

Discovering Indonesia: Video Reactions of *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* Storynomic Tourism

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Abstract

The storynomic tourism approach uses the power of storytelling in the effort to enhance quality tourism and promote destinations. In enhancing this approach a promotional video of Java, called *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* was launched in 2022 in a theme of rediscovering the mind, body, and soul of Java whilst promoting several destinations in Java. The video ignited multiple reaction videos from Youtubers around the world, a vernacular form of visual production where the Youtuber reacts to a certain media content. Reaction videos towards *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* holds an interpretation of Java from the creator as well as a production of representation of Java as a destination in the text. Thus, putting video reactions of *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* as a digital work that extends its designated promotional means with a situated cultural experience of the creator; reframing narration of the destination to their viewers and followers. The present study focuses on “reaction videos” on YouTube towards *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* in exploring representation and interpretation of the culture and destination. The exploration of interpretation and production in reaction videos of tourism storynomics may offer an understanding to the dynamics of tourism promotional videos in this digitalscape. For the analysis of this exploration, an audience reception framework situated in cultural studies is used to study the reaction videos and comments. The study has found reaction videos as a significant promotional tool that drives further narrations of Indonesia and the reproduction of perceived Java as a destination of peace, serenity, mystical and culturally rich destination.

Keywords: reaction videos; youtube; storynomic; tourism; social media

Introduction

Watching spontaneous human reactions has long been a natural appeal for many people. These expressions have driven media industries in capturing and producing various media contents on the basis of delivering authentic emotions in which the audiences crave. Before the internet, talk shows, variety shows, and reality shows were the few video-production forms that have been televised in winning

audience attention since the 1940s and still to date. Today, the growth of digital technologies and impact of the internet have led to more diverse, innovative, and creative media contents. Thus, revolutionising the form, production processes, and economy dynamics of the media entertainment industries is inevitable. The emergence of communication technology enables personalised experience of the digital world, birth prosumers and mainly

participatory production that marks a new era in the communication scape.

Social media and video sharing websites have become daily use platforms of society today. Youtube is the most prominent website, leading the video sharing platforms to date. YouTube's reported revenue for 2021 was about 24 billion USD (Statista, 2022). According to Hootsuite 2022 Digital Report, the site gets 14.3 billion visits per month, which is more than Facebook, and Instagram. The rate of videos being uploaded per minute has a rate of more than 500 hours. As of May 2019, videos were being uploaded at a rate of more than 500 hours of content per minute (Loke Hale, 2019). Since its purchase by Google, YouTube has the ability to link with other platforms and has become a platform for established media corporations in expanding their audience. Most content in Youtube is generated by individuals, giving birth to Youtubers as to many other social media based celebrities. Young people mutually have produced, consume, and circulate privatised self-images through this platform (Light.et.al, 2012). There are various categories of Youtube content, ranging from music, films, news, documentaries, live streams, and vlogs.

The genre of reaction videos on Youtube became popular and its virality led corporations to approach creators in making such content (Baht, 25 Jan 2021). The appeal of this genre to attract and engage with audiences have led reaction videos as tools for marketing, promotion and branding (Archer, 21 Oct 2018). According to The New York Times Magazine, this genre started in 2007 (Anderson, 25 Nov 2011) but became popular during the Covid-19 pandemic (Baht, 25 Jan 2021).

Essentially, reaction videos are videos of other people watching videos. This content consists of creators recording their spontaneous reactions and comments while watching an existing piece of content, often showing those videos within their own (Kim and Gang 2012; Ramstad 2012). As Yeran Kim mentions, the name "reaction video" refers to the portion of the video where the producer reacts to the content being watched (Kim, 2016). Reaction videos' rise of popularity have become a genre of its own. In the context of digital mediascape, this genre is a significant form of cultural practice in which consumers of particular content construct collective identity (Gray et.al. 2007; Pearson, 2010).

Reaction videos can also be seen as construction and framing of perception as it is the active production of interpretation and self-reactive images (Breinstein, 24 Aug 2020; Bird, 2011; Bruns, 2008). Reaction videos may also be seen and utilised as a marketing as well as a promotional tool as it enables content to engage with wide audiences and it may become "a leading market tool used for product promotion by social media influencers (Schwemmer & Ziewiecki, 2018).

