


Design and Development of a Non-Verbal Documentary Video on the Ten Years of Joko Widodo's Administration (A Practice-Led Study Using YouTube Analytics)

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Visual Communication Design, Non-Verbal Storytelling, Documentary Video, Practice-Led Research, YouTube Engagement</p>	<p>This study presents the design and development of a non-verbal documentary video that visually narrates the decade of Joko Widodo's administration in Indonesia. Using a practice-led approach, the research focuses on crafting a ten-minute documentary that emphasizes visual storytelling through natural sounds, ambient audio, emotive music, and readable subtitles to enhance accessibility and engagement. The production process involved three key stages: pre-production, production, and post-production, each emphasizing the aesthetic and communicative aspects of visual narrative. Evaluation was conducted using YouTube engagement indicators to assess viewer responses and interaction patterns. The findings reveal that the integration of human-interest visuals, contextual sound design, and data-driven graphics strengthens audience immersion and message retention. This study contributes to the field of visual communication design by offering practical insights into how non-verbal storytelling can effectively convey development narratives within limited duration and digital distribution platforms.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

The administration of President Joko Widodo has brought significant transformation to Indonesia's national development during the past decade. Achievements such as extensive infrastructure expansion, industrial downstreaming, renewable energy development, and improved healthcare access through the national health insurance program (BPJS) demonstrate the government's strong commitment to equity and public welfare (Kurniawan, 2024). Visual documentation of these achievements plays an essential role as an informative, reflective, and educational medium of public communication (Landa, 2021; Barnouw, 1993).

However, summarizing ten years of development progress into a ten-minute documentary presents complex design challenges. These challenges not only arise from the density of the material but also from the limited thirty-day production timeframe (McQuail, 2010). Moreover, the project required visual representation of frontier regions such as Papua, demanding a contextual, humanistic, and empathetic design approach (Landa, 2021).

To ensure inclusivity across diverse social and literacy backgrounds, the video was designed to be easily comprehensible to all audiences. Subtitles thus became a vital component of the visual communication strategy. Interestingly, the video does not rely on verbal narration or scripted commentary; instead, it adopts a purely visual storytelling approach built through documentary footage, spontaneous interviews between residents and the President, and authentic ambient audio, including natural sounds, market activity, and emotional social interactions (Barnouw, 1993).

The cinematic integration of sound and visuals was crafted to evoke emotional resonance and strengthen audience engagement, enabling viewers to internalize the essence of Indonesia's developmental narrative (McQuail, 2010). By emphasizing non-verbal expression, this design strategy seeks to deliver an empathetic and deeply affective representation of national progress. Consequently, this study aims to explore how a ten-minute video can effectively summarize and communicate the achievements of President Joko Widodo's administration in a communicative, emotional, and inclusive manner within a limited production period. Using a design-based experimental framework that follows video production theory, covering pre-production, production, and post-production stages, along with audience response analysis on digital platforms, this research contributes both theoretical and practical insights to the field of Visual Communication Design, particularly in the creation of public policy documentaries grounded in visual storytelling (Landa, 2021; Barnouw, 1993).

METHODS

This study adopted a practice-led design approach, positioning the creative process itself as the core of inquiry. Rather than merely analyzing an existing phenomenon, the researcher became actively involved in designing, producing, and evaluating a documentary video that communicates a decade of national development achievements. This method is grounded in the belief that design practice can generate knowledge through reflection, iteration, and aesthetic decision-making (Landa, 2021). The approach aligns with the field of Visual Communication Design, where creative exploration is both a method and an outcome, allowing theory to emerge naturally from the design process.

The research process was structured into three main phases: pre-production, production, and post-production, following the general framework of audiovisual media development (Barnouw, 1993). During the pre-production phase, the researcher formulated conceptual and visual frameworks, established thematic priorities, and prepared the production timeline. The main challenge was condensing a decade of achievements into a concise ten-minute format without losing narrative depth or emotional coherence. Careful

curation of data, footage, and sound elements was essential to ensure that every visual sequence carried meaning and contributed to the overall story.

The production phase involved on-site documentation, compilation of archival materials, and the selection of authentic soundscapes to capture Indonesia's diverse development stories. Real-life interactions between the President and citizens were used as spontaneous moments that illustrate empathy and leadership. The choice to exclude verbal narration was intentional, emphasizing visual storytelling through imagery, gesture, and atmosphere. This creative decision was guided by the principles of non-verbal communication and cinematic empathy (McQuail, 2010), allowing the visuals and sound design to carry the emotional weight of the narrative.

In the post-production phase, the researcher conducted editing, sound design, color grading, and the integration of subtitles. The editing process focused on pacing, rhythm, and emotional flow, ensuring that transitions between segments were seamless and visually coherent. Subtitles were designed not only as linguistic aids but also as part of the visual composition, using typography and color contrast that maintained legibility across different screen formats. The final sequence was exported and published on a digital platform for public viewing.

To evaluate audience response, the study utilized YouTube Analytics, which provides detailed metrics on viewership patterns, engagement, and audience retention. Rather than focusing solely on numerical indicators, these metrics were interpreted qualitatively to understand how specific design decisions influenced viewer perception. Comments, likes, and watch-time patterns were analyzed as indicators of emotional engagement and narrative clarity. This analysis helped validate whether the non-verbal storytelling approach succeeded in capturing and sustaining audience attention.

In addition to digital analytics, informal feedback from viewers was collected to enrich the interpretation of data. Respondents from different social and educational backgrounds were invited to share their impressions regarding accessibility, emotional impact, and narrative comprehension. Their reflections were used to assess the inclusivity and communicative effectiveness of the design. The combination of quantitative engagement data and qualitative viewer insights offered a balanced understanding of how visual storytelling performs as a public communication tool.

