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DIGITAL NARRATIVES ON SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR LOCAL CULTURAL PRESERVATION: A DIGITAL CULTURAL COMMUNICATION APPROACH

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Abstract

This study examines the role of digital narrative as an instrument for preserving local culture in the midst of the challenges of globalization and digitalization. The focus of the study is the Instagram account @pesona.indonesia, which is managed by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia, as a medium for tourism and cultural promotion. Through a qualitative approach with a content analysis method, this study describes the form of digital narrative, analyzes the integration of local cultural values, and assesses the contribution of audience interaction in cultural preservation. The results of the study show that the digital narrative on the @pesona.indonesia account is built through a combination of cinematic visual storytelling and the use of distinctive, persuasive, and informative language. Content such as Gelar Melayu Serangpun, Kamist Toraja, and the Sabang–Merauke narrative are evidence of how visual elements, texts, and cultural symbols combine to form captivating representations and create emotional attachment. The integration of local cultural values, such as collectivity, togetherness, and identity, is carried out authentically and contextually through the visualization of traditions, arts, culinary, and customs, complete with explanations of their meanings and philosophies. Furthermore, audiences play an active role in preserving culture through high levels of engagement (likes, comments, shares), the formation of user-generated content (UGC), and the potential for collaboration. These interactions not only expand the reach of cultural messages but also create spaces for dialogue and collective participation. Theoretically, this study enriches the study of digital cultural communication, while practically, providing strategic recommendations for social media managers and communication practitioners in designing engaging digital content while strengthening national cultural identity.

Keywords: Digital narrative, cultural preservation, social media, cultural communication

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran narasi digital sebagai alat untuk melestarikan budaya lokal di tengah tantangan globalisasi dan digitalisasi. Fokus penelitian ini adalah akun Instagram @pesona.indonesia, yang dikelola oleh Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif Republik Indonesia, sebagai media promosi pariwisata dan budaya. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode analisis konten, penelitian ini menggambarkan bentuk narasi digital, menganalisis integrasi nilai-nilai budaya lokal, dan mengevaluasi kontribusi interaksi audiens dalam pelestarian budaya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan

bahwa narasi digital pada akun @pesona.indonesia dibangun melalui kombinasi storytelling visual yang sinematik dan penggunaan bahasa yang khas, persuasif, dan informatif. Konten seperti Gelar Melayu Serangpun, Kamist Toraja, dan narasi Sabang–Merauke merupakan bukti bagaimana elemen visual, teks, dan simbol budaya bersatu untuk membentuk representasi yang memikat dan menciptakan ikatan emosional. Integrasi nilai-nilai budaya lokal, seperti kebersamaan, persatuan, dan identitas, dilakukan secara autentik dan kontekstual melalui visualisasi tradisi, seni, kuliner, dan adat istiadat, lengkap dengan penjelasan makna dan filosofinya. Selain itu, audiens berperan aktif dalam pelestarian budaya melalui tingkat keterlibatan yang tinggi (suka, komentar, bagikan), pembentukan konten yang dihasilkan pengguna (UGC), dan potensi kolaborasi. Interaksi ini tidak hanya memperluas jangkauan pesan budaya tetapi juga menciptakan ruang untuk dialog dan partisipasi kolektif. Secara teoritis, penelitian ini memperkaya studi tentang komunikasi budaya digital, sementara secara praktis, memberikan rekomendasi strategis bagi manajer media sosial dan praktisi komunikasi dalam merancang konten digital yang menarik sambil memperkuat identitas budaya nasional.

Kata kunci: *Narasi digital, pelestarian budaya, media sosial, komunikasi budaya*

INTRODUCTION

The preservation of local culture in the era of globalization and digitalization faces increasingly complex challenges. The rapid flow of information, cross-border cultural exchange, and the penetration of digital media have influenced the way people access, interpret, and preserve culture. Globalization encourages cultural homogenization, where popular culture and global trends dominate public spaces. As a result, local cultural values and practices are often marginalized or undergoing changes so that they risk losing their authenticity. (Blaschitz et al., 2022)

Digital media in this context presents as a paradox: on the one hand it is a threat because it encourages the spread of global popular culture that can erode traditional values, but on the other hand it also serves as a strategic opportunity to disseminate local culture more widely. Blogs, social media, and other digital platforms allow Indonesian culture to be creatively introduced to a global audience. This shows that digital media is not only a medium of communication, but also a cultural arena where the nation's identity is negotiated. (Hamdiah & Ahnaf, 2024)

Social media, with its interactive and participation-based characteristics, provides a new space for the management of cultural narratives. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube allow local culture to be packaged in visual, narrative, and emotional forms so that they are more receptive to diverse audiences. Cultural content that is delivered creatively through social media is able to strengthen image, build awareness, and encourage community involvement in cultural preservation. (Zahrani et al., 2025)

One concrete example is the @pesona.indonesia Instagram account managed by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia. This account consistently displays a variety of content that introduces the rich culture of the archipelago, ranging from tourist destinations, traditional culinary, to local rituals and traditions. Not only does this account function as a tourism promotion medium, this

account is also an instrument for cultural preservation through digital narratives that are packaged in a structured and attractive manner.

