



Research article

A local destination story for the restoration of the destination image affected by Covid-19 crisis: evidence from Indonesia[☆]Fatimah Abdillah^{a,*}, Adi Zakaria Afiff^b, Sri Rahayu Hijrah Hati^b, Asnan Furinto^c^a Graduate School of Management, Management Department Faculty of Economics and Business Universitas Indonesia, Depok, Indonesia^b Management Department Faculty of Economics and Business Universitas Indonesia, Depok, Indonesia^c Binus Business School, Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the impact of the narrative engagement mechanism on destination image and tourist behaviour during the Covid-19 crisis. This study used primary data collected from 390 respondents via a scenario-based survey. The results show that the authenticity, conciseness, and reversal of destination stories significantly influence the customers' narrative engagement, which further influences the destination's image and behavioural intentions affected by Covid-19. However, narrative engagement and the destination story did not lead to visitors' affective destination images. This study offers a practical contribution on how a personal travel story helped destinations affected by Covid-19 survive the crisis. Additionally, the study has substantial implications for local destination marketing organisations in expanding recovery strategies and redeveloping images in the future. The study also provides theoretical contribution as the dynamic change in local destination images (cognitive and affective) during the Covid-19 crisis have rarely been explored in academic studies.

1. Introduction

As a global pandemic, Coronavirus (Covid-19) has attracted significant research attention. It has been confirmed a global pandemic by the World Health Organization, and Indonesia has twenty fifth highest number of cases in the world (Pettersson et al., 2021; WHO, 2021). Meanwhile, countries have attempted to reduce the number of cases by implementing health policies such as wearing masks, social distancing, sanitation, and lockdown (Jarman et al., 2020; Vally, 2020; WHO, 2020). This has created a global economic crisis, particularly affecting the tourism industry (Griffiths, 2020).

Tourism is known to contribute significantly to economic growth (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017). However, due to Covid-19, almost all tourism-related sectors have stopped operating under normal conditions, and the sector's growth has been affected more than many other sectors (UNWTO, 2020). Tourism in Indonesia plays an essential role, contributing 5.4% of the total gross domestic product (GDP) as per 2018 data (Qibthiyyah et al., 2018). However, the global Covid-19 outbreak caused a national economic growth recession, and the most damaging crisis the tourism industry has faced for decades (WHO, 2021).

During a pandemic, people prefer domestic travel and avoid international travel. Travellers avoid non-essential flights (Gössling et al., 2020) and often choose car transportation during a crisis (Eisenmann et al., 2021; Shakibaei et al., 2021). To counteract this situation, governments need to focus on the domestic market to recover regional tourism and support the economic sector (Backer and Ritchie, 2017; Buckley, 2020; Gössling et al., 2020). Indonesia is also experiencing a similar phenomenon. Therefore, this study focuses on Indonesia's local market as a case study. The businesses and government usually use Java Island as representative of the Indonesian market. Java is the most densely populated island in Indonesia. One of the most popular destinations on Java Island is Yogyakarta (Djalante, 2018). Most travellers can access Yogyakarta by automobile and are located close to the capital city. Yogyakarta is famous for its natural beauty, local culture, and historical buildings, and is representative of Indonesia's scenery and vulnerability to natural disasters (Djalante, 2018; Rindrasih, 2018). Although the heritage tourism of Yogyakarta has been receiving government attention for a long time, the region's tourism industry is facing difficulties during the pandemic. Devastated by the Covid-19 crisis, Yogyakarta tourism requires a long-term recovery programme (Europa Nostra, 2020), making

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it a good case for exploration as a tourism destination affected by the pandemic.

The Covid-19 crisis had a negative influence on the development of tourist destinations. Negative news and perceived fear during the pandemic, made destination images one of the first assets to be affected. Natural disasters (earthquakes, tsunamis, etc.) and criminal activity (crime, terrorism, etc.) also decreased travel to tourist destinations (Avraham, 2016; Sonmez, 1998). Therefore, an alternative tourism marketing strategy is needed to minimise the effects of the crisis.

In tourism, a destination is equal to a product or brand (Temporal, 2015). Destination has a government, and may cover cities, provinces, islands, or countries (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Berács et al., 2006; Hanna and Rowley, 2008; Kerr, 2006). Meanwhile, a story is a branding tool (Delgado-Ballester and Fernández-Sabiote, 2016; Herskovitz and Crystal, 2010) for a destination (Bassano et al., 2019). A story helps marketers maintain a consistent customer-brand relationship of an experienced product, particularly tourism (Franke et al., 2004). Therefore, a strategy that has a long history with the brand and product obtained from previous research is effective for destination branding.

Successful branding can build a positive destination image (Veasna et al., 2013), consisting of both cognitive and affective images (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Beerli and Martin, 2004; Wu and Shimizu, 2020). Destination image supports market share (Coombs, 2014; Su et al., 2018) and an increase in those with an intent to visit (Bigne, Ruiz, & Curras-perez, 2019; Huang, 2019). In addition, the destination story evokes memorable moments in tourism (Mossberg, 2008), naturally has a persuasive effect (Green and Brock, 2000), is easy to receive (Kent, 2015), and mitigates negative perceptions (Delgado-Ballester and Fernández-Sabiote, 2016; Percy and Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2012; Solja et al., 2018; van Laer and Ruyter, 2010). A text destination story has a distinctive meaning in the development of transportation results (Green and Brock, 2000; Lien and Chen, 2013; Wong et al., 2015). Therefore, the text story can be used to develop a safe travel guide, tourist attractions, and the destination's reliability messages by destination marketers.