During the Covid-19 pandemic that took a surprise halt in almost every sector of society, storynomics grew to be considered seriously in developing the Indonesian tourism sector (Khairally, 11 Nov 2021). Storynomics itself is a story-driven marketing that lays its core on effective storytelling (McKee and Gerace, 2018). Storynomics approach in tourism puts forward a narrative of living culture to develop and promote destinations. The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy also launched storynomics development in tourism within the five priority destinations in Indonesia (Kemenparekraf, 21 May 2021). Promotional videos were produced in hand with the development of story based tourism during the pandemics. One of which was a video called *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* produced in 2021 in narrating Javanese culture whilst depicting destinations in Java.

Jawa Jagad Jawi uploaded in Youtube ignited Youtubers in creating reaction videos towards the promotional film supported by the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. Several Indonesian tourism campaign videos in prior, such as "Indonesia: Emerald of the Equator" in 2009 also became a content that led to various video reactions by Youtubers from different countries. Nonetheless, *Jawa Jagad Jiwa* is the first video following the storynomic approach.

Reaction videos towards *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* holds an interpretation of Java from the creator as well as a production of representation of Java as a destination in the text. Thus, putting video reactions of *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* as a digital work that extends its designated promotional means with a situated cultural experience of the creator; reframing narration of the destination to their viewers and followers. Beyond its integrated expansion of marketing and promotion of which reaction videos create engagement to their followers, the question of representation and interpretation of the culture

and destination in the promotional tourism storynomics of *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* is yet to be explored; how is the Javanese culture in the storynomics perceived?; what is the cultural appeal taken by the creators?; what is reproduced in the reaction videos?; and how are the responses of viewers? Exploring the interpretation and production in reaction videos of tourism storynomics may offer an understanding to the dynamics of tourism promotional videos in this digitalscape.

Theoretical Framework

Tourism has always played an increasingly important role in Indonesia's economic growth. There are five major destinations known as the five super priority destinations in Indonesia (Mandalika, Borobudur, Toba, Likupang and Labuan Bajo) that became the government focus in tourism development strategy when the pandemic hit globally. In the effort for tourism recovery, the Indonesian government turns to the power of storytelling in promoting the country's major tourist destinations. The storytelling approach is expected to enhance tourism quality, tourists experiences and prolong visitor's stay. The full recovery is estimated to be reached by the year 2025 (Jakarta Post, 19 Aug 2020) and make up for the Covid-19 crisis that had wiped an estimated 20 billion USD of Indonesia's tourism revenue (Kemenparekraf, 18 Aug 2021).

In enhancing storynomics approach the Ministry of Tourism and Economy Creative in collaboration with filmmakers launched a promotional video of Java, an island where Borobudur as one of the five super-priority destinations is located. This video is a short film called *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* that captures the culture and spirit of Java, in a theme of rediscovering the mind, body, and soul of Java. The film that took about eight months of production uses dense sublime Javanese cultural representation in narrating its story.

Tourism and Video Promotions

Tourism is known as one of the biggest economic forces on a global scale (World Tourism Organisation, 2012). The growth of tourism has led to an increase of destination and tourist attractions world wide (Duch, 2014). In the midst of advanced communication technology and daily use of networked information, the internet plays an important role

in thrusting the growth of tourism. It has become a means for tourists to search for information before travelling (Reino & Hay, 2014) and more a site to discover destinations and generate visit intent. Video of destinations and travel becomes more significant towards tourism as audiovisual production shows what destinations can offer and creates a mental voyage (Lee & Wicks, 2010). This is both relevant to User generated content videos that circulates widely in social media today as well as promotional video produced by tourism authorities as a destination marketing tool.

Promotional videos produced by tourism authorities have been used as a destination marketing tool for many decades (Pan, Santos & Kim, 2017). Promotional videos shape destination images (Pan, 2011), affect tourists' attitudes and visit intention positively (Guerrero-Rodríguez, Stepchenkova & Kirilenko, 2020). Furthermore, studies on promotional videos from different creators namely authorities and user generated content from tourists have a higher effect of intention to visit as they are considered to present information that are more reliable, accurate, complete and relevant (Un-Kon, 2017).

Reaction Videos

Reaction videos are a significant part of cultural practices. This Youtube content genre has become popular, especially in fan groups because it enables fans to confirm that they are not lone consumers of the particular content and, at the same time constructing a collective fan identity (Gray et al. 2007). Reaction videos are produced to capture genuine expression where the creator expresses their thoughts and opinions on the contents being reacted to. The captured expressions of the creator/reactor are part of the production, which makes the role of the creator in two unique positions (Bird, 2011); as a reactor in the interpretative position and as a creator of the reactive self-image in the producer position (Kim, 2016).