Most previous research has emphasized the visual aspects of cultural promotion, such as destination photos or content aesthetics, without in-depth review of the narrative dimensions that are actually central to building cultural meaning and audience engagement. In fact, digital narratives have a strategic role because they not only present information, but also construct identity, instill values, and build emotional bonds between local culture and audiences. The urgency of digital narratives in cultural content lies in its ability to present an authentic and educational representation, so that culture is not only consumed visually, but also understood and inherited in a broader social context. Thus, analysis of digital narratives is important to see how social media, especially Instagram @pesona.indonesia, articulates local cultural values and encourages audience participation in cultural preservation. (Carolina & Susanti, 2025) (Nur FIFA et al., 2025)

Based on this phenomenon, this study seeks to examine digital narratives as an instrument for preserving local culture through a digital cultural communication approach. The research questions asked include: (1) how the digital narrative on the @pesona.indonesia account is formed; (2) how the content integrates local cultural values; and (3) how audience interaction contributes to cultural preservation.

This study aims to: (1) describe the form of digital narrative on @pesona.indonesia accounts, including characteristics, communication styles, and message delivery patterns; (2) analyze the integration of local cultural values in digital content; and (3) assessing the role of audience interaction in supporting cultural sustainability through participation in the digital space.

Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the study of digital cultural communication, especially in the use of digital narratives as a strategy for cultural preservation. Practically, this research provides strategic recommendations for social media managers, communication practitioners, and related agencies in designing digital content that not only attracts the attention of the audience, but also strengthens cultural identity in the midst of globalization.

METHOD

Types of Research

This study uses a qualitative approach with a content analysis method. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on understanding the meaning, interpretation, and socio-cultural context contained in digital narratives, rather than on quantitative measurements. Content analysis is used to identify the patterns, themes, and narrative structures that emerge in social media content. This approach allows researchers to dissect the content of messages, visual forms, and audience responses related to cultural preservation.

Research Object

The object of this research is the Instagram account @pesona.indonesia, an official account owned by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia which is used as a medium for promoting culture and tourism. This account was chosen because it has a large number of followers, consistency of uploads, and a diversity of content that contains elements of local culture from various regions in Indonesia. In addition, the account uses a variety of content formats such as photos, videos, reels, and relevant Instagram Stories to analyze narratively.

Data Collection Techniques

1. Documentation

Collecting data in the form of posts, reels, captions, and comments uploaded on the @pesona.indonesia account during the research period. Documentation is done by saving screenshots and recording metadata (upload date, number of likes, number of comments, and hashtags used). This data is the main material for narrative analysis and cultural representation.

2. Observasi Virtual

Researchers conducted live observations on the Instagram platform without intervention, to understand upload patterns, audience interaction, and public responses to cultural content. These observations include how audiences comment, share, or tag content, as well as monitor the progress of interactions on a regular basis (Rice & Kurniawati , n.d.).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

@pesona.indonesia Account Overview

The @pesona.indonesia account is an official account managed by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia as a medium for promoting Indonesian tourism and culture in the digital realm. Until the time of this study, the account had millions of followers, the majority of whom were young people (ages 18–35) with an interest in tourism, culinary, culture, and photography. The content uploaded is diverse, including photos, videos, reels, infographics, and Instagram Stories, which are designed with a high visual aesthetic to attract the attention of the audience. Content formats prioritize a combination of visual narrative and text narrative through informative and persuasive captions.

The digital narrative on the @pesona.indonesia account is built through a combination of visuals, text, and interaction. Visuals in the form of photos and videos present cultural beauty cinematically, while captions provide context in the form of history, philosophy, and unique facts that enrich the audience's understanding. This narrative is strengthened by the use of communicative language and active interaction such as invitations to discussion or preservation campaigns, thus forming emotional attachment and a sense of togetherness. Thus, the digital narrative that is formed not only conveys information, but also instills cultural meaning while encouraging audience participation in the preservation of cultural heritage.(Simorangkir & Jamiati , 2025)

The account's target audience includes domestic tourists, foreign tourists, and culture lovers, with a focus on promoting tourist destinations, local traditions, performing arts, and traditional culinary. This account also acts as a digital storefront of Indonesian culture, showing the diversity of tribes, languages, and customs in 38 provinces.

