

AN ANALYSIS OF PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE IN WONDERFUL INDONESIA ADVERTISEMENTS ON INSTAGRAM

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Abstract

This study examines persuasive language in digital tourism marketing through analysis of embedded textual elements in twenty Instagram posts from @wonderfulindonesia. The research employs Aristotle's classical rhetorical theory, combining three fundamental persuasive appeals of pathos, ethos, and logos with Lamb's framework of twelve specific persuasive language techniques. Through systematic qualitative discourse analysis, the study reveals significant patterns in strategic use of persuasive elements designed to enhance Indonesia's tourism brand image. The findings demonstrate clear hierarchical preference in rhetorical appeals application. Pathos emerges as the most dominant persuasive strategy, appearing in eleven posts, effectively targeting audience sentiments by evoking emotions including inspiration, tranquility, and cultural pride. Ethos appears in seven posts, establishing credibility through institutional recognition and expert endorsements. Regarding specific persuasive techniques, emotive language emerges as the most frequently implemented strategy, appearing in nine posts, while imagery follows in six posts. This research contributes valuable insights to digital marketing and tourism promotion, demonstrating how the Wonderful Indonesia campaign strategically combines emotional appeal, institutional credibility, and selective logical reasoning to maximize engagement.

Keywords: persuasive language, rhetorical appeals, tourism promotion, Instagram, Wonderful Indonesia

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Introduction

In the digital era, advertisements has undergone a significant transformation with the rise of social media platforms such as Instagram. Businesses and organizations no longer depend solely on traditional media but increasingly utilize digital platforms to reach broader, more targeted, and interactive audiences. Social media, especially Instagram, plays an important role in shaping consumer engagement due to its highly visual and participatory nature. Among the many elements that contribute to the success of digital advertising, persuasive language remains a powerful tool for capturing attention, generating interest, and influencing behavior.

Wonderful Indonesia, the official tourism branding initiative launched by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia, actively uses Instagram to promote the country's tourist destinations, cultural diversity, and heritage. As of April 2025, the official Instagram account @wonderfulindonesia has approximately 1.5 million followers. This account's posts usually include visually appealing content in the form of photographs or videos with literary components embedded within the visuals, such as slogans, taglines, or short persuasive messages designed to engage both domestic and foreign audiences. These literary elements frequently use emotion, rationality, and credibility to affect viewers' perceptions and actions.

Persuasive language is important in digital tourist advertisements because it does not only convey information but also builds emotional connections with the audience and encourages them to take action. Prior research has demonstrated that strategically incorporating persuasive language strategies into social media material can boost audience engagement and brand responsiveness (Dwivedi et al., 2021). However, most studies have concentrated on captions or solely visual components. Limited attention has been paid to persuasive text integrated directly within the graphics of posts posted by tourism promotion accounts.

This study focuses on analyzing the types of persuasive language and the techniques used in the textual elements embedded within the visual content of Wonderful Indonesia Instagram posts. The findings aim to contribute to the fields of digital marketing, applied linguistics, and communication studies by providing insights into how embedded language influences public perception and affects behavior related to tourism.

Literature Review

Persuasive language plays a central role in influencing how people think, feel, and act in response to specific messages. On Instagram, a platform dominated by visual elements, language becomes an equally powerful tool when carefully crafted to complement imagery. It influences individuals by appealing to emotions, logic, and credibility. Therefore, in digital marketing, including tourism promotion, persuasive language is strategically employed to attract attention and encourage audience engagement. (Maharani et al., 2024)

On the Wonderful Indonesia Instagram account, persuasive language is not limited to providing factual travel information. It is designed to trigger emotional responses, ignite curiosity, and promote action. For instance, the texts embedded within images and videos are formulated to reflect adventure, tranquility, cultural pride, or excitement. This type of messaging seeks to inform users while also motivating them to choose Indonesia as their next travel destination.

O'Keefe defines persuasive as a successful intentional effort at influencing another person's mental state through communication in a situation where the recipient has freedom to accept or reject the message. This definition highlights that persuasive language is purposeful, ethical, and context sensitive. It is not coercive but encourages agreement or behavioral change by aligning with the audience's beliefs and desires.

