

The perceived destination image of Indonesia: an assessment on travel blogs written by the industry's top markets

By

Bernadeth Petriana

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Abstract

The tourist gaze theory suggests that tourists are taught by the destination marketing organisation to know how, when, and where to look. However, the birth of travel blogs has challenged this image as they offer the public “unfiltered” information. Travel bloggers have become more powerful in influencing the decision making of potential tourists. This study employs textual and photographic content analysis to investigate the destination image of Indonesia held by the industry’s key markets; Singapore and Australia. 106 blog entries and over 1,500 pictures were content analysed, and the results suggest that overall tourists tended to have positive images of Indonesia. International tourists are still very much concentrated in the traditionally popular places such as Bali and Jakarta. Negative images of Indonesia include inadequate infrastructure, ineffective wildlife protection, and westernisation of Bali. Natural and cultural resources are proven in this thesis to be Indonesia’s top tourism products. Influenced by their cultural backgrounds, Singaporean and Australian bloggers have demonstrated a dissimilar tourist gaze. The current study also analysed the bloggers’ image of Indonesia as opposed to the image projected by the government through the national tourism brand “Wonderful Indonesia”. The results indicate a narrow gap between the two images. Implications for Indonesian tourism practitioners include stronger law enforcement to preserve local culture and natural attractions, and recognising the market’s preference to promote other destinations. Recommendations for future research are discussed.

Keywords

Travel blogs, destination image, tourist gaze, destination branding, image formation, Indonesia, Wonderful Indonesia

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	8
1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT	10
1.2 THESIS STRUCTURE	11
Chapter 2: Literature Review	13
2.1 INTRODUCTION	13
2.2 TOURIST GAZE THEORY.....	13
2.3 IMAGE FORMATION AGENT.....	15
2.4 TRAVEL BLOGS	18
2.4.1 E-WOM PLATFORM.....	18
2.4.2 THE ROLE OF NARRATIVES	20
2.4.3 TRUTHFULNESS AND CULTURAL GAZE.....	21
2.4.4 THE ROLE OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN WEB 2.0.....	22
2.5 THE EVALUATION OF DESTINATION IMAGE STUDIES	23
2.6 INDONESIA.....	28
2.6.1 INDONESIA IN GENERAL	28
2.6.2 WONDERFUL INDONESIA.....	29
2.6.3 THE POLITICS BEHIND WONDERFUL INDONESIA.....	31
2.6.4 INDONESIA IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD.....	34
2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	36
Chapter 3: Methodology	39
3.1 INTRODUCTION	39
3.2. RESEARCH METHOD.....	39
3.2.1 PARADIGM.....	39
3.2.2 CONTENT ANALYSIS AND CAQDAS.....	42
3.3 SELECTION CRITERIA.....	44
3.4 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK	47
3.4.1 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS	48
3.4.2 IMAGE ANALYSIS.....	49
3.4.3 COMPARISONS WITH THE PROJECTED IMAGE.....	50
3.5 DATA COLLECTION	51
3.6 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE METHOD	51

Chapter 4: The Words and Images Used to Describe Indonesia	53
4.1 BLOGGERS' PROFILES	53
4.2 DESTINATIONS BLOGGED.....	55
4.2.1 SINGAPOREAN TRAVEL BLOGGERS	55
4.2.2 AUSTRALIAN TRAVEL BLOGGERS.....	56
4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: WHAT ARE THE WORDS USED BY THE TRAVEL BLOGGERS IN DESCRIBING INDONESIA?	57
4.3.1 URBAN AND TOURIST SITES.....	58
4.3.2 NATURAL ATTRACTIONS, TOURISTS' ENTERTAINMENT AND ACTIVITIES	62
4.3.3 CULTURE AND PEOPLE	65
4.3.4 FOOD AND BEVERAGE	66
4.3.5 ACCOMMODATION, PRICE AND QUALITY	68
4.3.6 INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORTATION, ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY ISSUES	70
4.4 IMAGES USED TO DESCRIBE INDONESIA	72
Chapter 5: The Negative, Positive and Neutral Tourism Attributes of Indonesia ...	78
5.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE, POSITIVE AND NEUTRAL TOURISM ATTRIBUTES OF INDONESIA AS INDICATED IN THE BLOGS?	78
5.1.1 DESTINATIONS AND ATTRACTIONS.....	80
5.1.2 THE CULTURE, HISTORY AND ART	83
5.1.3 THE LOCAL PEOPLE	85
5.1.4 FOOD AND BEVERAGE	87
5.1.5 ACCOMMODATION	88
5.1.6 ENTERTAINMENT AND ACTIVITIES	89
5.1.7 PRICE AND QUALITY.....	90
5.1.8 INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT.....	92
Chapter 6: The Bloggers' Constructed Gaze vs Wonderful Indonesia	95
6.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 3: HOW IS THE CONSTRUCTED GAZE OF INDONESIAN TOURISM PORTRAYED DIFFERENTLY BY THE BLOGGERS FROM SINGAPORE AND AUSTRALIA?	96
6.1.1 INDONESIA IN THE EYES OF SINGAPOREAN TRAVEL BLOGGERS.....	96
6.1.2 INDONESIA IN THE EYES OF AUSTRALIAN TRAVEL BLOGGERS.....	102
6.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 4: HOW DOES THE TRAVEL BLOGGERS' GAZE DIFFER FROM THE GAZE OF WONDERFUL INDONESIA?	106
6.3 SPONSORED VS UNSPONSORED BLOGS	113
6.4 DOES WONDERFUL INDONESIA REPRESENT THE REAL INDONESIA?	115

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Implications	117
7.1 CONCLUSIONS	117
7.2 IMPLICATIONS	119
7.2.1 ACADEMIC IMPLICATIONS	119
7.2.1 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS	121
7.3 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	122
7.4 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS.....	123
References.....	125

List of Illustrations

Tables

Table 2.5 A taxonomy review of destination image studies	23
Table 3.2.1 Similarities between research problems' characteristics and post-positivism.....	40
Table 3.3 Judging criteria for Singapore and Australia travel blogs.....	45
Table 4.1 Profile of the bloggers.....	54
Table 4.3 Words used to describe Indonesia	57
Table 4.4 Frequency of photographs in travel blogs by category	73
Table 5.1 The positive, neutral and negative tourism attributes of Indonesia	79
Table 6.2 Wonderful Indonesia vs Travel Bloggers.....	106

Figures

Figure 2.7 The research conceptual framework.....	36
Figure 3.4 The analytical framework	47
Figure 4.2.1 Indonesia destinations visited by the Singaporean travel bloggers.....	55
Figure 4.2.2 Indonesia destinations visited by the Australian travel bloggers.....	56
Figure 4.4 The traffic in Jakarta and Bali	76

Chapter 1: Introduction

According to the Tourist Gaze's theory (Urry & Larsen, 2011), people are motivated to travel and visit certain places in order to seek 'authenticity' and experience the 'real lives' of others. MacCannell (1973, as cited in Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 10) states that it is not acceptable to intrude into people's "real lives"; therefore "the people being observed and local tourist entrepreneurs gradually come to construct backstage in a contrived and artificial manner"; this is called 'staged authenticity'. Tourists are taught to know how, when and where to 'gaze' through a variety of media channels. The places tourists gaze upon are, in fact, socially constructed and vary by society. However, as the competition between destinations rises, tourists are overwhelmed by the options of holiday destinations, making it difficult for them to make a decision. This paradox of choice is driven by the rapid growth of the Internet and social media, which resulted in information overload, provoking fears of not being able to choose optimally (Schwartz, 2006). In an attempt to find more authentic and credible source of information, tourists turn to blogs and online reviews.

The birth of Web 2.0 and its User Generated Content (UGC) has allowed tourists to actively share their opinions, experiences and feelings online, leading to a word-of-mouth revolution (Camprubi, Guia, & Comas, 2013). Tourists make use of UGC and upload multimedia content to sharing sites, such as YouTube, Instagram, and Flickr, which have a real life approach, and without any or only a minimum amount of manipulation (Munar, 2011), causing consumers to trust their peers better than marketing messages (Buhalis & Law, 2008). A Nielsen Global Trust advertising survey of over 30,000 online respondents from 60 countries showed that two-thirds of the consumers trust opinions posted online (Nielsen, 2015).

The largest forms of UGC are travel blogs and online travel reviews (Standing, Tang-Taye, & Boyer, 2014). Unlike mass media and tourism organisations, bloggers share knowledge (Buhalis & Law, 2008), emotions and experiential moments (Jacobsen &

Munar, 2012); causing them to be seen as opinion leaders (Pan, MacLaurin, & Crotts, 2007), as they offer the public unfiltered, real information (Kline & Burstein, 2005).

One of the reasons why blogs become prominent is their narrative and storytelling elements. Information in blogs is substantially different from information in promotional tools manufactured by companies and destinations, as it features commentaries, observations, positive and negative attributes of products and services, moods and feelings (Volo, 2010). In this way, blogs influence the two components of destination image—cognitive and affective. Bloggers, through their “unbiased” stories and “unfiltered” photographs, challenge the prevailing image set by the destination management organisations and so become a new image formation agent.

Nevertheless, one also must consider the “truth” presented by the bloggers. Are they truth or false truth? What is truth? According to the correspondence theory of truth, a proposition is considered as true if and only if it corresponds to a fact (David, 2004). However, bloggers are influenced by their personal belief system, perceptions and cultural backgrounds (Munar, 2011). This cultural filter colours the writings and the photographs taken and posted by the bloggers. One could argue that blogs might not have much value as truth-generators, but on the other hand, they become one of the most reliable source of information to really understand specific markets.

Indonesia, as a part of the Asia-Pacific region has seen the fastest grow in tourism over the past two years (UNWTO in Schonhardt, 2013). However, other than facing competition from neighbouring countries that offer similar tourism products, Indonesia has also been associated with poor infrastructure and safety issues. On top of that, despite being the largest archipelago in the world, many destinations in Indonesia—other than Bali—have not received the same level of awareness. In order to boost the national tourism industry, the government launched a new promotional campaign called ‘Wonderful Indonesia.’ The five most prominent image attributes desired to be conveyed through this campaign are: (1) beautiful nature; (2) unique culture; (3) varied food; (4) hospitable people and (5) value for money. Through this

constructed gaze, the government promises the tourists that Indonesia is ‘the world of wonders’ worth exploring.

Recognising the importance of specified marketing strategy for each target market, and social media as a promotional tool, journalists, bloggers, and internationally well-known celebrities are invited to Indonesia, with the expectation that they will share their stories post-visit with the international community (Wulandari, 2014). Thus, it brings us to the overarching research question “What is the gaze constructed by bloggers of Indonesia?”

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The ideal situation for Indonesia is when the writings in the blogs match with the projected images. However, there has not been any study about what bloggers say about Indonesian tourism. Previous researchers have chosen to analyse specific destinations, such as Bali (Utama & Komalawati, 2015), Bandung (Pratminingsih, Rudatin, & Rimenta, 2014), Lombok (Sunarti & Hartini, 2015), Weh Island (Kim & Park, 2014), and Yogya (Tafiprios, Kartini, Hilmiana, & Sari, 2016). The aforementioned studies use both domestic and international tourists as data samples. The results show that Indonesia is perceived as a country with magnificent natural resources, diverse and tasteful food, sincere and welcoming people, and a rich culture, history, and art. On the downside, it is also often linked with past terrorism attack, undeveloped infrastructure, environmental problems, traffic congestion, and inflexible visa rules. Moreover, in Bali, concern has been rising about the development of tourism facilities making Bali too westernised, while the Balinese architecture is appealing to foreign travellers (Utama & Komalawati, 2015). This gap demonstrates the need to understand what tourists truly think about Indonesia. Considering the power of bloggers as influential image formation agents, and the fact that the government is now focusing on the international markets (Schonhardt, 2013; World Economic Forum, 2016), this research paper will concentrate on the gaze constructed by international travel bloggers who have been to Indonesia.

Furthermore, influenced by their own cultures and “truth”, the bloggers from each market may have different foci on their travel journeys. By understanding these various perspectives, the Indonesian government could focus on building an effective branding and marketing strategies for each target market in order to gain a competitive advantage in this current vista of extensive choices of tourist destinations.

Based on the abovementioned issue, the sub research questions for this research are:

1. What are the words and images used by the travel bloggers in describing Indonesia?
2. What are the negative, positive, and neutral tourism attributes of Indonesia as indicated in the blogs?
3. How is the constructed gaze of Indonesian tourism portrayed differently by the bloggers from Singapore and Australia?
4. How does the travel bloggers’ gaze differ from the gaze of Wonderful Indonesia?

The research questions collectively aim to understand the bloggers’ perceptions of Indonesia as a tourist destination, and how it differs with the image projected by the Ministry of Tourism through the national tourism brand Wonderful Indonesia.

1.2 THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter One, the introduction, outlines the literature reviews and identifies the research problem, along with the four questions that will be addressed. The second chapter, Literature Review, explains the current studies related to this research, including the Tourist Gaze theory (Urry & Larsen, 2011), the significant role of travel bloggers in shaping an image of a place, the scope of destination image studies, and the tourism brand of Indonesia, Wonderful Indonesia. It is followed by the conceptual framework that displays the interrelation

between each concept, leading to the research gap, which is the perceived image destination of Indonesia. Chapter Three, Methodology, discusses the textual and visual content analysis of 106 entries written by 16 Singaporean and Australian travel bloggers. It will then proceed to Chapter 4, a discourse on the findings and discussion of the first research question by exploring the words and images used to describe Indonesia. Chapter 5 addresses the second question that examines bloggers' perceptions of Indonesian tourism attributes, and how they influence the overall feelings about Indonesia. Chapter 6 presents the difference between Singaporean and Australians gaze, and how it differs with the image projected by the tourism ministry through Wonderful Indonesia. The final chapter, Chapter 7, includes the conclusions of the study, and the theoretical and practical implications. Recommendations for future research are discussed at the end of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This literature review addresses the three main concepts relevant to this thesis: the travel bloggers, evolution of destination image studies, and tourism in Indonesia. Firstly, it introduces the popular Tourist Gaze theory and how it is related to destination branding. It will then discuss how destination authorities create a tourism brand to project a certain image. The next main concept involves the birth of the Internet, the evolution of word-of-mouth marketing, and how it created travel bloggers. This chapter will also address how and why bloggers gained such important role in reshaping the destination image. Moreover, it will acknowledge that bloggers' "truths" are influenced by their cultural backgrounds. It also addresses the journey and the progress of destination image studies. The last concept of this literature review chapter will focus on Indonesian tourism; the perceptions of Indonesia in general, its tourism industry, and what it wants to achieve through the national tourism campaign, Wonderful Indonesia.

This chapter also features the conceptual framework that links all three concepts and shows the research gap it generates.

2.2 TOURIST GAZE THEORY

According to Urry (2002), the sociologist behind the concept of tourist gaze, people are inspired to travel to certain places to look for visual experiences that are different from their usual environment. Tourists travel to seek 'authenticity' and the 'real lives' of others. However, the places they gaze upon are, in fact, socially constructed. Crick (1988, as cited in Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 11) purposes, "There is a sense in which all cultures are 'staged' and inauthentic. Cultures are invented, remade, and the elements reorganised." This is referred as 'staged authenticity'. Constructed tourist attractions

are built by destination authorities to protect locals from tourist intrusions, to take advantage of existing opportunities and make profitable investments. Tourists learn where, when and how to 'gaze' through media channels such as travel guides, postcards, websites, magazines, and promotional brochures. Their gaze falls upon exactly those features of a place that are already anticipated by the destination management organisation (DMO). Furthermore, tourists do not see these objects or buildings in a literal sense, but as symbols for something else (Urry & Larsen, 2011). For example, a pretty English village represents old English traditions sustained to this day, and lovers in Paris can be read as "timeless, romantic Paris" (Urry, 2002, p. 3).

Hospers (2011) links the concept of tourist gaze to city branding. He notes that the city branders manipulate the gaze of possible visitors by providing an experience that resembles the images used in their branding, although the cities may not have that authentic experience as such. The most unlikely of places invent, reconfigure themselves and develop tourism infrastructure to be able to attract visitors. This commodification of places and the cultural life of the people are effectively represented through images and myths in such a ways that tourists find interesting. It is all captured and reproduced through photographs, film, news, novels, postcards, souvenirs, and travel blogs. Therefore, tourist gaze becomes an ever more perfected marketing effort to maximise the potential of a destination.

The tourist gaze theory emphasises the importance of having urban signs that can be photographed, multiplied and distributed, for example Paris' Eiffel Tower and Copenhagen's The Little Mermaid statue. Tourists do not anticipate surprises, but confirm what they expect to see by taking pictures. The objects gazed upon are the image carriers and are; the reason why some destinations stick better in people's minds than others. Therefore, Hospers (2011) suggests that in order to build a stronger touristic image, destinations should literally start by building an image.

According to Tasci & Kozak (2006), destination image contributes to forming destination brand and to its success in the market. A brand is more than just an image. It is marketers' most powerful tool due to the increased product parity and competition between destinations (Morgan, Pritchard, & Pride, 2002). "A destination brand, with all its meanings and assets, is intended and projected to have a certain image by the destination authorities" (Tasci & Kozak, 2006, p. 313). The brand is the gaze image constructed by the destination marketers. It is what the marketers would wish to see evoked when the target markets are asked "What comes to your mind when you think of this destination?" (Dinnie, 2010).

In Indonesian context, this gaze is represented through the tourism campaign Wonderful Indonesia. The word "Wonderful" refers to the "World of Wonderful". It implies a promise to the world that Indonesia is rich with wonders, both human and natural, that will inspire the heart and the mind of the visitors (Wonderful Indonesia, 2016). This campaign is used to reflect Indonesia's nature, culture, food, people and price competitiveness (Wulandari, 2014). Like any other tourism promotional activities, this branding is marketed and distributed through media channels such as guidebooks and promotional brochures. However, as the use of the Internet increases, this image is now challenged by a new image formation agent.

