

Persuasive Appeals Construction in Government Tourism Instagram Posts

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Abstract

Instagram serves as an excellent tool for tourism marketing. This applies for public institutions that try to brand tourism destinations through the multimodal elements that Instagram provides. This study analyzes the persuasive appeals in the first ten posts on Instagram's official Cilacap tourism account, @wisatabahari.clp. It is a qualitative case study that examines the rhetorical appeals of Aristotle as they are presented in both the text and the images. The data shows that the three rhetorical appeals are present jointly but may serve different roles in different posts. Ethos is achieved through the account's control, the government logos and representations, and the government tourism activities. Pathos, in contrast, is apparent in images of the sea in Cilacap, tourists and participants, cultural and ceremonial activities, and captions with evaluative descriptions of the activity that promote a sense of enjoyment and pride in Cilacap. Logos is present in the operational details provided, such as tickets, opening hours, contact details, and how to get there. Instead of showing the outcome of the appeals to actual audiences, the data shows the implications and presence of governmental/institutional ethos combined with persuasive and visual practical logic. The study shows that a government/institutional Instagram account used specifically to promote tourism has multiple persuasive rational elements and describes an Instagram account's posts in the digital tourism promotional marketing context.

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Introduction

Tourism promotion employs digital platforms as the preferred media. Narrative of the tourism destination is put on digital media along with attractive photos, captions, hashtags, logos, videos, in which all of them aim to seek attention from audience. One of the most used digital media in promotion tourism destination is Instagram. It is used as promotional media because it does not mention the destinations, in fact it constructs their images and make them valuable with the integration of verbal and visual elements. Tourism promotion on the platform is therefore not only a marketing activity. It is a rhetorical practice.

That rhetorical dimension emerges in government-managed tourism Instagram accounts. Different with commercial influencers, private travel brands, or user-generated travel pages, official government office accounts speak from an institutional position. Their persuasive authority may root from government affiliation, public responsibility, visual professionalism, and access to verified information, yet institutional status alone does not explain how persuasion is assembled within individual posts. Credibility must still be signaled. Emotion must still be invited. Practical information

must still be made usable. The account's official identity provides a context for persuasion, not a complete explanation of it.

Tourism discourse scholarship has long shown that destinations are linguistically and semiotically constructed as desirable places rather than neutrally described locations (Dann, 2023; Manca, 2016). Promotional texts select attractions, intensify positive qualities, suppress uncertainty, and anticipate the desires of imagined visitors. Digital media complicate this process. Instagram posts combine aesthetic display with compact instruction, allowing scenic imagery, evaluative language, institutional symbols, event announcements, prices, schedules, and calls to action to appear within a single promotional unit. Such multimodal density makes the platform analytically productive, but it also demands more precise categories than broad claims about attractiveness or engagement.

Aristotle's rhetorical appeal offers one useful point of entry. In this study, *ethos* refers not to credibility in the abstract, but to post-level resources that present the source, institution, spokesperson, or represented activity as authoritative and trustworthy. Government emblems, official attribution, professional expertise, institutional participation, and documented partnerships may function in this way. *Pathos* concerns textual and visual resources that invite affective orientation, including curiosity, enjoyment, pride, nostalgia, excitement, or communal attachment. *Logos* denotes practical and inferential resources through which a post supplies reasons for action, such as prices, schedules, routes, facilities, registration procedures, and contact details. Categories here should not be regarded as a sequential order, as they can, and probably do, become more or less identical and overlap in many ways.

In several views, a subset of related but separate questions is used in the context of tourism advertisement. These included looking closely at destination marketing and branding, the construction of destination images, the role of visuals, online reputation, and the evaluation of marketing effectiveness (Költringer & Dickinger, 2015; Mariani et al., 2016). Other studies dealt with the role of social media and the use of specific social media platforms in the case of promotional communications and engagement (Santoso et al., 2022; Tafesse & Wien, 2018). The Indonesian tourism research has looked at issues in the digital marketing of tourism, attractiveness of the destinations, and promotional issues (Parta & Maharani, 2023; Wahyuni et al., 2024; Wulandari, 2025). Some issues have been discussed, and they are useful, but the authors focus more on the results, functions of the platforms, and the modes of representation rather than on the flexible structure of the individual government posts.

