

Digital Communication Strategy and Implementation of Experiential Marketing at the Surabaya City Museum

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Abstract

Digital transformation has compelled museums to redefine their communication strategies to remain relevant in increasingly interactive and media-saturated environments. This study examines the digital communication strategies and experiential marketing practices implemented by museums in Surabaya, Indonesia. Grounded in digital communication theory and Schmitt's Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs), the research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach using in-depth interviews, digital content observation of Instagram (@musea.surabaya) and the official website, and documentation analysis. The findings reveal that digital communication primarily supports public education, audience engagement, institutional branding, and city tourism promotion. Although elements of storytelling and experiential marketing (sense, feel, think, act, relate) are present, they remain fragmented and largely informational rather than emotionally immersive or strategically integrated. The study's novelty lies in its integrated analysis of digital communication strategy and experiential marketing within the context of regional government museums, a perspective rarely explored in Indonesian scholarship. Practically, the findings offer strategic guidance for museum management, emphasizing the need for structured creative guidelines, analytics-based evaluation, digital-physical integration, and enhanced human resource competencies. The research contributes to the development of museum communication strategies and enriches cultural communication studies in the era of digital transformation.

I. Introduction

The Surabaya city government, supported by a budget allocation of 10.4 trillion rupiah, prioritizes tourism development and the creative economy as key strategic sectors. As the “City of Heroes,” Surabaya possesses rich historical assets and cultural heritage that position museums as important tourist destinations and instruments of civic education (Indriastuti et al., 2023). Within this context, tourism communication strategies play a crucial role in promoting cultural heritage and strengthening local identity, particularly in regions where historical narratives and collective memory serve as central attractions (Sufa et al., 2024). Museums are therefore not merely repositories of artifacts but strategic communicative institutions that mediate heritage, identity, and public knowledge.

The acceleration of digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped museum communication practices worldwide. Museums are increasingly conceptualized as hybrid cultural spaces integrating physical exhibitions with digital technologies to enhance visitor experience, accessibility, and engagement (Pallud, 2023; Yap et al., 2024). Digital engagement refers to interactive, participatory, and dialogical communication processes that foster meaningful relationships between institutions and audiences (Marty et al., 2020; Taiminen & Saraniemi, 2023). In parallel, visitor experience theory emphasizes the orchestration of cognitive, emotional, and sensory dimensions to create immersive and memorable encounters (Visentin et al., 2020). Technologies such as augmented reality, virtual tours, and interactive platforms enable museums to deliver personalized and participatory experiences aligned with the expectations of digital-native audiences (Smith et al., 2021). These transformations require museums to move beyond traditional

one-way information dissemination toward strategic, experience-oriented heritage communication (Karttunen & Koskela, 2024; Putri & Tjokrosaputro, 2024).

Recent studies highlight those social media platforms, particularly Instagram, play a significant role in shaping institutional image, increasing audience reach, and stimulating engagement through visual storytelling and interactive features (Rodríguez-Vera et al., 2024; Duester, 2024; Wang, 2025). Research also demonstrates that digital storytelling and emotionally resonant narratives enhance memory-making and cultural attachment (Yap et al., 2024; Sekarningrum & Lokita, 2024). However, while digital presence has expanded, many museums, especially in the Global South remain at an early stage of digital integration, where platforms are utilized tactically rather than strategically (Duester, 2024). In Indonesia, existing scholarship has predominantly examined social media content effectiveness or visit intention (Cornellia, 2022; Putri & Tjokrosaputro, 2024), but has rarely analyzed how digital communication strategies are systematically designed, implemented, and evaluated within regional government museums.

From a theoretical perspective, experiential marketing offers a relevant framework for understanding contemporary museum communication. Schmitt's Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs) sense, feel, think, act, and relate provide a multidimensional approach to designing visitor experiences that integrate cognitive, emotional, and relational elements (C. Chen et al., 2022). Empirical studies demonstrate that experiential marketing positively influences visitor satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth behavior in cultural tourism contexts (Irawati & Islam, 2024; H. Chen et al., 2022). Moreover, the integration of online and offline touchpoints is crucial for constructing

seamless omnichannel experiences in museums (Visentin et al., 2020). Nevertheless, implementation challenges remain significant in local government museums due to limited resources, technological constraints, and insufficient digital competencies (Silvana et al., 2021).

