

## Promoting tourism destinations through Sudanese tourists interacting experiences in Bandung

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**Abstract** This research focused on tourism because currently, it is one of the main pillars of the economy. The developing countries are currently competing in improving their tourism sector by taking advantage of newly developed technologies and advancements. Today, these countries are using new marketing tools to promote their destinations. Suitable distribution and intensive promotion increases the duration of residence of the tourist and increase national income. Therefore, it is necessary to inquire into promotional strategies in social media based on Sudanese tourist experiences. This study used a qualitative approach with phenomenological study to investigate how the developing countries, especially Indonesia, benefit from the tourist experience and social media as a new marketing tool in promoting destinations. The result showed that most of the Sudanese tourists used social media to find information about tourism destinations in Indonesia. The researcher conducted a short interview with six Sudanese tourists to understand the Sudanese tourists' behaviour, communication experiences in social media, and the factors that made them chose Indonesia. Other results showed that the Sudanese used social media to share their travel experiences by posting pictures, videos, comments, and opinions. These postings may serve as valuable information for other potential tourists and influence their choices.

**Keywords:** communication experiences; social media; destination choice; promotion

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Culture and heritage serve as a driving force for the growth of tourism, which is truly sustainable and fosters the balance of the universe through tourism and culture (Kumar, 2017). Developing communication tools is one of the best ways to develop Indonesian tourism. Internet age promotes tourism business. The Internet provides much information is provided for travellers about particular tourist objects. Indeed, tourism promotion significantly affects travellers' expectations.

The Internet provides services and interfaces between service providers and consumers, who are empowered by informed choice, education, encouragement and facilitation, that may cause changes (Alvarez & Korzay, 2011). The contribution of tourism to economic development through the various aspects of development theory have shaped and continue to shape essential studies in the political economy of tourism (Bianchi, 2018).

In the past five years, we have seen that the number of Sudanese tourists travelling to Indonesia for tourism purposes increases. For example, according to statistics from the Bandung Immigration Office, Sudanese tourists to Indonesia increased from 100 in 2009 to 1754 tourists in 2017. It is essential to note the importance of beauty and climate conservation. Without beauty and climate conservation, there will be no tourism activities, and that means there are no economic benefits for the community (Vibriyanto, Ismail, & Ekayani, 2015).

Researchers have talked to several Sudanese tourists about their communication experiences at tourist destinations because in past Indonesia was not yet a tourist destination favoured by Sudanese people. The most dominant tourists visiting Malaysia were Saudi Arabia, 106 (29.7 per cent), 66 (18.5 per cent) and 49 (13.7 per cent) led by Oman. Residents with the lowest number of tourists who arrived were Algeria, Eritrea, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Arab America, and the Arabic United Kingdom with 1 (0.3 per cent) each. Kuwait, Sudan and Bahrain each amounted to 44 (12.3 per cent), 38 (10.6 per cent) and 10 (2.8 per cent) (Salman & Hasim, 2012).

Suddenly, things seem to be shifting in favour of Indonesia. In this background, this study aimed to find out the actions in communication, the experience of Sudanese tourists in Indonesia, and the context that usually influences their experience and desire to come a second time. This can be well understood from textual descriptions and interpretations.

More recently, Sudan, in general, has a positive and productive relationship with Indonesia that is rooted in centuries of tradition of trade and religious involvement. At present, Indonesia's constructive diplomacy paves the way for more balanced and multidimensional relations between the two countries, particularly in the economic sector. Sometimes Sudan and Indonesia have different ways of interpreting and practising Islam

because of the difference in "Madhhab," but on the other hand, there is a similar culture in terms of food: both Indonesians and Sudanese like to eat fresh and spicy food.

Also, there are some common habits and practices, such as how people communicate with each other and welcome guests. Most morals and behaviour are rooted in religion. So, it is true that there is something unique to the people of Indonesia, especially the City of Bandung, which is the majority of ethnic Sundanese. They are popular with smiles and a warm welcome (Alves, Campón-Cerro, & Hernández-Mogollón, 2019). Maybe even Indonesian is not difficult to understand for Sudanese and Arabic tourists because 30% of the Indonesian words are similar to Arabic.

