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Digital Content Strategy for Brand Awareness and Business Development: A Case Study of *Lost in Jogja Private Trip*

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ABSTRACT

As social media becomes central to tourism marketing, small service providers must use digital content to communicate experiences and build recognition. This study examines the content strategy of Lost in Jogja, a cycling-based private tour business in Yogyakarta, through McPheat's four content-marketing dimensions: Educates, Informs, Entertains, and Creates Trustworthiness. Using a descriptive qualitative design, the research drew on observations of social media content, in-depth interviews with the owner and a tour guide, and documentation supported by a literature review. The findings show that educational posts introduce alternative cycling routes and local experiences, while informational posts describe tour activities, routes, and services. Entertainment is conveyed through short videos, relatable themes, humor, and platform-specific trends. Trustworthiness is communicated through spontaneous documentation of actual tours and alignment between promotional messages and service delivery. Instagram primarily supports marketing communication and customer interaction, whereas TikTok offers opportunities to reach wider audiences. The study's contribution is to demonstrate how these four communicative functions can be integrated into an experience-based tourism business through authentic local storytelling and platform adaptation. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of content relevance, credibility, and publication consistency. Because the study is based on a single qualitative case, it documents strategic practices rather than establishing causal effects on brand awareness or business performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Technological advances have transformed how businesses communicate with consumers and market their products and services. In tourism, digital content marketing has become increasingly important as consumers use online platforms to gather information, compare options, and assess experiences before making travel decisions. Images, videos, captions, and stories enable tourism businesses to communicate not only service information but also the experiences and values associated with their offerings. Marketing communication has therefore shifted from conventional promotion toward more interactive, visual, and experience-oriented approaches. Social media enables businesses to build brand awareness, establish audience relationships, and encourage engagement through content that reflects consumer interests and behavior.

The growth of digital tourism has reinforced the role of social media in tourism marketing. Prospective travelers routinely use the internet to explore destinations, attractions, accommodation, food, and activities. In Indonesia, the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2024) reported an internet penetration rate of 79.5% in 2024, representing approximately 221.56 million users. This environment creates opportunities for tourism businesses to disseminate information, showcase experiences, and interact with potential customers through Instagram and TikTok. Beyond promoting destinations, digital tourism involves representing experiences that may shape tourists' perceptions and choices. Through social media, consumers can assess visual depictions of activities and settings before purchasing tourism services.

Yogyakarta offers a relevant setting because its tourism experiences combine local culture, community life, creative activities, and urban exploration. Lost in Jogja, a private tour business, offers cycling-based experiences along routes in and around the city. The business established its digital presence on Instagram and subsequently expanded its communication to TikTok. Its posts feature cycling activities, local settings, community interactions, and customer experiences through photographs, short videos, Instagram Stories, and Reels. It also reshares user-generated photographs and videos, presenting tourism experiences from both the business's and customers' perspectives. This approach is pertinent to private tours because their value extends beyond transportation or an itinerary to local exploration, interpersonal interaction, and personal memories. Figure-1 presents the business's Instagram profile. By identifying cycling-based private trips and displaying booking information, the profile serves as an initial point of reference through which prospective customers can recognize the brand and locate its services.

Figure-1. Lost in Jogja Instagram Profile

However, the growing volume of tourism content on social media makes it difficult for businesses to secure attention and establish a distinctive identity. Visually appealing posts do not necessarily help audiences understand the services offered, sustain interest, or develop trust. Tourism businesses therefore need content strategies that educate, inform, entertain, and build credibility. This need is particularly relevant to Lost in Jogja because prospective customers must assess routes, activities, facilities, atmosphere, and expected experiences before booking. Effective digital communication consequently depends not only on posting frequency but also on whether content is designed to support brand awareness and business development.

Previous studies have addressed social media marketing, user-generated content, customer engagement, and memorable tourism experiences. Informative, interactive, and visually appealing content can support customer engagement (Novyanti & Christin, 2024), while user-generated content may offer authentic accounts of travel experiences and influence consumer perceptions (Akehurst, 2009; Lu & Stepchenkova, 2015). Studies of memorable tourism experiences highlight refreshment, hedonism, novelty, local culture,

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involvement, knowledge, and meaningfulness (Kim et al., 2012, as cited in Pujiastuti et al., 2021). Nevertheless, these perspectives do not fully explain how a small private tour operator organizes content to communicate locally grounded experiences. McPheat's (2011) four content-marketing dimensions—Educates, Informs, Entertains, and Creates Trustworthiness—offer a framework for examining the communicative functions of such content rather than treating it solely as product promotion.

