

## This local band! Celebrity culture of Jawa Arek in Yowis Ben tetralogy

Nimas Safira Widhiasti Wibowo

*Department of Communication, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jawa Timur*

*Rungkut Madya Street, Gununganyar, Surabaya, Indonesia*

Email: [nimas\\_safira.ilkom@upnjatim.ac.id](mailto:nimas_safira.ilkom@upnjatim.ac.id), Phone: +62 31 8721708

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**Abstract** This paper analyses the representation of the celebrity phenomenon in the Yowis Ben tetralogy (2018, 2019, 2021), which has become a fundamental aspect of modern Indonesian film. The researcher used a qualitative narrative analysis approach to examine how celebrity culture is portrayed in these films. This analysis examined story structure, character development, and visual components, highlighting the journey of a group of young individuals from the Javanese Arek Culture as they strive for popularity while preserving their cultural identity. The results indicate that this tetralogy positions celebrity culture as a remedy for desires related to social status, physical allure, affluence, and influence. The celebrity persona depicted in these films is intricately linked to the context of Javanese Arek culture, particularly in Malang, Indonesia. Cultural components, including language and intricate characters, enhance the representation of celebrity production. These films explain the intricacies of celebrity life while examining the motivations for attaining recognition, the techniques employed to gain it, the efforts to sustain a public persona, and the challenges encountered by celebrities.

**Keywords** : celebrity culture; Indonesian celebrities; Indonesian films; Javanese Arek culture

### INTRODUCTION

The portrayal of celebrity personalities has infiltrated our lives, influencing our perceptions, behaviours, aesthetics, and daily conduct (Cashmore, 2006). According to Aji (2022), celebrity figures are individuals or entities whose existence is perpetually scrutinised by society. In other words, celebrities are individuals or entities that attain fame due to significant societal attention.

Historically, the recognition of a celebrity by media outlets has been a requisite outcome of the mass media industry. The mass media industry exerts complete control over the creation of personalities that are valued by the audience. Moreover, mass media exerts considerable impact in setting trends and curating the public image of a celebrity, encompassing aspects such as style, behaviour, and other attributes (Nayar, 2009). The cultivation of a celebrity's popularity is a protracted endeavour, since the individual must fulfil the media's expectations of their ideal image.

The diverse characteristics of celebrity life are subsequently integrated into the discourse on celebrity culture. Aji (2022) characterises celebrity culture as a phenomenon inundated with representations of celebrities across diverse facets of life, including the rising popularity of celebrity-endorsed products, religious practices that incorporate celebrities, and the media industry's mass production of celebrities as a means of commodification. Notably, media engagement significantly contributes to the dissemination of this drug. The mass media indisputably propagates narcissistic aspirations of fame and opulence through various venues, including news, billboards, and prime-time television. The media presents celebrities in a manner that creates an illusion of proximity to our lives, despite our limited interaction with them (Cashmore, 2006).

Celebrity participation in marketing communication campaigns on social media enhances brand sales. A study by Turner (2015) demonstrated that American superstars on social media significantly enhance beer and wine purchases. Research by Phua & Lim (2023) also indicates that celebrities influence the attitudes and intentions of social media users concerning e-cigarettes. According to Fitri (2018), this is predicated on the notion that celebrities possess the credibility and allure to express their opinions on a company that their followers regard with trust. The internet and social media significantly impact celebrity image. Social media is thought to offer a more personal and unrestricted platform for celebrity opinions and visuals compared to television business constraints.

Currently, any individual can obtain the 'internet celebrity' title that is defined as a person who rapidly and effortlessly gains notoriety via social media (Aji, 2022). This popularity can be attained by producing distinctive and engaging content and subsequently disseminating it on social media, enabling individuals from many places to view and comment on the material. Moreover, it is feasible for this to evolve into an obsession and a life objective for certain individuals. The prevalence of 'celebrity culture' inside young culture, particularly in mainstream film narratives, is unsurprising. In which, in today's interconnected society, individuals can get superstar status without relocating to the entertainment hub.

