


## DIGITAL TRAVEL WRITING AS A LITERACY STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING REGIONAL RELIGIOUS TOURISM POTENTIAL ON INSTAGRAM

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<p>Received 04/22/2026          Revised 05/04/2026          Accepted 05/23/2026</p> <p><b>License:</b>          Copyright (c) 2026 All          Wirayudha Pramana Bhakti</p>  <p>This work is licensed under a <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/">Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License</a>.</p> <p><b>Corresponding E-Mail:</b>  <a href="mailto:wirayudha.pramana.bhakti@uingusdur.ac.id">wirayudha.pramana.bhakti@uingusdur.ac.id</a></p> <p><b>To cite this Article:</b> Citation using APA Style 7th edition format</p> <p><b>To link to this Article (DOI):</b>  <a href="https://doi.org/10.28918/manjadda.v1i1.14906">https://doi.org/10.28918/manjadda.v1i1.14906</a></p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>This study examines digital travel writing as a literacy-based strategy in managing the promotion of regional religious tourism on Instagram. Existing research on digital tourism has largely emphasized marketing performance indicators and engagement metrics, while narrative construction and literacy practices in religious tourism communication remain underexplored. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach by analyzing four Instagram posts promoting the tomb of Syekh Maulana Maghribi in Wonobodro and Ujungnegero, Batang Regency, Central Java. Data were collected through documentation and purposive sampling and analyzed using content analysis to identify narrative patterns and promotional functions. The findings reveal four principal narrative characteristics: the construction of sacred space, the framing of religious experience, the development of authenticity and symbolic legitimacy, and the production of cultural meaning. These findings affirm that digital travel writing constitutes a multimodal literacy practice that integrates textual, visual, and symbolic elements in shaping destination identity. Functionally, the narratives contribute to destination positioning, audience engagement, visit intention formation, institutional legitimacy strengthening, and cultural preservation. The study concludes that Instagram-based religious tourism promotion represents a form of tourism management that leverages digital literacy to support regional tourism development.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>Digital Travel Writing; Literacy Strategy; Regional Religious Tourism; Instagram.</i></p>
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### INTRODUCTION

Social media has fundamentally transformed tourism promotion by shifting communication from one-way information delivery to interactive digital engagement. Instagram, as a visually oriented platform, plays a central role in shaping destination image and influencing travel decisions. Contemporary travelers increasingly rely on digital content to construct expectations about places they intend to visit. Empirical findings confirm that social media significantly affects travel intention and destination perception among users (Winduwati & Putri, 2025).

### *Digital Travel Writing....*

Digital travel writing represents the evolution of conventional travel narratives into multimedia storytelling formats that combine visual and textual elements. Through captions, reflections, and descriptive narratives, Instagram posts construct symbolic meanings attached to destinations. Narrative-based content encourages emotional engagement and fosters a sense of connection between audiences and places. Studies show that storytelling elements in digital tourism communication enhance audience engagement and perceived authenticity (Kasemsarn & Nickpour, 2025).

Writing, as a productive language skill, plays a strategic role in constructing meaning and transmitting messages effectively. It involves organizing ideas systematically to ensure clarity and communicative impact. In the digital context, writing becomes not merely linguistic expression but also a strategic instrument for framing public perception. As Tarigan (2008) explains, writing is a structured communicative activity aimed at delivering ideas coherently and purposefully.

Literacy extends beyond technical reading and writing skills and functions as a social practice embedded in cultural contexts. Digital literacy enables individuals to interpret, construct, and disseminate meaning within mediated environments. In tourism promotion, literacy shapes how narratives are framed to align with audience expectations and cultural values. Alwasilah (2012) emphasizes that literacy involves the ability to construct meaning within socio-cultural frameworks, making it highly relevant to digital religious tourism communication.

Religious tourism integrates spiritual motivation, cultural heritage, and communal identity, making it distinct from other tourism segments. Its management requires balancing promotional strategies with the preservation of sacred values and authenticity. Effective planning ensures that economic objectives do not overshadow spiritual significance. According to Yoeti (2016), tourism development must incorporate strategic planning principles to maintain sustainability and cultural integrity.

