

Analysis of Lampung Tourism Content on Social Media: Study of Instagram Accounts @Lampuung and @Portraitlampung

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how tourism content is constructed and made visible on Instagram by comparing posts published between January and May 2025 using Situated Data Analysis.

Research methodology: The study employs a comparative qualitative analysis of Instagram content from two Lampung-based accounts, @lampuung and @portraitlampung. Posts were analyzed based on content categories, visual styles, narrative framing, and thematic emphasis to identify patterns of representation and engagement strategies.

Results: The findings reveal clear differences between the two accounts. @lampuung functions as an institutional promoter with broad destination coverage, while @portraitlampung operates as a curator emphasizing emotionally resonant and aesthetically optimized content. Tourism themes related to nature, marine attractions, culinary experiences, and recreation dominate due to their strong visual appeal and algorithmic compatibility. In contrast, cultural, health, sports, and ecotourism content receives comparatively limited exposure.

Conclusions: The study concludes that Instagram content visibility is strongly influenced by platform affordances and curatorial power, reflecting distinct actor roles and engagement strategies. Effective destination marketing should move beyond visual aesthetics and incorporate narrative-driven approaches that integrate cultural values and sustainable tourism principles.

Limitations: The analysis is limited to posts from January to May 2025 and focuses on only two Lampung-based Instagram accounts, which may limit broader generalization.

Contributions: Theoretically, this study extends Situated Data Analysis within tourism content research. Empirically, it demonstrates how digital visibility is shaped by platform dynamics. Practically, it highlights the need to strengthen cultural and sustainable tourism narratives in digital promotion.

Keywords: *Destination Image, Instagram, Lampung Tourism, Situated Data Analysis, Social Media Marketing, Tourism Representation*

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1. Introduction

Digitalization has fundamentally transformed how destinations are discovered, evaluated, and experienced. Contemporary tourists increasingly rely on digital platforms, particularly social media, to search for information, construct expectations, and make travel decisions prior to visiting a destination. Visual-based platforms such as Instagram have become especially influential because of their ability to

curate aesthetic narratives, stimulate emotional engagement, and amplify destination visibility within algorithm-driven attention economies (Gretzel & Koo, 2021; Marine-Roig & Huertas, 2020).

Unlike traditional destination marketing channels dominated by governmental or institutional actors, social media environments enable a diverse range of actors, including communities, influencers, and independent content creators, to participate in producing and circulating destination images. This shift has repositioned tourists from passive recipients of promotional messages to active co-creators of meaning through User-Generated Content (UGC) (Ghaderi, Béal, Zaman, Hall, & Rather, 2024; Tian, Yang, Mao, & Tang, 2021). As a result, destination images are no longer singular or centrally controlled but are fragmented, contested, and continuously negotiated across platforms.

Extant tourism research consistently demonstrates that social media plays a critical role across all stages of the tourist journey, from inspiration and planning to on-site experience and post-trip sharing (Narangajavana Kaosiri, Callarisa Fiol, Moliner Tena, Rodríguez Artola, & Sánchez García, 2019). Instagram has emerged as a dominant platform for destination representation because of its visual affordances, hashtag culture, and engagement metrics that reward aesthetic clarity and emotional resonance (Dinhopl & Gretzel, 2016). However, scholars have cautioned that algorithmic visibility privileges certain tourism categories, such as nature, culinary, and leisure, while marginalizing less visually immediate forms of tourism, including cultural heritage, wellness, sports, and ecotourism (Cahayani & Boli, 2025; Femenia-Serra & Gretzel, 2019).

Simultaneously, tourism scholarship has called for more critical and context-sensitive approaches to analysing digital tourism representations (Mega, Barusman, Habiburahman, & Barusman, 2026). While quantitative content analyses and engagement metrics dominate existing studies, such approaches often treat social media data as neutral artifacts, overlooking the social positions of content producers, platform logics, and situational contexts in which representations are created and consumed (Bucher, 2018; Rettberg, 2020). Addressing this gap requires analytical frameworks that conceptualize social media content as situated practices, rather than decontextualized texts.

Situated Data Analysis (SDA), proposed by Rettberg (2020), offers a theoretically robust lens for examining how digital content is shaped by actor positions, technological affordances, cultural norms, and algorithmic infrastructures. Within this framework, visibility, absence, and thematic dominance are understood as meaningful outcomes of socio-technical arrangements, rather than mere reflections of destination potential. Applying SDA to tourism research enables scholars to interrogate how destination narratives are curated, whose voices are amplified, and which forms of tourism are rendered visible or invisible within platform ecosystems (Suryajaya, Febianti, & Rinayanthi, 2025).

