

Research Article

Impact Analysis of Indonesian Top Box Office Horror Movies for Indonesian Tourism Destination

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Abstract.

Horror films are a genre that is feared when compared to other genres because they contain elements that are generally feared by humans, such as ghosts, terror, and nuances that often make the audience uncomfortable with the situation presented. However, the horror genre in Indonesia topped the box office in the year of the film's release. As of the last five years (2017–2022), there are *Pengabdian Setan (Satan's Slaves)* as highest in 2017, and *KKN in Dancers Village* (highest in 2022), and *Satan's Slaves 2 Communion* (second highest in 2022). Not only that, the popularity of these films made the film become a public discussion (in this case, the location). For example, the little house and the apartment from *Satan's Slaves* (the first & the sequel) is now officially a haunted house ride, then the Plunyon bridge in Jogjakarta which attracted public attention after appearing in the *KKN in Dancers Village* (2022). This study uses qualitative methods in the form of online observations and interviews, to provide a perspective on how strong the influence of a film is on a location. The results of this study concluded that the factors received by the location of the horror film were due to three factors, namely: the storytelling of the film scene at that location, what was set by the crew, and how the film was presented visually.

Keywords: horror, film, tour destination

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1. Introduction

Horror films in Indonesia generally have horror resources and libraries superior to other countries, because Indonesia is a country that has a diversity of cultures and beliefs, mystical & occult being one part of it. However, the management of the ghost library was initially not managed properly, so Indonesian horror films initially presented hot and erotic scenes, and ghosts were only a cover.

This makes Indonesians underestimate horror films because they believe that the film is an adult and erotic film but packaged with horror film branding. Yet, in the era of 2017 until now Indonesian horror films began to be trusted by the public, are able to



compete with other genre films at the Indonesian Box Office Movies every year, some even reaching four million to 10 million viewers.

TABLE 1: Top 3 Most Viewed Indonesian Box Office Movies of 2017 Source: filmindonesia.or.id.

Rank	Movie Title	Total Audience
1	Satan's Slaves	4.206.103
2	Warkop DKI Reborn: Jangkrik Boss Part 2	4.083.190
3	Ayat-Ayat Cinta 2	2.840.159

For example, *Pengabdian Setan (Satan's Slaves in International)*, a film by Joko Anwar & produced by Rapi Films, in 2017. The film reached four million viewers and topped the Box Office Movies throne in 2017. Even though the film was made by director Joko Anwar to be an Indonesian horror film with the lowest standards, it is expected that Indonesian horror films in the future will be better than that.

TABLE 2: Top 3 Most Viewed Indonesian Box Office Movies of 2022 Source: filmindonesia.or.id.

Rank	Movie Title	Total Audience
1	KKN In Dancers Village	*9.959.378 *(Before they release the extended version)
2	Satan's Slaves 2 Communion	6.390.970
3	Miracle in Cell No 7	5.852.916

Then the *KKN di Desa Penari (KKN in Dancers Village in International)* film by Awi Suryadi, produced by MD Pictures, in 2022. *KKN In Dancers Village* reached 10 million viewers and occupied the throne of Indonesian Box Office Movies in 2022, accompanied by a sequel to Satan's Slaves entitled *Satan's Slaves 2 Communion* which received 6 million viewers and got the second highest in Indonesian Box Office Movies 2022 (filmindonesia.or.id/2022). *Satan's Slaves 2 Communion*, indeed not the one that managed to rank number one, but the author will deliberately discuss this study, because it is the first film in Southeast Asia, that passed the IMAX test, and in terms of audiences much better outperformed the first film.

The popularity of the three films had a strong impact on society & shooting location. Like *Satan's Slaves House* in Pangalengan, Bandung, which is now officially a horror house ride after the film was released and attracted the attention of the public. Same thing, as one of the abandoned apartments in Bekasi, which is crowded after appearing as the main setting in *Satan's Slaves 2*. The same thing was also experienced at the

original location of the Plunyon Bridge, Gunung Kidul, Jogjakarta, which appeared in the *KKN In Dancers Village*.

From these problems emerged several problem identifications:

- i. The popularity of horror films has a strong influence on the audience.
- ii. The impact of horror films also occurs on the location that is used as the background of the scene.
- iii. From the identification of these problems, several questions arise related to the impact of this horror film:
 - iv. How does a horror film that is a “feared” genre attract people to find out about the location related to the film?
 - v. What do film creators do when presenting the film to the public? To attract people to visit the place?

