiness



Digital literacy, training, and knowledge sharing do not automatically produce destination performance if local human resources are not ready to use technology in ecotourism work processes (OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026). Human resource digital readiness acts as a mechanism that transforms individual capabilities, training interventions, and collective learning into more productive service practices and destination management (Teece, 2007; Wang & Noe, 2010). Human Resource Digital Readiness bridges the relationship between human resource development inputs and community-based tourism performance outcomes (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1996). This mediating position clarifies that technology does not operate as a single causal factor, but works through human readiness that enables technology to be utilized for sustainability purposes (OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026).

Digital literacy, training, and knowledge sharing are important human resource development inputs, but their contribution to community-based tourism performance depends on whether local human resources are ready to use digital technology in ecotourism work processes. Digital literacy provides the basic ability to use digital tools, training improves practical skills and work confidence, while knowledge sharing enables collective learning among destination actors. However, these inputs may remain fragmented if they are not transformed into a shared readiness to adopt, apply, and develop digital practices. Human resource digital readiness therefore acts as a mediating capability that converts individual skills, training outcomes, and collective learning into service improvement, conservation communication, community participation, and sustainable destination governance. This mediating role explains why technology does not operate as an independent driver of ecotourism performance, but works through the readiness of local human resources to use technology meaningfully and collaboratively.

Proposition 5: Human resource digital readiness mediates the relationship between digital literacy, training, knowledge sharing, and community-based tourism performance

Proposed Conceptual Framework

The proposed conceptual model positions digital literacy, training, and knowledge sharing as the main antecedents of human resource digital readiness (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; van Laar et al., 2017; Wang & Noe, 2010). Human resource digital readiness is then positioned as a core capability that drives community-based tourism performance in sustainable ecotourism development (Teece, 2007; Lee & Jan, 2019). This model provides a future research agenda for examining the mediating role of human resource digital readiness in the contexts of tourism villages, ecotourism, community-based hospitality, and nature-based destinations in developing countries (Jaakkola, 2020; Snyder, 2019).

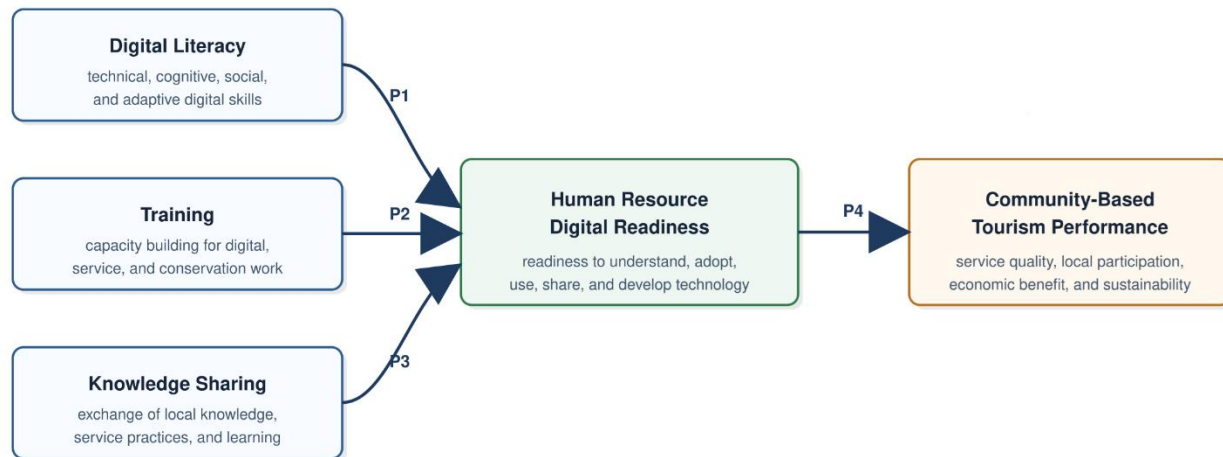


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework of Human Resource Digital Readiness for Sustainable Ecotourism Development

