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EXPLORING LOCAL MYTHOLOGY: FOLKLORE NAMING OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN BANGKA THROUGH NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

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Abstract
Although several tourist destinations in the Bangka Belitung Islands, particularly in West Bangka, Central Bangka, and South Bangka, derive their names from local folklore such as Mercusuar Mentok, Batu Balai, Pantai Tanjung Ular, Pantai Tapak Antu, Pantai Lampu, and Pantai Batu Berakit the narrative structures and cultural meanings embedded in these place names have received limited scholarly attention. As a result, the role of folklore-based place naming in shaping spatial identity and cultural memory within tourism contexts remains insufficiently examined.This research aims to analyze the narrative structure and cultural significance of the names of these tourist destinations using Vladimir Propp's narrative theory and Edward Said's postcolonial perspective. It employs a descriptive-interpretive qualitative approach involving field observations and semi-structured interviews with twelve local communities. Data were collected from oral narratives, literature reviews, and local documents. The findings reveal that each place name exhibits distinct narrative function patterns, including interdiction, violation, recognition, return, absentation, villainy, struggle, testing, and reward, which together shape the moral and spiritual values of the Bangka Belitung community. Additionally, the study incorporates a postcolonial view that highlights the folklorization process of these tourist attraction names in Bangka, as an effort to negotiate local identity and transform colonial influences into autonomous cultural symbols. This study contributes to the field of cultural toponymy and tourism studies by demonstrating that the naming of tourist attractions in Bangka Belitung functions not only as a geographic identifier but also as a narrative structure that preserves collective memory and operates as a postcolonial strategy of symbolic resistance, reinforcing the cultural identity of the Bangka Belitung people.
Keywords: *Bangka Belitung; folklore; narrative structure; postcolonial; Vladimir Propp*

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism destinations are increasingly shaped not only by physical landscapes but also by the meanings and narratives attached to them. This study begins from the premise that place names are cultural texts through which communities narrate their history, regulate social values, and construct spatial identity. In many coastal societies, the naming of natural sites is closely connected with myths, oral traditions, and

collective memory. Rather than functioning merely as geographical labels, these names act as narrative markers that encode moral lessons, ecological awareness, and spiritual relationships between humans and nature. Stories, in the form of mythology, legends, and folklore, serve as the soul that brings a place to life and builds an emotional connection between visitors and the spaces they explore (Galih Kusumah & Andrianto, 2023).

In the Bangka Belitung Islands region, particularly in West Bangka, South Bangka, and Central Bangka, the mythological names of tourist attractions such as *Mercusuar Mentok, Batu Balai, Pantai Tanjung Ular, Pantai Tapak Antu, Pantai Lampu, and Pantai Batu Berakit* represent the community's spiritual and historical connection to their natural surroundings. These place names represent more than historical anecdotes; they reveal how local communities interpret natural spaces through storytelling practices that transmit values across generations Each name embodies collective memories, moral values, and expressions of local identity, affirming that places are not empty spaces, but rather the result of meaningful cultural constructions (Amer, 2024).

However, in contemporary tourism development, the narrative dimension of place naming is often overlooked. Tourism promotion approaches in many regions are still dominated by a visual and consumerist orientation, failing to address the depth of cultural meaning inherent within them (Smith, 2015). Oral narratives that once served as moral guides and community identity have shifted to mere legends devoid of practical meaning (Syam et al., 2024). This tendency risks detaching tourism spaces from the cultural knowledge systems that originally shaped them. Ironically, the development of modern tourism in various regions often ignores this rich narrative, even though the mythology of place names can be a strategic tool in building sustainable tourist attractions (Hoskins, 2025). In this situation, preserving myths and folklore is not only a cultural issue, but also a creative economy that can encourage the growth of tourism based on local wisdom (Nofiyanti et al., 2025).

Criticism is that tourism promotion strategies in many regions are still trapped in a purely visual and exotic approach, highlighting the physical beauty of a destination without providing the emotional or historical meaning inherent within it (Solomon et al., 2022). However, true tourist appeal is shaped not only by what is seen, but by what

is told (Butler, 2017). The folklore that accompanies place names can arouse tourists' curiosity, create immersive experiences, and foster emotional attachment to the destination (Bica & Schuster, 2021). Thus, Therefore, understanding the narrative structure of these stories becomes essential for revealing how local communities construct meaning through place naming.