Accordingly, this study examines how Lost in Jogja uses digital content on Instagram and TikTok to communicate its private tour services, strengthen brand awareness, and support business development. Using McPheat's (2011) four dimensions, the analysis considers visual materials, videos, captions, stories, and customer-generated content. Its contribution is a contextual account of how a small, experience-based tourism business integrates educational, informational, entertaining, and trust-building messages while adapting its communication across platforms. The case offers insights for communication and tourism-marketing research on the digital representation of local experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Content Strategy

Digital content comprises information distributed in electronic formats, including text, images, audio, video, and infographics. In digital marketing, content is not simply a vehicle for information delivery but a strategic communication resource through which brands communicate value and sustain consumer relationships. Businesses use such content to convey product information, engage audiences, and strengthen their market presence. Nugroho (2024) suggests that digital content can also help organizations reach consumer segments that are difficult to access through conventional marketing channels.

Content serves different communication purposes. Abdullah (2021) identifies six categories: (1) informative content, which communicates information about products, services, or organizations; (2) educational content, which expands audience knowledge; (3) content marketing, which offers relevant information and value; (4) interactive content, which encourages participation through polls, quizzes, live streams, and questions and answers; (5) storytelling content, which builds emotional connections; and (6) content development, which involves ongoing evaluation and optimization. These categories illustrate how formats and messages can be adapted to specific audiences and communication objectives.

Effective digital content requires attention to both message and delivery. Kingsnorth (2025) describes seven characteristics of strong content: credible, shareable, useful or entertaining, interesting, relevant, distinctive, and consistent with the brand. Together, these qualities help content attract attention, encourage engagement, and support trust and marketing objectives.

Content marketing is central to digital content strategy because it enables brands to communicate value through sustained engagement. McPheat (2011) describes content marketing as publishing material that empowers, engages, educates, and connects readers. This perspective treats content as more than direct product promotion: it emphasizes meaningful exchanges that provide value to audiences. In social media settings, the approach can be examined through four interrelated dimensions: Educates, Informs, Entertains, and Creates Trustworthiness.

McPheat's perspective is especially relevant to social media because audiences can respond to and redistribute content rather than merely receive it. Content must therefore offer value while facilitating interaction and conveying brand credibility. Shelycia and Dewi (2025) found a positive relationship between Instagram content marketing and brand trust in the context they studied, reporting a contribution of 63.6%. Although the setting differs from tourism, the finding illustrates the potential relevance of content quality to consumer confidence.

In this study, McPheat's (2011) framework is operationalized through four dimensions. Educates concerns content that provides useful knowledge and improves audience understanding. Informs concerns clear, accurate information about services, activities, and the brand. Entertains captures the enjoyable or engaging qualities of content, including creative formats and storytelling. Creates Trustworthiness refers to the consistency, authenticity, and credibility through which content may foster confidence in a brand. The dimensions provide complementary analytical categories for examining Lost in Jogja's digital communication.

Social Media Marketing

Social media enables businesses to exchange messages, present services, and develop consumer relationships. Kotler and Keller (2011) emphasize the sharing of text, images, audio, and video, while Nasrullah

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(2015) highlights interaction among users. These affordances allow brands to publish information and receive immediate audience responses. Dhewi and Kurnianto (2023) report relationships between social media marketing, brand equity, and word of mouth, including electronic word of mouth. Social media marketing thus includes both promotional communication and ongoing interaction with consumers.

Within tourism, photographs, captions, Stories, Reels, and short videos help communicate destinations, activities, and experiences. Instagram users can respond through likes, comments, and shares, making communication more participatory. Putri and Sujono (2024) discuss the use of social media in Indonesian tourism public relations. From a communication perspective, tourism marketing on social media involves producing, distributing, and exchanging messages rather than simply broadcasting advertisements. Audience participation can further support engagement and customer relationships.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to consumers' ability to recognize or recall a brand within a product or service category. Aaker (1991) associates brand awareness with recognition and remembrance, while Keller (1993) distinguishes brand recognition from brand recall. Recognition involves identifying a brand when presented with a cue; recall involves retrieving it from memory when considering a category. Consistent digital communication can support both processes by making a brand more familiar. Social media marketing may also contribute to awareness alongside brand engagement, trust, and loyalty (Salsabila & Hati, 2024).

