



Digital Transformation Readiness and Tourist Experience in Tourism Villages: The Mediating Roles of E-Service Quality and Destination Innovation

Tarandhika Tantra

Leisure Management, Faculty of Economics & Business, Telkom University

Email: ttantra@telkomuniversity.ac.id

ABSTRACT

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Purpose of the study — This study aims to develop a conceptual framework explaining how digital transformation readiness may shape tourist experience in tourism villages through e-service quality and destination innovation.

Research Methodology: This study adopts a conceptual literature-based review using theory synthesis and thematic analysis. The literature was drawn from peer-reviewed studies on digital transformation, technology readiness, e-service quality, tourism innovation, smart tourism experience, and tourism village development. The synthesis integrates the Technology–Organization–Environment framework, dynamic capability theory, E-S-QUAL, smart tourism experience, and service-dominant logic.

Findings — The study proposes that digital transformation readiness may not be sufficient to improve tourist experience unless it is translated into reliable e-service quality and destination innovation. E-service quality functions as an operational service mechanism, while destination innovation functions as a strategic transformation mechanism that converts digital readiness into meaningful and co-created tourist experience.

Conclusion— This study contributes to tourism management, digital transformation, service quality, destination innovation, smart tourism, and community-based tourism literature by integrating digital readiness, e-service quality, destination innovation, and tourist experience into a tourism village framework.

Limitations — This study is conceptual and has not been empirically tested. Future studies should validate the proposed framework using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approaches in different types of tourism villages.

Keywords

: digital transformation readiness; e-service quality; destination innovation; tourist experience; tourism village.

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INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has become a central agenda in tourism management because digital technologies reshape how destinations create value, organize services, communicate with visitors, and sustain competitiveness in increasingly networked markets (Vial, 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021). Tourism destinations no longer compete only through physical attractions, hospitality facilities, or promotional visibility, but also through their ability to integrate digital infrastructure, service platforms, data-driven interaction, and visitor-oriented innovation into the destination experience (Gretzel et al., 2015; Buhalis & Leung, 2018). This shift is especially relevant for tourism villages, where local culture, community participation, small-scale entrepreneurship, and place-based experiences must be connected with digital service capabilities without weakening local identity and community ownership (Hjalager, 2010; Rismayani et al., 2025).

Tourism villages occupy an important position in sustainable tourism because they link visitor experience with local livelihoods, cultural preservation, rural entrepreneurship, and community-based destination management (Hjalager, 2010). Digital adoption can help tourism villages improve market access, visitor communication, booking convenience, destination storytelling, and service coordination, but the benefits depend on the readiness of local actors to use technology in meaningful and coordinated ways (Parasuraman, 2000; Verhoef et al., 2021). Recent evidence from Indonesian tourism villages shows that digital transformation readiness remains uneven across rural destinations, particularly because digital capability, institutional support, human resources, and market attractiveness do not develop at the same pace (Rismayani et al., 2025). This condition indicates that digital transformation in tourism villages should be understood not merely as technology adoption, but as a readiness-based managerial process that connects technology, organization, service quality, and destination innovation (Vial, 2019; Rismayani et al., 2025).

The tourist experience has also changed because visitors increasingly use digital tools before, during, and after travel to search for information, compare destinations, navigate places, share experiences, and evaluate service encounters (Neuhofer et al., 2012; Femenia-Serra & Neuhofer, 2018). Smart tourism research argues that technology can enrich destination experiences when digital systems support interactivity, personalization, accessibility, and real-time value co-creation between visitors, service providers, and destination actors (Gretzel et al., 2015; Femenia-Serra & Neuhofer, 2018). Meta-analytic evidence also confirms that smart

tourism technology contributes positively to tourism experience, especially when digital features provide useful information and interactive engagement for tourists (Sustacha et al., 2023). For tourism villages, this relationship is theoretically important because visitors usually seek authenticity, local interaction, cultural learning, and leisure meaning, while digital systems are often designed around efficiency, visibility, and transactional convenience (Neuhofer et al., 2012; Femenia-Serra & Neuhofer, 2018).

E-service quality provides a critical bridge between digital readiness and tourist experience because tourists evaluate digital destination services through efficiency, reliability, responsiveness, security, fulfillment, and ease of use (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Rita et al., 2019). In tourism villages, e-service quality may appear through destination websites, social media responses, online reservation systems, digital payment readiness, map integration, content accuracy, and post-visit communication (Buhalis & Leung, 2018; Rismayani et al., 2025). A destination may possess digital tools, but poor electronic service quality can weaken tourist trust, reduce perceived professionalism, and disrupt the experiential value of the visit (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Shin et al., 2021). Therefore, digital transformation readiness needs to be conceptually linked to e-service quality because readiness becomes valuable only when it is translated into reliable and visitor-oriented digital service encounters (Vial, 2019; Parasuraman et al., 2005).

