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A comparative analysis of the Portrayal of Rainforests and People in Tourism Promotional Videos

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Abstract:

Tourism promotional videos are known to play an important role in shaping destination image which motivates people to travel to the destination. Since destination images create expectations, marketing videos should ideally promote realistic scenarios which the tourist would experience at the destination. Failure to match the communicated destination image with reality, would only lead to tourist disappointment. Applying content analysis, we analyse the Brunei Tourism Promotional Video produced by Brunei Tourism in 2012, looking into possible areas where viewers are presented with unrealistic scenarios on Brunei's rainforests and people. We also look into the Biocultural content of the video, to understand how the biological and cultural diversities of the country has been portrayed. The video is then compared objectively with other prominent videos from the region to generate a comparative understanding. The results show that tourism promotion videos published from Brunei and Indonesia have a significant percentage of unrealistic content.

Keywords: *biocultural diversity, ecotourism, conservation, flagship species, biodiversity*

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INTRODUCTION

In 1990, Butler predicted that the visual media such as motion pictures, videos, and television will surpass the traditional print media in shaping images of destinations, and increasing footfall at the destinations. Twenty seven years later, on February 27 2017, YouTube officially announced that one billion hours of its content are watched by people around the world every day. Earlier, a study commissioned by Google showed that 83% of travellers were inspired by social networking, video, or photo sites, of which 42% were inspired specifically by YouTube videos (Think With Google, 2014). The same study also shows that videos play an important role in influencing people's decision from the initial 'thinking stage' to choosing the destination- a phase when travellers also develop an image of the destination. Although it could be safely assumed that much of these videos were User Generated Content (UGC), the role of induced sources such as promotional videos in shaping destination image, buyer behaviour and directing the gaze of tourists towards the 'image' they wish to see cannot be undermined (Urry 1990; Turner et al. 2005). If destination image comprises of expectation and perceptions of the destination (Buhalis 2000), then it is important to generate realistic promotional videos that would connect the tourist with the expected experience. The key question to be answered by promotional video makers is "what and whose image does a destination want to project?" (Reino and Hay 2011). In this article, we compare a promotional video published by Brunei Tourism to other promotional videos from Malaysia, Indonesia, Bhutan and Japan for their content. The article has three major objectives drawn from informed assumptions: i) To analyse the extent to which the promotion videos promote a realistic image of the destination, ii) To understand the portrayal of biodiversity, people and culture in the promotional videos, and iii) To gauge the efficiency of tourism promoters in making

use of the concept of flagship species that was devised to raise critical funding for biodiversity conservation through ecotourism.

Methodology

We critique the content of prominent tourism promotional videos from Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bhutan and Japan using content analysis approach adapted from Hou et al. (2011). The videos from Brunei and Japan were chosen subjectively while those from Indonesia and Bhutan were chosen as they happened to be the winners of the UNWTO competition 2017. The video from Sabah, Malaysia was also chosen subjectively as the destination is geographically close to Brunei. The expression style of videos are gauged according to Hou (2017) who categorises tourism promotional videos into five: i) the painting style that is essentially artistic, and makes use of graphic designs and static images, ii) the TV style that features dramatic plots, iii) the documentary style is descriptive that portrays life in an authentic manner without missing details, iv) the co-occurrence style that employs a variety of threads, angles and often comprises of multiple parts, v) the augmentative writing that provides different arguments connected to the themes (Hou 2017).

The first objective rests on the assumption that the destination image projected by tourism promoters is responsible for shaping the ‘perceived destination image’ in the minds of the potential tourist. As ‘perceived destination image’ is a sum of expectations a potential tourist develops prior to the visit, the post-visit satisfaction would depend on the extent to which these expectations are met at the destination (Govers and Go 1999; Govers and Go 2004). In the words of Kotler et al. (1993), the image should not be based on fantasy, but be realistic and believable (Also see: Foley and Fahri 2003). We consider an image ‘realistic’ when it depicts a scenario a tourist would actually experience or gaze at the destination. Doing so, we consciously veer away from probing into the ‘staged vs authentic’ nature of such experiences at the destination (See: Pearce and Moscardo 1986; Cohen 1988). Objective ii draws from the emerging concept of biocultural diversity (BCD) that is defined as the “diversity of life in all of its manifestations: biological, cultural, and linguistic, which are interrelated (and possibly coevolved) within a complex socio-ecological adaptive system” (Maffi 2007). Case studies show that the benefits routed to the local communities from ecotourism ventures could be enhanced, and negative effects minimised by adopting a participatory approach rooted in the locality’s biocultural diversity (Okano and Matsuda 2013;

Corcoran 2015). For objective ii, we will be looking into the prominence accorded to the BCD of the destination, and the nature of the portrayal. For objective iii, we apply the concept of flagship species that advocates the use of charismatic species whose conservation and popularisation would in turn raise funds for the conservation of the entire ecosystem. (Myers 1983). Ideally, ecotourism promotional ventures should have identified the charismatic species in the destination and showcase them in their promotional activities.

