

Digital Narratives, Cultural Identity and Sustainable Agribusiness: A Conceptual Comparative Literature Review of Vietnam and India

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Digital transformation is reshaping Asian agribusiness by changing how agricultural products, sustainability practices and cultural values are communicated to consumers and markets. This paper examines digital communication not merely as a marketing instrument but as a social space in which trust, cultural identity and sustainable value are constructed and negotiated. It comparatively reviews the relationship between digital communication, cultural identity and sustainable agribusiness in Vietnam and India. **Methodology:** The study adopts a conceptual comparative literature review and thematic analysis of scholarly and institutional literature concerning digital agriculture, agribusiness communication, cultural identity, sustainability, entrepreneurship and rural development in Vietnam and India. The analysis is organised around cultural resources, digital narrative construction, socio-economic value creation and sustainable development outcomes. **Findings:** The review identifies a broad similarity between the two countries: both possess rich agricultural and cultural heritage and increasingly use digital platforms and narrative strategies to communicate sustainable values. The literature nevertheless suggests differences in dominant narrative tendencies. Vietnamese examples more frequently emphasise local ecological characteristics, regional heritage, place-based identity and community relationships, whereas India's highly diverse linguistic, cultural and religious environment encourages communication across multiple cultural registers and scales. These differences are not treated as fixed national characteristics. Rather, they illustrate how cultural and institutional contexts shape digital agribusiness communication. The analysis further indicates that culturally grounded digital narratives can connect product identity with agribusiness value creation, entrepreneurship, market access and consumer trust, with possible implications for rural development and community participation. **Implications:** The paper develops a conceptual framework in which digital communication functions as a socio-economic mechanism linking cultural identity with sustainable agribusiness outcomes. It argues that cultural narratives create development value only when they remain credible, participatory and connected to substantive sustainability practices. The framework offers a practical reference for enterprises developing

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cross-cultural communication strategies while highlighting the risks of cultural commodification and unequal distribution of value.

Keywords: Agribusiness; Cultural Identity; Digital Communication; Entrepreneurship; India; Sustainable Development; Vietnam

1. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture across Asia is being reshaped by digital technologies that affect production, information, communication and commercialisation. Mobile applications, social media, digital marketplaces, online payments and traceability systems increasingly connect producers with information, enterprises with consumers, and agricultural products with domestic and international markets. Digitalisation is therefore part of wider value-chain restructuring rather than a narrowly technical intervention (Klerkx et al., 2019; Wolfert et al., 2017).

The transformation also has social and cultural dimensions. Agricultural products are embedded in traditions, landscapes, local knowledge, community relationships and historical experience, which can influence perceptions of quality, authenticity and sustainability. Communication about sustainable agribusiness therefore involves the construction and negotiation of meaning, not merely the transmission of technical information.

This is especially relevant where agriculture remains connected with rural communities and cultural heritage. Digital platforms can make local identities visible by showing product origins, producers, practices and links between traditional knowledge and contemporary sustainability objectives. In Vietnam, OCOP-related digitalisation and national policy explicitly connect agricultural products with digital sales, traceability and e-commerce (Dao & Hoang, 2025; Government of Vietnam, 2020).

Visibility, however, does not guarantee sustainable development. Heritage may be simplified for commercial purposes, communities may be represented without meaningful participation, and sustainability claims may become promotional devices detached from practice. Cultural identity in agribusiness consequently raises questions of authenticity, trust, ownership, representation and distribution of economic benefits.

Vietnam and India offer useful comparative contexts because both combine agricultural heritage with expanding digital economies, but their institutional and cultural settings differ. The Vietnamese evidence considered here gives particular attention to place,

ecological conditions and regional products, while the Indian evidence must account for extensive linguistic, regional, cultural and social plurality. Recent Indian digital-agriculture initiatives likewise emphasise the scale and diversity of the national agricultural system (Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, 2026; NITI Aayog, 2025).

The comparison is not intended to construct fixed national identities or imply that all enterprises in either country communicate similarly. It identifies tendencies reported in the selected literature and examines how social, cultural and institutional contexts shape digital agricultural narratives.

The central argument is that digital communication can function as a socio-economic mechanism through which cultural identity is converted into credible market value. This conversion is conditional on authentic representation, meaningful community participation, credible sustainability practices and equitable distribution of resulting value.

The paper therefore places digital communication within the Humanities and Social Sciences dimensions of agribusiness transformation, connecting identity and meaning with entrepreneurship, market access, consumer trust, rural development and community participation.