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the experience of Sudanese tourists to get a coherent context of the Bandung Tourism Destinations based on several clusters. According to interviews, five clusters were identified based on descriptions of Sudanese tourists: social profiles, unique and relaxing shopping experiences, unique cuisine, prices, and excellent tourist experiences (Ayikoru, 2015).

Such profiles refer to specific keywords that are associated with elements of experience, including senses (see, smell, hear and taste), sound, behaviour, and relationships. The whole tourism experience is captured in this study as an element of perception, cognitive, sensory, social experiences, and other bodies, all of which contribute to emotional experiences, through which we can find out the meaning and value of Indonesian tourism for Sudanese tourists, and whether Bandung can be the best tourist destination for Sudanese tourists (Balogun, 2019).

The form of in-depth interviews was chosen to collect useful qualitative data (Krippendorff, 2012; Yin, 2015). We asked some open-ended questions about the power of social media and tourist choices. We use several interview guides; where interview questions were made to be flexible to match the response of each informant.

In this paper, a systematic literature review was conducted with snowball sampling techniques to collect each respondent. This method was also used in interviews with social media cultural tourism groups and asks respondents who are experienced in travel tours (Mulyana, 2010).

It has been observed previously that in the tourist contact experience, social perspectives are based more on psychological and social expectations that are developed when tourists interact with people at tourist destinations and through social media. This study was designed to assess the effect of this communication experience on the promotion of tourist destinations, especially in the city of Bandung, and whether the communication experiences and perceptions of these tourists contribute to their choice of potential tourist destinations.

This paper aimed to explore and explain the phenomenon of Sudanese tourists who have begun to choose Indonesia as their new favourite

destination and especially Bandung, so through this study, we wanted to understand their communication experience in Indonesia and how Sudanese tourists define and interpret their communication. This can help to find out "what we need to be aware of" as input for tourism activists. Information obtained includes pleasant experiences, how they view Indonesian tourism, and the extent to which this experience can provide value for Indonesians as destination countries (Rachim, Yenny, Susilo, 2019; Blanchard & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2013).

This study can be considered for the development of Bandung tourism as an international destination, not only for African or Sudanese tourists. Furthermore, the government, together with other tourism stakeholders, must coordinate and work together in realizing Indonesia's tourism destinations, because tourism can make significant contributions to development problems in the future.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research is exploratory and interpretative in nature to understand what constitutes a unique situation in the Sudanese communication experience. Phenomenology studies are the preferred technique if questions are asked, when a researcher has little influence on things and when the emphasis is on current phenomena in some real-life backgrounds (Yin, 2003).

The aim of applying the phenomenological method is not to stop focusing on descriptions that only seek the essence but create new models and theories. If this phenomenological attitude is received in direct experience, not only sensual awareness but the substance of a particular subject and that can also cause phenomena to be interpreted as introducing, so we can face the problem of what if there are, then the usual basics. more precisely in the experiences of other writers and readers, so that they will be the subject of the following.

To achieve "collective essence," that is, what is common to most tourist encounters and to avoid partiality and subjective attitude, we aim to reach a shared consensus in establishing the basis as a criterion for the possibility of objectivity for results. An understanding of tourism trends is formed by items that do not change, which remain the same for free variations (different travel experiences). About the limited number of meetings examined the proposed protocol aims to show the process rather than striving for universality, in establishing the true nature of tourism (Crooks, Turner, Snyder, Johnston, & Kingsbury, 2011).

Researchers used a qualitative approach and focused on studying the topic as a new phenomenon in Indonesia because of most Sudanese travel to Europe, several Arab countries, and Malaysia. Now, there is a phenomenon for Sudanese travelling to Indonesia. Through this approach, we study this problem from a phenomenological perspective.

The construction paradigm also allowed researchers to carry values about the topic. Also, we used the constructivist paradigm because it provides many representations of reality, represents the natural complexities of the real world and focuses on building knowledge, not a reproduction.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Bandung is known as Paris van Java because when we look at the architecture, weather and design of the city, it is similar to Paris. It is seen in the old part of the city, usually ends up as a business district surrounded by Chinese commercial districts and markets. A little before the rainy season began in Bandung, now Indonesia is resting. The rainy season in Indonesia usually runs from October to May, and the peak of the rainy season in January. The dry season lasts from June to August, so daytime temperatures are 25-30 degrees Celsius. It is sunny in the morning, but in the afternoon it becomes foggy. Therefore, we have to get up early at 6:30 in the morning, and the sun is already there to sunbathe. The temperature drops at night, at sunset. In Bandung, the average temperature is 22 degrees Celsius; beautiful weather all year long.

