

Enhancing “Bandros” City Tour Experience Through Digital Media Based on Tour Guide and Gen Z Tourist Perspectives: A Preliminary Study

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Abstract. The tourism sector is a major contributor to Regional Original Income (PAD), with the Bandung Tour on Bus (Bandros) services playing a key role in Bandung. This study aims to explore the challenges faced by both tour guides and tourists during Bandros city tours and provide potential recommendations for enhancing the tourist experience. This study employed semi-structured interviews with tour guides and tourists, as well as distributing questionnaires to the tourists. The results showed that the main constraints of tour guides' perspectives were intercultural communication constraints related to customizing content based on tourists' diverse backgrounds and distracting environments. In addition, tourists highlighted constraints, such as ineffective communication, monotonous content, uninteresting delivery, the need for longer routes, and an unconducive environment. To increase engagement, tourists suggested integrating interactive media with a gamification system to bridge the communication engagement between tour guides and tourists, which could enrich the Bandros tour experience.

Keywords: Bandros, Gen Z, City tour experience, Interactive digital media.

1 Introduction

Bandung is a highly sought-after tourism attraction in West Java. The city of Bandung is a magnet for tourists due to its distinctive ecosystem and various attractions, including historical landmarks, cultural heritage, and local cuisine [1]. Visitors can expect to have unique and enjoyable experiences due to the pleasant natural conditions, well-maintained urban design, and sufficient infrastructure. According to Bandung's official Open Data statistics in 2022, the tourism industry contributed approximately 700 billion IDR to Bandung's Original Local Government Revenue (PAD). This represents approximately 34 percent of the total revenue, amounting to 2.1 trillion IDR [2].

Bandros is one of Bandung's most popular tourist attractions. Bandung City Government developed Bandros as an innovation to meet the World Tourism City Index from the perspective of city tours, following UNESCO's designation of Bandung as a World Tourism City on September 25, 2013 [3]. A tour guide balances Bandros, a tourist bus, with educational information about the city of Bandung [4]. It includes a skilled tour guide who delivers in-depth explanations about the city's history, culture, and fascinating facts about the visited sites [5]. A tour guide's responsibility in defining the tourist experience and meeting guest expectations requires strong communication skills. A tourist guide is essential in providing

access, engagement, comprehension, and empathy. They also serve as liaisons, mediators, educators, translators, communicators, and advocates for conservation and sustainability. The goal of this function is to increase tourists' satisfaction and engagement during guided trips [6]. Because tourist satisfaction plays a crucial role in shaping destination loyalty and post-visit intentions. Studies have shown that satisfied tourists are more likely to increase tourism loyalty to a destination [7] and influence the country's image [8]. Giving positive recommendations to potential visitors, either via word of mouth or online, is one of the post-visit behaviors.

Positive recommendations can significantly influence tourists' trust in a destination, making them more likely to visit places endorsed by others [9-10]. Reviews offer essential insights into the uniqueness, appeal, accommodations, and tour packages available, helping potential travelers understand destinations from other tourists' perspectives. Additionally, positive reviews provide valuable feedback for tourism operators to improve their services and accommodations [11]. The authors propose that enhancing Bandros's appeal through digital media is essential to attract Gen Z tourists. This assumption is based on three key factors. First, a study has shown that most Bandung tourists are Gen Z, aged 17-28 [12]. Second, as digital natives, Gen Z engages heavily with social media, making it a vital tool for promoting Bandros [13]. Third, the growing impact of digital disruption across various sectors, including tourism, underscores the importance of leveraging digital strategies to maintain Bandros's popularity.

Setyawan et al. (2024) have widely utilized digital media in the tourism sector, as evidenced in their travel guidebook on the Karimun Jawa archipelago [14]. This guidebook provides easily accessible and understandable tourist information, enabling potential visitors to gain an overview of the attractions they will be visiting. In addition, the use of digital media in tourism can serve as a marketing tool that helps attract more tourists [15]. Not only that, the use of digital media also functions to provide a comprehensive approach to engage potential customers and turn them into loyal customers [16]. Research on the challenges faced during the Bandros bus tours remains limited. A study found that many tourists still do not grasp the history of Bandung even after taking the tour through Bandros [12]. Study [3] explored how tour guides present urban legends during the ride, while [17] studied the bus's impact on Bandung's tourism appeal. These studies highlight the need to identify areas of tourist dissatisfaction, which can inform improvements to Bandros services, such as more engaging activities and better facilities [18]. Based on that background, the authors formulate the research question as follows: (1) What are the difficulties and challenges faced by tour guides and tourists during the Bandros?, (2) How can the research recommendation for implementing digital media help address the challenges faced by tour guides and tourists during the Bandros?