Instagram has become an important medium for disseminating information about religious tourism destinations in Indonesia. Research demonstrates that the platform can increase public awareness and knowledge about local spiritual heritage sites. Through visual documentation and descriptive captions, destinations gain broader visibility and audience reach. Maula and Idamatussilmi (2025) highlight Instagram's effectiveness as an information channel for promoting religious tourism.

Social media engagement significantly influences travel inspiration and decision-making processes, particularly among younger demographics. Visual attractiveness combined with compelling narratives strengthens users' interest in visiting destinations. Engagement metrics such as likes, comments, and shares reflect audience responsiveness to narrative-rich content. Empirical evidence suggests that social media functions as both a guide and reference in travel planning (Winduwati & Putri, 2025).

Digital literacy competence among tourism stakeholders determines how effectively promotional content is designed and distributed. Strategic communication requires understanding algorithmic visibility, audience segmentation, and narrative framing. Limited digital literacy can reduce the effectiveness of promotional initiatives, particularly for local destinations. Setiawan et al. (2025) argue that digital competence plays a crucial role in optimizing tourism communication strategies.

Although research on social media and tourism continues to expand, limited attention has been given to digital travel writing as a structured literacy strategy within destination management. Most studies emphasize marketing performance indicators rather than narrative construction and value transmission. Furthermore, the spiritual dimension of digital narratives remains underexplored in tourism scholarship. A systematic literature review confirms that narrative-based approaches in religious tourism promotion remain insufficiently examined (Negussie et al., 2023).

The case of Instagram posts promoting the tomb of Syekh Maulana Maghribi in Wonobodro and Ujungnegoro, Batang Regency, Central Java, provides a concrete illustration of this issue. The posts combine location references, religious identity, and event documentation within structured captions. Differences in viewer counts across posts suggest variations in how narrative emphasis corresponds with audience reach. This case offers an opportunity to examine how narrative characteristics and functions operate within digital religious tourism promotion.

Integrating digital travel writing into religious tourism management aligns with broader developments in heritage communication and community-based tourism. Narrative strategies allow local spiritual identities to be communicated to wider audiences without diminishing authenticity (Cahyani et al., 2023). Structured storytelling also supports regional growth strategies by strengthening destination branding (Watulandi et al., 2025). These perspectives reinforce the relevance of analyzing digital travel writing as a literacy-based strategy in managing religious tourism promotion.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the narrative characteristics of digital travel writing in promoting regional religious tourism on Instagram and to examine how these narratives function as literacy strategies in managing the promotion of regional religious tourism potential. By pursuing these objectives, the study contributes to tourism communication scholarship by moving beyond performance-based marketing indicators toward a deeper understanding of narrative construction and literacy practices within digital religious tourism management.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to explore how digital travel writing functions as a literacy-based strategy in promoting religious tourism on Instagram.

The qualitative design is appropriate because the research seeks to interpret meanings embedded in narrative captions, visual representations, and audience interactions rather than to measure statistical relationships. Data are analyzed interpretatively to understand how religious values and promotional strategies are constructed within digital narratives. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research is suitable for examining complex social phenomena in their natural contexts, particularly when the objective is to interpret meaning and process rather than quantify variables.

The primary data consist of Instagram posts related to the promotion of the tomb of Syekh Maulana Maghribi in Wonobodro and Ujungnegoro, Batang Regency, Central Java, including captions, visuals, and engagement indicators. Data collection was conducted through documentation and purposive sampling to select posts that explicitly contain narrative elements of travel writing. The analysis technique applies content analysis to identify themes related to literacy practices, religious messaging, and promotional strategies. As explained by Krippendorff (2018), content analysis enables researchers to systematically interpret textual and visual data in order to reveal patterns, meanings, and communicative intentions within media content.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

To provide empirical evidence of the narrative construction identified in this study, the following Instagram post is presented as primary visual data. This post represents the profile narrative of the tomb of Syekh Maulana Maghribi in Wonobodro and Ujungnegoro, Batang Regency, Central Java and demonstrates how descriptive, historical, and spiritual elements are integrated within a single digital frame. The combination of caption structure, visual composition, and engagement metrics illustrates how digital travel writing operates as both representation and promotion. The image below therefore functions as documented research data rather than merely illustrative material.