The gap is not as large as claiming total ignorance. In fact, some of the recent studies have written about digital tourism and communication, and have focused on the multimodal aspects and persuasive language. What is lacking is the in-depth analysis of regional government tourism posts and the flexible structure or the post-structure, which has been written about in the context of *ethos* and *pathos*, and the imagination of credibility. The difference is important. When it is claimed that every post from the official account is a post about *ethos*, then it is assumed that the credibility follows from the fact of owning the account, and is not obtained through the discourse. A more precise analysis is needed to dissociate the authority of the account from the evidence contained in the post.

Cilacap is a good example of a related issue. The regency promotes marine, natural, and cultural tourism through the official Instagram account @wisatabahari.clp, where promotional messages bring together destination imagery, government identity, visitor documentation, cultural

events, and practical travel information. The account does not stand in for all Indonesian tourism communications. It is an example that helps guide the persuasive resources that can be found in a small collection of posts. This directs the attention that is normally put on an entire platform or an organization to a much smaller unit of analysis. This means that the focus of the study is on the rhetorical construction, and not the audience response. It is not known if viewers of the account trusted the account, or were moved to visit the location of Cilacap. This is neither due to a survey, an interview, comment analysis, or any other behavioral metric. Rather, the persuasive resources that have been coded in the posts are analyzed. From the posts, credibility, designed emotions, and reasoning are made apparent. Influence claims can be made.

From the conclusion that has been made, the study asks three questions. The first is “How are ethos, pathos, and logos recognized in the selected posts?” The second question is “How are these rhetorical appeals integrated in the posts published by the account?” The final question of the three is “What are the possible rhetorical functions of these integrations?” The answers to these questions add a rhetorical dimension to the official digital tourism promotions. The study shows how various forms of institutional authority and affective representation are combined by practical representation in a context, which is the modern promotional environment.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative, multimodal case-study design to examine how persuasive appeals are constructed in an integrated set of tourism posts published on Instagram. The analysis does not measure persuasion as an audience outcome. Instead, it traces the textual and visual resources through which the selected posts project credibility, invite affective orientation, and present practical reasons for visiting or participating in tourism activities. A qualitative design was appropriate because the study required close interpretation of captions, photographs, written overlays, institutional symbols, and other context-dependent features that cannot be reduced to engagement counts alone (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Lim, 2025).

The primary data was drawn from @wisatabahari.clp, an Instagram account linked to tourism promotion in Cilacap Regency. The authors verified the account’s institutional status through three sources, i.e., the account biography, its visible affiliation with the Cilacap Regency tourism authority, and direct confirmation obtained during a visit to the Department of Youth, Sports, and Tourism of Cilacap Regency. After fixing the data on 9 June 2026, the authors visited the Tourism Office on 10 June 2026 to confirm institutional ownership and obtain contextual information. The visit did not influence data selection or rhetorical coding. Confirmation from the official office can establish who operates the account, but it cannot determine whether a particular image, phrase, or layout functions analytically as ethos, pathos, or logos. The authors therefore treated the office visit as contextual corroboration rather than interpretive confirmation. The authors archived ten Instagram posts published between 1 February 2024 and 6 June 2026, with the data frozen on 9 June 2026. The authors archived the data by taking screenshots of the Instagram posts because Instagram content remains editable, reorderable, and subject to later deletion, so archiving stabilized the dataset.

Purposive sampling isolated posts that met four criteria. Each item had to appear on the official account during the defined sampling period, contain an identifiable tourism-promotional purpose, include analyzable textual or visual material, and remain publicly accessible when archived. Single-image posts, carousels, reels, and event posters are included among the authors. During the

process, non-original posts, non-tourism-related admin notices, repeated posts, and posts without adequate visual or written content were excluded. While the ten-post data was sufficient for an exploratory rhetorical analysis, this was not enough for a thorough analysis of the long-term communication strategies of the institution. Its sufficiency lay in the analysis rather than the number of posts. Each post was composed of various elements, which were captions, images or video frames, written overlays, attribution to the institution, hashtags, and operational details. All of these elements were analyzed separately before the post was interpreted. The authors make no claims regarding thematic saturation.

The main focus of the analysis was the post. The authors regarded posts as multimodal communication units. The authors regarded the caption and the image as separate, as they covered various aspects of a post. For static and carousel posts, the authors analyzed the caption, the visual design, the text incorporated within the design, the logos of the institution, the people captured in the post, the objects of tourism, and the hashtags. For reels, the authors analyzed the frames that were selected, the spoken text, the text in the overlays, the audio, and the caption. The authors also excluded the public comments, the post engagements, the view counts, and the share counts as they were not a part of the study.