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to examine how Lost in Jogja manages digital content. The approach was appropriate because the research sought to understand the experiences and practices of individuals responsible for planning, producing, publishing, and evaluating content on the business's Instagram account. A descriptive design permits a systematic account of practices in their existing context without manipulating conditions (Fadli, 2021).

Informants were selected purposively according to three criteria: (1) direct involvement in Lost in Jogja's social media activities; (2) knowledge or experience of Instagram content planning, production, publication, or evaluation; and (3) the ability to provide information relevant to the study. Two informants met these criteria: the business owner, who determines digital marketing and content strategy, and a tour guide, who supports tour operations and supplies information and visual documentation. Their roles provided perspectives on strategic decisions and operational implementation.

The unit of analysis was digital content management on the Lost in Jogja Instagram account, specifically planning, creation, publication, and evaluation. The researchers observed content types, themes, presentation formats, captions, posting activities, and audience responses. In-depth interviews explored the reasons, experiences, and practices behind these activities. Published posts and other relevant materials were documented to complement the observational and interview evidence.

Data collection involved observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and a literature review. Observation focused on the account's content management practices; interviews examined decisions about content planning, production, publication, and evaluation; and documentation supplied relevant examples of published content. The literature review informed the study's conceptual and theoretical interpretation.

The analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1984): data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Interview, observation, and documentary materials were organized and compared to identify recurring patterns in content management. Source triangulation involved comparing statements from the owner and tour guide with observed Instagram posts and other documentation to strengthen the credibility of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings show that Lost in Jogja uses digital content in its marketing communication to support brand awareness and business development. The business operates almost daily in Yogyakarta and offers cycling-based private tours to adults and children, including families and groups booking special packages. Customers come from Yogyakarta and other Indonesian cities, including Jakarta, Malang, Bandung, Semarang, Palembang, and Lampung, as well as Malaysia, Japan, and Brunei Darussalam. The business is also

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expanding routes and partnerships and considering trekking packages and an e-book on alternative travel experiences in Yogyakarta.

Lost in Jogja uses Instagram and TikTok as its principal digital platforms. Instagram is the primary channel for marketing and sales support, whereas TikTok is used mainly to reach wider audiences and enhance brand awareness. Reels and other short-form videos showcase tourism experiences. Reported audience responses to selected posts include approximately 2,000 comments, 366,000 likes, and 16,900 views. The content observed was categorized according to McPheat's four dimensions: Educates, Informs, Entertains, and Creates Trustworthiness.

Educates

The Educates dimension appears in content that introduces alternative ways of experiencing Yogyakarta. Instead of focusing solely on established tourist attractions, Lost in Jogja documents local exploration and community interaction. For example, its "Blusukan" concept presents everyday life in local neighborhoods, introducing audiences to settings and activities that are less visible in conventional destination promotions.

Educational content also informs the business's plan to publish an e-book featuring alternative travel routes in Yogyakarta. Although the e-book remains a planned product, it reflects an intention to share destination knowledge beyond conventional attractions. Published content likewise connects tourism experiences with familiar subjects such as friendships, relationships, and working life, making information accessible through everyday contexts rather than exclusively promotional messages.

Informs

The Informs dimension is evident in posts communicating Lost in Jogja's services and activities. Instagram primarily supports marketing and sales, while TikTok broadens exposure. Photographs, Reels, and short videos present cycling routes, activities, and the local environments encountered during tours.

The business also monitors social media trends, particularly on TikTok, by observing topics discussed by users and videos appearing on the For You Page (FYP). It adapts relevant trends to its services, enabling tourism information to be presented in formats familiar to social media audiences.

Visual design also supports the presentation of information. Lost in Jogja uses Avenir and Arial typefaces, colorful graphics, and photographs and videos of tourism activities. Smartphones and cameras are used for documentation, while InShot and Canva support editing and graphic design. Alongside explicit service descriptions, visuals communicate routes, destinations, activities, and the likely atmosphere of a tour.