Figure 1. Instagram Post of the Tomb of Syekh Maulana Maghribi in Wonobodro (120.000 viewers) from @pekalonganinfo

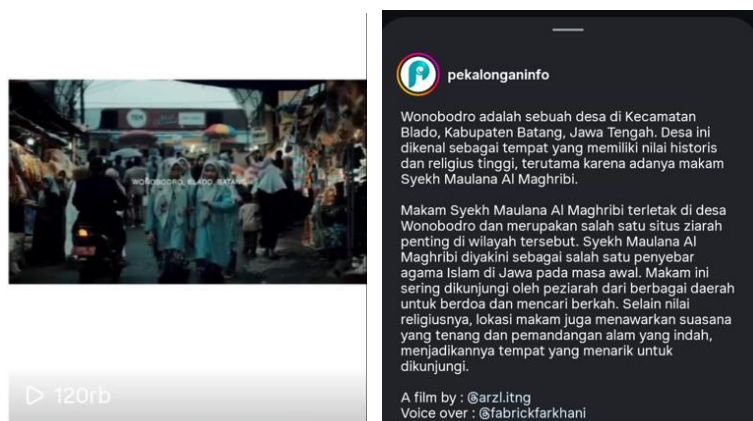


Figure 2. Instagram Post of the Tomb of Syekh Maulana Maghribi in Wonobodro (81.500 viewers) from @pekalonganinfo

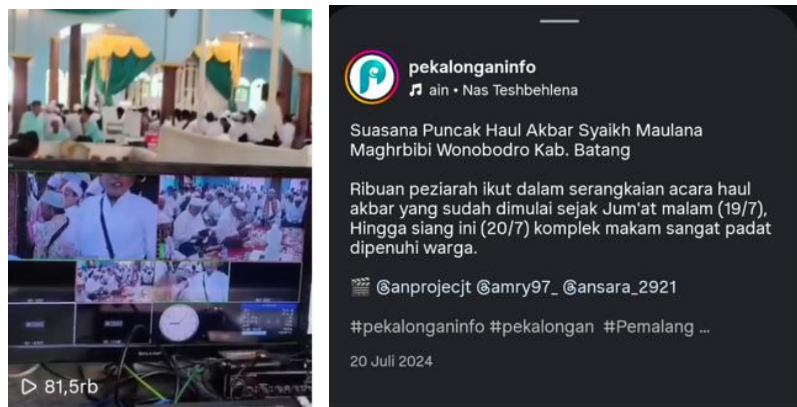


Figure 3. Instagram Post of the Tomb of Syekh Maulana Maghribi in Wonobodro (36.600 viewers) from @\_umiikkk



Figure 4. Instagram Post of the Tomb of Syekh Maulana Maghribi in Ujungnegoro (81.500 viewers) from @pekalonganinfo



The posts displayed above constitute the primary dataset examined in this study. Each post contains identifiable elements, including caption text, spatial references, thematic emphasis, and viewer metrics. These elements provide measurable and observable information regarding how the destinations are presented on Instagram. The following section describes the narrative characteristics found in these posts based on their textual structure, thematic focus, and engagement data.

### **1. Narrative Characteristics of Digital Travel Writing in the Promotion of Regional Religious Tourism**

The dataset consists of four Instagram posts promoting the tomb of Syekh Maulana Maghribi located in Wonobodro and Ujungnegoro, Batang Regency, Central Java. Each post contains a visual component accompanied by a caption and engagement metrics in the form of viewer counts. The viewer distribution shows variation across posts, with 120,000 viewers for the Wonobodro tomb profile, 86,000 viewers for the Ujungnegoro coastal tomb, 81,000 viewers for the Grand Haul documentation, and 36,000 viewers for the hot spring content. These numerical indicators form part of the observable characteristics of the posts. The data therefore present differences in thematic emphasis and audience reach.

The first post presents the profile of the tomb in Wonobodro Village, Bandar Subdistrict, Batang Regency. The caption explicitly identifies the location by mentioning the village, subdistrict, and regency. It also refers to Syekh Maulana Maghribi as the religious figure associated with the site. The structure of the caption combines locational information with a brief reference to the figure's identity. The post recorded 120,000 viewers.