Destination innovation is another essential construct because tourism innovation includes product, process, marketing, managerial, and institutional renewal that enables destinations to respond to changing visitor expectations and competitive pressure (Hjalager, 2010). Innovation in tourism villages may involve digital storytelling, creative tour packages, hybrid cultural interpretation, community-based service design, smart promotion, local product integration, and digitally supported visitor management (Hjalager, 2010; Neuhofer et al., 2012). Digital transformation readiness can stimulate destination innovation when local actors possess the capability to convert technology into new service formats, new visitor interactions, and new community-based value propositions (Vial, 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021). This relationship suggests that destination innovation should not be treated only as an outcome of digitalization, but also as a mechanism that strengthens the effect of digital readiness on tourist experience (Hjalager, 2010; Gretzel et al., 2015).

Despite the growing literature on smart tourism, digital transformation, e-service quality, and tourism innovation, several gaps remain visible in the study of tourism villages (Gretzel et al., 2015; Rismayani et al., 2025). First, smart tourism studies have often focused on urban destinations, hospitality ecosystems, platform-based services, or technology-enhanced experiences, while tourism villages have received less conceptual attention as community-based and resource-constrained destinations (Buhalis & Leung, 2018; Femenia-Serra &



Neuhofer, 2018). Second, digital transformation research explains strategic change and capability development, but it rarely specifies how digital readiness becomes tourist experience through service quality and innovation mechanisms in rural tourism settings (Vial, 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021). Third, e-service quality studies provide robust measurement foundations, but their application in tourism villages requires theoretical adaptation because digital service encounters are embedded in local culture, community participation, and place-based authenticity (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Neuhofer et al., 2012). Fourth, tourism innovation research recognizes multiple innovation types, but the role of destination innovation as a conceptual bridge between digital readiness and tourist experience remains insufficiently articulated in village tourism studies (Hjalager, 2010; Rismayani et al., 2025).

This conceptual article addresses these gaps by developing a framework that links digital transformation readiness, e-service quality, destination innovation, and tourist experience in tourism villages (Vial, 2019; Rismayani et al., 2025). The proposed framework positions digital transformation readiness as the foundational capability that enables tourism villages to prepare digital infrastructure, human resources, organizational coordination, and market-oriented digital practices (Parasuraman, 2000; Verhoef et al., 2021). The framework positions e-service quality as the service mechanism through which readiness becomes visible and valuable to tourists during digital interactions with the destination (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Rita et al., 2019). The framework also positions destination innovation as the strategic mechanism that transforms digital readiness into new experiential offerings, service processes, and community-based value creation (Hjalager, 2010; Gretzel et al., 2015). The conceptual contribution lies in integrating digital transformation theory, e-service quality, smart tourism experience, and tourism innovation into a tourism village framework that reflects both managerial readiness and visitor experience (Gretzel et al., 2015; Femenia-Serra & Neuhofer, 2018).

The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to move the discussion of tourism village digitalization from a technology adoption issue to an experience-oriented innovation framework (Vial, 2019; Rismayani et al., 2025). This study contributes to tourism and leisure management literature by explaining how digital readiness may shape tourist experience through the quality of electronic service encounters and the innovative capacity of destinations (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Hjalager, 2010). This study also offers practical relevance for tourism village managers, local governments, and community-based tourism actors because the framework helps identify which digital capabilities should be strengthened before expecting digital transformation to improve visitor experience (Verhoef et al., 2021; Rismayani et al., 2025). The article proceeds by reviewing the literature on digital transformation readiness, e-service quality, destination innovation, and tourist experience, followed by the development of

conceptual propositions and a proposed research framework for future empirical testing (Vial, 2019; Femenia-Serra & Neuhofer, 2018).

This study offers three main novelties. First, it shifts the discussion of tourism village digitalization from a technology adoption perspective to an experience-oriented and innovation-driven framework. Prior studies have discussed digital transformation, smart tourism, e-service quality, and tourism innovation separately, but limited conceptual attention has been given to how digital readiness becomes tourist experience in community-based tourism villages. Second, this study proposes e-service quality and destination innovation as dual mediating mechanisms. E-service quality explains the operational service pathway through which digital readiness becomes visible to tourists, while destination innovation explains the strategic transformation pathway through which digital readiness is converted into new destination offerings, processes, and value propositions. Third, this study integrates the Technology–Organization–Environment framework, dynamic capability theory, E-S-QUAL, smart tourism experience, and service-dominant logic into a unified conceptual model for tourism villages. This integration strengthens the theoretical explanation of how digital transformation readiness can support meaningful, co-created, and locally embedded tourist experience

LITERATURE REVIEW AND PROPOSITION DEVELOPMENT

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Transformation Readiness in Tourism Villages

Digital transformation readiness refers to the preparedness of an organization or destination to adopt, integrate, and reconfigure digital technologies into its value creation processes (Vial, 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021). In tourism villages, digital transformation readiness cannot be reduced to the availability of websites, social media accounts, or online booking channels because digital readiness also requires human capability, organizational coordination, technological infrastructure, and environmental support (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990; Rismayani et al., 2025). The Technology–Organization–Environment framework explains that technological adoption is shaped by the interaction between technological resources, organizational capability, and external pressure or support (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990; Baker, 2012). This perspective is relevant for tourism villages because village-based destinations depend on local actors, community institutions, small tourism enterprises, government support, and market access (Hjalager, 2010; Rismayani et al., 2025).

