

## Building city branding of Yogyakarta as a cultural city: A youtube user-generated content analysis

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### Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the role of social media in the form of Youtube in promoting the city branding of Yogyakarta, which has been known as a city of culture. Specifically, this research develops three research questions: 1) “What is the role of Youtube social media in promoting city branding of Yogyakarta?”, 2) “Does the cultural aspect appear as the main image of Yogyakarta on Youtube social media?”, 3) “What are the roles of individuals and institutions in the process of Yogyakarta city branding as a cultural city on social media Youtube?”. A total of 240 user-generated content on Youtube were collected via #yogyakarta over a period of 1 month. The content is then analyzed using content information analysis. This study adopts 12 different categories in order to analyze video content. Related to the research question, the research results show that social media plays an important role in creating city branding in Yogyakarta. In this case, users are able to describe Yogyakarta from various perspectives through social media (Youtube). Second, the cultural aspects identified are not the main aspects related to Yogyakarta, but local culinary delights and historical buildings. Nonetheless, these two aspects have a long history and connection with the culture in Yogyakarta. For the last question, the research results show that individuals play a bigger role in building Yogyakarta city branding than institutions. This shows that individuals are positioned not only as consumers of social media but also as producers of social media.

**Keyword:** City branding; Culture; User-generated content



## INTRODUCTION

Each region has its own tourism characteristics that make it unique and superior to other regions. Yogyakarta has been known as one of the popular tourist destinations in Indonesia where the hallmark of the tourism it offers is cultural tourism (Kencono & Iqbal, 2021). For this reason, Yogyakarta is known as the only region (precisely a province) in Indonesia that still maintains a system of government in the form of a

kingdom or palace. Various kinds of local wisdom such as customs, traditions, culture, and arts are still maintained by the people of Yogyakarta until now in the midst of unstoppable modernity (Vitasurya et al., 2018). The unique nature of Yogyakarta is what attracts many tourists, both domestic and foreign, to come to Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta was even designated as the ASEAN cultural capital for the 2018-2020 period by the ASEAN ministers for culture and the arts (ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts/AMCA) (Issundari et al., 2021).

Even though the main tourist destinations in Yogyakarta are cultural tourism, when compared to other regions in Indonesia (e.g. Bali), cultural tourism developed by Yogyakarta is still not fully optimizes. According to the (Central Statistics Agency, 2019), before the COVID-19 pandemic period, the number of foreign tourists who came directly to Yogyakarta in 2019 was only 113,028 tourists. This number is much lower when compared to Bali which reached 6.2 million tourists or around 38% of the total foreign tourist arrivals to Indonesia in 2019. In fact, if observed, the two regions actually have almost the same characteristics of tourism, namely they both rely on tourism culture as a leading destination. Besides being famous for its beautiful natural attractions, Bali also combines cultural tourism to attract tourists.

In order to develop a tourist destination, an area is not only enough to have beautiful tourist attractions, but it is also important to carry out a marketing strategy to introduce the tourist area to tourists (Morrison, 2013). One of the tourism marketing strategies is to build city branding which is the slogan of a city. According to (Gertner, 2011), a place such as a city, region, or country needs to form and manage branding to attract tourists as well as to be able to compete at the global level. Place branding literature includes studies of various entities such as cities, districts, regions, countries and groups of countries (Költringer & Dickinger, 2015; Oguztimur & Akturan, 2016).

Agreed with (Acuti et al., 2018) who states that intense competition between regions as a result of globalization encourages many regions to develop city branding strategies in building a strong competitive identity. With branding, government agencies, and media companies can introduce their superior culture while differentiating it from competitors so as to have a positive impact on the tourism sector (Chen, 2018). Therefore, city branding is important as an effort to introduce the characteristics of the city to the wider community.

The city branding strategy can be built through social media in developing digital era (Ramadhani & Indradjati, 2023; Sutriadi et al., 2020). The emergence of social media as a feature of advances in information technology can shape and change marketing activities, including urban marketing (Gulbahar, M. O., Yildirim, 2015). With social media, city branding efforts are easier, more cost-effective, and more effective (Zhou & Wang, 2014). In addition, branding through social media with various texts and visuals that are relevant to the city also allows a wider audience to reach so that it attracts the attention of many people (Gümüş & Gümüş, 2016). In the end, social media as an innovative platform can be used by public institutions to interact with the community and other institutions in order to introduce their regional characteristics (Criado et al., 2013).