The second post features the tomb located in Ujungnegoro Village, Kandeman Subdistrict, Batang Regency. The caption specifies the coastal setting of the tomb and highlights its proximity to the shoreline. The identity of Syekh Maulana Maghribi is again mentioned as the central figure connected to the site. The descriptive elements include both spatial reference and religious association. This post reached 86,000 viewers.

The third post documents the Grand Haul event held in Wonobodro Village. The caption refers to the haul as a commemorative religious activity honoring Syekh Maulana Maghribi. The location is explicitly stated, maintaining consistency with the first post. The narrative emphasis centers on the event rather than on physical landscape description. This post recorded 81,000 viewers.

The fourth post presents information about a hot spring located near the tomb area. The caption identifies the site as a regional tourism potential within Batang Regency. Unlike the previous posts, the emphasis is placed on natural attraction rather than on

religious identity. The locational information remains explicit in the description. This content obtained 36,000 viewers.

Across the four posts, spatial identification appears as a recurring element. Each caption mentions specific administrative divisions such as village, subdistrict, and regency. This pattern ensures geographic clarity in presenting the destination. The repeated mention of Batang Regency establishes regional consistency. The inclusion of these details forms a structural component of the captions.

Religious identity is prominently stated in three of the four posts. The name Syekh Maulana Maghribi is directly mentioned in the captions of the Wonobodro profile, the Ujungnegoro profile, and the Grand Haul documentation. The fourth post concerning the hot spring does not foreground the religious figure in the same way. The presence or absence of the figure's name differentiates thematic emphasis among the posts. This variation is observable in the textual content.

Thematic focus varies across the dataset. Two posts emphasize the tomb as a religious site with historical association. One post centers on a religious event connected to the tomb. Another post highlights a natural tourism resource located nearby. These thematic differences are reflected in the wording and structure of the captions. Viewer numbers differ according to these thematic categories.

The captions also demonstrate differences in narrative orientation. The tomb profile posts describe the site as a destination with identifiable location and religious significance. The haul documentation describes a communal event and its setting. The hot spring post describes a natural resource and its tourism potential. Each orientation corresponds to the main subject presented in the visual content. The narrative structure follows the thematic focus of the post.

In terms of engagement metrics, the highest viewer count appears in the Wonobodro tomb profile with 120,000 viewers. The second highest appears in the Ujungnegoro tomb profile with 86,000 viewers. The Grand Haul documentation follows with 81,000 viewers. The lowest viewer count appears in the hot spring post with 36,000 viewers. These figures indicate variation in audience reach among the posts.

The language used in the captions is concise and location-centered. Proper nouns referring to places and the religious figure are clearly written. The descriptive phrases directly correspond to the subject of each post. There is no extensive elaboration beyond identifying features and contextual information. The captions present information in a straightforward format.

Visual elements accompany each caption, showing the physical site or event referenced. The Wonobodro and Ujungnegoro posts display images of the tomb environment. The haul documentation presents visual evidence of the commemorative

gathering. The hot spring post displays the natural water source. These visual representations align with the textual description in each caption.

Overall, the observable characteristics of the posts include explicit spatial identification, thematic categorization, and differentiated viewer counts. Three posts foreground religious association, while one highlights natural tourism potential. Each post integrates caption text and visual imagery within a single Instagram frame. The dataset therefore presents identifiable narrative characteristics based on textual content and engagement data.

## **2. Function of Digital Travel Writing Narratives in Regional Religious Tourism Promotion Management**

The four Instagram posts function as publicly accessible promotional content related to religious tourism in Batang Regency. Each post presents information intended for online audiences through caption text and visual documentation. The inclusion of viewer counts provides measurable indicators of audience exposure. These components together demonstrate the operational role of Instagram posts in destination visibility. The posts collectively contribute to online representation of the sites.

The representational function is observable in the repeated naming of Syekh Maulana Maghribi in three posts. The tomb is presented as a site associated with a recognized religious figure. The captions consistently connect the physical location to this identity. Through repetition, the posts maintain continuity of representation. This consistency is visible across the dataset.

