



# Exploring Social Media Storytelling to promote Tourist Destinations: A case study of thematic villages in Malang City

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the narratives of Kampung Warna-warni Jodipan, Kampung Budaya Polowijen, and Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan, three Malang City themed villages that have developed into popular tourist destinations. Social media, especially platforms like Instagram, has become a powerful tool in promoting tourism by enabling destinations to reach global audiences, foster community engagement, and create visually driven narratives that attract visitors. This approach aligns with the Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) 11, a globally recognized framework that emphasizes creating inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements worldwide. By promoting these villages through effective Instagram storytelling, tourism managers can support SDG 11's objectives by highlighting unique cultural heritage while also contributing to local economic and social sustainability. This study used a quantitative descriptive content analysis method. The results revealed that the three thematic villages have not yet fully used storytelling techniques in the content created and posted on Instagram, and have not optimally used tourism components, such as attractions, amenities, and accessibility. These findings suggest that the managers of the Kampung Warna-warni Jodipan, Kampung Budaya Polowijen, and Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan should consider incorporating storytelling elements and tourism components in creating content to effectively target audiences and highlight the unique qualities of each village.

**Keywords:** *Storytelling, Tourist destination, Instagram, Thematic village, Tourism components*



## 1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the most significant sectors in Indonesia's economy, contributing to foreign exchange earnings and employment opportunities. With one of the world's richest cultural heritages, diverse natural landscapes, and unique diversity, Indonesia attracts millions of international visitors annually. Research has shown that international tourism has increased post-COVID-19 (Zubaidah et al., 2023), creating a greater need to utilize social media to promote tourist destinations more widely. According to researchers Khairani (2021), Khairani & Fachira (2022), and Agustina, et al (2024), social media is among the most effective strategies for marketing tourism destinations. Increased views on social media content enhance consumer engagement, making platforms like Instagram ideal for tourism marketing. According to a Napoleon Cat report, Indonesia had 90.18 million Instagram users in May 2024, a slight decrease of 0.36% from 90.51 million the previous month (DataIndonesia.id, 2024).

Utilizing social media to promote tourist attractions requires the integration of storytelling elements and core tourism components to achieve optimal results. However, many social media accounts for tourist destinations lack these aspects in their promotional content. A notable example is the set of three thematic villages in Malang City, East Java—Kampung Warna-Warni Jodipan, Kampung Budaya Polowijen, and Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan—which are among the most popular tourist destinations in the region (Ongis, 2024).

Storytelling and essential tourism components, such as attractions, amenities, and accessibility, play a crucial role in enhancing engagement on social media, particularly on Instagram. As a promotional medium, Instagram greatly influences users when storytelling is effectively incorporated (Sari & Praswati, 2024). Engaging content, combined with creative narratives, can positively impact consumer attitudes, influencing purchasing decisions by fostering trust and building relationships with users. Additionally, tourism components like attractions, amenities, and accessibility contribute to attracting a wider audience. Studies by Surya & Ningsih (2020), Ismail Rohman (2019), and Panuntun & Mahagangga (2024) showed that the attractions, amenities, and accessibility are instrumental in enhancing the appeal of tourism destination content on social media.

In this context, this study analyzes the use of storytelling and tourism components in promoting three thematic villages in Malang: Kampung Warna-Warni Jodipan, Kampung Budaya Polowijen, and Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan. Storytelling plays a key role in promoting tourist destinations by sharing memorable experiences and creating emotional connections with potential visitors (Solomon et al., 2022; Ulku & Erol, 2022). Therefore, this study focuses on examining the storytelling approaches and tourism components, specifically attractions, amenities, and accessibility, presented in the Instagram content of these thematic villages as an effort to boost visitor numbers and engagement.



## 2. Literature review

Storytelling has recently emerged as a powerful tool in tourism marketing, providing an engaging way to share attractions and experiences unique to each destination. Effective storytelling typically involves five key elements: setting, character, plot, conflict, and message. In tourism promotion, three essential components—attractions, amenities, and accessibility—are crucial for creating a compelling destination image. Previous studies have examined these aspects in tourism storytelling, tourism components, and thematic villages.

According to Novita et al. (2024), tourism components like accessibility, amenities, and ancillary services have a significant positive influence on visitor satisfaction. Similarly, Alvianna et al. (2020) found that attractions positively impact tourist satisfaction, while Zuhriah et al. (2022) emphasized that attractions are a key factor driving tourist interest. Priliantini et al. (2023) explored tourism promotion through storytelling, particularly how narratives about tourist sites in Solo Raya could revitalize tourism impacted by COVID-19. Jo et al. (2022) studied the influence of tourism storytelling on brand value, the "like" feature on Instagram, and visitor engagement, finding that storytelling greatly enhanced engagement on South Korean tourism Instagram accounts.