A community's economy in a destination depends on the tourism sector. However, the fear of Covid-19 has affected public health, regional travel policies, and national restrictions for tourist attractions, leading to decreased travel intentions. The restriction of travel to minimise the spread of cases has created fear and anxiety in society (Bashir, 2020) and destination image changes (Zenker and Kock, 2020). Storytelling is acknowledged as the most effective branding strategy to reduce risk perception and build positive behaviour (Sharif and Mura, 2019; Solja et al., 2018), but there is a lack of research exploring narrative engagement through transportation theory (Lee and Jeong, 2017). Although previous research has suggested conducting future crisis studies in tourism (Çakar, 2020; Ritchie, 2004; Zenker and Kock, 2020), there have been limited investigations to understand how to generate positive destination image changes during the pandemic and how to produce positive emotions and behaviour of tourists toward travel during disasters or crises through storytelling. Based on the above arguments, this study attempts to fill this gap by examining the role of destination stories in leading the positive destination image and tourist behavioural intention based on transportation theory. Specifically, the study investigates the relationships between destination stories, visitors' narrative engagements, destination image, and behavioural intentions in the context of the Covid-19 crisis.

2. Literature review

2.1. Storytelling

Destination consists of micro-destinations such as regional, city, and tourist attractions in a city (Kotler et al., 2017). Destination can also implemented as a brand for a product (Keller, 2013). Destination branding is the process of attracting customers and increasing loyalty by creating an identity for a destination (Kotler et al., 2017). The process is a

part of marketing communication that can enhance a unique image (Temporal, 2015) and influence travel decisions (Govers and Go, 2009).

Storytelling is an easy way to communicate information and is a well-known branding tool (Herskovitz and Crystal, 2010). Hence, destination branding through storytelling is an intelligent choice for managing visitor loyalty. Although external information is essential for inexperienced or first-time travellers (Li et al., 2008), experienced travellers spend more time searching for information about accommodations and destinations (Lehto et al., 2006). Therefore, storytelling increases consumers' imagery abilities, helps them receive information more quickly, and produces a positive evaluation and behaviour (Escalas, 2004; Green and Brock, 2000; Solja et al., 2018). It is a communication method that maintains the customer-brand relationship (Woodside, 2017), and its persuasion is acknowledged as a branding tool (Herskovitz and Crystal, 2010).

2.2. Narrative engagement

The stimulus, organism, response (SOR) paradigm clarified that the effect of a destination story on the Covid-19 crisis functions as a stimulus. Woodworth (1928) argued that an organism is a mediator that receives and changes stimuli from circumstances into the response as the process result (Lichtenstein et al., 1988). Narrative engagement is a psychological process in an organism (Busselle and Bilandzic, 2009). The activities of the psychological process can also describe the consumer engagement process (Bilro and Loureiro, 2020). There are four dimensions of narrative engagement: narrative understanding, attentional focus, emotional engagement, and narrative presence, reflecting the process as a multi-dimensional construct (Busselle and Bilandzic, 2009).

Transportation theory can explain the narrative engagement process, which emphasises that these narrative activities can have an effect and persuasive impact on consumer behaviour (Busselle and Bilandzic, 2009; Green and Brock, 2000; Lee and Jeong, 2017). The two critical focuses of consumer engagement are cognitive effects and behavioural intention (Bilro and Loureiro, 2020).

In addition, information in a travel review is easier to understand when told as a story. Previous studies have demonstrated the connection between story aspects and brand attitude (Chiu et al., 2012), usefulness and affect (Hsieh et al., 2018), and cognitive affect (Chen et al., 2009), including narrative engagement and brand attitude (Lee and Jeong, 2017). Consequently, three aspects must be assessed to understand the story structure: authenticity, conciseness, and reversal. Authenticity is the crucial element in fulfilling a story (Chiu et al., 2012; Guber, 2007; Chen et al., 2009; Hsieh et al., 2018; Youssef et al., 2019). Hence, the authenticity of information increases consumers' trust and positive behaviour. Thus, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1. Authenticity has a positive effect on narrative engagement

Conciseness, the second aspect of the story structure, represents unity (Reinstein and Trebby, 1997) and the length of the story (Chiu et al., 2012; Hsieh et al., 2018). Although previous studies emphasise shortness as conciseness (Chiu et al., 2012; Hsieh et al., 2018), this research adds coherence as an indicator. Previous studies have shown that the length of a story is an insignificant consideration in a reader's evaluation of a review (Gottschalk and Mafael, 2017; Chen et al., 2009). Therefore, travel reviews in story format should be arranged with good structural aspects and be concise to appear more attractive. Thus:

H2. Conciseness has a positive effect on narrative engagement.

Humour is known to have a positive effect, but there is evidence that it does not work for experience products (Chiu et al., 2012) and results in negative reactions (Söderlund et al., 2017; Warren et al., 2019). Therefore, humour was not used in this study. Reversal is a plot that consists of a climax and a solution (Chiu et al., 2012), which makes a story more natural and attractive (Chiu et al., 2012; Pera et al., 2016; Segal, 1995), and increases emotional responses (Alwitt, 2002). Since the reversal aspect has been proven to have a positive impact on the narrative

engagement of hospitality consumers (Lee and Jeong, 2017), the following hypothesis is developed:

H3. Reversal has a positive effect on narrative engagement.

2.3. Destination image

Images have become an essential part of tourism, as they are guidelines for visitors when choosing destinations (Coshall, 2000; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991). A tourist destination image is a combination of tourists' beliefs and impressions about a destination (Crompton, 1979). It is formed by a tourist or group based on a destination's knowledge, beliefs, and feelings. In tourism, image theory is defined as consumers' overall evaluation, which has the same meaning as attitude to an object, but is specifically used for a place (Josiassen et al., 2016; Kock et al., 2016).