Despite the growing body of literature on digital museum communication and experiential marketing, a clear research gap persists. First, there is limited scholarship examining the intersection between digital communication strategy and experiential marketing within regional museums in Indonesia. Second, few studies analyze how digital engagement, heritage communication, and visitor experience are strategically integrated rather than treated as separate domains. Third, existing research often emphasizes content analysis or visitor intention without evaluating institutional strategy design, operationalization, and evaluation mechanisms. This gap is particularly evident in the context of Surabaya, where museums are actively adopting digital platforms but lack comprehensive studies assessing the strategic coherence and experiential integration of their digital initiatives.

Therefore, this study contributes theoretically and empirically by integrating digital communication theory, heritage communication, and experiential marketing within the specific context of regional government museums. It examines how digital strategies are formulated, implemented, and evaluated, and how experiential marketing dimensions are embedded within digital communication practices. By focusing on the Surabaya City Museum, this research offers original insights into the strategic positioning of regional museums in the digital transformation landscape, while contributing to the advancement of museum communication scholarship and cultural communication studies in emerging contexts.

2. Research Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore digital communication strategies and experiential marketing practices implemented by museums in the city of Surabaya. A qualitative design was selected because the research seeks to understand communication processes, institutional practices, strategic orientations, and experiential dimensions that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement. The qualitative paradigm enables an in-depth exploration of meanings, interpretations, and contextual dynamics underlying digital engagement practices, consistent with exploratory research principles (Creswell, 2018). This approach is particularly appropriate for examining how institutional actors conceptualize, implement, and evaluate digital communication and visitor experience strategies within their natural organizational settings.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure the inclusion of individuals directly involved in planning, managing, and evaluating museum digital communication. The selection criteria included active involvement in social media management or website administration, participation in content planning and production processes, responsibility for public relations or communication strategy, and a minimum of one year of experience in museum digital operations to ensure familiarity with institutional workflows and strategic development. Informants consisted of social media administrators, public relations officers, creative content designers, and managerial staff responsible for communication policy. Purposive sampling was employed because it allows the identification of information-rich participants capable of providing in-depth insight into institutional strategy formulation and implementation (Patton, 2015).

Data were collected over a defined research period through three complementary techniques: in-depth interviews, digital platform observation, and documentation analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide structured around themes of digital communication strategy, audience engagement practices, experiential marketing implementation, content planning, evaluation mechanisms, and institutional challenges. Interviews allowed flexibility for probing and clarification in order to capture participants' perspectives comprehensively. Each interview was recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and anonymized to ensure confidentiality. Digital observation was conducted systematically on the museum's official Instagram account (@musea.surabaya) and official website (musea.surabaya.go.id), focusing on content typology, narrative framing, visual consistency, storytelling patterns, publication frequency, interactive features, and manifestations of experiential marketing dimensions (sense, feel, think, act, and relate). Observational data were documented through detailed field notes and digital archiving. Documentation analysis included the examination of digital archives, activity reports, and strategic planning documents to triangulate interview findings and contextualize digital practices within broader institutional policies.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved systematic coding of interview transcripts and observational materials using thematic categories derived from digital communication theory and experiential marketing frameworks, particularly Schmitt's Strategic Experiential Modules (C. Chen et al., 2022). Data display was conducted through thematic matrices and

comparative mapping to identify patterns across digital engagement strategies, storytelling practices, evaluation mechanisms, and experiential dimensions. Conclusion drawing and verification were undertaken iteratively by revisiting raw data to ensure interpretive consistency and theoretical alignment. The analytical process combined inductive theme development with theoretical guidance from digital engagement literature (Marty et al., 2020; Taiminen & Saraniemi, 2023) and visitor experience integration studies (Visentin et al., 2020).

