



From Oral Tradition to Digital Preservation: A Systematic Review of Efforts to Sustain Local Literatures in the Modern Era

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ABSTRACT

Background: The preservation of local literature rooted in oral traditions faces new challenges and opportunities in the digital era. Digital technologies enable documentation and wider dissemination, yet they also raise concerns about cultural authenticity, community sovereignty, and sustainability. A systematic synthesis is required to clarify current scholarly directions.

Aims: This study aims to: (1) identify dominant themes and research approaches in recent studies on the digital preservation of local literatures; (2) examine how scholars conceptualize the shift from oral to digital forms; and (3) analyze the documented educational impact of digitization within indigenous and local communities.

Methods: A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted following PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Searches across Scopus, Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, and ProQuest covered English and Indonesian publications from 2010–2025. Studies focused on preserving local literary content were included, while purely technical works were excluded. Data were synthesized through thematic analysis.

Results: Six thematic clusters emerged: Digital Tools and Innovation; Community Participation and Co-Creation; Ethical Access and Cultural Protocols; Multimedia Storytelling; Digital Knowledge Management; and Collaborative Institutional Models. Scholars largely frame digital transition as cultural continuity and narrative hybridity shaped by technology but grounded in community stewardship and digital sovereignty. Educationally, digitization enhances reading comprehension, writing skills, engagement, accessibility, and cultural relevance.

Implications: Effective preservation requires culturally grounded, participatory, and multidisciplinary approaches. Policymakers and practitioners should strengthen community-led digital stewardship, establish ethical access guidelines, and integrate digitized local literatures into curricula for sustainable cultural continuity.

Keywords: *Digital preservation; learning impact; local literatures; oral tradition; systematic literature review*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern era with the development of digital technology that is increasingly widespread today, the study of local literature, both oral and written traditions, faces unprecedented challenges and opportunities (Agbeyangi & Jere, 2024; Whaanga & Mato, 2020). Regional literary works, which used to be transmitted mainly through oral, cultural rituals, and local communities, are now also touched by digitization mechanisms, online archives, and social media platforms (Gomez et al., 2019; Marles et al., 2016; Shiri et al., 2021). Previous studies have shown that digital preservation efforts are becoming increasingly important in maintaining the sustainability of local cultural heritage. For example, research on the preservation of digital literature in libraries shows that collaboration, technology investment, and regular evaluation are key factors in maintaining the digital sustainability of artifacts (Haile, 2024; Moradi, 2020). Against this backdrop, it is relevant to systematically explore how cutting-edge research handles the transition from oral tradition to digital form in the context of local literature.

One of the main focal points is how oral traditions, which are contextual, community-bound, and often not formally documented, are adapted or mediated through digital technologies. Studies of legends, fairy tales, legends and other forms of local narrative show that technology is not only a means of storage, but also a medium of reinterpretation and redistribution. For example, research mapping local policies in the digital age states that the digitization of traditional knowledge systems opens up opportunities while posing risks to cultural authenticity and control. Thus, the literature shows that this topic is not only related to technical preservation, but also to cultural identity, community dynamics, and local heritage management.

Regarding methodological approaches and research themes, several systematic reviews have emerged, but with limited scope. For example, a review that reviewed the preservation of digital archives in libraries found that research focuses more on technical and policy aspects such as infrastructure, funding, and human resources, but less on the cultural and aesthetic aspects of local literature in particular. Similarly, one SLR related to the use of technology in literary learning highlighted the challenges of digital implementation but did not specifically address local literature or oral traditions. On the theoretical side, there is also a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) study on digital humanities that highlights the challenges of librarians, but again not specifically on local literature or oral traditions. This suggests that although the framework of digital preservation is well established in the study of archives and libraries, its application to local literature including the transformation from oral to digital traditions is still relatively under-explored in a systematic manner.