This study aims to develop a comprehensive digital media design to enhance the Bandros city tour experience, which requires an in-depth research process. The authors must begin with a preliminary study to identify critical issues, review relevant literature, and analyze data from field observations, interviews, and questionnaires. The authors then synthesize these findings into design recommendations for Bandros. The objectives are to understand the difficulties and challenges faced by tour guides and tourists during the Bandros city tour and formulate actionable recommendations that will guide the creation of digital media solutions to address them.

2 Related works

2.1 Tour guide's role in tourism

Tour guides play a key role in shaping service quality, the destination's image, and relationships with tourists [19]. According to study from Weiler, tour guides are essential in enhancing the tourist experience. Weiler stated that first, guides provide physical access to locations such as heritage sites and cultural spaces, ensuring proper timing and interpretation [6]. Second, they act as mediators, fostering communication between tourists and local communities. Third, they serve as intermediaries, using site information to aid understanding and often utilizing multilingual skills to bridge language barriers. Fourth, they help evoke emotional connections by engaging tourists in reflective activities that combine sensations, emotions, and memories with both new and old information. This study seeks to explore the tour-guiding process on the Bandros and identify the challenges faced by guides during their duties.



Fig. 1. Bandung Tour in Bus (Bandros) (Source : www.bandung.go.id)

2.2 Tour guide's role in tourism

Generation Z refers to individuals born between 1997 and 2022 [20]. This generation has the characteristics of digital natives, meaning they are highly skilled, competent, and understand technology very well [21]. They are easily influenced by social media's presence and engagement, but Gen Z is not hesitant to use digital technology and feels comfortable doing so. Despite being on a sightseeing trip, Gen Z continues to use digital technology [22]. Research has linked internet usage to deficiencies in executive functions, including memory performance, attention, and inhibitory control [23]. This study aims to investigate Generation Z's experiences when traveling on the Bandros bus around Bandung. According to Druin in [24], involving teenagers (including Generation Z) in the processes of design, evaluation, and co-designing something allows them to provide various perspectives.

3 Methodology

This study employed an embedded mixed-methods design, combining qualitative and quantitative approach. The qualitative approach involved semi-structured interviews with two tour guides (initials M and S, with eight and three years of experience, respectively) and two Gen Z tourists (initialed W and G), each has used the Bandros bus tour service three times. These interviews delved into participants' experiences, challenges, and expectations [25]. For the quantitative approach, a questionnaire instrument adapted from the well-established Tourist Experience Framework was distributed through purposive sampling to 29 Bandros tourists. The questionnaire was tailored to the specific context of the Bandros bus to gather data on tourist' experiences, constraints, and expectations.

To protect their privacy, authors ensured that all informant data was kept confidential. The interview with the Bandros tour guides took place at the usual tour starting point in Bandung's city square on March 27, 2024, from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM, lasting 90 minutes. We conducted a second interview with the two Bandros passengers on May 25, 2024. These interviews focused on the challenges faced by both tour guides and tourists during the tour, as well as their thoughts on potential solutions. We used an audio recorder to capture the interviews, ensuring accurate transcripts and preventing errors associated with solely relying on notes [26]. We transcribed the interview audio verbatim and then categorized the content based on recurring themes. After grouping the results by topic, we summarized them, aligning the findings with the research questions and objectives [27].

4 Results and Discussions

This section presents the interview results from the perspectives of both tour guides and tourists who have taken the Bandros bus tour. The tour guides, initials as M and S, are responsible for informing tourists about the history of Bandung, providing details that many passengers were previously unaware of. Additionally, they play a key role in enhancing the overall tourist experience throughout the journey.