Digital transformation changes tourism management by shifting destination value from physical service delivery toward digitally mediated interaction, data-supported communication, and experience-oriented service design (Gretzel et al., 2015; Buhalis & Leung, 2018). For tourism villages, readiness becomes important because local destinations often possess rich



cultural, natural, and social resources, but lack systematic digital capability to transform those resources into accessible and memorable tourist experiences (Neuhofer et al., 2012; Rismayani et al., 2025). Technology readiness also includes psychological and behavioral willingness to embrace digital tools, particularly optimism, innovativeness, discomfort, and insecurity toward technology use (Parasuraman, 2000; Shin et al., 2021). Therefore, digital transformation readiness in tourism villages should be viewed as a multidimensional capability that combines technology, people, organization, and institutional support (Vial, 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021).

E-Service Quality in Tourism Destination Management

E-service quality refers to the extent to which digital platforms facilitate efficient, reliable, secure, and responsive service delivery for users (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Rita et al., 2019). The E-S-QUAL model identifies efficiency, system availability, fulfillment, and privacy as central dimensions of electronic service quality, while recovery-related dimensions include responsiveness, compensation, and contact (Parasuraman et al., 2005). In tourism villages, e-service quality may appear through accurate destination information, responsive social media communication, clear booking procedures, digital payment readiness, online complaint handling, and reliable pre-visit guidance (Buhalis & Leung, 2018; Rismayani et al., 2025).

E-service quality is important because digital interaction often becomes the first service encounter between tourists and destinations (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Gretzel et al., 2015). A tourism village may offer authentic cultural attractions, local hospitality, and nature-based leisure experiences, but weak digital service quality can reduce tourist confidence before the visit takes place (Neuhofer et al., 2012; Femenia-Serra & Neuhofer, 2018). Previous tourism technology research indicates that smart tourism technology can increase tourist satisfaction and behavioral intention when tourists perceive the technology as useful, interactive, and supportive of travel decisions (Shin et al., 2021; Sustacha et al., 2023). This means that e-service quality functions as a service mechanism that translates digital readiness into a more accessible and reliable tourist experience (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Rita et al., 2019).

Destination Innovation in Tourism Villages

Destination innovation refers to the renewal of products, services, processes, marketing practices, managerial systems, and institutional arrangements within a destination (Hjalager, 2010). Tourism innovation is not limited to technological novelty because innovation may also emerge through new tour packages, community-based service models, cultural interpretation, creative storytelling, collaborative governance, and new forms of visitor engagement (Hjalager, 2010; Neuhofer et al., 2012). In tourism villages, destination innovation is strongly connected with local resources because the value of the destination depends on culture, community

participation, local products, landscape, hospitality, and everyday village life (Hjalager, 2010; Rismayani et al., 2025).

Dynamic capability theory explains that organizations need the ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure resources in response to changing environments (Teece et al., 1997; Verhoef et al., 2021). This logic fits tourism villages because digital transformation requires local actors to convert existing resources into new forms of visitor value (Hjalager, 2010; Vial, 2019). Destination innovation may become the strategic mechanism that connects digital readiness with tourist experience because digital tools only generate value when they support new service processes, new narratives, new market access, and new visitor interactions (Gretzel et al., 2015; Buhalis & Leung, 2018). Therefore, innovation in tourism villages should be positioned as a bridge between technological preparedness and experience creation (Neuhofer et al., 2012; Hjalager, 2010).

Tourist Experience in Digitally Mediated Tourism Villages

Tourist experience refers to the subjective, emotional, cognitive, sensory, social, and behavioral responses that tourists develop before, during, and after visiting a destination (Neuhofer et al., 2012; Femenia-Serra & Neuhofer, 2018). In tourism villages, tourist experience is shaped not only by service efficiency but also by authenticity, social interaction, local learning, cultural immersion, leisure meaning, and the perceived uniqueness of place (Campos et al., 2018; Femenia-Serra & Neuhofer, 2018). Digital technology can enhance tourist experience when it supports information access, navigation, storytelling, personalization, interaction, and experience sharing (Gretzel et al., 2015; Sustacha et al., 2023).