Bandung was famous as the centre of the garment industry; at that time; clothing from Bandung will have value as a creative design that is attractive and not too expensive. There are many factory outlets (FOs) that sell various types of clothing and are still not expensive. FO can be found on RE Martadinata Street, Djuanda Street, and Setiabudhi Street, various shops are offered by FOs, and many of them also offer restaurants.

If you want to try some urban variations, then you can try shopping at Pasar Baru, a small shop that looks modern, where you have to be able to negotiate to get what you want.

Short trips are available to the Lembang mountain resort and Bosscha Observatory, and to the Tangkuban Perahu volcano crater, the only Javanese crater which peak can be accessed by car, due to gas in several locations (Croy, 2010).

A hot spring resort is only 15 minutes drive from Tangkuban Perahu, and we can swim in a pool of warm water with minerals. The resort also offers lounges, restaurants, tennis courts and hotels with cottage views with beautiful mountain views.

Another attraction of Bandung, culinary, Bandung is also famous for various types of food offered by vendors, food in Bandung is famous for its delicious taste and even more so because of creativity. Many types of food are produced using a unique method.

### ***Break down of communication barriers***

The interaction of people in the Bandung region with Sudanese tourists plays a vital role in supporting Bandung as a tourist destination.

Interaction occurs between tourists consisting of tour guides, hotel employees, restaurant waiters, food and beverage vendors who have diverse educational backgrounds. With varied educational backgrounds, of course, they also have various competencies as well. Competence in communicating with foreign tourists is generally, and mainly Sudanese tourists, those who have a different culture which is a matter of concern for business managers in the region (Garcia Henche, 2018). English language training is one form of training that is widely provided by business managers to employees, especially in the Bandung area, which is very much needed. With excellent English talent, it is hoped that tourism operators in Bandung will be able to provide better services to tourists.

Longstanding communication between local traders and Sudanese tourists in the Bandung region has resulted in a cultural change for local traders and residents. Cultural change can be a symptom of changes in social structure, habits, and cultural patterns in society (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). Culture and communication are related to human behaviour and satisfaction with the need to interact with other humans. Porter and Samovar (in Mulyana and Rachmat, 2010) state that before behaviour can be called a message, it must fulfil two conditions: First, the behaviour must be seen by someone, and second, the behaviour must be meaningful. In other words, every behaviour that can be interpreted is a message. The implications of the concept of behaviour are: first, every word shows us, both verbal and nonverbal behaviour, can function as messages. Second, the behaviour may be conscious or unconscious.

In general, Sudanese tourists claim to have no significant problems interacting with Bandung residents. However, there is no problem due to cultural differences and customs between Sudanese tourists and the local residents; the only problem agreed by all Sudanese tourists is language.

Some things that support a good communication experience with traders and are a cultural factor of traders in Bandung who have an open and friendly character to foreigners. Another factor is the factor of economic necessity which requires traders to communicate well with tourists. Sometimes, traders and residents try hard to communicate information. Some of them use non-verbal language with a smile. This is reflected positively in Bandung tourist destinations, unlike Bali, where tourists sometimes face crime and theft, seriously dealing with tourists by traders and residents.

Informants exemplified the ethics of local people who bend when greeting an older person or passing a person who sits. In Sudanese culture, there is no bending, including when you greet others. However, this is very worrying for the citizens of Bandung. It is not polite to greet an older person or pass a person who sits without bending one's body.

Sudanese tourists who are accustomed to wearing Islamic clothing, when the weather is hot also still wear modest clothes. But in Bandung,

some informants saw women wearing minimal clothing because they felt hot, which meant for the Sudanese, this woman was not polite. However, that is typical of the local community. But when Sudanese tourists communicate with people and learn about the diversity of Indonesian culture, he can accept the situation and try to better understand Indonesian culture.

The informants also claimed that they still felt communication barriers in interacting with Bandung residents. But learning Indonesian and often interacting with locals can help. According to informants, understanding language is one of the primary keys for tourists when they want to mingle with the local community. Adjusting the culture and habits will be easier if you already understand the language used by local people.