To examine these narrative dimensions, this study employs Vladimir Propp's narrative structure theory. Propp (1968), in *Morphology of the Folktale*, identifies recurring narrative functions that structure folktales across cultures. Applying this framework allows the researcher to identify how specific narrative patterns such as prohibition, violation, struggle, and recognition operate within the folklore associated with Bangka's tourist destinations. Through this approach, the internal structure of each story can be analyzed systematically to reveal the cultural logic embedded within the narratives. For example, the story about the origins of *"Pantai Tapak Kaki Antu,"* which is a mysterious story about the existence of footprints printed on beach rocks for no clear reason, symbolizes the encounter between humans, nature, and supernatural powers that cannot be explained rationally (Herianti, 2024). Next, the story behind *"Batu Balai"* tells the story of Dempu Awang, a poor young man from Mentok who migrated to improve his fate, symbolizing human arrogance towards origins and the value of devotion to parents (Marzuki, 2023). By exploring these narrative functions, researchers can identify cultural patterns that show how local communities understand the relationship between humans, nature, and spirituality.

However, to fully understand mythology, structural analysis alone is not enough. Historical and ideological understanding is also required, for which postcolonial theory is an important analytical tool. Postcolonialism, as proposed by Edward Said, views postcolonial culture as a constant negotiation between the legacy of colonization and efforts to reconstruct local identities (Wang, 2023). In the context of Bangka Belitung, Dutch colonial history left a legacy of social and spatial structures that influence how people interpret space (Fahmi et al., 2024). Thus, place names rooted in myth often serve as a form of symbolic resistance to colonial narratives that dominate spatial meaning (Kumala, 2017). A postcolonial approach enables this research to reinterpret place-naming folklore as a practice of reclaiming narrative space, specifically the efforts

of local communities to assert their right to interpret their own space and history (Jaiswal, 2023).

The integration of narrative structure theory and postcolonialism in this study presents a new perspective on tourism. Place-naming mythology is not only an exotic oral heritage but also a cultural text containing resistance, collective memory, and economic potential. By understanding storytelling patterns and their historical context, tourism practitioners and local governments can develop story-based tourism, a strategy that places folklore at the core of the tourism experience. This integration of narrative structure and postcolonial approaches is then linked to the concept of story-based branding, or storynomics tourism, which has been implemented in several regions in Indonesia. Research by Priliantini et al., (2023), conducted in Solo Raya, showed that constructing a tourism narrative involving elements of character, conflict, and theme was able to revive tourist interest post-pandemic. Meanwhile, Wea et al., (2024), through research at *Candi Ijo*, proved that storynomics tourism can create a more profound spiritual and cultural experience for tourists. This research confirms that narrative-based tourism not only enhances the aesthetic value of a destination but also strengthens local cultural resilience amidst globalization.

However, previous studies have largely focused on marketing strategies and narrative construction, rather than examining the internal narrative structure of folktales themselves. Furthermore, while narrative studies of folktales have been conducted using structural approaches such as Vladimir Propp's morphology (Naseem & Fatima, 2024), these studies have generally been limited to literary analysis and rarely linked to the socio-historical dimensions of tourism spaces. Consequently, the relationship between folklore narrative structures, spatial identity, and historical power relations remains underexplored.

In the Indonesian context, particularly in Bangka Belitung, research on folklore has largely focused on documenting stories or identifying moral values embedded in oral traditions (Amalia et al., 2024). These studies have not yet examined how folklore place names simultaneously function as narrative structures, cultural memory, and postcolonial discourse within tourism spaces. Consequently, the analytical integration of narrative structures and postcolonial interpretations in tourism place naming studies remains underdeveloped.