Digital Narrative Analysis

Based on the results of the analysis, the digital narrative on the @pesona.indonesia account is formed through a combination of visual storytelling and the use of distinctive language.

1. Visual-Based Storytelling

Visual content presents cultural stories cinematically, for example:(Kristiyono et al., 2024)

The Melayu Serumpun title in Tanjungpinang visualized with photos and videos of dance performances, traditional clothing, and community interactions, illustrates the spirit of cross-border Malay brotherhood.



The Toraja fog, which is displayed through panoramic portraits of the mountains with mystical and philosophical narratives, invites the audience to feel the sacred atmosphere of the land of Toraja.



Sabang-Merauke, represented through a video cross-regional trip, forms a narrative of the integrity and diversity of Indonesia from the west to the east. This visual element not only displays aesthetics, but also builds an emotion of attachment to the culture presented.



2. Use of Language and Story Style

The caption on each upload uses warm, persuasive, and inspirational diction. Language styles vary from formal-informative to narrative-emotional, depending on the purpose of the content. In addition, there is the use of call-to-actions such as "Let's visit!", "Share your experience here!", or "Tag your traveling friends" that encourage audience interaction and participation. (Suci Nurangraini et al., n.d.)



3. Integration of Cultural Values

Rizky Febriansyah, (2025) The content on the @pesona.indonesia account integrates local cultural values by displaying various elements of Indonesian culture in an authentic and contextual manner. Through the photos, videos, and stories uploaded, this account

highlights the traditions, arts, culinary, and customs that are an important part of the cultural identity of the local community. This presentation is not only visual, but also accompanied by an in-depth explanation of the meaning and philosophy behind each cultural element, so that the audience can understand and appreciate the richness of the culture.

Additionally, the content often uses local language and traditional terms in its captions or narratives, which helps to maintain authenticity and strengthen emotional ties to the culture of origin. The account also invites followers to get to know and preserve culture through active participation, such as holding challenges or campaigns that promote local values. This approach is effective in combining aspects of education and entertainment, while building collective awareness of the importance of cultural preservation in the digital age (Zulfikar & Romadlan , 2025).

The narrative presented contains cultural values such as:

- a. **Collectivity:** highlighting the spirit of mutual cooperation and community cooperation.
- b. **Togetherness:** raising the moment of traditional celebrations or festivals involving various levels of society.
- c. **Identity:** affirms local symbols, languages, and artifacts as part of national identity. This integration creates cultural awareness that is not only informative, but also emotional.

The Role of Audience Interaction

Audience interaction on the @pesona.indonesia account contributes significantly to cultural preservation by creating a space for dialogue and active participation in getting to know and maintain cultural heritage. Through comments, likes, and sharing, audiences not only passively receive information, but also engage in discussions that deepen their understanding of local cultural values. The personal responses and experiences shared by followers in the comments section help enrich cultural narratives and create a sense of community among the digital community.(Hakim et al., 2024)

In addition, these accounts often initiate campaigns, quizzes, or challenges that invite audiences to participate in cultural preservation activities, such as promoting traditional customs or promoting local stories. This active participation helps spread wider awareness and motivates real action outside of cyberspace, so that cultural preservation becomes a collective movement supported by the digital community. Thus, audience interaction not only strengthens engagement, but also becomes an important pillar in maintaining and preserving culture through social media.(Hakim et al., 2024)