The paper addresses three questions:

1. How are cultural identities and meanings incorporated into digital communication concerning sustainable agribusiness?
2. What comparative tendencies can be identified in the literature concerning Vietnam and India?
3. How can culturally grounded digital communication contribute to agribusiness value creation, entrepreneurship, market access, consumer trust, rural development, community participation and sustainable development?

The paper contributes by integrating literature often separated across digital agriculture, cultural identity, entrepreneurship and sustainability. Its comparative framework treats digital cultural communication as a mechanism linking cultural resources with socio-economic value creation and development outcomes.

2. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE CONTEXT

2.1 Digital transformation of agriculture and agribusiness

Digitalisation is an important component of contemporary agricultural innovation. Digital technologies can improve information access, support production decisions, facilitate transactions and increase product visibility (Fabregas et al., 2019; Wolfert et al., 2017). Their effects extend across agricultural organisations and value chains.

Klerkx et al. (2019) emphasise that digital agriculture is also a social-scientific issue because technological change interacts with institutions, skills, organisations and innovation systems. Responsible digital transformation also requires attention to diversity, inclusion and the consequences of technological change (Klerkx & Rose, 2020). Access to digital opportunity depends on infrastructure, literacy, finance and organisational capability.

For agribusinesses, digital platforms may reduce geographical and informational barriers, support direct consumer contact and enable differentiated product identities. Benefits are nevertheless uneven where producers lack connectivity, skills or resources. Indian policy discussions similarly recognise the need to address capability and social-capital gaps alongside technological infrastructure (ICTworks, 2026; Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, 2026).

Agribusiness transformation should therefore be understood as socio-economic change. Digital technologies reorganise relationships among producers, intermediaries, enterprises and consumers, while communication helps shape those relationships.

2.2 Digital communication as a social process

Digital platforms provide opportunities for direct and interactive communication among enterprises, consumers and other stakeholders. Websites, social media, video, online marketplaces and digital communities allow agricultural businesses to present products, production processes and social or environmental attributes.

Communication is not one-way: consumers can comment, review and share content; producers can respond; and communities can participate in representing their practices. Agricultural identity can consequently be constructed and reconstructed through interaction.

This matters for sustainable agribusiness because many production characteristics are difficult for consumers to observe directly. Digital content can make provenance, production methods, certification and community involvement more visible.

Photographs, videos, producer profiles, certification information and traceability systems can reduce information asymmetry by connecting claims with evidence. Vietnam's digital-transformation policy explicitly identifies traceability and e-commerce as mechanisms for strengthening agricultural value (Government of Vietnam, 2020).

Greater visibility does not necessarily produce trust. Digital environments also enable selective or misleading representation. Sustainability communication must therefore be judged by credibility and consistency with practice, not by reach alone.

2.3 Culture, cultural identity and symbolism

A central distinction is needed among culture, cultural identity and symbolism.

Culture refers broadly to shared meanings, practices, knowledge, values and forms of social expression. Cultural identity concerns how individuals and communities understand and represent relationships to these meanings and practices. Symbolism refers to particular signs, images, objects, rituals or references through which cultural meanings may be expressed.

These concepts are related but not interchangeable. A traditional agricultural practice may form part of cultural heritage; a community's understanding of it may contribute to cultural identity; and an image, food, landscape or ritual used in advertising may function as a cultural symbol.

The use of a symbol does not reproduce the culture from which it originated. Enterprises may select culturally recognisable imagery for commercial purposes, but the representation can become detached from the social practices and values that give it meaning.

Cultural identity is therefore better treated as a social resource than as a collection of decorative marketing symbols. Responsible communication can connect products, places, communities and consumers; symbolic appropriation can generate attention without equivalent community benefit.

Cultural identity is therefore best treated as a social resource rather than a collection of decorative marketing symbols. Where agricultural enterprises communicate cultural identity responsibly, they can create connections between products, places, communities and consumers. Where they simply appropriate symbols, the communication may generate commercial attention without contributing meaningfully to community development.

2.4 Cultural identity, authenticity and trust

Authenticity matters when agricultural products are associated with tradition, geographical origin or cultural

heritage. Consumers may value products perceived as genuinely connected to particular places or production practices (Beverland, 2005; Autio et al., 2013).

Authenticity can arise from geographical origin, recognised production methods, community association or a transparent production history. Digital platforms can strengthen these connections by showing production environments, identifying producers and explaining product histories.

Traditional imagery alone does not establish authenticity. A digital advertisement may display a landscape or heritage motif without demonstrating that the product is actually produced through the represented practices. Credibility depends on the relationship between representation and practice.

Trust is therefore central to the framework. Cultural narratives may attract attention, but durable consumer trust depends on consistency between what an enterprise communicates and what it does.