1.1 Research Gap and Novelty

Recent works, for instance, have examined the role of digital technology in preserving Javanese cultural heritage from oral tradition to digital platforms, including concerns about authenticity and local technological adaptation (Jati, 2024). Likewise, systematic reviews of Indonesian folklore have analyzed cultural values and modernization challenges, including aspects of digital adaptation (Sawita, Nazurty, & Sulistiyo, 2024). However, these studies do not comprehensively map local literary genres such as fairy tales, legends, folklore, and spoken poetry within a global or cross-cultural oral-to-digital transition framework. Some existing studies remain technically oriented, focusing on digital dissemination mechanisms or preservation infrastructure. For example, research on digital dissemination of folk literature as part of intangible cultural heritage highlights strategies of online distribution and platform use (Xiao, Yu, & Xiao, 2024). Similarly, bibliometric and knowledge graph driven analyses of digital preservation research trends compare implementation paradigms across regions, particularly between China and Western contexts (Zhan, Liu, Chen, Wang, 2025). While valuable, these works tend to emphasize technological systems and macro level trends rather than integrating literary dimensions such as narrative aesthetics, performance context, and narrator communities into preservation analysis.

Methodologically, not many SLRs have explicitly adopted the “oral to digital tradition” framework as their central analytical lens. Although aspects of digitization, cultural value, and dissemination are discussed separately in the studies above, few systematically synthesize research themes, conceptual approaches, and methodological limitations through a coherent oral-to-digital literary preservation perspective. Therefore, this research is here to fill these gaps by conducting a systematic review that answers: (1) the main themes and research approaches in the study of local literary preservation in the digital era; (2) how scholars conceptualize the transition from oral tradition to digital form; and (3) what methodological shortcomings and research gaps need to be addressed in future research.

By adopting SLR methodologies for example based on guidelines such as the PRISMA Statement, this research contributes to a clearer understanding of the local literary rescue research landscape in the digital age. Thus, this contribution is not only a list of literature, but a comprehensive mapping of themes, methodological approaches, and emerging challenges. This is important because cultural preservation stakeholders including archives, local communities, technology developers need a more systematic understanding of what has been done, what has worked, and where there is still room for innovation. Thus, this research can serve as a basis for the development of more effective conservation strategies both at the policy, institutional, and community levels.

1.2. Research Questions

The study formulates research questions as follows:

1. What major themes and research approaches have characterized recent studies on the preservation of local literatures in the digital era?
2. How have scholars conceptualized the transition from oral tradition to digital forms of literary preservation?

3. How does the digitization of local literature influence literacy learn and educational practices in indigenous or local communities?

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study used the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to synthesize and critically analyze various previous studies related to the preservation of local literature, especially in the context of the transition from oral tradition to digital form. The review process follows the 2020 version of PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines (Page et al., 2021), which emphasizes transparency, repeatability, and methodological accuracy. The SLR stage includes four main steps: (1) identification of the literature, (2) screening and feasibility assessment, (3) data extraction and encoding, and (4) synthesis and interpretation of results. The scope of research is focused on reputable scholarly journal articles, conference proceedings, and academic book chapters published between 2013 and 2025, a period in which digital preservation practices began to become a major concern in the field of digital literature and humanities.

2.2 Research Object

The object of this research consists of data derived exclusively from scientific journal articles selected and collected in alignment with the study's objectives and research questions. These articles function not merely as references, but as primary data sources to be systematically examined, compared, and synthesized. The scope is deliberately limited to peer-reviewed scholarly publications in order to ensure academic rigor, conceptual clarity, and methodological transparency.

2.3 Research Procedures

Literature searches were carried out systematically on five main credible databases for the fields of literature, culture, and humanities, namely: (1) Scopus, (2) Google Scholar, (3) EBSCOhost (Academic Search Complete), and (4) ProQuest (Arts & Humanities Collection). Keyword combinations are arranged using Boolean operators as follows: ("local literature" OR "indigenous literature" OR "regional literature" OR "oral tradition" OR "folklore") AND ("digital preservation" OR "digital archiving" OR "digitization" OR "digital humanities") AND ("cultural heritage" OR "knowledge transmission" OR "heritage sustainability"). The search was limited to English and Indonesian articles, with an additional focus on SINTA journals 1–2 that examine the digital preservation of local literature. The bibliography of selected articles is also manually combed (*backward and forward search*) to find additional relevant sources. To maintain consistency and focus of the research, the inclusion and exclusion criteria are set as follows:

