



## Analysis of the Role of Storytelling through Social Media in Preserving Traditional Culture

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**Abstract.** The rapid development of technology has encouraged traditional cultural practitioners to become communication bridges, conveying information about cultural values and ancestral messages. Social media is one of the most widely used tools today. Platforms like Instagram enable the creative and attractive sharing of traditional cultural activities. Instagram offers features such as photos, videos, and stories that allow users to share and consume content engagingly and interactively. In cultural preservation, storytelling through Instagram is an effective tool for reviving and spreading knowledge about traditional culture. This study focuses on storytelling through Instagram in preserving traditional culture, particularly the activities of the Pakualaman Duchy. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through content analysis of Instagram accounts focused on Pakualaman culture and participatory observation of various cultural activities promoted through Instagram. The results indicate that storytelling through Instagram plays a significant role in maintaining and promoting Pakualaman's culture. Creative and visually appealing content allows stories about Pakualaman's history, art, traditions, and activities to reach a broader audience familiar with digital media. Instagram enables the rapid and widespread dissemination of information and allows direct interaction between account managers and followers, increasing public participation and engagement in cultural preservation efforts. This study confirms that storytelling through Instagram can be an effective strategy in preserving traditional culture. Recommendations for cultural practitioners include continually innovating in content packaging and utilizing various Instagram features to attract a wider and more diverse audience and enhance public knowledge about the noble values in traditional culture.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Traditional Culture, Storytelling, Participation, Digital Transformation

### INTRODUCTION

The need and significance of paying consideration to the participatory strategy in social legacy administration is upgraded within the final decades [1]. Traditional culture reflects a community's history, values and identity passed down from generation to generation. During globalization, the existence of traditional culture often faces challenges from rapid social, technological and economic changes. Approaches that focus on people present a distinct challenge to the traditional principles set forth by material-based and values-based approaches [2]. However, advances in information technology, especially social media, offer new opportunities to preserve cultural heritage through a more advanced and accessible approach. One form of traditional culture that is rich and has high historical value in Indonesia is the culture of the Duchy of Pakualaman.

The Duchy of Pakualaman still holds traditions and traditional ceremonies that are full of symbolism, such as classical dances, gamelan, typical batik, and religious ceremonies that have been passed down from generation to generation. The importance of community in sustainable cultural heritage management has been emphasized at UNESCO meetings since 1994 (the release of the Nara Document on Authenticity) and

reiterated on a worldwide scale [3] [4]. In addition, the Duchy of Pakualaman also has philosophical values that are reflected in the way of life of its people, who still maintain local wisdom amid changing times.

However, the biggest challenge in preserving the Duchy of Pakualaman's traditional culture is maintaining its relevance and sustainability amidst the younger generation who are more exposed to popular and modern culture. The way we handle cultural heritage material has been greatly affected by digitization, both in online and physical locations. At the same time, the transfer of audio and video content enabled the creation of the most engaging narratives for the viewers [5]. Currently, the global population is increasingly shifting towards mobile devices due to the widespread use of digital media technology and social media in the everyday routines of people worldwide.

Recent trends show that more than half of the world's total population will continue to use social media in the future. Social media can be seen as a social network where individuals are represented as nodes and their connections are shown as edges linking the nodes [6]. Instagram, a platform application on social networks, has become a significant aspect of contemporary media and communication advancements [7]. Utilizing visuals for communication has become a valuable tool for organizations to enhance their connection with the community. Stories and narration play crucial roles in business communication [8]. Storytelling helps showcase traditional culture in a captivating and easy-to-understand way, enabling it to reach a broader demographic, including millennials and Gen Z.

Social media platforms are also crucial in fostering the relationship between content creators and their audience. Audiences today use their power to express opinions, desires, and necessities, as well as collaborate with the entity they are consuming media from [9]. Co-creation is a highly effective method for creating a sense of ownership among an audience [10]. Recently, online communities have emerged alongside the digital age, forming around specific cultural practices or common topics related to heritage sites or cultural heritage. Individuals could share their memories or emotions, contributing to a shared "sense of place," either with others nearby or with a global audience [11]. Participating in such an online community allows individuals to exchange their expertise on various elements of cultural heritage with experts in the industry. Continuing technological advancements, the merging of digital display and crowdsourcing technology in communication and collaboration for cultural heritage is now an essential trend [12]. Co-production, also called co-design and co-creation, is a popular method of collaborative participation used in various activities such as product design for buildings, history, activities and cultural schedule.