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, this study applied validation strategies based on the criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation was conducted across interviews, digital observations, and documentation sources to verify consistency of findings. Member checking was undertaken by sharing preliminary interpretations with selected informants to confirm accuracy and minimize misinterpretation. An audit trail was maintained by systematically documenting all stages of data collection, coding decisions, and analytical procedures to enhance transparency and replicability. Additionally, researchers engaged in reflexive note-taking to acknowledge potential biases and ensure interpretive accountability. Through these procedures, the study strengthens methodological rigor and provides a systematic and credible examination of digital communication and experiential marketing practices within Surabaya's regional museum context.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents research findings on digital communication strategies and experiential marketing practices in museums in the city of Surabaya. The presentation is organized thematically according to the focus of

the research, then analyzed using the concepts of digital communication, experiential marketing theory, and empirical findings from previous studies.

A. Utilization of Digital Platforms as Primary Communication Channels

Research shows that museums in Surabaya use two main digital platforms: Instagram @musea.surabaya as a public engagement channel and the official website musea.surabaya.go.id as an institutional information center. Instagram acts as a visual, interactive medium enabling museums to reach audiences rapidly, while the website delivers formal details such as collections, service schedules, and event agendas. This usage mirrors global cultural institutions' strategies using social media as a public interface and websites as information repositories. To advance, museums in Surabaya must address strategic challenges to fully realize the potential of both digital platforms in cultural communication.

Instagram is used intensively because it suits the content consumption characteristics of millennials and Generation Z, as the dominant museum audience. Instagram's visual advantages allow museums to display artifacts, activity documentation, and brief historical narratives using carousel, reels, and stories formats. This is in line with findings that visual-based social media can expand the reach of cultural messages and increase engagement through consistent digital narratives (Cornellia, 2022; Rodríguez-Vera et al., 2024; Taiminen & Saraniemi, 2023). However, centralized account management has led to internal competition among museums for publication space, ultimately creating uneven visibility distribution and indicating that digital communication strategies remain at the tactical level rather than the strategic level.

In addition, the use of Instagram is still at the digital presence stage because digital content is not yet connected to the physical experience of visitors. Content has not been directed to guide visit routes, enrich the interpretation of artifacts, or build relationships between pre-visits and onsite experiences. This condition differs from global museum practices that have integrated QR-based storytelling, virtual previews, and digital experience systems that are integrated with physical services (Pallud, 2023). The museum's website also shows a similar pattern: although it provides basic information, the content is still static and has not adopted interactive features such as virtual tours, digital catalogs, or online learning tools that are commonly used by digital heritage-based museums.

The findings indicate that museums in Surabaya primarily rely on two digital platforms: Instagram (@musea.surabaya) as a public engagement interface and the official website as an institutional information repository. Instagram functions as a visually oriented communication channel, while the website provides formal information related to collections, schedules, and institutional announcements. An interview participant stated, *"Instagram is our fastest way to reach young audiences. Most interactions happen there, not on the website."* This confirms that social media has become the dominant touchpoint for audience interaction.

Overall, the use of Instagram and websites indicates the early stages of Surabaya museum digitization, but it does not yet reflect an integrated, experience-oriented digital strategy. To achieve digital integration and digital experience orchestration, museums need to develop digital identity differentiation between museums, enrich interactive website features, and implement data-driven communication to design content that is relevant to

audience needs. Integration between digital platforms and physical experiences is important so that digital media does not merely function as an information showcase, but as part of a sustainable and meaningful cultural experience ecosystem for the community.

B. Strategic Objectives of Digital Communication for Surabaya Museums

The results of the study show that museums in the city of Surabaya have formulated four main strategic objectives in managing digital communication, namely public education, increasing audience engagement, strengthening institutional branding, and contributing to the promotion of cultural tourism in the city. Although these objectives seem clear conceptually, their implementation reveals various dynamics that indicate that Surabaya museums are in a transitional phase between traditional communication strategies and mature digital communication strategies. Analysis of these findings opens up space for a more critical examination of how these strategic objectives are being implemented, the extent to which they are relevant to the global digital transformation of museums, and how regional museums are adapting to the changing behavior of digital-native audiences.