P1, P2, and P3 explain the influence of digital literacy, training, and knowledge sharing on human resource digital readiness. P4 explains the influence of human resource digital readiness on community-based tourism performance. P5 shows the mediating pathway of human resource digital readiness in sustainable ecotourism development. Although the proposed model focuses on the mediating role of human resource digital readiness, the relationship among the constructs may depend on several contextual conditions. Digital infrastructure readiness can determine whether local actors are able to apply digital skills in daily destination management. Community governance can influence the extent to which digital training and knowledge sharing are coordinated across destination actors. Local leadership can strengthen motivation, participation, and commitment to digital transformation. Stakeholder collaboration involving local governments, tourism village managers, MSMEs, community groups, and external facilitators can also enhance the implementation of digital practices. Therefore, future empirical studies may examine digital infrastructure readiness, community governance, local leadership, and stakeholder collaboration as boundary conditions that strengthen or weaken the relationship between human resource digital readiness and community-based tourism performance

METHOD

This study employs a conceptual review design using an integrative literature review approach to develop a conceptual framework of Human Resource Digital Readiness for Sustainable Ecotourism Development (Torraco, 2005; Snyder, 2019). A conceptual approach was selected because the purpose of this article is not to statistically test relationships among variables, but to synthesize theories, concepts, and empirical findings in order to develop propositions and a new conceptual model (Jaakkola, 2020). An integrative literature review was



used because this approach enables researchers to combine conceptual, empirical, and theoretical literature from the fields of human resource management, digital transformation, tourism, ecotourism, and community-based tourism (Torraco, 2005; Snyder, 2019).

The review is directed toward ecotourism and community-based tourism in developing countries, particularly because the management of such destinations strongly depends on local human resource capacity, community participation, and digital adaptation capability (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018; Rismayadi et al., 2026). The unit of analysis in this study consists of journal articles, academic books, institutional reports, and scholarly publications that discuss digital literacy, training, knowledge sharing, human resource digital readiness, ecotourism, and community-based tourism performance (Snyder, 2019; Page et al., 2021). The literature sources were searched through Scopus, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, Google Scholar, OECD iLibrary, and international institutional documents relevant to tourism and digital transformation (OECD, 2021; World Economic Forum, 2024).

The literature search process was conducted using a combination of keywords: “human resource digital readiness”, “digital literacy”, “training”, “knowledge sharing”, “community-based tourism”, “sustainable ecotourism”, “tourism workforce”, “digital transformation in tourism”, and “community-based tourism performance” (Snyder, 2019; Page et al., 2021).

The search also used Boolean combinations such as “digital literacy AND tourism workforce”, “training AND sustainable ecotourism”, “knowledge sharing AND community-based tourism”, and “digital readiness AND human resource management” to obtain more focused literature (Page et al., 2021). The literature was prioritized from publications published between 2015 and 2026 so that the review could capture recent developments in tourism digitalization, smart tourism, and digital human resource readiness (Gretzel et al., 2015; OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026). Several classical references were retained when they had strong theoretical positions, such as the resource-based view, knowledge-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, ability-motivation-opportunity theory, and readiness for change theory (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1996; Appelbaum et al., 2000; Teece, 2007; Weiner, 2009).

The inclusion criteria in this study covered literature discussing human resource development, digital literacy, training, knowledge sharing, digital transformation, ecotourism, sustainable tourism, or community-based tourism (Torraco, 2005; Snyder, 2019). The included articles had to demonstrate conceptual relevance to the main variables in the model, be published in scholarly journals or by credible institutions, and provide theoretical or empirical information that could be used to develop propositions (Jaakkola, 2020; Page et al., 2021). The exclusion criteria included articles that had no direct connection with human resources, tourism, ecotourism, digitalization, or community performance; popular articles without an academic basis; articles without adequate bibliographic information; and publications whose sources could not be traced (Snyder, 2019; Page et al., 2021).