Analyses of videos

Brunei Tourism Promotional Video

Brunei Tourism Department, Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism, published a video titled “Brunei Tourism Promotional Video” on YouTube in June, 2012 (Brunei Tourism 2012a). Since the date of its publishing, the video has recorded more than 150,000 views. However a shorter 2 minutes version of the same video, published along with the former was seen only by around 14,000 viewers (Brunei Tourism 2012b). Both the long and the short versions of the video start with a raining scene of rainforest indicating that the producers see rainforests as the main part of Brunei’s tourist attraction. Brunei is popular for its rainforests as well as cultural and linguistic diversities (Haji-Othman et al. 2016). In 2010, close to 54% of Brunei’s land surface was covered by primary unlogged forest (Bryan et al. 2013), and there are seven communities officially recognised native communities with varying degrees of ties to the forests (Martin 1995). The videos reflect this biocultural diversity by having significant percentage of the content devoted to the rainforest, people and culture. Although the promotional video successfully portrays Brunei’s Biocultural diversity as a tourist attraction, there seems to be a room for a further improvement in the manner in which they are portrayed.

The video begins by showcasing Brunei’s rainforests and the associated flora and fauna. Special emphasis is given to the proboscis monkey (*Nasalis larvatus*), a charismatic fauna whose sighting is not rare. Notable missing elements here are the hornbills, false gharials (*Tomistoma schlegelii*) and the Bornean ironwood (*Eusideroxylon zwageri*) which can be considered as flagship species. After one full minute, the video moves to a different section that portrays local people dancing and playing instruments in the forest, which is not a realistic scene one would expect to witness under normal circumstances in Brunei. Neither are there any packages promoting such an experience in

in Brunei. Yet, this scene lasts for 30 seconds (9.86%). Of the total duration of 5'07 minutes, about 27.5% of the content is devoted to the rainforest and the dance session; sixty seconds are devoted to the rainforest and its biodiversity while thirty seconds have been devoted for the above mentioned dance cum musical session in the forest (1'00- 1'30 minutes). Rest of the video depicts cultural attractions and religious scenes such as museums and prayers (Table 1).

Table 1. Timeline analysis of Brunei Tourism promotional Video

	Item Description	Timeline
Biodiversity	Rainforest	0'00-1'00
Biocultural Diversity	Dance and Music in the rainforest	1'00-1'30''
	<i>Sape</i> music	1'30''-1'42''
	Betel Chewing	1'42''-1'52''
	Culinary diversity	2'17''-2'36''
	Local Dance	2'36''-2'46''
	Visitor dancing with locals	4'37''-4'51''
National Heritage	Museum	2'02''-2'17''
	Monarchy & Nation	3'30''-4'02''
Religion	Mosques and Prayers	1'52''-2'02'' & 2'46''- 2'56''
	Chinese temple	2'56''- 3'12''
Leisure	Malls, Golf, Hotels, etc	3'12''- 3'26''
	Immersive experience in outdoors	4'02'' – 4' 37''
Unrealistic content	30 seconds of dancing in the rainforest (9.86%)	1'00'' - 1'30''
Video Style		TV/ Documentary