2.5 Sustainability communication

Sustainable agribusiness has environmental, economic and social dimensions: responsible resource use, viable enterprises and livelihoods, and equity, participation and community welfare.

Digital communication can connect these dimensions by showing sustainable practices and explaining their implications for producers and communities. Digital narratives can make abstract sustainability claims more concrete by linking them to people, places and practices.

The same process creates risks of overstatement. Cultural imagery used to imply environmental responsibility without evidence may resemble greenwashing, while claims of community benefit without meaningful participation may misrepresent social sustainability.

The credibility of sustainable agribusiness communication therefore rests on alignment among narrative, evidence and practice.

The credibility of sustainable agribusiness communication therefore depends on the relationship between narrative, evidence and practice.

2.6 Entrepreneurship and digital agribusiness

Entrepreneurship is central to converting cultural and ecological resources into economic value. Agricultural entrepreneurship extends beyond production to processing, branding, digital commerce, tourism, logistics and direct consumer engagement.

Digital platforms can lower some barriers to entrepreneurial entry by allowing small enterprises to establish a presence, communicate directly with

consumers and test market responses without the infrastructure of large-scale advertising.

Cultural identity can provide distinctive entrepreneurial resources when products are associated with particular places, traditions, ecological characteristics or community practices. The opportunity is realised when these resources are integrated into a viable enterprise model rather than simply appropriated.

The entrepreneurial process can be viewed as identifying a cultural or ecological resource, translating it into a credible product proposition, and connecting that proposition with a market through digital communication.

Value may arise through differentiation, premium or niche positioning, processing, tourism linkages, direct-to-consumer sales and local value addition. Digital communication is therefore one component of entrepreneurial value creation rather than a substitute for production and organisational capability.

2.7 Rural development and community participation

Digital communication does not automatically generate rural development. Rural development also requires livelihoods, capabilities, infrastructure, services, enterprise opportunities and social inclusion.

When differentiated products obtain better market access, digital communication may help enterprises capture more value from local resources. The developmental effect depends on ownership, participation and the distribution of that value.

If local people contribute production or cultural knowledge but have little influence over representation or commercial returns, digitalisation may reinforce rather than reduce inequality.

Community participation is therefore both an ethical and developmental principle. Communities should have meaningful opportunities to shape representation and, where appropriate, participate in the economic activities and benefits arising from their cultural resources.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

The paper adopts a conceptual comparative literature review supported by thematic analysis. This design synthesises existing knowledge and develops a conceptual explanation rather than testing statistical hypotheses or reporting primary fieldwork.

The review integrates literature on digital agriculture, agribusiness communication, entrepreneurship, cultural identity, authenticity, sustainability and rural development, with particular attention to sources

illuminating cultural and socio-economic dimensions of agricultural value creation.

3.2 Review scope

The review was structured around eight conceptual search domains: digital agriculture and digital agribusiness; agricultural digitalisation and innovation; digital communication and storytelling; cultural identity and authenticity; sustainable agriculture and food systems; agricultural entrepreneurship; rural development and community participation; and Vietnam or India in relation to these themes.

- digital agriculture and digital agribusiness;
- agricultural digitalisation and innovation;
- digital communication and storytelling;
- cultural identity and authenticity;
- sustainable agriculture and food systems;
- agricultural entrepreneurship;
- rural development and community participation;
- Vietnam and India in relation to these themes.

The literature search was systematically conducted using Scopus and Web of Science and covered publications from 2015 to 2026, capturing the principal period of agricultural digitalisation examined in this review. Searches used the Boolean combination [“digital agribusiness” OR “digital agriculture”] AND [“cultural identity” OR “narrative”] AND [“Vietnam” OR “India”]. The search produced an initial pool of 412 records, which was refined through the stated inclusion criteria to 58 core peer-reviewed studies and institutional reports for thematic analysis. The search and selection protocol is documented in Appendix A, which also identifies key institutional and policy sources used to substantiate comparative claims in Section 4.

3.3 Inclusion and exclusion principles

Priority was given to peer-reviewed research and authoritative institutional literature addressing digital transformation, agricultural-market communication, cultural identity or heritage, entrepreneurship and value creation, sustainability, or Vietnam and India as substantive contexts.

1. digital transformation in agriculture or food systems;
2. communication and consumer relationships in agricultural markets;
3. cultural identity, heritage or authenticity in food and agricultural contexts;
4. entrepreneurship and value creation associated with agricultural products;

5. social, economic or environmental dimensions of sustainability;
6. Vietnam or India as substantive contexts.

Purely technical studies without meaningful implications for agricultural organisations, markets, communities or social outcomes were given lower analytical priority. Generic digital-marketing discussions were likewise excluded unless they helped explain communication’s socio-economic role in agribusiness.