The authors archived each post through screenshots and recorded captions textually within the screenshots. Each item was labeled P1 through P10 with the corresponding date of posting and date of archiving. For reels or carousels, the authors selected the frames or slides in a manner deemed relevant to the analysis and noted the slides or frames in the order they appeared. These selections stored data that may later be edited or removed. This is a common issue for data extracted from platforms that do not provide data stability, as noted in (Thomason, 2021; Vijayakumar & Hameed, 2023). The data stored consisted of four linked records for each post in the form of a screenshot or selected frame set and a caption transcript, a textual description of the content of the frame or slide, and a coding sheet. This level of description augmented the decoupling of the interpretive process from the analysis, which was especially beneficial when defined solely through the captured data.

Analysis was based on Aristotle's rhetorical appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos, although in this case, the appeals were grounded in the Instagram platform rather than used as abstract textbook examples. Ethos described post-level resources that constructed credibility, authority, and/or institutional competence or legitimacy. Examples of ethos include official emblems, the presence or signature of a government representative, partnership or collaboration, public or civic engagement, and professional activity or presence. The status of the account was recorded in the contextual metadata in analysis, although this did not warrant that every post was evaluated as ethos. Pathos, on the other hand, was captured when readily apparent; this was described as inviting an affective response.

Indicators included evaluative expressions, depictions of enjoyment, cultural pride, collective celebration, scenic wonder, nostalgia, curiosity, intimacy, or excitement. The authors coded pathos only when the post contained identifiable affective cues. The authors did not infer that viewers actually experienced the emotion. Logos covered informational and inferential resources that supplied practical grounds for consideration or action. Ticket prices, dates, schedules, access routes, facilities, registration requirements, reservation procedures, discounts, and contact details fell within this category. A post did not receive a logos code merely because of the use of factual language; The categories were not mutually exclusive. When different modes performed different rhetorical

functions, a single post could receive two or three codes. For example, such functions could be fulfilled by an institutional logo that helped facilitate ethos, accompanied by a caption with departure times and ticket prices that provided logos, while a scenic photo created an appeal to pathos. Different functions and categories were kept due to separate evidence. Functions that were ambiguous were not forced into categories.

The authors conducted a seven-step analysis of the corpus. The first step was to assign a post identity and complete the post's archival record. The second step was a transcription of the caption and any written overlays. The authors then described the visual and/or audio features of the posts. These descriptions were made with no rhetorical frameworks or constraints in mind. The authors then assigned post-specific codes for all the text and/or features that were contained within the post. The codes were then read and compared in the context of the specific modes that were used. The authors made a post-level rhetorical profile. Overlaps that remained were contrasted along with the operational codebook. Retaining the overlaps or how many were removed or revised was noted. The authors created a cross-post matrix. This matrix compiled wordiness that described, codified, and illustrated the rhetorical appeals of the posts. The analysis focused on the functions and forms of the posts, rather than the effects of a post. Co-occurrence of different modes was treated as a rhetorical configuration.

The authors kept a traceable audit trail, which included posts, transcripts, visual data, preliminary coding, samples with adjusted classifications, and justifications for final coding. This created a means for each finding to be traced back to text or data. After the first round of analysis, the authors formally recorded their coding decisions. The authors stated that the codebook revision, ethos, came too close to assigning codes automatically. This was likely to happen because the source account was official. One member of the research team was the primary coder. Another member of the research team was the reviewer who reviewed the codebook, evidence, and uncertain classifications. This review was rigorous to ensure discussion. The analysis accepts that the posts had value as persuasive tools and makes no claims on how they were understood. The data was made of posts from an official account that had a public posting policy. The authors made no effort to collect private messages. Public posts and records of engagements were excluded. Any identifying private individuals, user handles, or profile pictures that were not relevant to the analysis were omitted from the data. Each figure included the user account that posted, the date posted, the date the post was archived, and a citation.