2.3 IMAGE FORMATION AGENT

Gartner (1994) believes that the image formation process is a continuum of different information sources forming one single image in an individual's mind. These information sources are classified into eight agents:

- a) Overt Induced I – information in the traditional mass media (e.g., magazines and newspaper);
- b) Overt Induced II – information prepared by the relevant institutions at the destination/DMOs (e.g., brochures and guide books from tour operators/wholesalers);

- c) Covert Induced I – using celebrities/recognisable spokespersons in promotional activities
- d) Covert Induced II – “unbiased source” (e.g., travel writers who go on a familiarization tours
- e) Autonomous – mass media broadcasting news (e.g., news reports, documentaries, movies, and articles,
- f) Unsolicited Organic – unrequested information -from friends, relatives and so on based on their knowledge or experience,
- g) Solicited Organic – information requested from knowledgeable sources/word-of-mouth
- h) Organic – information from personal experience or previous visits to the area.

Primary images are formed through the people actually visiting places but the secondary images – pre-visit images in tourists’ minds – are formed by induced, organic, and/or autonomous sources (Phelps, 1982 in Beerli & Martin, 2004). The primary image may be different from the secondary image because an image formed after a visit tends to be more realistic and complex (Gartner & Hunt, 1987, as cited in Beerli & Martin, 2004; Pearce, 1982; Phelps, 1986). However, because of the intangibility of tourism products, secondary images play a key role in tourists’ decision making processes. Before development of the Internet, secondary images were formed through information acquired from the destination marketers – the gaze created by the DMOs.

However, the advent and development of Web 2.0 has created a new agent. “Web 2.0” (Musser O’ Reilly & O’ Reilly Radar Team, 2007), is a term used to describe the second generation of the World Wide Web, where users are able “to contribute to developing, rating, collaborating and distributing Internet content and customizing Internet applications” (Munar & Jacobsen, 2013, p. 3). Unlike the traditional World Wide Web/Web 1.0, where data is mainly controlled by corporations so that, users can only view or downloaded the content (Shih, 2009 as cited in Munar & Jacobsen, 2013), Web 2.0 tools enable Internet users to actively create and distribute multimedia content, which greatly impacts the travel industry demand and supply (Sigala, 2011).

Among all Web 2.0 tools, expansion of social media is said to be the most advantageous (Brogan & Smith, 2009). Social media have many different forms, such as wikis (e.g., Wikipedia), blogs (e.g., travel blogs), microblogs (e.g., Twitter, Weibo), social networks (e.g., Facebook, Google+), media-sharing sites (e.g., Instagram, YouTube), review sites (e.g., TripAdvisor), and voting sites (e.g., Digg) (Zarella, 2010). According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), people use social media because of UGC, which includes “various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end-users” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61).

In recent years, UGC rapidly influences the formation of destination images, as tourists increasingly and actively post their personal experiences online in the form of textual and visual contributions (Marine-Roig & Clave, 2015). Research suggests that tourists who publish tourism-related information on the Internet also rely on UGC to reduce their uncertainty when making their own decisions concerning travel and tourism (Llodrà-Riera, Martínez-Ruiz, Jiménez-Zarco, & Izquierdo-Yusta, 2015). Consumers are able to exert powerful influences on each other (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). According to Munar (2011), slogans and logos of destinations are practically non-existent in UGC because, tourists do not use the formal elements of a destinations brand. However, as they share information (Buhalis & Law, 2008), emotions, and experiential moments (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012), other consumers perceive this information as more reliable and truthful than the content posted by official tourism organisations or mass media advertising. This, could increasingly challenge the image built by the DMOs (Munar, 2011). Given the influence of UGC in destination image formation, it is essential for tourism organisations to analyse the extent to which UGC content contributes to the creation and changes in destination image (Llondra-Riera et al., 2015).

According to Standing, Tang-Taye, and Boyer (2014), the most prevalent forms of UGC are travel blogs and online travel reviews (OTR). Blogs not only influence the way people communicate and share information, but they also influence consumer purchase decisions. However, given the ease of publishing posts, there is a rising concern over fabricated reviews (Minazzi, 2015). Although there is an issue of

authenticity (if the blogs are managed/sponsored by DMOs), readers perceive bloggers as opinion leaders (Pan, et al., 2007). Lu, Chang and Chang (2014) claim that sponsorship (direct-monetary or indirect-monetary benefits received by the bloggers) has no significant effect on consumer attitude. Whether bloggers accept cash, free samples, or discount coupons for advertising the goods, consumer attitudes toward blogs remain unaffected. This may due to the perceived honesty of the bloggers who are seen as not trying to mislead or cheat the readers (Lu, Chang, & Chang, 2014). This shows the power and credibility of blogs in disseminating positive e-word-of-mouth (e-WOM) information that improves consumers' purchase intentions.

Since a tourism product is essentially an experience good that cannot be assessed prior to purchase, research has shown that tourists seek advice from other consumers who have previously experienced a particular tourism product as their preferred source of pre-purchase information (Pan, MacLaurin & Crotts, 2007). Blogs have therefore become a vital online marketing tool and one of the most powerful e-WOM platforms.

2.4 TRAVEL BLOGS

2.4.1 E-WOM PLATFORM

According to Sharda and Ponnada (2007, as cited in Volo, 2010, p. 298), blogs are “virtual diaries created by individuals and stored on the web for anyone to access”. Blog writing is characterised by a strong sense of the blogger's personality and point of view (Hollenbaugh, 2010). A travel blog does not only serve as word-of-mouth, as “the motivations for producing blogs are more diverse than mere communication of product information” (Pan, McLaurin, Crotts, 2007, p. 37). Individuals now use blogs to conveniently describe and share their personal subjective experiences or opinions with friends and even strangers. Kline and Burstein (2005) argue that people blogged before the emergence of the Internet. The blog like phenomena goes back hundreds and thousands of years to when human engraved and painted cave walls with abstract

visual and language to describe their beliefs and ideas. Kline and Burstein (2005) claim the blog like phenomena started because *people converse*. People memorialise and institutionalise knowledge, and learn as a result. Although the word *weblog* only started to appear in 1997, Kline and Burstein (2005) believe that weblogging is part of a phenomenon that has ancient antecedents and deep cultural roots.

Blogs are a significant phenomenon as they become a door-opening tool that gives visibility and voice to what could not have been heard previously (Kline & Burstein, 2005). This is especially true in the context of political blogs. “The truth is that many people don’t necessarily trust what they read in the papers or see on television anymore” (Kline & Burstein, 2005, p. 7). As mainstream media no longer reflect the interests, beliefs, and priorities of the citizens, people turn to bloggers who offer unfiltered, real information.

In the hospitality and tourism context, there are many reasons why blogs are perceived as more reliable sources of information than other promotional tools, such as guidebooks. In blogs, people can write about their own destination images and provide others with functional cues, such as good accommodation or essential attractions. They can even use photos or films to illustrate the places they have been. Prospective tourists can search blogs for subjective travel experiences and can even respond to others’ experiences (Yoo & Gretzel, 2012). Unlike guidebooks, which are soon out-of-date and so often fail to provide current “true” depictions of places and services (Peel & Sørensen, 2016); blogs offer relatively more up-to-date information and “real” photographs. Guidebooks become generic and the authors are perceived to be unqualified, too young, too old and/or not “proper backpackers” (Peel & Sørensen, 2016, p. 96). On the other hand, blogs are written as first-hand accounts, offer “local” information from local people, and are accompanied by QA (Questions and Answer) archives which are considered more useful for obtaining travel information (Fujii, Takezawa, & Ishino, 2016).

The surge of online blogging started in 2004, and coincided with the coming of age of Generation Y, who often value peer recommendations over expert opinions (Colucci & Cho, 2014). In short, a blog can be viewed as a many-to-many platform that provides a personal, interactive process for communication and e-WOM exchange (Litvin et al., 2008), and produces interpersonal influences (Yoo & Gretzel, 2012). Travel blogs are perceived as being more credible and trustworthy than traditional marketing communications (Akehurst, 2008) because of the perceived independence of the authors (Banyai & Havitz, 2013).

2.4.2 THE ROLE OF NARRATIVES

One of the reasons why blogs become a highly influential communication tool is because the tourism industry is about selling experiences (Kim, 2010 in Bosangit, Hibbert, & McCabe, 2015). The way stories are told within travel blogs can reveal features of experiences that evoke reflection and specific meaning that is personally relevant to the writers (Caru & Cova, 2006). Narratives are fundamental in the construction of tourism experiences (McCabe & Foster, 2006). Tourists are storytellers, writers of introspective accounts of their own experiences and feelings (Pace, 2008). Storytelling is critical in transmitting tourism experiences since stories are shaped by memories and impressions of events over time (McGregor & Holmes, 1999).

Travel narratives not only reflect travel experiences but also self. As Bruner notes, “telling about oneself is like making up a story about who we are and what we are, what’s happened, and why we are doing it” (Bruner, 2002, p. 64). Travel blogging is more than reportage about places, people, and culture; it is also about the author, their world and/or how they see others (Bohls & Duncan, 2005). “Bloggers are self-reflexive individuals who tell their stories and explain their actions using their own words, which are useful in understanding the hedonic and subjective dimensions of experience; a way of understanding non-visible and rarely stated elements in experiences” (Carù & Cova, 2008 as cited in Bosangit et al., 2015, p. 5).

2.4.3 TRUTHFULNESS AND CULTURAL GAZE

One could question the degree of truthfulness presented by bloggers. How truthful is the information provided in travel blogs? According to the correspondence theory of truth, truth is correspondence to a fact (David, 2004). However, content created by travellers, both narrative and visual, aims to give an impression of reality or authenticity, compared to the manipulated commercial version of the destination. Bloggers are perceived as presenting the reality/truth in contrast with the image of a destination projected by DMOs.

However, online content is “embedded in Internet cultures and is dependent on both the limitations of site architecture and the personal gaze and the cultural background of the tourist” (Munar, 2011, p. 299). For example, Chinese tourists post lots more photographs in travel blogs compared to Western tourists (Volo, 2010) due to their desire of to show to their friends and others that they have been “there”, hence “gaining face” (*mianzi*) (Sun, Ryan, & Pan, 2014). Whereas Westerners tend to photograph landscapes (Urry & Larsen, 2011), Chinese tourists are more likely to record their own presence in the place, as a complement and harmonious part of the landscape (Wu, 1989, cited in Sun, Ryan, & Pan, 2014). Some of the reason behind these differences might be Hofstede et al.’ (2010) six cultural dimensions which consist of power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and indulgence versus restraint; or ethnic identity of the bloggers. In other words, cultural gaze influence the information and stories presented by the travel bloggers. However, given that tourists perceive travel blogs as being more reliable than the traditional marketing tools, it is essential to examine a destination through the eyes of the bloggers. According to Sun, Ryan, and Pan (2014), analysing photographs taken by the tourists is also important to better understand the images of destination held by tourists, as photographs provide an alternative to overcome the limitations of descriptive written language.

2.4.4 THE ROLE OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN WEB 2.0

Photography and travel are essentially linked. Photographs both document and shape the travel experience (Urry, 2002), and provide an opportunity for tourists to share experiences with others. Tourists take photographs during their trips for different reasons. It validates the fact that a person has physically “been there” (Hillman, 2007) and provides evidence to others that he/she has lived some degree of authentic, native, “other” life (Chalfen, 1979). The latter suggests a possible reason why the majority of tourists photographs involve images promoted by the DMO and already seen in travel guides, brochures, TV programmes, magazines, and social network sites (SNSs) (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Images are used to construct travel memories and help form those reminiscence into narrative or stories (Lo, McKercher, Cheung, & Law, 2011).

Traditionally, DMOs controlled the formation and distribution of a desired image. Photograph is a powerful marketing tool in promoting an image of a place, especially in early stages when tourist’s involvement level is low (Mackay & Couldwell, 2004). However, they now must compete with a wide range of non-commercial materials posted by tourists (Akehurst, 2008). The rising popularity of travel blogs induces more studies that suggest private travel blogs and other marketing channels have played a significant role in destination promotion by either confirming or challenging existing images created by the destination authorities (Schmallegger & Carson, 2008). It has been noted that although most tourists’ private images tend to strengthen the existing projected images, other photographs may portray a different perception or feeling about the destination. (Schmallegger et al., 2010)

Tyson (2009) also notes that the photographer takes a photograph to emphasise his/her perspective. A photograph is a statement of what the photographer believes to be important, and by extension when blogging, of what he/she believes will be interest to others. It is also a representation of self and/or a place to others (Sun, Ryan, & Pan, 2014). One could argue that travel photographs, along with their descriptions/captions, in blog posts, are the gaze constructed by the bloggers. It is the image of a destination presented by the trusted bloggers to their readers.

2.5 THE EVALUATION OF DESTINATION IMAGE STUDIES

Both photographs and travel stories create an image of a destination in the minds of the readers. Morgan, Pritchard, and Pride (2011) argue that a “place” only turns into a “destination” when it is accompanied by images and narratives in tourism promotional materials. Destination image is defined as “a set of beliefs, idea and impressions that people have of a place formed on the basis of the long-term information obtain from various kinds of channels, which as a result lead to a psychological construct reflecting properties and benefits from certain product or destination” (Li, Ali, Kim, 2015, p. 197). This subject has been analysed and evaluated over many years, leading to a greater understanding of a tourist behaviour. It is one of the most explored fields in tourism research. **Table 2.5** below provides the taxonomy of destination image reviews from 1990 to 2015.

Table 2.5 A taxonomy review of destination image studies

Researcher(s)	No. of papers analysed (Year)	Key findings	Cited by (June 2016)
Chon (1990)	23 (1979 – 1987)	- A conceptual model of the interrelationship between destination image and a traveller’s buying behaviour	709
Echtner & Ritchie (1991)	15 (1975 – 1990)	- Destination image consists of two main components: attribute based and holistic - Each of destination image components contains functional (more tangible) and psychological (more abstract) characteristics - Destination image can range from those based on “common”, functional, and psychological traits to those based on more distinctive/unique features, events, or feelings - In order to measure destination images, researchers should combine both structured and unstructured methodologies	1356
Gallarza, Saura & Garcia (2002)	65 (1971 – 1999)	- Destination image studies are theoretical and lacking a conceptual framework - Four taxonomies are presented: - (1) The most common attributes used in destination image studies: residents’ receptiveness, and landscapes/surroundings. No significant predominance of either functional or	1428

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> psychological attributes (2) Object (destination types)/subject (respondent's interview) dimension: image of countries is investigated more often than any other sort of destinations. Research shows a growing interest of imagery of cities. Types of respondents in DI studies are quite heterogeneous (3) Studies using non-quantitative method: Very few studies use qualitative methods as the main technique in order to analyse the marketing promotion images (4) Studies using quantitative method: A great diversity of statistical methodologies (especially combinations of multivariate and bivariate techniques) is applied A conceptual model of destination image, demonstrating the four natures of destination image: <i>complex</i>, <i>multiple</i> (in elements and processes), <i>relativistic</i> (subjective and generally comparative), and <i>dynamic</i> (varying with the dimensions of time and space) 	
Pike (2002)	142 (1973 – 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most popular type of destination of interest is countries, and the most popular region for study is North America, followed by UK/Europe, Asia, Australasia, Africa, Central America/Caribbean, South Pacific, and South America Majority of papers use structured techniques, and most popular data analysis method is factor analysis Data sample are mostly visitors at destinations and consumers at their place of residence Previous studies cover a wide range of interests, from effect of visitation, segmentation, to DMOs policy 	1033
Stepchenkova & Mills (2010)	152 (2000-2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several studies explore DI within a sociocultural context and cross-cultural perspective Mass media, with limitations, do create and reflect public opinion, attitudes and perceptions A significant interest in learning the relationship between destination image and personal self-concept, as well as the influence of this relationship on destination choice Many studies investigate destination image in management and branding context Still no consensus on the most fitting research methodology in measuring the behavioural aspect of destination image The growing number of applications of the SEM (Structural Equations Modelling) and qualitative studies (to analyse textual and 	120

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pictorial materials) - The rise of destination image studies on the Internet (travel websites, virtual travel communities, personal blogs and online media) - The geographical expansion in destination image studies 	
Nghiêm-Phú (2014)	177 (2008 – 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion on the conceptualisation and measurement of the projected destination image construct - Destination image is affected by information sources, tourist characteristics, past experience, and familiarity/novelty seeking behaviour; is the antecedent of satisfaction, behavioral intentions, and loyalty; and has interrelationships with place attachments, attitudes, beliefs, destination personality, motivations, perceived quality/value - The entering of image studies into new destinations - Newer constructs include the influence of pop culture, drama/movie, music, food and celebrities on destination image - More widely application of SEM - Suggestions for future research include the penetration of image studies into new or less cultivated areas, or other industries within hospitality and tourism, and development of new research and analysis methods 	4
Li, Ali & Kim (2015)	18 (1991 – 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dimensions/attributes determining the perceived destination image - Both cognitive assessments and affective assessments are used to measure the destination image - Most popular researched destination type is countries, followed by cities, states and resorts - Half of the analysed papers aim at measuring the image of travellers at their destinations, the other half target the perceptions of local people - Suggestions for future research include the relationship between culture on destination image—especially image conceived after visitation 	1

The review above illustrates that destination image has always been linked to tourists' satisfaction and motivations to visit (Chon, 1990), lack of conceptualisation, and has relied heavily on structured methodologies (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Pike, 2002). The most noticeable change is the shift from structured methodologies to mixed

methods (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Tasci, Gartner, & Cavusgil, 2007), and purely qualitative research (Gallarza, Saura, & Garcia, 2002; Tasci Gartner, & Cavusgil, 2007), as researchers include marketing promotion image analysis in order to measure all aspects of destination image.

Pike (2002) claims the most popular region for destination image studies is North America, and the most popular type of research is country-based. Although a destination is not restricted to a country, country-based research is still the most common study today (Nguyễn-Phú, 2014). Recent studies also investigate the relation of destination image to other constructs, such as the influence of pop culture (Lee & Bai, 2015; Lee, Scott, & Kim, 2008), and film or reality show-induced tourism (Fu, Ye, & Xiang, 2016). However, despite being a very popular research topic since the 1970s, destination image studies involving Asian countries only started to grow in 2001, and to this date there have not been many investigations of countries in the EU, Middle East, or Southeast Asia (Nguyễn-Phú, 2014).