The term place branding (in this case city branding) can not only be understood as consumers or people who “experience” places, but also co-create and produce including sharing through their social media (Baka, 2015; Berrozpe et al., 2017; Lew, 2019; Scarles, 2011). This term is called user-generated content (UGC) which is one of

the main forms of place branding efforts through social media and is considered capable of influencing people's perceptions of a place brand (Acuti et al., 2018). This is because users who create content through social media platforms can form a brand image (Culotta & Cutler, 2016).

According to (Zenker et al., 2017), residents are not only positioned as the target group of city branding efforts but can also initiate and legitimize branding activities so that residents play a central role in branding efforts. In this case, the more content about the city that is uploaded by users on social media, the more users participate in introducing the city not only to themselves but also to their followers. Thus, indirectly the city's branding efforts will be increasingly formed. For this reason, this research focuses on the use of social media through user-generated content as a strategy that is thought to be effective in introducing the identity of a city.

Previous literature has examined the role of user-generated content (UGC) in various social media for city branding or place branding (Acuti et al., 2018; Andéhn & Lucarelli, 2014; Glinska & Rudolf, 2019; Skinner, 2018; Taecharungroj, 2018). Analyzes how the role of user-generated content can influence the process of branding London and Florence as fashion cities on Instagram. The results show that UGC posted on Instagram can accelerate the process of establishing city branding in London and Florence as world fashion cities (Acuti et al., 2018). Explores user-generated content in the form of 149 photos uploaded on various social media (e.g Facebook, Instagram, and Webpage) as an effort to create a city branding identity in Greece. The findings confirm the importance of using social media as an effective tool to introduce the features and identities of various places in Greece (Skinner, 2018).

In another study, (Taecharungroj, 2018) used user-generated content on social media in the form of TripAdvisor and Google Maps to determine city branding identity in two metropolitan areas in Bangkok, namely Khaosan Road and Yaowarat (Bangkok Chinatown). These two areas are known as the paradise of street vendors and nightlife in Bangkok. The results of image and text analysis on social media show that content related to "kalilima" traders is the most prominent component and has become a separate identity for Bangkok. (Andéhn & Lucarelli, 2014) used social media in the form of Twitter to analyze the role of social media as a conceptualizer in shaping city branding in Stockholm.

By analyzing content uploaded on Twitter for 3 months, the study concluded that social media can support city branding efforts in Stockholm. In another study, (Glinska & Rudolf, 2019) diagnosed something that was characteristic of 34 cities in Poland and Ukraine through city branding efforts posted via social media in the form of Facebook. Involving 1700 user-generated content posted on Facebook by local governments, this research proves that cities in Poland have brand images of sincerity and joy, while cities in Ukraine have personalities of sincerity and competence.

Although studies on the contribution of user-generated content shared on various social media to efforts to create city branding have been growing recently, most of the studies focus only on textual information and images (e.g Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram), while social media use in the form of audio-visual or video such as Youtube is still limited. According to (Gkritzali et al., 2016), user-generated content in the form of videos is considered more able to project and describe city branding compared to posts in the form of text or images so that it has the potential to attract more social media

users. This is because users tend to prefer moving images compared to still images (Chen, 2018).

According to the (Populix, 2022), as many as 94% of respondents in Indonesia have used YouTube in the past month, making it the most frequently accessed social media platform in Indonesia. This is reinforced by the fact that Indonesia is also the country with the third largest number of YouTube users in the world after India and the United States. In addition, according to Google, there are more than 500 hours of new content uploaded to YouTube every minute. That translates to 30,000 hours of content per hour and 720,000 hours of content per day.

For this reason, this study uses user-generated content (UGC) uploaded on the Youtube platform to analyze its role in the city branding of Yogyakarta as a city of culture. This study develops three research questions, namely: H1: What is the role of Youtube social media in promoting the city branding of Yogyakarta?; H2: Does the cultural aspect appear as the main image of Yogyakarta on Youtube social media?; H3: What are the roles of individuals and institutions in the city branding process of Yogyakarta as a city of culture on Youtube social media?.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

Data in the form of user-generated video content posted on Youtube using #yogyakarta was collected for one month from 21 January 2024 to 20 February 2024. The total videos (including short videos) verified were 240 videos for further analysis. Videos posted on Youtube include titles, hashtags, video content, video duration, comments, captions, number of likes/dislikes, number of video views, user identity, and video links in various categories. This study aims to identify the main associations related to Yogyakarta by analyzing user-generated content in the form of videos uploaded on Youtube. Specifically, whether the main association related to Yogyakarta is related to culture or not. Therefore, content analysis on the video is applied.