Four primary objectives shape Surabaya museums' digital communication: public education, engagement, branding, and tourism promotion. Education remains the most dominant orientation. As one informant explained, *"Our main responsibility is education. Every post must contain historical information."* This reflects the museum's traditional role as a non-formal educational institution (Brata, 2022; Valeine & Mikuda, 2025).

The first objective, namely public education, is the most prominent element in every digital publication of the Surabaya Museum. Visual content

and informative narratives are compiled to introduce collections, historical figures, exhibition spaces, and local stories of struggle (Brata, 2022; Valeine & Mikuda, 2025). This approach is in line with the character of museums as public learning institutions. However, a deeper analysis shows that the education offered is still informative in nature and has not fully transformed into the edutainment model that is now the global museum standard. Museum digitization is not only aimed at imparting knowledge but also at increasing information retention through narrative designs that combine emotional elements, visualization, and interactivity (Yap et al., 2024; Yuwono et al., 2025). In the context of Surabaya, educational content has not been fully designed to encourage independent exploration or create an emotional connection between visitors and the city's historical heritage. Thus, although education is a strategic goal, its presentation remains within a traditional content-centered framework rather than an audience-centered one.

The second objective is to increase engagement, which is highly relevant in the social media ecosystem. The Surabaya Museum recognizes the changing information consumption behavior of the younger generation, who prefer short, aesthetic, and interactive visual content. Digital engagement is built not only by informative content but also by visual aesthetics, speed of interaction, and the presence of emotionally relevant narratives (Taiminen & Saraniemi, 2023). However, a critical analysis of the Surabaya Museum's practices shows that the engagement built still focuses on surface metrics such as likes or viewers, rather than meaningful engagement that involves conversation, reflection, or deeper two-way interaction. In addition, museums have not developed data-driven audience segmentation strategies, so content is still aimed at the general public without taking into account the needs and

preferences of specific groups such as students, researchers, historical communities, or families. In fact, audience segmentation differentiation is key to contemporary museum engagement strategies.

The third objective, namely strengthening branding, is an important focus for local government museums that want to establish themselves as modern and relevant historical learning spaces. Strong branding is necessary in order to compete with various forms of digital entertainment that are preferred by urban communities (Manassova et al., 2025). The Surabaya Museum has attempted to present its identity as an inclusive, visitor-friendly museum rich in historical value, but the digital branding strategy that has been implemented is still fragmented. There is no consistent visual identity between posts, no uniform narrative tone, and no visual differentiation between one museum and another. In fact, modern museums utilize digital branding to emphasize the uniqueness of their collections, educational approaches, and institutional character (Pallud, 2023). This inconsistency indicates that branding objectives remain aspirations rather than strategies implemented through a structured creative framework.

The fourth objective is to support the promotion of cultural tourism in the city of Surabaya. The museum is institutionally part of a broader tourism ecosystem, particularly under the coordination of the Department of Culture, Tourism, and Creative Economy. This finding is consistent with various studies showing that museums play an important role in strengthening the image of a city, local identity, and historical values that distinguish one city from another (H. Chen et al., 2022; Wang, 2025; Xie, 2023). However, this study found that Surabaya museums have not directly integrated their digital strategies with the city's tourism strategy. Museum content is rarely linked to

city tour routes, tourism events, or collaborations with other cultural destinations in Surabaya. In other words, museums have recognized their role in promoting tourism, but have not incorporated destination integration known in tourism as destination synergies into their digital strategies.

Overall, the four strategic objectives formulated by the Surabaya Museum demonstrate institutional awareness of the demands of the digital age. However, critical analysis shows that these objectives are still at the conceptual stage and have not yet been fully realized in the form of comprehensive operational strategies. The Surabaya Museum needs to transform from simply having strategic objectives to measurable, data-driven implementation that integrates digital communication, physical experiences, and the use of creative technology. Integration between these four strategic objectives is also crucial to avoid fragmentation of strategy and ensure that digital communication supports the visitor experience holistically.