Although transportation theory has received little attention in empirical studies on tourism, particularly in the Covid-19 crisis, the relationship between transportation theory and destination image is apparent (Wong et al., 2015). Online reviews are the main source of information for travellers (Casaló et al., 2015) to learn the status of a destination and make travel decisions (Howison et al., 2017), particularly in a story format (Adaval and Wyer, 1998; Nabi, 2017). In a company crisis, consumers tend to use stories for positive responses or apologies rather than other forms of communication (van Laer and Ruyter, 2010). A positive review is more suitable for increasing consumers' evaluation of an experienced product than its search equivalent (Hsu et al., 2017). A good destination review in story format would increase narrative engagement (Lee and Jeong, 2017) and reduce the effect of negative news and poor images during a crisis (Sharif and Mura, 2019).

Destination images are commonly divided into cognitive and affective aspects (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Gartner, 1994), produced by consumers' evaluations and experiences (Nunthiphatprueksa and Suntrayuth, 2018). Various nationalities and cultures are affected differently by the destination image (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Ryan and Cave, 2005), particularly the cognitive and affective aspects (Calantone et al., 1989; Kozak et al., 2004). The cognitive image is evaluated based on the characteristics and natural resources of a destination (Goodall and Ashworth, 1995). During the Covid-19 crisis, standard health protocols are critical in keeping tourists safe and healthy. Hence, safety and cleanliness attributes are not novel to the destination image. Dynamic changes in the image during a crisis should be explored through specific attributes, such as healthcare infrastructure (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Zenker and Kock, 2020). Based on the previous arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4. Narrative engagement has a positive effect on cognitive destination image.

The persuasive ability of narrative engagement can help tourist destination managers deal with a catastrophic image during a crisis (Avraham, 2016; Avraham and Ketter, 2017; Wu and Shimizu, 2020). Destination images are evaluated properly through cognitive as well as affective aspects (Custó dio and Gouveia, 2007). Affective images reflect the emotions of travellers toward a destination. An affective image can consist of exciting, pleasant, boring, and interesting aspects to describe tourists' feelings of a destination (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Hosany et al., 2007). The transportation effect from a story creates positive emotional effects, such as empathy (Johnson and Sangalang, 2017). Based on the previous statements, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5. Narrative engagement has a positive effect on affective destination image.

Most studies suggest a link between individuals' beliefs and feelings as cognitive and affective components of destination image (Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2018; Woosnam et al., 2020). It is essential to incorporate both cognitive and affective evaluations to understand the destination image (Stylidis et al., 2017). The antecedents of affective image are cognitive image components (Holbrook, 1978; Russell and

Pratt, 1980). In several studies, destination cognitive image has a positive effect on affective images (Tosun et al., 2015). Thus, this study explores the relationship between cognitive and affective images through the following hypothesis:

H6. Cognitive destination image has a positive effect on affective image.

2.4. Behavioural intention

During crises, positive reviews play an essential role in generating visitor intentions (Sharif and Mura, 2019). Consumer behaviour in marketing has fundamental components, namely, cognitive, affective, and conative (Holbrook, 1978). The story then influences the cognitive and affective aspects of consumers to generate a response (behaviour) (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Wu and Li, 2018). Behavioural intention is synonymous with composite loyalty (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2021). Meanwhile, cognitive and affective destination image components increase citizens' intentions to engage in word-of-mouth (WOM) (Papadimitriou et al., 2015). Additionally, the intention to revisit and willingness to recommend is covered by the behavioural intention construct (Foroudi et al., 2018).

Cognitive image has an extensive history of use in attitude and tourism studies (Kock et al., 2016). It consists of attributes such as accessibility, quality of accommodation, cultural diversity, reputation, and service (Foroudi et al., 2018; Prayag and Ryan, 2012; Veasna et al., 2013). The literature suggests that cognition and behavioural intention are positively correlated, including future behaviours (Lee, 2016; Qian et al., 2017). Hence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H7. Cognitive destination image has a positive effect on behavioural intention.

Recent tourism studies have focused on the influence of affective image on influence behaviour and travel decisions (Kock et al., 2016). Tourists develop affective components to a destination through their previous experience, and affective outcomes will increase when they feel a destination is more meaningful (Gitelson and Crompton, 1984). Previous studies used specific affective attributes to explain visitors' feelings during or after a disaster (Wu and Shimizu, 2020). In this regard, the affective perception of the destination affects revisit intention (Tosun et al., 2015). Thus, the relationship between affective image and behavioural intention can be expected based on the following hypothesis:

H8. Affective destination image has a positive effect on behavioural intention.

3. Method

3.1. Sample

There are several reasons why this study chose Yogyakarta and limited it to local respondents only (Backer and Ritchie, 2017; Eisenmann et al., 2021; Gössling et al., 2020; Lebrun et al., 2021): (i) developing the local market is the best choice during the Covid-19 crisis, (ii) most people in Indonesia live on Java Island, which represents the local market, (iii) during a crisis, people tend to avoid airlines and feel safer using cars for travel purposes, (iv) Yogyakarta is the most popular tourist destination in Java and the Indonesian market (Dahles, 2002) and is geographically located at the centre of Java Island, (v) during a crisis, people prefer to travel to familiar destinations than to other destinations, (vi) Yogyakarta's government has established some branding activities for the destination.

Purposive sampling was used in the study to select repeat visitors to a local destination affected by Covid-19. The online questionnaire was administered to 474 individuals in February 2021, with 84 responses removed as they did not meet the participation criteria, resulting in an 82% response rate. Respondent criteria included a visitation experience

to Yogyakarta in the last two years (2019–2021) and completing the questionnaire.

Consequently, 390 respondents completed the questionnaire online via SurveyMonkey. The survey used a between-subjects design. Each respondent answered only one version of the questionnaire, and SurveyMonkey collected the respondents' IP addresses to minimise multiple responses from one person.