In order to analyze video content, this study classifies videos into 10 categories developed by (Choi et al., 2007) namely: Historic buildings and heritage (ancient palaces, monuments, works of art); Cultural events (traditional events); Parks and gardens (natural landscapes); Fashion (clothes, accessories, shopping centers); Tourism facilities and infrastructure (hotels, museums, tourist attractions); Entertainment (concerts, parties); Scenic view (bird's eye); Local cuisine and dining (food, drinks, restaurants, grocery stores); Recreation and sport (matches, stadiums, sporting activities); and People and local residents (locals, everyday life). In addition, to accommodate videos that do not fit into the 10 categories above, this study adds 2 other categories in the form of videos that are not related to the 10 categories above (Other1), and videos that are not related to Yogyakarta (Other2) according to the study by (Acuti et al., 2018).

Each video is classified into a maximum of three categories out of 12 categories because it considers the main aspects of the city that Youtube users want to convey. The purpose of classifying video content is to identify which dimensions or categories are strongly related to Yogyakarta. In the case of this study, the category of cultural events (traditional events) is an alleged category that is predicted to have a strong relationship with Yogyakarta as a city of culture. In order to know how the city is perceived by different stakeholders (Netzer et al., 2012), video posts on Youtube are also classified according

to user identity (individuals and institutions/government). Technology has been a part of everyday life, many forms of technology have made human activity become easier, despite its potential to slowly replace humans, technology was meant to assist humans in their life, from the everyday routine of their occupation, technology has the potential to co-exist with humans.

## **RESULT AND DICUSSION**

### **Unpacking Yogyakarta's City Branding on YouTube of Video Content and User Identity**

As mentioned in the methodology section, there is 240 video content related to #yogyakarta uploaded on Youtube. That means that on average around 30 videos related to Yogyakarta are uploaded on Youtube in one day. This amount is quite large for video-based social media like Youtube where the owner must have a higher "effort" to create content on Youtube compared to other social media. What's more, that doesn't include Youtube video content related to Yogyakarta without using hashtags. Most of the types of video content are in the form of short videos that have a short duration (1-2 minutes) (about 70%), some are generally videos with a longer duration, and only a few are in the form of live videos with a duration of up to hours

Regarding video content categories, 36.67% of video content is not related to the 10 city branding categories (Others1) and 31.67% of video content is not related to Yogyakarta (Others2). That means video content related to the 10 categories of city branding and related to Yogyakarta dominates. Video content unrelated to the 10 city branding categories (Others1) is mostly about politics, unrelated news, and unrelated songs. Meanwhile, most of the video content that is not related to Yogyakarta (Others2) tends to be about other regions such as Central Java. Please note that there is a lot of YouTube video content with #yogyakarta always followed by the hashtag “#” for other regions such as #jawatengah. That's why there is some YouTube content that isn't related to Yogyakarta but is related to other regions.

The top three categories of city branding in Yogyakarta from the most uploaded video content on Youtube are local food and cuisine with 12.08%, historical buildings with 10.83%, and Tourism facilities and infrastructure with 9.58%. Meanwhile, YouTube video content for cultural aspects which is represented by the cultural events category is only 2.5% and makes it in the last position with the Fashion category. Thus, automatically, this study finds evidence that cultural aspects are not the main thing related to Yogyakarta, and the categories related to Yogyakarta are local cuisine and historical buildings.

Table 1. Tabulation results for the Yogyakarta city branding category

<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Historic buildings and heritage	10.83%
Cultural events	2.5%
Parks and gardens	7.5%
Fashion	2.5%
Tourism facilities and infrastructure	9.58%
Entertainment	5.42%
Scenic view	8.75%

Category	Percentage
Local cuisine and dining	12.08%
Recreation and sport	3.33%
People and local residents	7.92%
Not related to 10 categories (Others1)	36.67%
Not related to Yogyakarta (Others2)	31.67%

Source: processed by the author, 2024

Total video: 240; Duration: 1 month (21 January – 20 February 2024) for the historic buildings and heritage category, there is a lot of Youtube content that tells about iconic buildings in Yogyakarta such as the Yogyakarta 0 km monument, Prambanan Temple, and various artistic heritage. Please note that Prambanan Temple and the 0 km monument are very famous buildings in Yogyakarta. In the cultural events category, some of the videos contain the holding of a Yogyakarta-themed cultural festival. In relation to this category, on 2-5 February 2023, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (KEMENPARERKRAF) held a cultural event themed "ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF)" in Yogyakarta.