Sabah, Malaysian Borneo by Sabah Tourism

This promotional video of Sabah, the Malaysian state neighbouring Brunei has a narration throughout it and aims to provide a touristic perspective of Sabah (Table 2). The video begins with an introduction of Sabah as 'a land of green canopies and glorious sunsets.' Until 1'41, it continuously shows the nature of rainforest, wild animals and a river running across, effectively setting up an ecotourism mood. It is clear that rainforest and biodiversity are treated as main attractions with around 30% of the video dedicated towards the forest resources. Charismatic

species depicted in the video are hornbills, rafflesia, orangutan, sun bear, pygmy elephants, proboscis monkey and pitcher plants. The list is complete with no glaring omissions except for the belian tree. The narration draws the attention of the viewer towards interesting facts such as the percentage of the forest cover in Sabah. Following the forests and their biodiversity, the video shifts its focus to the biodiversity of Sabah's marine ecosystems, and from 2'08, tourist activities such as homestays are introduced. At 2'53 onwards, the viewer is introduced to Kinabalu Park which is an UNESCO World Heritage Centre, and without any doubt, one of the main tourist attractions in Sabah. However, Mt. Kinabalu is portrayed as a tourist attraction, with no mention of its cultural importance for the local indigenous people (Bidder and Polus 2014). There is also footage of festivals and traditions where elements of local culture such as food, festivals, dance, music and markets, are shown from a touristic perspective. In these shots, tourists are shown to interact or even dancing with the native people, and locals are shown dressed up for the tourist's gaze. The video contains no unrealistic scenes.

Table 2. Timeline analysis of Sabah, Malaysian Borneo

Item Description		Timeline
Biodiversity	Rainforests, biodiversity	0'00'' - 1'41''
	Marine biodiversity: diving and resorts	1'41-2'25
Biocultural Diversity	Local culture & homestays (touristic perspective)	2'28'' – 2' 50''
	Food, festivals, dance and Music (touristic perspective)	3' 41'' – 3' 58''
	Gaya street market (touristic perspective)	3' 58'' – 4' 07''
Heritage	Mount Kinabalu	2' 50' – 3' 22''
Leisure	Marine biodiversity: diving and resorts	1'41-2'25
	Adventure sports	3'22'' – 3' 41''
Unrealistic content	None	
Video Style		Documentary/ co-occurrence

Wonderful Indonesia by Indonesia Travel

‘Wonderful Indonesia’ emerged as the winner of the UNWTO (World Tourism Organization) Tourism Video Competition 2017 for the East Asia and Pacific regions. The video also won the peoples’ choice award, which highlights its popular appeal. Published in 2016, Wonderful Indonesia recorded about 465,500 views on YouTube by December 2017. This figure is by far higher than that of Brunei’s promotional video, which is 155,000 views since 2012 (December 2017). The video is a destination promotion venture, with the viewer taken from one destination to another. Also, by trying to pack in myriad range of attractions from rainforests to shopping malls, the video positions Indonesia as a mass tourism destination. One interesting feature of ‘Wonderful Indonesia’ is that the video does not give importance to any of Indonesia’s flagship species.

The first eight seconds focuses on a boat traversing the rainforest (Table 3). Following that, the video moves on to cultural crafts and dance scenes. Yet, rainforests appear from time to time as the video moves from one destination to another, gently ‘rocking’ between themes as it showcases the prime attractions of the destination. For instance, the video introduces Wayan Islands at 1’08, and then quickly goes back to rainforest again for six seconds. At 1’22, the scene changes to the urban landscape, but it backtracks again to the rainforest from 1’33, showing Tiu Kelep Waterfall with forests. Backtracking can be confusing to viewers, and it is perplexing to note that the video with extensive backtracking had actually won the people’s choice award. However, the video succeeds in providing an impression that Indonesia is endowed with forests, which is achieved by keeping the forested landscapes at the background. For instance, even in the footage (2’06” to 2’12”) showing a couple on the beach, mountains and forests appear as the background.

The video portrays rainforests and rice fields as interesting landscapes, accompanied by glimpses into human-nature interactions that have been dramatised and appear to be staged for the camera. From 1’36 to 1’39, a woman is shown to be in rain with an exaggerated expression of a healing atmosphere. There is another unrealistic scene of floating woman in the sea from 2’55 to 2’58, although it is not related to the rainforest. Likewise, there is also an underwater romantic scene which is highly unrealistic. Drone shots of landscapes, and isolated and uncrowded beaches shown in the videos are far from the reality of mass tourism destinations where tourists hardly get to experience a bird’s eye view of the landscape, or indulge themselves with minimal people around.