The enthusiasm of individuals for acquiring timely information and participating in the planning process presents significant potential for engagement through social media and in preserving cultural heritage [13]. Furthermore, social media platforms prioritize equal participation in discussions by allowing all internet users to share, communicate, view, or distribute information at a low cost. Social media platforms enable users to share information and receive immediate responses, creating a near-real-time experience [14]. The main motivation for this involvement would come from the perceived authenticity of the story, as well as the narrative tools used to introduce characters through the story's plot, which is constructed by breaking it into basic components. Moreover, the interactive mechanisms offer access to content that younger individuals are comfortable with, along with fragmented narratives that cater to their attention span [15]. The capabilities of new media technology have emphasized and generated fresh perspectives on viewing. There

has been a shift from passive audience to active media users, seeking content of their interest [16].

In new media, like Instagram, the abundance of online content has caused an easily distracted audience, leading content producers to compete for their attention. Long-form storytelling is becoming less popular in comparison to short videos that provide quick bites of information for faster consumption. However, the narrative requires the user to be focused and actively involved to progress the story. If the viewer stays passive, the content will go unnoticed [17]. The primary point of this article is that social media on Instagram can serve as platforms showcasing the values associated with historic urban landscapes of the Duchy of Pakualaman through storytelling narrative practices. The narratives shared on social media Instagram content reveal how people experience heritage in the Duchy of Pakualaman. This article shows how important it is to convey the stories and histories linked to urban heritage in Yogyakarta through such narratives. The online storytelling methods to be explored help enhance understanding of the intricate layers of historical urban areas. Through this research, it is hoped that awareness of the importance of preserving the traditional culture of the Duchy of Pakualaman can increase, as well as open new opportunities to strengthen cultural identity amid the dynamics of modernization.

## **METHODS**

This study focuses on exploring the significance of storytelling on Instagram for the preservation of Pakualaman's traditional culture. The Duchy of Pakualaman in Yogyakarta is renowned for its rich cultural heritage, encompassing traditional ceremonies, dances, music, and various art forms that have been preserved over time. Nevertheless, in this age of technology, there are significant obstacles when it comes to maintaining this tradition, particularly with the youth who dedicate more of their time online. Thus, this study examines the preservation and sharing of Pakualaman culture elements via social media, particularly Instagram, employing successful storytelling techniques.

This study utilizes a qualitative method involving content analysis of Instagram posts that focus on Pakualaman culture [18]. The sample for the study was intentionally chosen to analyze posts showcasing aspects of Pakualaman culture. The information examined comprised of text (captions), images, videos, and user engagements like likes and comments [19]. This research seeks to comprehend how narratives formed through Instagram content can assist in upholding Pakualaman's traditional cultural values by examining these different elements.

The study collected data in two stages. Initially, We compiled a list of cultural heritage events open to the public in the Duchy of Pakualaman through the official account. In the next phase of data collection, We chose certain communities and organizations for additional study. As mentioned in the literature review, it is crucial to study grassroots heritage activities and projects by the established heritage of Pakualaman in order to involve more individuals in preserving the urban past through a participatory approach.

The process of data analysis involved organizing the content into key themes, including story elements, Pakualaman culture representation, and audience reactions [20]. These themes were subsequently examined to determine their impact on the preservation of Pakualaman culture. The findings demonstrate that utilizing Instagram for storytelling

is crucial in revitalizing and introducing Pakualaman culture to a broader audience, particularly the younger generation who may not be as acquainted with this heritage. Compelling stories and captivating images in Instagram posts can form an emotional connection with viewers, ultimately heightening their admiration for the platform [21].

This research also emphasizes the importance of data validity by using triangulation techniques, where analysis results from different types of content are compared with each other to ensure consistency of findings [22]. In addition, peer checking was conducted to ensure that the researcher's interpretation of the data was objective and accurate. The findings of this study provide new insights into the potential of social media, especially Instagram, as an effective tool in supporting the preservation of Pakualaman's traditional culture. Through a creative and authentic storytelling approach, Pakualaman culture can continue to live and thrive in the midst of rapid modernization and globalization

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the important efforts to maintain the nation's identity is to preserve traditional culture amidst modernization. In achieving that goal, storytelling becomes an effective tool, especially when used in conjunction with social media platforms such as Instagram. The rich history, values, and traditions of the Duchy of Pakualaman can be conveyed with an interesting narrative that is easily understood by the public. The use of Instagram social media makes information accessible to a wider audience, especially the younger generation. The public can better understand how storytelling delivered through Instagram helps the preservation and adoption of traditional culture by the public by using Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory framework.