Figure-2 illustrates the business's route-price offers. The distinct tour options, listed prices, and accompanying service information show how digital content helps prospective customers distinguish among available packages before making an inquiry.

Figure-2. Prices and Route Options Offered by Lost in Jogja

Entertains

The Entertains dimension is reflected in Lost in Jogja's use of storytelling, humor, current trends, and spontaneous documentation. Interview data indicate that content ideas often draw on everyday topics, including romantic relationships, friendships, and work. These topics are integrated into travel-related narratives so that posts communicate the business's services without relying exclusively on direct advertising.

On TikTok, the business adapts relevant trending topics and For You Page (FYP) formats while retaining its brand identity. Entertainment is also conveyed through footage recorded during actual tours rather than

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heavily staged productions. Customers may express preferences about the type of documentation they receive, allowing the resulting content to reflect individual experiences. The “Blusukan” concept further presents local interaction and community life as engaging aspects of tourism. Together, these practices frame the tour as an experience while communicating Lost in Jogja’s distinctive service.

Creates Trustworthiness

The Creates Trustworthiness dimension is reflected in the use of authentic tour documentation and the alignment between online representations and services provided. Lost in Jogja emphasizes spontaneous recording of activities to avoid the impression that customer experiences are staged. Its photographs and videos depict activities and interactions that occurred during tours.

Tour guides contribute to this documentation and accommodate customers’ preferences, allowing images and videos to reflect individual experiences. The business also attends to bicycle quality, comfort, and safety. Before tours, staff check tire pressure and brakes, lubricate moving parts, clean bicycles, and address minor defects when necessary. These operational practices support consistency between the experience portrayed online and the service delivered. In this sense, credible communication is complemented by service quality.

Supporting Factors and Constraints in Content Management

The implementation of McPheat’s four dimensions is affected by organizational resources. The owner handles bookings, invoices, administration, social media management, and content production. Heavy demand for tours can also cause staff fatigue, making regular posting difficult.

The findings indicate that consistent content marketing depends not only on creative skills but also on the human resources available for ongoing production. These constraints do not prevent the business from producing educational, informational, entertaining, or trust-building content, but they affect publication frequency and consistency.

To address these constraints, the owner plans to develop skills in copywriting, digital content analysis, and campaign planning. The business also intends to monitor consumer behavior more systematically. These plans position content management as an ongoing process of planning, production, audience observation, and evaluation.

Discussion

Tourism experiences are increasingly communicated through visual documentation. Photographs and videos function not only as personal records but also as content through which tourism businesses represent experiences and establish a presence on social media. In Lost in Jogja’s case, spontaneous tour documentation connects the lived experience of customers with the brand messages encountered by prospective visitors.

Visual content can communicate information efficiently when imagery, color, layout, and other design elements reinforce the intended message. For Lost in Jogja, the value of these elements lies not simply in their aesthetic appeal but in their ability to communicate the character of its cycling tours. This interpretation is consistent with the role of relevant, engaging material in digital content strategy.

The business’s use of Instagram and TikTok illustrates the shift from conventional promotion toward participatory digital communication. Both platforms allow the company to turn customers’ travel experiences into shareable narratives, although each platform serves a somewhat different function. Instagram primarily supports marketing communication, while TikTok extends potential audience reach.

The Educates dimension illustrates how accessible messages can introduce audiences to experiences outside conventional tourist itineraries. By documenting local routes and “Blusukan” activities, Lost in Jogja communicates practical and cultural knowledge while distinguishing its service from other cycling-tour offerings. The findings suggest that educational value does not require a formal teaching format; it can be conveyed through understandable narratives grounded in real experiences.

Content themes are also informed by emerging social media conversations. The business connects familiar issues to local tourism and incorporates aspects of Yogyakarta’s community identity. This practice links audience relevance with place-based differentiation: posts encourage interaction while portraying the tour as a cultural and interpersonal experience rather than merely a commercial itinerary.

These practices can also be considered in relation to emotional branding. Gobé’s concept of emotional branding (2005, as cited in Prasetyo & Febriani, 2020) describes the development of meaningful connections

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between consumers and brands. Lost in Jogja's use of local stories and customer experiences provides a potential basis for such connections. The case therefore suggests that content may communicate both the practical features of a service and its experiential or emotional value.