In 2010, Stepchenkova and Mills link mass media to Urry's (2002) theory of The Tourist Gaze, and comment on the impact of mass media in creating and reflecting public opinions and perceptions. They note the growing number of qualitative studies, examining both textual and pictorial materials. Along with the expansion of the Internet, this review also recognises the travel websites, blogs and online media as data source in destination image research. This was affirmed later in a review by Nguyễn-Phú (2014) who noted the growing experimental methods and the increasing use of travel blogs or forums to generate the images of a destination.

The three most commonly used models for analysing the structure of destination image are:

- (1) the cognitive/affective/conative model (Gartner, 1994);
- (2) the attribute-based/holistic, functional/psychological, common/unique model (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; 1993; 2003);
- (3) the cognitive/affective/overall model (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

The cognitive component derives from tourists' beliefs, knowledge, and perceptions of a destination, and is therefore related to its attributes, such as "natural environment", "cultural heritage", "tourist infrastructures", or "atmosphere". (Pike & Ryan, 2004; San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque, 2008). The affective component refers to one's feelings toward the destination (Kim & Richardson, 2003), or the feelings or emotions the destination may evoke (e.g., pleasure, excitement) (San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque, 2008). The conative component is the action step – tourists' intention to visit or recommend to others based on their evaluations (cognitive-affective) of the destination (Gartner, 1994; Kladou & Mavragani, 2015; Marchiori & Onder, 2015).

In general, researchers agree that destination image has a crucial role in tourists' decision making, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, tourists' intentional behaviour, and their willingness to visit or revisit. When making a decision, prospective tourists rely on their mental images. This image, intertwines with motivations, interests, self-portrait, cultural background and other factors to influence a destination choosing decision (Stepchenkova & Mills, 2007). After all, "... images are more important than tangible resources, all because perceptions, rather than reality are what motivate consumers to act or not act" (Guthrie & Gale, 1991, as cited in Gallarza et al., 2002, p. 57).

According to San Martin and Rodriguez del Bosque (2008), the earlier studies only acknowledged cognitive component of destination image, but later studies capture cognitive and affective dimensions. One could argue that the cognitive dimension received more attention in earlier years because of the non-existence of the Internet and a lack access to information that could provide tourists with insights about the places to visit. Therefore, most people turned to the traditional mass marketing tools, such as advertisement and brochures from the tourism marketers who projected the destination image in the minds of target tourists, and direct the tourists' gaze to the expected places and cultures.

2.6 INDONESIA

2.6.1 INDONESIA IN GENERAL

Like many other countries, the Ministry of Tourism of Indonesia recognises the importance of investing in the destination marketing to build a positive image and to stand out in the tourism competition. Indonesia has seen tourism as a significant source of foreign exchange revenues, and an important component of the nation's economy. Given the limited exports and low prices of commodities, tourism is seen as a way to increase foreign exchange earnings (Schonhardt, 2013; World Economic Forum, 2016). In 2014, the total contribution of travel and tourism in Indonesia was 9.3% of GDP, and this is forecast to rise to 9.9% by 2025 (WTTC, 2015). Indonesia, as a part of the Asia-Pacific region, has seen the fastest growth in tourism over the past two years (UNWTO, as cited in Schonhardt, 2013). However, Indonesia also faces competition from the neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia that offer similar tourism products (beautiful nature and cultural resources), such as Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines. Additionally, Indonesia has always been associated with poor infrastructure, lack of tourist facilities, and cleanliness and environmental problems. The country also has to deal with its negative international image from past terrorism attacks that negatively affect the security and safety image of the country (Parkinson & Heyden, 2015). Gathut Dwi Hastoro, the head of Jakarta's Kota Tua management said, "People who have never been here before might not want to promote it to their friends" (Schonhardt, 2013). This shows that Indonesia may not have a very good image as a tourism destination in the eyes of future travellers. However, the government is trying to appeal to foreigners, as international tourists tend to spend more than locals (Schonhardt, 2013). Many travel industry analysts say that Indonesia wants to do more to attract tourists from Asia, and particularly from China. The Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) states that investment in tourism is on the rise and projected that total investment would reach \$1.18 billion in the year 2015 (Kompas, 2016). BKPM also maintains an optimistic investment outlook as foreign investors have reportedly expressed interest in tapping into Indonesia's underdeveloped, yet promising, tourism sector (Amirio, 2016). The Ministry of Tourism is also offering 10 new destinations called "New Balis", to boost the national tourism industry (Antara News, 2016), including

- Danau Toba, Sumatera Utara;
- Tanjung Kelayang, Belitung;
- Tanjung Lesung, Banten;
- Pulau Seribu, DKI Jakarta;
- Borobudur, Jawa Tengah;
- Bromo Tengger Semeru, Jawa Timur;
- Mandalika, Lombok;
- Labuan Bajo, NTT;
- Wakatobi, Sultra;
- Morotai, Malut (Pertiwi, 2016).

To increase the number of foreign visitors, the Ministry of Tourism also launched a new promotional campaign called Wonderful Indonesia.

2.6.2 WONDERFUL INDONESIA

Since the late January 2011, Indonesia's previous tourism campaign "Visit Indonesia" had been replaced by Wonderful Indonesia. The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism states that Wonderful Indonesia is created as a reflection of Indonesia's *wonderful nature, wonderful culture, wonderful people, food, and value of money* (Susanti, 2011).



Jero Wacik, the Minister of Culture and Tourism (2004 – 2011), stated that the campaign was inspired by Bali winning best destination in the world by Travel and Leisure Magazine from the U.S (Susanti, 2011). The criteria behind that award were nature, culture, people, food and value of money. The creation of this brand image is a long process. There were four stages in creating Wonderful Indonesia as a new tourism brand of Indonesia (Wulandari, 2014). The first stage was research to find suitable words and language to market and advertise Indonesia. The word 'Wonderful' was chosen to represent "a promise that Indonesia is indeed rich with wonders, in aspects of both human and nature, which will inspire the heart and mind,

while offering a new exciting experience for visitors” (Wonderful Indonesia, 2016). The establishment of brand, slogan, and tagline exploration was the next step which required the agreement of all stakeholders to decide which visions, identities, values, characters, cultures and aspirations were the most representative for marketing Indonesia. The third step was completed by establishing brand guidelines – including the font, the language, the logo design, the colours, visualisation, and delivery for various advertisements. The brand then implemented on an array of marketing and promotional activities.

According to Mrs. Agustini Rayahu, the deputy director of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy there are three key messages to be projected through the Wonderful Indonesia tourism campaign. The first is to introduce new tourism areas in Indonesia that are rich in cultural diversity and natural resources. To support this, tourism infrastructure is being strategically developed in the targeted areas. In 2016, the government has allocated US\$ 123 million for various infrastructure/maintenance projects, including expansion of road access, water system, drinking water, waste management, accommodation, and so on in Lake Toba, Mandalika and Borobudur Temple (Susanty, 2016). The second key is to promote sustainable tourism through various initiatives to maintain the uniqueness of Indonesian culture, tradition, and local wisdom. The third key message emphasises the creative economy and human resource in Indonesia (Rahayu, 2014, as cited in Wulandari, 2014). After the Wonderful Indonesia campaign was launched, it was reported that the number of foreign visitors to Indonesia rose from 7 million to 8 million (Statistics Indonesia, 2012). Together with the appointed PR agency, the ministry have vigorously driven an aggressive awareness campaign for the national tourism brand since 2015. The effort has borne fruit with Wonderful Indonesia winning numerous prestigious awards, most recently the Best Destination Marketing Award 2016 from Travel Weekly Asia (Hui, 2016). Wonderful Indonesia also made a huge leap in World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index from the NA (Not Available) position to 47th place (Antara News, 2016), beating *Malaysia Truly Asia* and *Amazing Thailand*. According to the Ministry of Tourism, such awards boost industry players’ confidence (Inilah Koran, 2016). With the government’s ambition to

double the tourist arrivals to 20 million by 2019 in mind, the Ministry of Tourism orchestrate marketing strategies to conquer all aspects of tourism.

Wonderful views of the untouched Indonesian natural environment, the exciting culture, and the peaceful, loving people are the gaze or destination image that the ministry wants tourists to see. These criteria are featured in the most recently uploaded promotional videos, titled ‘Explore Further’ and “A Visual Journey” which did not feature Bali at all, as an encouragement to the audience to look and go beyond Bali. The latter video has received good feedbacks from users of the streaming site [Indonesia Travel, 2016].

According to the World Bank, the Wonderful Indonesia campaign is directed to at least 16 major focus market: Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, United States, Britain, France, India, Germany, the Netherlands, the Middle East, and Russia (Wulandari, 2014). The Ministry of Tourism states that Indonesia ranks its focus markets based on the number of incoming foreign tourists, the geographical distance, and potential number of tourists from each country of origin (Wulandari, 2014). Based on those criteria, high priority countries are Singapore, China, Malaysia and Australia. The Ministry of Tourism also hopes to attract high spenders who stay on average 10 days or more, and “appreciate not just Bali, but also the cultural and natural wonders found throughout the Indonesian archipelago of over 13,000 tropical islands.” (Restanis, 2016, para 10).

2.6.3 THE POLITICS BEHIND WONDERFUL INDONESIA

“Creating a brand is not only economically desirable, it has considerable political and strategic implications” (van Ham, 2001 as cited in Volcic & Andrejevic, 2011, p. 604). It is argued that apart from encouraging the tourism industry, and pushing other destinations in Indonesia, there were several other reasons behind the manufacturing of Wonderful Indonesia.

The current Minister of Tourism, Arief Yahya, believes that tourism can be the core business of Indonesia. He pointed out that strong brand nation could endorse its tourism industry, but this is not currently so for Indonesia. The brand value of Bali is higher than the national brand equity. Nation brand is defined as the sum of people's perceptions of a country across six areas which are tourism, exports, governance, people, culture and heritage, investment and immigration (Anholt, 2002). In fact, Indonesia only started enhancing its nation branding last year. As a result of the weak nation brand, the Ministry of Tourism shifted their focus from customer management to brand management and awareness (Wulan, 2016). The Minister of Tourism wants tourism to be the major source of income for Indonesia that could attract more foreign direct investment (FDI), as well as for Wonderful Indonesia to endorse other industries in the country. The aim behind Wonderful Indonesia is to trade, tourist and investment (TTI) (CNN Indonesia, 2016).

In addition to that, Volcic and Andrejevic (2011) believe strong nation brand does not only help nations in competing in global marketplace by achieving greater visibility, drawing tourists, foreign investors and expanding exports, but also reinterpretation of national identity in commercial terms for both international and domestic markets. The other argued purpose of Wonderful Indonesia to unite the nation and reshape the national identity.

Indonesia with more than 300 ethnic groups is a highly diverse country. It has also suffered from long running ethnic and religious conflict (Bertrand, 2008). The reigning President, Joko Widodo pointed out Indonesia's lack of brand power and the egocentricity of ministries and institutions that resulted in ineffective work (Kuwado, 2016). He highlighted that each ministry acts independently in promoting trade, tourism and investment with its own tagline. For instance, the Ministry of Trade with its "Remarkable Indonesia", and Ministry of Tourism's Wonderful Indonesia (Amindoni, 2016). This collision of brands caused confusion and unsuccessful strategies to build a positive image of Indonesia. Aside from the dispute between the ministries and the local people, Indonesia is also well-known for its long history of corruption. Corruption, collusion and nepotism (KKN) has been an intrinsic part of

Indonesian government and societies, particularly since the regime of President Suharto (1965-1998). Tackling corruption has long been an agenda of every new commander in chief, but it is only recently that investigation and prosecution takes place. Since 2014, President Widodo runs the nation and pushes amendments for bureaucracy and public services. With the help of the Corruption Eradication Commission (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi), and the urge from Indonesian people as well as the free media, to the surprise of many, the nation sees an improvement in its Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), from the 107th place to 88th place (Coca, 2016; Transparency International, 2017). Corruption causes notable injustice in the societies and hinders the country from realising its potential. This reduction of corruption can boost nationalism and encourage the society to contribute to positive perception of the country in the global environment.

According to the President, Indonesia is in urge to have a good international image. A positive reputation will not only unite the nation, but also amplify the competitive value of the country (Kuwado, 2016). He also urged the ministries to consolidate and use “the soft power approach be strengthen through cultural diplomacy, the promotion of Indonesian cuisine and also promotion through sports” (Amindoni, 2016, para 4). From his words, this research argues that Wonderful Indonesia was created in an effort to unify the ministries, overcome the diversity and differences within the nation-state, and eradicate the corruptions within the institutions.

Although Wonderful Indonesia was first designed as a tourism brand, Cromwell (2007) argues tourism brand can take on the role of nation brand in case it does not exist. By the time this research is written, the nation is still in discussion about the most perceived fitting nation branding (Effendy, 2016). Nation brand, just like any other branding, cannot but its way into a better reputation internationally without genuinely strive to benefit its own people (Anholt, 2011). Through Wonderful Indonesia, the nation wants to be seen as a unified society. The government has shown the effort in making it a reality. Therefore, if the nation pulls out all the stops in overcoming the diversity and promote the country, there is no doubt that tourism

can be a major source of revenue, and Wonderful Indonesia to represent the positive reality of the country.

2.6.4 INDONESIA IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD

Although Indonesia has seen a steady grow in tourism, studies of Indonesian tourism are hard to find. Based on initial research, the latest study linked to Indonesia's destination image was conducted by Wulandari (2014) who analysed the difference between the projected and the perceived images of 'Wonderful Indonesia'. Indonesian academia tend to narrow down the study areas to particular city or province, such as Bali (Utama & Komalawati, 2015), Bandung (Pratminingsih, Rudatin, & Rimenta, 2014), Weh Island (Kim & Park, 2014), and Yogya (Tafiprios et al., 2016). In most cases, one should have a membership to access Indonesia thesis and dissertations. Hence there is a lack of online literature sources.

Based on the abovementioned papers, Indonesia has both positive and negative images. Positive images refer to its *beautiful natural attractions, warm and friendly people, distinctive and tasteful food* (Kim & Park, 2014; Pratminingsih, Rudatin, & Rimenta, 2014; Tafiprios et al., 2016), *good entertainment and tourism activities* (Pratminingsih, Rudatin, & Rimenta, 2014; Utama & Komalawati, 2015), *well developed tourism infrastructure* (Kim & Park, 2014; Tafiprios et al., 2016; Utama & Komalawati, 2015), *rich with culture, history and art* (Tafiprios et al., 2016; Utama & Komalawati, 2014). Negative images are linked to *environmental problems, traffic congestion, the immigration procedure, westernisation of Bali, and lack of tourist information centres* (Utama & Komalawati, 2015). Interestingly, the media depict Indonesia as an “*unpolished diamond*” with welcoming people and lingering concerns because of the past terrorist attack at tourist sites (The Economist, 2015). Recent news portrays Indonesia as “the sleeping giant” (Hammond, 2015; Inside Retail, 2016), because of its developing infrastructure, private equity advantage and economic growth – the largest in Southeast Asia. Boosting tourism is one of the priorities of the newly appointed president Joko Widodo (Hommand, 2015). The

government wants at least 20 million foreign tourists to visit annually by 2020 and has therefore made some bold movements by increasing the promotional budget to nearly \$100 million and hiring Ogilvy, a big advertising agency, to boost the tourism image. Immigration authorities have at last granted visa-free entry (Hommand, 2015; Pitoko, 2016; Topsfield, 2016). The government also plans to allow greater foreign ownership in tourism-related business, increase connectivity and develop flights for the rising demands of Muslim tourists (The Jakarta Post, 2016). The former Prime Minister of New Zealand, John Key, expressed desires to expand the trade ties between the two countries, from exporting products to tourism and education, and to raise New Zealand's opposition towards the death penalty in Indonesia (Newshub, 2016; Sherman & Wong, 2016).

According to Ogilvy Public Relations, many markets have low awareness of tourism destinations in Indonesia. Western markets in particular (e.g., Australia, New Zealand, USA, and UK) are largely only familiar with Bali (Apriyanti, personal communication, June 2, 2016). On the other hand, Indonesia, in trying to attract visitors from the Far East Asia markets (Japan, Korea and China), is facing a huge competition from the neighbouring countries. One of the most apparent problems is the non-existence of low cost airlines and direct flights. The Chinese are sceptical about Indonesia's safety, hygiene, crime and anti-Chinese trends. Singaporeans only have high awareness of three key cities (Bali, Batam and Bintan Islands) for weekend travel. Australians and New Zealanders have strong sentiments towards Bali for affordable luxury and proximity, but struggle to find information about Indonesian destinations beyond Bali; the Facebook page turns them off because of unattractive images and lack of information in English (Apriyanti, personal communication, June 2, 2016).

Social media is an increasingly important promotional tool in the marketing strategy of the Ministry of Tourism. A Travel Blogger Award will be awarded to the best Indonesian blogger promoting Indonesian tourism through the Internet, to both local and international tourists. Various online media in Indonesia have dedicated travel sites on which travel bloggers can share their experiences with photographs they took

during their travel (Euromonitor, 2015). The ministry also invites journalists, bloggers, and internationally well-known figures and celebrities to experience travelling in Indonesia first-hand. They are then expected to write their stories and share photographs with the international community (Wulandari, 2014).

Given that travel blogs are important phenomenon, and have the power to influence the gaze of prospective tourists coming to Indonesia, this paper aims to answer the overarching question, “What is the gaze constructed by bloggers of Indonesia?” Bloggers who have been to Indonesia have been chosen as the data sample because content generated by tourists who have already visited the destination have the largest impact, by stimulating desire and motivation for travel and influencing purchase choices (Munar, 2011).