The smart tourism literature argues that technology-enhanced destination experiences are produced through interaction between tourists, digital systems, service providers, and destination environments (Neuhofer et al., 2012; Femenia-Serra & Neuhofer, 2018). Service-dominant logic also views value as co-created through interaction among actors rather than delivered unilaterally by providers (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Campos et al., 2018). This view is important for tourism villages because tourists do not merely consume facilities, but participate in cultural, social, and leisure experiences that are embedded in the local community (Campos et al., 2018; Rismayani et al., 2025). Thus, digital transformation readiness should support tourist experience by improving both digital service quality and destination innovation (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Hjalager, 2010).

Theoretical Synthesis

The proposed framework integrates four theoretical perspectives. The TOE framework explains why digital transformation readiness depends on technological, organizational, and

environmental conditions (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990; Baker, 2012). Dynamic capability theory explains how tourism villages reconfigure local resources and digital capabilities into innovative destination offerings (Teece et al., 1997; Verhoef et al., 2021). E-service quality theory explains how digital readiness becomes visible through reliable, efficient, secure, and responsive digital service encounters (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Rita et al., 2019). Smart tourism experience and service-dominant logic explain how digital tools and local actors co-create meaningful tourist experiences (Gretzel et al., 2015; Femenia-Serra & Neuhofer, 2018).

Based on this synthesis, digital transformation readiness is positioned as the antecedent construct, e-service quality and destination innovation are positioned as mediating mechanisms, and tourist experience is positioned as the outcome construct. This conceptual position is useful because it avoids treating digitalization as a direct solution for tourism village development. Instead, the framework argues that digital readiness improves tourist experience only when it is translated into high-quality electronic services and innovative destination practices.

Table 1. Synthesis development

Construct	Operational Definition in This Study	Main Dimensions	Key References
Digital Transformation Readiness	The preparedness of tourism villages to adopt, integrate, and reconfigure digital technologies into service delivery and destination management.	Technological readiness, organizational readiness, human digital capability, environmental support	Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990; Parasuraman, 2000; Vial, 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021
E-Service Quality	The quality of digital service encounters perceived by tourists when interacting with tourism village platforms and online contact communication channels.	Efficiency, reliability, fulfillment, responsiveness, privacy,	Parasuraman et al., 2005; Rita et al., 2019
Destination Innovation	The renewal of destination products, services, processes, marketing practices, management systems, and institutional arrangements.	Product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation, managerial institutional innovation	Hjalager, 2010; Teece et al., 1997
Tourist	The cognitive, affective,	Cognitive experience,	Neuhofer et al.,



Construct	Operational Definition in This Study	Main Dimensions	Key References
Experience	sensory, social, behavioral, affective and co-created responses developed by tourists before, interaction, during, and after visiting a tourism village.	experience, 2012; Campos et al., 2018; Femenia-Serra & Neuhofer, 2018	

B. CONCEPTUAL PROPOSITION

Digital Transformation Readiness and E-Service Quality

Digital transformation readiness provides the technological and organizational basis for improving e-service quality in tourism villages (Vial, 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021). A tourism village with stronger digital readiness is more likely to provide accurate online information, responsive communication, integrated booking systems, reliable digital payment options, and accessible visitor support (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Rismayani et al., 2025). The TOE framework supports this relationship because electronic service quality depends not only on technology availability but also on organizational capability and environmental support (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990; Baker, 2012). Therefore, the first proposition is formulated as follows:

Proposition 1: Digital transformation readiness positively shapes e-service quality in tourism villages.

Digital Transformation Readiness and Destination Innovation

Digital transformation readiness can stimulate destination innovation because digital technologies enable tourism villages to redesign products, processes, marketing practices, and visitor engagement models (Hjalager, 2010; Vial, 2019). Tourism villages with stronger readiness can use digital tools for storytelling, market segmentation, community-based package design, visitor data management, and collaborative destination promotion (Gretzel et al., 2015; Rismayani et al., 2025). Dynamic capability theory supports this argument because destinations need to reconfigure resources and capabilities to respond to technological change and tourist demand (Teece et al., 1997; Verhoef et al., 2021). Therefore, the second proposition is formulated as follows:

Proposition 2: Digital transformation readiness positively shapes destination innovation in tourism villages.

E-Service Quality and Tourist Experience

E-service quality influences tourist experience because digital service encounters shape tourist expectations, perceived convenience, trust, and satisfaction before and during the visit (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Rita et al., 2019). Reliable and responsive digital services help tourists reduce uncertainty, plan activities, access destination information, and interact with destination managers more easily (Buhalis & Leung, 2018; Shin et al., 2021). Smart tourism research shows that useful and interactive technology can enhance the quality of tourism experience (Femenia-Serra & Neuhofer, 2018; Sustacha et al., 2023). Therefore, the third proposition is formulated as follows:

Proposition 3: E-service quality positively shapes tourist experience in tourism villages.