3.2. Procedure

The study used a scenario-based survey that combined the hypothetical scenario with the self-responses and experiences of the respondents after travelling to a destination. The development of the construct measurement items followed a multiple translation protocol (English–Indonesian–English). In the first stage, respondents were asked to read and evaluate their personal travel stories. The story describes the experience of a person who travelled to Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 pandemic period (Appendix A). In the second stage, they were asked to answer the cognitive and affective destination image questions, including behavioural intention to visit a destination in the story.

The story was created and modified based on an example from previous studies (Chiu et al., 2012; Hsieh et al., 2018; Wong et al., 2015) into a destination review. Several steps were involved in this modification. The first step was the author, content maker, and academic Professors, helped review the scenario. Next, a pilot test was conducted in two parts. Part one involved 30 respondents answering a question about the level of their liking to the theme, using a numeric scale in which 1 was equivalent to 'Strongly Disagree' and 7 was equivalent to 'Strongly Agree'. Since the average answer was above the mean (i.e., 5.5), with a score of 6.1, the scenario fulfilled the respondents' criteria. In part two, fifteen respondents, different from the main study, were asked to validate the story aspects for the travel review story through three open questions. The questions were: (1) 'please state some facts in the story', (2) 'please show the unity and coherence plot in the story', and (3) 'please state some problems that need to be encountered by the main character in the story'. The second section showed that all respondents answered correctly and suggested improvements to the story.

The survey questionnaire was divided into five parts: (a) demographic information, (b) story aspect judgement by customers, (c) customer narrative engagement, (d) customer destination image, and (e) customer behavioural intention. There was also a single screening single question: 'Have you visited Yogyakarta in the past two years (2019–2021)?' Subsequently, the respondents were asked to provide information on individual characteristics at the time of the survey.

The main part of the survey started by showing the selected travel story from the pilot test, which was followed by questions (7-point Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree) related to the story aspects based on Chiu et al. (2012) and their engagement responses. Narrative engagement measurements were developed by combining Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) and Lee and Jeong (2017), which are explained through four dimensions. Ten items related to cognitive image were selected from previous studies (Veasna et al., 2013; Zenker and Kock, 2020) and rated on a 7-point Likert scale. Then, the affective image was measured using scales developed by Wu and Shimizu (2020), which have a crisis context, including five bipolar scales (7-point scale). Finally, behavioural intention was measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree).

4. Result

4.1. Sociodemographic characteristics

More than half of the respondents were female, representing 69% (N = 238), while 39% (N = 152) were male. The majority (58.5%) of the respondents were 20–24 years old (N = 228), and the younger age range had more curiosity to visit affected disaster destinations (Walters et al.,

2015). Income of the respondents was described by their travel expenditure and length of stay (García-Sánchez et al., 2013). The daily travel expenditure ranged from to \$34–68 (34.6%) to \$34 (40.3%), and almost half of the respondents (44.9%) had a length of stay between two and three days.

One-third of the respondents completed graduate school (36.7%) and nearly half (38.5%) preferred to travel with family, showing that travellers tend to spend leisure time with their family during the crisis to make them feel safe. The local traveller pattern is similar to the man-made crisis research that shows the change of domestic travel behaviour with family and relatives only (Smith and Carmichael, 2005).

The respondents' travel characteristics during Covid-19 were also described. Searching information was high, between sometimes and extensively, at 40% and 30.8%, respectively. Most respondents (61.8%) had travel experience (first-timers and repeated visitors) during the pandemic and visited Yogyakarta for leisure (56.7%). In addition, travel information and experience frequency during crises increased familiarity and trust (Walters and Clulow, 2010). Table 1 shows the details of travellers' characteristics.

4.2. Survey

The study applied the common method variance through the Harman single factor test to eliminate the biases in the self-administrated survey (Podsakoff et al., 2003, 2012) and passed the requirement (the covariance among the measurements was lower than 50%). The study used a two-step approach (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988) for structural equation model analysis, comprising measurement (CFA) and structural models to analyse the survey responses via LISREL 8.8. Both analyses were conducted to investigate the relationships between the variables in the proposed research model and the hypotheses. The eleven latent measurement model variables were (1) authenticity, (2) consciousness, (3) reversal, (4) narrative understanding, (5) attentional focus, (6) emotional engagement, (7) narrative presence, (8) destination cognitive image normal, (9) destination cognitive image, (10) destination affective image, and (11) behavioural intention.

The confirmatory factor analysis was estimated using the maximum likelihood method, while the measurement model analysis consisted of several tests, namely model fit, validity, and reliability. Evaluating the adequate fit of the measurement model was the first step in analysing the research model and data. The measurement results, presented in Table 2, showed that the goodness-of-fit indices were $\chi^2(647) = 1110.56$, p-value = 0.00; χ^2/df (NCS) = 1.72 (recommended value ≤ 3), NNFI = 0.97, IFI = 0.98, CFI = 0.98, GFI = 0.84, SRMR = 0.065, and RMSEA = 0.043. The results indicated that the value for each model fit index was acceptable (Hair et al., 2014), and the proposed model can further analyse the structural model. The measurement model calculates the latent variable score (LVS), allowing multiple dimensions to be transformed into a single indicator or parcelling (Bandalos, 2002).

Meanwhile, the evaluation of convergent validity consisted of factor loadings (SFL), average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR). The related indicators of a latent variable must exceed 0.5 (SFL ≥ 0.50) to pass the cut-off values criteria (Table 2). The good reliability of a measurement model has to fulfil appropriate composite reliability (CR) ≥ 0.60 and average variance extracted (AVE) ≥ 0.50 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Although two constructs, conciseness (AVE = 0.34) and cognitive image normal (AVE = 0.45), have AVE ≤ 0.50 , since they had CR at a recommended level (CR ≥ 0.60), the results were acceptable.

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), validity must consider not only the average variance extracted (AVE) but also composite reliability (CR). Although many researchers believe that at least 0.7 (CR ≥ 0.7) is the limit for reliability acceptance, by considering the theoretical basis for measures of latent factors and the error variance, which is excluded using this SEM approach, the result for conciseness construct with reliability less than usually found (CR ≥ 0.6) still provides the best available

Table 1. Demographics sample.