C. Digital Content Planning and Production Process

The results of the study show that the planning and production process for Surabaya Museum's digital content has been carried out systematically in a three-stage workflow: concept planning, visual production, and publication. In the planning stage, the admin and creative teams develop content ideas based on historical themes, museum collections, city figures, or specific commemorative moments. This planning is generally oriented towards temporal relevance, for example, Heroes' Day, Education Day, or the commemoration of national figures which is then translated into visual and narrative forms.

Digital storytelling practices primarily include historical figure

narratives, artifact visualization, and brief explanatory captions. While informative, storytelling remains fact-oriented rather than experiential. One interviewee admitted, *“We focus more on historical accuracy than emotional storytelling.”*

However, in-depth analysis reveals that the planning process is not yet fully based on a strong digital communication strategy. The museum has not implemented audience personas to map the needs, preferences, and behaviors of different audience segments. In fact, this approach is important to ensure that the content produced is truly in line with the expectations of target groups such as students, families, academics, or historical communities. Persona-based content creation is an important component of modern digital communication strategies because it increases message relevance and strengthens engagement (Smith et al., 2021; Taiminen & Saraniemi, 2023).

In the visual production stage, the museum utilizes photography, videography, graphic design, and motion graphic-based content creation. However, observations show that most of the content is still documentary in nature and does not fully utilize creative techniques that can enhance aesthetics and visual appeal. This is related to technical limitations in the use of professional editing tools and more advanced audiovisual equipment. When compared to modern museums such as the MACAN Museum, the National Museum of Singapore, or the British Museum, which have strict editorial guidelines and brand identity guides, the Surabaya museum appears to be in the early stages of building a strong visual identity (Maharani, 2024).

In addition, the museum does not yet have standard content guidelines in terms of color tone, photography style, caption structure, or storytelling patterns. This inconsistency results in significant variations in content quality.

In the framework of visual communication, consistency is an important element in building brand recall and digital identity (Kotsiopoulos & Sakellariou, 2022). Therefore, the content production process of the Surabaya museum can be categorized as semi-professional, not yet fully standardized, and requiring strengthening of creative documentation to ensure consistency in messaging and visual aesthetics.

D. Digital Storytelling: Potential and Limitations in Building Cultural

Experiences

Digital storytelling is one of the most vital components in modern museum communication, as it serves to transform collections and artifacts into meaningful narratives for audiences. Research findings show that the Surabaya Museum has utilized three main forms of storytelling: historical figure narratives, collection visualizations, and brief explanations through captions or short videos. This approach is effective in introducing the city's cultural and historical material in a concise and easy-to-understand manner.

However, critical analysis reveals that Surabaya museum storytelling still tends to be informative rather than experiential. The narratives presented emphasize historical facts rather than emotional experiences, personal perspectives, or drama. In fact, global museums have shifted to a model of storytelling based on emotion and personal connection to create immersive engagement (Carrozzino & Bergamasco, 2020).

For example, many international museums have developed storytelling from the object's perspective, first-person narratives, or visitor-centered interpretations that invite audiences to enter the story and feel an emotional connection. In this study, the Surabaya museum has not yet explored this

approach. The narrative content of the collection does not yet highlight the human stories behind the artifacts, the broader socio-cultural context, or the relevance of the artifacts to people's lives today.

This shows that the potential of digital storytelling has not been optimally utilized. Museums have a great opportunity to develop digital dramaturgy, which is designing narratives that are more dramatic, dialogical, and interactive. An emotion-based digital storytelling approach has been proven to improve visitor memory, strengthen cultural attachment, and increase interest in physical visits (Kamatula et al., 2025; Sekarningrum & Lokita, 2024). Thus, developing more immersive and experience-oriented storytelling is an important agenda for the Surabaya Museum in strengthening its digital identity.

E. Evaluation of Digital Communication Strategies: Limitations of Assessment Methods and Lack of In-Depth Analytics

The evaluation of Surabaya Museum's digital communication strategy is still carried out using surface indicators such as the number of likes, comments, viewers, shares, and direct messages. These indicators do provide an initial overview of audience response, but they are not sufficient to comprehensively assess the quality of engagement. In digital analytics studies, surface metrics are referred to as vanity metrics pleasing to look at but not necessarily reflective of communication effectiveness (Kaur & Singh, 2022).