Destination Innovation and Tourist Experience

Destination innovation enhances tourist experience by creating new forms of attraction, interaction, interpretation, and service delivery (Hjalager, 2010; Neuhofer et al., 2012). In tourism villages, innovation may strengthen tourist experience when local actors develop creative cultural packages, digital storytelling, community-based leisure activities, and integrated local product experiences (Campos et al., 2018; Rismayani et al., 2025). Service-dominant logic supports this relationship because tourist experience emerges through co-created value among tourists, communities, and service providers (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Campos et al., 2018). Therefore, the fourth proposition is formulated as follows:

Proposition 4: Destination innovation positively shapes tourist experience in tourism villages.

The Mediating Role of E-Service Quality

Digital transformation readiness may not automatically improve tourist experience if digital tools do not produce efficient, reliable, and responsive service encounters (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Vial, 2019). E-service quality becomes the operational mechanism that converts readiness into value perceived by tourists (Rita et al., 2019; Shin et al., 2021). This argument is important for tourism villages because digital infrastructure alone cannot create positive experiences without clear information, dependable interaction, and service reliability (Buhalis & Leung, 2018; Rismayani et al., 2025). Therefore, the fifth proposition is formulated as follows:

Proposition 5: E-service quality mediates the relationship between digital transformation readiness and tourist experience in tourism villages.

The Mediating Role of Destination Innovation

Digital transformation readiness can also influence tourist experience through destination innovation because technology becomes meaningful when it supports new destination offerings and renewed service processes (Hjalager, 2010; Verhoef et al., 2021). Destination innovation allows tourism villages to transform digital capability into creative tourism products, community-based experiences, and more adaptive destination management (Neuhofer et al., 2012; Rismayani et al., 2025). This proposition follows dynamic capability theory because digital readiness must be reconfigured into innovation before it becomes experiential value for tourists (Teece et al., 1997; Vial, 2019). Therefore, the sixth proposition is formulated as follows:

Proposition 6: Destination innovation mediates the relationship between digital transformation readiness and tourist experience in tourism villages.

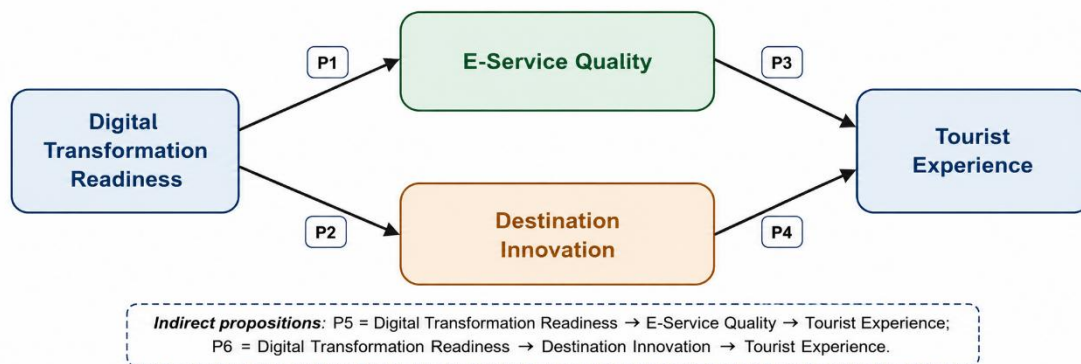


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework

The proposed conceptual framework positions digital transformation readiness as the main antecedent, e-service quality and destination innovation as parallel mediating mechanisms, and tourist experience as the main outcome. The first pathway explains how digital readiness improves tourist experience through better electronic service delivery, while the second pathway explains how digital readiness improves tourist experience through destination innovation. This framework suggests that tourism village digitalization should not be assessed only from technology adoption, but also from its ability to generate reliable digital services and innovative destination experiences.

METHOD

This study adopts a conceptual literature-based review using theory synthesis and thematic analysis. This design is appropriate because the study does not aim to test statistical relationships, but to develop a theoretically grounded framework explaining how digital transformation readiness may shape tourist experience in tourism villages through e-service quality and destination innovation. Conceptual articles require a clear research design, explicit theoretical positioning, and a coherent explanation of how constructs are integrated into a new



framework (Jaakkola, 2020; MacInnis, 2011; Whetten, 1989). Therefore, this study follows a theory synthesis logic by integrating concepts from digital transformation, technology readiness, e-service quality, tourism innovation, smart tourism experience, and service-dominant logic.

The research context is tourism villages as community-based destinations that combine local culture, leisure experience, rural entrepreneurship, and destination management. This context was selected because tourism villages increasingly face pressure to adopt digital tools while maintaining service quality, local identity, community participation, and destination innovation. The unit of analysis in this conceptual study is not individual tourists or tourism managers, but the theoretical relationships among four constructs: digital transformation readiness, e-service quality, destination innovation, and tourist experience.