Items		Frequency	Percent (%)
Domicile	Jakarta	46	11.8
	Banten	41	10.5
	West Java	134	34.4
	Centre Java	100	25.6
	East Java	69	17.7
Age	20–24	228	58.5
	25–34	88	22.6
	35–44	35	9.0
	45+	39	10
Gender	Men	152	39
	Women	238	61
Education	Senior High School	148	37.95
	College	31	7.95
	Graduate	143	36.7
	Postgraduate	68	17.4
Travel expenditure (daily)	>USD 120	27	6.9
	100–120	21	5.4
	69–99	50	12.8
	34–68	135	34.6
	<USD 34	157	40.3
Length of stay (days)	>7	15	3.8
	6–7	42	10.8
	4–5	119	30.5
	2–3	175	44.9
	Round-trip	39	10
	Prefer to travel	Individual	41
With partner		83	21.3
With friend		111	28.5
With family		150	38.5
Organised group package		3	0.8
Organised non-group package		2	0.5
Search travel info during the pandemic	Never	15	3.8
	1-2 (slightly)	99	25.4
	3-4 (sometimes)	156	40
	5-6 (extensively)	120	30.8
Number of visits during the pandemic	0 (non-visitor)	149	38.2
	1 (first time visitor)	83	21.3
	2 or more (repeated visitor)	158	40.5
Purpose of visit during the pandemic	Leisure	221	56.7
	Family/Friends	80	20.5
	Business trip	29	7.4
	Other	60	15.4

measure (Hsu et al., 2010; Lam, 2012; Moon et al., 2017). The fit of the internal structure of the model could be achieved by variance extract for each individual item is 0.5 (AVE range 30–40%, $VE \geq 0.5$), and composite reliability values greater than about 0.6 ($CR \geq 0.6$) are desirable (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Lam, 2012). Moreover, there are records of publications in top tier journals with an AVE with less than 0.5 and CR around 0.6 (Hsu et al., 2010; Lam, 2012; Moon et al., 2017).

In addition, the results of discriminant validity analysis (Table 3) show that the AVE value of each construct was larger than the corresponding squared inter-construct correlation value, confirming adequate discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Therefore, the convergent validity test supported the theoretical measurement model used in this study.

The goodness-of-fit for the structural model were $\chi^2(218) = 500.90$, $p\text{-value} = 0.00$; $\chi^2/df = 2.30$ (recommended value ≤ 3); NNFI = 0.96; IFI = 0.97; CFI = 0.97; GFI = 0.87; SRMR = 0.077; and RMSEA = 0.58. All

goodness-of-fit must meet the accepted criteria (Hair et al., 2014). Table 4 summarises the final results. All aspects of the story positively affected visitors' narrative engagement; hence, H1, H2, and H3 were supported. Figure 1 shows all the direct effects of the constructs. Authenticity ($\beta = 0.36, p < 0.05$) had the strongest influence on narrative engagement formation. However, reversal ($\beta = 0.14, p < 0.05$) had the lowest effect on narrative engagement, and the power of conciseness ($\beta = 0.50, p < 0.05$) was in the middle. The results confirmed that all story aspects played an important role in promoting narrative engagement on travel during Covid-19.

Positive relationships between visitors' narrative engagement and cognitive image were revealed, confirming H4 ($\beta = 0.64, p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the positive relationship between cognitive image and affective image (H6) was supported ($\beta = 0.34, p < 0.05$). However, the relationship between visitors' narrative engagement and affective image (H5) was not supported ($\beta = 0.08, p > 0.05$). Consistent with the proposed theoretical model, the relationship between cognitive image and behavioural intention, including relationships between affective image and behavioural intention, was supported by H7 ($\beta = 0.43, p < 0.05$) and H8 ($\beta = 0.15, p < 0.05$), respectively.

5. Discussion

The Covid-19 crisis challenged marketers to manage a recovery strategy, utilising non-tangible assets such as destination image (Avraham, 2016; Zenker and Kock, 2020). Therefore, marketers need to strengthen their understanding of alternative communication marketing strategies. Although there is evidence about the persuasive power of a story, studies on narrative persuasion and practitioners are still limited (Lee and Jeong, 2017). Based on theoretical gap and industry needs, this study explores the destination story's role as a narrative persuasion strategy to help increase a visitors' positive destination image and behaviour in the tourism crisis.

The current study linked three story aspects including: authenticity, conciseness, and reversal, with a narrative engagement construct (Busselle and Bilandzic, 2009; Lee and Jeong, 2017), explained by transportation theory (Green and Brock, 2000). The hypothesis testing results identified that all aspects (authenticity, conciseness, and reversal) have positive outcomes and induce visitors' narrative engagement. In general, these results are similar to those of previous studies on story aspects (Chiu et al., 2012; Hsieh et al., 2018; Lee and Jeong, 2017).

This study supports the positive role of authenticity in the Covid-19 crisis. Authenticity serves as an essential communication tactic for building behaviour (Lee and Jeong, 2017). When the destination's story was perceived as real and attractive, visitors tended to engage in the story affected by the crisis. For instance, prior studies have shown that authenticity could increase brand equity and intentions to visit restaurants (Lu et al., 2015). Although crisis may be a negative situation, the study finds an interesting result regarding the authenticity of crisis in plot stories that increase readers' acceptance of reality and lead to positive destination image and tourists' behaviour. To show the new normal attitudes in tourism as a part of reality in the story, readers can find value and feel safe to travel. Helping people feel knowledgeable about their new attitude would increase certainty (Barden and Petty, 2008) and make them feel that the new attitude is moral (Luttrell et al., 2016).