In Indonesia, the culture of individual celebrities is frequently linked to an opulent lifestyle in urban and metropolitan regions, which includes Jakarta, Bandung, and their environs. For instance, a renowned celebrity in the capital whose existence is scrutinised by the public frequently showcases a life of opulence, exemplified by designer apparel, fancy automobiles, extravagant residences, and private aircraft. This portrayal of affluence and a beautiful lifestyle undeniably motivates many individuals to aspire to superstar status. Reza, a renowned Indonesian artist manager, stated in DetikHOT (2013) that the predominant motivation for individuals aspiring to become artists is the allure of substantial financial gain and a hedonistic lifestyle. The current reality indicates that all prevalent cultural trends, particularly those highlighted in the media, predominantly emanate from the Jakarta region and its vicinity. This results from Jakarta's preeminence as the hub of government, the entertainment industry, and the national media sector in Indonesia (Sukirno, 2011). In this instance, superstars from the capital frequently emerge as popular personalities who garner respect and admiration from numerous individuals, even in distant regions (Lestari, 2023).

Celebrities are frequently linked to position, looks, fortune, and power, which are challenging for the average individual to attain (Nayar, 2009). In the television industry, we are consistently exposed to several infotainment programs that examine the public personas and private lives of celebrities. Nearly all television channels, both domestic and international, transmit such shows in diverse formats. These programs frequently feature startling or unsettling news on the public personas and private lives of celebrities. Celebrity culture has become a trend that is recognised by numerous individuals, prompting many to align their identities with those they adore.

The representation of celebrity culture in Indonesian cinematic narratives is consistently intriguing to examine. The portrayal of celebrities in mass media consistently emphasises sensationalism and extravagant representations, sometimes referred to as the luxury of the capital city (Karlina, 2014). Narratives concerning celebrities will predominantly occur in the capital city to illustrate Jakarta-centricity. The tale centres on an individual's struggle or career

trajectory to penetrate the entertainment industry. Furthermore, the discourse concerning celebrities centres on their endeavours to preserve their public persona and navigate the competitive landscape of the entertainment industry in the capital. Numerous films portray celebrity culture, such as *Selendang Rocker* (2009), *Youtubers* (2015), *Ada Cinta di SMA* (2016), *Sweet 20* (2017), *Chrisye* (2017), and *Backstage* (2021). These films thrived in the market because of their distinctive narratives, which resonated with the audience's aspirations of becoming influential celebrities in the entertainment industry.

No exceptions in the *Yowis Ben Tetralogy* (2018-2021). In contrast to other celebrity films, the *Yowis Ben Tetralogy* presents a contextual identity inside the realm of celebrity culture by integrating aspects of celebrity life into the experiences of characters rooted in Javanese Arek culture, a locale distant from the glamour of the capital city (Ferris, 2010). The four *Yowis Ben* films describe the journey of a local band from Malang striving for prominence as a leading band in Indonesia. Alongside illustrating the odyssey of a local band striving for celebrity status, these four films also narrate the tale of a local band seeking to attain artistic prominence. The films consistently embody the comedy-drama genre in their narratives.

The *Yowis Ben Tetralogy* (2018-2021) showcased the captivating aspects of Indonesian cinema and achieved commercial success. The four films garnered significant acclaim from audiences throughout their theatrical releases. The most recent picture achieved a position in the '10 Best-Selling Films of 2021' and garnered over 100,000 theatregoers (Putro, 2021). The four videos illustrate the career trajectory of an individual originating from a city distant from the capital's mass media influence, ultimately attaining national prominence.

The narrative of the inaugural *Yowis Ben* film (2018) centres on Bayu, the protagonist characterised as an innocent, rural, impoverished, and unremarkable individual, who endeavours to establish a band with his three companions, Doni, Nando, and Yayan. This strategy effectively elevated *Yowis Ben*'s fame. The success of the inaugural *Yowis Ben* film (2018) motivated the production team to proceed with *Yowis Ben 2* (2019), which narrates the career trajectories of the protagonists as they navigate the entertainment industry in Bandung, West Java, recognised as Indonesia's 'city of musicians.' Additionally, the production team released the *Yowis Ben 3* (2021), which narrates the life of *Yowis Ben* following his ascent to fame as a band. Concert tours have occurred in many cities, including Solo, Banyumas, and Kediri. In conclusion, the production team released the concluding instalment of the *Yowis Ben Tetralogy*, titled *Yowis Ben Finale* (2021), which resolves the problems shown in the preceding series.