This study applies Situated Data Analysis to examine the representation of Lampung tourism on Instagram through a comparative qualitative analysis of two influential regional accounts: `@lampuung` and `@portraitleampung`. Lampung, an emerging destination in Indonesia, possesses diverse tourism assets spanning natural landscapes, marine attractions, culinary traditions, cultural heritage, and conservation-based ecotourism. Despite this diversity, public perceptions of Lampung tourism on social media appear to be uneven, raising questions about how digital visibility is constructed and distributed.

The two selected accounts represent distinct actor positions in the Instagram tourism ecosystem. The `@lampuung` account operates primarily as a destination promoter with an institutional orientation, emphasizing broad coverage and information content. In contrast, `@portraitleampung` functions as a curator, privileging emotionally engaging and aesthetically refined representations that are rooted in personal experience. Comparing these accounts provides a unique opportunity to explore how different curatorial logics, communication objectives, and algorithmic strategies shape destination narratives. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions.

- 1) How are different tourism categories represented and prioritized on Lampung-focused Instagram accounts?
- 2) How do actor positions and platform logics influence tourism's visibility and narrative construction?

3) What are the implications of these representational patterns for destination image formation and sustainable tourism promotion?

By integrating tourism studies with Situated Data Analysis, this research contributes theoretically by advancing a contextualized approach to digital tourism representation and empirically by offering insights into destination branding practices in emerging regions. Practically, the findings inform destination marketers and policymakers on how to design more inclusive, narrative-driven, and sustainable digital promotion strategies beyond visually dominant categories. Tourists in the digital age generally conduct research on a destination before traveling, including amenities such as transportation, accommodations, and attractions (Rayo, Rayo, & Mandagi, 2024).

This information can be obtained from various sources, including other people's experiences, mass media, and the Internet. Promotions targeted at tourists influence travel decisions. This is due to the intense competition between countries and destinations to attract tourists to their shores. When it comes to information gathering, tourists typically do not rely on government media as their primary sources. They prefer information in the form of reviews from previous travelers or private media outlets, which are typically more engaging than government sources. However, official government media remain a reference to reduce information uncertainty due to the legality and credibility of official media from state institutions, in this case, the Ministry of Tourism.

Global tourism research shows that this sector has significant potential to support economic development, cultural preservation, and empower local communities (Pratama, Nyoman, & Putu, 2024). However, a more sustainable approach is required to mitigate these negative impacts. Tourism development does not rely solely on the government; communities, as stakeholders, can also play an active role. One example is the traveler or tourism communities. In the past, these communities were typically closely associated with local residents at tourist destinations, such as tourism awareness groups or interest-based tourism communities, such as nature lovers (Bagasta, Iswara, & Lasally, 2021).

The digital revolution has transformed the tourism industry. Platforms such as Airbnb, TripAdvisor, and Augmented Reality (AR) applications facilitate personalized travel experiences. Matijević, Zielinski, and Ahn (2025) emphasized the role of big data in predicting travel trends and optimizing destination management. However, technology adoption is uneven across countries. Limited digital infrastructure prevents local MSMEs from competing with global firms. Furthermore, concerns about *overtourism* arise because of excessive promotion on social media. In research, digital influence is also known as digital research method. This method refers to data collection techniques conducted on the Internet and its content. Netnography is a highly relevant tool for understanding how tourists and tourism stakeholders interact in the digital space. In the context of digital tourism, netnography can be used to explore various phenomena, such as the following:

1. Traveler experience: Through online reviews and social media.
2. Destination marketing: Examining tourist destinations' digital communication strategies
3. Traveler behaviour: Such as travel planning, decision-making, and interaction with online communities.

Uugantsetseg (2022) demonstrated the importance of social media in the travel planning process. Modern travellers tend to seek reviews, recommendations, and inspiration from platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Trip Advisor before making travel decisions. Solanki and Thomas (2025) offer a comprehensive overview of what we know about social media in tourism, highlighting the crucial role these platforms play in destination marketing and management. This helps us understand how destinations can leverage social media to increase their visibility and attractiveness to potential visitors. Research on social media use intentions in travel planning by Sabeen, Ahmad, Ali, and Shahbaz (2023) uncovers the motivations behind travellers' engagement with online platforms. They found that the need for information and desire for social interaction were the primary drivers.