Table 1 Criterion of Inclusion and Exclusion

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication Type	Journal articles, scientific proceedings	Thesis, editorial, book reviews
Time Range	2010–2025	Published before 2010

Language	English and Indonesia	Other languages without translation
Study Focus	Preservation of local literature, oral traditions, or digital-based regional literary works	Digital preservation without a focus on literature (e.g. museums, historical archives)
Methodological Relevance	Conceptual, empirical to cultural preservation and digitalization	Pure technical studies (e.g. algorithms, metadata, IT systems) without cultural context

The selection was carried out in stages starting from the title and abstract, then a *full text review* by two independent reviewers to avoid subjective bias.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data extraction is performed using a structured worksheet (Microsoft Excel) with the following variables: (1) author name, year, and country of research, (2) types of local literature or oral traditions studied, (3) research design (qualitative, ethnography, case studies, digital ethnography, etc.), (4) theoretical frameworks (digital humanities, semiotics, cultural sustainability, postcolonialism, etc.), (5) the technology or digital platform used, (6) key findings and implications, (7) research challenges and limitations. The extracted data were then thematically encoded using the excel, to identify patterns of findings and methodological trends that were repeated in various research contexts.

The synthesis process is carried out narratively because the variety of approaches and contexts in the analyzed studies are quite diverse. The analysis was conducted inductively to find conceptual themes such as digital archiving as cultural continuity and community-based storytelling, as well as emerging methodological trends. In addition, thematic frequency analysis was performed to assess dominant tendencies for example, how often the themes of "cultural identity" or "technological transformation" appeared compared to "accessibility" and "cultural authenticity." Cross-regional comparative dimensions (Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin America, and other indigenous communities) are also used to look at how digital preservation strategies are applied in different cultural contexts.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

This study examines the direction of development of local literary preservation studies in the context of digital transformation by combining the findings of three research questions: the main themes that emerge in the literature (RQ1), how researchers conceptualize the transition from oral tradition to digital form (RQ2), and identified the digitization of local literature influence literacy learning and educational practices in indigenous or local communities (RQ3).

The systematic review yielded a multifaceted landscape of research dedicated to the digital preservation of local literatures, addressing the triad of inquiries that guided this study. In response to the first research question, the analysis reveals that contemporary scholarship is predominantly clustered around several interconnected thematic strands, with technological innovation and community-centric models forming the dominant axes. To answer the second question, scholars predominantly conceptualize the oral-to-digital

transition not as a rupture but as a process of adaptive continuity, mediated by frameworks of cultural sovereignty and narrative hybridity. Finally, concerning the third question on educational impact, the findings indicate a growing, though nascent, body of evidence demonstrating how digitization actively shapes literacy learning and pedagogical practices within communities, albeit with significant variability in implementation and measured outcomes. The following sections present a synthesized overview of these core findings, structured according to the emergent themes and conceptual models that define the current scholarly discourse.

Table 2 Main Themes in Digital Preservation of Local Literature

No	Main Themes	Research Focus	Related Studies
1	Digital Tools & Technological Innovation	Application development, AI, web system, multimedia for the revitalization of local narratives	Abingosa et al. (2025); Maglangit et al. (2023); Kobis & Tomatala (2025); Rafee (2025); Rai et al. (2024)
2	Community Participation & Co-Creation	Elder engagement, younger generation gangs, digital content co-stewardship	Hausknecht et al. (2021); Freeman et al. (2021); Milenkiewicz (2025); Renganathan & Kral (2018)
3	Ethical Access, Cultural Protocols & IP	Community control over sacred data, kindergarten licensing, protocol-based access	Leopold (2013); Moradi et al. (2020); Powell (2016)
4	Multimedia & Interactive Storytelling	Digital storytelling: animation, AR, tangible media to engage learning	Silva (2016); Reitsma et al. (2013); Juanda et al. (2025)
5	Digital Knowledge Management & Metadata Design	Culturally sensitive archiving systems (metadata, security, Mukurtu)	Wiberg (2014); Chen (2014); Bogdanova et al. (2010)
6	Collaborative Models & Institutional Partnerships	Campus–museum–community partnerships for sustainability	Powell (2016); Godfrey et al. (2016); Aluvilu et al. (2018)