Therefore, this study addresses this gap by analyzing the narrative structure of place-naming folklore in West Bangka, South Bangka, and Central Bangka. Unlike previous studies that treat folklore primarily as cultural heritage or tourism promotion material, this research conceptualizes place naming as a narrative system that simultaneously constructs moral regulation, spatial identity, and historical reinterpretation. The lack of scientific documentation and interpretation has prevented this potential from being utilized in regional tourism development. The novelty of this research lies in its interdisciplinary approach that connects narrative morphology, postcolonial interpretation, and tourism spatial identity. By analyzing how folklore structures shape the meanings of tourist destinations, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how storytelling functions not only as cultural memory but also as a mechanism for negotiating identity and reclaiming narrative authority in contemporary tourism landscapes.

From a practical perspective, this approach offers concrete solutions for the local tourism industry. By incorporating place-naming mythology into a destination branding strategy, tourism managers can present unique and authentic narratives, piquing tourists' curiosity and strengthening the community's cultural identity (Duarte & Soeiro, 2025). Creatively incorporating local narratives into destination interpretations will enhance tourists' emotional engagement, extend their stay, and expand the economic impact on local communities (Yang et al., 2025). Furthermore, this strategy helps communities become more than just tourist attractions, but active participants in defining and managing their own cultural heritage (Ahmed, 2024).

Therefore, exploring local mythology through Propp's narrative structure and postcolonial perspectives is not only about preserving oral traditions but also about developing a sustainable cultural and economic approach (Propp, 1968). This research aims to demonstrate that myths in place naming play a dual role: reflecting historical identity and serving as a culturally based commercial asset that can enhance the competitiveness of Bangka Belitung tourism both nationally and globally. This method is expected to create a space for dialogue between cultural preservation and economic growth, while also emphasizing that local stories are crucial in building humane, sustainable, and culturally independent tourism.

METHOD

This research employs a descriptive-interpretive qualitative approach because it aims to explore the meaning, structure, and historical background of the mythologies behind tourist destination names in Bangka Belitung (Novita, 2024). This approach was selected to delve into the cultural and symbolic values embedded in folklore as social texts within society. Theoretically, the study combines two main frameworks: Vladimir Propp's narrative structure theory and postcolonial theory. Propp's theory is applied to examine narrative functions in place-naming myths, such as absence, struggle, and recognition, to understand the universal patterns that shape these folktales (Naseem & Fatima, 2024). Meanwhile, postcolonial theory helps interpret these stories in the context of colonial and postcolonial history, highlighting how local communities use mythology as a form of symbolic resistance against colonial cultural dominance and as a way to renegotiate their identities within modern tourism discourse (Patel, 2022). This interdisciplinary approach enables narrative analysis to extend beyond the text's structure to include ideological perspectives and their related social changes.

The research location was centered in three districts in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province: West Bangka, South Bangka, and Central Bangka, because these regions hold a rich and strong folklore that is still alive in community practices. The folklore behind the names of places such as *Mercusuar Mentok, Batu Balai, Pantai Tanjung Ular, Pantai Tapak Antu, Pantai Lampu, and Pantai Batu Berakit* served as the main object of analysis. Primary data were collected through field observations and in-depth semi-structured interviews with twelve local participants selected through purposive sampling. Participants included four community elders, three fishermen, two local tour guides, and three tourism managers recognized by the local community as knowledgeable about the origins of place-naming folklore. Their ages ranged from 35 to 72, representing different generational perspectives on the transmission of oral traditions.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, most participants were native speakers of the Bangka Malay dialect and frequently switched between Bangka Malay and Indonesian when telling local stories. Secondary data were obtained from local archives, government documents, and relevant academic literature. Through the results of interviews, observations, and literature review, the researchers sought to obtain a

complete picture of how place-naming mythology still functions as a marker of identity and economic potential in the context of contemporary tourism.