In the context of Lampung tourism, social media plays a significant role, given Lampung's natural riches, including beaches, small islands, waterfalls, and a compelling local culture that can be

showcased through visual content. However, formal promotional efforts by the local government often fail to reach a wider audience, particularly the younger generation, who are highly active on social media. Therefore, the presence of social media platforms such as @lampuung and @potraitlampung is highly relevant.

These two accounts act as visual curators for Lampung, showcasing aesthetically pleasing photos and videos of tourist destinations submitted by users or captured directly by the content creators. The @lampuung account is known for its large and active following, with content that highlights Lampung's natural beauty from a modern and urban perspective. Meanwhile, the @potraitlampung account often showcases the artistic and human-interest aspects of Lampung's destinations, including portraits of local life, culture, and rural settings. These differences in content presentation styles raise important questions about how each account constructs the Lampung tourism narrative and how audiences perceive it.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Media and Tourism Decision-Making

Social media platforms have transformed how potential tourists discover, evaluate, and choose travel destinations, increasingly substituting traditional information sources with user-generated content and interactive visual narratives. Recent literature highlights that social media and user-generated content function as primary sources of travel inspiration, with a significant influence across the pre-trip, on-site, and post-trip phases of the tourism experience (Mandagi, Indrajit, & Wulyatiningsih, 2024). Social media content can shape perceptions, reduce information asymmetry, and influence risk assessments and destination choice behaviours (Dewayani, Nahar, & Nugroho, 2023). Platforms that emphasize visual storytelling, such as Instagram, have become central to how tourists process information and form expectations, with imagery serving not only as descriptive content but also as symbolic representations of lifestyle, identity, and experiential promise.

2.2 Instagram and Destination Image Construction

Instagram's visual and engagement-oriented architecture makes it a particularly influential medium for shaping destination images. Visual content dominates travel communications on the platform because scenic, aesthetically compelling posts attract user interaction and algorithmic visibility (Hazarhun, Bülbül, Arslan, & Çetinsöz, 2024). Studies have demonstrated that tourism-related Instagram posts influence destination awareness, image formation, and travel intentions by providing vivid, visual cues and inspirational narratives. For example, qualitative and content analyses of destination Instagram accounts show how posted imagery, hashtags, and captions communicate not only the physical attributes of destinations but also their cultural and emotional meanings. These visual representations play a key role in constructing destination images and reinforcing brand identities for diverse audiences.

2.3 Social Media Content Themes and Engagement

Recent research on tourism Instagram content has identified thematic patterns and engagement mechanisms that influence the aspects of destinations that are highlighted. Content categories such as scenic attractions, recreational activities, cultural highlights, and event promotions often drive higher engagement because of their immediate visual appeal (Al Fajar & Erlangga, 2025). Conversely, content that lacks strong visual cues or narrative framing, such as informational posts about sustainable tourism, health attractions, or local community issues, tends to receive less attention and may be underrepresented in tourism feeds. Several studies have noted that official or Destination Management Organization (DMO) Instagram accounts often curate content strategically, emphasizing narrative coherence and destination brand values to build a consistent visual identity (Sihombing, Nirmalawati, Wianastiti, Aini, & Iswanti, 2025). This practice underscores the role of institutions in shaping digital destination narratives, while simultaneously highlighting the limitations imposed by platform logics that favor visually engaging over substantively informative posts.

2.4 Actor Roles and Content Strategies

Distinct actor positions in the tourism Instagram ecosystem such as institutional promoters, influencers, and individual content creators use different curatorial strategies that affect destination visibility and engagement. Institutional accounts tend to prioritize comprehensive representation and official

narratives, whereas independent creators and influencers often emphasize personal experience, aesthetics, and emotional engagement to build follower loyalty and normative appeal. The dual roles of these actors are analytically significant because they reflect different motivations, agendas, and capacities to shape audience perceptions. This aligns with research showing that influencer credibility and narrative framing can significantly alter travel intentions especially among younger demographic segments, such as Generation Z by enhancing users' attitudes toward destinations through perceived authenticity and relatability.

2.5 Platform Logic, Algorithmic Mediation, and Tourism Representation

Beyond the actors themselves, the logic of the platform and its algorithmic mediation exerts an important influence on which content becomes visible and influential. Algorithmic prioritization of posts that generate stronger engagement likes, comments, share tends to advantage visually striking and emotionally resonant content over posts requiring contextual explanation or cultural interpretation. This dynamic contributes to the dominance of certain tourism themes (e.g., nature, leisure, and food) and the relative marginalization of others (e.g., heritage and ecotourism) in online tourism narratives. The growing emphasis on algorithmic visibility raises questions about representational bias and the sustainability of tourism promotion practices, as visual appeal and engagement potential may outweigh considerations of social, cultural and environmental value in destination marketing strategies.