Scholars like Rosenberg et al. (2022) state that persuasive language requires the communicator to understand the audience's psychological and cultural background. The message must resonate with their values and appeal to their interests. Therefore, effective persuasive language involves a combination of linguistic strategies and contextual understanding, resulting in communication that is both compelling and respectful.

According to Ogah & Abutu (2021), persuasive communication is goal directed and audience centered. It seeks to modify attitudes or behaviors by shaping perceptions. In advertising, especially in digital contexts like Instagram, persuasive language is often condensed into short but impactful messages. These texts must be clear, emotionally engaging, and credible to gain trust and stimulate action.

The study of persuasive language has its roots in the field of rhetoric, which traditionally examines how language is used to convince or move others. Over time, scholars have expanded this understanding to include not only the content of messages but also the context in which communication takes place, the characteristics of the communicator, and the nature of the audience. Persuasion is recognized as a complex, dynamic process that involves both the sender's intentions and the audience's reception and interpretation.

A modern and widely accepted perspective on persuasive is offered by O'Keefe (2016), who defines persuasive as "a successful intentional effort at influencing another's mental state through communication in a circumstance in which the persuadee has some measure of

freedom.” This definition emphasizes several important points. First, persuasive is intentional: the communicator deliberately crafts messages with the goal of influencing the audience. Second, persuasive is successful only when it actually changes or reinforces the audience’s mental state, such as their beliefs, attitudes, or motivations. Third, persuasive occurs within a context where the audience retains freedom to accept or reject the message. This ethical dimension distinguishes persuasive from coercion or manipulation.

In practical terms, persuasive language involves strategic choices regarding vocabulary, sentence structure, tone, and style to effectively convey the intended message. These choices are made with consideration of the target audience’s characteristics, such as their cultural background, values, prior knowledge, and emotional state. By tailoring messages to the audience, communicators increase the likelihood that their persuasive efforts will resonate and produce the desired effect.

Furthermore, persuasive language is not only about the words themselves but also about how those words are organized and presented within the overall communication. The structure, coherence, and clarity of the message contribute significantly to its persuasiveness. Messages that are logically consistent, engaging, and relatable tend to be more effective in shaping audience perceptions and behaviors.

In today’s digital communication landscape, persuasive language plays a crucial role in influencing audience attitudes and behaviors, especially within digital marketing environments where messages must quickly attract attention and encourage engagement. Among various theoretical frameworks, Aristotle’s rhetorical theory remains one of the most fundamental and widely applied models in understanding persuasive. This theory identifies three primary modes of appeal: *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. These appeals continue to be highly relevant in contemporary advertising practices, including tourism campaigns on social media platforms (Umachandran & Said, 2022).

First, *Ethos* is concerned with the audience’s perception of the communicator’s credibility, authority, and reliability (Umachandran & Said, 2022). In tourism advertising, *ethos* is often established through endorsements by reputable entities such as government tourism boards, certified travel guides, or influential personalities. For example, Wonderful Indonesia reinforces *ethos* by featuring content supported by recognized experts, respected celebrities, or respected tourism institutions. Moreover, the use of formal language, consistent branding, and professional tone further enhances the campaign’s ethical appeal by signaling competence and institutional legitimacy (Afren, 2024).

Second, *pathos* focuses on the audience’s emotions, values, and desires with the intention of creating a personal connection (O’Keefe, 2016). In digital tourism campaigns, emotional appeals are particularly effective due to the integration of evocative imagery and expressive language. Wonderful Indonesia’s Instagram posts often describe serene beaches, vibrant cultural festivals, or heartfelt stories that inspire feelings such as excitement, nostalgia, or curiosity. The use of vivid adjectives, narrative techniques, and culturally rich descriptions intensifies the emotional impact, encouraging viewers to emotionally invest in the experience and thereby increasing the likelihood of travel (Mele et al., 2021).

Third, *logos* focuses on reason and logic by providing factual information, statistics, and structured arguments (O’Keefe, 2016). In the Wonderful Indonesia campaign, *logos* is exemplified by posts that provide practical information relevant to tourists, such as affordability, travel rankings, climate data, and accessibility. For instance, claims like “Bali is ranked among the top 10 travel destinations worldwide” offer objective evidence that supports the attractiveness of the destination. Logical appeals help address the rational considerations of the audience, balancing emotional engagement with credible information to foster informed decision making.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive method to explore and describe the types and functions of persuasive language used in posts from the Instagram account @wonderfulindonesia. This approach was selected because it enables the researcher to provide an in depth description of how language is used in real life contexts, particularly within tourism campaigns on social media.