Table 3. Research Stages and Procedures

Stage	Procedure			Purpose		
Identification Searching	literature	through	academic To	collect	relevant	initial

Stage	Procedure	Purpose
Screening	databases and institutional sources	literature
	Reading titles, abstracts, keywords, and article contexts	To remove literature that does not fit the topic
Eligibility	Reading article content and assessing the relevance of theories, concepts, and findings	To ensure that the literature supports model construction
Inclusion	Including literature that meets conceptual and theoretical criteria	To form the final corpus for synthesis

The analysis was conducted through theory-driven thematic synthesis, namely by grouping the literature based on theoretical themes and the main constructs in the model (Snyder, 2019; Jaakkola, 2020). The first stage of analysis was conducted by identifying the definitions, dimensions, and functions of each construct, namely digital literacy, training, knowledge sharing, human resource digital readiness, and community-based tourism performance (van Laar et al., 2017; Wang & Noe, 2010; Lee & Jan, 2019). The second stage was conducted by mapping the conceptual relationships among constructs based on theory and previous empirical findings (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1996; Teece, 2007). The third stage was conducted by developing conceptual propositions that explain the relationships among digital literacy, training, knowledge sharing, human resource digital readiness, and community-based tourism performance (Jaakkola, 2020; Torraco, 2005). The fourth stage was conducted by formulating a conceptual framework that shows the position of human resource digital readiness as a mediating mechanism in sustainable ecotourism development (OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026).

To maintain the quality of the synthesis, this study used three literature evaluation strategies. First, the literature was selected based on its direct relevance to the constructs and theories used in the model (Jaakkola, 2020). Second, the literature was compared across fields so that the concept of digital human resources was not developed only from a technological perspective, but also from the perspectives of management, tourism, and sustainability (Snyder, 2019; Torraco, 2005). Third, each proposition was formulated after sufficient theoretical and empirical support had been identified from previous literature (Webster & Watson, 2002; Jaakkola, 2020).

This study did not involve a human population, respondents, or informants because the data analyzed consisted of scholarly documents and institutional publications (Snyder, 2019). Therefore, this study did not require questionnaire instruments, statistical validity tests, statistical reliability tests, or respondent sampling techniques as commonly applied in quantitative research (Jaakkola, 2020). The limitation of this method lies in its conceptual nature, as it does not empirically test the relationships among variables. Therefore, the proposed model needs to be examined in future research through surveys, case studies, or mixed-methods approaches in community-based ecotourism destinations (Snyder, 2019; Rismayadi et al., 2026).

Table 4. Literature Corpus and Role in Model Development

Literature Theme	Main Sources	Key Contribution to the Study	Role in the Framework
Digital literacy and tourism workforce	van Laar et al.; OECD; Gretzel et al.	Explains technical, cognitive, social, and adaptive digital skills required in digital tourism work	Basis for Proposition 1
Training and human resource development	Aguinis & Kraiger; AMO literature	Explains how training improves knowledge, skills, work attitude, and readiness to perform	Basis for Proposition 2
Knowledge sharing and collective learning	Wang & Noe; Grant	Explains how knowledge is exchanged, disseminated, and transformed into collective capability	Basis for Proposition 3
Digital readiness and dynamic capability	Weiner; Teece; Vial	Explains readiness, adaptation, sensing, seizing, and transforming digital opportunities	Basis for Proposition 4 and Proposition 5
Sustainable ecotourism and community-based tourism performance	Lee & Jan; Giampiccoli & Saayman; World Economic Forum	Explains performance indicators such as service quality, local participation, economic benefit, conservation, and sustainability	Outcome construct

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. RESULTS

Conceptual Synthesis

The conceptual synthesis indicates that sustainable ecotourism development requires human resource digital readiness as a bridging capability between human resource development practices and community-based tourism performance. Digital literacy, training, and knowledge sharing represent three key antecedents because they provide individual skills, structured learning, and collective knowledge circulation. However, these antecedents do not automatically generate destination performance unless local actors are ready to adopt, apply, share, and develop digital technology in ecotourism work.