2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the literature above, the conceptual framework for this research is as below:

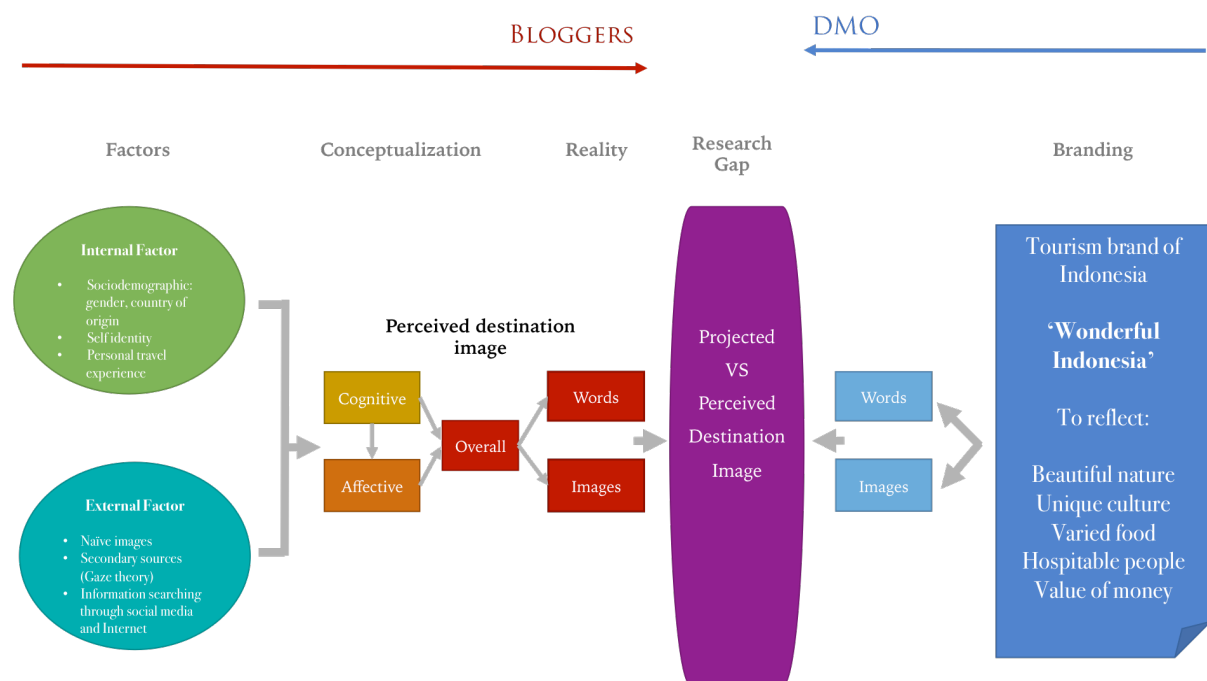


Figure 2.7 The research conceptual framework

The purpose of this research is to analyse the perceived destination image of Indonesian tourism as seen through the eyes of the travel bloggers from the industry's top markets. Hence, the central concept is of bloggers as image formation agents challenging the image projected by the destination authorities. Gartner (1994) suggests the image formation process of bloggers as autonomous and organic agents is based on by *internal* and *external factors*. Internal factors relate to the sociodemographic characteristics of the bloggers, which in this context is Singaporean and Australian bloggers—that leads to cultural filters, and affects how the bloggers present truth and their identities through the posts. It is also about the blogger's own experiences while traveling in Indonesia. External factors refers to naïve images – images that they held before coming to Indonesia; images from secondary sources – such as projected image from Wonderful Indonesia, and other information from social media and the Internet. As mentioned above, bloggers or tourists who publish information online, to a large extent, rely on other bloggers when making travel decisions. Therefore, the information searching process will form certain images in bloggers' minds. As discussed in literature review, both internal and external factors influence the *cognitive* and *affective* components of destination image, forming an *overall* image of Indonesia as a tourism destination. It has been noted from the literature that the cognitive component is the antecedent of the affective, and the overall component is influenced by both of these elements (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). The overall image of Indonesia is expressed in *words* and *images* by the bloggers. In this thesis, these words and images will be analysed separately with textual and visual content analysis (**Figure 3.4**).

The Ministry of Tourism created Wonderful Indonesia to project the desired image of Indonesia's beautiful nature, unique culture, varied food, hospitable people and value of money. In the same way, like other image formation agents, this image is expressed through words and images in promotional materials. The two images can be similar or different. There is an apparent lack of any studies about words and images used by travel bloggers in projecting Indonesian image, hence this study to fill that research gap.

The conceptual framework above covers the three major concepts in the literature review: travel bloggers as image formation agents, destination image and tourism in Indonesia. As mentioned previously, there have been many studies about travel blogs and destination image (see **Table 2.5**). Nevertheless, the number of academic research of Indonesian tourism is still limited. Furthermore, previous article has proclaimed the need to examine both textual and visual information to understand the formation of destination image in the online marketplace (Choi, Lehto, & Morrison, 2007). Therefore, this research seeks to answer the existing gap in the literature review.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter reviewed the main theories used in this study, which are travel bloggers' formation or constructed gaze of destination image, and the gap between that and the projected image created by the Indonesian tourism ministry. The key areas to understand are the words and pictures used by the travel bloggers in describing Indonesia, the positive, negative and neutral tourism attributes, and the constructed gaze as opposed to the gaze presented by the national tourism organisation. In order to answer the research questions, this section will firstly discuss the chosen paradigm and, subsequently, the research methodology. Following is the selection criteria of the data, how it was collected and the sample size. It will then feature the analytical framework that incorporates the needed analysis techniques. This thesis includes both narrative and visual information; therefore, it will also explain the textual and image analysis approach employed. The next chapter will then describe how the examined bloggers' words and images are compared with the textual and visual information found in Wonderful Indonesia's advertising. It will then be followed by a review of the collected data. Lastly, this chapter will end with an assessment of the inherent strengths and limitations of the methodology.

3.2. RESEARCH METHOD

3.2.1 PARADIGM

A paradigm is used as a guideline to determine the relationship between the researcher/s and the subject/s. The word paradigm is defined as a set of basic beliefs, or worldview that guides the researcher in choosing the method, in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Examining the assumptions of ontology and epistemology provides a basis for choosing the right method and applying the research findings to address this important social issue. Each

paradigm has its own ontology (the nature of the reality), epistemology (the relationship between the researcher and the participants/subjects/objects), and methodology (the way the research is conducted). The paradigm adopted by the researcher establishes the design of the methodology.

The research focus of this study is the perceived destination image of Indonesia as presented by the travel bloggers. As the use of Internet increases, travel bloggers have become a new image formation agent. Unlike the DMOs, who project Indonesia as a perfect, utopian destination, travel bloggers share “unbiased” stories and “unfiltered” photographs. Through the research questions, this paper aims to understand what bloggers are saying about Indonesia, and the gap between the bloggers’ perceived and the DMOs’ projected image. Fundamentally this study focuses on the truth, but also recognises that travel bloggers are tempered by their own gazes and/or cultural experiences. Based on the abovementioned characteristics of the research problems, this research adopts post positivism paradigm (**Table 3.2.1**). Post positivists believe that there is a reality independent of our thinking, but we are all biased and affected by our cultural experiences. The post positivist approach admits that knowledge is a result of social conditioning (Wahyuni, 2012). The epistemological basis of the post positivist paradigm is objective as the investigator is capable of studying the subject without influencing it or being influenced by it. Objectivity is seen as a regulatory ideal. The methodology in post positivism aims to address the research question by determining the meanings and purposes people ascribe to their actions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For that reason, this study uses content analysis – treating the raw, “dead” data as truth, or factual knowledge, while accepting a degree of probable falsibility.

Table 3.2.1 Similarities between research problems’ characteristics and post-positivism

Characteristic	Research problem	Post-positivism
Ontology	<i>How is the constructed gaze of Indonesian tourism portrayed differently by the</i>	Reality exists but only imperfectly and probably and probabilistically

	<i>bloggers from Singapore and Australia?</i>	apprehensible. Blogs are presentations of reality, but it is acknowledged that bloggers are influenced by their own personal belief systems, perceptions, and cultural backgrounds.
Epistemology	<i>What are the words and images used by the travel bloggers in defining Indonesia?</i> <i>What are the positive and negative tourism attributes of Indonesia as indicated in the blogs?</i> Fundamentally aims to understand things that have been said; focus on objective / truth – as close as possible to reality	Modified <i>dualist/objectivist</i> ; findings probably true but always subject to falsification
Ethics	Extrinsic / neutral	
Values	Data in the blogs are treated in a factual way – with a certain degree of explanation	Independent research; value free – influence denied
Methodology	Examination of Indonesian tourism through the raw, “dead” data of travel blogs written by Singaporean and Australian bloggers. Content analysis utilised.	Modified experimental/critical multiplism – doing inquiry in more natural settings, collecting more situational information, and reintroducing discovery as an element in inquiry; increased use of qualitative techniques

Whereas the validity and credibility of a quantitative study depends on the construction of its instrument, in qualitative research, “the research is the instrument construction” (Patton, 2001, p. 14). The credibility of a qualitative study relies on the ability and the effort of the researcher (Golafshani, 2003) in generating an understanding of “a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing” (Eisner, 1991, p. 58 as cited in Golafshani, 2003). Rather than reliability or validity, qualitative papers use the terms authenticity or trustworthiness (Jennings, 2010). In other words, the reliability of this qualitative paper should be judged by its quality. Its quality is assessed by examining the trustworthiness of the research, which, if

defensible, produces confidence in the result (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This research uses a post positivism paradigm that focuses on objectivity and therefore trustworthy. The data is being treated as raw and researcher brings a certain degree of explanation, within the context of the correspondence theory of truth.

3.2.2 CONTENT ANALYSIS AND CAQDAS

Depending on the objective and the paradigm the researcher adopts, there are various methodologies that may be used to tackle research questions. In destination image studies, there has been a strong preference to use a structured methodology (Jenkins, 1999). Quantitative approaches, such as surveys, have been useful to for analysing the relationship between variables, testing hypotheses, and measuring the components of image perception by rating a set of tourism attributes. However, the limitation of this approach includes the constraints that are applied to the subjects in giving their answers and expressing their thoughts, which result from the order and the type of questions asked in the questionnaires or interviews.

This study uses a qualitative content analysis technique that allows the researcher to gain pristine data and from that data identify what is being said about Indonesian tourism. Content analysis is a method for the subjective interpretation of textual data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes of patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This method is often used in tourism-related studies and destination image research to analyse both textual and visual materials from media sources and the Internet (Stepchenkova, Kirilenko, & Morrisson, 2009). Although there are quantifying elements in this research, which relate to the word frequency test and the percentage of positive, neutral, and negative comments about Indonesian tourism, this study is still considered to be in the qualitative domain.

The root of content analysis can be traced back to the beginning of the use of symbols, voices, and writing in human history (Krippendorff, 2012). However, today's content analysis has transcended the traditional symbolic and textual analysis.

This can be seen in the development of communication concept, the development of media technologies that shapes our attention to communication, and the role of culture in assigning significance to what is being analysed. Given the large volumes of available data, this contemporary content analysis occurs in a large context, which consequently requires computer aids.

CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software) was developed during the late 1980s by social sciences academics who were involved in qualitative data analysis (Fielding & Lee, 1991, cited in Gilbert & Stoneman, 2016). A key challenge of qualitative approach is the transformation of “hundreds of pages of field notes to a final report” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, as cited in Wickham & Woods, 2005, p. 688). A well-structured and efficient management system is critical in tracking, accessing and documenting the data and the analyses applied to it (Gibbs, Friese, & Mangabeira, 2002). CAQDAS programs assist in the data management system by facilitating electronic storage, search and retrieval of qualitative data, as well as the coding process (Wichkam & Woods, 2005). CAQDAS packages maintain an easy connection between ideas and allow users to overview the whole analyses (Gilbert & Stoneman, 2016). For that reason, CAQDAS programs have been extensively used in many areas of tourism research on text based materials, for example CatPac to assess destination image (Ryan & Cave, 2005; Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008; Sun, Ryan, & Pan, 2015), and Leximancer (Darcy & Pegg, 2011; Wu, Wall & Pearce, 2014).

Although the functionality of CAQDAS programs has increased significantly, qualitative researchers may still value CAQDAS primarily for its coding, retrieval and searching for coded segments (Wichkam & Woods, 2005). For this study, Nvivo 10 was selected as the qualitative data analysis software that would best enable the researcher to run word frequency tests in order to determine the words used by travel bloggers in defining Indonesia as a tourist destination.

3.3 SELECTION CRITERIA

Given the context of this study, only specific blog entries were investigated. Given travel bloggers travel widely and constantly update their blogs, it was necessary to select only Indonesia specific entries because analysis of the rest would be irrelevant. The chosen blogs had to be written by either Singaporeans or Australians. Bloggers who migrated to other countries were still included.

As bloggers are identified as opinion leaders (Pan, McLaurin, & Crotts, 2007), it is essential to choose recognised travel bloggers as participants in this study. Since 2008, Singapore has been holding an annual blog awards to celebrate the bloggers, or what the site refers as “the Internet phenomenon that is given life through words, photographs, illustrations and thoughts of the individuals” (SBA, 2015). This implies the recognition of the bloggers in Singapore. On the other hand, Australia does not have an official annual blog awards, and therefore a list of top travel blogs written by *Pretraveller.com* is used as a guideline. *Pretraveller.com* ranked the Australia / New Zealand travel blogs based on the criteria below (**Table 3.3**). To avoid possible bias, the researcher then checked and compared the website traffic of the blogs through *SimilarWeb*, an information technology company that provides user engagement statistics for websites and mobile apps. It is essential to see the website traffic, because bloggers’ popularity is indicated by their readership. Popular bloggers have a strong influence on- their reading audience (van Reijmersdal et al., 2016). To be as objective and credible as possible, the researcher created their own list of popular travel blogs for this study.

Table 3.3 Judging criteria for Singapore and Australia travel blogs

Singapore	Australia
<p>Singapore Blog Awards by <i>omy.sg</i></p> <p>Judging criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original, inspiring, entertaining content • Presentation (visual appeal and ease of navigation) • X-Factor • Researcher checked and compared the popularity of the blogs through <i>similarweb.com</i> 	<p>Top Australian and New Zealand Travel Blogs 2016 by <i>pretraveller.com</i></p> <p>Judging criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written by Australian or New Zealander • An active blog • Has a substantial number of travel articles • Has its own domain name (.com) • Ranked using their current Domain Authority • Researcher checked and compared the popularity of the blogs through <i>similarweb.com</i>
<p>Passport Chop</p> <p>The Occasional Traveller</p> <p>Pohtecktoes</p> <p>Fly Honey Stars</p> <p>Sunrise Odyssey</p> <p>Discover Book Travel</p> <p>Travel and Beyond</p> <p>Explore Life Lah!</p>	<p>Y Travel Blog</p> <p>Travel with Bender</p> <p>Time Travel Turtle</p> <p>Mapping Megan</p> <p>Nomadic Notes</p> <p>Suitcase Stories</p> <p>Grantourismo</p> <p>Our Oyster</p>

The criteria for the blog selected are:

- 1) Only blog entries posted between 1st January 2011 and 31st July 2016 selected. The analysis starts from 2011, the year when the national tourism campaign Wonderful Indonesia was launched to the most recent entries.
- 2) The blog has its own domain or personal websites, which means the blog is created and maintained by the owner. A few of the blogs are managed by family or couples traveller but mostly only the Singaporean / Australian owner posts on the blog. These blogs are open to public view. Readers come from different backgrounds.
- 3) The study focuses on textual content analysis. However, the researcher also collected the travel photographs and took note of the focus of the photographs.
- 4) Preferably the bloggers visited Indonesia for leisure purposes rather than for business or education purpose
- 5) Blog entries such as 'Itinerary' were excluded, as they do not reflect the perceived image of Indonesia as a tourist destination.

3.4 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

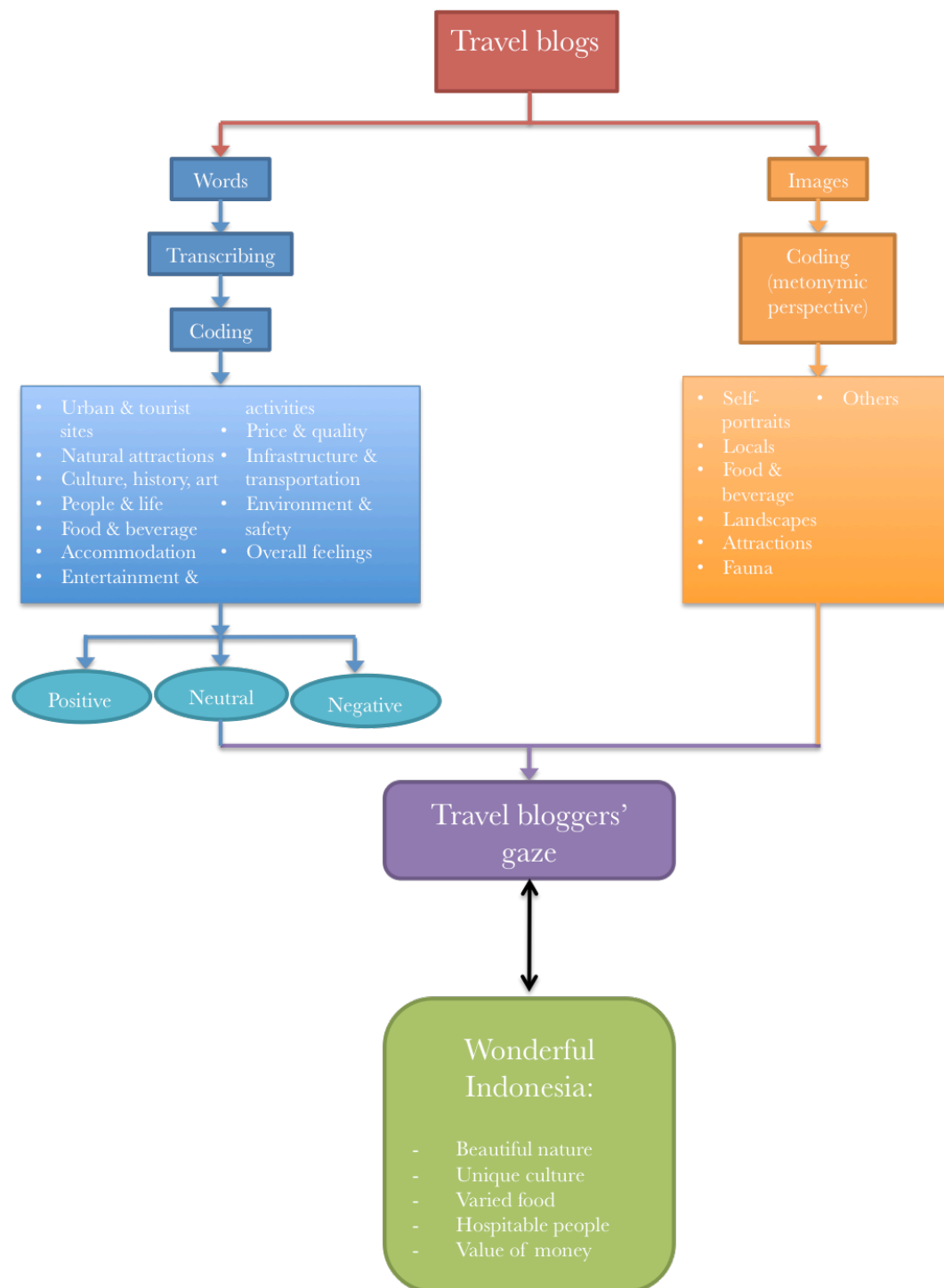


Figure 3.4 The analytical framework

The aims of this study is to acquire information about Indonesian tourism through the eyes of the travel bloggers, and to compare that image with the image projected from the national campaign Wonderful Indonesia. It was initially decided to use the text-only blog posts to avoid complexity with the analysis of photographs. However, it

quickly became evident that photographs or images are an important tool for the bloggers to illustrate their journeys. Photography has long been acknowledged as crucial in developing tourist gaze and tourism in general (Urry & Larsen, 2011). The researcher therefore decided to analyse both of the textual and visual documents in the blogs.