The informational function appears in the explicit mention of administrative location details. Each caption identifies the village, subdistrict, and regency. This provides audiences with clear geographic reference points. The hot spring post also identifies the site as a regional tourism asset. The provision of location data forms part of the informational role of the posts.

The event-documentation function is evident in the Grand Haul post. The caption records the occurrence of a commemorative religious gathering. The image visually depicts the event setting and participants. This post differs from the others by focusing on activity rather than solely on place. The viewer count indicates public exposure to this documentation.

The promotional function is observable through the presentation of destinations as visitable sites. The tomb profiles present the location as a religious tourism destination. The hot spring post presents the natural resource as a tourism potential. Viewer counts indicate the scale of public reach for each type of content. These posts therefore operate within a promotional framework on social media.

The integrative function appears in the linkage between religious site and regional identity. All posts mention Batang Regency as the broader administrative area. The repetition of this reference associates the religious destination with the regional name. The hot spring post also situates its potential within the same regency. This linkage creates a consistent regional framing.

The dataset also shows variation in viewer distribution according to content type. The combined viewer count of the three religious-themed posts totals 287,000 viewers. The single natural tourism post accounts for 36,000 viewers. This numerical comparison demonstrates differences in audience exposure. The figures remain part of the observable dataset.

The posts function simultaneously as documentation, information dissemination, and destination exposure within Instagram's platform structure. Each post integrates caption text, visual representation, and viewer metrics. These components operate within a publicly accessible digital environment. The data therefore demonstrate the presence of structured narrative presentation in religious tourism promotion. All observable functions derive from the textual and visual content documented in the dataset.

## **Discussion**

### **Narrative Characteristics of Digital Travel Writing in the Promotion of Regional Religious Tourism**

Within genre studies, travel writing is understood not merely as a record of journeys but as a representational practice that shapes how readers perceive places, cultures, and experiences. In *Travel Writing*, Thompson (2011) explains that travel narratives do not objectively mirror reality; rather, they construct reality through selective description and perspectival framing that mediate how space is interpreted. Representation is therefore inherently structured, as writers choose specific elements of place to foreground while omitting others.

In digital environments, this representational process becomes multimodal, integrating textual narration with visual imagery and platform-based interaction. As a result, digital travel writing preserves the foundational characteristics of classical travel narratives while adapting to the communicative logic of social media platforms. These theoretical premises provide the basis for identifying the narrative characteristics of digital travel writing in religious tourism promotion.

#### **1. Representation of Place as Sacred Spatial Construction**

The first prominent narrative characteristic identified in the data is the representation of place as sacred spatial construction. Instagram captions consistently specify detailed administrative locations, including village, sub-district, and regency, thereby establishing geographic precision. However, spatial identification extends beyond

physical coordinates by associating the site with the religious legacy of Syekh Maulana Maghribi. Through this association, the destination is discursively transformed from a physical location into a site of spiritual and historical significance. The narrative does not merely inform audiences about where the site is located but frames it as a locus of Islamic heritage and reverence. Consequently, space is constructed symbolically as sacred geography.

This representational strategy aligns with findings by Yuliarti et al. (2021), who demonstrate that Instagram-based tourism storytelling shapes destination image through the integration of textual description and visual representation. Their study shows that spatial clarity combined with symbolic meaning enhances audience perception and memorability of a destination. In the context of religious tourism, spatial representation becomes inseparable from spiritual identity. The detailed geographic references reinforce legitimacy, while the religious framing deepens symbolic resonance. Thus, representation operates simultaneously as spatial documentation and identity construction. Digital travel writing in this case performs a dual function: mapping the location and sanctifying the space through narrative.

## **2. Narrative Framing and Mediation of Religious Experience**

The second dimension concerns narrative framing and the mediation of religious experience. In the analyzed posts, framing is evident in the emphasis on religious commemoration events such as haul ceremonies and repeated references to the revered religious figure. The narrative positions visitation not simply as tourism but as an act of spiritual engagement and collective remembrance. Through selective emphasis, the captions guide audiences to interpret the destination within a sacred experiential context. The communicative focus is therefore directed toward reverence, memory, and devotion rather than leisure or recreation. This framing redefines the meaning of travel as pilgrimage-oriented experience.