Language differences in communication can be seen from the volume and tone of voice between Sudanese and people in Bandung. Furthermore, when visitors arrive at a new place and want to enter there, sometimes there is confusion when talking. This form of verbal communication is needed in tourist communication with the local community to enable effective communication with each other. In this study also, forms of verbal communication occur in tourists which can be seen from the use of two languages in everyday life, namely English and Indonesian.

Nonverbal messages between tourists and residents who use body movements consist of three main components: facial messages, gestural messages, and postural messages. Facial message uses facial expressions to convey particular meanings, such as happiness, shock, fear, anger, sadness, nausea, criticism, and interests, and so on.

When tourists use nonverbal communication, they will try to make symbols with their body parts or body movements, because gestural messages show the movements of several members of the body such as the eyes and hands to convey various meanings.

### ***Responding to environmental challenges***

One of the main factors driving some Sudanese tourists to adopt customs is previous intercultural experiences in other destinations. Integration into the new environment has made it easier for some informants to familiarise themselves with the adaptation phase and feel less frustrated to adapt in Bandung. Because many friendly people live there. Also, the informant knows his psychological style and personal reaction to challenging and unpredictable circumstances and unknown environment (Yasir et al., 2019). This experience and the people in Sudan helped him adapt.

Sudanese tourists who have recently come, for example, are trying to get closer to the locals by greeting people using Indonesian words such as "How are you?", "Good Morning" and so on. While tourists who are

experienced or who have been to Indonesia many times will speak more Indonesian when speaking with residents.

Furthermore, related to food, the informant claimed to have adapted to the taste of local food. The spicy taste that was once a barrier to eating food in this region, because of its digestion, is now no longer a problem (Horng & Tsai, 2012). Local community contact with Sudanese visitors is usually marked by cultural and linguistic differences on the local community side. Even though it sometimes causes misunderstandings, until now, it can still be overcome because tourists respect the local culture.

Bandung's lifestyle is different from Sudan. We can assume that personal freedom and open-minded people attract Sudanese tourists. However, at the same time and create a barrier to communicate with those who live in the village with a more relaxed and personal way of life. Many of them regard visitors as a compromise for their new way of life, especially during peak periods. In rural areas around Bandung, several other obstacles form unfavourable conditions for interacting with visitors.

Although they felt comfortable and could adapt to the culture and society in Bandung, the informant claimed to continue to maintain his habits, for example, in terms of breakfast. The informant still maintains the habit of eating bread as he did in his home country; because they rarely eat rice in Sudan.

The results showed that initially cultural differences, especially language, were a challenge for Sudanese tourists and residents in communicating so that the cross-cultural communication patterns that occur between Sudanese tourists and residents in communicating at destinations are very winding and complicated. Nevertheless, over time, the relationship between the two gradually strengthened. Also, social needs as humans to interact and communicate become supporting factors that encourage them to always be involved in the conversation (Kotler, Bowen, Makens, & Baloglu, 2017).

Heavy traffic, crowded public transportation and angry Grab drivers are some of the obstacles according to informants. Although challenges trigger frustration, this confusion is also seen as part of the overall experience. Many participants showed experience as incomplete without challenges; Sudanese tourists do not run away from them and sometimes try challenges. Some information provided by our informants said their weather and physical condition also played an essential role in the flexibility of regular planning and scheduling of participants. When the weather is cold, for example, some information mentions how they adjust their schedules, including indoor activities (e.g., museums, galleries, Bandung shopping centres).