The theory of innovation diffusion explains how innovations spread within a community and how the community adopts them. This diffusion process consists of five main stages, namely Knowledge, Persuasion, Decision, Implementation, and Confirmation [23]. Each stage in this theory can be identified in the efforts to preserve the traditional culture of the Duchy of Pakualaman Duchy through Instagram. Some examples of content published on Instagram include major events such as *Grebeg Besar*, *Mlampah Guyub Sesarengan*, and various traditional competitions such as *Sayembara Jemparingan Mataraman*. In addition, posts related to events such as *Dhaup Ageng Ceremony* and other cultural competitions are also considered in this analysis of the role of storytelling. In today's rapidly developing era of modernization, maintaining

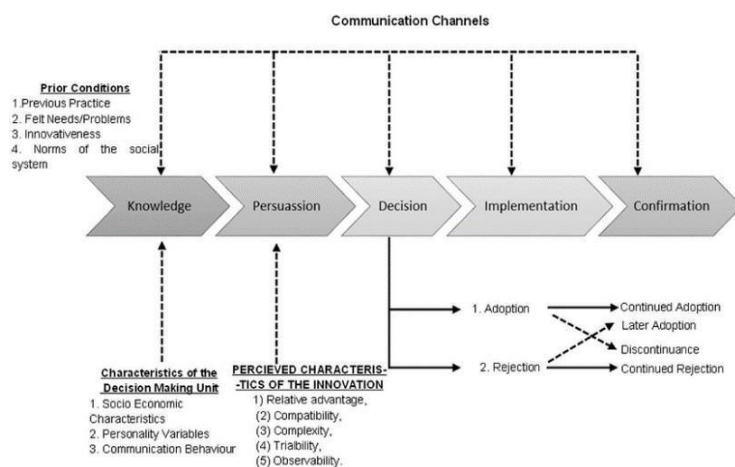


FIGURE 1. a model of five stages in the innovation-decision process (source: Roger 2019)

## 1. Knowledge: Storytelling as a Medium of Cultural Introduction

The first stage in the diffusion of innovation is knowledge. The knowledge stage is the stage where the process of individuals or groups becoming aware of innovations in decision-making begins. At this stage, a person discovers that the innovation exists and seeks knowledge about it. At the knowledge stage, the three most important questions are “what”, “how”, and “why”. In the context of maintaining culture through Instagram social media, this stage involves the public becoming aware of the Duchy of Pakualaman's traditional culture through storytelling. Storytelling conveys cultural facts and rituals into a compelling narrative, making it more memorable and impactful [24].

As the example, a reel post about *Grebeg Besar* by the account @visitingjogja, which gained 18,805 views, provides a narrative in highlighting the importance of the event. The video shows the atmosphere of the legendary *Grebeg Besar*, with *Bregada Prajurit*, elephants, and *gunungan* being paraded. The video not only shows the activities of the event, but also tells the story of *Grebeg Besar*, explaining its meaning, the symbolism of *gunungan*, and the participation of the community in the activities that take place. This narrative approach makes cultural events easier to understand and helps viewers understand the importance of the meaning behind the event, thereby increasing cultural awareness. In addition to informing, these visual stories attract new audiences who may not be familiar with the tradition.

Likewise, the post reels of the Changing Ceremony of Dwaja Bregada Jaga Pura Pakualaman shows the changing of the *Bregada* in Pakualaman. The video featured in the @jogjatv.tv account uses storytelling to convey the history of this tradition and its evolution from an internal ceremony to a public cultural event. Although there is no audience in the video, the information about the tourist attraction disseminated through Instagram is able to introduce this tradition to a wider community. In addition to these accounts, the official Pakualaman account @purapakualaman also always posts the activity which is held every Saturday Kliwon. By framing the content as a story, the audience is not only provided with information about the event; they are also invited to experience the story that tells about the tradition, continuity, and community participation. This method of storytelling at the knowledge level helps to make culture more accessible and appealing to contemporary audiences.