The mediating function of social media in shaping tourist perception is further supported by Winduwati and Putri (2025), who found that digital platforms function both as informational guides and interpretative references in travel decision-making. Their findings highlight how narrative content influences audience understanding and expectation of destinations. In religious tourism promotion, framing becomes especially significant because it determines whether the site is perceived as sacred or merely scenic. The data show that when spiritual dimensions are foregrounded, audience engagement tends to be stronger. Narrative framing thus serves as a mechanism for directing interpretation and reinforcing the sacred identity of the destination. Through this process, digital travel writing mediates religious experience for online audiences.

### **3. Construction of Authenticity and Symbolic Legitimacy**

The third narrative characteristic involves the construction of authenticity as symbolic legitimacy. Authenticity in tourism is not an inherent attribute of a site but is socially constructed through markers that signal historical depth and cultural credibility. As MacCannell (1999) explains, authenticity emerges through symbolic cues that allow visitors to perceive an experience as genuine and meaningful. In the analyzed Instagram posts, authenticity is constructed through the inclusion of specific administrative references and visual documentation of the tomb site. The alignment between textual narrative and photographic evidence strengthens credibility and reduces ambiguity. This multimodal coherence reinforces audience trust in the representation.

Empirical support for this dynamic can be found in Ibrahim et al. (2025), who emphasize that religiosity and destination image significantly influence tourism intention in Muslim-friendly contexts. Their study demonstrates that symbolic religious elements enhance perceived authenticity and strengthen destination appeal. In the present data, the repeated mention of Syekh Maulana Maghribi consolidates historical continuity and reinforces spiritual legitimacy. Authenticity is therefore systematically built through narrative consistency and symbolic reinforcement. Rather than functioning as mere promotional embellishment, authenticity operates as a credibility-building strategy. Digital travel writing thus contributes to legitimizing the destination within the broader discourse of religious tourism.

### **4. Cultural and Symbolic Meaning Construction**

The fourth dimension concerns the production of cultural and symbolic meaning. The analyzed narratives connect physical space with Islamic historical memory and communal identity. By emphasizing religious commemoration events and spiritual heritage, the captions transform the destination into a symbolic site of collective memory. The narrative constructs continuity between past religious figures and present-day community practices. Through this linkage, tourism communication becomes a vehicle for cultural transmission rather than simple information dissemination. The destination is positioned as a living repository of religious tradition.

This meaning-making process is consistent with findings by Rachmaniar and Anisa (2025), who argue that digital tourism promotion relies heavily on the integration of visual strategy and narrative symbolism to shape audience perception. Their research highlights how digital storytelling constructs experiential depth and cultural resonance. In the case of religious tourism, symbolic references to faith and tradition enhance emotional engagement. The data indicate that posts emphasizing religious value generate broader interaction compared to those focusing solely on economic or natural aspects. Cultural meaning production therefore represents a defining narrative feature of digital travel

writing in this context. Through symbolic construction, sacred destinations are framed as sites of reverence, continuity, and shared identity.

## **5. Synthesis of Narrative Characteristics**

Overall, the narrative characteristics of digital travel writing in the promotion of religious tourism can be synthesized into four interconnected dimensions. Representation constructs sacred spatial identity; framing mediates religious experience; authenticity establishes symbolic legitimacy; and cultural meaning production transmits collective values. These dimensions interact dynamically within Instagram's multimodal communication environment. Digital travel writing thus extends beyond informational promotion to function as a strategic narrative instrument. It integrates spatial precision, interpretative guidance, legitimacy construction, and symbolic transmission within a coherent communicative structure. Consequently, religious tourism promotion on Instagram reflects a deliberate narrative design that aligns classical travel writing principles with contemporary digital media practices.