Further research by Zuhriah et al. (2022) examined tourist interest in the religious tourism site of Gus Dur's tomb in Jombang Regency, showing that attractions, accessibility, and amenities significantly influence interest in visiting. Rahmawati et al. (2021) studied Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan and noted that local public involvement in tourism management remains low, suggesting a need for greater community participation. Anita & Lestari (2020) examined the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII) YouTube channel and found that storytelling strengthened TMII's brand and effectively promoted its tourism activities. Similarly, Ningtiyas et al. (2021) highlighted the positive impact of attractions, accessibility, amenities, and ancillary services on tourist loyalty and interest in visiting San Terra De La Ponte, a popular tourist spot in Malang Regency. Studies by Aripadono (2020), and Prasetyo & Setyadi (2017) examined how storytelling and follower engagement can increase the visibility and reach of social media posts. Their findings suggest that storytelling can foster closer relationships between organizations and consumers, making it a valuable element in tourism marketing.

While these studies have explored storytelling in promoting tourist attractions, few have focused on how thematic villages use these techniques on Instagram. This study aims to fill that gap by analysing how three thematic villages in Malang—Kampung Warna-Warni Jodipan, Kampung Budaya Polowijen, and Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan—utilize storytelling and essential tourism components to enhance their marketing efforts on Instagram.



### 3. Method

This study employed a quantitative descriptive content analysis design (Arikunto, 2006) to examine data and information pertaining to the narratives presented on the Instagram accounts of the research subjects: @kampung\_warna\_warni, @kampungbudayapolowijen, and @kayutanganheritage. Quantitative descriptive research methodologies were employed to deliver an objective overview or description of a condition using numerical data, encompassing data collection, analysis, and presentation of conclusions (Arikunto, 2006). The objective of content analysis was to provide knowledge, yield fresh insights, depict facts, and furnish practical counsel for action (Krippendorff, 2004). This study analysed data from material submitted between January and December 2023, coinciding with a period of heightened tourist demand due to year-end travel.

The five aspects of storytelling and the three tourism components were organized into categories based on codes adapted from Fog et al. (2010), Gitner (2016), Wellek & Warren (2024), and Miller (2011). The codes and characteristics for each aspect are presented in the following tables.

*Table 1. Storytelling aspects*

Storytelling Aspects	Code	Characteristics
Setting	SETT	Place, time, weather conditions, social conditions, mood or atmosphere.
Character	CHAR	People or figures who appear, their roles, physical appearance, speech, thoughts and feelings, or reactions of characters.
Plot	PL	A complete sequence of events or storyline, and the flow of the story.
Conflict	CON	Moments of tension, situations to overcome, or struggles faced by the main character.
Message	MSSG	Educational, inspirational, or moral statements, and quotes.

*Table 2. Tourism Components*

Tourism components	Code	Characteristics
Attraction	ATR	Fundamental destination appeals, including culture, nature, events, spatial planning, recreation, and entertainment.
Amenities	AMN	Public and essential facilities.
Accessibility	ACS	Accommodation, transportation, and routes.



The aspects analyzed were categorized as described. The unit of analysis in this study consisted of verbal elements in the form of sentences used in the captions of each upload from the research subjects. The data collection method employed observation and review of social media documents, specifically the Instagram accounts of the three thematic villages.

During the data analysis, the researchers collected and categorized the findings based on the identified units of analysis and general information presented in verbal sentences and comments. To avoid bias and subjectivity, a data validity test was conducted involving two independent coders. Both coders exchanged the observed objects to ensure that the analysis results were balanced and reliable.

#### 4. Findings and discussion

This study seeks to investigate the narrative elements and tourist factors, including attractions, amenities, and accessibility, within the Instagram profiles of Kampung Warna-warni Jodipan, Kampung Budaya Polowijen, and Kampong Heritage Kajoetangan. This research focusses on three thematic villages that serve as tourist sites in the Malang City region. The collected data is shown in this table.

*Table 3. Data Collected from 3 Instagrams' Accounts Thematic Villages*

<b>Instagram Accounts</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Followers</b>	<b>Content count</b>	<b>Engagements</b>
<b>@kampung_warna_warni</b>	January 1, 2023-April 14, 2024	10,000	24 posts: 6 images (4 photos and 2 collages) and 18 videos	7,663 likes
<b>@kampungbudayapolowijen</b>	January 6, 2023-May 4, 2024	106	91 posts (only 23 with captions): 3 photos and 20 videos (including 2 blank videos)	181 likes
<b>@kayutanganheritage</b>	January 1, 2023-May 19, 2024	6,779	70 posts: 60 photos and 10 videos)	62,797 likes

This data shows that each account has different contents in total along with the engagement. The @kayutanganheritage has greater online engagement with 6,779 followers. However, it turns out that the @kampung\_warna\_warni account which has 24 contents and has lack of online engagement with a total number of followers of 10,000. It can be said that more contents could engage more viewers instead of more followers yet lack of contents. This results contrast to a study conducted by Aripadono (2020) which found that the frequency of uploads on social media can increase online engagement with followers on social media who are also consumers or potential



consumers. The next analysis is the **tourism components and storytelling aspects** used for each account described in each section below.