The literature was identified from peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, review articles, and conceptual studies related to the main constructs. The search prioritized reputable academic sources, including Scopus-indexed journals, Web of Science-indexed journals, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Wiley Online Library, Taylor & Francis Online, Emerald Insight, SAGE Journals, and Google Scholar for citation tracing. Google Scholar was used only as a complementary tool to identify citation trails and cross-check bibliographic completeness. The review focused primarily on literature published between 2000 and 2026 because digital readiness, e-service quality, smart tourism, and digital transformation became more established in management, service, and tourism scholarship during this period. Foundational works published before 2000 were retained when they were theoretically essential, including the Technology–Organization–Environment framework, dynamic capability theory, and service-dominant logic.

The literature search used four groups of keywords. The first group focused on digital transformation readiness and included “digital transformation readiness,” “technology readiness,” “digital capability,” “TOE framework,” “smart tourism readiness,” and “tourism village digital transformation.” The second group focused on e-service quality and included “e-service quality,” “E-S-QUAL,” “digital service quality,” “online service quality,” and “tourism digital service.” The third group focused on destination innovation and included “tourism innovation,” “destination innovation,” “smart destination innovation,” “community-based tourism innovation,” and “rural tourism innovation.” The fourth group focused on tourist experience and included “tourist experience,” “smart tourism experience,” “technology-enhanced destination experience,” “tourism experience co-creation,” and “tourism village experience.”

The inclusion criteria were established to ensure theoretical relevance and source traceability. Literature was included when it met at least one of the following criteria: defining or developing one of the main constructs; explaining relationships among digital technology, service quality, innovation, and experience; discussing tourism villages, rural tourism, community-based tourism, or smart tourism destinations; or providing methodological guidance for conceptual and literature-based research. Literature was also prioritized when it



was published in reputable journals, had a clear DOI or publisher record, and was relevant to tourism, hospitality, service research, information systems, innovation, or management.

The exclusion criteria were applied to maintain the quality and relevance of the literature base. Non-peer-reviewed web materials, anonymous online articles, inaccessible papers, duplicate records, weakly related studies, and publications without clear bibliographic information were excluded. Studies focusing only on technical infrastructure without implications for tourism service, destination management, innovation, or tourist experience were not used as core references. Studies discussing digital marketing or tourism promotion without linking them to service quality, innovation, or visitor experience were also excluded from the core synthesis.

The analytical procedure consisted of four stages. First, the literature was mapped according to the four main constructs: digital transformation readiness, e-service quality, destination innovation, and tourist experience. Second, each construct was reviewed to identify its definition, theoretical foundation, main dimensions, and relevance to tourism villages. Third, theoretical relationships among the constructs were synthesized using the Technology–Organization–Environment framework, dynamic capability theory, E-S-QUAL, smart tourism experience, and service-dominant logic. Fourth, the synthesized relationships were converted into conceptual propositions and visualized in the proposed conceptual framework.

The synthesis procedure followed a thematic and theoretical logic rather than an author-by-author summary. Digital transformation readiness was analyzed through technology readiness, organizational readiness, human digital capability, and environmental support. E-service quality was analyzed through efficiency, reliability, fulfillment, responsiveness, privacy, and contact. Destination innovation was analyzed through product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation, managerial innovation, and institutional innovation. Tourist experience was analyzed through cognitive, affective, sensory, social, behavioral, and co-created experience.

The trustworthiness of the conceptual synthesis was strengthened through source triangulation and theoretical triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing studies from tourism management, hospitality, service research, information systems, innovation management, and digital transformation literature. Theoretical triangulation was conducted by integrating multiple theoretical perspectives rather than relying on a single theory. The Technology–Organization–Environment framework explains readiness conditions, dynamic capability theory explains the transformation of resources into innovation, E-S-QUAL explains digital service encounters, and service-dominant logic explains value co-creation in tourist experience.

Because this study is conceptual, it does not involve respondents, field surveys, statistical sampling, or hypothesis testing. The proposed framework is intended as a theoretical model for future empirical examination. Future studies may test the framework using quantitative survey data from tourists, tourism village managers, local tourism enterprises, or community-based tourism organizations. Structural equation modeling may be used to examine the direct and



indirect relationships among digital transformation readiness, e-service quality, destination innovation, and tourist experience.