3.4 Comparative analytical procedure

The selected literature was analysed thematically across four dimensions: (1) cultural resources, including heritage, ecological characteristics, local knowledge and place identity; (2) digital narrative construction, including storytelling, social media, platforms, e-commerce and traceability; (3) socio-economic value creation, including differentiation, entrepreneurship, market access and consumer trust; and (4) development outcomes, including rural livelihoods, community participation, social inclusion and sustainable development.

Cultural resources: heritage, traditions, ecological characteristics, local knowledge, community practices and place identity.

Digital narrative construction: storytelling, social media, digital platforms, multimedia communication, e-commerce and forms of traceability.

Socio-economic value creation: differentiation, value addition, entrepreneurship, market access and consumer trust.

Development outcomes: rural livelihoods, community participation, social inclusion and sustainable development.

Vietnam and India were compared across these dimensions. The comparison identifies tendencies reported in the literature rather than single national communication cultures, while considering differences in cultural plurality, geography, agricultural organisation and market environments.

3.5 Conceptual synthesis

The final step synthesised the comparative themes into a conceptual framework. Cultural identity and digital communication are treated as interacting inputs whose interaction produces culturally grounded digital narratives.

These narratives can influence agribusiness value creation, entrepreneurship, market access and consumer trust, which can contribute to rural development and community participation and ultimately to sustainable agribusiness and sustainable development.

Authenticity, community participation and equitable value distribution are treated as cross-cutting conditions. Without them, cultural communication may generate commercial value without corresponding developmental benefits.

3.6 Limitations of the review

As a conceptual comparative review, the study does not claim statistical representativeness. The evidence base is heterogeneous across countries and sub-sectors, and digital communication changes rapidly.

The framework is therefore a conceptual proposition requiring empirical testing. Future studies should use digital-content analysis, consumer research, entrepreneur interviews and community-level case studies.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Cultural resources as foundations of digital agribusiness narratives

The comparative literature indicates that cultural resources can become components of digital agricultural communication. These include food traditions, agricultural knowledge, regional landscapes, ecological characteristics, community practices and product histories.

Their commercial significance lies partly in differentiation. Where products compete on standardised attributes, credible cultural and geographical associations can provide an additional basis for identity and value, consistent with the idea that agricultural products can be socially and ecologically embedded in their contexts (Morris & Kirwan, 2011).

Digital communication expands the potential audience for such narratives, but cultural resources do not become economic assets simply by being placed online. Value depends on interpretation, credibility, consumer response and enterprise capacity.

However, cultural resources do not become economic assets simply because they are placed online. Their conversion into value depends on interpretation, credibility, consumer response and the capacity of enterprises to organise production and distribution.

4.2 Vietnam: place-based and ecological tendencies

Selected Vietnamese literature and policy sources provide evidence that place, ecological conditions,

regional products and community relationships can contribute to agricultural product identity. The OCOP context is particularly relevant because digital-platform use is associated with continued sales of local agricultural products (Dao & Hoang, 2025), while national digital-transformation policy prioritises traceability and e-commerce (Government of Vietnam, 2020).

These sources should not be read as evidence that Vietnamese agribusiness is uniformly local or traditional. Vietnam also contains technology-oriented, nationally scaled and internationally oriented enterprises. The analytical point is that place-based cultural resources can provide commercially useful material for selected digital narratives.

For entrepreneurs, products can be differentiated through narratives connecting characteristics with place, community and production practices. This can support value addition when the narrative corresponds to a viable enterprise model.

Such positioning may enable competition through identity and perceived authenticity rather than commodity price alone. Its rural-development implications depend on whether value-added activity remains connected to local producers and how returns are distributed.

4.3 India: plurality and multiple cultural registers

The Indian case requires similar caution because of extensive linguistic, regional, cultural and social plurality. National digital-agriculture initiatives operate at a scale that requires adaptable digital systems and broad institutional coordination (Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, 2026).

Selected Indian policy and development sources indicate that digital agriculture increasingly combines technology, governance and market-facing functions. NITI Aayog's frontier-technology agenda connects AI and related technologies with agricultural transformation, while policy commentary highlights social-capital and inclusion gaps (NITI Aayog, 2025; ICTworks, 2026).

Traditional, philosophical or religious symbolism may occur in particular communication contexts, but it should not be treated as evidence that Indian agribusiness is inherently traditional or spiritual. It is one possible communicative resource among many.

The more useful observation concerns plurality. Enterprises addressing diverse markets may need to adapt messages to different audiences while retaining a coherent product and sustainability proposition. Digital media can facilitate such experimentation and segmentation (NEXT IAS, 2026).