This hypothesis is supported by the significant influence of conciseness as a story aspect in this study. The study results might be attributed to visitor perception that effective risk communication requires clear and concise communication (Coombs, 2014). In addition, conciseness is the second most used story aspect for Spanish companies and brands (Delgado-Ballester and Fernández-Sabiote, 2016). The length of reviews determines the fruitfulness of a review (Moore and Lafreniere, 2019). The destination story in the Covid-19 crisis must provide clear information that benefits travellers. Safety information to keep visitors healthy is the main concern. Too much information in a narrative may reduce engagement, such as a narrative in a book being more enjoyable and

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis.

Measurement items	Loadings	CR	AVE
Authenticity		0.86	0.67
The story is authentic	0.78		
The story seems able to occur in the real world	0.85		
There is an abundance of facts so the story is authentic	0.82		
Conciseness		0.61	0.34
The story is short	0.59		
The story is unity and coherence	0.63		
Reading the story does not take me a lot of time	0.53		
Reversal		0.74	0.55
There is a climax in the destination story	0.74		
The character in the destination story encounters obstacles	0.67		
The obstacles are overcome at the end of the destination story	0.52		
Narrative Understanding		0.80	0.57
It was easy to make sense of what was going on in the story of the destination	0.85		
My understanding of the characters was clear in the story of the destination	0.82		
It was easy to recognise the thread of the story in the destination	0.79		
Attentional Focus		0.78	0.55
While reading the story of the destination, I found myself thinking about the destination	0.81		
I am thinking only about the destination in the story	0.80		
It was easy to keep my mind on the story of the destination	0.59		
Emotional Engagement		0.79	0.56
The destination story affected me emotionally	0.59		
During my reading activity, when the main character succeeded, I felt happy and when they suffered in some way, I felt sad	0.81		
I felt sorry for some of the characters in the destination story	0.82		
Narrative Presence		0.77	0.53
During my reading activity, my body was in the room, but my mind was inside the world created by the destination story	0.80		
The destination story created a new world, and then the world suddenly disappeared when I finished my reading activity	0.73		
At times my reading activity, the story world was closer to me than the real world	0.65		
Cognitive Image Normal		0.85	0.45
Accessibility	0.58		
Variety & quality of accommodation	0.64		
Cultural diversity	0.69		
Cultural & historical attraction	0.66		
General level of service	0.70		
Exoticness	0.74		
Reputation	0.68		

Table 2 (continued)

Measurement items	Loadings	CR	AVE
Cognitive Image Covid		0.94	0.78
Health protocol policy	0.77		
Health infrastructure	0.87		
Standard hygiene and cleanliness	0.90		
Affective Image		0.90	0.58
Risky-save	0.83		
Anxious – Relaxed	0.87		
Worried – Assured	0.86		
Fearful – Fearless	0.70		
Bored - Excited	0.59		
Behavioural Intention		0.87	0.69
I intend to stay with this destination for the next few years	0.86		
I expect to do more business with this destination in the next few years	0.86		
I would strongly recommend this destination to others	0.76		

imaginative than a film (van Laer et al., 2019). The significance of conciseness in this study is not only related to the length of the story but also to the unity of the story. Previous research has stated that a coherent story is essential for consideration in order to produce a better persuasive effect (Feng, 2018). Thus, conciseness that includes unity and coherence of the story with essential safety information should be implemented for travel in pandemic conditions.

The analysis shows that the reversal of stories contributes to the development of narrative engagement positively because it attracts the attention and emotions of readers. The reversal helps evoke viewers' emotional pathways and fulfil their desire to consume problematic plots in a story (Oliver, 2008). More suspenseful elements that occur chronologically would result in a greater emotional response at the story's resolution (Nabi and Green, 2015).

Although the pandemic policies restricted some areas, including tourist attractions, accessibility is still an essential component in building a cognitive image. Domestic tourism is a prospective choice for visitors during the pandemic (Hussain and Fusté-Forné, 2021). The study provides evidence that visitors' engagement in the narrative significantly influences the cognitive destination image. Similarly, previous studies proved the positive relationship between narrative transportation constructs and destination image, particularly cognitive aspects (Wong et al., 2015). The additional cognitive part in this study is the Covid-19 characteristics such as health protocols policies and infrastructure. Although health is the main concern for the Covid-19 crisis, culture and heritage are strong aspects in crisis, and they still contribute to the destination image. During the Covid-19 pandemic, tourists give a good score to cultural activities and heritage sites, as well as to hygiene and health protocols (Rech and Migliorati, 2021).

This study showed that the relationship between narrative engagement and affective destination image was not significant, but indirect relationships through cognitive image formed affective image. Previous literature argues that the foundation of affective is cognition (Adhikari and Bhattacharya, 2015) and cognitive experiences precede emotional responses (Agapito et al., 2013; Qian et al., 2017). In addition, a previous study on travel information also confirmed that there was no direct relationship between general information and affective image (Noh and Vogt, 2013).

This result is contrary to some evidence that the persuasive effect of the story can build the affective components directly (Hsieh et al., 2018; Solja et al., 2018). This may be because the pandemic obscures consumers' feelings of engaging directly with the story. Covid-19 is a threat to tourism and causes distress to tourists concerned about having negative experiences during travel (Kour et al., 2020). Moreover, to become

Table 3. Discriminant validity.

Latent	AU	CO	RE	NU	AF	EE	NP	CIN	CIC	AI	BI
AU	0.819										
CO	0.347	0.583									
RE	0.261	0.282	0.742								
NU	0.412	0.519	0.320	0.755							
AF	0.422	0.359	0.209	0.583	0.742						
EE	0.439	0.329	0.416	0.457	0.459	0.748					
NP	0.348	0.315	0.360	0.365	0.405	0.617	0.728				
CIN	0.353	0.190	0.129	0.331	0.345	0.229	0.226	0.671			
CIC	0.441	0.286	0.167	0.369	0.239	0.313	0.294	0.525	0.883		
AI	0.300	0.102	0.107	0.186	0.205	0.185	0.210	0.254	0.321	0.762	
BI	0.250	0.108	0.185	0.144	0.385	0.137	0.205	0.390	0.248	0.293	0.831

Note: The value on the diagonal shows the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct. Values below the diagonal represent inter-construct correlations (significant at the 0.01 level and 0.05 level, 2-tailed).

