

Musical Hyperreality in Kampung Jelita: A Case Study of Thematic Tourism in Surabaya

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Abstract

This study analyzes music's role in shaping visitors' hyperreal experiences in Kampung Jelita, Surabaya. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research focuses on the Japanese and Balinese thematic zones and applies Jean Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, literature review, and documentation conducted in the Kampung Jelita area, Manukan Lor IV E Street, RT 05/RW 01, Banjar Sugihan Subdistrict, Tandes District, Surabaya. The findings reveal that instrumental music is a cultural simulator that evokes illusion and fantasy, supporting Baudrillard's view that simulation can substitute reality. The soundscapes in each thematic zone, Japanese and Balinese, enhance the immersive experience by harmonizing with visual ornaments, prompting visitors to engage emotionally, experience nostalgia, and participate in performative acts such as renting traditional costumes. However, some visitors noted inconsistencies between the music and the intended cultural themes. Theoretically, this study contributes to hyperreality discourse by emphasizing the role of music in reinforcing sensory simulation within thematic tourism village contexts. Practically, the findings suggest that curating culturally coherent soundscapes can strengthen visitors' emotional attachment and enhance destination branding. Thus, music should be regarded as a strategic medium in constructing cultural identity and tourist experience.

Kata kunci: Kampung Jelita; musical hyperreality; simulacra; traditional instrumental music

Hiperrealitas Musik di Kampung Jelita: Studi Kasus Tematik Wisata di Surabaya

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis peran musik dalam membentuk pengalaman hiperreal pengunjung di Kampung Jelita, Surabaya. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, penelitian ini berfokus pada zona tematik Jepang dan Bali serta menerapkan teori hiperrealitas Jean Baudrillard. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi langsung, studi pustaka, dan dokumentasi yang dilakukan di kawasan Kampung Jelita, Jalan Manukan Lor IV E, RT 05/RW 01, Kelurahan Banjar Sugihan, Kecamatan Tandes, Surabaya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa musik instrumental berfungsi sebagai simulator budaya yang membangkitkan ilusi dan fantasi, mendukung pandangan Baudrillard bahwa simulasi dapat menggantikan realitas. Lanskap bunyi (soundscape) di setiap zona tematik Jepang dan Bali memperkuat pengalaman imersif dengan menciptakan keselarasan antara elemen audio dan visual, sehingga mendorong pengunjung untuk terlibat secara emosional, merasakan nostalgia, serta berpartisipasi dalam tindakan performatif seperti menyewa kostum tradisional. Namun, beberapa pengunjung mencatat adanya ketidaksesuaian antara musik yang diputar dengan tema budaya yang dimaksudkan. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap wacana hiperrealitas dengan menekankan peran musik dalam memperkuat simulasi sensorik dalam konteks kampung tematik wisata. Secara praktis, temuan ini menyarankan bahwa pengelolaan lanskap bunyi yang selaras secara budaya dapat memperkuat keterikatan emosional pengunjung dan meningkatkan citra destinasi wisata. Dengan demikian, musik perlu dipandang sebagai media strategis dalam membangun identitas budaya dan pengalaman wisata.

Keywords: Kampung Jelita; hiperrealitas musik; simulakra; musik instrumental tradisional

INTRODUCTION

During her tenure as Mayor of Surabaya from 2010 to 2020, Tri Rismaharini proposed several flagship programs to handle metropolitan cities' economy and regional development. One of them was Thematic Villages. The term *kampung* has now changed to show a specific regional identity. At the same time, the term *kelurahan* (sub-district) refers to the urban area. A thematic village is an area under the administration of a sub-district that showcases the identity or uniqueness of a community or region, which is promoted and highlighted based on mutual agreement (Suliyati et al. 2019). The Kampung Tematik program aims to reduce poverty and unemployment, improve housing quality, empower local communities, and manage potential and improve tourist destinations. The implementation of the thematic village program began in 2014-2017 and became the starting point for environmental improvement and community empowerment to overcome poverty in Surabaya. It was not just during Tri Rismaharini's time, but the program continued during the next mayor's term, Eri Cahyadi, period 2021-2030.