Data analysis was conducted in stages through three layers of interpretation. The first stage was a narrative structure analysis based on Propp's morphology to identify recurring storytelling functions in each myth. The second stage was a postcolonial analysis that reinterpreted the stories as a form of collective memory reconstruction and a counter-discourse to the colonial narrative that defined local space and identity. The third stage linked the results of the two previous analyses to a folklore-based tourism branding strategy. Through a story-based branding or storynomics tourism approach, the narrative and historical interpretations were translated into a conceptual model that positions local communities as the storytelling subjects. In this way, the research is not only theoretical but also offers a practical contribution: place-naming mythology can function as both an intangible cultural heritage and an authentic, humanistic, and sustainable tourism promotion strategy for Bangka Belitung.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

In this study, Vladimir Propp's theory of narrative structure serves as the primary foundation for analyzing plot patterns and character functions in folktales related to the naming of tourist destinations in Bangka. In his work, “Morphology of the Folktale” (1968), Propp explains that every folktale has a consistent functional pattern, although the surface elements vary. Propp identified 31 narrative functions that always appear sequentially and six types of character roles (spheres of action) that contribute to the story's progression (Propp, 1968). Through this approach, narrative structure can be understood not as a random sequence of events, but as an organized system with a specific moral and cultural logic.

In the context of this study, not all of Propp's functions are used in their entirety, but only a few that are relevant to the characteristics of the folklore naming tourist destinations in Bangka Belitung. Propp emphasized that not all functions are present in the story; the most important thing is that the sequence remains logical and can explain the story's structure chronologically and symbolically, thus maintaining its relevance (Propp, 1968). These functions include absence (the departure or loss of the originator that triggers the emergence of a place name), interdiction (the prohibition that forms the

basis for the naming), violation (the violation of the prohibition that results in symbolic consequences), villainy (the emergence of a threat or curse that explains the meaning of the name), donor sequence (the giving of a sign or assistance that forms the origin of the name), testing (a moral test that confirms the value of the name), and return (the restoration of balance that is immortalized through the naming of the place). The selection of these functions is based on common patterns that emerge in six stories of the origin of tourist destination names in Bangka Belitung, which demonstrate how communities interpret the relationship between humans, nature, and spirituality through naming symbols. To clarify the theoretical framework used to analyze these narrative patterns, the study adopts Vladimir Propp's morphology of folktales, which identifies recurring narrative functions that structure traditional stories. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual structure of Vladimir Propp's narrative functions that serves as the analytical basis for examining the folklore narratives associated with tourist place names in Bangka Belitung.

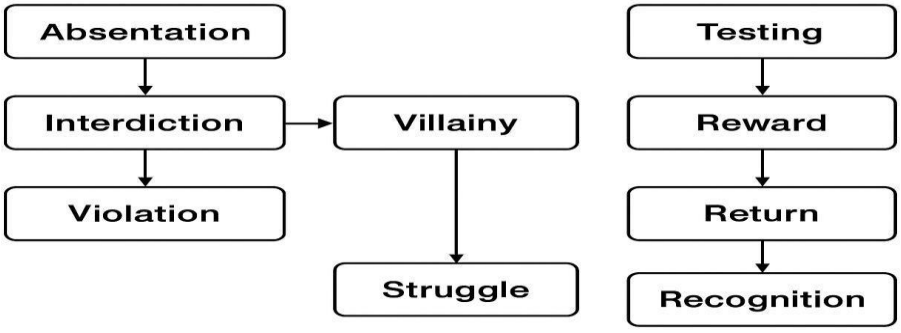


Figure 1. Vladimir Propp's Theory

The diagram above shows Vladimir Propp's narrative structure, used to analyze the folklore of naming tourist destinations in Bangka Belitung. Each stage illustrates the process of name formation as the result of a series of symbolic events. Starting from the departure or violation of norms by a figure (absentment, interdiction, violation), continuing to conflict or curses that create certain symbols (villainy, struggle), until the emergence of moral and spiritual markers immortalized in place names (testing, reward, return, recognition). This pattern shows that the naming of tourist destinations in Bangka is not merely a geographical form, but a representation of the community's

collective values and memories of events, morality, and their interactions with nature. By incorporating Edward Said's postcolonial perspective, this study views the folklore of place naming as a symbol of local identity resistance to colonial domination and modernity. According to Edward Said, postcolonial theory is a form of thinking, identity, and cultural representation of colonized communities through a discourse he calls Orientalism (Ali & Khadim, 2024). In this context, postcolonialism functions to criticize and dismantle how the legacy of colonial power still lives on in language, symbols, and cultural narratives, while simultaneously opening up space for colonized communities to reclaim authority in interpreting themselves and their own space. In the context of this study, this perspective helps explain how local communities reinterpret tourism place names not merely as historical remnants but as cultural narratives that reconstruct local identity within postcolonial space.