Table 4. Hypothesis analysis.

Structural Path	t-value	Hypothesis
Authenticity (AU)→Narrative engagement (NE)	4.96	H ₁ supported
Conciseness (CO)→ Narrative engagement (NE)	4.97	H ₂ supported
Reversal (RE)→ Narrative engagement (NE)	2.34	H ₃ supported
Narrative engagement (NE)→Cognitive Image (CI)	9.51	H ₄ supported
Narrative engagement (NE)→Affective Image (AI)	0.98	H ₅ not supported
Cognitive Image (CI)→ Affective Image (AI)	3.69	H ₆ supported
Cognitive Image (CI)→Behavioural Intention (BI)	5.79	H ₇ supported
Affective Image (AI)→ Behavioural Intention (BI)	2.02	H ₈ supported

immersed in the story, consumers must feel safe and comfortable in their role to fully pay attention to their activity (Mossberg and Eide, 2017). The emotion of belonging to a particular destination refers to place identity, and tourism settings can increase one's feeling of expressing and affirming this identity (Kyle et al., 2004; Proshansky et al., 1983). A story produces meaning, but only if consumers feel that they are part of the story (Mossberg and Eide, 2017). Therefore, the elements of destination identity in the destination-story affected by crisis which might not be strong enough to contribute to affective image, must be enhanced.

Some identity elements increase the quality of a story. First, language is an element of identity with a cultural aspect. The individual's culture affects perception, and the shorter the cultural distance, the lower the perceived risk (Beerli and Martin, 2004). Language is a matter that impacts the ability to understand and receive information (Njoku et al., 2021). Aspects such as nationality and culture contribute to cognitive and affective destination image formation (Stylos et al., 2017). The perception of language is found to have a positive effect on affective images (Tosun et al., 2015). Characters of the story are another element of

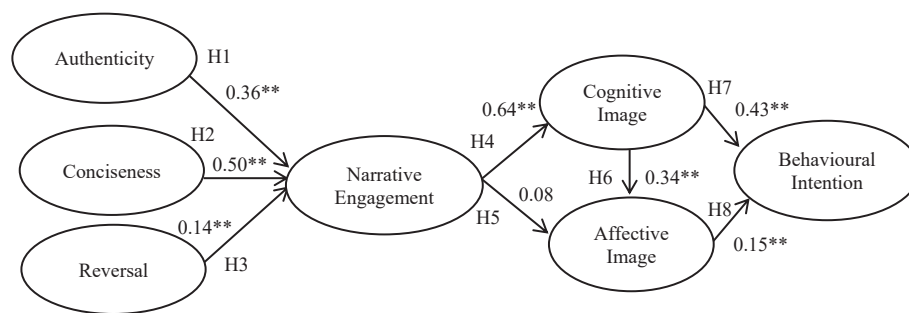
identity. In narrative, character is a key component in generating emotion (Nabi and Green, 2015). The main character in the story is an employee; consequently, the story shows a different identity between the story's character and the majority of respondents (students). In general, consumers need to find the relationship between the story and their life in order to create their own meaning and identity (Mossberg and Eide, 2017).

Finally, the study results show that narrative engagement to the destination-affected crisis story through destination image can enhance behavioural loyalty, such as the intention to return to the destination and recommendation it to others. It is known that the role of cognitive image in behavioural intention is stronger than that of affective image. These results are in line with the results of previous research reviews, where it is explained that cognitive image has a stronger influence than affective image in shaping behaviour (Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2018; San Martín and Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008). Although some studies have shown no direct relationship between emotional experience and behavioural intention (Lee, 2016; Zheng et al., 2017), the results emphasise that both cognitive and affective destination image have an influence on behavioural intention. This result is also supported by previous scholars in dark tourism that cognition and emotional responses directly influence behaviour intention (Qian et al., 2017).

6. Conclusion, theoretical contributions, practical implications, and future study

6.1. Conclusion

A crisis is an event that requires action to overcome some of the associated challenges and a story can act as an effective communication strategy (Sharif and Mura, 2019). This tourism study investigated how



** (significant, p<0.05)

Figure 1. Research model.

visitors would engage in a destination story and preserve the destination image during a crisis. Furthermore, the study attempts to better understand the destination-affected crisis story by establishing previous narrative engagement and destination image literature. Covid-19 induced feeling of uncertainty that produced fear and anxiety on vacation. However, a story helps visitors understand the situation, and the results from the study offer both theoretical and practical implications.

6.2. Theoretical contributions

First, the theoretical contributions of the study include its enhancement of the understanding of the mitigation of destination image changes during the Covid-19 tourism crisis. In addition, destination image, divided into cognitive and affective aspects, was connected, and examined with behavioural intention. This study makes a theoretical contribution by integrating story elements and narrative engagement to influence positive destination image and travellers' behavioural intention using narrative transportation theory. Thus, the current study also tested the robustness of the transportation theory developed by Green and Brock (2000); however, in contrast to previous studies, we use the narrative engagement dimensions developed by Busselle and Bilandzic (2009), which divided the persuasive process of transportation theory through four dimensions (narrative understanding, attentional focus, emotional engagement, and narrative presence) in one construct. This study offers a more objective and comprehensive analysis using the relationship between story elements and all dimensions of narrative engagement in the model because previous evidence found a significant influence of all dimensions on behaviour (Johnson and Sangalang, 2017; Sukalla et al., 2015). Furthermore, the application of transportation theory in the tourism crisis was quite limited. Therefore, the shortcomings of previous studies that tested the role of persuasion as a narrative engagement construct and its influence on destination image were clarified in this study.