#### 4. 1 Tourism Components: Attraction, Amenity, Accessibility

Related to the components of tourism in this study consist of three, namely attractions, amenities, and accessibility. In Table 3, it appears that the attraction element is quite dominant, although the amount is not too significant, namely the @kayutanganheritage account, which is 13%. Specifically in that element, several details are recorded, namely the Catholic church, which is the icon of Malang City, the Jengki house, the old-time house typical of Kayutangan, the locomotive, and others. Some of these posts can be seen in the picture below.

From the several attractions in Kayutangan, the vintage places of old houses that can still be enjoyed by tourists dominate the attraction elements. This is in line with the type of tourism of Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan which carries a thematic village centered on the heritage of typical Dutch houses, so that content that displays tourist attractions in the form of uniqueness, beauty, and values in the form of diversity of natural and cultural wealth is very prominently displayed. On the @kampungbudayapolowijen account, the attraction component only appears in 1 content, or 4.3%, which displayed a video related to the Malang Mask. The caption described the Malang Ragil Kuning Mask of the Kampung Budaya Polowijen. The uniqueness and beauty of the Kampung Budaya Polowijen are represented by interesting videos and storytelling that has the potential to attract tourists to visit.

This is in line with research conducted by Ningtiyas et al. (2021), Alvianna et al. (2020), and Zuhriah, et al. (2023) that the attraction element plays a significant role in the progress of a tourist destination. However, it is unfortunate that from the data obtained, none of the attraction components in the content of the three thematic villages have a high value. In other words, the thematic village party does not yet understand the attraction components that should be displayed in the content they create.

**Table 4.** Recapitulation of Data Coding of Tourism Components of 3 Instagram Accounts

No	Research Object	Tourism Unsure		
		Attraction	Amenity	Accessibility
1	Kampung Warna Warni	0	0	0
2	Kampung Budaya Polowijen	4.3%	0	0
3	Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan	13%	4.2%	0

When observed from Table 4, compared to the attraction component, the amenity component in the two thematic villages also has a percentage of 0. This explains that the content created by @kampung\_warna\_warni and @kampungbudayapolowijen does not contain any amenity components. The only thematic village that displays the amenity component is @kayutanganheritage with 3 uploads, or 4.2%. The uploads contain information related to overnight accommodation for tourists, places of worship, and



interesting photo spots. The absence of components raised in the uploads of the two thematic villages is contrary to Novita, et al. (2024) who stated that amenities have a very positive and significant influence on visitor satisfaction at tourist destinations.

Table 4 shows that none of the three Instagram accounts incorporate accessibility components into their content. This aligns with Rahmawati et al. (2021), who found that community involvement in tourism management remains limited. To improve, managers could highlight accessible routes, ticketing options, and transportation details in future posts to attract a wider audience."

Many accessibility components can be displayed in the uploads of the three thematic villages, such as adequate infrastructure in the form of access and ticketing and other requirements to be able to visit certain tourist locations, paved road access, clear directions, directions that are easy for tourists to understand, and routes that are easy to reach. Unfortunately, because the managers of thematic villages do not yet understand the tourism components that can be displayed in the content created, no content provides accessibility information. This is in line with the opinion of tourism observer Chusmeru from Jenderal Soedirman University who stated that almost all regions in Indonesia have interesting tourism potential, but not all of them have been narrated well to tourists (Ibo, 2019). In conclusion, it implies that the components of tourism to create content that includes attractions, amenities, and accessibility are necessary to be applied for promoting the tourist destinations. Moreover, the manager of each thematic village can continue to produce quality and useful content to support the progress of tourism in Malang City. This is in line with research by Agustina et al. (2024) when the tourism component is complete in the content created by thematic village managers, social media can be the most effective strategy for marketing tourism destinations.

#### 4.2 Storytelling Unsure: Setting, Character, Conflict, Plot, Message

The discussion of storytelling elements in the three Instagram accounts of three thematic villages consists of the setting, character, conflict, plot, and message based on the concepts of Fog et al. (2010) and Gitner (2016). These five messages are such a unity that if one element is missing, the storytelling will not be conveyed perfectly. From the data in Table 5, it can be seen that the storytelling element of conflict is missing across all accounts. According to Anita & Lestari (2020) on their research implies that indeed humans are inherently more inclined to trust the power of stories in the form of narratives rather than observing brands. Therefore, through compelling stories, consumers are more likely to spread certain brands by word of mouth.