*Yowis Ben*'s ascent to fame and popularity exemplifies the celebrity manufacturing process inside celebrity culture. The narrative of his four films illustrates the journey of ordinary Jawa Arek kids striving for recognition via various efforts, ultimately achieving fame and admiration from many audiences. This is attributable to *Yowis Ben*'s capacity to deliver something distinctive and innovative, specifically through the performance of original Javanese compositions crafted by its members, thereby establishing them as a local music ensemble that has successfully infiltrated the national market.

This subject is noteworthy due to the scarcity of studies examining the portrayal of celebrity culture in Indonesian cinema. The film selection is predicated on the researcher's hypothesis that the four *Yowis Ben* films exemplify a contextual celebrity culture, portraying the narrative of a local Malang band, characterised by Javanese Arek cultural elements, striving for national recognition. The four-film series have garnered significant acclaim and attention from the Indonesian public. The researcher aims to examine the portrayal of celebrity culture in the life of Javanese Arek cultural figures within the context of contemporary Indonesian cinema. This study seeks to examine the story of the *Yowis Ben* tetralogy (2018-2021) in its portrayal of celebrity culture within its cinematic framework.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study has employed a qualitative method of narrative analysis, which, as noted by Gerring (2017), is an approach centred on comprehending and analysing individual stories or narratives. This approach explains the significance, experience, and identity embedded in media narratives. Narrative analysis in film encompasses tale structure, characters, themes, and visual and auditory elements to define deeper meanings (Ryan & Lenos, 2020). Narrative analysis was selected for

its capacity to examine the intricacies of the tale and cultural influences, which are highly pertinent to the film's theme. This method also takes into account cultural context and intertextuality to reveal the intricacy of the story in the film script.

This study intends to examine the text of the *Yowis Ben Tetralogy* (2018-2021). The researcher will explain the celebrity culture within the Javanese Arek character's life and analyse the components of imagery, motion, and camera effects that impact the narrative. To enhance methodological rigour, the study will concentrate on specific text units, including scenes and dialogues, with the selection of pertinent units determined by the theme of celebrity culture. This analysis will incorporate the social context to identify the relationships among elements in the scene. The researcher will additionally contemplate his position and perspective as a Generation Z individual raised inside the Javanese Arek culture to mitigate potential bias, thereby enhancing the study's transparency and reliability.

The principal data in this study consist of the complete text of the *Yowis Ben tetralogy* (2018-2021). The researcher will choose moments that illustrate the representation of celebrity culture in the lives of Javanese Arek cultural figures, in accordance with the research topic. Concurrently, secondary data is utilised to get more knowledge in this writing process. The selected secondary data include literary studies and academic texts relevant to the research issue. This information is accessible via books, journals, news articles, or other publications in both physical and digital formats.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The portrayal of celebrity culture influencing the lives of Bayu, Doni, Yayan, and Nando, members of the Yowis Ben music group, serves as a representation of the allure and dominance of popularity, which many individuals aspire to achieve as a life objective. The opulent celebrity lifestyle seen on film is sometimes regarded as the primary motivator for others aspiring to attain a comparable status. This aligns with Aji's (2022) perspective that superstars present an exceptional image characterised by 'stardom', 'appearance', and 'charisma'.

Celebrities are perceived as embodiments of desirable qualities and serve as symbols of creativity through their portrayal on film (Aji, 2022; Bennett & Holmes, 2010; Kennedy et al., 2019). In this framework, the media's role in employing celebrity images is crucial. The media possesses the authority to regulate the portrayal of celebrities presented on screen. Aji (2022) & Bennett & Holmes (2010) contends that the media possesses the power to embed celebrity influence within television program portions. The celebrity's appeal must be bolstered by the media, particularly that which is concentrated in the capital city. Quinn (2024) corroborated this in his study of the cultural commodity represented by Scottish WWE superstar Drew McIntyre. WWE media's portrayal of Drew McIntyre constructs a commodified and masculine Scottish identity through symbolic ethnicity, converting the boxer into a commercially appealing commodity while reducing the intricacies of the original identity.