During its development, thematic villages in Surabaya were categorized into three types: Excellence Village, Kampung Tourism Village, and Ecological Village. One example of a thematic tourism village is Kampung Jelita. The word "Jelita" stands for *Jepang Bali Kita* (Our Japan-Bali). Kampung Jelita is one of several themed villages in Kampung Wethan Wonderland, which is located on Manukan Lor IV E Street, RW. 01, Banjar Sugihan Subdistrict, Tandes District, Surabaya. Kampung Wethan Wonderland consists of six RTs, and Kampung Jelita is in RT 05.

This neighborhood features two closely located zones with Japanese and Balinese themes, attracting local and international tourists. The combination of local and global aesthetics provides a visual tourist experience.

However, the music played in each theme at Jelita plays an important role. Scientists agree that music can stimulate every human brain area (Kusuma 2025). This creates emotionality, authenticity, and memorable experiences supported by positive personal connections with the local atmosphere.

Music contributes significantly to the overall image of a destination by representing Japanese and Balinese cultural identities. Moreover, it promotes, positions, and markets the city as a tourist destination (Hutabarat 2022). In this context, music creates a unique impression for visitors. The role of music as a destination attraction is also beneficial for promoting the village and as an effective effort to shape a positive destination image, while also enhancing tourists' perceptions and satisfaction with the acoustic environment in the village (Min et al. 2020). This phenomenon is interesting to analyze from the perspective of hyperreality. This is because the use of music in each theme at Kampung Jelita not only serves as entertainment, but also seems to form a simulation of Japanese and Balinese cultural realities constructed for tourism purposes in the villages of Surabaya.

Previous studies have explored hyperreality in various music contexts. Mohammad & Astuti (2021) examined the phenomenon of virtual music ensembles as a form of hyperreality in music education. Windleburn (2021) analyzed hyperreal music in Noah Creshevsky's digital compositions that simulate musical experiences. Similarly, Windari Widodo & Kasiyan (2024) discussed how computerized technology influences hyperreality in creating digital music in the globalized era. Meifilina & Saputra (2024) studied the hyperreal representation of power and sexuality in dangdut music, comparing the songs *Duo Semangka* and *Nasida Ria*.

However, these studies predominantly focus on music production, representation, consumption, and education, rather than on thematic tourism experiences constructed through music. Therefore, this study identifies a clear research gap: the limited exploration of music's role in constructing cultural simulations and hyperreal experiences within thematic tourist destinations.

Based on this background, the research question is: How does music shape visitors' hyperreal experiences in thematic tourism villages, particularly in Kampung Jelita, Surabaya? Jean Baudrillard introduced the theory of hyperreality in the book "Simulacra and Simulation", explaining that *"(it is) the generation by models of a real without origins or reality: the Hyperreal"*. It is a perfect concept to define "fake realities".

The hyperreal is a product of 'simulating' a certain (first) reality through 'masking' the truth of another (second) reality, which resulted in the third reality, which Baudrillard called a Simulacrum, which bears no relation to any reality whatsoever (Ismatuloh 2023). This hyperreality not only creates illusions but also becomes a new reality that is entirely accepted by visitors (Baudrillard 1981). Therefore, hyperreality is a reality that transcends itself because reality has been engineered with images, hallucinations, and simulations.

Hyperreality occurs when representations and symbols replace genuine experience, creating a new reality accepted as authentic. It is not merely an illusion but a constructed reality that individuals fully perceive and live as "real" (Ismatuloh 2023).