### **The Functions of Digital Travel Writing Narratives in the Management of Regional Religious Tourism Promotion**

In the context of regional tourism management, promotion is no longer understood merely as the dissemination of information, but rather as a strategic process involving meaning construction and destination image formation. Narrative plays a central role in this process because it integrates elements of identity, experience, and symbolic values into a coherent communication framework. Morgan, Pritchard, and Pride (2011) emphasize that storytelling lies at the core of modern destination branding, as narratives enable destinations to construct a unique value proposition amid tourism market competition. In the context of regional religious tourism, digital travel writing published on social media platforms such as Instagram functions as a strategic medium for aligning cultural identity with promotional objectives. Thus, narrative is not merely a description of travel experiences, but a managerial instrument in the promotion of regional religious tourism.

#### **1. Narrative as a Positioning Instrument for Religious Destinations**

The first function of digital travel writing narratives lies in their role as an instrument for positioning religious destinations. Positioning in tourism promotion aims to place a destination within a specific perception in the minds of audiences. By emphasizing religious figures, sacred history, and spiritual values embedded in a particular site, travel writing narratives construct the identity of the destination as a sacred space with distinctive symbolic uniqueness. Morgan et al. (2011) explain that destination differentiation is built through a distinctive and consistent value proposition in promotional communication. In the context of regional religious tourism, recurring

narratives about pilgrimage traditions, haul commemorations, and Islamic heritage reinforce the image of the region as a center of spirituality. Therefore, digital travel writing serves as a strategic tool to strengthen religious identity within regional promotional management.

The research findings indicate that the consistent mention of religious figures and administrative locations in each post strengthens the association between the region and its spiritual identity. Structured narratives create recognizable communication patterns for audiences. This consistency ensures continuity in promotional messaging, preventing fluctuations in destination image. Furthermore, the use of diction emphasizing sacredness reinforces differentiation from general tourism attractions. These findings demonstrate that narrative operates systematically in constructing stable and directed positioning.

## **2. Narrative as a Construction of Authenticity and Legitimacy**

The second function involves constructing authenticity and destination legitimacy. Authenticity is a crucial aspect of religious tourism, as it relates directly to perceptions of sacredness and the genuineness of spiritual experience. MacCannell (1999) argues that modern tourists seek experiences perceived as authentic to fulfill symbolic and existential needs. Travel writing narratives on social media that include historical details, clear administrative locations, and visual representations of religious sites contribute to building this perception of authenticity. When narratives are consistent with visual representations and local traditions, the legitimacy of the destination is strengthened in the eyes of audiences. Thus, narrative functions not only to shape image but also to reinforce public trust in the spiritual value of the destination.

Based on the analysis, posts that included brief historical information and contextual explanations of local traditions received more stable audience responses compared to more general posts. The mention of commemorative years, genealogies of religious figures, and ritual activities enriched perceptions of the destination's meaningful depth. Audiences perceived the site not merely as a physical location, but as a space embedded in historical continuity. This finding suggests that legitimacy is constructed through specific and consistent narrative details. Therefore, authenticity does not emerge spontaneously but is strategically constructed through deliberate communication practices.

## **3. Narrative as a Mediation of Spiritual Experience**

The third function relates to the mediation of spiritual experience. Thompson (2011) explains that travel writing is not an objective reproduction of reality, but a representation of experience mediated through the writer's perspective. In the digital context, Instagram captions and visuals frame religious experiences so that they can be understood and felt by audiences who are not physically present. Such narratives transform physical spaces into symbolic spaces imbued with spiritual meaning.

Descriptions of solemn atmospheres, collective prayers, and haul commemorations not only convey information but also evoke symbolic experiences for readers. Therefore, digital travel writing narratives function as mediators between local experiences and global audience perceptions.

The research findings show that the use of reflective and emotive language in captions strengthens the experiential dimension of the narrative. Narratives describing solemnity, communal participation, and religious ambiance foster emotional proximity with audiences. These representations encourage readers to imagine themselves present within the depicted events. The transformation of lived experience into communicative storytelling expands the symbolic reach of the destination in digital space. Thus, narrative mediation plays a significant role in extending spiritual experiences into the virtual realm.

#### **4. Narrative as a Strategy for Engagement and Interaction**

The fourth function is as a strategy for engagement and interaction in promotional management. Social media enables two-way communication between destination managers and audiences. Shalsagiani and Suryasih (2023) demonstrate that the utilization of Instagram in tourism promotion enhances destination attractiveness through visual content and consistent interaction. In the context of religious tourism, narratives highlighting shared values and spiritual symbols encourage emotional engagement. Comments, likes, and content sharing indicate that narratives successfully generate social resonance. Hence, digital travel writing functions as a means of building relational connections between promotional institutions and tourism communities.