The filmmakers sequentially construct this social reality within the narratives of the four *Yowis Ben* flicks. The creation of these films is influenced by internal dynamics (including ideals, visions, missions, and ideologies) and external factors (such as sponsors, market demands, and production houses) that are integral to the filmmakers' environment, affecting the portrayal of the film, in this article is *Yowis Ben Tetralogy* (Romero-Fresco, 2020). Moreover, alternative tactics, including language use and framing, significantly impact the narrative construction (Orifjonovich, 2023). *Yowis Ben*, a comedic film, portrays the journey of a group of young individuals from Malang striving for fame, infused with Javanese humour. The four *Yowis Ben* flicks regularly exhibit an upbeat atmosphere and a comprehensible narrative. Despite the predictable plot, this film effectively illustrates a contextual phenomenon within celebrity culture, specifically the endeavours of local youth to infiltrate the national music industry whimsically. In the subsequent sub-chapter, the researcher will analyse the *Yowis Ben tetralogy* to expound on the discourse of celebrity culture illustrated in *Yowis Ben*'s career trajectory as a music group from Malang.

### **Celebrity footprints: the journey of Malang youth's ambitions**

The inception of the *Yowis Ben* tale started with Bayu and Doni's ambition to validate their presence to those in their vicinity. This representation is seen in a sequence from the initial *Yowis Ben* film, wherein Bayu experiences marginalisation owing to the stigma associated with being a 'Pecel Boy' from an impoverished background. Pecel is frequently associated with uncomplicated culinary delicacies from East and Central Java, characterised by relatively modest costs, hence indicating a lower economic status (Damayanti et al., 2023).

This emblem of socioeconomic class causes Bayu to feel estranged and undervalued by his peers, particularly in romantic affairs that frequently culminate in rejection, as by his confession of love to Stevia. Bayu's excitement intensifies as he resolves to contact Susan, the object of his admiration. Doni perceives himself as inferior in IQ relative to his younger sister. The inequitable treatment from their parents motivates Doni and Bayu to collaborate and establish a band. This moment is recorded in the film *Yowis Ben* (from 17:00 to 17:54). Bayu's yearning for recognition intensified due to his frequent feelings of neglect from his peers. Bayu, a youngster from an impoverished household known as 'Si Pecel' for frequently selling pecel at school, felt unable to assert his identity. This aligns with the assertion of (Banaji et al., 2021) that impoverished individuals frequently lack the ability to express their views within their communities, particularly about decisions made by policy-making entities. Moreover, society frequently underestimates the experiences and expertise of impoverished individuals, leading to their presence being overlooked (Banaji et al., 2021).

Currently, adolescents often perceive that all issues can be resolved through the attainment of celebrity status and external validation (Gorea, 2021; Zhang & Kennedy, 2020). A significant allure of celebrity status is the acquisition of public esteem or appreciation due to one's renown and accomplishments (Ashimp, 2007). Nayar (2009) asserted that a celebrity's accomplishments might serve as indicators and symbols of power, allure, and legitimacy. In essence, fame confers more attention and esteem from society (Galvagni, 2020). Doni also felt motivated to demonstrate his worth, particularly in the perception of his parents, who consistently contrasted him with his younger sister. This circumstance motivated him to seek recognition and validation from his parents regarding his existence. The conviction that celebrity status constitutes an accomplishment and a source of pride prompted Bayu and Doni to concur in establishing a band as a means to overcome their obstacles. By doing so, they aspired to be recognised and valued by others. This tale fundamentally depicts the prevailing societal reality, whereby the allure of celebrity status is seen as an aspiration by numerous individuals (Adese & Innes, 2021; Pringle, 2004; Soukup, 2006). Celebrities present a lifestyle persona as someone recognised by the society, perceived as capable of addressing many life challenges (Fraser & Brown, 2002). For instance, attaining celebrity status renders individuals more probable to fulfil their desires, garner attention from diverse entities, and gain acknowledgment from the broader society, all of which are seen as substantial accomplishments (Aji, 2022; Fraser & Brown, 2002; Marwick, 2013).