Interviews with Bandros tourists revealed that, while the ride is enjoyable, there are areas for improvement—particularly in the tour guide's delivery, which some found unengaging and at times boring. Tour guides try to address this issue by using humour, but surveys and interviews with Gen Z tourists highlighted several concerns. These tourists expressed dissatisfaction with the tour guide's explanations, finding them less engaging even with added jokes. Additionally, highway noise made it difficult for them to focus on the lengthy explanations. While descriptive data from the survey results of generation Z respondents can be seen from the following table data (Tab.1 and Fig.2). Based on those data, some respondents are outside the age of Generation Z. Thus, the respondents data that meet the age criteria of Generation Z are 26 respondents.

Table 1. Respondents Data Based on Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	14	53.85%
Female	12	46,15%

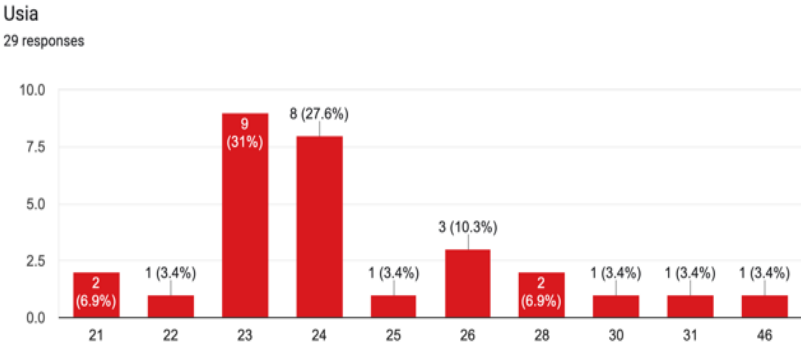


Fig.2. Age of Respoondents

4.1 Challenges and Obstacles Faced by Tour Guide and Tourist

According to informants M and S, tour guides face challenges due to the diverse backgrounds of tourists, both domestic and international. As a result, they must adapt the content and language to suit the needs of their passengers (tourist). The potential for traffic congestion is one of the main issues with the Bandros bus services. M noted that passengers often become bored during traffic jams or stopped at traffic lights. S added that tour guides need to take special measures to keep passengers engaged during these delays. However, efforts to convey information are not necessarily constrained by external environmental conditions. Challenges also arise from tourists who feel sleepy, are busy with gadgets, or sleep.

The tourists' curiosity about the bus's unique and colourful design motivated W and G to ride the Bandros. They also saw it as an opportunity to tour Bandung with friends or family. However, they faced challenges like those mentioned earlier. Passengers often felt drowsy in noisy environments, and the monotonous, unengaging programs made the experience tedious and tiring. Additionally, as the tour progressed into the afternoon, the tour guide seemed fatigued and less enthusiastic about explaining Bandung's historical details. Based on survey, the respondents' constraints included 19 out of 26 disliked the frequent traffic jams when riding Bandros, and 10 out of 26 felt uncomfortable due to the noisy environment. This is because Bandung is a tourist city, so there are many vehicles from within and outside the city, especially on weekends. Others mentioned the lack of exciting material delivery, leakage when it rained, the need for a longer route, and the less conducive atmosphere on the bus.

4.2 Solution Strategies to Enhance The Tourist Experience

The tourism sector must prioritize enhancing the tourist experience. Informant W suggests that tourists need additional features to capture their attention. In response to the challenges faced by Bandros, informant G believes that a mediator between the tour guide and tourists could increase interaction, such as incorporating interactive games during traffic or at red lights. Integrating game elements tied to specific locations can achieve this. Changing the Bandros bus routes and destinations periodically, such as every month, could also encourage repeat use. The Bandung City Government's official website currently lists six Bandros routes: the blue route (Alun-alun to Buahbatu), the yellow route (Gasibu to Braga), the purple route (China Town to Alun-alun), the pink route (Gasibu to Taman Budaya), and the black route, reserved for VIP guests visiting the city.

4.3 Discussion

Bandros tour guides serve as intermediaries of understanding, conveying information about Bandung's history to tourists [6]. Bandung is known for its strategic location, cool

climate, and historical buildings from the Dutch colonial era [1]. This study highlights challenges like previous research on communication barriers, unfavorable environments, and the influence of technology. Cultural differences pose unique challenges for tour guides as Bandung attracts tourists from diverse domestic and international regions. Guides must possess intercultural communication skills, such as cultural adaptability, effective self-presentation, and the ability to positively engage tourists [28].