Result and Discussion

Result

The ten-post data has a mixture of emotional appeals and informational appeals; some contain both, but their distribution varies. Nine contain pathos, and eight contain logos. Most promotional messages go beyond showcasing a destination. They contain imagery and accompanying text in support of travel. Ethos needs to be interpreted differently. The account's official status builds an institutional context for the data, but that status should not automatically convert every post into an instance of post-level ethos. The authors therefore distinguish account-level credibility from rhetorical enactments of credibility within individual posts. Government ownership frames the source as authoritative. Post-level ethos, by contrast, is coded only where a message contains identifiable evidence such as institutional emblems, an official representative, explicit governmental attribution, documented partnerships, or other markers of competence and legitimacy.

Table 1. Rhetorical Coding of the Instagram Corpus

Post	Date	Ethos	Pathos	Logos	Representative Evidence	Coding Rationale
P1	06/06/2026	√	√	-	Government account identity; cultural procession; emotionally expressive caption (" <i>sensasi baru</i> ", " <i>diajak melihat langsung</i> ")	Credibility derives from institutional authorship, while cultural imagery and evaluative language construct emotional engagement.
P2	11/04/2026	√	√	-	Official branding; panoramic beach photography; invitation to visit; emotional visual (happiness, excitement)	Institutional identity reinforces credibility, whereas scenic representation positions the destination as enjoyable.
P3	20/03/2026	√	-	√	Official logo; schedule; registration information	The post primarily combines institutional authority with practical information while containing limited emotional representation.
P4	02/01/2026	√	√	√	Official endorsement; visitor experience; departure schedule; emotional visual and caption (happiness, excitement, " <i>liburan berkesan</i> ")	Visual enjoyment is complemented by factual travel information.
P5	09/12/2025	√	√	√	Government organizer; community participation; event schedule; emotional visual (happiness, excitement)	Institutional authority legitimizes the event while practical details facilitate participation.
P6	31/07/2025	√	√	√	Tourism Office identity; promotional poster; venue information; emotional visual (happiness, excitement)	Emotional invitation is reinforced through factual event details.
P7	01/07/2025	√	√	√	Official logo; coastal scenery; ticket information; emotional visual (happiness, excitement)	Credibility, attractiveness, and practical information operate simultaneously.
P8	27/06/2025	√	√	√	Government identity; visitor documentation; contact information; emotional visual and caption (happiness, excitement, " <i>ribuan masyarakat dengan sangat antusias</i> ")	The post combines institutional credibility with emotional and practical appeals.
P9	25/06/2025	√	√	√	Institutional branding; destination imagery;	Multiple rhetorical resources jointly construct

					reservation procedure; emotional visual and caption (happiness, excitement, <i>"kursi terbatas lhooo", "pengalaman seru"</i>)	persuasive destination representation.
P10	01/02/2024	√	√	√	Tourism Office logo, photographs of visitors, ticket information, reservation contact, emotional visual (visual of vessel, beach)	Institutional identity establishes credibility, photographs evoke excitement, and operational information supports travel planning



Figure 1. Institutional Representation as Ethos

Ethos is most commonly present at the post level and is most clearly seen in the promotional content of the Head of Cilacap Tourism Office. It is not based on the name of the account. It is done through the image of the representative of a government office and is reinforced through the symbols of the office. This shows that the content is not a paid advertisement. This is a specific choice of rhetoric and differs from the background status of the account. In some cases, ethos is represented by the agency's symbols, in references to official programs, in documentation of tourism activities, in collaboration with schools and the communities, and in professional documentation. These should be coded as ethos only when seen in the post. Professional photography may increase the visual quality of the post, but it is not enough to demonstrate authority; hence, ethos is not automatically represented in professional photography, but is represented when photography is of a high professional standard.

The post featuring the tourism-office representative illustrates this distinction particularly well. His appearance anchors the promotion in governmental authority, while the surrounding harbor setting connects that authority to a specific tourism product. The image does not prove that viewers trusted the message. It projects trustworthiness.

Emotional appeal is the most widely distributed post-level resource in the data, emerging in nine of the ten posts. Its realization is rarely confined to a single phrase. Scenic imagery, collective participation, evaluative wording, and depictions of visitor experience often work together, producing an affective orientation that frames Cilacap as pleasurable, memorable, culturally meaningful, or worthy of curiosity destination. The promotional material for the Kapal Wisata Bahari Banawa Nusantara offers a representative case. Images of visitors aboard the vessel, the maritime setting, and the prospect of viewing Nusakambangan and the surrounding coastal landscape construct tourism as an exploratory experience. The caption intensifies that positioning through expressions such as “*sensasi baru*” and through invitations to travel with friends, family, or a partner. These elements appear to evoke anticipation and shared enjoyment.