No	Name of Tourist Attraction	Function
1	Mercusuar Mentok, Bangka Barat	*Donor* (reinterpretation of "light"), *Return* (symbol of salvation).
2	Batu Balai, Bangka Barat	*absentation*, *interdiction*, *violation*, *villainy*, *punishment*, and *recognition*
3	Pantai Ular, Bangka Barat	*villainy* and *struggle, testing, recognition*
5	Pantai Batu Berakit, Bangka Barat	*Interdiction*, *violation*, and *punishment*
6	Pantai Tapak Antu, Bangka Tengah	*donor sequence*, *recognition*
7	Pantai Lampu, Bangka Selatan	*Helper, reward*, and *magical agent*

Table 1. narrative structure

A distinct tourist destination located in Tanjung Kalian, West Bangka, Mercusuar Mentok emerged not directly from folklore, but rather from a process of colonization. The lighthouse was built by the Dutch government in 1862 and used to

guide navigation in the Bangka Strait. Despite its historical colonial context, local people later imbued its name and presence with new meaning through oral storytelling (Dogra, 2017). Interviews with Mentok residents revealed the belief that the lighthouse is guarded by "sea guardians," or the spirits of sailors who died in the surrounding waters.

> "...sometimes on foggy nights, the lighthouse's light turns golden, and residents believe this is a sign that the spirits of old sailors are guiding their ships to prevent shipwreck..." (Interview with Mr. Herman, Fisherman, July 13, 2025).

Within Propp's analytical framework, the folklorization process of the name "*Mercusuar Mentok"* represents a donor-return function that undergoes a transformation of meaning. The lighthouse, originally a colonial instrument for maritime navigation, was reinterpreted by the local community as a symbolic gift from a supernatural power that protects the sea. The donor function emerged through the assignment of spiritual meaning to the light, which was believed to protect sailors from danger, while the return signified the return of balance between humans and the sea through this symbol of safety.

Through this narrative, the community reconstructed it as part of their belief system and collective memory. From a postcolonial perspective, the naming of *"Mercusuar Mentok"* demonstrates the resemantization of colonial space into cultural space, where European symbolic power was replaced by the authority of local meanings. These findings suggest that the narrative structure embedded in the naming of Batu Balai not only perpetuates the folktale but also serves as a cultural mechanism to reinforce moral values and social norms. From a postcolonial perspective, this narrative continuity also reflects how local communities maintain a moral and spiritual framework that resists the erosion of traditional values brought about by modern social change.

The second destination is a large stone site in the Mentok coastal area called "Batu Balai," which, through interviews with local residents, is believed to have originated from an oral story about a young man named Awang who disobeyed his mother after marrying a wealthy woman from overseas. When his mother came to see him, Awang pretended not to recognize her. In her deep disappointment, she cursed him to become a stone. The naming of "Batu Balai" was then interpreted by the community

as a symbol of moral rebuke for anyone who forgets their origins and mother. In Vladimir Propp's narrative structural analysis, the naming of "Batu Balai" displays a fairly complete sequence of functions: absence, interdiction, violation, villainy, punishment, and recognition. The absence function emerges when Awang leaves his hometown in search of a better life, followed by an interdiction in the form of his mother's message not to forget his origins. Violation of this message marks the violation function, while the curse that turns Awang into stone reflects both the villainy and punishment functions. The ending of the story, immortalized through the naming of "Batu Balai," presents a recognition function, when the community realizes the importance of devotion and loyalty to parents. From a postcolonial perspective, the naming of "Batu Balai" can also be read as a form of cultural resistance to modernity that obscures moral and spiritual ties in coastal communities. This narrative shows how the people of West Bangka use place naming as a means of teaching values and social control, while also affirming a cultural identity rooted in the relationship between humans, morality, and the land of birth.

