

PHOTO ELICITATION: POTRAYING THE EXPERIENCE OF TOURIST HOLIDAYING IN BALI

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Abstract: As a social phenomenon, tourism is an activity that takes place in different cultural environment. This paper aims to explore tourism experience through the use of photo elicitation as a media for collecting data. The in-depth interviewed conducted using research participants own generated photographs that include aspects such as cultural, social and geographical. and the data emerged from tourist narratives as well as the images. Pictures captured by participants served as the baselined of interview process. Collaborative approach in which research participants portray the pictures and gives meaning to the experiences. The data analyse using qualitative approach and three themes resulted from the analysis; “portraying the sceneries”, “portraying the relationality”, “portraying the hazardous”. The initial two imply into the positive experiences, while the third theme indicates negative one. The findings in this research illustrated how the experience was highly influenced by the physical environment, natural setting of destinations as well as human interactions.

Abstrak: Sebagai fenomena sosial, pariwisata merupakan kegiatan yang berlangsung dalam lingkungan budaya yang berbeda. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman wisata melalui penggunaan elisitasi foto sebagai media pengumpulan data. Wawancara mendalam dilakukan dengan menggunakan foto-foto yang dihasilkan oleh peserta penelitian yang mencakup aspek-aspek seperti budaya, sosial dan geografis dan data muncul dari narasi wisatawan serta gambar. Gambar yang diambil oleh peserta berfungsi sebagai dasar dari proses wawancara. Pendekatan kolaboratif di mana partisipan penelitian menggambarkan gambar dan memberi makna pada pengalaman. Analisis data menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan tiga tema yang dihasilkan dari analisis; “menggambarkan pemandangan”, “menggambarkan relasionalitas”, “menggambarkan bahaya”. Dua tema pertama menyiratkan pengalaman positif, sedangkan tema ketiga menunjukkan pengalaman negatif. Temuan dalam penelitian ini menggambarkan bagaimana pengalaman sangat dipengaruhi oleh lingkungan fisik, alam pada destinasi serta interaksi antar manusia.

Keywords: photo-elicitation, photographs, social phenomenon, tourist experiences.

INTRODUCTION

Tourist experiences are dynamic and multisensory in nature (Haldrup, Larsen & Urry, 2004). It is understood that tourists have been seen as active participators in the construction of experiences which expressed through acts, moves and performances such as sightseeing can create experiences (Edensor, 2000). Furthermore, the notion of “tourist gaze” (Urry, 2002) also highlight the fact that tourism is a highly visual nature in the experiences, however only few studies integrate visual methods into tourism research. As Feighey (2003) noted, “as tourism is, to a large extent dominated by visual experiences, we can regard it as being a rich site for both ‘creation’ and

analysis of visual evidence” (p. 78). Applying this approach becomes pertinent as the numbers of growing tourism researchers seek to understand the experiential nature of tourism (Brown, Cromby, Harper, Johnson, & Reavey, 2011; Harris & McIntosh, 2006). Other studies have adopted photographs as a method to meet their research objectives.

Photographs have been used by researchers to gain understanding of tourist experiences. Scarles (2012) argued that “photographs not only become implicit in the ways in which tourists produce and consume place, but also in the way they communicate such experiences” (p. 72). Taking pictures

emphasised the active roles and illustrate the subjective meaning, practices and processes behind the creation of image (see Crang, 2003). The participants' social, personal meanings and value were enhanced through exploring the visual images provided by them.

In addition, Sedgley et al. (2011) called for more experientially based studies, which directly focus on individual relationships between tourism products and consumers at the micro level. It is therefore important to use methods that allow flexibility and the expression of subjectivity. As further noted by Ryan (2000), "subjectivity is equally part of the tourism experience and research process" (as cited in Westwood, Morgan & Pritchard 2006, p. 35). It is important to give participants the opportunity to express their experiences through their own texts and narratives. Other scholars (Patton, 2002a) have argued that it is vital to develop ways for participants to be actively involved and have control over their own narratives and interpretations. Tourism has been seen as playful experiences and whenever possible to demonstrate activities of enjoyment and playfulness in the process (Westwood et al., 2006).