2.6 Emerging Research on Visual Tourism Analytics

Recent methodological advances in tourism research underscore the value of multimodal and data-driven approaches to understanding the representations of social media. Analysts have begun integrating content and image analysis with platform metadata to reveal how visual storytelling interacts with engagement metrics and user behaviours (Amir, Hafizan, Anuar, Asyraff, & Shahril, 2022). For example, systematic reviews of social media's role in destination branding identify visual content innovation and dynamic user engagement as emerging areas of scholarly attention. Content analyses that examine the landscape of posts across multiple accounts provide insights into the narrative patterns preferred by audiences and platforms, supporting more nuanced interpretations of how tourism identities are constructed in digital spaces.

2.7 Research Gaps and Theoretical Positioning

Despite the rapid growth of research on social media and tourism, there are still several gaps. First, studies often focus on single accounts or quantitative measures of engagement, limiting our understanding of how different actor roles and narrative practices contribute to destination image co-production. Second, few studies have systematically analysed the absence of certain themes or the implications of content omission for destination representation. Finally, theoretical frameworks that integrate visual communication, platform logic, and actor positions such as Situated Data Analysis are underutilized in tourism scholarship despite their potential for contextualizing social media content as a product of socio-technical practice. By situating Instagram content within a broader sociotechnical framework and comparing accounts with different strategic orientations, this study contributes to a more holistic understanding of digital destination representation and provides empirical evidence of how platform dynamics shape tourism narratives.

3. Research Methodology

This study was conducted using a qualitative approach. Qualitative research emphasizes the exploration of meaning, in-depth understanding, and interpretation of social phenomena. According to Fàbregues and Guettermann (2025), qualitative research is an investigative process that aims to understand social or humanitarian problems from the perspective of participants by collecting data in a natural environment and analyzing it inductively. This research qualitatively examines the representation of Lampung tourism on Instagram through a comparative study of two accounts: @lampung and @portraitlampung. The research location is *virtual*, namely the analysis was conducted on Instagram uploads of both accounts (@lampaung and @portraitlampung) within the period of January 1 to May 31, 2025 (5 months).

This study focuses on analyzing the types and characteristics of tourism content uploaded by the Instagram accounts @lamppuung and @portraitlampung, including content formats (photos, videos, reels), visual styles, narratives, and featured themes. The unit of analysis was a single Instagram *post* (an image or video along with a caption and public metadata such as location tags, hashtags, upload date, and relevant public comments). Samples were taken purposively *in* stages until data saturation was reached, with an initial recommendation of 20–50 posts per account, depending on content diversity and the need for depth of analysis.

Sample selection considered variations in themes (e.g., nature, culture, culinary, events, accommodation), formats (photo vs. video), and upload periods to capture heterogeneity in representation across accounts. Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative content analysis approach *combined* with the principles of *situated data analysis* (Rettberg, 2020) and digital observation. The analysis was conducted in a gradual, systematic manner and continued throughout the data collection process (Lyhne, Thisted, & Bjerrum, 2025). The analysis process consisted of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing/verifying conclusions, which were reinforced using qualitative coding techniques.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative case study design to explore how tourism destinations are represented on Instagram through distinct actor positions and content strategy. The case study approach is appropriate for an in-depth examination of contemporary phenomena within real-world contexts, particularly when researchers seek a rich, contextualized understanding rather than a statistical generalization. Qualitative methods are increasingly used in tourism research to capture complex social and communicative processes, especially those embedded in digital environments (Fuchs, 2023; Mattei, 2024).

3.2 Study Context and Sampling

The empirical context comprises two prominent regional Instagram accounts focusing on Lampung tourism: @lamppuung and @portraitlampung. These accounts were purposively selected based on their follower size, posting frequency, and representational orientation—one institutional and one curator-driven—allowing for comparative insight into different narrative practices. Purposive sampling aligns with qualitative case study logic, enabling the selection of information-rich cases that illuminate the phenomenon of interest (Lim, 2025).