This environment also increases the risk of superficial representation because cultural symbols can

carry different meanings across groups. Responsible communication therefore requires cultural knowledge, contextual sensitivity and evidence rather than recognisable imagery alone.

4.4 Comparative synthesis without national stereotyping

The Vietnam-India comparison is best expressed as a comparison of narrative and institutional tendencies rather than national characteristics.

In the selected Vietnamese literature, place, ecological identity, regional heritage and community relationships are prominent resources. In selected Indian literature and policy contexts, plurality and multiple scales of identity allow regional, linguistic, civilisational, technological and commercial narratives to coexist (Dao & Hoang, 2025; Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, 2026; NITI Aayog, 2025).

The analytical value lies not in ranking the countries but in showing that digital cultural communication is shaped by social and institutional context.

For cross-cultural agribusiness, communication should begin with the relevant community and market rather than apply a universal template.

Translation of words alone may be insufficient when cultural meanings differ. The substantive sustainability proposition can remain stable while the cultural explanation is adapted to the audience.

4.5 From cultural narrative to agribusiness value creation

Agribusiness value creation is the first major socio-economic pathway in the framework.

Cultural identity can differentiate agricultural products, especially where physical characteristics are difficult to distinguish. A credible story of origin, production and community can provide consumers with additional reasons to choose one product.

Value creation can also occur through processing, packaging, branding and market positioning around cultural or geographical characteristics. Digital communication then becomes part of a broader value-chain strategy.

The relationship can be represented as:

Cultural resource → credible narrative → differentiated identity → consumer recognition → potential value creation.

The chain is conditional: recognition does not necessarily become trust or repeat purchase unless the narrative is credible and supported by practice.

4.6 Entrepreneurship as the connecting mechanism

Entrepreneurship explains how cultural resources can move from meaning to economic opportunity.

Entrepreneurs may identify local products, traditional processing methods, ecological characteristics or community knowledge as resources for new ventures and innovation. Digital communication can help develop online identities, test demand and reach buyers.

This supports product, communication, business-model, organisational and market innovation, including value-added goods, storytelling, direct-to-consumer sales, community-based enterprise and niche or international markets.

This can support several forms of innovation:

- Product innovation through value-added agricultural goods;
- Communication innovation through storytelling and digital content;
- Business-model innovation through direct-to-consumer sales;
- Organisational innovation through community-based enterprise; and
- Market innovation through niche and international segments.

The conceptual importance of entrepreneurship is that it provides the bridge between cultural identity and economic activity. Yet digital opportunity depends on capital, skills, infrastructure and market access, so rural enterprises may remain disadvantaged without enabling capabilities.

However, entrepreneurship should not be romanticised. Digital entrepreneurial opportunities depend upon access to capital, skills, infrastructure and markets. Small rural enterprises may remain disadvantaged if digitalisation increases competitive pressures without providing the capabilities needed to respond.

4.7 Market access

Digital communication can reduce geographical barriers between agricultural enterprises and consumers.

Online platforms can extend local enterprises beyond immediate production areas and introduce unfamiliar products to international audiences. In Vietnam, OCOP-related digital sales illustrate the relevance of continued platform engagement for local agricultural products (Dao & Hoang, 2025). In India, large-scale digital-agriculture programmes indicate expanding infrastructure for agricultural information and market coordination (Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, 2026).

Cultural narratives can be useful where consumers have limited prior knowledge because they communicate not only what a product is but why it is distinctive.

Market access should not be equated with market success. Digital visibility cannot guarantee logistics, quality, affordability or reliable supply; communication must be integrated with production and distribution capabilities.

4.8 Consumer trust and authenticity

Consumer trust is a critical mediating process.

Cultural narratives may create an initial perception of authenticity, but trust develops when representations are consistent with observable or verifiable practice. Transparency, traceability and credible evidence are therefore important components of digital communication.

Enterprises can provide information about producers, production locations, processing methods, certification and environmental practices. These signals help consumers assess whether cultural and sustainability claims have substantive foundations.

Trust matters because consumers often cannot directly observe production conditions. Credible communication can reduce uncertainty, whereas unsupported emotional narratives can weaken credibility.

4.9 Cultural commodification

Cultural commodification is central because cultural practices, meanings and identities can become resources for market exchange.

In agribusiness, commodification may involve traditional foods, knowledge, landscapes, rituals or community identities being translated into commercial narratives. It can generate income and recognition, but problems arise when commercial value becomes detached from community interests. This reflects broader concerns about how cultural meanings become incorporated into market-oriented branding (Holt, 2002).