3.4.1 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The textual analysis of this research design refers to the above blue framework (see **Figure 3.4**) that comprised of three components: (1) transcribing, (2) coding, (3) classification into positive/neutral/negative comments. Firstly, valid blog entries with their titles, photographs, links, and posting dates were numbered and saved into separate MSWord files. The words were then transcribed, which involved close and repetitive observation of data to find the most relevant information for the study. Transcription included eliminating utterances – that words that do not contribute meanings to the study – such as “rooms”, “way”, “places”, and “time” – were removed by using “stop words”. This transcription step required more time than anticipated as some of the Singaporean bloggers use Chinese, Singlish, and Malay slang words that had to be translated into English terms.

Researcher then transferred the entries to Nvivo 10, a qualitative data software application that is designed to help researchers structure immense amounts of qualitative data. Using the “node” feature, researcher carefully read the data and categorised the content of the blogs into different image attributes. These attributes were adapted from Li and Wang’s (2011) study but were changed after preliminary coding accordingly; because of the enormous quantity of results in the “attractions” category, researcher decided to divide it into two classifications: man-made attractions, and natural attractions. Thus, 10 image attributes were established:

- 1) urban or tourist sites
- 2) natural attractions
- 3) culture/history/art

- 4) people/life
- 5) food/beverage
- 6) accommodation
- 7) entertainment/activities
- 8) price/quality
- 9) infrastructure/transportation
- 10) environment/safety.

A frequency test was applied to find the most frequent word used in describing Indonesia. These words revealed many aspects of bloggers' travel experience in Indonesia, but may not serve as indicators of tourists' likes or dislikes. The texts were therefore also coded into positive, negative, or neutral based on the tone of the writing.

3.4.2 IMAGE ANALYSIS

Images featured in the blogs were first collected and content analysed. According to Stepchenkova and Zhan (2013), analysis of the meanings behind visual images can be done from two perspectives: metonymic or metaphoric. From the metonymic perspective, the focal theme in the picture can be treated as a stand-alone attribute and is interpreted at face value. The metaphoric perspective treats the elements of a photograph as symbols that contribute to a meaning behind mere appearances. The chosen perspective determines the methodological approach of the pictorial analysis. Given the time constraint and the number of images in the travel blogs, the researcher decided to use the metonymic perspective of content analysis for the images rather than the semiotic analysis. Image-based content analysis codes on the appearance of certain themes, their frequencies, and co-occurrences. This methodology was considered adequate as it allowed the researcher to capture the perceived image attributes of Indonesian tourism and to construct the holistic gaze of the Singaporean and Australian bloggers.

The visual materials were coded into six categories based on the focal theme of the picture:

- (1) self-portraits
- (2) the locals
- (3) food and beverage
- (4) landscapes/attractions
- (5) fauna
- (6) others.

The first category – “self-portraits” – includes selfies (self-cameras) and photographs of the bloggers by themselves or taken by others. The second category – “Locals” – includes photographs of locals, taken knowingly and unknowingly. It also includes photographs of the bloggers with locals, as the researcher believed that the focal point of these pictures is the locals. “Food and beverage” includes any photograph of meals and drinks during the travel. The fourth classification – “landscapes” – includes photographs that encapsulated the scenic values of Indonesian natural attractions, such as beaches, jungles, sunset, sunrise, and so on. This category also includes places of attractions – from iconic buildings to theme parks. The “fauna” category is images of animals. This category was unanticipated, as researcher was not aware of the popularity of Indonesian fauna in the eyes of the tourists. Images that did not belong in any of the abovementioned categories were put into the last category – “others”, and were judged based on the positive or negative sentiment of the photographs. To avoid possible bias and to get more reliable results, the researcher asked another two postgraduate students to code the pictures. The researchers worked together to compare and negotiate the coding until a consensus was reached.

3.4.3 COMPARISONS WITH THE PROJECTED IMAGE

The last component of the research design is comparing the constructed gaze of the travel bloggers with the image of Indonesia projected through the national campaign Wonderful Indonesia. Both the textual and visual elements of the travel blogs create an integrated image of Indonesia as a tourist destination. This is the destination image

of Indonesia as depicted by the travel bloggers. To create this gaze, researcher analysed the data by using the following steps: (1) read the data carefully and identify major ideas or patterns, (2) establish keywords, (3) construct the gaze. When reading the textual documents and analysing the travel photographs, it was essential to adopt the cultural gaze of Singaporean and Australian tourists. The bloggers' constructed gaze of Indonesia was then compared with the image portrayed by the government through Wonderful Indonesia. The researcher also contacted staffs from the Ministry of Tourism, and received data on the marketing strategies of the brand. Comparing the gazes enabled researcher to identify a gap between the projected and the perceived image of Indonesia as a holiday destination.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

All 16 blogs chosen for this study have average to high website traffic. Web traffic is one of the most important performance indicators that reflect popularity of websites, (van der Heijden, Verhagen, & Creemers, 2003). It measures the number of viewers, the number of pages visitors click, and the amount of time visitors spend exploring the page. From all 16 travel blogs, 106 blog entries were identified as relevant for this study. It is worth to notice that 24 of the blog entries were sponsored. Additionally, each post typically generated 0 to 25 comments, but 2 of them elicited as many as 65 comments. Some bloggers produced only one entry whereas others wrote as many as 16 entries, resulting in over 400 printed pages, which included over 1800 pictures.

3.6 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE METHOD

This study includes both textual and photographs analysis, and therefore gives a clear overview of Indonesia as seen through the eyes of the travel bloggers. The lack of image-based research in the tourism industry has been lamented by Feighey (2003) as photographs can provide a welcome supplement to the limitations of descriptive written language (Sun, Ryan, & Pan, 2014). Hence, analysing both textual and photographic data generates a better understanding of destination image of Indonesia

as seen through the eyes of bloggers. Furthermore, the methods used for the content analysis are often used in destination image and tourism studies to analyse textual and pictorial materials from media and Internet (Stepchenkova, Kirilenko, & Morrison, 2009) as it provides rich information about the projected image of a destination (Jenkins, 1999), and reveals holistic and psychological impressions of a destination that are not captured by classic quantitative approach (Mackay & Fesenmaier, 2000).

One of the limitations of this study includes the amount of the data sample. There were 106 entries investigated, and that might constraint the perspectives of bloggers, and do not fully represent the overall destination image of Indonesia. Due to the boundaries of the study and the massive amount of the photographs posted by the bloggers, researcher could not create a more detailed list of categories for the image analysis so used only the focal theme of the photographs to categories them. Also, content analysis is exploratory in nature and relies on subjective judgements to some extent.

Initially, the researcher was going to use Leximancer or CATPAC to analyse the data. Leximancer extracts the meaning of words (semantic), and produces a “cloud” diagram in which key concepts and ideas are displayed. This feature was very helpful in the text analysis to define the image of Indonesia as a tourist destination. CATPAC is a strong tool that can be used to analyse both text and pictures simultaneously (Govers & Go, 2005). However, because of licensing issues, the researcher has to use Nvivo 10, which is also useful for data management and coding.

This chapter discusses the chosen methodology, which is content analysis on words and images from 16 blogs written by Singaporean and Australian tourists. Researcher will use qualitative software application, Nvivo 10, to run word frequency tests in order to find the most frequently mentioned words in the blogs. Content analysis on blogs allowed for exploratory research to get a more holistic perspective on travel bloggers’ perceived destination image of Indonesia.

Chapter 4: The Words and Images Used to Describe Indonesia

The purpose of this study is to examine the destination image of Indonesia as perceived by the industry's top markets: Singaporean and Australian tourists. In order to access their perceptions of Indonesia, it is essential to learn the narrative and the pictures they use to describe Indonesia. This section will first display the profile / sociodemographic of the bloggers, followed by the destinations they were blogging. It will then move on to the findings and discussions of the first research question: What are the words and images used in describing Indonesia? The first part of this chapter focuses on the result of the textual analysis, while the second part discusses the photographs taken by the bloggers.

4.1 BLOGGERS' PROFILES

This research used Singaporean and Australian travel bloggers as its data sample, as they are the biggest markets of Indonesian tourism (Statistic Indonesia, 2016). All 16 blogs featured "About me" sections, in which the bloggers share stories about their backgrounds, how they became travel bloggers, future plans, travel tips, how to work with them, and current location. Unfortunately, none of the bloggers provided personal information, such as age, which would have been useful for understanding the bloggers' preferences and travel patterns. This study included six solo travellers, eight couples, and two families. Some of the travel bloggers produced several entries during their stay in Indonesia including accommodation reviews, dining experiences, travel activities, and itineraries. Details about the bloggers will not be revealed in this study. Each blogger was assigned a number and henceforth will be referred to by number alone.

Table 4.1 Profile of the bloggers

Blogger #	Gender	Origin	Type of tourist
1	Male	Singapore	Married couple
2	Male	Singapore	Solo traveller
3	Female	Singapore	Solo traveller
4	Male	Singapore	Solo traveller
5	Female	Singapore	Married couple
6	Female	Singapore	Solo traveller
7	Female	Singapore	Married couple
8	Male	Singapore	Married couple
9	Female	Australia	Married couple
10	Female	Australia	Married couple
11	Female	Australia	Married couple
12	Male	Australia	Married couple
13	Male	Australia	Solo traveller
14	Male	Australia	Solo traveller
15	Female	Australia	Family
16	Female	Australia	Family

The data sample included 16 bloggers, 8 from Singapore and the other 8 from Australia. The background of the bloggers included 8 married couples, 4 solo travellers and 2 families.

4.2 DESTINATIONS BLOGGED

4.2.1 SINGAPOREAN TRAVEL BLOGGERS

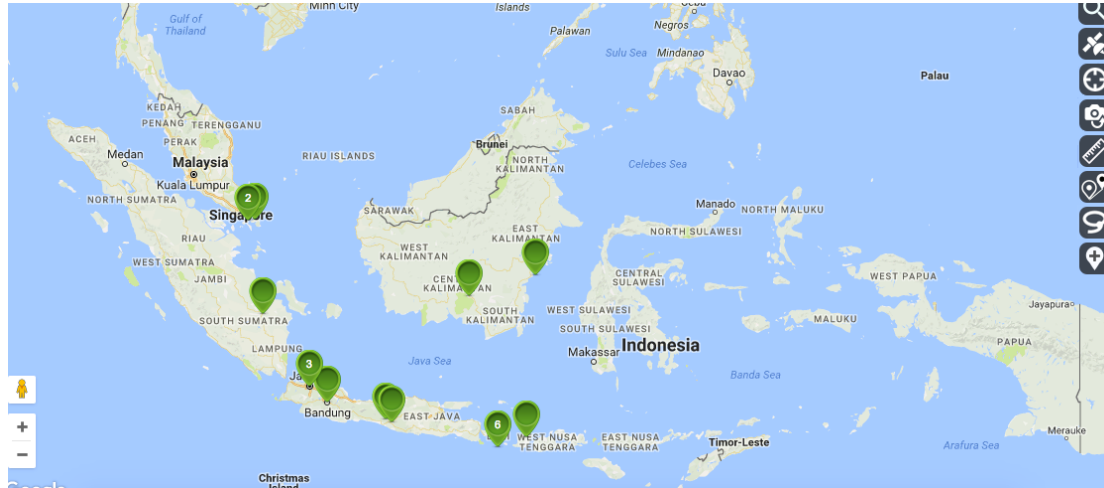


Figure 4.2.1 Indonesia destinations visited by the Singaporean travel bloggers

Figure 4.2.1 shows the Indonesian destinations blogged about by Singaporean tourists. Some of the pins have numbers on them corresponding to the number of bloggers who stayed in those particular areas. Bali was the most visited destination; six of the eight Singaporean tourists blogged about it. Of those six, three have visited Bali more than once. Another popular destination for Singaporean tourists is Jakarta; three bloggers posted about their journey in Indonesia's capital city. Singaporean tourists also visited Bintan and Batam islands, the closest Indonesian islands to Singapore. It only takes a ferry trip to reach Bintan and Batam. It is therefore no surprise that a lot of Singaporean tourists visit these islands. None of the Singaporean tourists studied has ever been to Sulawesi or Papua, suggesting marketing weakness and little knowledge of those destinations among Singaporean travellers. How Singaporean tourists perceive Indonesia as a holiday destination will be explored more deeply in the next chapter.

4.2.2 AUSTRALIAN TRAVEL BLOGGERS

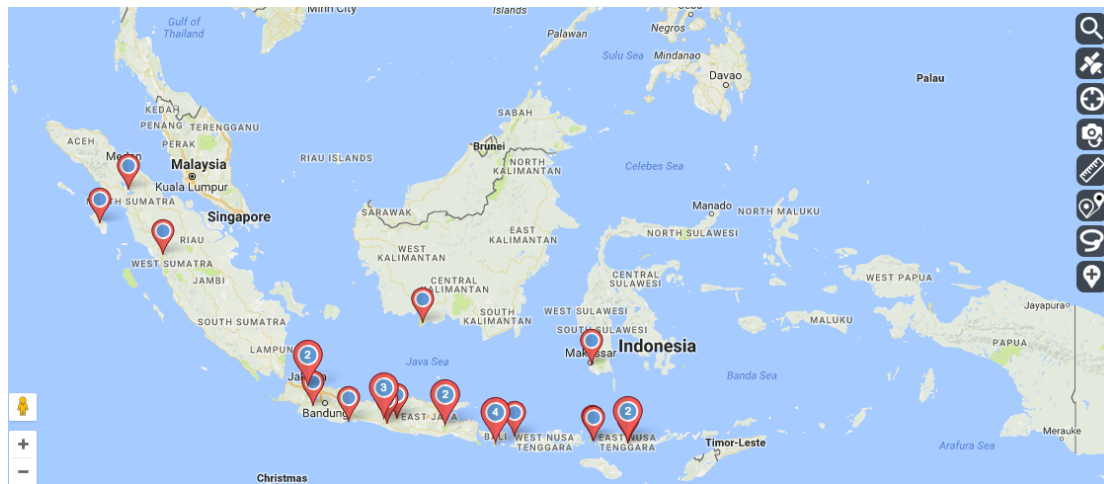


Figure 4.2.2 Indonesia destinations visited by the Australian travel bloggers

Figure 4.2.2 shows that most of the Australian tourists prefer to visit the Java Island, Bali, and Komodo Island. The most recognised destination is Bali as four out of the eight tourists blogged about it. Two of them had only been to Bali, and one other had been to Bali nine times. This result confirms the Ogilvy’s research on Indonesia that Western markets are mostly only familiar with Bali (Apriyanti, personal communication, June 2, 2016). It is interesting to note the evenly distributed destination among the Australian tourists. Two bloggers came to East Nusa Tenggara to see komodo dragons – the venomous, largest living lizard in the world. Three of them visited the Borobudur temples in Central Java. Borobudur temple is listed as the largest Buddhist monument in the world by Guinness World Records (Budhiana, 2012) earning it the title of “Indonesia’s signature Buddhist monument” from Lonely Planet. It has become one of the most visited tourist attraction in Indonesia. Other than that, Australian tourists mainly come to Indonesia to enjoy natural attractions; such as, trekking in the Sumatran jungles, hiking in the Mount Bromo and Mount Rinjani National Parks on the Java islands, watching the komodo dragons in Komodo Island, and relaxing in Bali. Sulawesi and Papua are still also relatively unknown to the Australian tourists.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: WHAT ARE THE WORDS USED BY THE TRAVEL BLOGGERS IN DESCRIBING INDONESIA?

The first research question aims to find the most frequent word used to describe Indonesia in Singaporean and Australian travel blogs. By identifying the most frequently used word, we discover what comes to the tourists' minds first when they think of Indonesia. After transcribing (see textual analysis 3.4.1), the researcher ran a word frequency query in Nvivo 10. Such methodology has been commonly used in many destination image studies using text based materials (Sun, Ryan, & Pan, 2015). Furthermore, this thesis goes beyond mere word count to latent content analysis—meaning understanding the underlying contexts. This summative approach to qualitative content analysis is unobtrusive and provides insights into how words are actually used (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

As shown in **Table 4.3**, the top 10 mentioned words are *Bali, beach, temple, food, hotel, Indonesia, locals, island, shopping and restaurant*.