The synthesis produces five key constructs: digital literacy, training, knowledge sharing, human resource digital readiness, and community-based tourism performance. Digital literacy reflects the ability of local human resources to use digital technology for information search, communication, collaboration, problem solving, and adaptation. Training reflects structured human resource development designed to improve digital, service, conservation, and



community-based capabilities. Knowledge sharing reflects the exchange of local knowledge, service practices, digital experience, and collaborative learning among destination actors. Human resource digital readiness reflects the readiness of local actors to understand, accept, use, share, and develop digital technology for ecotourism value creation. Community-based tourism performance reflects multidimensional destination outcomes, including service quality, local participation, economic benefits, environmental protection, and socio-cultural sustainability.

The results of this conceptual study indicate that sustainable ecotourism development requires the digital readiness of local human resources as a bridging capability between technology, learning, and community-based tourism performance (OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026). The literature synthesis produced five main constructs, namely digital literacy, training, knowledge sharing, human resource digital readiness, and community-based tourism performance (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; van Laar et al., 2017; Wang & Noe, 2010; Lee & Jan, 2019).

These five constructs form a conceptual flow in which digital literacy, training, and knowledge sharing strengthen human resource digital readiness, while human resource digital readiness drives community-based tourism performance (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1996; Teece, 2007).

Table 5. Synthesis of Key Constructs

Construct	Conceptual Meaning	Main Dimensions	Role in the Framework
Digital literacy	The ability of local human resources to use digital technology for information search, communication, collaboration, problem solving, and skills adaptation in tourism work	Technical skills; cognitive skills; social skills; adaptive skills	Antecedent
Training	A structured human resource development process that improves knowledge, skills, work attitudes, and confidence relevant to ecotourism management	Digital training; service training; conservation training; community-based training	Antecedent
Knowledge sharing	The exchange of local knowledge, service experience, digital practices, and learning among destination actors	Local knowledge exchange; service knowledge; digital practice sharing; collaborative learning	Antecedent
Human resource digital readiness	The readiness of local actors to understand, accept, use, share, and develop digital technology for	Digital acceptance; digital confidence; digital collective capability	Mediating capability



Construct	Conceptual Meaning	Main Dimensions	Role in the Framework
Community-based tourism performance	ecotourism value creation	readiness	Outcome
	Destination performance in service quality, economic conservation, and sustainability	reflected Service quality; resident participation; economic benefits; socio-cultural sustainability; cultural sustainability	

The first synthesis result shows that digital literacy becomes the initial foundation of human resource digital readiness because tourism technology can only be used productively when human resources possess technical, cognitive, social, and adaptive capabilities (van Laar et al., 2017; OECD, 2021). Digital literacy helps ecotourism actors manage promotion, tourist communication, destination documentation, online reviews, and conservation education more effectively (Gretzel et al., 2015; Rismayadi et al., 2026). Digital literacy serves as a strategic resource that strengthens the readiness of local human resources to face the demands of digital tourism (Barney, 1991; Vial, 2019).

The second synthesis result shows that training strengthens human resource digital readiness because training provides knowledge and skills that can be directly applied in destination-related work (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; OECD, 2021). Training relevant to ecotourism needs to include the use of digital platforms, tourist services, destination marketing, environmental interpretation, and community-based conservation management (Lee & Jan, 2019; Rismayadi et al., 2026). This conceptual finding emphasizes that training should not merely be positioned as an administrative activity, but should become a strategy for strengthening the capabilities of local human resources (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Appelbaum et al., 2000).