In the context of Kampung Jelita, the Japanese and Balinese themes, supported by background music, act as simulations of cultural reality. The sounds, ornaments, and performances create a sensory illusion that immerses visitors in a fabricated environment that feels authentic. Thus, music is a cultural simulator, blurring the line between authentic cultural experience and constructed touristic

fantasy — a state Baudrillard identifies as hyperreal.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design with a case study approach, namely the Japanese and Balinese zone, Kampung Jelita. This qualitative method can help gain deep insights, explore human behavior, and understand the complexity behind a phenomenon (Lim 2025). Accordingly, Lavarda & Bellucci (2022) state that this design is handy in exploring how culture and sensory elements, such as music, contribute to constructing symbolic meanings in tourism contexts. The case of Kampung Jelita was selected because it presents a unique convergence between music, cultural simulation, and thematic tourism, which aligns with the characteristics of Baudrillard's hyperreality, where simulation replaces authentic experience. Previous local studies have noted that thematic villages in Surabaya represent engineered cultural spaces that symbolize both development and spectacle, thereby justifying this site as a relevant and valid locus for studying musical hyperreality.

Although data were collected during a single day (May 25, 2025), this design was logically limited by access, visitor flow, and the feasibility of field observation during active tourism hours. A one-day collection ensured direct immersion during the village's operational peak from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (GMT+7), maximizing the likelihood of observing natural visitor behavior and auditory responses in real-time.

Participants and Sampling

This study involved 7 participants from Kampung Jelita. The participants were six females and one male, selected through purposive sampling. This technique is used based on specific considerations relevant to the research objectives (Makwana et al., 2023). The

purposive approach allowed the researcher to focus on individuals capable of articulating their emotional and perceptual responses to music in the Japanese and Balinese zones, which is essential for understanding experiential hyperreality.

Informants were selected based on individuals who visited Kampung Jelita, Surabaya City. This is based on specific characteristics or traits that are considered to have a close relationship with previously known

population characteristics (Khusran et al. 2025). Inclusion criteria for participants included the following (1) Visitors who were present directly at the location at the time of data collection, who were present on May 25, 2025 from 8:00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. (GMT+7), (2) Female or male with a minimum age of 14 years, and (3) Willing to be involved in the interview. This criterion also considers participants' interest, emotional experiences, and perceptions while visiting the Japanese and Balinese zone, Kampung Jelita.

Table 1: Information on the visitors of Kampung Jelita (Source: interviews conducted by the researcher, 2025).

Informant Code	Initials	Gender	Age	Occupation	Zone Preference	Notes on Musical Perception
P1	L	Female	15 years old	High school student	Japanese & Balinese	Described excitement and a "foreign-like" sensation from Japanese music
P2	M	Female	61 years old	Private team member	Balinese	Reported strong cultural identification with Balinese rhythms
P3	I	Female	63 years old	Housewife	Both	Felt a peaceful ambience due to a harmonious soundscape
P4	T	Female	56 years old	Housewife	Balinese	Found the Balinese gamelan more emotionally resonant
P5	N	Female	61 years old	Housewife	Japanese	Associated Japanese melodies with anime and modern culture
P6	R	Female	45 years old	Housewife	Both	Perceived both zones as immersive, though the Balinese zone was more authentic
P7	T	Male	68 years old	Retiree	Balinese	Commented that the Balinese zone felt more "real" and spiritually alive

Data Collection

The study data were collected through In-depth interviews to explore informants' perceptions and experiences of cultural representations and musical experiences in thematic zones. Non-participatory observation: conducted directly by the researcher on visitors' interaction with the visual and musical elements presented in the Japanese and Balinese zones. Literature study involves searching for relevant news articles, books, and scientific journals to strengthen the analysis. Lastly, a documentation study includes visual images of Kampung Jelita.

Data Analysis

This study employed the data analysis techniques developed by Miles & Huberman (1984), namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. This involved several stages: 1) Conducting a site survey in Kampung Jelita, 2). Developing interview question guidelines tailored to the research focus and objectives, 3). Visiting and conducting in-depth interviews with visitors to Kampung Jelita on May 25, 2025. 4) Transcribing interview recordings to identify the data obtained, 5). Categorizing the data

based on two thematic areas: the Japanese and Balinese zones, 6). Presenting and interpreting the interview results, 7). Analyzing the data using Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality as an analytical framework, supplemented by a literature review, and 8). Concluding the analysis conducted.