Table 4.3 Words used to describe Indonesia

Categories	Keywords (Frequency)
Urban & tourist sites	Bali (379), temple (216), Indonesia (167), Kuta (136), Jakarta (132), city (96), park (82), market (64), Bintan (62), Tanah Lot (53), mall (53), buildings (51), museum (48), Jimbaran (44), Batam (43), village (43), palace (42), site (38), Ubud (36), attractions (35), Seminyak (33), Uluwatu (32), town (29), Makassar (28), pura (28), Sumatra (25), Samabe (22), monument (22), Bandung (21), Borobudur (21), safari (20), Waterbom (19)
Natural attractions	Beach (285), island (154), sunset (82), animals (66), ocean (65), nature (60), monkeys (55), orangutans (49), mountains (48), sunrise (36), cliffs (35), jungle (29), forest (28), garden (27), crater (26), river (23), waterfall (22), komodo (16)
Entertainment & activities	Shopping (143), walks (110), shows (61), massage (53), fishing (51), dance (46), dining (45), spa (37), surfing (37), swimming (36), club/clubbing (35), sports (19), golf (19), diving (19), hiking (7), biking (5)

Culture, history & art	Culture (59), traditional (57), history (28), architecture (21), statues (19), paintings (18)
People & life	Local (146), Indonesian (123), people (119), Balinese (98), kids (94), tourists (89), guides (85), family (63), crowds (56), children (32), Western (29), Hindu (29), ceremony (25), gods (23)
Food & beverage	Food (197), restaurant (152), drink (60), dinner (60), rice (57), breakfast (56), fried-food (47), seafood (44), chicken (41), coffee (40), vegetables (34), buffet (32), cuisine (32), soup (29), café (28), chocolate (27), Chinese (27), fruits (26), Italian (26), banana (25), coconut (23)
Accommodation	Hotel (174), resort (168), pool (131), villa (73), Sheraton (54), facilities (20)
Price & quality	Price (80), budget (30), brands (21), authentic (20)
Infrastructure & transportation	Boats (63), ferry (42), drivers (36), traffic (35), taxi (31), bus (25), terminal (23), toilet (18), construction (18)
Environment & safety	Air (54), security (21), environment (7), pollution (5)

4.3.1 URBAN AND TOURIST SITES

This category includes cities, regions, and all the man-made attractions. In a previous study (Li & Wang, 2011) where this framework was adopted, urban/tourist sites and natural attractions were put into one group. However, given the large number of results in this category in this study the researcher decided to divide it into two subcategories.

Bali was the most frequent word used by the bloggers as it was mentioned for 379 times across all 16 blogs. Bali is famous as “the island of a thousand temples”, and it was no surprise that some of the bloggers used this tagline in their blogs. As a result, the word “temple” became the second most mentioned word. These temples, also referred as *puras*, are places of worship for the adherents of the predominant Balinese Hinduism. Temples are also key attractions in other parts of Indonesia where Hinduism was once dominantly practised. Although some of the bloggers suggested readers visit other destinations in Indonesia, Bali has been highlighted as the must visit place. Furthermore, this island is considered to be the “backyard” of Australia.

*"Indonesia is a much loved holiday destination for Australian families."
(Blogger 16)*

"Kuta feels like familiar territory to us. I realise it's not everyone's cup of tea, and over the years the district has gained a reputation as a crowded tourist hotspot for Australians." (Blogger 15)

This immense popularity of Bali has long been acknowledged by the government. Both Australian and Singaporean tourists perceive Bali as Indonesia's best destination for its affordable luxury and proximity.

Among the most mentioned words in the urban and tourist sites category is Kuta Beach (word frequency: 136). This most famous beach front is also the most congested area in the region, as it accommodates resorts, malls, and markets with various kinds of stalls. Once a quiet fishing village, Kuta has undergone a major transformation over the past years because of the increasing development of tourism facilities. It is now often criticised for its frenzied traffic and poorly planned buildings. These complaints were also discussed in the blogs. Despite these criticisms and the acknowledgment of the commercialisation of Kuta, the bloggers still include this spot in their itineraries, resulting in a large number of references in the blogs. A few of the bloggers included tips for readers about parts of the island to explore to find the real "authentic" Bali.

"Bali's diminutive villages are worlds away from the sprawling tourist towns of Kuta and Seminyak, as you'll discover if you go for a drive, stop the car in some out-of-the-way village, and take a wander." (Blogger 4)

"The island is home to rich culture and traditions that has survived over centuries. Its people toil their farms and worship in their temples invoking blessings and dreading the wrath of Gods above. It's a place where religious mysticism, simple villagers and beautiful sceneries

come alive when the island is explored past its all too familiar island retreat itinerary." (Blogger 7)

In addition to that, Tanah Lot (53) – literally translated as Land in the Sea – is considered to be the most notorious Hindu temple in Bali. The temple was built on a large offshore rock, and is reachable by a few minutes' walk, as it is only 20 meters away from the coastal lip. The Tanah Lot temple has been a part of Balinese mythology for centuries. Given its unique setting and sunset backdrops, Tanah Lot is undoubtedly the most frequently featured temple on Balinese postcards, and has become the most photographed tourist attraction in Bali. Both Kuta Beach and Tanah Lot are the most mentioned and photographed places in the blogs. This validates the Gaze Theory, in which tourists do not anticipate surprises but confirm what they expect to see by taking photographs of the popular landmarks. Kuta Beach and Tanah Lot are "image carriers" – urban signs that are photographed, multiplied, and distributed by the DMOs and that successfully stick in tourists' minds. Every blogger who blogged about Bali mentioned Kuta Beach and Tanah Lot. Given the strong images, tourists feel compelled to visit these conventional "must-see" tourist attractions, otherwise their trip would be considered lacking.

"A trip to Bali isn't complete if you have not set foot at Kuta Beach. This is the most crowded place in Bali and where all the action happens." (Blogger 3)

"Known as Pura Tanah Lot, the temple is besieged by tourists in the late afternoon who come by bus loads to view it at sunset to capture the famous silhouette photo of this mesmerizing structure." (Blogger 7)

"Whoa! I've been 9 times to Bali and I've never been here. How is that possible?! During high tide the rock formation (of Tanah Lot) is completely surrounded by water, making it a photographer's dream location." (Blogger 15)

It is worth pointing out that Bali is mentioned two times more often than Indonesia itself. The word frequency of Bali is 379, while Indonesia is only 167. Given its unique popularity, Bali has become the image of Indonesia – the first thing that comes to tourists’ minds when Indonesia is mentioned. Additionally, as shown in **Table 4.3**, nine others of the most frequently used words in urban/tourist sites category are also directly linked to Bali – Kuta, Tanah Lot, Jimbaran, Ubud, Seminyak, Uluwatu, Pura, Samabe, and Waterbom. The most popular combination of destinations in Bali for the international tourists is Kuta Beach, Tanah Lot, Jimbaran, Seminyak, and Ubud. These places are mainly famous for their nature, seafood, resorts, and culture. Typical tourists’ activities in Bali include enjoying sunsets, watching the Balinese Kecak and fire dance performances, visiting temples, and relaxing in the luxury hotels.

Other than Bali, the most talked destinations among the travel bloggers are Jakarta (132), Bintan Island (62), Batam Island (43), and Borobudur Temple (21) in Java. This confirms Euromonitor’s report (2016) on how Bali and Jakarta are still the most notable tourist attractions despite vigorous promotion of other destinations. Jakarta, with its countless malls, is a perfect place to shop. The words “shopping” and “malls” also appeared repeatedly in blogs. As one blogger said, “In Jakarta, it seems shopping is the national hobby” (Blogger 14). In Jakarta, tourists also show a preference for going clubbing.

“Jakarta has a reputation as the best nightlife city in Asia. Certainly, compared to other cities I’ve visited in the region, one of the advantages it has is that it’s not full of tourists. The mix of upper class locals and Western expats gives the bars and nightclubs of Jakarta a hospitable and familiar atmosphere.” (Blogger 13)

Even though Jakarta is the capital city and offers an array of diverse tourist activities, it is not seen as a must-go-to destination. Instead, many international tourists perceive Indonesia through visiting Bali. Bali has become the tourism representation of Indonesian. Most people link Jakarta with its famous traffic. This strong image of

congested Jakarta is not without basis. The capital has been named for the world's worst traffic (Toppa, 2015).

Overall the bloggers noted that Indonesia's best tourism products are not its modern cities, but its abundant natural resources, which can be found in other parts of the country.

"The first impressions of Jakarta are of a long drive in from the airport with poor traffic, a crowded and confusing city, and no obvious reason for visiting (Indonesia's greatest attractions are spread out elsewhere in the archipelago)." (Blogger 14).

"We were not planning to spend any time in Jakarta. Crowded, congested, polluted – it was not our ideas of a good time." (Blogger 16)

4.3.2 NATURAL ATTRACTIONS, TOURISTS' ENTERTAINMENT AND ACTIVITIES

Among the natural attractions in Indonesia, 'beach' is the most preferred holiday spot for the bloggers. It was mentioned for 285 times, making it the most popular natural attractions in Indonesia. This might be due to the strong image of sun, sand, and sea, which, although they are no longer explicitly mentioned on the Ministry of Tourism's official site, have been growing for years in tourists' minds through association with Bali. The high number of results in this category is due to the many references to Balinese beaches in the blogs. According to the bloggers, Kuta Beach is said to be the most overrated yet legendary beach, Jimbaran is famous for its seafood, Nusa Dua houses the best resorts, and Seminyak is the best place to watch sunset and sunrise. Generally, the coastal areas are considered "pristine" and have beautiful blue sea water.

Another frequent word found in the blogs is “island”. This is mainly used as a reference to Bali Island and Bintan Island. The former is more famous among Australian tourists, whereas the latter is more popular with Singaporean tourists. Additionally, there are several references to Indonesia as “a country with a thousand islands.” Wonderful Indonesia also asserted this idea on its website, stating that Indonesia is “the largest archipelago in the world comprising 13,466 large and small tropical islands fringed with white sandy beaches, many still uninhabited and a number even still unnamed” (Wonderful Indonesia, 2016). It is clear that the travel bloggers strongly associate Indonesia with its natural attractions, especially beaches and islands.

One of the bloggers, at the invitation of the Ministry of Tourism, visited “less common” beaches such as Pink Beach on Komodo Island, and Pangandaran Beach on Java. According to the blogger, the “undiscovered” beaches are more authentic as they are filled with more locals than international tourists.

“Pangandaran—an alternative beach destination to Bali. Up until a few days before I arrived I had never heard of Pangandaran. This fishing village on the south coast of West Java is a popular beach resort (if you can describe it as that) for domestic visitors, but like much of Indonesia beyond Bali, it is not on the international travel radar. What I loved about Pangandaran was that I had that feeling of being somewhere exotic. Having spent a lot of time on crowded Thai beaches I had long lost that feeling. An empty beach, coffee coloured sand, dense jungle and mountains in the background, on a tropical island formed of volcanic eruptions, this is what I imagined a tropical beach in Southeast Asia to look like.” (Blogger 14)

“Pink Beach—I can’t think of any finer I’ve ever laid eyes on. Far from the crowds, out of sight from the typical tourist trail, it’s a little bit of paradise in Indonesia.” (Blogger 14)

Other frequently used words related to the nature include sunset and sunrise. According to the bloggers, these scenes are best viewed from the beach or the mountain – the two natural attractions most frequently used in the blogs.

*“Sunrise over Mt Bromo was the most breathtakingly beautiful act of Mother Nature that I have ever had the pleasure of witnessing.”
(Blogger 9)*

“Sunrise over Mt Bromo was far too magical for even my big dreams. I had finally become the explorer whose eyes were the first to gaze upon untold beauty and splendour.” (Blogger 1)

Among all the mountains and jungles mentioned, Mount Bromo, Mount Rinjani, and the rainforests in Kalimantan, Borneo Island were the most talked about. The bloggers suggested that readers to go “walking/hiking”, “fishing”, “surfing”, “swimming”, “diving”, and “biking”. These nature-based activities are in the entertainment and activities subcategory. Tourists also favour “spa”, “massage”, “clubbing”, “dining”, and “shows”. The Balinese Kecak Fire Dance is very famous among the international tourists. This dance is performed by about 50 bare-chested male dancers chanting a “keh-chack” polyrhythmic choir. The dance was taken from the Ramayana Hindu epic and traditionally featured in tourists’ itineraries. Consequently, the Kecak Fire Dance is now internationally recognised as one of Bali’s signature dances. Bloggers were charmed by the atmosphere surrounding the dance. As the gaze theory suggests, tourists see beyond the performance. What the bloggers gaze upon through this moving body is the Balinese culture – the story behind the dance. MacCannell (1973, as cited in Urry & Larsen, 2011) says this is the example of “staged authenticity” and “reconstructed ethnicity”.

“Draped in black and white chequered cloth, the men perform with rich expressions and vigorous arm movements either sitting down or standing in a circle forming the dance arena. As the sun sets and darkness creeps in, the arena is dramatically lit by flickering bamboo torches....even the breath-taking views of the waves crashing onto the

cliffs are soon forgotten as the trilling Fire Dance gets you transfixed and hypnotized." (Blogger 7)

Beerli and Martin (2004) claim natural attractions include natural resources, weather, flora and fauna. Under the natural attractions category, it was found monkeys (55), that orang-utans (49), and komodo dragons (16) are the most sought after native species of fauna in Indonesia. To see these animals in their own natural habitats, bloggers went to non-stereotypical destinations – such as Kalimantan on Borneo and Komodo Island. Both regions are now being heavily promoted by the Ministry of Tourism on their website.

Table 4.3 shows that Indonesia is best well-known for its natural attractions. Beach, island, mountain, sunrise, and sunset are the most prominent images of Indonesia in the minds of tourists. Above all else, Bali is the representation of Indonesia for tourists. The best Indonesian tourism products include nature-based activities – such as surfing, fishing, hiking, swimming, watching traditional dances, spa and massage. Despite the Ministry of Tourism’s effort at promoting new destinations in Indonesia, international tourists are still concentrated in the traditional popular areas – such as Bali, Jakarta, Batam, and Bintan. This also confirms Urry’s gaze theory that tourists visit a place because it is signed as a must visit destination by the tourism industry.

4.3.3 CULTURE AND PEOPLE

According to the Tourist Gaze theory, tourists travel in order to experience culture that is different from in their home country (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Given its contrast with their own culture, bloggers have shown a huge interest in Indonesian traditions. Indonesia is rich in culture and history. It is home to 200 ethnic groups influenced by Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. Although Indonesia now has the largest Muslim population of any country in the world, it was dominated by Hinduism and Buddhism in the eighth and tenth centuries. These constructed the popular Borobudur and Prambanan temples on Java Island. Hinduism lost ground to quickly expanding

Islam and retreated to Bali, which now accommodates nearly 90 per cent of Indonesian Hindus. With Bali and the Hindu temples becoming the most popular tourist attractions in Indonesia, it is not surprising that most bloggers focused on the Hindu imprint on Indonesia through its architecture, modern practice, and the lifestyle of the local people.

Many references have been made about how religion, culture, and history have influenced Indonesian lifestyle and traditions. Bloggers frequently used the word “traditional” (57). Both Singaporean and Australian tourists enjoy watching and being a part of the traditional lifestyle of Indonesians – such as traditional boat making, watching traditional dances, tasting the traditional food, and buying traditional art, textiles and crafts. These aspects of traditional Indonesian lifestyle are attractive to tourists because they are so different to what they experience in their more modernised home countries.

“With a treasure trove of fine art, wooden and lime stone carvings, traditional and ceremonial masks, handmade jewellery, paintings, furniture and fabrics, Bali is nothing short of gaspingly amazing!”
(Blogger 3)

4.3.4 FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Food is an important tourism attribute for Indonesia. Almost every blogger in this research had at least one entry dedicated to Indonesian food and beverage. The word “food” itself was mentioned for 197 times. The Singaporean and Australian tourists often reviewed their unique meal experiences in Indonesia ranging from five star hotel experiences to street food. As shown in **Table 4.3**, the bloggers preferred to dine in the restaurants. They especially enjoyed eating at ethnic restaurants that offered “authentic” food and cultural ambience. Other than sit-down ethnic restaurants, the bloggers also went to cafes, coffeehouse, and small-scale street vendors, such as food

carts. “Buffet” (32) was mentioned frequently because of the bloggers staying in hotels and resorts, which typically serve food in buffet style for breakfasts and dinners. The buffet was applauded because of the assortment of the food choices. The bloggers were impressed by their Indonesian food adventure.

“Sometimes vacationers enjoy a cultural aspect when it comes to dining. They want local food, served by locals in a traditional environment. That is where White Rose Kuta Resort, Villas & Spa comes into the picture.” (Blogger 15)

“You can try these Balinese foods almost anywhere, from budget to upscale restaurants, from roadside food vendors to luxury hotels. But whatever you do, make sure you tick them all off.” (Blogger 14)

Cuisine has been recognised as an effective marketing and positioning tool of a destination, and is becoming a crucial tourism product (Karim & Chi, 2010). Food can be used to enhance tourists’ experience, to represent a region’s cultural identity (Frochot, 2003), and/or to be the main reason for tourists to visit a destination. Based on the analysis of the blogs, while in Indonesia, the bloggers opted for traditional food over Western meals. Rice (57) and fried-food (47) were amongst the most popular dishes. Rice is the staple food in most Asian countries, and especially in Indonesia, which is the third largest rice producing country in the world (FAOSTAT, 2014, as cited in *Rice*, 2016). In Indonesia, rice is rarely absent from a meal, and thus the bloggers, notably the Australians, find it intriguing. Fried-food such as pisang goreng (fried banana), fried rice, fried noodle, and other street snacks are very popular. Other typical cuisines consumed by the bloggers were seafood, chicken, vegetables, soup, chocolate, fruits, banana, and coconut. Tourists travel in quest for novelty and strangeness. On a trip they are generally more willing to take risks, including new culinary experiences, than in their ordinary lives (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). This is confirmed by this study as it shows that both Singaporean and Australian tourists prefer native food compared to their familiar foodstuffs and dishes. However, the

bloggers were mainly exposed to “iconic” eateries that capitalise on the archipelagic and the tropical image of Indonesia.

According to the Australian bloggers, unlike in some other Asian countries, it is easy to find mild, non-spicy foods in Indonesia that are suitable for children, thus encouraging readers to go to Indonesia because it is seen as a family-friendly travel destination.