The third synthesis result shows that knowledge sharing strengthens human resource digital readiness through collective learning among destination actors (Grant, 1996; Wang & Noe, 2010). In community-based ecotourism, knowledge about local culture, conservation, service, technology, and tourist behavior is distributed among many actors and therefore needs to be managed through knowledge-sharing mechanisms (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018; Wang & Noe, 2010). Knowledge sharing ensures that digital capability does not remain limited to certain individuals, but develops into a collective capability of the community (Grant, 1996; OECD, 2021).

The fourth synthesis result shows that human resource digital readiness functions as a mediating capability in this conceptual model (Teece, 2007; Weiner, 2009). Human resource digital readiness explains how digital literacy, training, and knowledge sharing can be transformed into more adaptive, collaborative, and sustainability-oriented destination management practices (OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026). This finding reinforces the view

that technology does not automatically generate destination performance because its impact depends on human readiness to use technology meaningfully (Vial, 2019; OECD, 2021).

The fifth synthesis result shows that community-based tourism performance needs to be understood as multidimensional performance that includes service quality, resident participation, local economic benefits, and environmental as well as socio-cultural sustainability (Lee & Jan, 2019; World Economic Forum, 2024). Destination performance in ecotourism is not only measured by growth in tourist visits, but also by the community's ability to preserve natural resources, manage tourism experiences, and distribute benefits to local residents (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018; Rismayadi et al., 2026).

Table 6. Conceptual Results and Propositions

Code	Conceptual Relationship	Proposition
1	Digital literacy → Human resource digital readiness	Digital literacy positively shapes human resource digital readiness in sustainable ecotourism development.
2	Training → Human resource digital readiness	Training positively shapes human resource digital readiness in sustainable ecotourism development.
3	Knowledge sharing → Human resource digital readiness	Knowledge sharing positively shapes human resource digital readiness in sustainable ecotourism development.
4	Human resource digital readiness → Community-based tourism performance	Human resource digital readiness positively shapes community-based tourism performance in sustainable ecotourism development.
5	Digital literacy, training, knowledge sharing → Human resource digital readiness → Community-based tourism performance	Human resource digital readiness mediates the relationship between digital literacy, training, knowledge sharing, and community-based tourism performance.

Based on the synthesis results, this article develops a conceptual framework that positions human resource digital readiness as the main mechanism in sustainable ecotourism development (Jaakkola, 2020; Rismayadi et al., 2026). This framework shows that strengthening digital human resources cannot be limited to technological mastery, but must also include training, collective learning, readiness for change, and community performance orientation (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Weiner, 2009; Wang & Noe, 2010). Therefore, the conceptual results of this study provide a basis for developing empirical models in future studies on tourism villages, ecotourism destinations, and community-based hospitality (Snyder, 2019; Jaakkola, 2020).

B. DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that sustainable ecotourism development cannot rely solely on the availability of technology, but requires the digital readiness of local human resources as



a key capability in transforming technology into destination value (OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026). This conceptual finding supports the digital transformation literature, which emphasizes that new technology only produces organizational change when accompanied by changes in capabilities, work processes, and value creation patterns (Vial, 2019; Teece, 2007). In the context of community-based ecotourism, human resource digital readiness becomes important because local communities act as managers of tourism experiences, guardians of local knowledge, service providers, and conservation actors (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018; Lee & Jan, 2019).

Theoretically, this study extends digital tourism and sustainable ecotourism literature by positioning human resource digital readiness as a mediating capability rather than merely as an individual skill or technological requirement. This position is important because digital transformation in community-based ecotourism depends not only on the availability of digital tools, but also on the ability of local actors to integrate technology with service delivery, conservation education, community participation, and destination governance. The proposed framework also extends the resource-based view by showing that digital skills become valuable when embedded in local knowledge and organized through community practices. It extends the knowledge-based view by explaining that knowledge sharing enables communities to transform distributed knowledge into collective digital readiness. It also extends dynamic capabilities theory by showing that digitally ready human resources help communities sense, seize, and transform digital opportunities into sustainable tourism performance.