In Indonesia, many portrayals of celebrities permeate all facets of society, including advertising, television shows, and the digital domain, hence intensifying the aspiration to attain celebrity status (Pedroni, 2016). This is supported by the numerous options afforded by the media business for the people to attain notoriety. The portrayal of affluence and opulence linked to celebrity lifestyles significantly impacts the aspirations of the broader public to emulate them (Gundle, 2002; Marwick, 2013; Mitchell, 2014). Stadler (2020) said that the portrayal of celebrities leading opulent lifestyles on film captivates many individuals, prompting them to pursue opportunities for celebrity status. The substantial remuneration afforded to artists serves as a significant allure, fostering the belief that achievement in the entertainment industry yields not just notoriety but also considerable affluence (Ciszek, 2020; Gamson, 2023).

In the film *Yowis Ben* (2018), the storyline is evident in the moment where four friends endeavour to realise their aspirations by entering the most renowned band competition in Malang. By winning this tournament, they aspire to enhance their popularity and get wider recognition. For them, the trophy serves not just as a symbol of success but also as a significant accomplishment to impress others who have disparaged them, demonstrating their capability as musicians. This term underscores that *Yowis Ben* merits acknowledgement and prestige as a

newly established band with accomplishments. The film illustrates the protagonists' aims and challenges while also conveying their wish to validate themselves before society and alter the stigma associated with them. This representation illustrates the social dynamics in which success in the entertainment industry is frequently linked to acknowledgement and approval from peers (Balleys et al., 2020; Kim, 2021).

The narrative progression from *Yowis Ben 2* to *Yowis Ben Finale* is driven by economic concerns. Achieving fame and success as a musician is perceived as a remedy for the financial difficulties encountered by the members of Yowis Ben. The economic incentive was prominently emphasised in *Yowis Ben 2*, when Bayu's family struggled to afford their rental payments. This left Bayu perplexed, particularly as he had recently graduated from high school and lacked a substantial paycheck. Bayu subsequently pursued a resolution with his uncle, Cak Jon. His uncle advised Bayu to truly pursue a profession as a musician to alleviate financial difficulties. In *Yowis Ben 2* (from minute 12.01 to 13.22), Bayu's motivation for enhancing his musical career is not alone to validate himself, but also to pursue affluence and financial prosperity. Bayu, a proponent of his family's traditions, seeks to please his mother by covering their rent. This prompts Bayu and Cak Jon to contemplate methods for acquiring money swiftly and effortlessly. They contend that achieving recognition as a musician invited to several events is the one solution to their family's financial difficulties, particularly in addressing their three-year overdue rent.

Indonesia's economic circumstances are characterised by low per capita income (Annur, 2022; Hill, 2021), requiring its populace to make a greater effort to get enough earnings. Nonetheless, the scarcity of work options for recent graduates is a significant difficulty. Bayu, a recent school graduate, lacks sufficient work experience. Consequently, Cak Jon, tasked with overseeing Bayu's future, must make a prompt way to assist Bayu's family, who require immediate financial support. One proposal was to endorse Bayu's musical career as an alternate approach. This signifies a paradigm change in Indonesian culture, perceiving the entertainment business as a lucrative vocation capable of generating riches (Amalia, 2021).

Within the framework of the Javanese Arek tradition, which Bayu adheres to, Cak Jon is seen as a person of significant respect and honour in familial connections. While it is presumed that the culture of East Java is more stringent than that of the western region (Abdillah, 2019). The notion of family remains pivotal in Javanese society, wherein connections among family members are founded on affection (Adhitya, 2015). This familial connection renders Cak Jon reliable for overseeing all actions associated with Yowis Ben, including scheduling performances, disbursing compensation, and addressing requirements throughout the events. This film illustrates how the amalgamation of many cultural elements may enhance local identity, influencing the ideals and trajectories of people in their pursuit of success.

### **Yowis Ben: journey from pecel boy to celebrity status**

The *Yowis Ben Tetralogy* vividly illustrates the challenges faced by four young men in their pursuit of aspirations. The audience is encouraged to trace Yowis Ben's career trajectory from its inception to his eventual acceptance in the Indonesian entertainment industry. The tale indicates that this expedition was arduous and protracted. Moreover, their success is contingent upon their distinctiveness, competencies, and favourable public perception as superstars to captivate the audience's attention. The capacity of a star to preserve a favourable public persona is a significant issue. Turner (2015) explains that superstars possess the capacity to cultivate a persona that is favoured by the public, often by showcasing something distinctive or unconventional. Furthermore, celebrities employ techniques such as marketing, advertising, publicity, and other cultural processes to enhance their image (Aji, 2022; Chen et al., 2021).