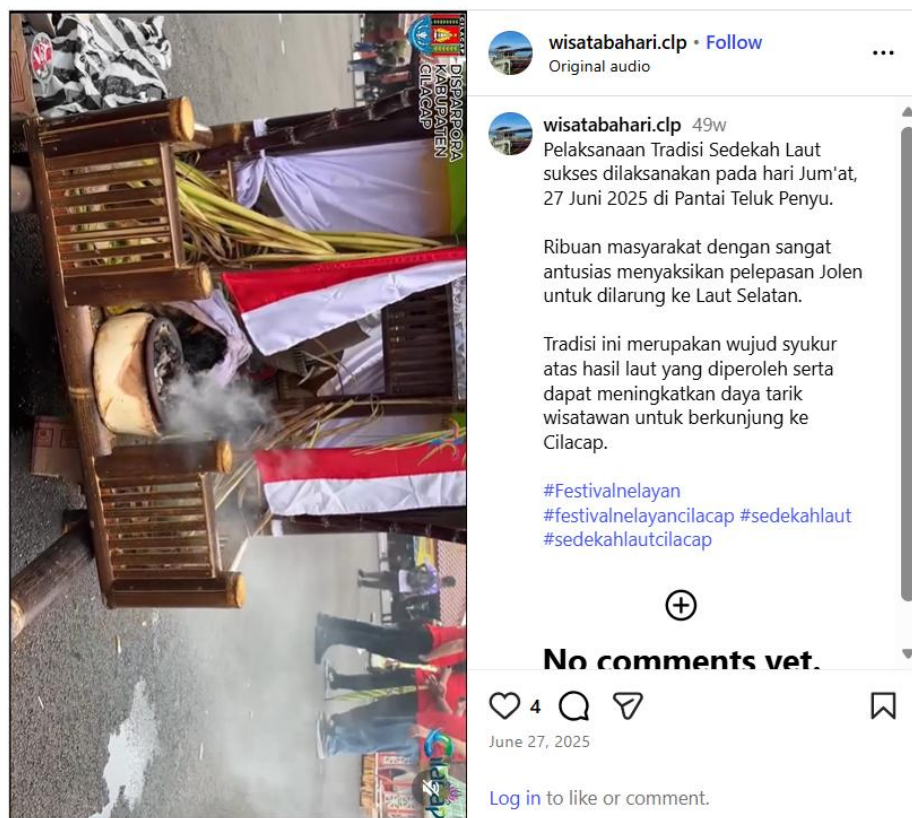


Figure 2. Cultural Representation as Pathos

Cultural content results in a unique set of emotions. In the post about the Sedekah Laut tradition, pictures of ritual objects and pictures of community members participating in and/or observing the ceremonies highlight that the Sedekah Laut is much more than an attraction. In fact, the post links promotion of the Sedekah Laut as local tourism with collective memory and local identity, and with local and regional expressions of gratitude. For people who are not familiar with the tradition, the pictures may express pride in the community. For outsiders, the pictures may create a sense of curiosity. However, both are equally valid. It is important to distinguish these things. Pathos recognizes affective design, not the psychology of the audience.

Logos is present in 8 of the posts and appears as information that eliminates uncertainty relating to an action. Prices, dates, times, information on how to reserve a spot, and contact information are all things that aid the audience in determining if they are going to participate in an event. The posts contain a different type of reasoning than the more abstract imagery of nature or of the ceremony. The posts rigorously detail a special promotion on tickets for the Independence Day celebration on board the Banawa Nusantara. The posts leave the audience highly informed about the event and highly justified to make the personal choice to participate.