4.3.5 ACCOMMODATION, PRICE AND QUALITY

The bloggers showed a preference to stay in hotels (174) and resorts (168) in Indonesia. Only one out of the 16 bloggers had the experience of staying in a budget hotel. It could be argued that this is linked to Indonesian price and quality. Prices in Indonesia are relatively low compared to Singapore and Australia, hence staying in a resort or hotel is considered affordable. As one of the bloggers suggested, in Indonesia, *“you get what you pay for.”*

The bloggers predominantly stayed in three to five stars hotels. The most well-known hotels in Bintan and Batam Island, according to the Singaporean bloggers, are Bintan Lagoon Resorts and Batam View Beach Resort. Other than the good reviews, a few of the Singaporean bloggers chose these hotels because of the 3D2N short getaway package to Indonesia. Those that went to Bali often stayed in luxury resorts such as Sheraton, Four Seasons, St Regis, and Samabe.

Some of the posts about accommodation in Indonesia were sponsored. As was discussed in the Literature Review, the Ministry of Tourism understands the power of bloggers, and so frequently invites them to travel to Indonesia. Also hotel brands themselves invite the travel bloggers to stay, free of charge, in exchange of a review or a write up. Based on the analysis of the blogs, most of the sponsored posts are about the hotels or resorts in Bali. The fierce competition between hotels is because of

the over-supply in Bali, which consequently leads to the decreasing occupancy rate. As more hotel rooms flood the market, the hoteliers strive to keep their business afloat by inviting travel bloggers. The credibility of hotels is now influenced by their online reviews. In regards to Indonesia, most bloggers complimented the hotels' service and emphasised the generous size of the rooms, the pools, and other facilities.

One chain brand of luxury hotels, Sheraton, appeared as one of the most mentioned words in this category. Sheraton Bali Kuta Resort (54) actively invited both Singaporean and Australian bloggers to stay with them and enjoy their new food and beverage concept: Sunday Market Brunch, which has received numerous positive reviews from bloggers. This unique brunch allows the guests to try local delicacies and to shop for some groceries and fresh food. Two of the bloggers found this concept interesting because Kuta, the area in which this hotel located, has been so westernised that as far as the eyes can see, it is surrounded by Western food. This supports Tseng et al., (2015) suggestions that combination of place like markets with food can effectively express the local culture, and give tourists a greater sense of authenticity.

"What really makes this brunch different from any other is the market aspect. The international-themed brunch is hosted alongside a small open-air market positioned at the front of the restaurant not only showcasing delicious local and international cuisine, but handmade crafts and services from local farmers, artisans & vendors." (Blogger 15)

Regarding price and quality, the most repeated words related to budget (30), brands (21), and authentic (20). Indonesia is seen as a good place to buy branded foodstuffs at relatively cheap prices. As it was mentioned earlier, "shopping" plays a big part in tourist activity in Indonesia. Given the low prices, tourists question the realness or the authenticity of the branded products. Compared to Australian tourists, Singaporean tourists are a lot more critical about shopping in Indonesia. Singapore and Indonesia are both in South East Asia and therefore share more similarities in terms of products

and culture than Australia does. Tourists become more sensitive to price and quality when they can find similar wares in their own country.

“Verdict – overpriced chocolates; most can be found in Singapore. Those that are new to me are Indonesian chocolates which doesn’t sound or look appetizing.” (Blogger 3)

4.3.6 INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORTATION, ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY ISSUES

Boats (63) and ferries (42) are said to be the most popular forms of transports within Indonesia for the tourists. This is because of the short sea trips travellers must take to reach small islands. In some parts of Indonesia, small boat is still the only way to travel. For example, in the deep jungle of Kalimantan when going to see the iconic and endangered orangutan, bloggers had to take a traditional small boat, called klotok. They truly felt the wilderness of the natural environment. In the cities, taxis and buses were also used, but the bloggers rarely mentioned it. Most of the tourists still prefer metered taxis as the buses in Indonesia can be unsafe. Public transportation in Indonesia is still limited and cannot be relied upon. There were negative comments about how the transportation was not in good condition. The bloggers also warned readers to be extra careful in taking public transport because of pickpockets.

“A chartered van picked us up from the terminal. It was small and old. The return van was worse. It looked ready to fall apart.” (Blogger 2)

Bloggers also showed a preference for renting cars and hire personal drivers for sightseeing tours. The bloggers frequently spoke highly of the local drivers for their knowledge, assistance, and kindness. Even though it is moderately more expensive to employ a chauffeur-driver, it is considered to be the safest and most comfortable way of traveling in Indonesia. In terms of other infrastructure, there were some concerns

about unstable electricity and Wi-Fi in relatively rural areas of Indonesia. Not only the public transport but also the airport terminal and the station were of concern for bloggers as neither is airport built to support the growing tourism.

“With such a bad scar in their history, safety is something that they cannot compromise and these measures actually made me feel safer in Bali.” (Blogger 3)

Previous studies of Indonesia showed that Indonesia is often associated with terrorist attacks, in this research the bloggers have not made many remarks in regards to the previous bombings. Martínez and Alvarez (2010, p. 759) say “in the tourism sector, a negative country image does not necessarily affect the perceptions related to the destination.” The distinction between country image and tourism image shows that despite the negative perceptions of the country from economic/political point of view, a nation may be positively viewed from tourism perspective. It is considered safe to travel in Indonesia. The main safety issues discussed are related to pickpockets and political rallies. Furthermore, the bloggers believe that Bali has not only recovered from the attack, but now has a better security plan.

An image of polluted country (5) comes to the bloggers’ minds in relation to Indonesia. Indonesia has never been known for its preservation of nature. The bloggers shared their distress about dirty tourist sites and natural attractions, as well as the poorly managed conservation attempts in Kalimantan and Sumatra. Several hygiene concerns were raised in relation to street food and the water in the Holy Spring Temple of Bali.

“We came to the Holy Spring Temple with the intention to soak ourselves in some holy water, and was fully prepared to get all wet. But the huge crowds and the standard of hygiene made us forfeit that plan.” (Blogger 1)

"Numerous makeshift food stalls lined a busy road to create a dining with death experience. Hygiene standards don't seem to be at the highest so eat at your own risk." (Blogger 2)

In contrast, relatively new tourist attractions in Bali, such as Waterbom – the premiere water park in Asia according to TripAdvisor – and the resorts, were applauded for being environmentally friendly. Even though the other parts of Indonesia have not received the same positive comments, the bloggers believe that the locals are starting to be more environmentally conscious

"I applaud Bali's effort in energy conservation. Even in their 5 star hotels, there was no A/C in the hotel lobby. Despite the terrible heat, no air conditioning in hotel lobbies seemed to be the norm." (Blogger 3)

"Environmentally minded visitors will be pleased to know that Waterbom recycles 3600m³ of water each day. The waterslides are all built and maintained to strict international safety standards, so we didn't feel concerned for our wellbeing unlike several other places we've visited in Bali." (Blogger 15)

4.4 IMAGES USED TO DESCRIBE INDONESIA

Destination image is built not only on words, but also images. The 1871 images in the travel blogs were analysed based on motifs (objects) and themes (focal themes) as applied in other studies of tourism photography (Govers & Go, 2005; Sternberg, 1997).

Table 4.4 Frequency of photographs in travel blogs by category

Focal theme	Singapore	Australia
Attractions (hotels, culture, art)	332 (30%)	223 (29.2%)
Landscapes	209 (18.9%)	110 (14.4%)
Food & Beverage	152 (13.7%)	132 (17.3%)
Self-portraits	99 (8.9%)	76 (10%)
Locals	86 (7.8%)	81 (10.6%)
Fauna	21 (1.9%)	56 (7.3%)
Others (menu, activities, price list, map, transportation, crowds, traffic)	208 (18.8%)	85 (11.2%)
Total	1108 (100%)	763 (100%)

According to Govers and Go (2005), in content analysis of images, appearance or absence of tourists in images can be used as a way to distinguish between tourist gaze (Urry & Larsen, 2011) and experience (Fairweather & Swaffield, 2002). Therefore in this study, in photographs in which the bloggers appeared, the focal theme was defined as being experiential (performance) whereas in photographs where the bloggers were absent, the focal theme was defined as representations or reflections of objects and activities (tourist gaze). This technique is supported by Hoffman and Novak (1996, as cited in Govers & Go, 2009) through the concept “telepresence” that claims that the appearance of tourists in images helps consumers to imagine themselves in the actual travel experience.

The above shows that Singaporean travel bloggers post more photographs than Australian bloggers. Furthermore, out of 763 photographs in Australian blogs, 532 (70%) of them are from Blogger 15, who travels with her family and thus justified the relatively huge number of the photos. Socio-demographics influence tourist behaviour

and in this case, bloggers who travel with children or family take more photographs than solo travellers or married couples.

As seen in **Table 4.4**, 30 per cent of photographs in the travel blogs are about tourist attractions in Indonesia. The attraction category includes the man-made tourist sites (temples, museums, and recreational facilities), luxury resorts, reflections of culture through crafts/souvenirs, cultural heritage, traditional performances, and so on. Hindu sculptures, and *canang sari* (Balinese daily offerings to the gods) are among the most photographed objects. That suggests that what is photographed by the bloggers is very much attraction/activity based. The absence of the bloggers in these pictures shows that these images are non-experiential. The most photographed landmarks are Borobudur and Balinese temples – as projected in promotional marketing tools – suggesting that the bloggers are gazing at the places the Ministry of Tourism wants them to.

The second most frequently photographed theme is landscapes. This group includes the natural attractions of Indonesia; such as beach, mountain, jungle, sunset, and so on. Although both of Singaporean and Australian tourists frequently captured the scenery of Indonesia, the former featured more landscape images in their blogs. In contrast, the Australian tourists were a lot more interested in taking pictures of the local fauna (orangutans, komodo dragons, etc.). The difference between these two categories (landscapes and fauna) is relatively large. This may be explained by the demographics and cultural background of the tourists. Given its location, Singapore is more likely to have similar wildlife to Indonesia. However, rapid deforestation has destroyed 95 per cent of Singaporean natural habitats and much of its native fauna (Brook, Sodhi, & Ng, 2003). Singaporeans who grow up in urban settings are more likely to be familiar with city-based activities than with traveling to rural areas to see endangered species in their natural habitats. By contrast, Australians are not strangers to wildlife as the country is home to some of the most intriguing animals and is very committed to conservation (Ironsides, 2017). Tourism Australia has even launched a new campaign called “Australian Wildlife Collection” for tourists who wanted to ensure their visit was sustainable. Anglo-Australians, in particular, take ecologically

sustainable development very seriously. The difference between Singaporean and Australian tourists approach to wildlife confirms Aslin and Bennett's study (2000), which suggests that people's perspectives on wildlife are bound to their cultural assumptions and world views. This concept is expressed through the photographs taken by the bloggers.

Nearly 10 per cent of the photographs from both sets of bloggers are self-portraits. As shown in above table, Singaporean travel bloggers feature more self-portraits more often than Australian bloggers. Many of these photographs were self-portraits or selfies of the bloggers posing at the tourist sites. This is part of the "telepresence" concept discussed previously, in which through the photograph, the readers envision themselves being in the place. This result suggests that Singaporeans share the Confucian value with the Chinese reported on by Sun, Ryan, and Pan (2014), which showed that Chinese tourists are likely to post large numbers of photographs that record their presence at a tourist attraction as an adjunct to the landscape. These photographs are experiential, meaning that the viewers see the destinations through the eyes of the bloggers, which are more truthful images than those distributed by the DMOs.

The bloggers obviously found their dining experiences in Indonesia positive. They expressed their delights through both words and photographs. Nearly 18% of the photographs posted by Australian bloggers, and 14% for Singaporean were about the food and beverages the bloggers encountered during their visit in Indonesia. It was mentioned previously that, while in Indonesia, the tourists preferred to try local food rather than Western food. Additionally, most of the Singaporean bloggers were more interested in the street food. As Singapore is a south-east Asian country, they are more familiar with the Indonesian dishes, and are likely to equate it with Malaysian cuisine or their own version of the south-east Asian food. Although it was not stated directly through words or photographs, it was seen that Australian bloggers were more attracted to the meals prepared in the restaurants or hotels than street. This could be linked to their image of polluted Indonesia, which may cause them to be wary of

unhygienic food preparation and fear stomach upsets. In general, the photographs of food are positive, showing the appreciation of bloggers towards the local food.

The rest of the featured photographs were put into the category “Others”. This group of photographs were neutral, containing images of maps, price lists, menus, and so on. These pictures did not tell us much about the actual tourism experience, but related directly to consuming specific products. The image analysis showed that most of the photographs in the travel blogs have good nuance, from beautiful sceneries to smiling locals. Photographs are used to support the bloggers’ positive textual descriptions of Indonesian tourism attributes. Most of the pictures capture the calming, somehow “authentic” atmosphere of Indonesia. Yet, a few of the photographs showed the negative side of Indonesia. Even though there are not many, these photographs show a side of Indonesia that the DMOs will not project – for example, the heavy traffic in Jakarta and Bali, the crowds, and infections from mosquitoes and leeches bites while trekking. Showing the reality of a destination is one of the reasons why bloggers are still considered as opinion leaders (Pan, McLaurin, Crofts, 2007) by offering the public truth through concrete images.

It is worth noting that even though “a picture is worth a thousand words”, the photographs taken by the bloggers were mostly experiential-type images. This type of image is fragmented in nature and product based, showing the reality of the offered tourism products (Govers & Go, 2005), and therefore not focused on sensory and emotional cues of the tourists.



Figure 4.4 The traffic in Jakarta and Bali

This chapter shows that, according to the bloggers, Bali is the representation of Indonesian tourism. The word Bali was mentioned more frequently than the country itself, showing the popularity of the island and the extent to which it encapsulates the destination image held by the tourists. Jakarta, Batam, and Bintan Island were also among the most frequently mentioned destinations by both Singaporean and Australian tourists.

This result confirms Euromonitor's research (2016) the Bali, Batam/Bintan Island and Jakarta are still the most well-known destinations. It also means the tourists are gazing at the anticipated destination. Looking back at the conceptual framework (**Figure 2.7**), this selection of destinations were still very much influenced by the external factors, or exposure to the promotional materials by DMO and information searching in Internet. Even though bloggers gaze upon the predicted destination, through their words and photographs, they show the reality of the destination, as opposed to the perfect image created by the Ministry of Tourism. The natural attractions, local culture, and food are Indonesia's strongest tourism attributes. In addition, the results show that bloggers used words/narratives to share their image of a destination. This information is enhanced by "real" photographs. However, even though the words might influence readers' emotions, the photographs were more experiential in nature, or directly related to the tourism products.

Chapter 5: The Negative, Positive and Neutral Tourism Attributes of Indonesia

5.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE, POSITIVE AND NEUTRAL TOURISM ATTRIBUTES OF INDONESIA AS INDICATED IN THE BLOGS?

This chapter discusses the findings related to the second research question. The previous chapter identified the words used to describe Indonesia, but did not capture the holistic image (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993), the researcher therefore added an “Overall feelings” category to get a deeper understanding about bloggers’ feelings about Indonesia. It is necessary to understand tourists’ feelings about a destination because emotions or feelings are a key to decision making and behaviour processes (San Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque, 2008). Whereas the first question focused on tourists’ cognition (beliefs, understanding, and perception of tourism attributes), this second question focuses on the affective component of the tourists assessment of the destination. Cognitive and affective factors create an overall image of a destination.

Through this question, the researcher also categorised the positive, neutral, and negative comments of the image attributes to understand the likes and dislikes of the tourists. Previous destination image studies also analysed positive and negative responses toward various image attributes and found that this can be used to improve the destination and to understand the preferences of the tourists (Li & Wang, 2011), as well as to define the overall image held by tourists (Tseng, Wu, Morrison, Zhang, & Chen, 2015).

Positive comments are remarks that came across to the readers as positive, indicating blogger’s appreciation of a particular tourism attribute. Negative comments indicated bloggers’ disapproval of a particular aspect of Indonesia. Neutral comments were bloggers’ notes or commentary on a tourism attribute that were neither positive nor negative. Neutral comments were recorded in order to clarify bloggers’ opinions on

some elements of Indonesia that are not necessarily good or bad. The analysis identified more positive than negative responses, which indicates that the bloggers tended to have favourable impressions of Indonesia as a tourist destination.

Table 5.1 The positive, neutral and negative tourism attributes of Indonesia

Categories	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Overall
Urban & tourist sites	Good (132), holy (25), wonderful (10), majestic (4)	Ancient (23), busy (21), old (20), sacred (13)		Positive
Natural attractions	Beautiful (61), famous (36), relaxing (20), magnificent (15), gorgeous (14), spectacular (11), breathtaking (9), stunning (8), panoramic (4), scenic (4)		Touristy (15), poor (7)	Positive
Culture, history & art	Rich (14), fascinating (4)		Lost (9)	Positive
People & life	Friendly (33), interesting (34), smiley (21), simple (11), genuine (4), sincere (2)	Hindu (29), religious (15), spiritual (11), Islamic (4)	Traffic (35), crowds (18), strange (11)	Positive
Food & beverage	Delicious (28), awesome (23), yummy (10), delightful (4)	International (26)	Terrible (4), not fresh (3)	Positive
Accommodation	Luxury (17), excellent (13), spacious (13)	Modern (32)	Slow Wi-Fi (6)	Positive
Entertainment & activities	Traditional (56), unique (23), enjoy (20)		Unsatisfying (3)	Positive
Price & quality	Cheap (10), budget (6), reasonable (3)	Worth (15), decent (5), enough (5)	Expensive (15), disappointing (12), overpriced (5), pricey (4), rip-off (3)	Negative
Infrastructure & transportation			Inadequate (2)	Negative
Environment & safety	Safe (14)		Polluted (5), pickpockets (2), grotty (1)	Positive
Overall feelings	Paradise (19), magical (15), romantic (11), exotic (9), mystical (9), extraordinary (4)			Positive

The above table (**Table 5.1**) was created from word frequency tests and manual classification. The researcher subjectively classified the adjectives into the applicable categories. There were unavoidable overlaps in the results of this research question. The same adjectives can be used for several different categories. For example, the word ‘good’ was used as a positive remark about tourist sites, natural attractions, food and beverage, and many others. However, the researcher decided to classify the word “good” in urban and tourist sites as it was found in that specific category the most. The same methodology was applied to all positive, neutral, and negative comments. The comments were coded into positive, neutral, and negative, then the respective adjectives were checked in each category to determine where it was used most. Analysis of this type is essential as it enables further understanding of which attributes need to be improved and whether the whole travel experience in Indonesia is considered positive or negative.