Commodification is not necessarily negative. Economic recognition of cultural resources can create income, encourage preservation and provide communities with new opportunities.

The concern arises when commercial value becomes disconnected from community interests.

These risks explain why authenticity, participation and equitable value distribution are necessary conditions rather than optional ethical additions.

4.10 Community participation

Community participation changes the relationship between cultural communication and sustainable development.

When communities help define how identity is represented, digital communication can provide recognition and voice. Community members may contribute stories, knowledge, practices and interpretations of heritage.

Participation also affects economic outcomes. Ownership or meaningful involvement in enterprises based on cultural resources can help retain a greater share of value locally.

This provides a direct connection between digital communication and rural development.

The key question is not whether a community appears in a digital narrative, but whether it has agency in constructing the narrative and shares in resulting value.

4.11 Rural development

Rural development is an outcome of interacting processes rather than a direct consequence of digital communication.

Culturally grounded communication may support rural development when it strengthens value creation and entrepreneurship, improves market access and allows a greater share of value to remain within rural economies.

Potential benefits include income, employment, skills, enterprise formation and stronger local value chains, as well as recognition of local knowledge and cultural continuity.

There may also be less directly measurable cultural benefits. Increased recognition of local knowledge and agricultural traditions can contribute to cultural continuity.

Risks include demand exceeding local capacity, pressure to alter traditional practices, exclusion of local consumers and capture of gains by external firms.

Sustainable rural development therefore requires institutional mechanisms linking market opportunity with inclusive participation and value sharing.

4.12 Sustainable development

Sustainability is the final stage of the framework, combining economic viability, social inclusion and environmental responsibility.

Digital communication can make sustainable practices visible and connect them with consumer demand, but communication alone cannot make an agribusiness sustainable.

However, communication alone cannot make an agribusiness sustainable.

Storytelling cannot substitute for environmentally responsible production, and featuring rural communities

does not establish social sustainability. Communication is an enabling mechanism, not a substitute for substantive practice.

The framework therefore treats communication as an enabling socio-economic mechanism, not as a substitute for substantive sustainability.

4.13 The proposed conceptual framework

The comparative evidence supports the framework presented in Figure 1. Cultural identity and digital communication are interacting starting domains: identity provides heritage, place-based meaning, knowledge and values, while digital communication provides channels through which these meanings are selected, interpreted and shared.

Cultural identity provides heritage, traditions, place-based meaning, community knowledge and values. Digital communication provides the channels through which these meanings can be selected, interpreted and communicated.

Their interaction produces culturally grounded digital narratives.

These narratives connect with four immediate socio-economic processes:

1. **Agribusiness value creation**, through differentiation and value addition;

2. **Entrepreneurship**, through new ventures, innovation and rural enterprise;
3. **Market access**, through expanded consumer reach and domestic or international market engagement;
4. **Consumer trust**, through transparency, authenticity and credible sustainability claims.

Together, these processes can contribute to rural development and community participation, including income, livelihoods, capability formation, collective action, local voice and recognition of local knowledge.

Three conditions cut across the framework: authenticity, meaningful community participation and equitable value distribution. When these are weak, cultural communication may create commercial value without corresponding social or sustainability benefits.

The framework therefore proposes an interconnected pathway rather than deterministic causality: digital communication and cultural identity shape narratives; narratives can support value creation, entrepreneurship, market access and trust; these processes can contribute to rural development and participation; and the resulting conditions can support sustainable development.

Figure 1 illustrates that cultural identity and digital communication interact to generate culturally grounded digital narratives. These narratives connect to