There are many Yogyakarta cultures displayed at this event. As much as 7.5% of video content about Yogyakarta uploaded on Youtube is related to aspects of parks and gardens or natural landscapes. Video content related to this category partially discusses famous natural sights in Yogyakarta such as Mount Merapi or Parangtritis Beach. Not much video content related to Yogyakarta city branding in the Fashion category (2.5%) in the last 1 month. However, from the video content analyzed, there are some that discuss batik and shopping centers in Yogyakarta.

In the tourism facilities and infrastructure category (hotels, museums, tourist attractions), approximately 9.58% of video content uploaded on Youtube is related to this category. As one of the regions that rely on the tourism sector as a leading sector, Yogyakarta is equipped with various supporting and main facilities that support the tourism sector. There are quite a number of YouTubers who create content related to this category, for example, famous tourist attractions in Yogyakarta (e.g Malioboro), museums, and others. There is as much as 5.42% of video content uploaded on Youtube related to the entertainment category. Most of the video content contains music concert events held in Yogyakarta. The scenic view is a category that is uploaded quite a lot in Yogyakarta with a percentage of 8.75%. Most of the video content in this category contains views of the beautiful city center of Yogyakarta.

This study found evidence that the local cuisine and dining categories (food, drinks, restaurants, grocery stores) are the categories most closely related to Yogyakarta. There are around 12.08% of videos uploaded in Yogyakarta related to this category. This result is not surprising because there are indeed many local foods in Yogyakarta. Most Youtube content creators choose to include local Yogyakarta specialties in their videos when they travel to create content. Some typical Yogyakarta foods that are often highlighted by Youtubers in their videos are "Brongkos" and "Gudeg". Some of the other content tells about restaurants, places to eat, or grocery stores in Yogyakarta.

As much as 3.33% of video content about Yogyakarta city branding on Youtube is related to the category of recreation and sport (matches, stadiums, sporting activities).

Video content uploaded in this category is more towards football matches from local clubs and local community sports activities. In the last category, namely people and local residents, around 7.92% of the video content about Yogyakarta city branding relates to this category. In this category, Youtube creator content highlights activities or important events related to local residents in Yogyakarta.

In terms of Youtube user identity, this research found evidence that as much as 80.42% of video content comes from individuals, while the remaining 19.58% comes from institutions such as the government and the media. This proves that the community is taking part in promoting the city branding of Yogyakarta. The video content is created by individuals, most of it is identified as the owner's name, and the other part is in the form of a Youtube channel name. Unfortunately, even though there is a lot of video content sourced from individuals, the number of video views is still relatively small compared to video content originating from institutions.

This is because individual creators tend to have fewer subscribers than institutional creators, although there are some who already have many subscribers. Meanwhile, video content related to Yogyakarta city branding by Youtube creators from institutions tends to be less than individuals. Most of them come from national or local media, a small number come from ministries (e.g Kemenparekraf), and there are even institutional (media) content creators from abroad, namely CAN insider, a media from Singapore. That said, video views are, in general, more institutional than individual creators because they have more subscribers. But unfortunately, institutional creators, especially the media, are Youtube creators who contribute video content that is not related to the 10 categories of city branding and is not related to Yogyakarta in large numbers.

### **Role of Youtube Social Media in City Branding**

Reflecting on the results of the video content analysis presented in the previous section, the answers to the research questions are presented below. The first research question (H1) states "What is the role of Youtube social media in promoting city branding of Yogyakarta?". By looking at the fact that there is 240 video content uploaded on Youtube in a period of one month, the research concludes that Youtube social media plays an important role in promoting Yogyakarta city branding. There are an average of around 30 videos related to Yogyakarta that are posted per day, not including videos about Yogyakarta which may be posted without #yogyakarta so they are not detected, making social media, especially Youtube, play an important role in branding an area.