The purpose of this study is to find out what aspects are influential on horror films that managed to rank at the top of the Indonesian Box Office Movies in 2017 & 2022, so that the film has the power to move the audience to find out more about the background scenes in the film.

2. Research Methods

This research will use qualitative methods. Qualitative according to Widiatmoko is a research method carried out by observation, interviews, and literature studies [1]. The author chose this research method by observing public reactions and news that raised the background of the film scene, then interviews with several sources who had watched the film, and literature studies on aspects of the film. The reason the author chose qualitative is because the main data of this study will be obtained through search and observation in the form of public reaction and attention to this location which can be seen from the large number of viewers and comments contained on *YouTube* videos and some news that raises the location of the three films.

Another method that supports this research is by raising the method, how and why? [2]. This study will discuss how these films can have an impact on the audience and on related locations, and why the audience has attention so that some have the enthusiasm to find out and visit the location that is the background of the story in these films.

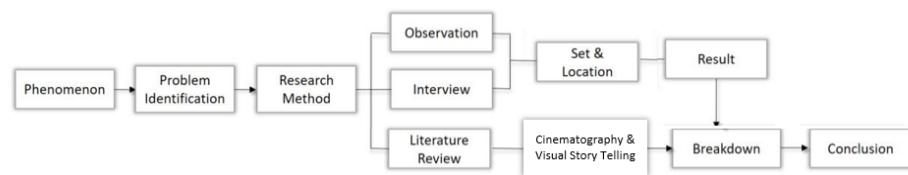


Figure 1: Research method flowchart.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Public impact after watching the films

Satan's Slaves and *KKN di In Dancers Village* are the two horror films that managed to become the owner of the Indonesian Box Office Movies throne in the year when they were released, *Satan's Slaves* became the highest-grossing film in 2017, and *KKN di In Dancers Village* became the highest-grossing film in 2022. The popularity of the film can be stated to continue, as the sequel to *Satan's Slaves* was released in 2022 managed to reach six million viewers (two million higher than the first film), and won the second position of the highest-grossing film of 2022. Those films have their popularity in the year of their release, the impact they provide is not only limited to marketing the film to public viewers, but has an impact that is subtly planted in the heads of the public. Some examples like these:

3.1.1. Movie's impact on the shooting location

The impact of popularity of the three films not only has an impact on public discussion related to the story but also has an impact on the location that is the background of the story. Like the house that became the main setting of *Satan's Slaves* 2017, which is located in the Pangalengan area, Bandung. In the first movie, the house was indeed an old house that was said have been built in the era when the Dutch were still in Indonesia. After the film was released, the house was designed in such a way as to become an official and permanent haunted house ride. The author saw ghost dolls displayed on all sides of the house during observations about the inside of the house. It didn't stop there, the living room of the house displayed a photo of the mother character in *Satan's Slaves* 2017 (played by Ayu Laksmi), and a family photo in the film (displayed photos of actors and actresses playing each character). The haunted house ride is now

used as one of the tourist attractions by the manager of the Pangalengan Bandung tour package.



Figure 2: *Satan’s Slaves House 2017*, and a promotional poster for Pangalengan tourism. Source: Google, Detik Travel, Otw Tour, Instagram @travel.ciwidey.

The impact continued into the film’s sequel, *Satan’s Slaves 2 Communion*, which tells the story of a family experiencing ghost terror and members of a mysterious group moving to an apartment. The apartment confirmed by Joko Anwar as director, that the apartment had been empty and was a government project that had been stalled for 13 years. Observations from the authors found that the apartment on average does not have doors, banisters, and walls that are still the basic color of cement. So, the apartment is very dangerous to visit.

However, after the film was released, several YouTubers and private television visited the house and explored. It didn’t stop there, some people visited that ‘stalled building project’ place just because they wanted to know, this was conveyed by the guard because many people entered and they were given a limit to only go up to the 6th floor. But some of them are desperate to visit the top floor of the building.



Figure 3: Sample from a few video explorations of the Apartment *Satan’s Slaves 2*. Source: Youtube.

The same thing happened to Plunyon, a tourist spot in Gunung Kidul, Jogjakarta, which was chosen to be the setting for the *KKN In Dancers Village* film. Although the tourist location appears only in the form of an entrance bridge (which is told in the film as the road to In Dancers Village), it is enough to get public attention, because the *KKN In Dancers Village* film itself has been watched by more than nine million viewers. The

bridge to the tourist destination of Plunyon is now an icon in itself after appearing in the *KKN film In Dancers Village*.