The theory used is Jean Baudrillard's hyperreality, a concept inseparable from the terms simulacra and simulation, as each understanding is interrelated and has a close relationship. Simulation is the main element in the formation of hyperreality. Hyperreality is fully present within simulation and is not produced, but "it is always ready to be reproduced". This means that hyperreality is a simulation that is more 'real' than the 'real', more 'beautiful' than the 'beautiful', and more 'true' than the 'true'.

Subsequent interpretation employed Jean Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality as the analytical lens, examining how music operates as a simulator of culture and emotion that blurs the distinction between authentic and constructed experiences. Triangulation across interviews, observations, and visual documentation was used to ensure analytical coherence. All findings were cross-referenced with secondary sources to enhance theoretical consistency.

Trustworthiness and Methodological Limitations

To ensure research validity and reliability, this study applied several trustworthiness strategies: credibility was strengthened through triangulation and member checking; transferability was enhanced by providing rich contextual descriptions of the setting; dependability was maintained through detailed methodological documentation; and confirmability was supported by maintaining reflexive field notes and data archives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

However, this study acknowledges certain limitations. The one-day data collection

may limit temporal variation in visitor experiences, and the small number of participants may restrict generalizability. These limitations were mitigated by ensuring data saturation through depth of interviews rather than breadth of sampling. Additionally, environmental factors such as noise and visitor density were monitored to maintain consistent contextual conditions during observation. The focus on two thematic zones, while limiting scope, allowed for deeper phenomenological insight into the sensory construction of hyperreality.

Ethical Considerations

This study has considered the ethical aspects of qualitative research. Ethical approval was obtained before data collection, and all participants gave verbal informed consent after the researcher explained the purpose and objectives of the study, procedures, and forms of involvement. To maintain privacy and confidentiality, participants' identities were disguised using codes (e.g., P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7). Researchers also ensured that informants had complete freedom not to answer specific questions or stop participation anytime.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Kampung Jelita (*Jepang Bali Kita*) is one of the thematic tourist villages in Surabaya that features two zones with Japanese and Balinese themes. Music in both zones is important for creating the atmosphere in the Kampung Jelita tourist area. The data collected in this study can be broadly categorized into two categories: data indicating that the music played in the Japanese zone aligns with its theme, and data showing that the music played in the Balinese zone also aligns with its theme. The following is data from in-depth interviews with visitors regarding the hyperreality of the music's alignment with the village's tourism theme.

Table 2: Visitors' Hyperreality of Using Music in Japanese and Balinese Zones (Source: interviews conducted by the researcher, 2025).

Informant Code	Japanese Zone	Balinese Zone	Interpretation Notes
P1	Disagree	Agree	Perceived a mismatch between Japanese music and the visual setting; found Balinese music more authentic
P2	Agree	Agree	Felt both musical ambiances consistent with each theme
P3	Agree	Agree	Reported positive affective response; music enhanced immersion
P4	Agree	Agree	Noted the harmony between the background music and the ornaments in both zones
P5	Agree	Agree	Connected emotionally with Japanese music through imagined association with media
P6	Agree	Agree	Described nostalgia and realism supported by both music themes
P7	Agree	Agree	Found both zones musically and visually aligned, enhancing the sense of place

The Hyperreality Music in the Japanese Zone

The first area in Kampung Jelita is the Japanese zone. This zone is designed to resemble the typical atmosphere of Japan through visual elements such as *torii* gates, lanterns, sumo statues, kanji (Japanese characters), cherry blossom ornaments, *yukata* (traditional Japanese costume) for rent, and others. In addition, background music plays while visitors walk around.



Figure 1: Entrance of the Japanese-themed area in Kampung Jelita, featuring a traditional torii gate, lanterns, and decorative elements that recreate a Japanese cultural atmosphere (Photographed by the author during field observation, 2025)

Most visitors, six out of seven, felt that the music matched the theme and contributed to the

overall atmosphere. However, one visitor expressed a differing view. Informant L shared:

"Based on my hearing, the music in this Japanese village is similar to that in China, so it feels like being in a Chinese tourist spot rather than a Japanese-themed one. Therefore, I feel it is unsuitable because the atmosphere does not reflect the Japanese theme" (P1, Informant L, 15 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