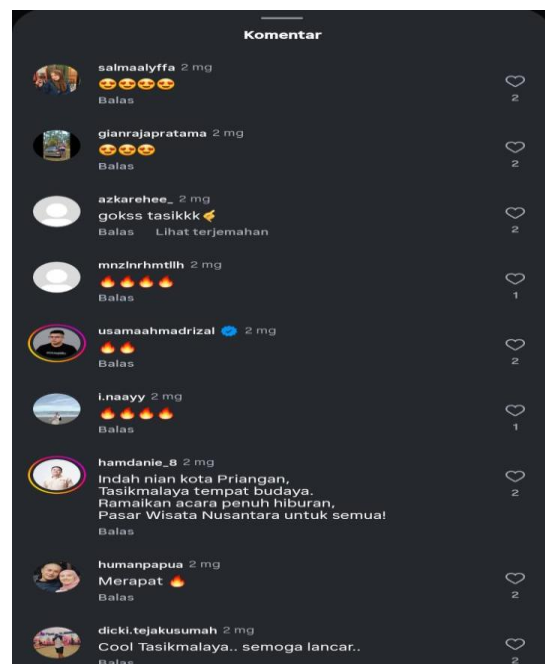
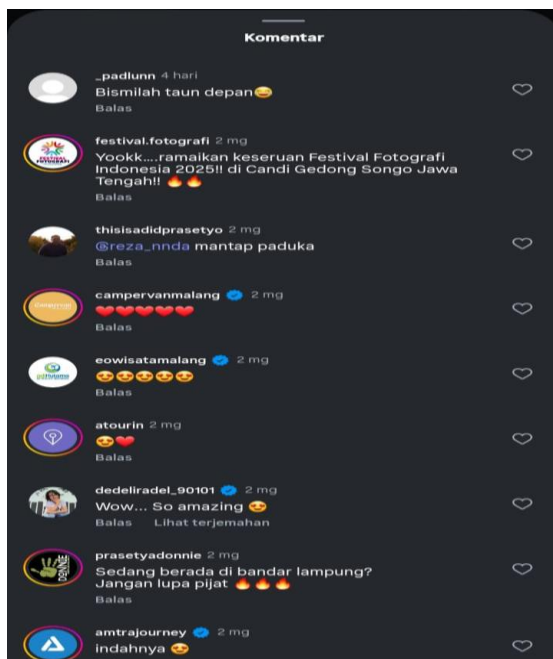
The results of the observation show that the audience plays an active role in the process of cultural preservation through digital interaction.

1. **Engagement**The high level of audience engagement, as seen from the followers, number of likes, comments, and shares on each upload. The content of cultural

festivals or natural beauty tends to have higher engagement than just informative content.



- Comments Comments that appear often contain appreciation, pride, or personal experiences related to the culture being displayed. These positive comments form a public discussion space that strengthens cultural narratives.



- User-Generated Content (UGC). Many audiences repost or upload their own content by tagging @pesona.indonesia. This expands the reach of cultural messages and creates a viral effect.
- Potential for Collaboration. Active interaction opens up opportunities for collaboration between account managers and audiences, for example through

cultural photo competitions, travel stories, or hashtag campaigns that invite people to participate in promoting culture.

The discussion contains the results of research and scientific discussions. The discussion contains an explanation of the rules and facts. The analysis corresponds to the approach to the problem chosen by the author. In addition, the comparison must also be explained with the results of other researchers who have almost the same topic. The results and findings of the research must be able to answer the formulation of the research problem in the introduction. Use factual and relevant references. The article must produce novelty or novelty from both a theoretical and practical point of view.

The discussion contains at least: (1) (what elements/how) the data presented has been processed (not raw data), set in the form of a table or picture (choose one), and provided with information that is easy to understand? Write down findings or findings, but don't discuss them here; (2). (element of why) In the discussion section, there is a relationship between the results obtained and the basic concept and/or hypothesis. In some areas of science, we even have to discuss the molecular aspects at the study level. The discussions conducted must be supported by real and clear facts; and (3) (what other element) is whether there is a conformity or conflict with the results of other people's research.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that the @pesona.indonesia account builds a digital narrative through a combination of strong visual storytelling, persuasive narrative captions, and the integration of local cultural values. The resulting narrative not only displays the visual aesthetics of destinations and traditions, but also shapes the audience's emotions of attachment to Indonesian culture. Content such as *Gelar Melayu Sejarpun*, *Kamist Toraja*, and *the Sabang–Merauke* narrative prove that visual elements, language, and cultural symbols can be combined to create an alluring cultural representation. In addition, the results show that audiences play an active role in cultural preservation through engagement (likes, comments, shares) and user-generated content that expands the reach of cultural narratives. This participation indicates that there is a potential collaboration space between account managers and the community in maintaining cultural identity in the digital era.

Suggestions for Advanced Research

This research has limitations on the scope of objects that only focus on one Instagram account. To enrich understanding, advanced research can:

1. Compare cultural narratives across social media platforms (e.g. TikTok, YouTube, or Facebook) to see differences in formats and audience acceptance.
2. Conduct longitudinal analysis to observe changes in narrative strategies over time.
3. Integrate survey methods or audience interviews to gain a direct perspective on the perception and impact of cultural narratives.
4. Examining the collaborative role of independent content creators (*influencers*) in strengthening the national cultural narrative.

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