Qualitative descriptive research aims to offer detailed and rich accounts of events or phenomena without the need for complex abstraction. It allows researchers to stay close to the data while investigating how meaning is constructed, communicated, and interpreted within natural discourse.

Previous research supports the effectiveness of this approach in advertising and media analysis. For example (Kim et al., 2017), used qualitative descriptive methods in health communication and emphasized the method's ability to capture contextual meaning within natural language. In the field of tourism promotion, (Nobar et al., 2020) examined how emotional and logical appeals on social media platforms shape audience responses, especially in environmental and sustainability campaigns. Additionally, (Umachandran & Said, 2022) analyzed national tourism campaigns in Southeast Asia and highlighted how cultural values and visual-textual integration impact persuasive strategies in digital platforms.

These studies reinforce the appropriateness of using qualitative descriptive methods in the present research. This approach is particularly suited for examining persuasive communication in digital tourism promotion, especially on platforms like Instagram where language and visuals are tightly integrated.

The data in this study were obtained from content published by the official Instagram account @wonderfulindonesia. This account is managed by the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy as a digital promotional platform to introduce various tourism destinations in Indonesia to an international audience. The primary data used in this research consist of English language embedded text that accompany photos or videos promoting tourism destinations. The data were collected using purposive sampling, a sampling technique based on specific considerations aligned with the objectives of the study.

Several criteria were applied in the data selection process, including that each embedded text must be written in English, must contain identifiable elements of persuasive language in accordance with Aristotle's rhetorical theory and Lamb's theory persuasive language techniques framework applied in this study, and must specifically promote tourism destinations located in Indonesia. Furthermore, the data collection was limited to posts published between February and June 2025 to ensure the analysis reflects recent promotional trends. From a total of 53 posts published during this period, 20 posts were selectively chosen based on the established criteria. This selection process ensures that the data collected effectively supports the research objective of analyzing the use of persuasive language in tourism promotional content on the Instagram platform.

The data collection process in this study was conducted using documentation techniques, which are commonly used in qualitative research. This technique was chosen because the data consisted of digital documents in the form of embedded text that were publicly available on the official Instagram account @wonderfulindonesia. The primary focus of this research was on the written language presented in these captions, making documentation the most suitable method to systematically and accurately obtain the necessary data without engaging in direct interaction with any subjects or informants.

The data were collected using purposive sampling, according to Nyimbili (2024) a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher deliberately selects samples based on specific, predetermined criteria relevant to the research objectives. This method ensured that the data collected were focused, relevant, and aligned with the purpose of the study. The selection process was guided by several clear criteria:

First, the embedded text had to be written in English to maintain language consistency and to reflect the global target audience of the promotional campaign.

Second, the captions needed to contain identifiable persuasive language features based on Aristotle's rhetorical theory and Lamb's theory persuasive language techniques used in this research. Third, the content had to specifically promote tourism destinations located within Indonesia, including natural attractions, cultural heritage sites, urban tourism experiences, or events related to tourism. Fourth, the posts were required to have been published within the period of February to June 2025 to ensure the relevance and timeliness of the data in capturing current promotional trends.

The data collection process was carried out in several structured stages. First, the researcher accessed the official Instagram account @wonderfulindonesia and systematically identified and recorded all posts published during the specified timeframe. Second, from a total of 53 posts available within the February to June 2025 period, the researcher applied the inclusion criteria through purposive sampling and selected 20 posts that were considered most relevant and aligned with the research focus. Third, the caption texts from these selected posts were carefully documented by copying them into a data collection sheet and assigning identification codes to each caption to ensure systematic data organization.

Fourth, after the caption texts were fully collected, the researcher organized and arranged the data chronologically according to the publication dates of each post. This step ensured that the subsequent analysis could be conducted in a structured and coherent manner. Fifth, the researcher conducted qualitative analysis by examining each caption to identify and classify persuasive language features, using rhetorical theory and categories of persuasive techniques to interpret how language is strategically applied in digital tourism promotion.