Figure 3. Practical Travel Information as Logos

Across the data, informational appeals often occur alongside pathos. A post may first present a visually attractive destination and then supply dates, prices, or booking instructions in the caption or poster. Such co-occurrence suggests that emotional attraction and practical reasoning are assembled within the same promotional unit. The data do not show that one necessarily precedes the other. The strongest empirical pattern lies in the combination of appeals rather than in any single category. Several posts contrast different rhetorical functions. Institutional markers establish authority, scenic or cultural imagery supplies affective force, and operational details offer practical grounds for consideration. These resources are mutually reinforcing, but not sequential. They coexist. The data support a model of rhetorical configuration, not a temporal pathway from trust to desire and then to decision. A government emblem may appear beside an emotionally charged image and a ticket price within the same post. The viewer encounters the ensemble at once. Any claim that ethos precedes pathos or that logos converts desire into action would require reception data unavailable in this study. Taken together, the results identify three recurring tendencies, i.e., institutional credibility is selectively enacted at the post level, affective appeals are widespread, and

practical information frequently accompanies visually attractive content. These tendencies describe how persuasion is constructed in the posts.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that persuasive communication on the Instagram account @wisatabahari.clp is constructed through the multimodal co-presence of credibility, affective appeal, and practical reasoning. Nevertheless, ethos, pathos, and logos were neither equally prominent nor functionally interchangeable. Pathos and logos appeared across most posts through attractive maritime and cultural imagery, evaluative expressions, ticket prices, schedules, itineraries, registration procedures, and contact information. Ethos, in contrast, became analytically salient only when institutional authority was made visible through post-specific elements, such as government officials, official logos, public programs, or documentary evidence of governmental involvement. The account's official ownership therefore created a potential basis for credibility but did not automatically transform every post into an ethos-based message. The findings also reveal that the three appeals frequently occupied the same visual-verbal frame, although the data provided no evidence that audiences processed them sequentially or that their presence generated actual visitation, engagement, or behavioral change.

This interpretation corresponds with contemporary applications of Aristotelian rhetoric to institutional social media. Korená and Pártlová (2023) found that public-sector environmental organizations employed ethos, pathos, and logos to construct identity and reputation across Facebook and Instagram. Similarly, Voci (2022) demonstrated that the classical appeals remain useful for examining how institutional media formulate rational, ethical, and emotional claims. However, the present study refines these applications by distinguishing between account-level authority and post-level ethos. This distinction is important because institutional identity exists before an individual post is encountered, whereas rhetorical credibility must be materially enacted within the post. Digital ethos can also be distributed across brands, organizations, communities, and multiple content producers rather than being attached to a single speaker (Basaraba et al., 2021). Consequently, a government-managed tourism account should not be coded as inherently credible merely because of its administrative ownership.

The findings further support the growing recognition that tourism persuasion on Instagram is fundamentally multimodal. Volo and Irimiás (2021) emphasize that Instagram requires methodological attention to the meanings constructed through visual content rather than treating photographs as secondary illustrations of written captions. Computational studies have likewise shown that destination images can be identified through recurrent visual clusters representing landscapes, activities, cultural practices, people, and built environments (Arefieva et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). Liu et al. (2020) demonstrate that social media imagery can communicate brand associations that are not fully recoverable from text, while Nixon (2024) cautions that automated visual classifications may overlook contextually specific and culturally embedded meanings. The Cilacap posts substantiate this concern. Images of boats, coastlines, ritual objects, government employees, and participants in *Sedekah Laut* did not merely duplicate the captions; they supplied affective, institutional, and cultural meanings that would have been lost through text-only analysis. This finding also aligns with Egger et al. (2022), who argue that official destination images and visitor-generated images may foreground different attributes and therefore require comparative visual and textual interpretation.

The construction of ethos in the Cilacap data differs notably from influencer-centered models of digital persuasion. Influencer credibility is commonly associated with personality, authenticity, familiarity, attractiveness, parasocial interaction, and perceived value (Sheng et al., 2022). In the present case, credibility was comparatively impersonal and bureaucratic. Government employees, administrative logos, public activities, and a documentary visual style operated as institutional warrants. This does not imply that bureaucratic ethos is more persuasive than influencer ethos; rather, it identifies a different source of rhetorical authority. Studies of tourism social media indicate that communication credibility can strengthen destination engagement and brand equity (Huerta-Álvarez et al., 2020), while Instagram post characteristics may influence destination perception and intention to visit (Eman & Refaie, 2025). However, the present findings do not establish such effects. They show only how credibility is projected in the posts, not whether audiences consider the government trustworthy or act upon its messages. Similarly, Roozen (2025) demonstrates that visual, textual, influencer, and destination-specific characteristics may contribute differently to post effectiveness, reinforcing the need to separate message properties from measured audience responses.