Meanwhile, Snake Beach in the Mentok area of West Bangka has a naming story that stems from the local people's belief in a guardian creature of the sea. According to local residents, the name *"Pantai Tanjung Ular*" originates from a traditional story about the appearance of a large sea serpent believed to maintain the balance of the coastal environment. Residents believe the serpent appears before a storm or when the sea "does not want to be touched" by humans.

> "...When the sea is quiet and the wind stops, we don't dare go down to the beach. Our elders used to say that it was a sign that the guardian of the sea was passing by. That's where the name Snake Beach came from..." (Interview with Mr. Mansyur, local resident, July 14, 2025).

This story has become a local identity passed down from generation to generation, signifying the spiritual connection between the community and the sea, which is considered alive and conscious. Within the framework of Vladimir Propp's narrative structure, the name *"Pantai Tanjung Ular"* displays the dominant functions of villainy, struggle, recognition, and testing. The villainy function emerges through the presence of the sea serpent, which acts as a moral tester for humans against greed and violations of natural boundaries. Meanwhile, the struggle function is represented by

coastal communities attempting to adapt their behavior to natural signs and maintain ecological balance to avoid angering the sea guardians. The testing function refers to the stillness of the sea and the stillness of the wind as a test. Although it does notend with a punishment function, as in the story of Batu Balai, the name *"Pantai Tanjung Ular"* carries a function of recognition, namely a collective awareness of respecting the sea as a living entity with spiritual power. From a postcolonial perspective, this naming reflects the local agency of the Bangka people in maintaining their traditional cosmology against modern narratives that view nature solely as an economic resource. Through the myth of the sea snake, the community repositions the sea not as an object of exploitation, but as a subject with will and boundaries.

The next tourist destination is Batu Berakit Beach. According to an interview with Mr. Rahmat, based on oral accounts from the local community of Air Putih Village, this story is still often told to fishermen's children. The story tells of a young man who built a raft out of stone to avoid sinking while fishing in the middle of the sea. However, because he violated the prohibition on going to sea on a full moon, he was cursed to become stone along with his raft. In Propp's theory, this story encompasses the functions of interdiction, violation, and punishment. The shape of the large rocks on the beach is then considered a "petrified raft." From a postcolonial perspective, this legend emphasizes the spiritual connection between humans and the sea, while also critiquing the practices of natural exploitation inherited from the colonial economic system of the past.

Then, the Tapak Antu Beach destination in Central Bangka, whose name originates from an oral tradition about the footprints of a supernatural creature believed to have appeared after a mysterious plague struck the fishing village in the past. According to residents of Kurau Village, one night there was a heavy storm accompanied by a thunderous roar, and the next morning, residents discovered giant footprints on the rocks along the shore.

> "...These footprints were considered a sign that the guardian spirits of the sea had come down to help ward off the disease that had struck the village. Since then, the beach has been called Tapak Antuta—the footprints of spirits..." (Interview with Mrs. Rosmiati, a local resident, July 14, 2025).

This name later became a symbol of healing and spiritual protection for the local community. In Vladimir Propp's structural analysis, the naming of "Tapak Antu Beach" displays a dominant donor sequence and recognition function. The donor sequence function is evident through the presence of sea guardian spirits as providers of supernatural assistance to humans, while recognition emerges in the community's awareness of the spiritual significance of this assistance. There is no direct conflict between humans and supernatural forces, but this reciprocal relationship demonstrates a balance between two worlds: the human and the spiritual realm. From a postcolonial perspective, the naming of "Tapak Antu" demonstrates how the local community reclaimed discourses about the space of illness and disaster, which during the colonial period were often associated with "backwardness" or superstition. Through this folklore, the community asserted their own knowledge of illness and salvation based on ecological harmony and local spirituality. Thus, the naming of "Tapak Antu" demonstrates how local myths and morality functioned as a form of epistemological resistance to colonial views that marginalized indigenous beliefs.