## 2. Persuasion: Building Emotional Connections through Storytelling

After people encounter an innovation, they create an attitude towards it. At this stage, storytelling plays an important role in building an emotional connection between the audience and the cultural content. Not only does the audience learn about the culture, but care begins to emerge. At the persuasion stage, audiences begin to show interest in the innovation and seek more information. The Instagram account of the Duchy of Pakualaman and the activities of the participating communities in this context not only provide visual documentation but also interact with the public through descriptive captions and comments. One indicator of the success of this persuasion stage is the high number of likes, views, and positive comments on some content. For example, the reels uploaded by the @alon.mlampah account show activities that take place in Pakualaman. These include traditional archery, also known as *Jemparingan*, and making traditional food. In *Jemparingan* event, the narrative told in the caption and the visualization of the archery participants emphasize how important it is to keep this tradition alive, which attracts the audience to want to know more. With 1,249 likes, 16 comments, and 22,692

views, this video shows that people are watching it and loving it. Questions on how to participate in similar activities are given in the comments of this video, showing a desire to be more involved in Pakualaman culture.



FIGURE 2. Content of @alon.mlampah in Pakualaman

The posts about *Dhaup Ageng Siraman* Traditional Ceremony on the official account of the Pakualaman Duchy @purapakualaman, which received 176,508 views, 4,261 likes, and 18 comments, and on the @infocegatanjateng.harian account, which received 12,200 views. Many people showed their curiosity and admiration for this traditional wedding ceremony in the comments on these accounts. The video successfully captured the audience's attention and instilled a positive attitude towards the culture through visuals depicting the calm and sacred atmosphere around Pakualaman.

This stage of persuasion requires content that is not only informative but also aesthetically pleasing to capture people's attention and foster a sense of appreciation for the culture on display [25]. Now people feel closer and more interested in learning about local traditions than ever before.

### 3. Decision: Deciding to Support or Participate

The decision to support or oppose the learned innovation is the next stage of innovation diffusion. At this stage, a good narrative can motivate the audience to do something. Storytelling has the ability to turn viewers into participants by presenting cultural events and practices as part of a broader narrative as a form of contribution [26]. In the preservation of Pakualaman culture through Instagram, this phase is shown by more active community interactions, such as sharing content, providing comments, or even participating in events promoted by the platform.

For example, a post with the theme *Lomba Literasi Aksara Jawa Tingkat Nasional* that can be found on the @purapakualaman account in June 2023 gained widespread attention with 638 likes and many comments showing enthusiasm for the event. Not only did it inform the audience about the competition, but it also integrated it into a larger effort to preserve an important aspect of Javanese culture. The storytelling approach, which emphasized the competition as a way to honor and maintain valuable cultural traditions, motivated the audience to participate.

In the same way, *Lomba Dolanan Anak* post uses stories to emphasize the role of

traditional children's games in cultural education and preservation. Parents and educators were encouraged to involve their children in these games because of the stories presented in these reels. As a result, they decided to actively take part and support the event. The visualization of the story here shows how children can learn cultural values through traditional games, which encourages parents to participate. Storytelling connects individual actions to a larger cultural narrative, which goes a long way in helping the audience support.

At this point, people are not just passive spectators anymore, but they start to take concrete actions, supporting the cultural preservation process and becoming an active part of the cultural preservation effort. This decision to support and participate reflects the content of these cultural activities in influencing people's actions.

#### **4. Implementation: Facilitating Cultural Engagement through Narrative-Based Content**

Individuals or groups begin to put their decisions to support innovation into practice during the implementation stage. Participating in cultural activities, attending events, or sharing content are some examples of cultural preservation. Storytelling plays an important role at this stage as it provides a clear narrative that encourages and guides the public to participate [26]. In the case of cultural preservation through Instagram, the implementation can be seen in how people passively support various cultural activities promoted by the platform.

One example of implementation is community participation in events promoted through Instagram, such as *Lomba Dolanan Anak* and *Sayembara Nasional Jemparingan Mataraman*. The post about *Sayembara Jemparingan Mataraman*, uploaded by the @purapakualaman account, received 503 likes, 5 comments. The comments given on this post show that the community not only likes the content, but also supports the organization of this type of competition or competition for education and preservation of traditional culture. This traditional archery competition was participated by the community not just as spectators. Instagram played an important role in showcasing this series of activities and gave the audience engaged online the impression that they were actually present at the event.