The synthesis of the results of the study shows that research on the preservation of local literature in the digital era develops in several central themes. Most studies have focused on the application of digital technology as a new medium for storing and disseminating oral traditions as well as cultural texts. This effort can be seen through the development of online archives, mobile applications, and the use of cutting-edge technologies such as augmented reality and artificial intelligence to improve the user experience. In addition to the technology aspect, community engagement is a consistent

concern. Many studies place indigenous elders, youth, and educators as active contributors, both in documenting narratives and determining ethical boundaries for their use. This approach shows that the preservation of local literature is not only a technical issue, but also a social and cultural process. In terms of ethics, a number of studies emphasize the need for cultural sovereignty in data management, including regulating access to certain content that is considered customarily sensitive. This community-centered approach also relates to efforts to maintain the authenticity and integrity of the narrative.

The issue of accessibility has also emerged as a focus of research, especially to ensure that local literature can be used by the wider community, including those living in areas with limited infrastructure or those with low digital literacy. Technology that is easy to use and supports access without an internet network is a strategy that is often used.

On the other hand, more and more research are considering sustainability and institutional support so that digital initiatives do not stop at initial development. There is also a tendency to integrate local literary content in the formal education curriculum as an effort to strengthen cultural relevance for the younger generation. Overall, these findings show that the study of local literary preservation moves at the intersection between technological innovation, cultural values, and human involvement in the hope of preserving tradition in the midst of changing times.

Table 3 Conceptual Models for Sustaining Oral Traditions in Digital Media

No	Conceptualizing Transition	Core Concepts in Literature	Related Studies
1	Continuity of Cultural Heritage	Oral traditions are not replaced, but expanded through digital media to maintain the continuity of cultural values	Ogen, O. et al. (2025); Eslit, E. R. (2025); Merolla, D. (2011)
2	Community-Driven Digital Stewardship	Community as the primary authority holder of the narrative; digitalization must be led by indigenous voices	Powell, T. B. (2016); Hausknecht, S. et al. (2021); Milenkiewicz, E. (2025)
3	Technology as a Mediating Bridge	Technology helps bridge the old–young generation and strengthen intergenerational transmission	Rai, S. et al. (2024); Silva, W. (2016); Reitsma, L. et al. (2013)
4	Hybridization of Narrative Form	Orality is maintained but developed through animation, hypertext, AR, AI.	Juanda, J. et al. (2025); Kobis, D. C., & Tomatala, M. F. (2025); Rafee, Y. M. (2025)
5	Ethical and Controlled Knowledge Circulation	The digital transition must follow customary rules, selective access, and the protection of sacred knowledge	Leopold, R. (2013); Moradi, F. et al. (2020); Wiberg, A. (2014)
6	Repatriation and Digital Sovereignty	Digital archives are used as a way to restore narratives that have been separated from the community of owners	Shetler, J. B. (n.d.); Faulkhead, S., & McKee, B. (2013)

7	Sustainable Digital Ecosystems	Transitions must be long-term planned: infrastructure, policies, metadata management	Godfrey, N. et al. (2016); Chen, S. (2014); Haile, G. (2024)
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This research shows that the transition from oral tradition to digital form is not understood as a break from history, but as an extension of the life of tradition through new media. Technology acts as a bridge that allows cultural values to remain alive in the midst of the modern context. However, that continuity is only considered legitimate when the community remains the holder of knowledge control, especially in determining access restrictions to sacred or high-value content. The concepts of *digital sovereignty* and *controlled circulation* appear repeatedly in several reference articles. On the other hand, many studies see that the practice of digitization results in hybrid narrative forms of stories that remain rooted in originality but appear in interactive media such as hypertext and animation. This approach opens up space for the younger generation to reconnect with their cultural heritage through the medium they master. In addition, there is an emphasis that cultural preservation must be managed in a sustainability ecosystem including technology, policy, institutional collaboration, and digital literacy in the community.