The advent of the internet has transformed individuals' lifestyles, particularly within the entertainment industry (Leung & Lee, 2005). Before, entertainment and information were exclusively available through television, radio, and newspapers, but now they can be effortlessly accessible via the internet (Sargsyan et al., 2023). Social media enables people to articulate themselves, communicate viewpoints, and share ideas outside the constraints of conventional media. This has prompted several individuals to vie for 'entertainment provision' in the pursuit of gaining the attention of fellow social media users, including the pursuit of the designation

'internet celebrity' or micro-celebrity (Johnston, 2020). This aligns too with the perspective of Ando & Remond (2020) as cited in Aji (2022) that the internet possesses the capability to rapidly transform regular individuals into 'celebrities' with ease.

Filmmakers endeavour to portray societal events through cinematic storylines based on this phenomenon. The achievements of other users who attained viral status on social media motivated Yowis Ben to promote his band using YouTube (Christin & Lewis, 2021). Nonetheless, being a band originating outside the mass media sector, Yowis Ben encounters several obstacles in achieving popularity. A primary issue is the scarcity of options for coverage by mass media, which is often concentrated in the main city. Consequently, a digital approach is the sole means for Yowis Ben to attain broader recognition. Yowis Ben's work may be extensively appreciated by social media users through the submission of videos on the YouTube platform.

The Javanese melodies that define Yowis Ben are perceived as a product of Bayu Skak's artistic creation, including parts of his cultural heritage. The Arek Jawa language is regarded as a distinctive creation and is hardly used by the people in song form. The Arek Jawa language constitutes a cultural artefact within the Arek Jawa administrative region (Surabaya, Malang, Sidoarjo, Gresik, Blitar, and adjacent places) and continues to serve as a medium for daily communication. In contrast to the more polished Javanese populace in the west (Mataraman), the linguistic use in the Arek Jawa region appears coarser and more direct. This distinctiveness eventually became the hallmark of Yowis Ben, a music ensemble that performs Javanese songs, particularly those influenced by the Arekan Jawa dialect.

This portrayal may have been influenced by the experiences of Bayu Skak, the creator of the Yowis Ben Tetralogy from Malang. Bayu started his career as a YouTuber, frequently posting comedic videos. His work proliferated and achieved virality on YouTube due to its uniqueness, particularly in Javanese. Bayu aimed to include this experience in his film by emphasising the story associated with the celebrity development process within the framework of Arek Jawa culture, which is intimately familiar to him. In this sequel, Bayu and his pals' adventure extends beyond merely captivating audiences on YouTube or attaining the status of the premier band in Malang. They want to get increased recognition within the mass media sector of the capital city. In *Yowis Ben 2*, Cak Jim's allure of the luxurious lifestyles of superstars in the capital city motivates Yowis Ben to chase that aspiration and promote their name in Bandung, the origin of the music business.

In a scene from *Yowis Ben 2*, Mbak Bondol asserts that "*Pusat musik terbesar di Indonesia itu ada di Bandung. (The epicentre of Indonesia's largest music industry is in Bandung).*" (Dialogue of Mbak Bondol, *Yowis Ben 2* film). This phrase articulates the contemporary social realities in Indonesia. Bandung is regarded as the origin of innovative tendencies. Numerous esteemed artists from diverse disciplines originate from Bandung, including renowned musicians such as Gigi, NOAH, Project Pop, Mocca, The SIGIT, among others. The designation of Bandung as the nucleus of the music business in Indonesia remains relevant today. Buky Wikagoe, a music analyst, asserts that Bandung serves as the epicentre of Indonesian music due to the prolific output and market success of its performers. Moreover, music aficionados in Bandung are recognised for their discerning character. If a band's music is embraced by the populace of Bandung, it is said to possess quality. This image is included in *Yowis Ben 2*, illustrating that Bandung, recognised as the hub of Indonesian music, can provide aspiring musicians from many places with the aspiration of recognition. This film not only portrays Bandung as a site for attaining celebrity but also seeks to articulate the notion of cultural assimilation between Javanese and Sundanese cultures.