Lampu Pulau Lepar Beach, located in the South Bangka region, has a naming story closely linked to the spiritual narratives of its fishing community. According to local residents, the name "Pantai Lampu" comes from stories of mysterious lights often seen on the open sea on foggy nights. Residents believe that the lights are not from ships, but from the lanterns of the spirits of sailors who died in storms, who now guide the ships to safety.

> "...When the lights appear at sea, we know the sea is dangerous. But strangely, ships that follow the light always survive. That's why the beach is called Pantai Lampu..." (Interview with Mr. Idris, lighthouse keeper, July 15, 2025).

Within Propp's narrative structure, the name "Pantai Lampu" demonstrates the dominant functions of helper, magical agent, and reward. The lanterns of the sailor spirits act as helpers, providing symbolic assistance, while the light itself functions as a magical agent, guiding humans through the dangers of the sea, and the safety of the community becomes a symbol of reward. This pattern not only emphasizes the spiritual connection between humans and the sailor spirits but also conveys a cosmological awareness that the sea is a space with its own life and morality. From a postcolonial perspective, this naming folklore demonstrates how the people of South Bangka adapted

the symbol of light, often associated with European knowledge and "enlightenment" in the colonial context, into a local symbol of maritime safety and solidarity. The naming of "Pantai Lampu" thus reflects the process of colonial symbols becoming cultural markers that support the spiritual experiences of coastal communities. Light is no longer a representation of colonial power, but a local radiance that embodies the values of humanity, protection, and a harmonious relationship between humans and the sea.

In the six folklore narratives analyzed in this study, a recurring pattern emerges in which narrative structure is closely linked to moral regulation and spatial identity. Functions such as prohibition, violation, and punishment frequently appear in stories related to coastal environments, suggesting that folklore plays a role in regulating human interactions with nature. This narrative pattern demonstrates that place naming in Bangka Belitung is not only descriptive but also normative, embedding ethical guidelines in geographical memory.

Furthermore, when interpreted through a postcolonial lens, these narratives reveal how local communities actively reinterpret natural and colonial spaces through storytelling. Rather than simply preserving folklore as cultural heritage, these narratives function as discursive tools that negotiate identity, spirituality, and historical experience in the context of contemporary tourism. This suggests that folklore-based place naming can operate simultaneously as narrative structures, cultural memory, and symbolic resistance.

These six legends demonstrate that Propp's functions not only describe the sequence of characters' actions but also demonstrate the local community's value system, which emphasizes the balance between humans and nature. The application of Propp's theory in this study allows for the unraveling of structures that are not merely narrative but also ideological. When read through a postcolonial lens, these structures also demonstrate the Bangka people's efforts to maintain their narrative authority over geographical space and cultural meanings that were once diminished by colonial discourse. Thus, Propp's theory of narrative structure not only explains the internal logic of folktales, but also opens up space for reading folklore as a cultural strategy in negotiating local identity, power, and traditions amidst changing times.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the naming of tourist attractions in Bangka Belitung is not merely a functional act of geographic identification but a culturally embedded practice that reflects complex meaning systems. In relation to the research objectives, the analysis confirms that place names serve as narrative containers through which local communities encode moral values, ecological awareness, and spiritual beliefs. This indicates that toponymy in the Bangka context operates as a form of cultural expression that connects human experience with the natural environment. The identification of narrative functions such as absentation, interdiction, violation, villainy, struggle, testing, reward, and recognition, based on the framework of Vladimir Propp (1968) suggests that the selected place names are structured in ways similar to traditional folklore narratives. This finding implies that naming practices are not arbitrary but follow recognizable narrative patterns that reflect shared cultural knowledge. These patterns also reveal how coastal communities conceptualize their relationship with nature, particularly through moral lessons related to environmental balance and social harmony.

Furthermore, the findings answer the research questions by demonstrating that folklore embedded in place names functions as a mechanism for intergenerational knowledge transmission. The observed patterns indicate that storytelling traditions are sustained not only through oral narratives but also through spatial markers embedded in the landscape. This expands the understanding of folklore as a living system that is continuously reproduced in everyday life. The implications of these findings are significant for understanding tourism landscapes. The results suggest that tourism destinations in Bangka Belitung should be interpreted as narrative spaces rather than purely physical sites. This perspective highlights the importance of integrating cultural narratives into tourism development, particularly in promoting sustainable and culturally sensitive practices. In this sense, the study contributes to a broader understanding of how local knowledge systems shape the meaning and value of tourism destinations.