Table 3. Timeline analysis of ‘Wonderful Indonesia’

	Item Description	Timeline
Biodiversity	Rainforest	0’00” – 0’8”
Biocultural Diversity	Local Dance and Music	0’8” – 0’17”
	Landscapes, rural culture	0’17” – 0’45”
	Local culture- handlooms	1’44 – 1’49”
	Urban and local experiences dramatised for tourists	1’49” – 2’28”
	Local Coffee	2’18” – 2’21”
	Puppetry	2’21 – 2’26”
Leisure	Urban landscape, malls, hotels, etc	1’22” – 1’32”
	Underwater experience	1’02” – 1’22”
	Underwater and waterfalls	1’32” – 1’44”
Unrealistic content	Underwater romantic scene	2’26” – 2’46”
	A few drone shots, isolated uncrowded beaches	0’34”; 0’37”-0’38”; 1’10”-1’14”; 2’41”-2’42”; 2’46”-2’47”
Video Style		TV/ co-occurrence

Happiness is a place by Tourism Bhutan

Published in 2015, ‘Happiness is a place’ won the UNWTO Tourism Video Competition-2017 for the South Asian region. The entire video aims to give potential tourists glimpses of authentic local culture instead of a healing, romantic atmosphere portrayed in ‘Wonderful Indonesia’. An outstanding part of this video is that there is no unrealistic content in the video and the video mostly comprises of actual documentary style footages.

To begin with, the viewer is introduced to Bhutan’s rainforest, along with different intervening cuts of traditional performance and adventure activities (Table 4). This style of portrayal lasts for the first 21 seconds. The unique part is from 0’22 to 0’37, when only rainforests and mountains are shown. The video is very simple, but effectively shows the significance of the green Himalayan landscape. From 2’14 to 3’13, the video focuses on biodiversity. Charismatic species such as tigers, Hornbills, Snow Leopards and even insects, birds and bats are featured indicating the importance given to biodiversity as a whole. However, there is no shots of wild elephants- another flagship species, though there are footages of tamed elephants. Towards the end (3’14 to 3’36), the video returns to the view of rainforests and mountains. This translates into 1 minute 22 seconds

of footage on Bhutan’s rainforests and Biodiversity, which is nearly 35% of the video. Some original footages of tourist activities such as climbing mountain and rafting are also shown.

Table 4. Timeline analysis of ‘Happiness is a place’

Item Description		Timeline
Biodiversity	Himalayan landscape (Forests & snow)	0’12” – 0’31” ; 3’13-3’23”
	Flora and fauna	2’08” – 3’09”
Biocultural Diversity	Local culture: festivals, dance, music, local life (Non-dramatised)	0’58” – 1’32”
Religion	Temple, Prayers	0’40” – 0’58” ; 1’32” – 1’36”
Leisure	Trekking & Hiking	0’31” – 0’40” ; 3’23” – 3’36”
	Adventure sports: rafting, hiking, elephant ride (realistic footage)	1’36” - 2’08”
	Elephant ride	3’02” – 3’09”
Unrealistic content	None. Drone shots are used, but they are views the tourist would normally see in such high altitude regions	
Video Style		Documentary

True North, Akita by Akita Prefecture, Japan

‘True North, Akita’ was directed and edited by Maki Indo, and published officially by Akita prefecture in 2016. As suggested by the title of the video, it clearly falls into the ambits of ‘creative tourism’ defined as “travel directed towards an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place, and it provides a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture” (UNESCO, 2006). The video depicts the day to day life of an ordinary family in Akita prefecture with a beautiful song by Asuka Aoya in the background. Although it does not show much rainforest environment, as a promotional video, it successfully tells the audience what the director wanted to. The video casts a landscape which would otherwise considered as just another rural landscape with no tourist attractions as a beautiful place to live and experience. This is achieved by attracting the tourist’s attention to the small, yet often neglected components of the ecosystem.

The first 33 seconds simply shows the agricultural landscape, and the following part from 0’38 to 2’30 focuses on nature and human interactions (Table 5). Until 3’40, the focus changes to interactions between people, and it again shows nature from 3’41. After that, from 4’31, the main feature goes to traditional food, but it still shows interactions between people and biodiversity. Although it might be difficult for tourists to spend a long time in Akita to experience the local lifestyle, it at least shows the authentic biocultural characteristics of this place, in a realistic manner. The video lasts for 5’45, and the length is not that different from Brunei tourism promotional video, which is 5’07. Unlike other videos which try to show a variety of the scenes, it is more concise and linear, giving a slower and more relaxed impression to the viewers as the theme of the video laidback, just as the destination it projects. The entire video gives a biocultural experience of the locality, with every scene capturing the intimate relationship between people, their culture and the biodiversity around them. The video does not fail in its mission to impart a nostalgic feeling of a childhood or life in a rural unspoilt environment. The video also conveys the message that there no major charismatic flora or fauna in the destination, but tourists can always find joy in otherwise neglected biodiversity such as the humble frog in the stream or the wild flower one could pick up anywhere. However, the video fails to provide any space for the Asian Black Bears of Akita, a charismatic species forced into conflict with humans. The Asahi Shimbun of January 8, 2018 reports that 817 black bears were killed in 2017, which amounts to 60% of the bear population in Akita.