Pathos was primarily produced through scenic attraction, cultural intimacy, anticipated enjoyment, collective identity, and ritual continuity. Maritime posts presented the sea as a space of novelty, excitement, and memorable experience, whereas cultural posts connected tourism with communal participation, inherited tradition, and local pride. These results extend studies that treat digital heritage narratives as combinations of historical information, identity, affect, and audience positioning (Basaraba, 2022). They also correspond with research showing that emotional devices, including humor and evaluative language, can differentiate destinations and make tourism discourse more memorable (Potočnik Topler, 2022). Nevertheless, the Cilacap findings reveal that pathos in cultural tourism cannot be reduced to pleasure or entertainment. In posts concerning *Sedekah Laut*, affective appeal was embedded in social memory, ritual significance, and community belonging. This distinction is relevant to sustainable tourism communication because destinations increasingly employ Instagram to promote environmental and cultural values while simultaneously seeking visibility and market attractiveness (Kilipiri et al., 2023). Cultural affect must therefore be interpreted in relation to the community represented, not merely as a marketing technique.

Logos emerged through concrete information that allowed prospective visitors to imagine participation as practically achievable. Ticket prices, departure times, registration procedures, itineraries, destination stops, and contact details reduced uncertainty and transformed abstract interest into a potentially actionable plan. This finding is compatible with research showing that destination communication contributes to both image formation and decision support (Nguyen & Tong, 2023; Santos et al., 2024). It also complements Syafganti et al. (2023), who found that official tourism channels must maintain consistency while adapting destination information to the affordances of different digital platforms. In the present study, however, logos had an additional public-service function. Because @wisatabahari.clp is institutionally managed, informational density does not merely support commercial persuasion; it also fulfills an administrative obligation to provide accessible and operationally useful information. The account therefore combines promotional discourse with public communication. Rather than separating inspiration and information, Instagram compresses scenic imagery, institutional signs, captions, prices, and procedural details into a single screen.

The Indonesian evidence broadly reinforces this multimodal interpretation. Isti'anah et al. (2021) found that Indonesian tourism promotion on Instagram combined linguistic and visual resources to construct optimism, attractiveness, and post-pandemic travel confidence. Aisyiyah (2023) similarly demonstrated that tourism images and captions jointly represent destinations, activities, participants, and experiential meanings. The findings from @wisatabahari.clp extend these studies by specifying the rhetorical functions of those resources: visual and verbal elements may establish credibility, generate projected emotion, or provide practical reasoning. They also correspond with Manik et al. (2021), who identified multiple persuasive strategies in Instagram promotion of Samosir. However, the current analysis adopts a more restrictive interpretation of ethos by requiring visible rhetorical evidence rather than inferring credibility from the identity of the account administrator.

The local findings also illustrate the institutional and infrastructural conditions of regional digital tourism. Indonesian studies have repeatedly reported that social media promotion is constrained by limited technical capacity, inconsistent content management, weak interorganizational coordination, and unequal access to digital resources (Akbar et al., 2020; Firmansyah et al., 2021). Musliha and Adinugraha (2022) describe digital tourism communication as simultaneously promotional, informational, and market-oriented, whereas Kusumasari et al. (2022) show that regional destinations may remain difficult to identify when tourism content is fragmented across general accounts. Saputra and Nugraha (2024) likewise emphasize the need for planned Instagram management within local tourism offices. These observations clarify why the logos-oriented content in the Cilacap account is important: schedules, prices, contact information, and routes compensate for informational uncertainty that can otherwise obstruct participation. Moreover, studies of Indonesian heritage destinations underline the importance of community involvement and locally grounded narratives in digital development (Indainanto et al., 2024). The prominence of *Sedekah Laut* therefore reflects not only destination marketing but also the representation of local identity. Although destination imagery can mediate intentions to visit in digital environments (Rahayu et al., 2024), the current study appropriately refrains from converting rhetorical presence into an untested behavioral claim.

Theoretically, the findings support a platform-sensitive refinement of Aristotle's rhetorical model. Ethos should be conceptualized as a relationship between pre-existing source identity and post-specific evidence; pathos should be interpreted as projected affect rather than confirmed audience emotion; and logos should encompass both persuasive reasoning and decision-enabling public information. The appeals should also be treated as simultaneously available multimodal resources rather than stages in a fixed psychological sequence. This interpretation accords with research showing that persuasive meaning in contemporary media is created through the interaction of words, images, composition, and source positioning (Salih, 2021). The proposed refinement therefore preserves the analytical clarity of the Aristotelian triad while accommodating distributed authority, multimodal composition, and institutional platform use.