The document shows that many digital-based local literature preservation research is still in the phase of technological experimentation. Many studies only present digital prototypes, without assessing how the innovation functions in real communities and whether there is really a preservation of cultural values. In addition, the success of preservation is usually judged by the ease of use or attractiveness of the interface, not by how indigenous knowledge is inherited or whether cultural authority is maintained. The disparity in representation is also striking: communities with better access to infrastructure tend to be more likely to be documented, while people in disadvantaged areas who retain a lot of rich oral traditions do not appear as much in the study. On the ethical side, a number of studies recognize the importance of customary control over digital access, but there are not many methodologies that consistently translate these principles into data design and management. Ultimately, the SLR findings highlight the need for multidisciplinary collaboration that brings together technological sophistication with a deep understanding of oral culture, language, and history.

Table 4 Impact of Digitized Local Literature on Literacy Learning and Language Preservation

Studies	Reading Comprehension Improvement	Writing Skill Development	Language Preservation Effectiveness	Accessibility and Engagement	Implementation Challenges and Solutions
(Kobis & Tomatala, 2025)	Increased comprehension via AI and multimedia storytelling	AI-generated narratives support creative writing	AI tools aid language education and revitalization	Mobile apps and social media enhance access and cultural relevance	Digital literacy gaps and infrastructure limitations persist

(Singh, 2022)	Digital storytelling improves narrative understanding	Young Indigenous speakers engage in digital content creation	Supports language reclamation through translation and storytelling	Multimodal digital storytelling fosters cultural engagement	Complex identity negotiation and intercultural challenges
(Diana et al., 2025)	Significant gains in informational and literary text comprehension	Interactive e-module improves writing skills	Local wisdom integration supports cultural literacy	Teachmint app increases motivation and accessibility	Need for culturally responsive assessment design
(Sholihah et al., n.d.)	Not directly measured; focus on writing skill enhancement	E-module with local wisdom significantly improves writing	Embeds cultural heritage in writing education	High practicality and positive student feedback	Balancing tradition with digital tool usability
(Safinaturrahmah et al., 2024)	Reading literacy improved through culturally based digital storytelling	Teachers trained to create digital storytelling materials	Sasak cultural context strengthens literacy and identity	QR codes enable independent access to stories	Teacher training and parental involvement critical
(Azima et al., 2025)	Improved comprehension of cultural messages via digital storybooks	Moderate effectiveness in literacy skill improvement	Digital media preserves Minangkabau cultural values	Digital videos enhance engagement and understanding	Suggestions for improved illustrations and language use
(Hardina et al., 2024)	Enhanced reading comprehension with local	Not primary focus; emphasis on reading	Cultural narratives increase relevance and motivation	Canva platform supports interactive learning	Student engagement challenges with traditional texts

This table presents a systematic review of several empirical studies related to the implementation of digital media based on local wisdom in the context of literacy learning,

language, and cultural preservation. Overall, the findings indicate that integrating local content, such as folklore, cultural values, and regional languages into digital formats like digital storytelling, interactive e-modules, and mobile applications can significantly improve reading comprehension, writing skills, and learner motivation, especially in indigenous communities or regions with strong cultural heritage. The studies also highlight the role of technology including AI, platforms such as Canva, and QR codes in expanding access, supporting language revitalization, and strengthening cultural identity. However, implementation challenges such as digital literacy gaps, infrastructure limitations, the need for teacher training, and culturally responsive content design remain obstacles that must be addressed to ensure the sustainability and long-term impact of these digital initiatives.

3.2. Discussion

Reading the overall findings in an integrated manner, it appears that research on the preservation of local literature is moving in an ever-changing landscape on the one hand enriched by technological innovations, but on the other hand still grappling with the challenges of ethics, representation, and socio-cultural validity.