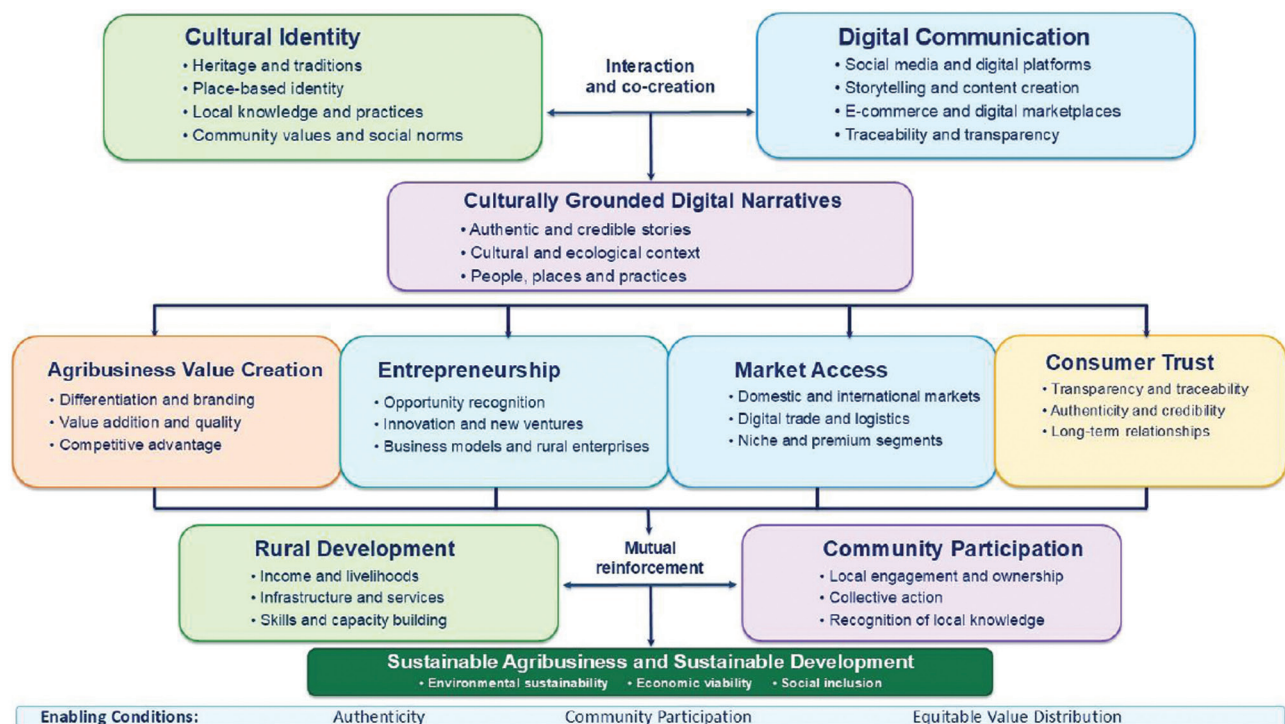


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Culturally Grounded Digital Communication in Sustainable Agribusiness

Note. Author-developed framework based on the comparative synthesis of the literature. Arrows represent proposed relationships rather than tested causal effects

agribusiness value creation, entrepreneurship, market access and consumer trust, which can influence rural development and community participation and ultimately contribute to sustainable agribusiness and sustainable development. Authenticity, community participation and equitable value distribution condition these relationships.

4.14 Implications for agribusiness enterprises

The framework offers practical implications for enterprises. First, identify cultural resources that genuinely distinguish the product rather than importing cultural symbolism for promotion. Second, link cultural and sustainability claims to evidence. Third, adapt communication to the intended audience without altering the substantive sustainability proposition.

Fourth, consider who benefits from cultural value creation. Where communities provide knowledge or identity, participation and benefit-sharing can strengthen ethical legitimacy and long-term sustainability.

Fifth, integrate digital communication with entrepreneurial and operational strategy because narrative appeal cannot compensate for weak production quality, supply reliability or distribution.

Third, communication should be adapted to the intended audience. The comparison of Vietnam and India illustrates why a single narrative cannot necessarily be transferred unchanged across cultural environments.

4.15 Implications for policy and development institutions

The findings also have policy implications. Digital-agriculture programmes should complement connectivity and technical capability with communication, entrepreneurship and cultural-representation skills.

Training can include digital storytelling, branding, market research, consumer engagement and responsible cultural representation. Producer organisations and cooperatives can be supported in developing collective digital identities and market channels.

Policies supporting geographical indications, cultural heritage, sustainable certification and community-based enterprises can strengthen credibility. Development institutions should also monitor value distribution so that increased product value does not accrue mainly to external actors.

4.16 Implications for cross-cultural market engagement

Cross-cultural communication should not rely on literal translation alone. Cultural meanings are embedded in social contexts and may be interpreted differently across markets.

Enterprises should distinguish the core sustainability proposition from the cultural narrative used to communicate it. The substantive practice should remain consistent while its explanation is adapted to context.

The comparison suggests a principle of culturally informed consistency: stable substantive commitments combined with context-sensitive communication. This avoids both universalised messaging and excessive adaptation for short-term commercial appeal.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This conceptual comparative literature review examined digital communication, cultural identity and sustainable agribusiness through selected literature concerning Vietnam and India. The comparison identifies a common foundation of agricultural and cultural resources alongside different contextual tendencies in digital communication.

In the selected Vietnamese literature, place, ecological identity, regional heritage and community relationships are prominent resources. In selected Indian literature and policy contexts, extensive plurality allows regional, linguistic, civilisational, technological and commercial narratives to coexist. These are tendencies in the reviewed evidence, not fixed national characteristics.