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected from Instagram posts published between January and May of 2025. The dataset comprised images, captions, hashtags, and engagement metrics (likes and comments). Instagram was selected because of its visual emphasis and documented influence on destination image formation (Mattei, 2024). To contextualize content patterns and actor intentions, supplementary qualitative interviews were conducted with account administrators and tourism communication experts (n=6). Semi-structured interviews provided insights into posting rationales, narrative strategies, and perceptions of audience engagement. Semi-structured interviews allow for comparability across cases while accommodating participant perspectives (Lo, Rey-Martí, & Botella-Carrubi, 2020).

3.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis proceeded in three stages.

1. Content Categorization: Instagram posts were coded inductively to identify tourism categories (e.g., nature, culture, and culinary), visual styles, and thematic emphases. This initial coding followed the procedures outlined for exploratory visual content analysis in tourism research (Mattei, 2024).
2. Thematic Analysis: The coded dataset was subjected to thematic analysis using NVivo 12 to derive key patterns and cross-case contrasts. Thematic analysis is a rigorous qualitative technique that enables the systematic identification of recurring themes while maintaining analytic transparency (Fuchs, 2023).
3. Situated Interpretation: Findings were interpreted through the lens of Situated Data Analysis (SDA), which emphasizes the contextual and sociotechnical processes shaping data production and meaning

within platform environments (Rettberg, 2020). SDA positions visibility, absence, and narrative choices as outcomes of actors' decisions and platform logics rather than neutral representations.

Throughout the analysis, triangulation of sources (images, captions, and interviews) was used to enhance credibility. Intercoder agreement checks were conducted during coding, following the guidelines for maintaining reliability in qualitative research. Member checking with the interview participants further strengthened the validity.

3.5 Rigor and Trustworthiness

To ensure methodological rigor, this study adhered to the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Triangulation of data sources and methods enhanced the internal validity. A thick description of the case contexts supports transferability. An audit trail documenting the analytic decisions was maintained to enable dependability and confirmability (Lim, 2025). Additionally, reflexive memos were maintained throughout the analysis to account for the researcher's positionality.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards for social media research. The Instagram posts analysed were publicly accessible. The interview participants provided informed consent, and identifiable data were anonymized to protect their privacy.

4. Results and Discussions

This study analyses how tourism destinations in Lampung are represented on Instagram through two accounts with distinct actor positions: an institutional account (@lampung) and a non-institutional, curator-driven account (@potraitlampung). Using Situated Data Analysis (SDA), the results demonstrate that tourism representations are shaped by the social position of content producers, platform affordances, and algorithmic visibility, resulting in uneven representation across tourism categories.

4.1 Natural Tourism Representation

Natural tourism is the most dominant category across both Instagram accounts. However, the visual representation of nature consistently depicts managed and curated environments rather than wilderness or untouched ecosystems. Posts commonly feature destinations integrated with recreational infrastructure such as botanical gardens, camping areas, flower parks, and accessible viewpoints. The institutional account (@lampung) presents nature tourism as part of a regional tourism identity, emphasizing destination branding and a collective representation. In contrast, the non-institutional account (@potraitlampung) frames nature tourism as a personal and emotional experience, often emphasizing the atmosphere, mood, and individual presence. These differences indicate that the same tourism category is visually constructed in distinct ways depending on the uploader's institutional role and the intended audience.

4.2 Cultural Tourism Representation

Cultural tourism content appears almost exclusively on institutional accounts. Cultural posts focus on symbolic landmarks and formal events, such as traditional dance competitions and iconic monuments, positioning culture as heritage and official identity rather than as a lived experience. These representations are largely ceremonial and informative. The absence of cultural tourism posts on the non-institutional account indicates that cultural content is less frequently selected for personal or experiential narratives. This pattern suggests that cultural tourism is visually framed as an institutional asset rather than an everyday or emotionally engaging tourism experience within the Instagram content ecosystem.

4.3 Artificial Tourism and Recreational Attractions

Artificial and recreational tourism is prominently featured in the institutional account, with consistent posts highlighting urban leisure spaces, recreational facilities, and modern attractions. These destinations are visually standardized, easy to frame, and compatible with Instagram's emphasis on

clarity and instant appeal. In contrast, artificial tourism is largely absent from non-institutional accounts. This absence reflects selective content curation, where non-institutional creators prioritize destinations that offer stronger emotional resonance or visual uniqueness. The result is an imbalanced visibility of artificial tourism that reflects differences in institutional mandates rather than tourism availability.