Table 5. Timeline analysis of ‘True North, Akita’

	Item Description	Timeline
Biodiversity	Landscape where agricultural and natural expanses are shown to co-exist	0’00” – 0’ 34”
	Flora and fauna	3’00” – 5’42”
Biocultural Diversity	Local culture: festivals, dance, music, local life (Non-dramatised)	
Religion	Temple, Prayers	2’52” – 3’00”
Leisure	Cycling	3’33”-4’30”
Unrealistic content	None. Drone shots are used, but mostly to situate the scene in the environmental context	
Video style		Documentary

Findings

Fantasy or reality

Of the five promotional videos analysed, Sabah, Bhutan and Japan had no unrealistic content. Indonesia and Brunei's Tourism promotional video had around 11% and 9.86% of footage that could be considered unrealistic in nature respectively. Such artificial, unrealistic content does not help in communicating a proper image of the destination. By eliminating the unrealistic dance session, which a tourist would never experience in Brunei, the video could have saved a precious 30 seconds which could have been dedicated to other charismatic landscapes or flora and fauna. Considering that Brunei is a small country with limited travelling opportunities within the country, and limited opportunities for attracting domestic tourists, promotion on the internet is crucial to reach potential tourists from overseas. In this scenario, the dancing scene contradicts the popular impression of Brunei Darussalam as a country guided by the doctrine of MIB (Melayu Islam Beraja). Chen et al. (2013) in their case study of tourism in Brunei suggest that prevalence of strong Islamic norms and values are not cultural constraints that deter tourism, but opportunities to promote such unique culture and hospitality. Hence, it would be in the interest of Brunei to showcase the real cultural scenario that tourists would experience in the country.

Indonesia's video has an overtly dramatised underwater romantic scene which falls clearly into the realm of fantasy. Likewise, there are also a few drone shots and scenes of isolated uncrowded beaches that the tourist would never get to experience in a crowded destination. Drone shots provide a bird's eye view of the destination, which a normal land based tourist would never be able to gaze. It is true that the landscape looks beautiful from the sky level, but in most of the cases, tourists do not go to that level to see the entire site. They rather walk around and witness what are around them. By showing scenery from tourists' view point, the videos would offer a realistic image of the destination that the tourist would actually view. Although Bhutan's 'Happiness is a place' video also makes use of drone shots, the footage can still be considered realistic as Bhutan is a high altitude country where tourists get to experience bird's eye view of the Himalayan landscape. "True North, Akita" is honest realistic portrayal of local life; what is portrayed is exactly what tourists can see in the area, which avoids any possible disappointment by the tourist later. If we consider trend of UGC influencing tourist's choices, for Brunei and Indonesia, there is a high possibility of contradiction between unrealistic images promoted by

official videos and realistic images promoted by UGCs. However, by promoting a realistic image, videos from Bhutan, Sabah and Japan avoid such contradictions straight away.

Portrayal of Biocultural Diversity

Analysis of Brunei's Tourism Promotion video shows that the Kingdom's biocultural diversity is not promoted adequately. In the place of the unrealistic dancing scenes, the video could have depicted more realistic cultural expressions, as well as examples of interactions between nature and people. However, the inclusion of footage on betel chewing is a commendable act. In the case of Bhutan too, the video could have focused on the interactions between people and environment. This is important considering that the concept of the video is 'Happiness is a place', where one would expect to see glimpses of Bhutan's Biocultural Diversity. As the promotional video from Indonesia is keen on packing everything into the same video, there is no biocultural experience for the viewer, although there are a few footages related to human-nature interactions that appear to be staged for the camera. There are also footages showing tourists photographing themselves with the native people which is against the spirit of biocultural diversity. The video from Sabah Tourism stands out from the rest in the portrayal of biocultural diversity. Ethnic communities are shown dressed up for the tourist's gaze which rather indicates the insensitiveness of the promoters towards Sabah's native communities, and can be critiqued academically from a 'commoditisation' and 'staged authenticity' perspective (See: Cohen 1988). Mount Kinabalu, which is designated as a world heritage centre is also shown from the tourist perspective. Given the immense cultural importance accorded to the mountain by the KadazanDusun community, and the associated notion of sacredness, it is important to sensitize the tourists about the importance of the site. Highlighting the importance of Mt. Kinabalu in the local cultures would also help in avoiding controversies and conflicts promoted by insensitive tourists as in the example of the nude tourists of 2015 (Yunci and Baptist 2016). In terms of portraying BCD of the destination, True North Akita scores high. The video is successful in sensitising the viewer towards the biocultural diversity of place- the biodiversity, local customs and lifestyle.