Second, the study examines image theory through cognitive and affective destination image constructs to explain tourists' thoughts and feelings during the Covid-19 crisis. This study completes the current lack of evidence in destination branding that was previously examined through one variable (Veasna et al., 2013). The significant influence of cognitive image indicates that tourists can clearly understand the information of the destination in the story. Then, the persuasive process of the story alters its knowledge of the affective image of the destination. It is interesting to note that the strongest impact of the cognitive image components is highly related to travel precondition in Covid-19 such as health protocol, sanitation, and hygiene. However, this study found no direct relationship between narrative engagement and affective image constructs. Therefore, it is very important for marketers to realise that the story of the destination affected the Covid-19 crisis by inducing people to be more aware and careful during travel. This caution-feeling experience could not build a direct relationship between persuasion and emotion. Thus, elements which develop persuasive effects, such as identity, can be added to the destination story to produce more warm feelings.

6.3. Practical implications

Destination stories are commonly found in online channels such as websites, blogs, and social network systems (SNSs) as recommendations or reviews. The literature on review in communication marketing argues that e-WOM and public relations are the best alternative strategies in crisis situations (Avraham, 2016; Huang, 2019), which might include the Covid-19 crisis. This study offers opportunities for destination government and tourism managers to promote a destination through information on services and travel guidelines during the Covid-19 pandemic which fulfils three elements (authenticity, conciseness, and reversal) such as this pre-developed story script and ask online users to share their destination story in similar story elements. Although producing a destination story requires further help from employees with specific skills and

techniques, the repeated message about the attractiveness and safety of a destination from both government and tourism organisations would ensure the success of the campaign. However, it is crucial to monitor online public opinions and ensure that travel information does not lead people to misperceive the environment.

This study shows that a positive destination story with real information including some negative facts that produce authenticity would protect destination image, gain market trust, and increase visitors' intention behaviour. Processing information in story-format makes people likely to engage with stories and leads to transportation experience without increasing negative evaluations (Solja et al., 2018). However, to build local identity, destination marketers could develop a variety of local cultural messages with positive emotions in destination stories. The value of information through the experience of destination identity is more easily understood and evokes the transportation effect on visitors' feelings and behavioural responses of the destination. Previous literature states that the more the audience involves their feelings into the story, they will find enjoyment and relief in the solutions part of the story. Thus, it is crucial for destination managers to bear in mind that the information in the story must contain facts that include the unfortunate situation of destination and identity elements for successful promotion purposes.

6.4. Limitation and future study

This study has some limitations. First, the study was conducted on health crises in tourism at the destination level. Future studies should compare destination stories to other crises such as earthquakes and tsunamis. Second, although the study offered a different insight to restore destination image, only about 60% of respondents had travel experience during the Covid-19 pandemic. Similar travel experiences during the crisis by a different group of target respondents might provide another result. Third, the study used a local destination as an example case, but future studies could use a country as a case to obtain more general results. Finally, the relationship between narrative engagement and affective image was not proven by the study. Further studies have suggested investigating destination stories enriched by more positive emotion words (Moore and Lafreniere, 2019) and destination identity as a part of the story elements that would produce additional benefits for research on destination storytelling.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Fatimah Abdillah: Conceived and designed the experiments; Performed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

Adi Zakaria Afiff, Sri Rahayu Hijrah Hati & Asnan Furinto: Conceived and designed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

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Data will be made available on request.

Declaration of interests statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Additional information

No additional information is available for this paper.

Appendix A

Hello, my name is Sari; I am a busy private employee. Working at home as a result of Covid-19 made me bored, lonely, and stressed when my work did not meet expectations.

Furthermore, because I could not take any more stress, I decided to take a trip to Yogyakarta, a city rich in culture, natural beauty, and local cuisine.

The view of the active Merapi, off-road adventures in Nglinggo Tourism Village, and the soothing roar of the waves at Parangtritis beach are all unforgettable experiences. In addition, the historical and mythical Yogyakarta palace and the city centre of Yogyakarta did not go unnoticed.

In addition to sightseeing, gastro tourism cannot be overlooked. Yogyakarta has long been known for delicious local culinary delights, such as Gudeg, Sate Klatak, Bakmi Jawa, Kopi Joss, and the legendary snack Pia Pathok.

Can you travel during the mobility restriction period? Yes, it is possible, and I have proven it. During Covid-19 or 'CovidCation', safe tourism is possible because Yogyakarta already has complete health facilities and is government-guaranteed. Hotels, restaurants, and tourist areas have implemented health and hygiene protocols according to government regulations.

These establishments provide touchless services, hand washing facilities, masks for employees, regulate the number of daily visitors, check the temperature of all visitors and employees, regulate physical distance, and maintain good hygiene standards.

My visit to Yogyakarta tourist attractions has relieved my boredom and returned my enthusiasm for my daily work.

I believe the advantages of the dynamic and creative Yogyakarta tourism area, can remain attractive to tourists because there is always something new to offer. Moreover, due to the limited number of visitors, I enjoyed the atmosphere even more.

One employee said that the Covid protocol was well implemented and other employees made similar statements. Hence, I felt more secure and comfortable when travelling in Yogyakarta. My travel experience evokes memories of the specialties of Yogyakarta, and I am pleased and grateful for the beauty of culture, various beautiful spots, historical values, and delicious culinary delights that Yogyakarta has to offer.

Yogyakarta provides the best moments of my tour and happiness. Let us travel to Yogyakarta and keep supporting Indonesian tourism. Always remember to stay alert and adhere to protocols such as wearing masks, hand sanitisers, face shields, and maintaining a safe distance.

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