This perspective highlights how disconnecting auditory and visual cues can disrupt a visitor's cultural expectations and diminish thematic immersion. In contrast, other informants expressed strong emotional and sensory alignment between the music and visuals. For instance:

"First impression, wow! It is really nice, it is like this, it is like that, especially with the background music of Japan" (P6, Informant R, 45 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

This response illustrates how the right music can complement visual elements, encourage visitor engagement, such as renting *yukata*, and foster economic participation in tourism. Other informants shared similar sentiments:

"Yes, it is cool. The Japanese background music makes me feel like I am in Japan, even though I have never been there, especially with all the Japanese decorations. I really like the Japanese

costume rental." (P4, Informant T, 56 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

"The Japanese music is appropriate, especially since Japanese costumes are available for taking photos" (P3, Informant I, 63 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

"Yes, it is appropriate. The music is pleasant and matches the Japanese cultural decorations" (P2, Informant M, 61 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

These statements reinforce the idea that integrating music and visual elements plays a pivotal role in building the cultural atmosphere of the Japanese zone.



Figure 2: Visitors dressed in yukata, a traditional Japanese garment, walking through the Japanese zone, highlighting the immersive cultural experience offered at Kampung Jelita (Photographed by the author, 2025)

One informant, for example, made a strong connection between media representations and the thematic setting:

"The song is just right, even though I have never been to Japan and have only seen videos on social media. I came here because I saw Luna Maya being proposed to by Maxime in Japan. Luna was proposed to under cherry blossoms, and it turns out there are cherry blossoms here too, just like in their video" (P5, Informant N, 61 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

This reflects how imagined associations formed through social media can shape a visitor's sense

of authenticity, enhancing the immersive illusion of being in Japan.

"Japanese ornaments like this are unsuitable for traditional Yogyakarta music" (P7, Informant T, 68 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

This suggests that incongruous audio elements can break the illusion, highlighting cultural specificity's importance in curating a hyperreal tourist space.

The Hyperreality Music in the Balinese Zone

The Balinese Zone is the second thematic tourism area presented in Kampung Jelita after the Japanese Zone. Similar to the previous zone, this theme is designed in such a way as to resemble Bali with the support of ornaments and music typical of the region. From these two things, visitors feel the atmosphere that represents Bali, even though geographically it is still in the middle of Surabaya City.



Figure 3: Stage and decorations in the Balinese-themed zone of Kampung Jelita, showcasing traditional Balinese umbrellas and plants to enhance the cultural ambiance (Photographed by the author, 2025).

Many visitors affirmed that the musical component significantly shaped their emotional response and perception:

"When entering this Balinese zone, the background music that plays already reflects the atmosphere of Balinese directly and is very heartfelt when visitors listen to the music available

here" (P1, Informant L, 15 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

"Balinese music is soothing, so when entering, it makes the atmosphere calm even though it is only Balinese instruments such as *rindik* music, but this already represents it" (P6, Informant R, 45 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

These responses show that even minimal instrumental cues like the *rindik* can convey a strong sense of place..

"With the nuances of Balinese ornaments and background music, this is suitable" (P7, Informant T, 68 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

"The Balinese music and the combination of ornaments, such as *janur*, black and white checkered *sarong* (Balinese poleng cloth), and frangipani trees are suitable" (P2, Informant M, 61 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

Together, these elements merge to create a multisensory harmony that leads visitors to feel as though they are momentarily in Bali. This aligns with Jean Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality, which posits that simulation can replace reality by creating convincing representations based on signs and codes (Oktavianingtyas, Seran, and Sigit 2021). Further confirmation of this idea is seen in the following statements:

"The Balinese atmosphere is thicker with Balinese music and the volume is just right, not too loud" (P5, Informant N, 61 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

This emphasizes that technical elements such as sound volume also matter. When the music is culturally appropriate and technically well-presented, it reinforces the simulation and enhances visitor immersion..