Through videos uploaded on Youtube, Youtube users are able to tell and describe aspects of Yogyakarta in various aspects and build information through videos to followers. In this case, user-generated content (UGC) on Youtube can influence brand image and brand knowledge (Acuti et al., 2018), which further strengthens existing city branding or promotes new things (Fitchett, 2005), with a direct influence on brand perception (Zhang & Sarvary, 2015). Once again, this research confirms how social media contributes to city branding efforts.

Regarding H2 "Does the cultural aspect appear as the main image of Yogyakarta on Youtube social media?", the results of the study, by adopting the categories proposed (Choi et al., 2007) which was developed by (Acuti et al., 2018), found that although Yogyakarta is indeed known as a city of culture, it is not limited to that. In this study, the

cultural aspect does not appear as the main association possible because this aspect is only measured from "cultural events" which may only be held a few times a year in Yogyakarta. In addition, it is also possible that the research time period is not synchronous with the holding of cultural events in Yogyakarta, so there is not much YouTube video content that describes Yogyakarta from a cultural perspective. Apart from that, Yogyakarta has a long history with local culinary delights and historic buildings as the first and second top of the 10 categories. These two aspects have special relevance and are closely related to the cultural structure in Yogyakarta.

Towards the last question H3 "What is the role of individuals and institutions in the process of city branding Yogyakarta as a city of culture on Youtube social media?". For this question, creator content from individuals has a larger contribution portion, and is more related to city branding in Yogyakarta than institutions, even though in terms of the number of views is relatively less. These empirical findings confirm that social media, especially Youtube, has empowered individuals, and enabled users to actively respond, participate, and create content (Kim & Ko, 2010). In this case, individuals not only act as "connoisseurs" of social media, but also producers who produce many content products uploaded on social media (Andéhn & Lucarelli, 2014).

Although three research questions were developed in this study, this paper has several limitations that can be refined in future studies. First, this study only analyzes video content to describe city branding, so the assessment is not comprehensive and less complex. Therefore, further research can add other aspects of analysis (e.g. visuals) to provide an in-depth and broad view of city branding. Visual communication is a form of textual paralanguage which is able to form more relevant perceptions in the communication process (Luangrath et al., 2016). Second, the period for collecting video content in this study tends to be short, only one month, so future research can extend the research period. Third, this research also only concentrated on one type of social media (Youtube). It will be very interesting if further research is carried out by integrating other social media (e.g Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, etc) in assessing and monitoring city branding more thoroughly.

Because these limitations can be addressed by future studies, which can enhance the comprehensiveness and complexity of the analysis of city branding. For instance, incorporating other forms of visual analysis, such as still images, can provide a more nuanced understanding of city branding. Additionally, extending the research period to capture a longer span of video content can provide a more comprehensive view of city branding over time. Furthermore, integrating multiple social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, can provide a more thorough assessment of city branding across different online channels. By addressing these limitations, future research can provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of city branding.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research confirms that social media, especially Youtube, plays a crucial role in building Yogyakarta city branding. Social media contributes to creating city branding easier, faster, and more efficient. Moreover, at this time, we are already in the phase of the era of advances in information and communication technology so as to enable the acceleration of the creation of city branding on the internet. In terms of the main



categorization of what is related to Yogyakarta, this research finds that local culinary aspects and historical buildings are the two main aspects related to Yogyakarta.

Although the cultural aspect (specifically categorized as “cultural events”) is not directly related to Yogyakarta, there is a long history between local cuisine and historical buildings in Yogyakarta and Yogyakarta culture as a whole which makes them interrelated. This research also found evidence of how "active" individual users are in producing video content to promote city branding in Yogyakarta. This confirms that users are not only positioned as consumers, but also producers who play an active role in creating and introducing city branding on social media.

Finally, this research resulted in several implications aimed at least two main related parties: regional policy-makers (especially Yogyakarta), and individuals. Local governments can activate or strengthen their social media (especially Youtube) in promoting city branding in Yogyakarta. It is highly recommended to start creating a special Youtube channel related to city branding in Yogyakarta (if they don't already have one) and start actively creating and sharing content about Yogyakarta on Youtube. This is reasonable considering that most Youtube content related to Yogyakarta is produced by individuals and the media, not local government authorities. Meanwhile, individuals (tourists, residents, business people) can benefit from this research, especially those who are interested in interpreting the city's image in order to make a more conscious decision to become (or confirm to be) visitors, residents, and investors in Yogyakarta.

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