Kim (2016) describes that reaction videos have a generic form in three parts; the introduction, the middle and the end. The introduction is where the creator/YouTuber greets the audience. The middle are the facial expressions, gestures and comments. The third is the discussion or other opinions of the creator as the closing.

Reaction videos can be seen as a marketing and promotional tool. Reaction

video content plays a crucial role in translating the appeal of the medium reacted to their audiences. Michelle Cho shared her analyses on how South Korean boy band BTS uses fan reaction videos as a promotional tool at the UCLA Centre for Korean Studies (UCLA, 2018).

Reaction videos in Youtube could be considered as a marketing and promotional tool due to its capability to engage with the enormous market in getting tens of millions of views. Like many social media marketing scape; Youtube has subsequently grown into a huge channel filled with endorsers, influencers, YouTubers, promotions, advertising, product placement, and testimonials. For marketers, friending /following /subscribing validates their efforts and activates a viral distribution of their brand across channels (IAB, 2009).

Material and Methodology

For the analysis of this exploration, an audience reception framework situated in cultural studies is used. This framework puts the YouTubers as active audiences, interpreting media through their own situated cultural experience (Hall, 1999) as well as representation of text produced in cultivating their audience (Jenkins, 2003). Hence, the reaction videos are seen as texts rather than as ethnographic audience data. Metadata of the video reaction and comments of the reaction videos are also taken into consideration in understanding the dynamics of reaction video of *Jiwa Jagad Jawi*.

The reaction videos taken into account of this research are reaction videos uploaded in February 2022, not more than a month after the official video was published, and 7 main accounts with high subscribers and viewers are analysed (Tabel.1).

Table 1: Seven *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* Video Reactions Uploaded in February 2022

Video Reactions	Viewed	Comments
TK Top Travel (25.2K Subscribers) Uploaded, 23 Feb 2022	61,612	66
TriFateGeo (95.8K Subscribers) Uploaded 19 Feb 2022	39,632	117
Reactions by D (88.4K Subscribers) Uploaded 17 February 2022	16,337	67
Maria Estefano (60.8K Subscriber) Uploaded 16 February 2022	14,890	67
Rukia Dagtan (187K Subscribers) Uploaded 17 Feb 2022	8,928	57
Vibe with Judeo (86.7K Subscribers) Uploaded 18 February 2022	7,424	18
FrankValchiria (428K Subscribers) Uploaded 21 February 2022	5,663	39

Result and Discussions

The promotional video *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* was uploaded through the Official Account of the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy named 'Wonderful Indonesia' on 5 February 2022. In the same month 33 reaction videos were uploaded by Youtubers from different countries, with the first video reaction uploaded 6 days after the 11th of February. By May 2022, the promotional video in the official account had reached 397,483 views and had a total of over 65 different reaction videos from Youtubers with diverse origins. Whilst the number viewers of the reaction videos varies (see Table 1), the multiplying number of reaction videos created

in itself plays a role in spreading and distributing the content to their followers. Hence, reaction videos of the storynomic tourism content facilitate awareness as well as functioning as a promotional tool in reaching a wider audience. Having the number of viewers from the reaction videos we can predict that the number of reach may double the number of reach of the official video within weeks. This makes reaction videos an effective tourism promotional tool, although it should be considered that reaction videos are a content of itself that may put out messages that differ from the original content.

Expressing Attraction of Content

Creators of reaction videos produce their content by expressing their thoughts and perception of the video that they are looking at. These expressions are embedded in gesture, facial expression and commentary of the creators towards the promotional tourism video played. There are several distinct scenes and moments in the promotional video that give rise to expressions. Foregoing, the elaboration of creators expressions, a short description of the video and several key elements to take into account in prior.

Jiwa Jagad Jawi video which lasts for 8 minutes 12 seconds is an artistic cinematic work that tells a story of a Javanese woman in search of and finding her roots, identity, and family (Figure 1). The video highlights its message with ‘Rediscover the Spirit of Java’ as it’s closing. The video depicts various destinations in Java that consist of heritage

sites, natural sites, and cultural sites. There are six tourist destinations highlighted, namely Borobudur Temple, Kahyangan Dlepih, Tembi Tourism Village, Kotagede, Sri Gethuk Waterfall, and Sewu Temple.

