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**“I Then Called My Father Straight Away to Ask”:
Educational School Trips and Cultural Identity**

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Abstract

The authenticity and promotion of cultural immersion developed in cultural places has been seen to provide meaningful experiences and, at the same time, present unique aspects of cultural identity to student visitors. Conducting research in the Cultural Museum of Cenderawasih University and Abar village in Papua, Indonesia, this paper highlights how native Papuan students make meaning within a cultural context and identify their own identities based on an educational school trip. Moreover, the paper underlines students' responses on cultural issues and threats resulted from their reflective experience.

Keywords: School trips, Papuan, cultural identity, Indonesian

Introduction

The positive outcomes of students' trips have been examined for decades, although it should be admitted that the academic focus has mostly been geared towards students in a higher level (university or college) traveling abroad, which involves trips longer than one-day trip (See Cater, Low, and Keirle 2018; Ishii, Gilbride and Stensrud 2009; Purdie, Neill, and Richards 2002). However, studies on students' short-term domestic travel in lower levels, such as the secondary, and its impact, seem to be mostly forgotten, particularly in exploring the experiences of native student participants. This paper is aimed at exploring how native Papuan students at the secondary level construct meaning of their cultural identities through a one-day cultural-based trip to two cultural venues. This paper will also examine how they respond to the trips and will link this to cultural issues faced by current Papuan culture.

It is important to note as Sobel (2009, 230) highlighted “anthropological analysis of cultural identity regarding cultural nationalism and transnational identity studies are beginning to look at tourism and travel as grounds for academic inquiries.” This can be adopted in the sense of native students' collective socio-cultural experience with Papuan cultural identities, based on their own perspectives.

Travel and Cultural Identity and Place Attachment

Culture shapes and contributes to the overall development of citizenship, by strengthening awareness of an individual cultural uniqueness and encourages people creatively to use it for further development. Meanwhile, traveling is claimed to be able to help to connect and affect individual perceptions and to shape one's identity through experiences of places and other

people. Hibbert, Dickinson, and Curtin (2013) argued that traveling could be effective to enhance emotional and physical connectedness on a person's identity. In this regard, the cultural attributes of cultural places are often described as enriching visitors' interpretation of identity.

Previously, there has been general concern about tourism / travel and cultural identity as discussed in published literature. Ragheb and Beard (1982) noted in their leisure motivation scale that despite intellectual competence, the mastery of skills and abilities and seeking solitude were important enough to motivate a person; the social element cannot be neglected in terms of identity and belonging. According to Hou, Lin, and Morais (2005) and Prentice (1993), attachment to one particular destination, such as cultural tourism destination, can be useful to understand someone's cultural identity or self-image. In addition, previous literature has clearly indicated that cultural venues offer outstanding elements such as learning awareness, understanding cultures, and cultural identity (Bachleitner and Zins 1999; Yan and Bramwell 2008). Low (1992) suggested that a place may have meaning for cultural values if individuals obtain direct experience with the place in search of their origin and genealogical roots.

Studies of cultural identity related to trips have been explored more specifically at sites which can provide a particular connection for visitors and the place. As Besculides, Lee, and McCormick (2002) and Esman (1984) indicated, aspects of the unique attributes in cultural practices such as family bonding, community pride and ethnic identity can lead to increased pride and cultural identity. Low and Irwin (1992) argued that this is caused by place attachment which includes cognitive and emotional linkage to that place. The term 'place identity' is referred to if it provides an individual's strong emotional attachment to particular places or settings (Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff 1983) and if the affective bond or link is embedded between visitors and the place associated with elements of attraction, the visits' frequency and familiarity with the sites (Hidalgo and Hernández 2001). Meanwhile, in their paper, Griffin (2004) and Leinhardt, Crowley, and Knutson (2003) underlined that students, who represent this generation, indicated through school trips the ways through which they enfold and interpret their museum experience via sociocultural perspectives into their personal life and identity.

Research Context and Venues

This research took place in Jayapura, the capital city of Papua, which is located in the Eastern part of Indonesia. Papuan. The indigenous people of Papua are known for their various ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Griapon and Ma'rif (2016) pointed out that there are approximately 248 tribes recorded inhabiting the island and in general they are divided into two main groups: coastal tribes and highland tribes.

Through educational school trips, two cultural venues, the cultural museum of Cenderawasih University and Abar cultural village were selected to be the cultural places based on available conditions (i.e. safety, facilities, educational guides and cultural and historical values) and the appropriateness with respect to secondary school curriculum, in particular the lesson of art and culture and local content. Extra consideration was taken due to the role that both venues play in conserving and preserving indigenous culture and maintaining authenticity through the cultural collections, and local knowledge and practice (Madusise 2015; Mearns 2006; UNESCO-ICOM 2012).

The cultural museum of Cenderawasih University was the first venue used in this research with 2,500 cultural objects listed in the museum collection list. With its function to preserve

the cultures and educate visitors, this museum is known by many schools in Jayapura to be the place for offering lesson related to Papuan, namely art and culture and local content. Abar village, located on the outskirts of Sentani, is one of the main potential tourist attractions in Papua. Behabol, Darsono, and Respati (2017) indicated that the village plays a significant role in increasing local economy, due to the localities for crafts and Papuan cultures. Making traditional pottery, “Sempe,” is a favourite activity for visitors. The making process is interesting due to its unique traditional technique and tools and cultural values and meaning including myths embedded in the pottery (Maryone 2017).