The findings align with the study [19], who emphasize that Bandros tour guides not only provide information but also focus on service promises, emotional care, and building relationships with tourists. A study discovered that the unique, colorful design of the Bandros bus attracts tourists [22]. However, poor communication from guides or an unfavourable environment on the bus can negatively impact the tourist experience [29].

Generation Z as a digital native heavily relies on technology, using mobile devices and social media to seek and share information during their travels [29]. This creates a potential distraction, splitting tourists' attention between the guide and their gadgets. However, it also presents an opportunity. Gen Z's connection to digital technology highlights the potential for using it to enhance the tourist experience. For instance, a study [14] has successfully integrated digital media in the tourism sector, providing easily accessible, interactive information, as seen in their travel guidebook for the Karimun Jawa archipelago.

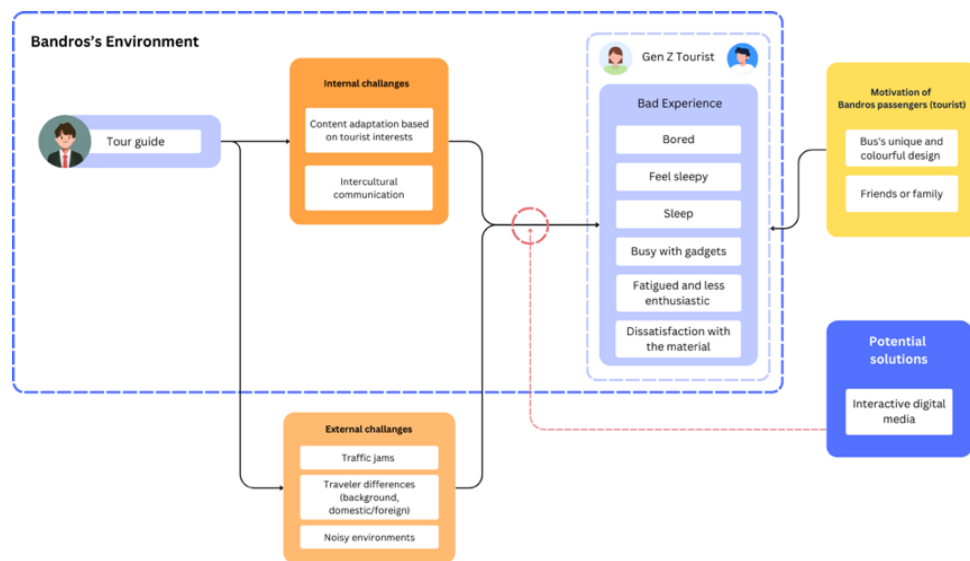


Fig. 3. Chart of constraints and their impact on the tourist experience on Bandros.
(Source: Authors documentation)

According to informant G, incorporating a gamification system into the Bandros experience could improve engagement. This idea aligns with [24], a study on museum tours, which found that gamification, such as treasure hunts and challenges, helps maintain the interest of teenage visitors. Gamification can positively affect focus and engagement, making information delivery more interactive, especially for Gen Z, who prefer unique and interactive media content [30]. Incorporating digital media into the Bandros tour can assist guides in

delivering more engaging and interactive information about Bandung. Interactive media provides not only auditory but also visual and hands-on experiences, enabling tourists to gain a deeper understanding of the city [31].

5 Conclusion

This preliminary study shows that both tour guides and tourists experience constraints. Tour guides experienced constraints such as material adaptation and communication intercultural problems. Meanwhile, tourists felt that the monotonous content, unsupportive environment, and distractions from mobile devices could potentially reduce the quality of the Bandros Bus experience. To address these issues to improve the tourist experience, the preliminary study recommended integrating interactive media, including gamification systems, to encourage more engaging interactions between tourists and tour guides. The study also suggests periodic route changes to reduce boredom. The study's limitations include a small sample size, which does not fully represent tourists from diverse backgrounds or the Generation Z demographic.

Future research should employ broader sampling techniques to ensure greater representativeness. Additionally, this study focuses only on Generation Z; future studies should explore other generational groups to better understand the factors contributing to tourist dissatisfaction on Bandros tours.

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