The Borobudur temple dominates the screen time of places explored throughout the video. Javanese traditions consisting of rituals of worship and purification are intertwined with daily cultural practice such as cultural festival, traditional massage, tradisional dance, and *wayang* (shadow puppet show). The whole video of *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* is filled with Javanese cultural symbols, to name some are the depiction of Semar, a sacred character in Javanese mythology that is known as the guardian spirit of Java; javanese batik and apparels; javanese masks; and traditional javanese songs.

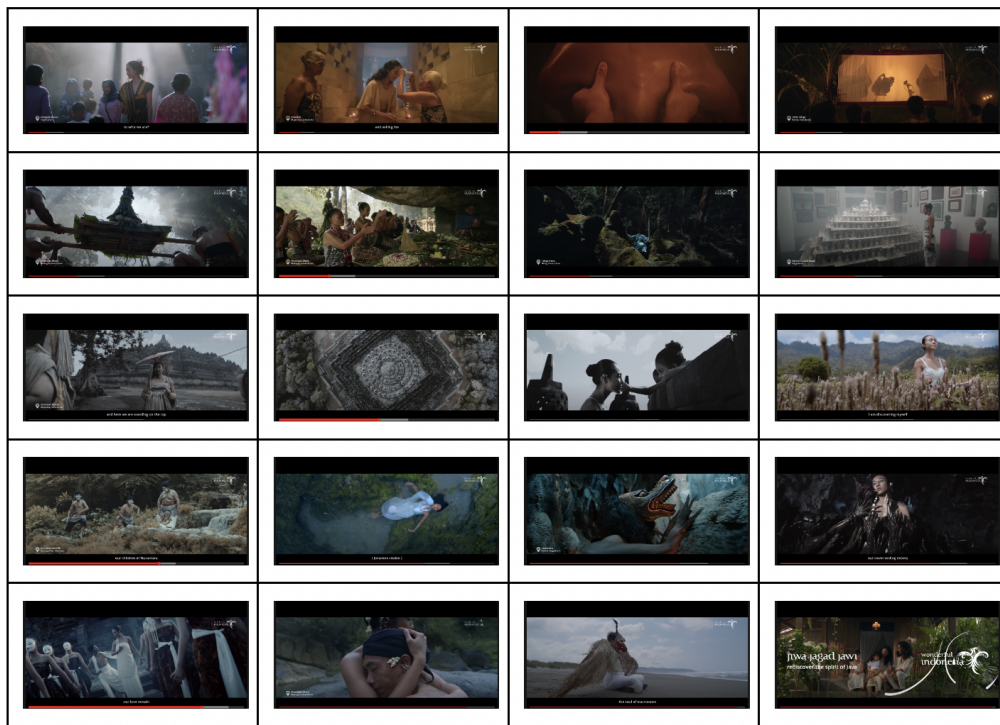


Figure 1: Jiwa Jagad Jawi

Source: Screen Capture from official video of Jiwa Jagad Jawi

There is a common response from all the reaction video creators whilst watching the video, that agreed upon an outstanding cinematic production. Appreciation towards an artistic and well produced video was expressed verbally with words such as ‘fantastic’, ‘magnificent’, ‘beautiful’ and ‘amazing’ cinematography. The comments of a well produced tourism video is also often followed

by a commentary of wonder why the video has yet to have millions of viewers. Another common response that is apparent from the creators is their expressions of confusion and curiosity in the beginning of the video and consistent expression of wonder throughout the end.

The highly symbolic and artistic video left few Youtubers speechless or short in

commentary such as from the account ‘Positive Reactions’ that commented with one word; ‘lost’ before stumbling into interpreting what they have understood from the video. The depiction of Semar, also left most Youtubers in wonder. One Youtuber understood it as indigenous tribes still living in the tranquil places throughout Java, some found it as a form of art, others found him as a representation of friendly locals. The voice over of Semar speaking in the video grabbed most of the creators attention. though none of the creators understood it as the voice of Semar. The common reaction to Semar’s voice over is spine chilling. The whole video does offer a dynamic nuance of thriller in several parts that does keep the audience attention; as some Youtubers commented “I got goosebumps” (Rukia Dagtan from Philippines), “This sounds like a horror movie” (TriFateGeo from America).

There is a general scene and moments in the promotional video that caught most of the creators’ attention; namely the Borobudur Temple. This site was known to many Youtubers and generated a common positive commentary of how extraordinarily beautiful the site is and have facial expressions of excitement with visual exploration of Borobudur. This site is also the main site that most Youtubers mention as a must see for themselves after the pandemic; either its with ‘this I have to see’, “I have to go to Indonesia”, “I would really like to go here”, and so on. In most of the reaction videos reactions, the creators would exclaim an invite to their audience to visit Indonesia.