Pedagogically, the posts can be used to develop critical tourism and social media literacy. Students should be taught to examine who claims authority, how visual framing produces emotional expectations, what information supports a decision, and whether the intended meaning is supported by audience evidence. Such instruction can promote more reflective online behavior by helping learners distinguish institutional status from demonstrated credibility, projected emotion from

actual emotional experience, and popularity from evidential validity. From a policy perspective, regional tourism offices should establish communication standards covering source transparency, accuracy of operational information, accessibility, community consent, cultural representation, and the ethical reuse of photographs. Government agencies should also evaluate promotional content through audience research rather than relying solely on likes or views. Policies concerning cultural tourism should involve local communities in determining how rituals are narrated and commercialized, thereby reducing the risk that collective traditions are detached from their social and spiritual meanings.

The study contributes a contextually grounded account of how a regional government constructs persuasive potential through an Instagram-based combination of institutional, emotional, and informational resources. Its novelty lies in four analytical distinctions: account-level authority versus post-level ethos, affective design versus experienced emotion, promotional logos versus public-service information, and the co-presence of rhetorical appeals versus their assumed sequential processing. The integration of captions, visual objects, administrative signs, and cultural representations also demonstrates why tourism rhetoric cannot be adequately examined through linguistic or visual data alone. Rather than asserting that the posts successfully persuaded audiences, the study offers a testable proposition: government tourism communication becomes rhetorically comprehensive when it makes authority visible, renders destinations emotionally intelligible, and enables participation through concrete information.

The findings should be interpreted in light of the study's restricted case design, limited post corpus, and focus on one government-managed Instagram account. The analysis identifies rhetorical resources but cannot determine how different audiences interpreted the posts, whether emotions were actually experienced, or whether the messages influenced engagement, destination image, visitation, or cultural attitudes. Coding may also have been affected by interpretive subjectivity, particularly where a single visual element could perform more than one rhetorical function. Moreover, the analysis did not systematically examine comments, reposts, algorithmic visibility, audience demographics, publication timing, or changes in the posts over time. Future studies should combine multimodal rhetorical analysis with intercoder reliability procedures, audience interviews, experiments, surveys, comment analysis, and platform metrics. Comparative research involving government tourism offices, commercial operators, community-managed destinations, and influencers could determine whether institutional ethos operates differently across account types. Longitudinal and cross-cultural studies are also needed to examine how persuasive strategies change during crises, festivals, policy campaigns, and destination rebranding.

Conclusion

Persuasion in the selected @wisatabahari.clp posts is constructed through the interplay of institutional credibility, affective representation, and practical information. The data shows that ethos, pathos, and logos do not unfold as a fixed sequence. They more often coexist within the same promotional unit, each contributing a different rhetorical function. Institutional symbols and official representation project authority, scenic and cultural imagery invite affective engagement, while prices, schedules, reservation procedures, and contact details make participation easier to evaluate. The posts, therefore, create persuasive affordances rather than measurable persuasive effects. This distinction defines the study's contribution. This analysis prevents the assumption that official ownership translates to credibility and explains that pathos deals with the design of the affect, while

logos offers a basis for practical consideration that does not necessarily result in behavioral change. The analysis provides the Aristotelian framework for rhetoric to digital tourism discourse, especially for the ways that images, captions, and other institutional and operational elements get compressed within a single platform message.

The limitations of the study must be considered. The analysis of ten posts from a single government-managed account cannot be understood to mean anything about the larger regional tourism communicative frameworks, nor does this type of analysis answer the question of how the audience understood, trusted, or engaged with the content. No audience studies, engagement analysis, or behavioral studies were included in the analysis. This absence of information provides a framework more specific to account-oriented rhetorical analysis and less so from a marketing perspective. Studies focused on the perception of institutional credibility, or post-anticipated audience emotions, or those using posted information for travel decisions, especially with a focus on government and commercial tourism promotions, would be most valuable in determining the possible differences of ethos across the promotional contexts. A greater and more extensive focus on tourism promotional campaigns may also assist in determining if variations in persuasive frameworks occur based on destination, time, or social media platform. The study aims to show that official tourism Instagram accounts are not persuasive in their potential to influence users through images. The persuasive potential lies in the strategic combination of authority, affect, and information in forms of ethos, pathos, and logos.

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