Institutional challenges further constrain digital transformation. Informants cited limited creative personnel, insufficient audiovisual infrastructure, and minimal advanced digital training. These findings align with previous research on Indonesian museum digitization challenges

(Silvana et al., 2021). One participant remarked, *“We have ideas, but sometimes we lack the technical skills and equipment to execute them professionally.”*

The Surabaya Museum has not conducted a more in-depth analytics-based evaluation, such as audience sentiment analysis, audience demographic mapping, content performance analysis by category, click behavior, or conversion rates from digital interactions to physical visits. The museum has also not optimally utilized Instagram insights or website analytics data to design data-driven content strategies. In fact, international museums have integrated analytics as an important component of their experience management strategies (Rodríguez-Vera et al., 2024).

This lack of in-depth evaluation makes it difficult for museums to identify which content is most effective, which themes are most appealing to audiences, or when audiences are most active in interacting. Without data-driven evaluation, museum digital communication strategies tend to be unresponsive to changes in trends and audience preferences (Srivastava & Kulshrestha, 2025). This highlights the need to strengthen analytical capabilities, both in the form of human resource training and the use of digital analytics tools.

F. The Challenges of Digital Transformation: Human Resources, Technology, and Creative Competence

The Surabaya Museum faces various challenges in undergoing digital transformation. The first challenge is the limited availability of creative human resources, especially in the fields of graphic design, videography, photography, copywriting, and social media management. The lack of personnel with adequate technical competencies makes it difficult for the museum to consistently produce high-quality content. In the digital age,

content quality is crucial in determining visual appeal and engagement capacity.

The second challenge relates to technological infrastructure. The museum does not yet have adequate audiovisual equipment to produce professional content, such as high-resolution cameras, studio lighting, editing devices, or even access to AR and VR technology. Technological capacity is one of the most crucial factors in accelerating the digitization of museums in Indonesia (Silvana et al., 2021).

The third challenge is the lack of advanced training to improve the digital literacy of museum staff. Most staff have not received intensive training in digital communication strategies, content management, digital storytelling, or analytics-based evaluation techniques. Thus, the Surabaya Museum is still in the early stages of digital literacy, not yet reaching the stage of digital fluency where technical, creative, and strategic skills are integrated.

Overall, these challenges indicate that Surabaya museums do not yet have a strong support ecosystem for a more mature digital transformation. Limited human resources and technology are the main obstacles preventing museums from moving from the digital presence phase to digital integration.

G. Experiential Marketing Practices: Analysis of Connectivity and Implementation Weaknesses

Field findings show that the Surabaya museum has implemented elements in the five dimensions of Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs), namely sense, feel, think, act, and relate (C. Chen et al., 2022). In the sense dimension, the museum highlights the visual artifacts, exhibition space interiors, and museum atmosphere to create aesthetic appeal. In the feel

dimension, narratives of figures and the city's history of struggle are designed to evoke pride and emotional connection. In the think dimension, the museum presents educational content and historical trivia to stimulate critical thinking. The act dimension emerges through the promotion of educational activities that encourage direct participation, while the relate dimension is presented through an emphasis on Surabaya's identity as the City of Heroes.

Although these five dimensions have emerged, critical analysis shows that their application is still sporadic and has not yet become an integrated strategy. SEMs' dimensions are present in the form of separate content, rather than a series of systematically designed experiences. Museums have not yet made experiential marketing the foundation for designing the overall flow of digital and physical experiences. In other words, museums are in the experiential emergence stage, the stage when elements of experience begin to appear, but are not yet fully orchestrated.

In addition, museums have not yet developed an experience touchpoints map, which is a map of experience touchpoints that connects digital content, social interactions, educational activities, and physical visits. In fact, global museums have made experiential marketing a key strategy that integrates digital narratives and the visit process (Visentin et al., 2020). Without this integration, the Surabaya Museum risks missing out on the opportunity to build a more multidimensional, emotional, and long-lasting experience.