The conceptual contribution lies in connecting digital cultural communication with a broader socio-economic pathway: agribusiness value creation, entrepreneurship, market access and consumer trust can, under appropriate conditions, contribute to rural development, community participation and sustainable development.

Culture does not become sustainable value merely because it is represented online. Cultural symbolism is not equivalent to cultural identity, digital visibility is not equivalent to market success, and sustainability narratives do not constitute sustainability unless supported by substantive practice.

Cultural commodification remains central. Commercial use of cultural identity can generate income and recognition, but can also simplify meaning, detach symbols from communities and concentrate value outside the communities whose knowledge and identity generate it.

Authenticity, community participation and equitable value distribution should therefore be treated as conditions for sustainable cultural communication.

Digital communication can function as a socio-economic mechanism through which cultural identity is converted into credible market value, but its contribution to sustainable development depends on authenticity, community participation and equitable distribution of resulting value.

This proposition extends digital-agriculture discussion beyond technology adoption by placing communication within the social and economic transformation of agribusiness. It also positions cultural identity as a potentially productive resource while recognising the responsibilities involved in its commercialisation.

For entrepreneurs, the framework highlights differentiation, value addition and market development; for rural communities, it highlights agency and benefit-sharing; for consumers, credible information and authenticity; and for policymakers, digital capability, cultural knowledge, entrepreneurship, market access and inclusive value distribution.

Future research should empirically test the framework through comparative digital-content analysis, consumer studies, rural-entrepreneur interviews and community-level research. Such work could examine whether culturally grounded narratives influence authenticity perceptions, sustainability assessments, purchase intentions, enterprise formation and actual distribution of value.

Research should also examine digital inequality because unequal access to technology, skills and markets may allow better-resourced enterprises to benefit disproportionately.

Comparative work in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and other Asian economies could further test whether the framework travels across different cultural and institutional contexts.

Transforming Asian agribusiness for a sustainable future requires more than technological modernisation. It requires viable enterprises, inclusive rural development, credible environmental practices and meaningful producer-consumer relationships. Digital communication can support these relationships when it makes the cultural, social and environmental dimensions of agricultural value visible and credible.

The challenge is therefore not simply to communicate sustainability more effectively, but to create communication systems in which cultural identity, entrepreneurial opportunity, market value, community participation and sustainable practice reinforce rather than undermine one another.

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Appendix A

Institutional and Policy Frameworks Supporting Digital Agribusiness Narratives

Table A1 provides a synthesis of institutional and policy frameworks that substantiate the comparative socio-economic and cultural contexts discussed in Section 4. The table is complemented by a record of the literature-search and selection protocol used for the review.

Table A1. Summary of Regional Institutional Contexts.

Country	Institutional framework / programme	Relevance to cultural identity and digital agribusiness	Source
Vietnam	One Commune One Product (OCOP) Programme	Emphasises place-based identity, local ecological characteristics and regional heritage; digital-platform activity can support the market visibility of local agricultural products.	Dao & Hoang (2025)
Vietnam	National Digital Transformation Programme to 2025, oriented to 2030 (Decision 749/QĐ-TTg)	Prioritises agricultural digitalisation, including smart farming, traceability and e-commerce, with implications for the value of localised agricultural products.	Government of Vietnam (2020)
India	Digital Agriculture Mission (AgriStack) and Farmer Registry	Develops a national digital-agriculture ecosystem at large scale and requires adaptable systems capable of operating across India's linguistic, cultural and regional diversity.	Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (2026); NEXT IAS (2026)
India	Frontier Technology-Led Agricultural Transformation	Connects frontier technologies such as AI and IoT with agricultural transformation while highlighting the need to address social-capital and inclusion gaps.	NITI Aayog (2025); ICTworks (2026)

Note. The institutional sources substantiate contextual and policy claims; they are not treated as empirical proof of a single national communication pattern.

Table A2. Literature Search and Selection Protocol.

Protocol element	Specification
Databases	Scopus and Web of Science
Publication period	2015–2026
Boolean search phrase	["digital agribusiness" OR "digital agriculture"] AND ["cultural identity" OR "narrative"] AND ["Vietnam" OR "India"]
Initial records	412
Final analytical corpus	58 core peer-reviewed studies and institutional reports
Selection basis	Relevance to digital agriculture/agribusiness, communication, cultural identity or heritage, entrepreneurship/value creation, sustainability, and Vietnam or India as substantive contexts
Analytical method	Thematic synthesis across cultural resources; digital narrative construction; socio-economic value creation; and development outcomes

Note. The reported record counts and search parameters are author-provided elements of the review protocol. The review is presented as a conceptual comparative literature review, not as a systematic review with statistical meta-analysis.

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