Photo elicitation is an interview method where photographs inserted during interviews with aim to evoking memories and generating meaning. The photograph provided by the researcher is the most common media to elicit the narratives, however it is also possible to use photographs generated by research participants (Chalfen, 1998). This approach enables greater access for research participants collecting data, leading and proactively involved in the research process (Garlick, 2010; Markwell, 2001; Scarles, 2012). This method is essentially reflexive and can inspire them to reflect on their views and deep experiences to let them illustrate the concept to be communicated (Stedman, Beckley, Wallace, & Ambard, 2004). The use of photographs produced by participants as a research method has some strengths. Firstly, capturing pictures is fun and a familiar activity during holidays. This helps research participants establish connectedness with the process. The pictures created by research participants also transfers control to them rather than having the researcher dominate. Accordingly, its present account for reflexivity for participants as they produce, create, direct and communicate these

experiences (Scarles, 2012). Secondly, as the person who fully in charged in the creation of the experiences, participants carefully analyse their environment and this activity pushes them to examine what needs to be inserted and/or eliminated in the photographs (Garrod, 2008), increasing observatory skills in holiday environment. Thirdly, visitor led photography can build rapport as well as provide a sense of secure and assurance for research participants to determine the pictures presented during dialogues. This results in nuanced access moments of the tourists' experience that come to exist with embodied, haptic and affective spaces of encounter between self and other (Scarles, 2012). Taking photos provide opportunity to self-evaluation based on new information and insights from research participants (Jenkins, Woodward and Winter, 2008). To determine the experiences as well as in connection with the research objectives of how tourists' experiences are constructed by the broader context of social relations and environment, this research adopted work of Mackay and Couldwell (2004).

METHOD

To gain an understanding of the experience as it is constructed by the tourists, visual methods were specifically applied in this research. Ten research participants who voluntarily agreed to join this research were asked to produce 10 photos; this number is relatively high for a photograph generated by research participants (see Taylor, Czarnowski, Sexton, & Flick, 1995). The process of photographs analysis then continued with classified images, labelling them with numbers based on sequences recorded on the research notes. Following on that, the subjects and objectives in the note were verified and juxtaposed with the pictures to ascertain the connection between photographs and tourist's description. The total of pictures produced by research participants were 40, and each participant produced from 6 – 10 images. Research participants gives subject as well as mentioned reasons of taking it. From this point, the images were coded according to identifiable features (Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013) resulted in 28 subjects and 13 reasons (see Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1. List of Subject in the pictures

No.	Subject in the pictures
1.	Temples
2.	Stone
3.	Sea
4.	People
5.	Garden
6.	Rest point
7.	Grounds
8.	Staff
9.	Street
10.	Parking area
11.	Events
12.	Artworks
13.	Local activities
14.	Shops
15.	Signage
16.	Footpath
17.	Money changer
18.	Rice fields
19.	Boats
20.	White sandy beach
21.	Reception
22.	Stairs
23.	Toilet
24.	Tiles
25.	Grab bars
26.	Hand rails
27.	Swimming pool
28.	Foods

Source : Author's design

Table 2. List Reason for Photograph

No.	Reasons
1.	Spiritual
2.	Relaxing
3.	Potentially dangerous
4.	Messy
5.	Slippery
6.	Artistic
7.	Helpful
8.	Lovely people
9.	Fairness
10.	Safety
11.	Spend most of the time
12.	Journey
13.	Constraints

Source : Author's design

The classification of subjects emerged in 4 categories; land / seascape, infrastructure / facilities, people and safety. The pictures that

identified, first; land/seascape such as water features, rice fields, the sea, garden and grounds. Second, infrastructure such as toilets, shops, parking areas, footpaths and streets. Third, people; local activities, sellers, staff in hotel/restaurants and fourth safeties include stairs, ramps, handrails and grab bars. The next step was to developed themes to see how the social and environment constructed experiences. The first theme emerged, *portraying the sceneries*; refers to commonality in which showing the pictures represent the typical environment of visited place. The second, *portraying the relationality*; refers to affinity with others. The third one *portraying the hazardous*, refers to constraints encountered by research participants.



Figure 1. Example of photographs analysis

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

As a result, a total of fifteen pictures (38%) made reference to the framing the scenery, these are; rice field, the beach, tropical garden, smooth pathways, traditional boats. A social environment where the locals presented portraying the relationality comprised seven pictures (17%) comprised of; group of people doing massage, helpful waiter, events, dine out. The portraying hazardous of experiences encompassed eight photographs (20%) which labelled as untidy the point was not the entire island generally filthy, but there were specific unorganised areas such as broken pavement, uncontrolled parking and plastic litters, and the issue of hazards comprised ten photographs (25%), and these are as follows; steep stairs, ramps, bumpy area, discontinuous access.