Yogyakarta's food, local culture, and community interactions offer recurring subjects for Lost in Jogja's visual narratives. The business packages these experiences into short videos, often approximately one to two minutes long, and distributes them on social media. In doing so, it presents the city's distinctiveness as part of the tour's value proposition and may encourage prospective customers to associate the brand with authentic local experiences.

The Informs dimension complements these narratives by providing details relevant to travel planning. Audiences need reliable descriptions of routes, services, and activities to evaluate a tour. Consequently, informative content should be assessed not only for visual attractiveness but also for its clarity, relevance, and consistency with actual service provision.

This interpretation is broadly consistent with research linking tourism-related information to tourists' perceptions, trust, and intentions (Sutrisno et al., 2024). Other studies cited in the manuscript also associate digital content quality and destination image with trust and visit intentions (Li & Wang, 2022; Zhang et al., 2020). These comparisons should be treated cautiously because the present qualitative study examines content practices rather than measuring their causal effects on consumer behavior.

The business also responds to audience interest in trending tourism destinations. The cited GoodStats (2025) infographic identifies Yogyakarta as a popular holiday destination among Indonesians. Lost in Jogja uses this wider interest to present its tours through stories that make destination information more engaging. Although the manuscript discusses fear of missing out (FOMO), the available interview and observation evidence does not establish its effect on purchasing decisions; it is best understood here as a possible contextual influence.

Storytelling provides another perspective on these findings. Pulizzi (2012) discusses storytelling as a marketing approach that can engage audiences, while McKee and Gerace (2018) emphasize narrative in marketing communication. Lost in Jogja's portrayal of local environments and travel experiences illustrates how destination information can be framed as a story rather than a sequence of promotional claims.

Copywriting contributes to this narrative approach through concise and persuasive captions, scripts, and other messages. In a crowded digital environment, tourism businesses must present service information in ways that compete for attention without obscuring its meaning. Ningrum (2022) discusses communication and tourism branding, a relevant context for the business's efforts to combine visual material, written captions, and spoken narration.

The Entertains dimension is visible in the business's adaptation of popular formats and themes. Audience comments and other interactions provide feedback that may inform future content decisions. However, engagement with an individual post should not be equated automatically with sustained brand awareness or business growth. Publication consistency and the relevance of entertainment to the core service remain important considerations.

The results further indicate that maintaining a coherent digital presence requires a manageable publication schedule, continued collaboration, and appropriate service innovation. Consumer expectations are influenced in part by information encountered before booking, making coordination between online content and tour operations important for brand credibility.

Creates Trustworthiness is therefore closely connected to both communication and delivery. Authentic tour footage can support credibility when it reflects the experience that customers actually receive. Yet the business's limited personnel and multiple operational responsibilities constrain the frequency of content creation and its capacity to adopt new digital practices.

Taken together, the findings suggest that the four dimensions operate as complementary functions rather than isolated content categories: education and information explain the experience, entertainment attracts attention, and authenticity supports credibility. This integration offers a useful perspective on experience-based tourism marketing, while the single-case qualitative design limits claims about its wider effectiveness or causal impact on brand awareness.

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CONCLUSION

Lost in Jogja integrates educational, informational, entertaining, and trust-building messages into its digital content strategy. Instagram functions mainly as a marketing and customer-communication channel, while TikTok extends potential audience reach. Across both platforms, local exploration, spontaneous tour documentation, and accessible narratives help communicate the distinctive features of its cycling-based private tours. The study contributes a contextual illustration of how McPheat's four content-marketing dimensions can be applied to an experience-based tourism business.

These findings are limited to a qualitative case involving two informants and observations of the business's digital content; they do not establish a causal increase in brand awareness or sales. Practical priorities include consistent posting, attention to audience feedback, and alignment between promotional representations and service delivery. Future research could compare multiple private tour operators and incorporate audience interviews or platform analytics to examine how content characteristics relate to brand recognition, trust, and booking decisions.

DECLARATIONS

Author Contributions

Author 1: Conceptualization, Writing–Original Draft, Methodology, Formal Analysis.
Author 2: Validation, Writing–Review & Editing, Visualization.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Full transcripts are not publicly archived due to participant confidentiality commitments; anonymized excerpts are available upon request.

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