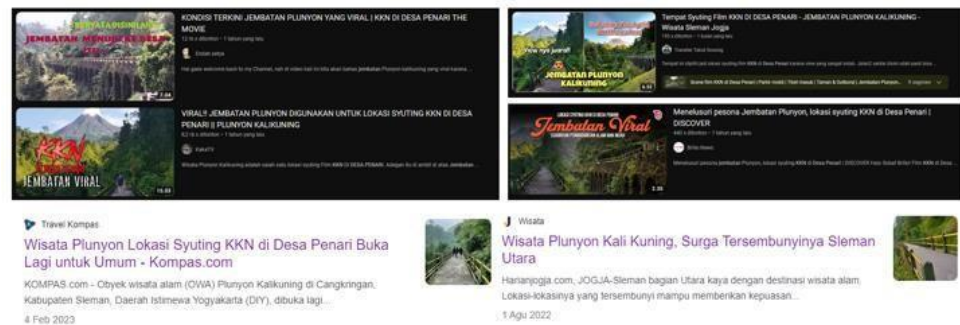


Figure 4: Audience attention for Plunyon tourism destination, After *KKN in the Dancers Village*. Source: *Youtube & Google*.

3.2. Cinematography

Cinematography is the final composition of a film shooting production (before post-production), which cinematographically includes many things, such as lighting and color, and location setup. Blain Brown in “Cinematography Theory & Practice: for Cinematographers & Directors” [4], said a lot of things about cinematography. However, in this research, we only talk about some parts that have a relation with those movies, such as the visual language of Cinematography and visual storytelling.

3.2.1. Practical lighting technique (visual language)

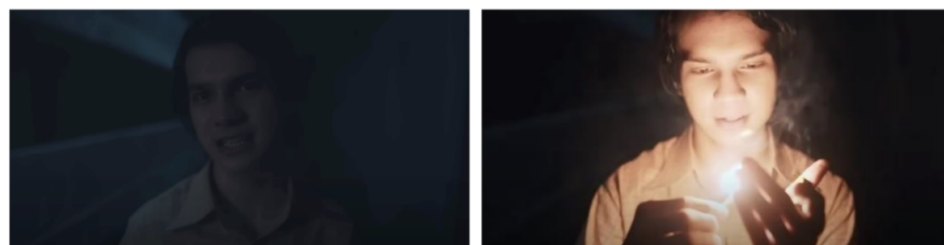


Figure 5: Practical Light used for *Satan’s Slaves 2 Communion* lighting technique. Source: *Rapi Films YouTube Channel*.

Some sources said that the scene that was horror for them was the scene when a character named Tony, checked the bodies of an elevator accident with only a lighter and was done when the entire apartment experienced a power outage. The author found that the lighting technique in *Satan’s Slaves 2* was confirmed by one of the

Satan's Slaves 2 actors named Endy Arfian in the secret behind-the-scenes video. He said that the location of the apartment was an abandoned building, there was no light, the conditions were dark, and the lighting technique was made as minimal as possible, the light only came from the match fire or flashlight used by these actors/actresses, for example, then exemplified the use of fire matches as a light source in the frame during shooting. Moveable light is a concept about fear, tension and suspension from ghost [5], relate with Tony's character that had a fear inside when he check the bodies through the floor by floor on the dark apartment.

3.2.2. Build & set up location

In the process of setting up a location, Joko Anwar as the director always briefs the crew to build locations that should not exist as the main function of special effects is carried out when abroad. One of them is the flood scene inside the first floor of the apartment, which is the original set that was built in such a way like a pool, using 29 water tank cars (Confirmed by Joko Anwar, on *Tempodotco YouTube Channel*).



Figure 6: Set up and final flood scene on the apartment, using 29 water tank car. Source: *Rapi Films*.

Another scene from *Satan's Slaves 2 Communion*, shows a climactic scene featuring the secret hall of the group of devotees in the film. The unexpected thing is that the hall is on the top floor of the apartment, and access is through a secret stair in one of the apartment room units, this is very unusual in public buildings. The stairs were built by the set-up crew in one of the units in the abandoned apartment.

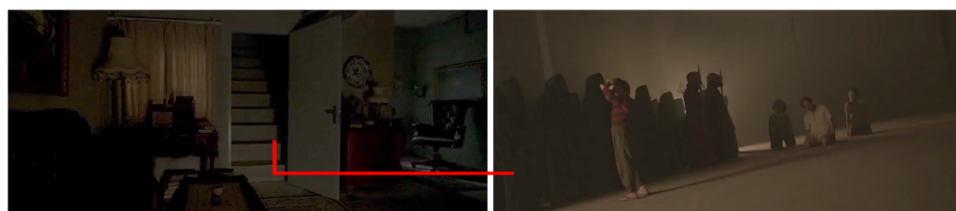


Figure 7: Set up and build secret stairs in the room of apartment for access to the secret hall. Source: *Rapi Films*.