There are several distinct scenes, elements, and moments in the promotional video that were appealing and left the creators curious that represent an intertwining interpretation with their personal cultural background or experience. For example; the music was mentioned by Youtubers that have interest in music. The dancing scene also brought up some comments interconnecting the dance with yoga. Elements of fashion and apparels also brought several reactions, i.e ‘Vibe with Judeo’ commented “those prints are like African prints” referring to the batik. These expressions and comments that are personal to the creators are the very essence of what draws followers and audiences to reaction videos. The genuine expression and subjective comments mould the Youtubers character and persona that draw the audience; their response may vary to

be funny, informative, or sarcastic. It is this emotion of the creator expressed that becomes the foundation of the consumption of reaction video.

The general reaction, expression, and comments were all positive feedback. It is fair to say that positive reactions from creators are influenced by their position and awareness as a Youtuber to be precautious towards cultural sensitivity and their interest in reaching a wide multicultural audience. Viewers comments on the other hand, could be seen free from such interests and is an important element in weighing the engagement with viewers.

A great deal of the viewers' comments are exclamations from Indonesian that expresses their pride to be an Indonesian citizen. There is a high engagement of Indonesian people offering further information on Java and Indonesian culture, as well as sharing personal experiences of Indonesia. Whilst most foreign viewers shared positive comments of interest, a few also engaged in sharing and promoting other destinations in Indonesia they had experience as interesting; such as a viewer by the name Asher Turan commenting in Italian to the Italian Youtuber Frank Valchiria about Nusa Tenggara Timur in Indonesia. Viewers' comments depict the dynamic of information spread and discourse, creating awareness of Indonesia tourism and supporting the storynomic tourism beyond the original video.

Making-Sense of Jiwa Jagad Jawi

The opinion and perception on Indonesia expressed by the creators are key factors in weighing the effects of storynomic tourism video. The concluded opinion of *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* comes to an interesting perception on Java and Indonesia. The storyline of *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* where a woman is in search of her identity was hardly highlighted by the creators, but they have highlighted the conclusion of a culturally rich country. Depictions of the temples are interpreted as a culturally rich representation and endless stories of historical roots. Reaction by D, for example, commented how Indonesia has an incredible background in creating Indonesia today. Rituals depicted in the video were interpreted as a country of rich religions, whilst traditional dances in the video were mostly interpreted as diverse tribes in Indonesia. Making a perception of Java as a mystical and culturally rich destination.

Most of the creators recognized and expressed their awe of the Borobudur temple as the biggest Buddhist heritage site in the world, although the island of Java is interchangeably mentioned as Bali; having the popularity of Bali as a tourist destination. This spurred many viewers' comments in offering information that Bali is a part of Indonesia and Java is another island in the archipelago.

The storynomic tourism video *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* was regarded by the creators as having a powerful message of peace, nature, mystics and serenity. Besides the beautiful scenery of nature that were repeated in their opinions, the impression of Javanese culture drove the perception of culturally rooted traditions in Java.

The place was expressed as a place filled with culture and mantras, where it transposed a different way of life that is far from the saturated tiring expectation in modern life. As Youtuber Rukia Dagtan states in conclusion that Indonesia is full of art that speaks from the heart. A place where people go to find themselves.

Conclusion

Video reactions of storynomic tourism is a significant promotional tool. The engagement and number of viewers from the reaction videos swiftly multiplies and reaches a wider audience globally, enhancing awareness of Indonesian tourism and destinations. Reaction videos created by Youtubers towards *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* overall holds a positive message and a persuasive invitation to the viewers to visit and explore Indonesia, thus supporting a tourism marketing approach. The unique personal expressions of Youtubers are the main appeal to followers and viewers, and drive engaging narration and discussions of cultural elements and destinations. This engaging narration supports the very foundation of the storynomics tourism approach itself.

The concluded opinion of *Jiwa Jagad Jawi* comes to an interesting perception on Java and Indonesia. The screen time of Borobudur temple that dominates the video succeedingly became a highlight focus to Youtubers and can be seen as an accomplished production in promoting Borobudur as one of the 5 super-destinations in Indonesia. The cinematic work plays a significant role in driving the production of Java by the Youtubers as remaking Java as a mystical and culturally rich destination.

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