Dominant Themes and Research Approaches in Recent Digital Preservation Studies

The SLR's findings show that local literary preservation research in the last decade has moved on an increasingly broad and multidimensional spectrum, driven by technological advances and increasing attention to cultural sovereignty. The most prominent trend can be seen in the emergence of technological innovation as the main foundation for the development of preservation systems. Various studies such as Abingosa et al. (2025), Maglangit et al. (2023), and Kobis & Tomatala (2025) underline the use of mobile applications, web-based corpora, and AI-based technology for language documentation and revitalization. This approach shows the enthusiasm of the academic community and technology developers to maximize digital capabilities in bridging the need for local literary preservation amid the acceleration of modernization.

However, technological innovation alone is not enough. The literature shows a shift towards a community-driven preservation paradigm, involving indigenous elders and the younger generation as knowledge holders and co-producers of digital content. Research such as Freeman et al. (2021) and Hausknecht et al. (2021) show that the success of digital preservation is not determined by the sophistication of the platform, but by the collaborative process that represents social relations within the oral tradition itself. This approach emphasizes that technology should adapt to the needs and values of the community, not the other way around.

In line with the increasing attention to participation, the themes of ethics of access and cultural control are becoming increasingly central. Studies by Leopold (2013), Moradi et al. (2020), and Wiberg (2014) underline that digitalization presents new issues about the limits of sacred knowledge, cultural license, and intellectual protection. These findings point to a significant transformation in the way researchers view digitalization: not just as a documentation tool, but as a political and ethical space that requires community-based arrangements.

Another direction seen is the emergence of various forms of interactive digital storytelling, such as animation (Rai et al., 2024; Silva, 2016), hypertext (Juanda et al., 2025), and tangible interfaces (Reitsma et al., 2013). This hybrid form does not separate the narrative from its original orality, but rather expands the storytelling experience

through the integration of visuals, sound, and interactivity. This development signifies that cultural preservation has moved beyond archival documentation, towards the creation of new cultural experiences that remain rooted in tradition.

Conceptualizing the Transition from Oral Tradition to Digital Forms

The conceptualization of the transition from oral tradition to digital format is not understood linearly by researchers. The literature in this study shows that the transition is understood primarily as a cultural continuity, not a simple change of medium. Many studies emphasize that oral tradition remains the epistemological foundation, while technology only serves as a means of expanding reach and maintaining narrative relevance for younger generations (Ogen et al., 2025; Eslit, 2025; Merolla, 2011). Thus, digitization is seen as a process of "saving context," not just "storing content."

This conceptual approach is reinforced by the idea of community digital stewardship, which positions the community as the main owner, controller, and curator of cultural knowledge. Powell (2016) and Milenkiewicz (2025) explicitly point out that digital platforms must reflect the structure of customary authority, both in the selection of stories, access mechanisms, and metadata management. With this perspective, digitalization becomes a negotiation process between tradition and technology, where cultural principles remain the main reference.

On the other hand, a number of studies see this transition as a process of narrative hybridization, namely the formation of a new storytelling style that combines authenticity with interactive media. Studies such as Silva (2016), Rafee (2025), and Juanda et al. (2025) show how digital storytelling can deliver a narrative experience that is closer to oral dynamics improvisation, performativity, and multimodality compared to conventional writing formats. Digitalization in this context not only preserves traditions, but also encourages cultural innovation that remains in tune with local narrative structures.

In addition, the concepts of digital sovereignty and controlled circulation of knowledge are increasingly prominent in the literature. Leopold (2013) and Moradi et al. (2020) show that digitalization can serve as a tool to restore cultural sovereignty, especially when cultural archives previously stored in external institutions are returned to communities through digital repatriation (Shetler, n.d.; Faulkhead & McKee, 2013). This conceptualization confirms that the digital transition is not only technical, but also political, with regard to the right of representation and power over narratives.