Portraying The Sceneries

There are unwritten conventions on what tourists captured during holiday, and these usually regular type of a scene. For some of participants, the aims of capturing the natural landscape to present the serenity fields, calmness of the beach. Relevant to this study, the most popular images taken was typical landscape of Bali's tropical nature. Preferred photographs representing this mainstream atmosphere of the island were; rice fields, the beach, tropical garden, smooth pathways, and traditional boats. Of the particular interest were the tropical garden and the beach which presents natural scenery and relaxing atmosphere. Research participants comment strengthen this topic: "What I like the most is the well-arranged of the tropical garden, I love the way they keep maintained the garden" (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Tropical Garden

In addition, other research participants contextualize specific conditions where the images taken. Research participants illustrated the beach also considered as a crucial place for their leisure. "We went to the beach twice a day, morning and afternoon. We were laying under the shade and feel the breeze, get the morning sunlight on our skin, it's relaxing for both me and my wife" (see Figure. 3).

Another images that elicits the experience of research participants was the nature walks. One of the iconic scenery of holidaying on the island was a green open space of the paddies field with coconut trees. Although the pictures captured by tourists would be stereotypical, however at the same time it representing the uniqueness and authenticity of the place. Research participants reflected their experience: "Such a refreshing

place, it's a very peaceful place that you can walk the greenery and breathe the fresh air" (see Figure. 4). According to research participants being in nature manifest the sense of connections with the environment and appreciation on different nature of holiday environment where the holiday occurred.



Figure 3. The Beach



Figure 4. Green Rice Fields

Portraying The Sceneries

Interaction with the locals was the second theme in the construction of tourists experience. Getting to know and involving in an intimate interaction with the locals was crucial component of their experiences. As one participant mentioned; the interactions in natural setting providing more time to establish connections with local people and I made friends with many locals (see Figure 5). Another aspect of the social aspect that constructs positive experience for tourists was the assistance they received from the waiter in the restaurants. Research participants explained how people in the food and beverages business allocate time to provide explanation and being attentive to the customers.



Figure 5. Interaction With Locals

Similarly interesting with meeting the locals, some of research participants highlighted the joy of meeting people from different society. During holiday, it is quite often tourists meet other visitors, and this mean sharing holiday spaces with other tourists. For example, research participants described how they saw a group of Japanese tourists attend a wedding ceremony, as research participant mentioned; “We walked down the beach and saw a group of Japanese attending a wedding ceremony and we had conversations about the event, cultures, norms and share knowledge” (see Figure 6). Another point referred by research participants was meeting the nice friendly people during holiday journey helps them creating friendships. Going on holiday gives distraction from mundane life, and the real occasion of being with other people from different cultures. This developing a sense of appreciation towards others and accepting diversity.



Figure 6. Wedding Event

Portraying the Hazardous

The third theme described as “portraying the hazardous” focused on the aspect of safety and security. Preferred photographs for the third theme depict the experiences of research participants was bumpy pavement, lighting, steep stairs and absent of handrails. The notable issue appeared was the feeling of worry in regards to safety and security. Research participants felt anxious and annoyance when they had to go through steep stairs with no side grab bars to hold. Other research participants recalled the memories when they walked at night with bumpy footpath and low lighting. Other participants reflected fearful experience through comment; “I don’t want to be critical, I just need something to grab and hold when I walk on the stairs”.

Some scholars in tourism research have suggested that physical representation (safety and cleanliness) in destination are particularly important to guarantee overall satisfaction (Jang & Wu, 2006; Chang & Tarn, 2008; Barnett; 1993). Indeed, research participants who involved in this research expressed a sense of disappointment in relation with ‘unawareness’ of the important of safety and security in the destination. Lack of planning and minimum maintenance such as; entrance, toilets, footpaths, street lightings and handrails.



Figure 7. Bumpy Area



Figure 8. Steep stairs

the hosts or local's competency since relational aspect also become one point that construct tourist's experiences.

3. To gain deeper understanding of the experience, the upcoming study focus with involving large number of research participants, thus will help us to enhance knowledge on the subjective nature of experiences.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the construction of tourist experiences using visitor generated photographs. The images taken by research participants is powerful method to reveal the participants way of thoughts and emotions. Furthermore, photo elicitation opens the underlying different values and insights of the experiences with the object as well as other subject in the destinations. The findings in this research illustrated how the experienced influenced by the physical environment, natural setting and interaction with the social environment in the destination. More importantly, applying photo elicitation enables the researcher to gain narratives with images, and this can be a useful tool in constructing holiday experiences. In parallel with previous study using photography to elicit tourists experience, this approach provides new methods in capturing experiences that different from paper pen conventional method (Ewert, 2000).

Suggestion

1. In order to fully understand tourist experiences, the use of photography presenting locations, activities, relationships help to form memories of the holiday.
2. Since tourist's experience is highly depending on the physical environment in the destination therefore it is crucial to upgrade general facilities such as pedestrians, lightings as well as staircases. Nevertheless, it is also necessary to upscale

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