*Table 5. Rekap Koding Data Storytelling of 3 Instagram Accounts*

No	Research Object	Storytelling Unsure				
		Setting	Character	Plot	Conflict	Message
1	Kampung Warna Warni	12.5%	4.1%	4.1%	0	20.8%



2	Kampung Budaya Polowijen	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	0	0
3	Kayutangan Heritage	12.8%	0	1.4%	0	8.5%

From Table 5, the setting element is quite dominant among other elements, especially in the @kayutanganheritage account, with as many as 9 out of 70 uploads, or 12.8%, which is slightly different from the @kampung\_warna\_warni account, with as many as 3 out of 24 uploads, or 12.5%. This happens because the setting is the main focus displayed by the managers of thematic villages. In the @kayutanganheritage account, the setting that appears can be seen from the uploads in the form of photos that are dominated by pictures or videos that depict the atmosphere and conditions at Kajoetangan Heritage. In addition, there are also collaborative uploads with followers who take pictures at Kajoetangan Heritage, precisely at typical spots in Kajoetangan which are depicted in various ways, for example, with expressions of enjoying walking to romantic expressions in pre-wedding photos with Kayutangan as the background. In general, the picture is dominated by one or a group that shows a specific place or location. In addition to photos, the setting elements in the uploads of the @kayutanganheritage account are also shown in a video showing a group of Keroncong musicians in front of the Kajoetangan Heritage shops.

Furthermore, the highest message element was obtained by the @kampung\_warna\_warni account with 5 out of 24 uploads, or 20.8%. The second value was the @kayutanganheritage account with 6 out of 70 uploads, or 8.5%. This happens because the message in storytelling has a unique power to convey something to the audience. Moreover, if the message is also packaged using attractive visuals in photos or videos, it will certainly make the audience pay more attention. This is in line with Hermanson (2008) who showed that messages about the values and products of a company can be accepted by the audience because the packaging of the message can bring up elements of emotion and attachment among the audience to the company. In the context of this study, the dominant messages are related to preserving culture and art as well as positive messages in tourism in general. Both are related to the thematic village itself and other things that are indirectly connected.

Lastly, there are elements of character and plot that only appear a little in the uploads on the Instagram accounts @kampung\_warna\_warni, @kampungbudayapolowijen, and @kayutanganheritage. On the @kampung\_warna\_warni account, the characters that appear can be seen from the uploads in the form of photos that predominantly display the characters from the visitor's perspective. There are also human characters that are depicted in various ways, such as faces, poses, and outfits of the day. In general, each photo is dominated by only one person, so the character formed is also only one for each upload. Character can also be observed from facial expressions and the clothes worn.

On the @kampungbudayapolowijen account, the characters that appear can be seen from the uploads in the form of pictures showing dances using Malang masks. In addition to pictures, the character elements in the uploads of the @kampungbudayapolowijen account are also displayed in videos showing dancers wearing masks with various





movements and expressions reflected the typical of young people who love the arts. On the @kayutanganheritage account, there are no uploads that represent characters or have a value of 0. The uploads that dominate in the Kajoetangan Heritage thematic village are in the form of several videos and photos that have different presentation characters, so in the video, it is not the pose that is used as the basis for seeing the character, but the body movements of the people in the photo.

## 5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the Instagram content of Kampung Warna-warni Jodipan, Kampung Budaya Polowijen, and Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan lacks the key storytelling aspects, with conflict being completely absent across all accounts. Similarly, the tourism components—attractions, amenities, and accessibility—are underrepresented or missing in the content. The absence of these elements limits the potential of the villages to attract visitors and fully leverage their tourism potential.

The results show that Kampung Warna-warni Jodipan has a stronger focus on the setting (12.5%), and message (20.8%) while character and plot are minimally represented. Kampung Budaya Polowijen demonstrates setting, character, and plot (all 4.3%) but lacks conflict and message. Meanwhile, Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan emphasizes setting (12.8%) and message (8.5%) but shows minimal focus on plot and no representation of character or conflict. It implies that the content created by each account does not represent the five storytelling aspects.

Furthermore, as it is shown from the data, Instagram content for these tourist attractions is not representing key tourism components: attractions, amenities, and accessibility. Kampung Warna-warni Jodipan is not represented in all three components because the dominant content is tourist photos with irrelevant captions. This tourist destination only reached 4.5% for the attraction component, while for amenities and accessibility, the percentage was 0%. In Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan, it promotes attractions with 13%, amenities with 4.2%, while the aspect of accessibility is not mentioned at all.

This interprets that to improve the thematic village, the managers should focus on incorporating storytelling elements such as conflict and plot and provide practical information on accessibility. Enhancing the content in these ways can help attract more visitors, increasing tourism revenues and benefiting the surrounding communities. Future research could explore the impact of training local content managers in storytelling techniques and tourism promotion.

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