Through the application of documentation techniques combined with purposive sampling, this study collected data in a methodical and focused way. The process involved systematic identification, selection, documentation, and organization of caption texts, allowing the research to produce valid, reliable, and contextually relevant findings regarding the use of persuasive language in tourism promotional content on Instagram.

Result and Discussion

The analysis of twenty Instagram captions posted by @wonderfulindonesia reveals the significant role of persuasive language in shaping audience perception and fostering engagement with Indonesian tourism. Each caption serves not only as an informative message but also as a persuasive tool that incorporates rhetorical strategies appealing to the audience's emotions, sense of credibility, and logical reasoning. The patterns identified from the data analysis indicate a deliberate use of rhetorical appeals and persuasive techniques tailored to maximize audience engagement on a visual platform such as Instagram.

The purpose of this research was to investigate the use of persuasive language in Wonderful Indonesia Instagram posts, focusing on identifying the types of rhetorical appeals and persuasive techniques applied within the captions. Based on the findings from the analysis of twenty selected Instagram captions, it is evident that the Wonderful Indonesia campaign employs a structured communication strategy by integrating persuasive language to promote Indonesian tourism through social media.

The primary objective of this study was to determine the dominant types of persuasive language based on Aristotle's classical rhetorical appeals, which consist of pathos, ethos, and logos. The findings demonstrate that all three rhetorical appeals are utilized within the captions, with certain appeals occurring more frequently than others. Overall, the analysis shows a tendency to prioritize emotional resonance and credibility, while logical reasoning is used more selectively.

In addition to Aristotle's rhetorical framework, this study employs Lamb's persuasive language techniques to identify specific linguistic strategies that enhance the effectiveness of

the promotional messages. Lamb's framework categorizes twelve persuasive techniques deliberately applied to engage the audience emotionally and cognitively. The findings reveal that these techniques are frequently integrated with the rhetorical appeals to create a multidimensional persuasive effect, increasing the likelihood of audience engagement and favorable perception of Indonesian tourism.

To present the distribution of rhetorical appeals and persuasive techniques, the table below presents a concise summary of the analysis of the 20 selected Instagram captions, detailing each caption's dominant rhetorical appeal and the persuasive techniques applied. These classifications are based on textual features, thematic focus, and persuasive intent embedded in each post, providing a clear overview of persuasive elements in digital tourism promotion. Additionally, the categorization of persuasive techniques in this study follows current theories in promotional and advertising communication that emphasize the role of deliberate language use in influencing audience responses on visual platforms like Instagram (Braca & Dondio, 2023). By combining these perspectives, this study highlights how persuasive elements are intentionally embedded in Instagram captions to increase public engagement and enhance the portrayal of Indonesian tourism.

Types and Techniques of Persuasive in Instagram Post Captions

No	Embedded Text	Type of Persuasive	Persuasive Technique
1	Indonesia's Hidden Wellness Gems - Escape crowd, find peace here	Pathos	Emotive Language, Imagery
2	Respect the Culture, Enjoy the Island of Gods	Ethos	Metaphor, Inclusive Language, Appeals
3	Borobudur - Massive Buddhist temple in Central Java and it's honestly breathtaking. With stunning carvings and a peaceful vibe, it's the kind of place that makes you stop, stare and reflect.	Pathos	Imagery, Emotive Language
4	Jakarta E-Prix - Electrifying the Future Through Sustainable Racing	Logos	Evidence, Emotive Language, Alliteration
5	Time to Explore Surabaya's Most Iconic Sight - Suramadu is Calling	Pathos	Emotive Language
6	Discover Harmony Through Nature, Culture, and Future	Pathos	Emotive Language
7	The World is Waiting, But Indonesia is Calling - Discover Wonderful Indonesia	Ethos	Appeals, Inclusive Language
8	Chasing The First Light - Best Sunrise Spots in Central Java	Pathos	Imagery
9	Find Your Green Escape in Indonesia's Top Destinations	Pathos	Emotive Language