"The organizers are clever, right in the selection of music playback, appropriate, just like in Balinese music" (P4, Informant T, 56 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

"The instrumental, which is like Balinese music, is very identifiable to everyone; it is like playing music in a Bandung restaurant, there must be typical Bandung music, immediately realizing that this is like Bandung and this is like

Bali, so it fits the music." (P3, Informant I, 63 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

These observations underline that visitors rely on familiar auditory markers to authenticate the cultural atmosphere. These sound cues become central in constructing a believable and immersive simulated space.

Simulation and Reality of Japanese and Balinese Thematic Zones

The Japanese and Balinese cultural zones in Kampung Jelita are deliberately constructed to offer an experience rooted in simulation—where ornaments, music, and atmospheric cues blend to evoke an imagined cultural reality. These two zones not only present a visual resemblance to Japan and Bali but also actively stimulate the senses and imagination of visitors, making them feel *as if* they are physically present in those locations.

This immersive illusion was supported by the experience of one visitor who had actually traveled to Japan:

"Well, I happened to have climbed Mount Fuji. The Kampung Jelita is creative, starting from the Japanese-style architecture and music in this zone. I feel like I was back in Japan when I climbed Fuji when I was young." (P6, Informant R, 45 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

Even though the setting is artificial, the visitor acknowledged that the atmosphere revived a personal memory, creating a nostalgic emotional bridge between the simulated and the real.

"Even though Japan is fake, there are still differences, but this way I can get rid of my nostalgia for decades ago" (P6, Informant R, 45 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

Similarly, another visitor compared her past visit to Bali with her experience in the Balinese zone of Kampung Jelita:

"I visited Bali a few years ago and was surprised when I entered the Bali zone. It represents Bali, especially Balinese traditional music. Unfortunately, this zone has no *canang* because it is a Balinese characteristic, but it is more

or less similar" (P2, Informant M, 61 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

For another visitor, the music in the Balinese zone was perceived as even more emotionally powerful than her real-life visit to Bali:

"When I was on a school trip to Bali, I did not find this kind of music there; I had only heard it before. Well, precisely when in the Balinese thematic zone, the playback of Balinese music seems to be deeper in nuance, like a healing atmosphere in Bali, even though this is only in Surabaya, if you add a replica of the *canang*, the vibe will be thicker" (P1, Informant L, 15 years old, Surabaya, May 25, 2025).

These responses reveal that music helps replicate cultural atmospheres and sometimes enhances them beyond actual experiences. Through the deliberate arrangement of sound and visuals, Kampung Jelita offers a hyperreal version of cultural tourism that blurs the boundary between reality and simulation.

DISCUSSION

The findings from Kampung Jelita show that visitors' sensory experiences are shaped not only by visual stimuli but also by what they hear. This emphasizes that music plays a critical role in building spatial imagination. As noted by Tuan, listening to music allows individuals to construct spatial imagery beyond the visual, expanding one's experience of place through sound.

Although instrumental music simulates an authentic atmosphere in the Japanese zone, several visitors perceived a mismatch. One informant even associated the music with Chinese culture, disrupting the intended Japanese ambiance. This illustrates how perceptual dissonance can occur when sensory elements, particularly sound, do not align with thematic visuals. When this happens, the simulation fails to immerse the visitor fully. (Millet et al., 2021) A mismatch between sound and visual elements can weaken the illusion and reduce emotional engagement.

On the other hand, when sound and visual cues harmonize, the simulation becomes convincing. Visitors who positively associated Japanese music with media references or memories expressed heightened emotional attachment to the zone. Music in a tourism space acts not only as a background element but also as a cultural expression, a narrative tool, and a symbolic marker of place.

This emotional resonance reflects how music can shape perceptions of a destination. According to (Lv et al. 2023), music enhances the perceived image of a location and increases visitors' attachment to the destination. In the case of Kampung Jelita, music helps produce an emotional connection, even though the setting is artificial. Such findings illustrate the mechanisms through which hyperreality is constructed; sound functions not only as a simulation but as a convincing replacement for the real (Yen, Liu, and Ni 2025).

The theory of hyperreality is where simulations no longer reflect an original reality but become realities in themselves. In Kampung Jelita's Japanese zone, Japanese ornaments and background music combine to form a simulacrum that visitors perceive as real, even though it is constructed. (Asharudin 2023) emphasized that such simulations are often exploited to generate emotional and commercial value, creating environments people accept as authentic despite being artificial.