The Mediating Role of Technology in Narrative Transmission and Learning

The transition from oral tradition to digital preservation presents both a profound opportunity and a complex sociocultural challenge for the sustainability of local literatures. Framed within the theoretical lens of cultural continuity (Merolla, 2011) and digital sovereignty (Powell, 2016), the digitization process must be understood not as a mere technical migration, but as a form of narrative hybridity that extends the life of tradition. The studies synthesized in this review (Rai et al., 2024; Silva, 2016) empirically demonstrate that technologies such as AI-driven storytelling, interactive animation, and augmented reality can effectively function as mediating bridges (Rai et al., 2024), enhancing intergenerational transmission and improving measurable literacy outcomes like reading comprehension and writing engagement among youth. For instance, AI-generated narratives (Kobis & Tomatala, 2025) and culturally contextualized e-modules (Diana et al., 2025) do not replace the oral essence but re-contextualize it, aligning with Appadurai's (1996) concept of the "social imaginary," where digital media becomes a new arena for constructing and sharing cultural narratives. This technological mediation,

however, is only effective when it reinforces, rather than undermines, the community's role as the primary epistemic authority.

However, the promising findings on accessibility and learning gains are tempered by significant gaps in implementation and evaluation, revealing a tension between technological solutionism and culturally grounded preservation. While digital tools enhance engagement and provide new access points (Safinaturrahmah et al., 2024; Azima et al., 2025), the prevailing research paradigm exhibits a concerning trend: a dominance of prototype development over longitudinal, impact-oriented studies. Success is often narrowly evaluated through technical usability metrics, neglecting deeper, theory-informed assessments of cultural impact and epistemic sovereignty. This aligns with critical digital humanities scholars who warn against decontextualized digitization that risks perpetuating digital colonialism. The identified challenges infrastructure gaps, digital literacy divides, inconsistent application of ethical protocols (Leopold, 2013), and underrepresentation of remote communities (Sundani, 2023) highlight that technological innovation is insufficient without a parallel sustainable digital ecosystem. Future efforts must therefore be guided by a community-driven digital stewardship model, integrating participatory design with multidisciplinary collaboration (e.g., ethnography, linguistics) to develop culturally responsive evaluation frameworks. Only through such an approach can digital preservation truly fulfill its promise of sustaining not just the content, but the living, meaning-making practices of local literatures for future generations.

4. CONCLUSION

This systematic review concludes that the digital preservation of local literatures represents a dynamic and evolving field characterized by a dual emphasis on technological innovation and community-centered cultural stewardship. The findings affirm that digital tools from AI-enhanced storytelling to interactive archives serve as vital mediating bridges that can enhance literacy, foster intergenerational transmission, and expand access to cultural narratives. This review also reveals that digitization significantly influences literacy learning and educational practices by making local literature more accessible, engaging, and pedagogically integrable; however, its effectiveness is contingent upon culturally responsive design and the active involvement of indigenous knowledge holders as co-creators of digital learning resources.

However, the research landscape remains uneven, marked by a persistent weakness: an overreliance on short-term, prototype-driven studies that prioritize technical feasibility over deep cultural impact, alongside inconsistent integration of ethical protocols and inadequate representation of marginalized linguistic communities. These limitations underscore the need for future research to adopt longitudinal, culturally-grounded methodologies that evaluate not only usability but also socio-cultural validity and epistemic sovereignty. Future studies should particularly focus on how digital local literature can be systematically embedded into formal and non-formal education curricula, and how such integration affects long-term language retention, identity formation, and community-based knowledge sovereignty. Potential research directions include developing participatory, co-designed evaluation frameworks; strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration between technologists, linguists, and community elders; and exploring scalable models for digital repatriation and sustainable ecosystem development. Ultimately, the sustainable preservation of local literatures in the digital age depends on balancing technological potential with a committed, reflexive practice of cultural responsibility and community-led governance.

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Authors' Contributions

Alvons Habibie served as the primary author, taking responsibility for the research design, data collection, data analysis, and the preparation of the manuscript draft. Harto S. Malik contributed through academic supervision, critical evaluation of the analytical framework, verification of the findings, and substantive revisions to strengthen the scholarly quality and coherence of the manuscript. Both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the article and assume full responsibility for its content.

AI Generative Statement

The authors acknowledge the limited use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools exclusively for linguistic editing and grammatical refinement during the preparation of this manuscript. The conceptualization of the study, methodological design, data analysis, interpretation of results, and final conclusions remain entirely the authors' own intellectual work and responsibility.

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