The findings of this study are also consistent with previous research in cultural toponymy and folklore studies, which emphasize that place names often function as carriers of collective memory and cultural identity. Earlier studies (Amalia et al., 2024;

Ahmed, 2024 & Kumala, 2017) have shown that toponymic practices reflect historical experiences, environmental interactions, and belief systems embedded within local communities. The present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that such meanings can also be analyzed through narrative structures, particularly using a morphological approach. In comparison with prior research on folklore and tourism, the results align with studies suggesting that storytelling plays a crucial role in enhancing the cultural value of tourism destinations. However, this study goes further by systematically identifying narrative functions within place names, thereby offering a more structured analytical framework. This approach provides a novel contribution by bridging folklore analysis with tourism studies, particularly through the concept of narrative-based destination interpretation.

Moreover, the findings of this study can be theoretically explained through the integration of narrative morphology and postcolonial perspectives. The application of Vladimir Propp's framework demonstrates that place names in Bangka Belitung exhibit structural similarities to folktales, particularly in the sequencing of narrative functions. This supports the assumption that folklore operates through patterned structures that are deeply embedded in cultural practices, including naming systems. At the same time, the findings refine Propp's theory by extending its application beyond oral or written narratives to spatial and cultural phenomena. This suggests that narrative morphology is not limited to storytelling in a conventional sense but can also be identified in the symbolic organization of landscapes. In this way, the study contributes to the theoretical development of folklore studies by demonstrating the adaptability of narrative analysis across different cultural forms.

From a postcolonial perspective, the reinterpretation of place names reflects a process of reclaiming spatial identity. The findings support the idea that local communities actively negotiate meanings inherited from colonial history, transforming them into expressions of cultural autonomy. This process aligns with postcolonial theories that emphasize hybridity, reinterpretation, and the localization of meaning. Rather than passively inheriting colonial spatial structures, the Bangka people engage in a dynamic process of meaning-making that repositions their cultural identity within the landscape.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the naming of tourist attractions in West Bangka, Central Bangka, and South Bangka functions not merely as geographical markers but as representations of cultural meaning systems that reflect the relationship between humans, nature, and local spirituality. Using Vladimir Propp's theoretical framework, the findings reveal that the six tourist attractions contain narrative functions that emphasize the moral values and ecological awareness of coastal communities, including absentation, interdiction, violation, villainy, struggle, testing, reward, and recognition.

These narrative patterns demonstrate that folklore embedded in place names serves as a symbolic mechanism through which local communities transmit moral teachings, ecological awareness, and spiritual beliefs across generations. From a postcolonial perspective, the folklorization of place names also illustrates how the Bangka people reinterpret spatial meanings inherited from colonial history and transform them into autonomous cultural symbols. This reinterpretation indicates that tourism landscapes in Bangka Belitung function not only as physical spaces but also as narrative spaces where cultural identity and historical memory are continuously negotiated. This study contributes to the fields of cultural toponymy, folklore studies, and tourism studies by demonstrating that folklore-based place naming can be analyzed simultaneously as a narrative structure, a form of cultural memory, and a postcolonial strategy for reclaiming spatial identity.

By integrating Vladimir Propp’s narrative morphology with a postcolonial perspective, this research offers an interdisciplinary framework for understanding how local storytelling traditions shape the cultural meanings of tourism destinations. Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The analysis focuses on six tourist destinations in three regions of Bangka Belitung and relies primarily on qualitative data obtained from interviews with local community members.Therefore, the findings may not fully represent the diversity of folklore narratives and place-naming traditions across the entire Bangka Belitung region. Future research is recommended to expand the scope of analysis by examining a larger number of tourism sites and incorporating comparative studies with other regions in Indonesia. Further studies may also explore how folklore-based place naming can be integrated into sustainable tourism strategies,

particularly through narrative-based destination branding and storynomics tourism approaches.

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