Ismatuloh (2023). In hyperreality, simulation is sustained through continuous image production, and spaces are created, maintained, and reproduced to strengthen the illusion. This insight is particularly relevant in tourism contexts, where emotional triggers like music help solidify the simulated narrative.

Rindik, a traditional Balinese instrument, successfully evokes calm, cultural familiarity, and immersion in the Balinese zone. Visitors described the auditory experience as emotionally "soothing" and highly representative of real-life Bali. (Sari 2024) noted that *Rindik* music produces a tranquil atmosphere, connecting listeners to Balinese

identity. In this context, music is not merely decorative; it becomes an essential part of the immersive experience.

The emotional depth experienced by visitors in the Balinese zone demonstrates the power of auditory simulation in tourism. According to Oktavianingtyas et al., simulation is created through signs that no longer point to reality but construct their own self-contained world. The Balinese zone does precisely this, combining ornaments and sound to form a coherent hyperreality that feels even more authentic than reality itself.

Imagery shapes perception, and this study affirms that sound-based imagery, such as traditional music, can powerfully influence spatial experience. (Essien, 2024) further pointed out that idealized spaces designed to meet consumer expectations help sustain simulation, making visitors more likely to believe in the authenticity of the experience.

Laurencia & Sukendro (2021) also explained that hyperreality leads to the dominance of signs over meaning, where the symbols used (in this case, Balinese music and decorations) become more meaningful than the actual culture they represent. This artificial reality is not accidental; it is produced intentionally to evoke memory, imagination, and desire.

Informants in Kampung Jelita also highlighted how simulation reconnects them to personal memories. One visitor, who had climbed Mount Fuji years earlier, said that the Japanese zone made him feel like he was back in Japan. This reflects Baudrillard's notion that people are drawn to simulations because they fulfill emotional and psychological needs even when they know what they are experiencing is constructed.

(Giannos et al., 2021; Liu, 2022; Spence & Di Stefano, 2022)& Di Stefano, 2022) stated that auditory and visual media share formal qualities that allow them to evoke similar emotional responses. Sound can be a primary sensory tool for transporting individuals into imagined cultural spaces. In Kampung Jelita, the

effectiveness of sound in producing hyperreal experiences shows that auditory simulation must be recognized as a central element in tourism design.

In sum, the study demonstrates that the construction of hyperreality in thematic tourism spaces relies on visuals and significantly on sound. By curating appropriate, culturally resonant music, Kampung Jelita successfully simulates Japan and Bali, creating emotionally immersive zones where the line between real and imaginary is deliberately blurred. This aligns with (Yen, Liu, and Ni 2025), who highlighted that immersive XR technologies enhance visitors' engagement by integrating visual and auditory stimuli, strengthening the perception of place and immersion.

Theoretical Implications

The study contributes to developing hyperreality-music studies by demonstrating that music can be a key medium in tangibly shaping the cultural simulations visitors receive. From Kampung Jelita, it proves that music not only reinforces visual elements in thematic tourism spaces but also actively constructs spatial illusions and emotions attached to simulated cultural images. This confirms that music has a central role in creating an experience of hyperreality, where the boundaries between reality and representation become blurred.

Theoretically, this study expands the focus of hyperreality studies that have tended to be visual-centric by presenting the auditive dimension as an agent of cultural simulation. Music in tourist spaces is no longer just decorative but becomes a symbolic marker that mediates perception, forms affection, and fosters attachment to an entirely constructed space. Thus, this research opens a new space for developing studies on soundscape as an instrument of cultural representation in the simulation practices of contemporary tourist destinations.

Practical Implications

This study provides important implications for thematic tourism destination managers, cultural

experience designers, and village managers. Background music is not just a complement to the atmosphere, but a strategic auditory element that shapes visitors' perceptions, emotions, and behavioral intentions. In the context of Kampung Jelita, music is proven to create affective illusions in harmony with the visual representations of Japanese and Balinese culture.