H. Synthesis of Findings: The Position of Surabaya Museum in the Digital Transformation Landscape

The synthesis of findings shows that Surabaya Museum is in the early stages of digital transformation. The use of digital platforms has created a good

foundation for digital communication, but its implementation is still tactical rather than strategic. The content production process is underway, but it does not yet have strong editorial standards. Digital storytelling exists, but is more informational than experiential. Digital evaluation is conducted, but still focuses on surface indicators. Human resources and technology challenges hinder the acceleration of innovation, while experiential marketing is present only partially and is not yet integrated.

The digital transformation model of the Surabaya Museum can be understood to be in the digital presence phase, with early indications of moving towards digital integration, but it has not yet reached the digital orchestration stage, which is the stage when digital strategy functions as the main framework that strengthens the overall communication, education, and visitation experience.

Overall, the Surabaya museum has demonstrated great potential to develop itself as a modern digital cultural institution. However, a more structured, data-driven, creative, and integrated strategy is needed to ensure that the digital transformation runs optimally and that the museum is able to compete as a relevant, immersive, and sustainable cultural destination.

Table 1. Research Findings Summary

Findings	Description of Field Findings	Academic Analysis	Critical	Implications for the Surabaya Museum
Utilization of Digital Platforms	of Instagram and websites are the main channels; Instagram as a space for visual interaction; websites as a center for static information.	Strategies are still at the digital presence stage, not yet integrated; digital identities between museums are not differentiated.		Museums need to differentiate their digital brands, integrate platforms, and

			strengthen the digital-physical experience.
Strategic Goals for Digital Communication	Focus on public education, engagement, branding, and tourism promotion.	Objectives are conceptual and have not yet been fully translated into operational strategies; they are not based on audience segmentation and data.	There is a need for a communicative strategy that is audience-centered, data-driven, and measurable.
Content Production	The planning, production, publication workflow is in place; content is informative and documentary.	There are no content guidelines; content quality varies; aesthetics are not consistent.	Standardization of visuals (brand guide), strengthening of creative competencies, and optimization of workflow are needed.
Digital Storytelling	Focus on figures, collections, and brief historical narratives.	Informational in nature, it does not yet touch on experiential storytelling; it does not yet evoke the audience's emotions.	Museums need digital dramaturgy and experience-based narratives to increase emotional engagement.
Digital Evaluation	Evaluation uses likes, views, shares, DMs.	Analysis remains surface-level; no audience mapping or analytics-driven strategy.	Deep analytics (sentiment, content performance, conversion) need to be implemented.
Digital Challenges	Shortage of creative human resources; technological	Supporting ecosystem is not yet mature; museums are not yet	Investment in human resources, technology, and

	limitations; minimal digital training.	able to move towards digital integration.	training is required.
Experiential Marketing	All dimensions of SEMs are present but separate and sporadic.	Not yet integrated into an overall strategy; no experience touchpoints map.	SEMs need to be integrated with digital strategies to enhance visitor experience.
Synthesis of Digital Transformation	The museum is in the early stages of transformation.	The digital foundation is in place, but it is still tactical, not strategic.	Must move from presence → integration → orchestration.

4. Conslusion

This study concludes that although Surabaya museums have successfully established a foundational digital presence through Instagram and website utilization, their digital communication remains largely tactical and fragmented rather than strategically integrated. While institutional objectives education, engagement, branding, and tourism promotion are clearly defined, their implementation lacks audience segmentation, analytics-based evaluation, cross-platform coherence, and immersive storytelling. Experiential marketing elements are present but applied sporadically rather than systematically, and performance measurement relies primarily on surface-level metrics, indicating that the museums remain in the digital presence phase rather than progressing toward full digital integration and orchestration. The study contributes by integrating digital engagement, experiential marketing, and heritage communication within a regional museum context and introducing the concept of experiential emergence to describe transitional experiential practices. Managerially, advancing toward digital orchestration requires structured persona-based content strategies, immersive narrative development, standardized branding guidelines, analytics-driven

performance systems, integrated visitor touchpoint mapping, and strengthened digital competencies supported by institutional investment. Future research should employ comparative, longitudinal, and mixed-method approaches to assess the long-term impact of integrated digital strategies on visitor experience, loyalty, and institutional sustainability.

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