Effective utilisation of flagship species

Brunei's tourism promotional video provides special emphasis on the Proboscis monkey (*Nasalis larvatus*), while other charismatic species such as hornbills, false gharials (*Tomistoma*

schlegelii) and the Bornean ironwood (*Eusideroxylon zwageri*) are not featured. Sabah's video showcases hornbills, rafflessia, orangutan, sun bear, pygmy elephants, proboscis monkey and pitcher plants, with the only omission being the Belian tree which is a tree unlike the animals in the list. Surprisingly, 'Wonderful Indonesia' does not give space to any of Indonesia's flagship species. WWF (2018) lists six flagship species for Indonesia: Sumatran tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*), Sumatran orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus abelii*), Sumatran elephant (*Elephas maximus sumatrensis*), Sumatran rhino (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*), Javan rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus sondaicus*), and Bornean orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus pygmaeus*); species such as the komodo dragon (*Varanus komodoensis*) could also be added to the list indicating its non-exhaustive nature. Bhutan's video promotes charismatic species such as Tigers, Hornbills while footages of wild elephants are missing. Elephants are only portrayed as tamed animals, providing rides to tourists. In the era of User Generated Contents (UGC), Tourism planners will have to be extremely careful on issues related to animal rights and ethics. We suggest that it would be in the interest of such countries not to promote activities involving animals held in captivity, as learnt from the Thai experience (Cohen 2008; Cohen 2013). The video on Akita appears to intentionally hide the presence of the Asiatic Black Bears of Akita, a charismatic species which are classified as 'vulnerable' as per the IUCN Red List (Garshelis & Steinmetz 2016). Perhaps, instead of hiding the presence of such a charismatic species, the video could have highlighted it with the intention of raising funds for mitigating the bear-human conflict in Akita.

Conclusions

The study provides an understanding of the contrasting approaches undertaken by the different tourism promoters of Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Japan and Malaysia. The tourism promotional videos from Brunei and Indonesia had a significant percentage of unrealistic content, could lead to a mismatch between the tourists' expectations before visit, and the actual experience during the visit. We feel that such a mismatch defeats the very purpose of tourism promotion. Our observation is in line with the argument of Reino and Hay (2011) that tourism promoters are yet to understand the real potential and application of YouTube. It is not the official marketing videos that are playing a decisive role in helping potential tourists make decisions, but the UGCs. Thus, the writing on the wall is clear: tourists are increasingly sceptic about promotional videos that promote pseudo images of the destination (Yoo and Gretzel 2009; Shani, et al. 2010),

and it is important for tourism promoters to either portray realistic images of the destination, or encourage UGCs on YouTube. All the videos include content on Biocultural Diversity of the destination. However, there are considerable variations in the approach. The video from Sabah differs from others in portraying the Biocultural Diversity of Sabah as something meant exclusively for the tourists' gaze. We suggest that tourism promoters avoid such negative portrayal of indigenous people. On the portrayal of flagship species, the study shows that tourism promoters have largely made use of the flagship species available in their respective countries, with the promotional videos from Indonesia and Japan being exceptions. None of Indonesia's six listed flagship species are featured in the video. Indonesia's tourism promotional video uses a TV/ co-occurrence style and it is possible that promoters overlooked the attractiveness of flagship species to the mass tourism market. The video from Akita on the other hand, seems to have omitted the presence of bears in the region owing to their troubled relationship with the local. We feel that instead of hiding their existence from the tourist's gaze, the promoters could have also portrayed them so as to generate funds to mitigate the human- bear conflict.

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