This is certainly a part of creating its impression for the audience and being an experience for the audience. Then something similar happened to the scene at home, the first part of the film. When the hallway of the house in front of Bondi and Ian's character room is a photo of their mother displayed at the end of the hallway and beside the bedroom door. However, in reality, next to Bondi and Ian's character's room, there is a bathroom, which is supported by the same wall wallpaper motive as the part in the movie which is only located in the hallway in front of Bondi and Ian's character's room. It can be argued that what the viewer saw on screen was the result of the set and location's crew and not necessarily raw from the original location.



Figure 8: The original location was a bathroom at the side of Bondi and Ian's room, in the film is a wall where photos of the mother figures are displayed. Source: *Merdeka.com & Rapi Films*.

From KKN in the Dancers Village, they built a bathroom (and a pool) in the middle of the forest. In the real story, *Simpleman* as the real writer said that there no bathroom at all, in their house (villagers), so they take a bath in the public bathroom in the middle of the forest that is closest to the water source.



Figure 9: An old pool and a bathroom, in the middle of the forest. Source: *MD Pictures*.

3.2.3. Visual story telling

Movement and visual in the movie were components of visual storytelling. Other scenes, from *Satan's Slaves 2 Communion*, include coloring the building which looks a little blue and gray, which seems cold and dark, and taking pictures of the building that moves from the top floor into the middle floor, as well as going around the building to invite. The audience went around looking at the atmosphere of the building. Another thing is supported in the scene below by the *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa* song (Ismail Marzuki, 1947), where the song meaningfully has its meaning in its time, namely a sign that midnight has arrived (aired when Television of the Republic of Indonesia the closing of the day's program, and aired just before the midnight (before the change of day).



Figure 10: One sample of Movement and Visual Story Telling *Satan's Slaves 2 Communion*. Source: *Rapi Films* as Production House & *Ical Tanjung* as The Director of Photography.

In the scene above, not all of us can see the meaning of that scene. That scene just represented the atmosphere of the apartment at night and the camera movement with the technique of following the movement of objects. In that Scene, there's no character as an object is shown. However, Joko Anwar confirmed in one of the interviews that the camera movement of the *Rayuan Pulau Kelapa* scene is the point of view of the "Mother" character (That played by Ayu Laksmi) who had gone at the first movie and returning in the form of a ghost who travels around the apartment and wants to visit her family again. The movement & cinematography on this case it is about little part of storytelling about Rini's family relation (even after life). Rini's family issue its a part of socio cultural on the *Satan's Slave* franchise [6].

In the scene above, we can see that Awi Suryadi (the director) and Ipung (the director of photography) showed us the view of the bridge to go to the Dancer's Village, they showed us the beautiful view but with a Javanese traditional music called Gamelan.



Figure 11: One sample of Movement and Visual Story Telling of KKN In Dancers Village. Source: *MD Pictures*.

For the second picture, they try to show us the place view, and how old (as we can see some kind of “tendrils” around) the “*Sanggar*”, or the place “The Dancer” lives and has a throne.

4. Conclusion

The popularity of a film has a strong impact on society because films that have several viewers above millions of viewers can be concluded to be films that are well known by the public at large and in general. Not only an impact for the story, but also has an impact on the location. That’s a factor in how successful the creators are behind the scenes. How writers and directors try to do storytelling through the films they make. Then some factors are deliberately made more memorable, such as the background of the hallway scene of *Satan’s Slaves* house which was originally a bathroom, but in the film transformed into a wall with a photo of the figure of “Mother” who seems terrible, then the scene of the stairs in the room of *Satan’s Slaves 2* apartment, which looks improperly designed because it is told to be a secret staircase to the secret floor hall, or the mysterious building in the middle of the forest that become a place of dancers ghost. This makes some sources say it is quite out of the box and makes what happens in this film quite terrible if it happens in real life.

The last aspect that spearheads this storytelling is the cinematography, how the composition of objects and movements are made to tell what happens in the film, and several times made to give perspective and fear felt by the characters in it. Therefore, aspects that can build a separate impression from the audience of a location/setting of a horror film visually are aspects of storytelling, building & setting up locations, and cinematography in the film.

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