Table 2. Literature Selection Criteria

Criteria	Description
Review type	Conceptual literature-based review using theory synthesis and thematic analysis
Article type	Peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, conceptual papers, and high-quality review articles
Publication period	Mainly 2000–2026, with older foundational works retained when theoretically essential
Main databases and sources	Scopus-indexed journals, Web of Science-indexed journals, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Wiley Online Library, Taylor & Francis Online, Emerald Insight, SAGE Journals, and Google Scholar for citation tracing
Main fields	Tourism, hospitality, service research, information systems, innovation, digital transformation, and management
Main constructs	Digital transformation readiness, e-service quality, destination innovation, and tourist experience
Inclusion basis	Clear construct relevance, theoretical contribution, tourism village relevance, traceable source, DOI or publisher record
Exclusion basis	Non-peer-reviewed sources, anonymous web materials, unclear bibliographic identity, duplicate records, inaccessible papers, and weak theoretical relevance
Analytical strategy	Construct mapping, thematic coding, theoretical synthesis, proposition development, and conceptual framework construction

Table 3. Analytical Framework

Construct	Analytical Focus	Main Theoretical Basis
Digital Transformation Readiness	Technology, organization, human capability, environmental support	TOE Framework; Technology Readiness Index
E-Service Quality	Efficiency, reliability, fulfillment, responsiveness, privacy, contact	E-S-QUAL
Destination Innovation	Product, process, marketing, managerial, institutional innovation	Tourism Innovation; Dynamic Capability Theory
Tourist Experience	Cognitive, affective, sensory, social, Smart	Smart Tourism Experience;



Construct	Analytical Focus	Main Theoretical Basis
	behavioral, co-created experience	Service-Dominant Logic

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Conceptual Synthesis Results

The conceptual synthesis produced four main findings. First, digital transformation readiness in tourism villages is a multidimensional capability rather than a simple indicator of technology adoption. It includes technological infrastructure, organizational coordination, human digital capability, and environmental support. This finding suggests that tourism villages require integrated readiness before digital tools can improve service delivery and visitor experience.

Second, e-service quality emerged as an operational service mechanism that connects digital transformation readiness with tourist experience. Digital readiness becomes visible to tourists through reliable information, responsive digital communication, clear booking procedures, secure transactions, efficient service processes, and accessible online support. This finding indicates that digital transformation has limited experiential value when tourism villages fail to translate digital capability into high-quality electronic service encounters.

Third, destination innovation emerged as a strategic transformation mechanism that connects digital readiness with new forms of destination value. Destination innovation includes product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation, managerial innovation, and institutional innovation. In tourism villages, innovation may appear through digital storytelling, community-based tour packages, local product integration, creative cultural interpretation, and adaptive visitor management. This finding shows that digital readiness becomes more meaningful when local actors use technology to renew destination offerings and strengthen visitor engagement.

Fourth, tourist experience in tourism villages is shaped by the interaction between digital service quality and destination innovation. Tourist experience does not depend only on access to online information or transactional convenience, but also on cultural meaning, local interaction, authenticity, participation, leisure value, and co-created experience. This finding confirms that tourism village digitalization should support both service efficiency and experiential richness.

Based on these findings, the study proposes a conceptual framework in which digital transformation readiness influences tourist experience through two mediating mechanisms: e-service quality and destination innovation. The first pathway explains how readiness improves tourist experience through better electronic service delivery. The second pathway explains how readiness improves tourist experience through innovative destination practices. These pathways are reflected in the six conceptual propositions developed in the previous section.

Table 4. Results of Conceptual Synthesis

Key Finding	Conceptual Meaning	Supporting Literature
Digital transformation Readiness	includes technology,	Tornatzky & Fleischer,



Key Finding	Conceptual Meaning	Supporting Literature
readiness multidimensional	is organization, human capability, and environmental support	1990; Vial, 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021
E-service quality is an operational mechanism	Digital readiness becomes valuable through reliable and responsive digital services	Parasuraman et al., 2005; Rita et al., 2019
Destination innovation is a strategic mechanism	Digital readiness must be converted into new offerings, processes, and visitor value	Hjalager, 2010; Neuhofer et al., 2012
Tourist experience is co-created	Experience is shaped by digital support, local interaction, participation, and meaning	Gretzel et al., 2015; Campos et al., 2018

Based on these findings, the study proposes a conceptual framework in which digital transformation readiness influences tourist experience through two mediating mechanisms: e-service quality and destination innovation. The first pathway explains how readiness improves tourist experience through better electronic service delivery. The second pathway explains how readiness improves tourist experience through innovative destination practices. These pathways are reflected in six conceptual propositions developed in the previous section.

B. Theoretical Discussion

This study contributes to digital transformation readiness literature by positioning readiness as a precondition for experience-oriented tourism village development. Digital transformation is not treated merely as technology adoption, but as a readiness-based process that requires the alignment of technology, organization, people, and environmental support. This argument is important for tourism villages because digital progress in community-based destinations depends on local leadership, community participation, digital literacy, institutional support, and market access.

This study also contributes to e-service quality literature by extending the relevance of E-S-QUAL into the tourism village context. In tourism villages, e-service quality is not limited to website performance or online transaction efficiency. It also includes accurate destination information, fast social media response, clear reservation procedures, secure digital payment options, online complaint handling, and reliable pre-visit guidance. This extension shows that electronic service quality is a critical mechanism through which digital readiness becomes visible and valuable to tourists.