In addition, reels featuring *Gagrag Pakualaman* Classical Dance Competition on the official @purapakualaman account and @vacation.lagi account attracted great interaction from the Instagram audience. Through the official account of Kadipaten Pakualaman, it received 450 likes, 11 comments and 7,640 views with many comments praising and admiring the traditional dance performance. This shows that the public is not only aware of the competition but also interested in getting involved and helping the preservation of traditional dance.

This implementation process is very important as it shows that traditional culture-related content is doing positive things for the community. Since community participation is crucial for cultural preservation, active participation is essential.

#### **5. Confirmation: Validation and Reinforcement of Cultural Preservation**

According to innovation diffusion theory, the confirmation stage occurs when individuals or community groups try to validate or reinforce their decision to continue engaging in the innovation [27]. The positive experiences they gain from their involvement and the social support from their community are often sources of this confirmation. This stage is reinforced by storytelling that connects audiences and

supporters, giving them a sense of being part of a collective cultural movement. In Pakualaman culture, confirmation occurs when people who are already participating in cultural activities confirm their commitment through continued interaction, both physically at the next event and virtually through comments and re-posts on social media.

For example, the reels about the environment inside Pakualaman Temple submitted by @dutajog account that gained 1,419 likes and 27,493 views served as a validation of the community's shared cultural identity. The storytelling in this post not only documents the event but also emphasizes the culture of Pakualaman which is not only in the form of activities but also infrastructure and interaction between the royal family and the community. This narrative reinforces the audience's decision to support and participate in cultural preservation in Pakualaman, as they feel connected to a larger cultural story.

Likewise, @purapakualaman's *Siraman Dhaup Ageng Ceremony* post used storytelling to highlight the deep cultural significance of this ritual, gaining 2,411 likes and 24 comments. The narratives presented in these posts show that audiences are engaged and supportive, reinforcing their commitment to preserving and celebrating their cultural heritage. The positive comments and appreciation given by the audience after attending Siraman Dhaup Ageng or Grebeg Besar show that people are satisfied with their participation and want to continue supporting cultural events.



FIGURE 3. Content of @purapakualaman about Siraman Dhaup Ageng Ceremony

Audiences did not just attend once, but continued to support and engage in various cultural activities, as demonstrated by the documentation of competitions and processions. They also continue to participate in subsequent events. As shown by the repeated interactions across various posts on the theme of cultural preservation, Instagram stories can sustain community engagement over a longer period of time than a one-off success. As seen in posts about *Lomba Dolanan Anak* or *Grebeg Besar*, users often interact on subsequent events. This shows that the community has accepted and adapted the innovation to their cultural habits. The confirmation stage shows that the cultural innovations provided by the Duchy of Pakualaman are accepted both in the short and long term with community support. This confirmation stage is reinforced by a good narrative, helping to strengthen the audience's role in sustainable cultural preservation.

## CONCLUSIONS

Through the application of the Diffusion of Innovation theory, storytelling on social media, especially Instagram, is crucial to maintaining the traditional culture of the Duchy of Pakualaman. Each step of the diffusion, from knowledge to confirmation, proves to attract attention, foster interest, and engage the public in traditions that may have gradually been abandoned. Instagram, as a visual platform, is the perfect place to convey complex and symbolic cultural narratives in a way that is accessible and appealing to contemporary audiences. The Duchy of Pakualaman manages to keep their traditions



relevant with strong storytelling, ensuring that these cultures are not only remembered, but also continue to live and thrive amidst the challenges of modern times.

In addition to helping new generations get to know the culture, the digital content and virtual interactions invite them to be part of the preservation and sustainability of this rich cultural heritage. With its visual and narrative appeal, Instagram stories prove to be an effective tool for the diffusion of cultural innovations in the modern era. The role of social media, particularly Instagram, as a channel for the diffusion of cultural innovations, is crucial. Instagram helps the Duchy of Pakualaman maintain and spread their cultural traditions to the next generation due to its strong visualization, ease of interaction, and wide access. It allows cultural heritage to be preserved while keeping up with advances in contemporary technology and communication.

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