The first finding shows that digital literacy forms the foundation of human resource digital readiness because ecotourism actors require technical, cognitive, social, and adaptive abilities to use technology in destination-related work (van Laar et al., 2017; OECD, 2021). This result extends smart tourism studies, which have largely emphasized the role of technology, data, and digital platforms in creating tourism value, by affirming that the digital literacy of local human resources is a prerequisite for technology to be used productively (Gretzel et al., 2015; Vial, 2019). In ecotourism practice, digital literacy enables communities to manage promotion, tourist communication, conservation narratives, experience documentation, and responses to online reviews in a more targeted manner (OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026).

The second finding shows that training strengthens human resource digital readiness because training provides practical skills, confidence, and adaptive capacity in facing technology-based work changes (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Weiner, 2009). This result is consistent with the human resource development literature, which explains that training can improve individual, team, organizational, and societal performance when designed according to actual work needs (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). Training in ecotourism needs to be directed toward the use of digital platforms, destination marketing, tourist services, environmental interpretation, conservation, and community governance so that it does not stop as technical training separated from destination needs (OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026).



The third finding shows that knowledge sharing strengthens human resource digital readiness through collective learning processes among destination actors (Grant, 1996; Wang & Noe, 2010). This result supports the knowledge-based view, which positions knowledge as a strategic resource when it can be shared, combined, and used for collective action (Grant, 1996). In community-based tourism, knowledge sharing is important because knowledge about local culture, conservation, service, and technology is often distributed among residents, guides, managers, MSME actors, and local governments (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018; Wang & Noe, 2010). Thus, knowledge sharing helps transform individual digital capabilities into collective community capabilities (Grant, 1996; OECD, 2021).

The fourth finding shows that human resource digital readiness conceptually influences community-based tourism performance because digital readiness makes communities more capable of responding to changes in tourists, managing services, and creating sustainable ecotourism experiences (Teece, 2007; Lee & Jan, 2019). This result extends dynamic capabilities theory by showing that sensing, seizing, and transforming capabilities in ecotourism destinations do not only exist within formal organizations, but can also grow within local communities that possess digital readiness (Teece, 2007; Rismayadi et al., 2026). Community-based tourism performance in this model does not only refer to economic performance, but also to service quality, resident participation, local benefits, conservation, and socio-cultural sustainability (Lee & Jan, 2019; World Economic Forum, 2024).

The fifth finding positions human resource digital readiness as a mediating mechanism that connects digital literacy, training, knowledge sharing, and community-based tourism performance (Barney, 1991; Teece, 2007). This mediating position explains that digital literacy, training, and knowledge sharing do not necessarily produce destination performance if local human resources do not yet have the readiness to apply technology in ecotourism work processes (OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026). Thus, this model strengthens the argument that technology is not the sole source of advantage, because the value of technology depends on human capability, knowledge governance, and community readiness to change (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1996; Weiner, 2009).

The theoretical contribution of this article lies in the integration of the resource-based view, knowledge-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, and ability-motivation-opportunity theory into a single conceptual framework for digital human resource development in sustainable ecotourism (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1996; Teece, 2007; Appelbaum et al., 2000). This framework extends the tourism management literature by positioning human resource digital readiness as a strategic capability, not merely as a consequence of technology use (OECD, 2021; Vial, 2019). This article also contributes to the community-based tourism literature by showing that the success of community-based destinations requires the integration of local knowledge, digital skills, training, and collective learning (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018; Lee & Jan, 2019).

The practical implication of this article is that tourism village managers, ecotourism actors, local governments, and community facilitators need to design human resource development programs that combine digital training, service literacy, conservation education,



and knowledge-sharing forums (OECD, 2021; Rismayadi et al., 2026). Destination digitalization programs should not only provide platforms or social media accounts, but should also build community capacity to manage content, read tourist needs, maintain service quality, and communicate sustainability values (Gretzel et al., 2015; World Economic Forum, 2024). For policymakers, this model can be used as a basis for designing more measurable tourism human resource capacity-building programs, particularly in ecotourism destinations and tourism villages located in areas facing digital skills gaps (OECD, 2021).