The findings reveal that posts containing participatory invitations, such as collective prayers or announcements of religious events, generated higher levels of interaction. Audience responses extended beyond appreciation to expressions of support and intentions to attend future events. These interactions indicate that narrative creates an active dialogic space. Moreover, sustained communication through regular postings strengthens follower loyalty to the promotional account. Thus, narrative functions as a mechanism for reinforcing social networks in regional religious tourism promotion.

#### **5. Narrative as a Driver of Visit Intention**

The fifth function relates to the formation of visit intention. The ultimate objective of promotional management is to encourage concrete actions in the form of tourist visits. Fitri et al. (2021) found that Instagram-based marketing significantly influences visit intention by shaping perceived value and destination attractiveness. Digital travel writing narratives that highlight spiritual experiences, unique traditions, and religious ambiance contribute to the formation of audiences' intrinsic motivation. Persuasion in this context operates implicitly, constructed through symbolic and emotional appeal rather than

explicit directives. Therefore, narrative functions as a catalyst connecting symbolic representation with behavioral decision-making.

The research findings indicate that posts highlighting specific religious moments, such as annual haul commemorations, tend to trigger inquiries regarding schedules and site accessibility. This demonstrates a shift from symbolic interest toward action-oriented engagement. Narratives that include temporal and contextual information clarify opportunities for audience participation. Consequently, persuasive function operates through the integration of spiritual meaning and practical information. These findings suggest that digital travel writing can guide audiences from awareness to the stage of visit intention.

## **6. Institutional Legitimacy and Cultural Preservation**

Beyond promotional functions, digital travel writing narratives also contribute to institutional legitimacy in managing regional religious tourism. Through structured and consistent narratives, destination management institutions demonstrate their capacity to preserve, organize, and promote religious sites responsibly. Representations of religious events, support for local traditions, and collaboration with community leaders strengthen perceptions of managerial professionalism. Such narratives construct not only destination image but also institutional credibility. Therefore, digital travel writing serves as a strategic communication medium linking destination promotion with governance legitimacy.

Additionally, digital travel writing functions as an instrument of cultural preservation through the documentation and reproduction of the symbolic meanings of religious traditions. Each post that records rituals, haul commemorations, or pilgrimage practices effectively creates a digital archive that extends the vitality of tradition within the virtual public sphere. These narratives transmit religious values to younger generations and broader audiences. This process demonstrates that promotion cannot be separated from cultural responsibility in sustaining local identity. Accordingly, narrative functions not only economically but also in strengthening collective memory and ensuring cultural continuity within the region.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study demonstrates that digital travel writing on Instagram functions not merely as an informational medium, but as a literacy-based strategy in managing the promotion of regional religious tourism. Through qualitative content analysis of Instagram posts related to the tomb of Syekh Maulana Maghribi in Wonobodro and Ujungnegoro, the findings identify four principal narrative characteristics: the construction of sacred spatial representation, the framing of religious experience, the establishment of authenticity and symbolic legitimacy, and the production of cultural meaning. The integration of spatial

identification, references to religious figures, visual documentation, and contextual descriptions constructs the destination as a sacred space embedded in historical continuity and collective identity. Thus, digital travel writing operates as a multimodal literacy practice that combines textual, visual, and symbolic elements in shaping the image of religious tourism destinations.

Functionally, digital travel writing narratives serve as instruments for destination positioning, authenticity construction, mediation of spiritual experience, audience engagement, visit intention formation, institutional legitimacy, and cultural preservation. Consistent references to religious identity and administrative location reinforce destination differentiation within regional branding strategies, while the integration of spiritual values with practical information facilitates the transformation of symbolic awareness into behavioral intention. These findings confirm that Instagram-based religious tourism promotion should be understood as a structured narrative management practice rather than solely as performance-driven marketing activity. Consequently, digital literacy emerges as a strategic foundation in the sustainable management of regional religious tourism promotion.

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