The study further contributes to destination innovation literature by positioning innovation as a mediating mechanism between digital readiness and tourist experience. Tourism innovation is not limited to technological novelty, but includes new tourism products, renewed service processes, creative marketing practices, adaptive management systems, and



collaborative institutional arrangements. In tourism villages, destination innovation enables local actors to convert digital capability into digital storytelling, community-based packages, local product integration, and more meaningful visitor engagement.

This study also contributes to smart tourism experience and community-based tourism literature by emphasizing the balance between digital efficiency and local authenticity. Smart tourism research shows that technology can enhance tourist experience when it supports interaction, personalization, information quality, and value co-creation. However, tourism villages are not only digital service spaces; they are also cultural, social, and community-based destinations. Therefore, digital technology should enrich local interaction, cultural learning, leisure meaning, and co-created experience rather than replace the social and cultural qualities that make tourism villages distinctive.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in integrating four research streams that are often discussed separately: digital transformation readiness, e-service quality, destination innovation, and tourist experience. The proposed framework explains that digital readiness may shape tourist experience through two complementary mechanisms. E-service quality represents the operational service pathway, while destination innovation represents the strategic transformation pathway. This dual-mediation logic strengthens the theoretical explanation of how digital transformation readiness can support meaningful tourist experience in tourism villages.

The practical implication is that tourism village managers should not begin digital transformation only by creating websites, social media accounts, or online booking channels. They should first assess digital readiness, including infrastructure, human capability, service coordination, content management, and institutional support. Local governments and destination managers should also train community actors to manage digital communication, visitor data, online service recovery, digital storytelling, and community-based innovation.

The findings are also relevant for sustainable tourism village management. Digital readiness can support sustainability when it improves market access for local products, strengthens community-based services, reduces information barriers, and helps visitors engage with local culture responsibly. Destination innovation can help tourism villages create value without relying only on mass visitor numbers because innovation may improve experience quality, local participation, and community benefit.

For future research, the proposed framework can be empirically tested using quantitative methods. Researchers may measure digital transformation readiness as an antecedent variable, e-service quality and destination innovation as mediating variables, and tourist experience as the outcome variable. Future studies may also add tourist satisfaction, revisit intention, destination loyalty, perceived authenticity, digital literacy, community participation, or sustainable tourist behavior as extended constructs.

CONCLUSION



This study developed a conceptual framework explaining how digital transformation readiness may contribute to tourist experience in tourism villages through e-service quality and destination innovation. The study achieved its objective by synthesizing literature on digital transformation, technology readiness, e-service quality, smart tourism experience, destination innovation, and community-based tourism. The proposed framework argues that digital readiness may not be sufficient to create meaningful tourist experience unless it is translated into reliable electronic service encounters and innovative destination practices.

The main theoretical contribution of this study lies in integrating four constructs that are often discussed separately in tourism and management literature. Digital transformation readiness is positioned as the foundational capability, e-service quality as the operational service mechanism, destination innovation as the strategic transformation mechanism, and tourist experience as the main experiential outcome. This integration extends smart tourism and tourism village literature by showing that digitalization should be understood as an experience-oriented and innovation-driven process, not merely as the adoption of digital tools.

The practical contribution of this study is relevant for tourism village managers, local governments, community-based tourism institutions, and tourism MSMEs. Tourism villages should strengthen digital infrastructure, human digital capability, online service responsiveness, content accuracy, digital payment readiness, and service recovery before expecting digital transformation to improve tourist experience. Destination managers should also use digital readiness to develop innovative tourism products, digital storytelling, community-based packages, and integrated local product experiences.

This study has several limitations. First, the framework is conceptual and has not been empirically tested. Second, the literature synthesis focused on four main constructs, while other relevant variables such as tourist satisfaction, destination trust, revisit intention, perceived authenticity, digital literacy, community participation, and sustainable tourist behavior were not included in the model. Third, the framework was developed for tourism villages, so its applicability to urban destinations, large-scale resorts, heritage sites, or smart cities requires further examination.

Future research should empirically test the proposed framework using quantitative methods such as structural equation modeling. Future studies may collect data from tourists, tourism village managers, local tourism enterprises, or community-based tourism organizations. Further research may also compare different types of tourism villages, such as cultural villages, nature-based villages, creative economy villages, halal tourism villages, or digital tourism villages. Future conceptual development may extend the model by adding tourist satisfaction, destination loyalty, perceived authenticity, community participation, or sustainable tourist behavior as additional constructs.

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DECLARATION ON THE USE OF AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

The authors declare that AI-assisted technology, namely ChatGPT by OpenAI, was used to support language refinement, manuscript structuring, and preliminary organization of conceptual arguments in this manuscript. The AI tool was not used as an author or co-author. The authors have reviewed, verified, edited, and approved all AI-assisted content, including conceptual arguments, references, tables, and figures. The authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and ethical accountability of the submitted manuscript.

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