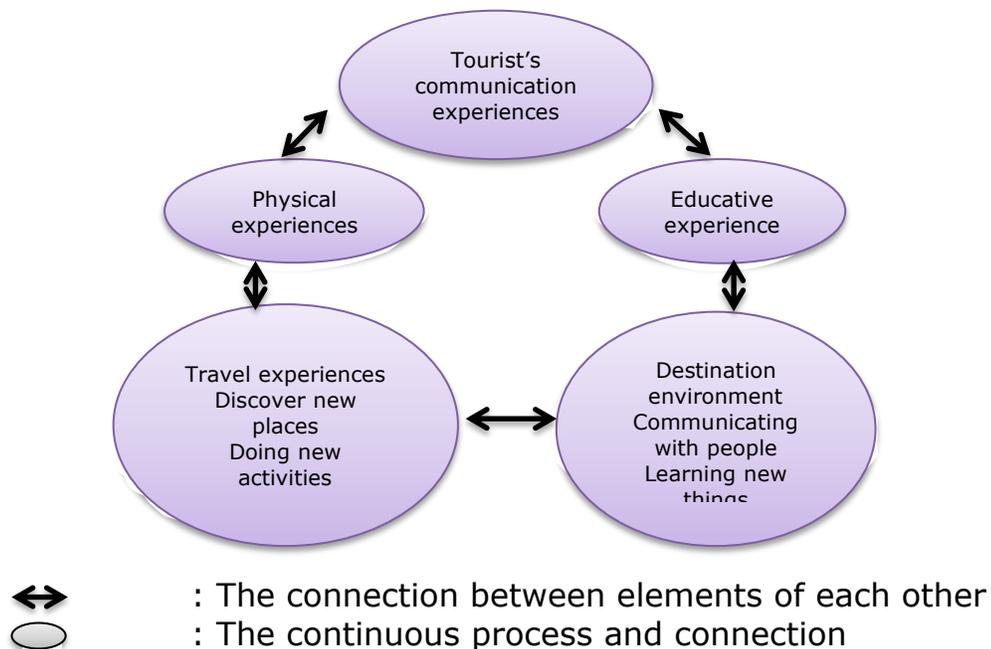
### **Capturing and sharing memorable moments**

Tourists have documented their meetings, such as stories, picture shows, and souvenir purchases. Also, respondents clarified that they would like to come back later. However, it is more critical that these respondents also identify their intention to return with people who did not accompany them on their first trip; For example, some stated intentions to re-create with close friends or significant others when they met me with their original family. Our temporal concept of tourism meetings, memory influences mediation that occurs throughout the experience phase and starts before, during and after travelling.

The city of Bandung has provided a blend of products and services. Sudanese tourists have developed their own experiences using these tools. A tourist said: "It is important for the success of long-term goals to provide a good tourist experience."

The following model illustrates the communication experience that Sudanese tourists have learned through their trips to Indonesia. This model was designed based on research findings in the field. Essential themes from emerging experiences are physical experience, educational experience, destination environment, and travel experiences. Illustrations of these themes are illustrated as the material below.

Figure 1. Model of tourist's communication experiences



We see from the picture above that the tourist communication experience, in general, can be divided into two, real experience, and educational experience, in a simplified way.

We see that there are ongoing relationships between elements that show a correlation between the results we have achieved in the above model, where we find that tourists go from one place to another, so we find new activities and see new places (Martínez, Galván, & Lafuente, 2014; Štefko, Kiráľová, & Mudrík, 2015).

Also, through his presence in the new environment must communicate with the people around him, and there is a cultural exchange between him and others, and learn new things from them. Shopping in Bandung and negotiating are also obstacles highlighted by respondents, in addition to heavy traffic, crowded public transportation and angry taxi drivers. Many participants suggested uninhibited meetings as incomplete; sometimes, visitors try to find new things in their destination.

## **CONCLUSION**

The communication experience of Sudanese tourists, the results show that there is good interaction between locals and tourists. Tourists are fascinated by the personalities of citizens in Bandung because they are open-minded and sensitive to each other and enjoy the culture of visitors, which is a good reflection of the happiness of tourists during their trips to Bandung. However, specific weak points need to be improved: Because most people do not speak English and visitors find it difficult to communicate with them, tourist destinations also lack some essential services and facilities.

Many Sudanese tourists with high accessibility identify tourist destinations in Bandung on average where leading tourist destinations in tourist destinations easily reach right road conditions, bar noise, and excellent transportation, housing, complete and simple guided routes.

So it is hoped that Bandung tourism stakeholders can pay more attention to the indicators. For example, by improving the quality of services such as hospitality to visitors, the provision of clean and comfortable toilets and mosques. Also, the physical and social environment must be maintained. The behaviour of the local community is also very influential so that it can be directed to the community about the importance of tourism and how to behave towards tourists, marked Bandung from others with a positive image because the culture and behaviour of the citizens are still better than other destinations in Indonesia, they must make a perfect documentary about Bandung's goals and Sundanese culture so that visitors get a deep impression and want to return.

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