Curation of destination audio is critical to demonstrate contextuality and specificity. The music chosen should accurately represent the culture, in terms of instrument type, tempo, and feel. The mismatch between musical and visual elements has disrupted visitors' simulative experience. Therefore, managers must develop audio curation guidelines that consider theme alignment, cultural identity, and the emotional experience to be built.

Audio curation can also involve local musicians or sound designers to create a distinctive thematic soundscape. This collaboration not only enriches the imaginative dimension of visitors but also supports the local creative industry. To maintain the quality of the experience, feedback mechanisms such as audio satisfaction surveys should be developed, which can be used to evaluate and refine the soundscape on an ongoing basis. The implications underline that music has the potential to be a strategic tool in building destination images, strengthening thematic identities, and creating tourism experiences that are not only enjoyable but also emotionally and culturally embedded in visitors' memories.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that may affect the scope and generalizability of the findings. The small sample size, involving only seven informants who visited on one day of data collection, is a significant limitation in broadly representing the diversity of visitors' experiences and perceptions. In addition, all participants came from local backgrounds, which allows for perception bias due to

geographical and cultural proximity to Kampung Jelita.

This local visitor bias may affect how they build emotional connections and interpret the cultural simulations presented, in contrast to the responses of foreign tourists who may have more diverse cultural associations. Another limitation lies in the sensory coverage discussed in this study, which still focuses on the auditory aspect. Crossmodal studies are urgently needed in immersive and multisensory thematic tourism spaces to reveal how the combination of sound, visuals, and atmosphere forms a more complex hyperreality.

Therefore, future research should explore a cross-cultural research agenda involving visitors from different cultural backgrounds and nationalities to see how perceptions of music and cultural simulation are constructed in contrast or similarly. This cross-cultural approach will enrich the understanding of the dynamics of music reception as a cultural marker and simulation tool in global tourist spaces. The study could also extend the method to include experimental observation techniques or longitudinal studies to assess the long-term effects of music on tourists' memory and emotional attachment to a destination.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that music plays a crucial role in shaping visitors' experiences of thematic tourism spaces, contributing significantly to the construction of hyperreality in Kampung Jelita. The Japanese and Balinese zones illustrate how auditory cues enhance or disrupt immersion. When music aligns with visual and cultural elements, visitors experience emotional attachment and a sense of authenticity, even in an entirely constructed environment. Conversely, mismatches between sound and visual stimuli can reduce the credibility of the simulation, demonstrating the delicate balance required in designing sensory-rich tourism experiences. Overall, the findings confirm that hyperreality in tourism is not purely visual;

sound is an essential dimension that actively shapes perception, emotion, and memory.

Theoretically, this research contributes to understanding Baudrillard's hyperreality concept in tourism contexts. It highlights how auditory simulation through culturally meaningful music functions more than mere decoration: it becomes a symbolic and narrative tool that constructs self-contained realities. The study reinforces that hyperreal spaces rely on multisensory congruence, where signs (music, ornaments, visual motifs) can dominate meaning over the original culture. Additionally, it extends existing literature on tourism design by emphasizing sound as a primary medium for creating immersive, emotionally resonant experiences.

Practically, these findings offer guidance for thematic tourism developers. Curating music that aligns with the intended cultural narrative can strengthen visitor immersion and emotional engagement, enhancing satisfaction and memorability. Future research should explore cross-cultural perceptions of auditory simulations, investigate long-term effects of musical hyperreality on visitor behavior, and examine how technology (e.g., spatial audio or VR) can further enhance sensory immersion. Such studies would deepen understanding of multisensory tourism design and the ongoing negotiation between authenticity and simulation..

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With tremendous respect and gratitude, the author conveys to the visitors of Kampung Jelita, such as L, M, I, T, N, R, and T, for volunteering their time, sharing their experiences, and opening a valuable dialogue space for this research process. Also, the author is grateful to Ms. Dewi, who provided advice on making this article, and Mr. Sujana (Komang), as the founder of Kampung Jelita, who gave permission, trust, and the opportunity to conduct observations and interviews in the thematic tourism village.

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