10	A Place Where Beauty Becomes Wonder	Pathos	Metaphor
11	Jakarta - Paradise for Food & Shopping Enthusiast	Logos	Exaggeration
12	Jakarta - Timeless Story, History, and Flavors	Ethos	Imagery
13	Bali Named "The Best Island" 2025	Ethos	Expert Opinion
14	Kepulauan Seribu - Discover Tranquility & Wellness in a Tropical Paradise	Pathos	Emotive Language
15	A Journey Through Lake Toba's Culinary Heritage, Restorative Escapes, and Thrilling Waters	Pathos	Imagery, Emotive Language
16	Step Into the Wonders at the World's Leading Travel Trade Show	Ethos	Expert Opinion
17	Wastra Wonders - Indonesia's Heritage Fabrics	Ethos	Appeals
18	From Bali with Love - A Celebration of Romance	Pathos	Emotive Language
19	The Best Trek in the World - Lonely Planet's Top Picks	Ethos	Expert Opinion
20	Indonesia Invites You to Uncover the Magic of Lake Toba	Pathos	Imagery

In conclusion, the Wonderful Indonesia Instagram campaign demonstrates an effective integration of Aristotle's rhetorical appeals and Lamb's persuasive language techniques to maximize audience engagement. The dominance of pathos reflects a strategic alignment with Instagram's visual and emotional communication style. Ethos supports credibility and authenticity, while logos provides selective rational reinforcement. Together, these elements create a holistic persuasive approach that enhances public perception and interest in Indonesian tourism (Braca & Dondio, 2023)

Conclusion

This study was conducted to answer two main research questions: first, what types of persuasive language are used in the textual content of Wonderful Indonesia Instagram posts; and second, which persuasive language techniques are employed to influence audience perception through these posts. The research analyzed embedded textual elements in twenty Instagram posts from the official @wonderfulindonesia account by applying Aristotle's classical rhetorical appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos, alongside Lamb's framework of twelve persuasive language techniques.

The findings reveal that pathos is the most dominant rhetorical appeal, appearing in eleven out of twenty captions. This dominance of emotional appeal indicates that the Wonderful Indonesia campaign strategically emphasizes evoking feelings such as inspiration, tranquility, admiration, and cultural pride. The frequent use of pathos aligns effectively with Instagram's visually rich platform, where emotional engagement plays a key role in influencing audience response and interaction.

Ethos is the second most prominent appeal, present in seven captions of the analyzed content. This appeal functions to build credibility and trust by referencing institutional recognition, cultural heritage, and expert endorsements. The strategic use of ethos reinforces the authenticity of the Wonderful Indonesia campaign and strengthens audience confidence in Indonesia as a trustworthy and attractive tourism destination.

Logos appears in only two captions, making it the least frequently used rhetorical appeal. This selective application of logical reasoning provides factual information and practical benefits, mainly through event-based details and infrastructure descriptions, effectively complementing the emotional and credible appeals without overwhelming the audience with excessive rational arguments.

Regarding the second research question, the analysis identifies several persuasive techniques from Lamb's framework that are strategically employed throughout the captions. Emotive language emerges as the most frequently used technique, appearing in nine captions, followed by imagery in six captions. These techniques work synergistically to engage audiences both emotionally and cognitively, creating vivid mental pictures and strong emotional connections with Indonesian tourism destinations.

Additional techniques such as appeals, inclusive language, expert opinion, metaphor, and exaggeration are also strategically applied to enhance message memorability, build credibility, and strengthen audience engagement. The integration of these diverse techniques demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of persuasive communication principles in digital marketing contexts.

This study contributes to the understanding of how digital tourism promotion can effectively combine classical rhetorical principles with contemporary persuasive techniques to enhance destination marketing on social media platforms. The findings demonstrate that successful tourism campaigns require a balanced integration of emotional appeal, credibility building, and selective logical reasoning to maximize audience engagement and influence positive perceptions.

In conclusion, the Wonderful Indonesia Instagram campaign exemplifies an effective strategic approach to digital tourism promotion through the deliberate integration of Aristotelian rhetorical appeals and Lamb's persuasive language techniques. This combined methodology successfully creates compelling promotional content that not only informs but also emotionally connects with audiences, builds institutional credibility, and encourages favorable attitudes toward Indonesian tourism destinations. The research confirms the continued relevance of classical rhetorical principles in modern digital communication and highlights the importance of strategic language use in contemporary tourism marketing.

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