Ethical considerations were integrated throughout the research process. All footage featuring individuals was obtained with consent, and cultural sensitivity was prioritized, particularly in representing communities from Papua and other frontier regions. The researcher maintained a neutral stance in depicting governmental achievements, ensuring that the video functioned as a documentary reflection rather than political propaganda. Music and sound effects were used with appropriate licensing and acknowledgment, following professional standards of audiovisual ethics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The design experiment produced a ten-minute documentary video titled “Ten Years of Jokowi – For an Advanced Indonesia.” The video combines documentary visuals, citizen interviews, ambient sounds, emotional music, and subtitles as a substitute for narration. It successfully encapsulates the strategic achievements of President Joko Widodo’s administration, including infrastructure development such as toll roads, ports, and border facilities; industrial downstreaming; renewable energy initiatives; healthcare access through the BPJS program; as well as progress in education and the economy in frontier regions, particularly Papua.

The non-verbal storytelling strategy proved highly effective in conveying the message of national development in an emotional and inclusive manner. The deliberate selection of footage showing direct interactions between the President and citizens helped foster an emotional connection with viewers. The use of subtitles ensured that the video remained accessible to audiences from various backgrounds without diminishing the strength of its visual narrative.

Selective footage choices also played a crucial role in shaping the narrative direction. For example, tourism footage from Raja Ampat was intentionally omitted to avoid creating the impression of a promotional video, thereby maintaining the documentary’s focus on the theme of national development. In contrast, scenes depicting border construction and citizen engagement were highlighted as the central visual elements representing progress and inclusivity.

Visual and Technical Discussion

The greatest challenge during post-production was achieving harmony between the musical score and the ambient audio. The music was not merely used as a background element but functioned as an emotional driver, evoking feelings of compassion, enthusiasm, and optimism among viewers. This synchronization was executed with precision to maintain the natural rhythm and authentic atmosphere of each scene.

Another challenge arose in the use of data graphics and subtitles. The complexity of the visual backgrounds required careful attention to text color selection and graphic element placement. The adopted solution involved combining white stroke outlines with black shadows on subtitles and applying transparent overlays to data graphics, ensuring readability even over dynamic visual sequences.

Audience Response

After being published on YouTube on October eighteenth, the video received a strong response, with viewers expressing appreciation for its emotional depth and subtle delivery. Most comments praised the visual approach as “touching” and “non-preachy,” highlighting the narrative power achieved without verbal narration and the emotional impact created purely through visuals and natural audio.

The relatively high viewing duration compared to typical short documentaries suggests that the emotional storytelling approach and inclusive visual design successfully enhanced

audience engagement and strengthened the communicative power of the development message conveyed to the public.

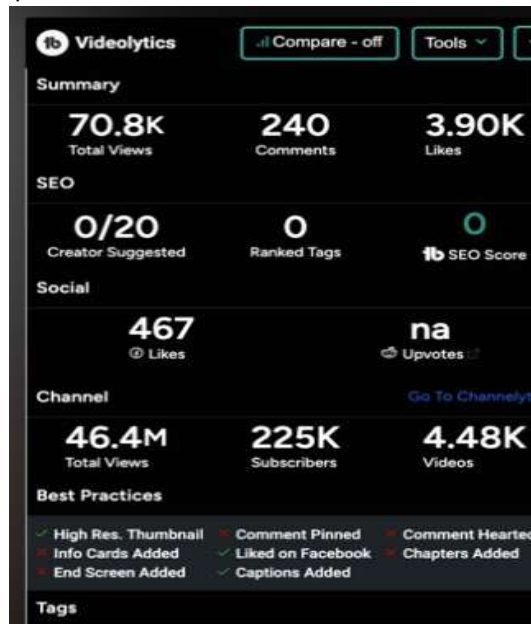


Figure 1. YouTube Analytics of the State Secretariat Video

In addition, the video was reposted by several online media YouTube channels, including Harian Surya and Tribun. The combined viewership from these channels reached approximately five thousand seven hundred views, with eighty-seven likes and an SEO score of fifteen.



Figure 2. YouTube Analytics of the Harian Surya Channel Video

Figure 2 presents the analytical overview of the reposted documentary on the Harian Surya YouTube channel. The data visualization illustrates viewer engagement metrics, including view count, interaction rate, and audience retention. Although the total views were lower than the original upload, the engagement level remained relatively strong, indicating that the visual storytelling and emotional tone of the documentary successfully resonated with audiences across different media platforms.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that a non-verbal storytelling approach can effectively convey messages of national development through the medium of documentary film. By integrating documentary visuals, ambient audio, emotional music, and subtitles, the design experiment succeeded in creating a narrative that is both emotionally engaging and inclusive. The absence of verbal narration encouraged viewers to interpret meaning through visual cues and natural sound, resulting in a deeper emotional connection. The aesthetic synchronization between image and sound played a crucial role in maintaining rhythm and authenticity, while the technical precision in color, typography, and graphic composition ensured clarity and accessibility across various screen formats. Audience responses showed that viewers appreciated the film's ability to communicate empathy, optimism, and a sense of unity without overt persuasion. The documentary was perceived as reflective and human-centered, allowing audiences from diverse backgrounds to relate to the story of progress. The findings reinforce the idea that visual communication design can serve as a powerful tool in shaping public understanding of policy achievements. Overall, this project contributes to the field of design research by providing practical insights into how non-verbal storytelling can transform complex information into a cinematic experience that inspires, informs, and connects society through visual empathy.

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