As a filmmaker, Bayu aims to articulate the oneness that defines the nation's cultural variety. This film illustrates togetherness and acculturation via language and the friendliness of the Bandung community, which assists Yowis Ben in realising his aspirations. This aligns with Abdillah's (2007) assertion that the Arek Jawa community exhibits openness and tolerance towards various cultures. This receptiveness to change facilitates Yowis Ben's acceptance of Cak Jim's proposal to relocate to Bandung.

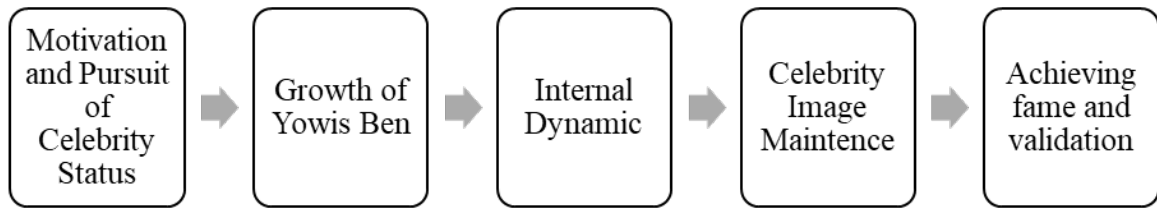
### **Maintaining celebrity image: the road to fame for a famous band**

The narratives of *Yowis Ben* and *Yowis Ben 2* illustrate Yowis Ben's first challenges in achieving fame. Nonetheless, the story shown in the *Yowis Ben 3* and *Yowis Ben Finale* series diverges. The narrative in the third and fourth films unfolds one year after the preceding series, as *Yowis Ben* begins to gain public recognition. This illustrates the alteration in the hierarchical standing of all Yowis Ben workers. Maintaining the celebrity's image is crucial in the celebrity development process. The objective is to maintain the celebrity's favourable image among their admirers. This appears to be the narrative that filmmaker Yowis Ben intends to communicate. They conducted a tour of Java under the supervision of Mbak Bondol and the management of Cak Jon. While the specifics of their musical voyage between towns are not explained, several contextual factors and character dialogues plainly suggest that they had conducted a tour throughout multiple cities in Java. Yowis Band has amassed a substantial following from many places across Indonesia, particularly in Java. The support from fans across different locations during the last concert of the Java tour demonstrates that Yowis Ben has a robust fan base as a band that provides a distinctive experience. They execute Javanese compositions, although in a modernised manner. In each performance, Yowis Ben consistently attempts to provide optimal entertainment for their followers.

Concrete proof is observable in the segment from 08:04 to 11:00 in the film *Yowis Ben 3*. Numerous fans exhibit fervour in anticipation of the band's performance. Some individuals include Yowis Ben elements to enhance the ambiance, such posters, flags, and giant banners inscribed with '*Nando Aku Gak Iso Turu*' ('Nando, I Can't Sleep'). Fans are a fundamental element in the discourse around the origins of celebrity culture. A celebrity title would not exist without the backing and esteem of admirers (Kang et al., 2022; Kusuma et al., 2020). The two are interconnected and interdependent. Another method to preserve Yowis Ben's positive reputation is to address internal problems inside the organisation. This aligns with the prevailing reality in the Indonesian entertainment industry, that internal discord can jeopardise a band's career. Numerous prominent bands in Indonesia have had career setbacks because of internal discord among its members. This representation is also evident in the narrative of Yowis Ben through to the *Yowis Ben Finale*. An instance occurs in the film *Yowis Ben Finale* (around 75.37-76.00 minutes), where Yowis Ben is seen joyfully smiling while embracing, acknowledging their error.

This motivates Yowis Ben personnel to consistently address internal problems and preserve their integrity. In the plot of the film *Yowis Ben 3*, Yowis Ben serves as both a venue for self-affirmation and the primary source of revenue for its staff. If Yowis Ben disbands, it will adversely affect their income stream. This also represents the ethos of the Javanese Arek group, which places a strong priority on brothers and solidarity. The Yowis Ben crew developed a profound emotional connection due to their shared upbringing from high school. This pertains to Abdillah (2007) that the Javanese Arek community emphasises camaraderie, familial bonds, and unity.