4.4 Culinary Tourism Representation

Culinary tourism has emerged as a prominent and flexible content category. Posts featuring local foods, such as durian and seruit, are visually engaging and culturally meaningful. Culinary tourism is framed as both a lifestyle practice and marker of local identity. From an SDA perspective, culinary posts function as relational data, in which meaning is co-constructed through interactions among the uploader, audience, and shared cultural knowledge. Culinary tourism bridges traditional and modern consumption practices, making it highly compatible with Instagram's visual and narrative affordances.

4.5 Marine Tourism Representation

Marine tourism is represented by visually striking imagery of beaches and islands. These posts emphasize scenic value and desirability, framing destinations as "must-see" locations. Marine tourism content appears on both accounts but is curated selectively, highlighting only certain destinations as being symbolically important. Marine tourism posts operate as cultural and economic data, shaping perceptions of value and attractiveness through visual prioritization of the content. The visibility of marine destinations reflects curatorial decisions rather than a comprehensive representation of regional coastal resources.

4.6 Health and Wellness Tourism

Health and wellness tourism is underrepresented. The institutional account does not feature wellness tourism, while the non-institutional account includes only limited references, primarily associated with natural facilities, rather than holistic wellness experiences. The scarcity of wellness tourism content indicates that this category has not yet been prioritized in Lampung's Instagram tourism representation. Wellness tourism appears to be symbolically underdeveloped despite its potential relevance to sustainable and experiential tourism.

4.7 Sports Tourism

Sports tourism was entirely absent from both accounts. From an SDA perspective, this absence constitutes meaningful data rather than an omission. The lack of sports tourism representation suggests that such activities are not considered visually compatible or strategically valuable in current Instagram tourism curation practices.

4.8 Ecotourism Representation

Ecotourism content is limited and concentrated on formal conservation sites, particularly the Way Kambas National Park. Ecotourism is framed symbolically through institutional conservation narratives that emphasize wildlife protection and environmental ethics. However, ecotourism representations lack relational depth because local community involvement and participatory sustainability practices are not visually foregrounded. Consequently, ecotourism primarily functions as a symbolic marker of environmental concern rather than an interactive or experiential tourism category.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This study highlights two significant conclusions about the representation of Lampung tourism on Instagram accounts @lampuung and @potraitlampung, using Situated Data Analysis (SDA). The findings suggest that visibility on Instagram is not solely determined by the inherent tourism potential of the destination but is instead a situated product shaped by the platform's algorithmic logic and the positioning of the content producers. The differentiation in visibility across tourism categories—where visually appealing and easily consumable content such as nature, marine, culinary, and recreational tourism receive more engagement, while content-heavy categories such as cultural, ecotourism, and health tourism struggle—demonstrates how platform dynamics and audience consumption patterns influence digital tourism representation.

Consequently, they are more likely to be amplified by Instagram's engagement-driven algorithms. Conversely, categories such as cultural, ecotourism, health, and sports tourism exhibit markedly lower visibility. These forms of tourism are "content-heavy," requiring historical knowledge, narrative depth, or temporal specificity for meaningful interpretation. In the absence of sophisticated digital storytelling strategies, such content struggles to compete in a platform ecosystem dominated by visually spectacular and easily consumable imagery. Importantly, this low visibility should not be interpreted as a lack of tourism value, but rather as a structural consequence of how meaning is negotiated within social media.

5.2 Research Limitations

While the study offers valuable insights into the digital representation of tourism, several limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the analysis focused solely on the Instagram accounts @lampuung and @potraitlampung, which may not be fully representative of the entire spectrum of tourism representation across different platforms or in other regions of Indonesia. Secondly, the study's reliance on algorithmic engagement metrics means that the nuances of audience engagement—such as the depth of interaction or the impact of non-visual content—were not fully explored. Furthermore, the analysis did not account for the broader socioeconomic, cultural, and political contexts that may influence how tourism is depicted on social media. Future studies could expand on these limitations by examining multiple platforms, incorporating different content types, and considering regional variations in digital tourism representation.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

This study opens avenues for future research that can enhance our understanding of tourism representation in the digital age. Future studies should explore the intersection of platform algorithms and digital storytelling strategies to better understand how content can be effectively crafted to engage a broader audience, including those interested in less visually immediate tourism categories such as culture, ecotourism, and sports. Additionally, examining the role of influencers, local communities, and tourists themselves in co-creating tourism narratives on social media platforms would provide deeper insights into how tourism identities are collaboratively constructed. Lastly, further research could investigate the impact of digital tourism representations on real-world tourism behaviours and sustainable destination development, addressing how digital media can align with long-term cultural and environmental goals.

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