Participants

Two schools, SMAN 1 Jayapura and SMAN 3 Jayapura, agreed to participate and send their students on the school trip. The total participants were 50 students (mixed Papuan and non-Papuan) coming from first-year students in secondary level and aged between 15–17. Due to the aim of the study to focus on native students’ experiences, the purposive sampling was then applied to fit the criteria of the study (Willig 2013). As a result, non-Papuan students were excluded, and the number of participants were 26 Papuan students. At a final stage for data collection, 19 students agreed to participate in the interview.



Picture 1: Student participants in the cultural venues

Methodology

Two forms of data collection were employed; in-depth interviews and observations during the educational trips. Interviews were conducted among other familiar strategies for collecting qualitative data, by reconstructing the knowledge of the participants, and are useful

for collecting information in complex situations (Denzin and Lincoln 2008; Mason 2002). Observations were conducted during school educational trips in their natural loci where the phenomenon was being studied. Observations helped to capture the physical contexts of Papuan students' expressions and kinaesthetic experience (Carl Cater and Cloke 2007) as well as supporting elements to make sense of the other data collected (Kawulich 2005; Taylor-Powell and Steele 1996). A constructivist grounded theory approach was employed to analyse the data. As (Ghezalje and Emami 2009) points out, this approach to analyse the data is based on the shared experience of participants, the researcher and data sources. Grounded theory principles rely on building categories based on reducing raw data into concepts which are coded and interpreted using a constant comparative approach (Strauss and Corbin 2014). In addition, the coding process is assisted by using NVivo (V.11) qualitative software. Direct quotes were used in the current report as a means to describe participants' own words and to strengthen the researcher's claims. Riley (1995, 636) suggested that it allows 'the respondents to impart their own reality, cataloguing the socially constructed knowledge of informants rather than the hypothesizing of the investigator'.

Results

As a result of in-depth analysis of grounded theory, three main categories emerged that lead to the main theme "bridging students' cultural identity." These can be illustrated as follows:



Picture 2: Categories and main theme

Recognizing Identity

Encountering and reflecting on the Papuan culture, students indicated that the cultural relationship and attributes brought by both venues can help them to recognize their cultural roots as Papuan. Moreover, it seemed that the trips successfully strengthened feeling part of the Papuan culture through interaction and connection with the place. This can be described in one

comment derived from interview:

in the museum I think...I am a Papuan, but I don't have good knowledge about Papua. So, it made me to have something like (understanding) Papuan cultures through the collections and learn its (cultural) values

(Male Papuan student, SMAN3)

Understanding cultural context

This category represents how both venues served to provide more information to clarify students' understanding of their own cultural identity in the Papuan context. This can be explained better due to contextual learning elements provided, such as touching museum collections or playing with clay while making crafts Sempe with villagers, and possibly the attractive presentation of tour guides at the venues. Moreover, it can be suggested that place attachment in the venues contributed to shape students' perspective in understanding the Papuan context. One student commented in the interview:

Topic about museum collections is interesting. The way the guide explained it really attracted me. Folktales of tribes in Serui and Manokwari and some myths, meanings and functions of their hunting tools. I have no ideas about that before

(Male Papuan student, SMAN3)

Reflecting on Cultural Trips

The concerns of cultural issues were captured, indicating that Papuan students went through a meaningful process of reflection regarding belongingness and identity and the concept of preservation and conservation.

Perhaps the valuable experience I have got is about preserving my culture; the Papuan culture

(Male Papuan Student, SMAN1)

Furthermore, the friends of this informant indicated appreciation to Abar villagers who work hard to preserve their traditional crafts and underlined the threat that possibly come on the traditional crafts.

Perhaps the way they preserve their culture and custom. I mean, it is a rare thing to find that local arts and culture nowadays still exists. I think if younger generations refuse to conserve it, I am afraid Sempe will be lost

(Female Papuan Student, SMAN1)

Discussion and Conclusion

One conclusion that can be drawn from the study is place attachment in the Papuan context with all the combined cultural elements, cultural objects and people with the same cultural attributes can play a significant role in strengthening and shaping identity process and at the

same time contribute to maintain cultural identity. In this study, these student participants acquired more understanding of cultural knowledge by reflecting on their own cultures within the venues and interpreted cultural place attachment as a “cultural bridge“ for their cultural identity. Cater and Poguntke (2018) underlined that searching for identity is acquired through many ways such as learning the history, visiting the place and meeting people related to their identity in the place. Emerging categories recognizing identity, understanding cultural context and reflecting the trips, indicated that these aspects were recognized due to certain contexts resulted from the unique cultural attributes, physical properties and cultural authenticity within the venues combined with cultural learning activities. Cross (2001) claims that a concept to explain the bond that a person has with one place can be drawn from the relationship to the place and the types of bond the person has with that place, which can be in the form of social activities.

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