The examination of the *Yowis Ben tetralogy* indicates that the characters' pursuit of fame functions as a method to validate themselves and attain societal acceptance. Furthermore, the use of the Arek Jawa language not only embodies local identity but also serves as a sign of pride that fortifies their character. The media significantly influences the construction of celebrity images, facilitating their popularisation among the public. Moreover, familial connections and communal support significantly influence their path, illustrating the intricate interconnections among individuals, culture, and society within the entertainment industry. Thus, the analysis of the changing status of the actors in the four Yowis Ben films can be illustrated through the following Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Changes in actors throughout the *Yowis Ben* tetralogy  
Source: Author Compilation (2025)

From Figure 1, it can be stated that the journey of the Yowis Ben band, as depicted through its tetralogy, encapsulates the pursuit of celebrity status by Bayu, Doni, Yayan, and Nando, illustrating how their aspirations evolve amidst the allure of fame. Initially driven by a desire for recognition, the experiences of Bayu and Doni reveal the socioeconomic challenges that propel them to form a band as a means of validation. This context highlights a societal tendency to equate celebrity with success, where the glamour of a celebrity lifestyle often overshadows the harsh realities of their origins.

As Yowis Ben progresses, internal dynamics play a crucial role in their development. The band members navigate conflicts and tensions while striving to maintain a cohesive identity that reflects their shared background and dreams. This unity is essential not only for their artistic integrity but also for sustaining their public image. The media's portrayal of celebrity culture amplifies these dynamics, shaping their identities as they seek to capture the audience's attention and admiration.

Throughout their journey, the sustenance of their celebrity image becomes paramount. They must adapt to the evolving expectations of their fans and the entertainment industry, often leveraging social media and digital platforms to enhance their visibility. This evolution mirrors a broader trend in which emerging artists strive for recognition, utilising modern tools to cultivate their brand.

Ultimately, the tetralogy culminates in the band achieving fame and validation, representing not only personal triumphs but also a commentary on the pervasive influence of celebrity culture in Indonesian society. Their story encapsulates the complex interplay between ambition, identity, and societal perceptions, revealing how the pursuit of celebrity status shapes the lives of individuals seeking to break free from the constraints of their backgrounds.

## CONCLUSION

The Yowis Ben tetralogy (2018-2021) depicts a cohort of adolescents pursuing popularity as a distinguished band in Indonesia, presenting a poignant tale that reflects the ambitions and challenges faced by several young people today. The film portrays their journey through the intricacies of ambition, identity, and the quest for achievement, encapsulating the emotional burden of their aspirations and setbacks. This contemplation on the human experience highlights the significant difficulties associated with pursuing one's aspirations, especially within the competitive realm of the national music industry.

The tale primarily examines celebrity identification within the context of Arek Jawa Culture. The employment of the distinctive Javanese language, symbols representing local wisdom, and robust familial and brotherly traditions underscores the complex interplay between local identity and the quest for renown. The film's depiction of celebrity culture inspires audiences, especially the youth, to contemplate social ideals related to status, looks, and success. Character development is intimately interwoven with direct language and regional humour in Javanese cultural heritage, illustrating how these factors influence the characters' experiences and desires.

These findings offer substantial insights into the wider ramifications of celebrity culture in Indonesia. They disclose both the societal ideals and ambitions of the youth, as well as the negotiation of cultural identity amidst global influences. The interaction between local culture and celebrity image raises enquiries on the impact of these representations on audience views of identity, especially among younger viewers who are in the process of forming their own self-concept and societal knowledge.

Moreover, the conclusion poses essential questions concerning the media's influence on public perceptions of celebrities and the resulting societal effects. It underscores the necessity for a more profound investigation into how these representations affect public perceptions and shape the cultural milieu. Particular instances from the videos demonstrate the intricate interplay between celebrity culture and Javanese values, providing a deeper comprehension of the cultural dynamics involved.

This study paves the way for future research on celebrity culture, especially on its evolution about global trends. What unresolved enquiries persist concerning the ambitions of teenagers across various cultural contexts? In what ways may future research clarify the connection between local cultures and global celebrity phenomena? Addressing these enquiries will not only advance academic discourse but also deepen our comprehension of the importance of cultural identity in a progressively linked society.

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