Practically, the framework suggests that tourism village managers, ecotourism operators, local governments, and community facilitators should not design digitalization programs merely by providing platforms, social media accounts, or online reservation systems. Digitalization programs should be linked to human resource development through digital literacy training, service-oriented training, conservation interpretation, and structured knowledge-sharing forums. Local actors need to be trained not only to use digital tools, but also to communicate destination narratives, educate tourists about conservation values, respond to online reviews, manage digital content, and coordinate community-based services. Policymakers can use the framework to design capacity-building programs that are more measurable, community-oriented, and sustainability-driven.

The managerial relevance of this article lies in the message that sustainable tourism innovation needs to begin with human readiness, not technology alone (Vial, 2019; Teece, 2007). Ecotourism destinations with local human resources who possess digital literacy, adequate training, and a culture of knowledge sharing are more likely to produce adaptive services, valuable tourism experiences, and sustainable destination governance (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Wang & Noe, 2010; Rismayadi et al., 2026). Therefore, this conceptual model provides a basis for future research to empirically test the relationships among variables in tourism villages, ecotourism, community-based hospitality, and nature-based destinations in developing countries (Jaakkola, 2020; Snyder, 2019).

Future research should empirically examine the proposed framework in tourism villages, ecotourism destinations, community-based hospitality businesses, and nature-based destinations in developing countries. Quantitative studies may test the mediating role of human resource digital readiness using survey data and structural equation modeling. Qualitative studies may explore how local actors experience digital readiness, training, and knowledge sharing in daily ecotourism practices. Mixed-methods research may combine surveys and interviews to explain both the strength of relationships among constructs and the contextual factors that shape digital readiness. Future studies may also examine digital infrastructure readiness, community governance, local leadership, stakeholder collaboration, and institutional support as moderating variables.

CONCLUSION

This conceptual study developed a framework of Human Resource Digital Readiness for Sustainable Ecotourism Development by integrating digital literacy, training, knowledge



sharing, human resource digital readiness, and community-based tourism performance. The framework positions human resource digital readiness as the central mediating capability that links human resource development practices with sustainable ecotourism outcomes. The study argues that digital literacy, training, and knowledge sharing do not automatically create destination performance unless local human resources are ready to understand, accept, use, share, and develop digital technology for ecotourism purposes.

The main theoretical contribution of this study lies in the integration of the resource-based view, knowledge-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, and ability-motivation-opportunity theory into a unified conceptual model. The framework extends tourism digital transformation literature by shifting attention from technology adoption to human readiness. It also contributes to community-based tourism literature by explaining that local knowledge, digital skills, training, and collective learning should be treated as interconnected capabilities that support sustainable destination performance.

The practical implication of this study is that tourism village managers, ecotourism operators, local governments, and community facilitators need to design digital capacity-building programs that integrate digital literacy, service quality, conservation education, and knowledge sharing. Digital transformation in ecotourism should not only provide digital tools, but should also strengthen the readiness of local actors to use technology for tourist communication, destination storytelling, environmental education, service coordination, and community benefit.

This study has limitations because it is conceptual and does not empirically test the proposed relationships. The framework also requires further validation across different types of community-based ecotourism destinations. Future research should test the model using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods approaches and may include contextual variables such as digital infrastructure readiness, community governance, local leadership, stakeholder collaboration, and institutional support.

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DECLARATION ON THE USE OF AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

AI-assisted technology was used during the preparation of this manuscript. The authors used ChatGPT by OpenAI to support language refinement, structural organization, conceptual drafting, and clarity improvement in selected parts of the manuscript. The AI-assisted output was reviewed, verified, edited, and approved by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, originality, references, conceptual arguments, tables, figures, and ethical accountability of the submitted manuscript. AI-assisted technology is not listed as an author or co-author.



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