5.1.1 DESTINATIONS AND ATTRACTIONS

Based on the results in **Table 5.1**, Indonesia generally received positive comments. Indonesia is relatively large and so each place within the country has a strikingly different image. Despite these diverse images, the bloggers deemed the urban and tourist sites in Indonesia to be “good” (132). Bali is described as a “paradise” (19) – a good place to escape to and be treated like a king. Jakarta, despite its traffic congestion, is considered to be a good place to start to understand the cultural of the country as it houses the best museums. Less well-known destinations in Indonesia that are not filled with tourists offer a more authentic experience.

“The first impressions of Jakarta are of a long drive in from the airport with poor traffic, a crowded and confusing city, and no obvious reason for visiting (Indonesia’s greatest attractions are spread out elsewhere in the archipelago). But because Jakarta is usually not on the radar of tourists, there’s an authenticity to much of it that is hard to avoid.”
(Blogger 13)

"What I loved about Pangandaran was that I had that feeling of being somewhere exotic. Having spent a lot of time on crowded Thai beaches I had long lost that feeling. An empty beach, coffee colored sand, dense jungle and mountains in the background, on a tropical island formed of volcanic eruptions, this is what I imagined a tropical beach in Southeast Asia to look like." (Blogger 13)

Bloggers also used words such as "holy" (25) and "majestic" (4), which are usually linked to spirituality and the religious aspects of Indonesian culture that influence the development of places. Bloggers also noted that tourist sites were "busy" (21) or "old" (20); terms usually associated with the traditionally popular attractions such as Borobudur temple and Kuta. The words "busy" and "old" do not necessarily indicate negative remarks, but in a broad sense they may be interpreted as a warning to the authority for a better site management. Furthermore, even though bloggers often showed fascination towards ancient sites (23), they also deplored the deterioration of the buildings.

"As I arrive, I can see that it has fallen slightly into disrepair. Not in the sense that it hasn't been looked after – more that it has not been maintained to the same level an actively-used palace would have been." (Blogger 14)

"The Borobudur Temple complex is the single most visited site in Indonesia, although the majority of tourists are Indonesians. The increasing numbers are presenting challenges and the authorities are looking at ways to manage any potential damage to the site. Millions of dollars have been spent on restoration and preservation over recent decades – particularly by UNESCO, which listed the site on the World Heritage List in 1991. Something so intricate but also so large, abandoned for so many years, needs a lot of love and care. Being closer to Heaven doesn't make it immune from the hands of man." (Blogger14)

Although urban areas and tourist sites received positive comments from the bloggers, the natural wonders of Indonesia earned even more compliments. The natural attractions in Indonesia are considered as “beautiful” (61), “famous” (36), “relaxing” (20) and have “breathtaking” (9) views. There were a few negative remarks, commenting on how touristy (15) some of the natural attractions have become. Occasionally, these comments led to other discussions about crowds (18) and polluted areas (5).

One of the issues repeatedly discussed by the bloggers was the badly managed wildlife conservation (7) all around Indonesia. Given its fortunate location and its vast tropical territory, Indonesia is blessed with a high level of biodiversity. Its iconic species include the orangutan (red ape), Sumatran tiger, Javan two-horned rhinoceros, Sumatran elephants, Komodo dragon, Anoa “midget buffalo”, and various breeding birds. Unfortunately, many of these species continue to decline because of the rapid loss of rainforests in Kalimantan, human intervention, habitat destruction, and crimes against wildlife. Indonesia’s conservation efforts are considered to be inefficient. The bloggers heavily criticised the sight of apparently neglected animals at animal shows and the zoo. One of the bloggers pointed out the paradox that the human intervention into wildlife population can either save or endanger it.

“But tourism could, in some ways, be the very thing that protects the orangutans and their habitat. The biggest threat to the animals is the destruction of the jungles here in Kalimantan. Local Indonesians are cutting it down to build palm oil plantations. But they’re only doing it because it’s the easiest way to make a living.” (Blogger 14)

“This wasn’t a place to learn about and appreciate the animals that live among us, this was a place to watch poor exploited animals perform tricks for human amusement. But when that sun bear came out on a tricycle, riding its bike back and forth across the stage..... We couldn’t take it anymore. It was at that point we had to get up and leave.” (Blogger 16)

"Calling it a zoo needs a lot of imagination as all there is was a few badly maintained cages with some birds & lots of rabbits." (Blogger 2)

The media have covered this issue many times as locals have uploaded gruesome photographs of them hunting and barbecuing endangered animals (Satriastanti, 2015). Unfortunately, the perpetrators of these wildlife crimes often receive less than the maximum penalty. The societal attitudes of Indonesians towards wildlife and the lack of law enforcement have been criticised in the media and also by the bloggers. However, one of the bloggers suggested that, as the number of international tourists increases, there is a potential for more donations and support for conservation. That may help the locals recognise the benefits of tourism and encourage them to pursue conservation rather than palm oil plantations. Other than the wildlife protection issue, the natural attractions of Indonesia are perceived as positive tourism attributes.

5.1.2 THE CULTURE, HISTORY AND ART

As seen in **Table 5.1**, both of Singaporean and Australian tourists find Indonesian culture and history rich (14) and fascinating (4). The bloggers believe Indonesian culture is so deeply-rooted that it shows in the architecture of the buildings, the development of the cities, and in the way the locals live.

"From my experience, most of Indonesia is very proud of their heritage. But those in Yogyakarta seem more enthusiastic than others to continue weaving it into daily modern life." (Blogger 14)

"Monkeys are sacred to Balinese culture and meandering Ubud's Sacred Monkey Forest Sanctuary to see the cheeky Balinese long-tail macaques tops most travelers' to do lists. Visit any Balinese temple or museum and you'll notice that the monkey features prominently in the architecture, sculpture and performances." (Blogger 10)

According to the bloggers, Indonesia is a melting pot of traditions and cultures. It has absorbed diverse cultural and religious elements from its unique geography and trading history. Although Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, the bloggers showed more fascination towards Hindu (29) and Buddhist heritage and rituals. Even though, bloggers recognized the Islamic (4) practice in Indonesia, there was not a single post about Muslim culture. Other than bloggers' own travel preferences, some of the factors that could explain this occurrence are: (1) the bloggers mostly visited Bali – the touristic destination where Hinduism is predominant and (2) Indonesia's main tourist attractions, such as temples, are cultural assets of the Hindus Buddhists who once dominated the Java islands. This also means that, despite the Ministry of Tourism's effort in appealing as a halal tourism destination (The National, 2016), the bloggers have not associated Indonesian tourism with Muslim culture.

"Even the most short-sighted Australian tourist can't avoid noticing the deep connection the Balinese have with the spiritual world. Temples seem to outnumber the touts offering you taxis and almost every shop or restaurant has a small offering placed outside it several times a day." (Blogger 14).

"Life on Bali is imbued with rituals — religious, spiritual and social, complicated and simple — from the events marked on the Balinese calendar to the daily offerings made at Hindu temples." (Blogger 10)

Canang sari – the Balinese daily offerings to gods – was frequently mentioned and photographed. It became a symbol of the spirituality (11) of the local people. The bloggers positively commented at how local culture, history, and art are still well-preserved and practiced. However, **Table 5.1** also shows that negative comments refer to the "lost" culture (9). According to some bloggers, Indonesian history, culture, and art are jeopardised and being rapidly eroded by excessive modernisation in Jakarta and some parts of Bali. The endangered culture is regretted by the international tourists as they believe that this element is a major attraction for

Indonesian tourism. Preservation of cultural sites is also criticised because of inadequate protection.

"The history of that small colonial origin has almost been lost in the wave of development that has washed over the city." (Blogger 14)

5.1.3 THE LOCAL PEOPLE

Indonesian people are friendly (33). No matter the destination – busy Jakarta or crowded Bali – the locals were acclaimed as friendly, interesting (34), smiley (21), and sincere (2). International tourists are charmed by Indonesians for their hospitality – from the staff at resorts to people on the street. The friendliness of the people is something that constantly appeared in the blogs.

"The locals here are friendly, welcoming, and positive, and in comparison to many other world capitals." (Blogger 11)

"The one thing that strikes you throughout your sojourn in this land are its people. These people are genuinely warm and friendly. You will notice that where ever you go you find the locals are amicable and soft-spoken." (Blogger 7)

"The Indonesians in general were just very friendly and helpful!" (Blogger 6)

More often than not, the hotel staff were praised for remembering the tourists' names, which made the whole travel experience more personal. This remembering and greeting guests by name is called a "moment of truth" (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Balinese resorts have perfectly implemented this impression management that expresses the "sincerity" and "warmth" of Indonesians. Below are examples of how

this “moment of truth” influenced the affective component of Indonesia as destination image.

“During my stay I noticed the staff all knew my name and each time I passed them by they greeted me with a pleasant smile. Very rarely I met a bunch of dedicated professionals who are genuinely friendly and take the effort to learn your needs and remember them for the rest of your stay.” (Blogger 15)

“Samabe’s motto is “Arrive as a guest, depart as a friend and return as family.” It is always a pleasant surprise when a hotel can deliver, actually over-deliver, on their maxim. We truly experienced a family holiday in which we connected with the most understanding, compassionate staff possible and departed as firm friends.” (Blogger 15)

This positive image of Indonesians is interrelated with the “spiritual” and “religious” life of the people. According to the bloggers, because of their strong belief system, Indonesians are peaceful and friendly.

“Like any religion, it takes strong faith and belief to commit yourself to an immeasurable hypothesis. In Bali, though, the belief system is ingrained in their upbringing. The idea of karma is strong in their attitudes and their behaviors and it certainly makes for a calmer sense of being.” (Blogger 14)

Even though the locals were considered to be welcoming and attentive, there were also some negative comments directed at some apparently “strange behaviours” (11) of the local people. Some vendors were very persistent in selling and some local guides refused to help the tourists without tips. Singaporean bloggers often mentioned about guides bringing tourists only to places where they receive tips, and therefore

question the credibility of the stores. Consequently, the bloggers advise their readers not to purchase goods from stores recommended by local guides because they are not “authentic”. Referring back to the literature review, bloggers can be very influential on readers as they have experienced first-hand the tourism services (Litvin et al., 2008). Thus, bloggers’ suggestions not to buy goods in these stores are persuasive for the readers, and may impact the local businesses.

There were also negative comments about locals’ poor English – in areas other than Bali – and positive comments about their affection towards children. It was noted that Indonesians liked children and always greeted tourists with children. On the downside, this over friendliness was sometimes burdensome. The bloggers warned tourists not to be surprised when locals smile and want to take pictures of your little ones. Most of the negative comments related to the locals and lifestyle were about the “traffic” (35) and the “crowds” (18). Although Jakarta has always been known for its world famous traffic, Bali – especially the popular tourist spots – is slowly becoming a congested area filled with local sellers and tourists.

“The last time I was in Bali for my birthday this year, I wasn’t that impressed with Kuta. Compared to the more upscale Seminyak and posh seclusion of Jimbaran, Kuta seemed overly crowded with people, a constant flurry of activity and full of touristy stuff in warm congested lanes – even the famous Kuta Beach didn’t appeal with its human traffic and persistent flow of touts trying to get you to buy stuff.” (Blogger 6)

5.1.4 FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Generally, Indonesian food and beverage was considered as a positive tourism attribute. Many of the bloggers commented at how “delicious” (28) and “yummy” (10) the local foods are. It was also said that the diversity of food available in Indonesia was excellent for the international tourists. Regarding beverages, there were multiple negative remarks toward the Kopi Luwak (civet coffee), which is claimed to

be the world's rarest and most expensive coffee – with a price tag of U.S \$150–\$227/pound (Jumhawan et al., 2013). This beverage is made from coffee cherries that have been digested by *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, the small palm civet native to southern and northern Asia (Marcone, 2004). According to Marcone (2004), Kopi Luwak's high selling price is mainly because of its exoticness and the uncommon production process, rather than its taste. Many have expressed concerns because there is no standardised method for determining the authenticity of the coffee cherries (Jumhawan et al., 2013), and the industrialisation of production causes stress on the luwaks (civets) including animal cruelty (Wild, 2013). One of the famous places to see the production of kopi luwak is in Bali. This place often features in typical tourist itineraries. Bloggers often criticised the ridiculously high prices and the production process of the coffee, saying that it involved cruelty to the animals.

Other negative comments were linked to the not-so-fresh seafood (3) and the price and quality of the food. Bloggers also suggested going to locals' spots if tourists want to have more affordable meals.

"Apparently you can get good or just as great versions for much cheaper if you know where the locals go, but as far as a tourist spot goes, it's still affordable and the food is good." (Blogger 6)

Both the Singaporean and Australian bloggers overall had a good perception of local food.

5.1.5 ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is another core attribute in tourism. Most of the Singaporean and Australian bloggers stayed in three stars and above hotels or resorts. The few bloggers who visited less popular destinations had the opportunity to stay with the locals in traditional houses, and even spent a night on small boats. Regardless of the

accommodation, the comments were mostly positive. However, given the chosen types of lodging, the results in this category were mostly about hotels and resorts.

The bloggers found accommodations in Indonesia “luxury” (17) and “excellent” (13). There were many positive comments about the “spacious” (13) rooms. The hotels where the bloggers stayed were described as “modern” (32). In Bali, the luxurious resorts are one of the main reasons for return visits. Several of the bloggers chose to spend most of their holiday in the resorts because of the facilities and the famous Indonesian massage. These resorts, with their world class facilities and sincere staff, become a “utopia” where the tourists felt like being treated as a king.

“It was the beginning of a utopian holiday that you could only imagine in your wildest dreams. Fortunately this place is completely real.”
(Blogger 15)

Some of the negative remarks reported slow Wi-Fi (6). This issue was only encountered in hotels in Sulawesi and on Sumatra Island.

5.1.6 ENTERTAINMENT AND ACTIVITIES

Every destination has its own charms. This tourism attribute is vital in shaping the image of a destination. The Singaporean and Australian bloggers viewed the variety of entertainment and tourist activities in Indonesia as positive. As discussed in previous chapters, tourists in Indonesia typically opt for nature-based activities, shopping, relaxation, and watching traditional performances. Overall, the bloggers deemed these activities as “unique” (23) and “enjoyable” (20). The fact that the tourists did not find any of the available activities “boring” indicates that Indonesia has diverse entertainments that cater to different markets. The very few negative comments centred on reality not meeting tourists’ expectations, or quality not matching price (3).

5.1.7 PRICE AND QUALITY

Previous research suggests that Indonesia is generally considered to be a budget destination. This research found contradictory results. According to the bloggers, the prices in Indonesia are “expensive” (15). There is stark contrast between the opinions of Australian and Singaporean tourists in this regard. Whereas the majority of Australian bloggers think Indonesian prices are “cheap” or “reasonable”, the latter suggests overpricing. Below are examples of the Australian bloggers’ opinion of prices in Indonesia:

“Indonesia is the perfect budget travel destination. It’s a much loved holiday destination for Australians, and no wonder. It’s one of the only countries that Australians can fly to on a budget, and once you arrive it is pretty easy to stretch your funds.”(Blogger 16)

“Indonesia is one of those places where you can either spend a little, or you can spend a lot. You can spend just a handful of dollars on a fan cooled room, or you can splurge for a resort and spa. It’s up to you. Luckily, even the relatively nice hotels in Indonesia are still relatively good value when compared to hotels in nearby Australia.” (Blogger 16)

However, a few complaints were reported concerning the prices in Bali. As one blogger put it: *“It’s not cheap. It’s Western prices.” (Blogger 15)*. The prices in Bali have gone up rapidly because of the increase in numbers of foreign tourists. According to Ironside (2016), recent price increases could blow out even further as a result of the booming Chinese market. The Bali Government Tourism Office reports that the number of Chinese travellers to Bali is close to outnumbering Australians. This issue may intensify in the future.

Neutral comments were mostly about “worth” (15) for purchases and “decent” (5) for quality. As noted in previous chapter, “shopping” is one of the most popular tourist

activities in Indonesia. Tourists often come to Indonesia and spend a few days just shopping. The prices are reasonable and the quality is adequate. This is presumably because of the falling exchange value of the local currency against the US dollar, making the country a more affordable destination (Euromonitor, 2016).

"For the avid shopper, it is possible to find anything you want – much of it at reasonable prices. Designer items which have been imported from overseas are still quite expensive but it is possible to get excellent deals on clothes and accessories at most of the major malls." (Blogger 14)

Although the value of the local currency has fallen, Indonesian prices were still considered to be expensive. This is linked to the high transportation costs between islands within Indonesia. It also reflects that the Singaporean bloggers' opinions were critical regarding prices and quality. The national tourism campaign aims to promote an image of Indonesia as a budget destination. Bloggers therefore anticipate that prices should be lower than in their home country. When prices are in fact similar, or the quality is less than expected, this will naturally draw criticism. This conforms to Fairweather and Swaffield's argument (2002, p. 293) "... destination image also sets up criteria for negative evaluation. The promotional image is largely skewed towards a set of favourable experiences. When visitors encounter settings of experiences that differ markedly from their expectations, their evaluations can be very negative."

"Most items/services within the resort are priced similarly to Singapore. It isn't more expensive than it is here but being in Indonesia I was expecting it to be a least slightly cheaper." (Blogger 4)

"At S\$11.00, the price differed little from what we would get at Singapore zi-char stalls considering that the prawns were small, not very fresh and with a similar serving size. I was utterly disappointed with the food." (Blogger 2)

The price and quality tourism attribute received many negative comments as the bloggers think the goods in Indonesia are “expensive”, “overpriced”, “pricey” with “disappointing” qualities. The amount of the negative remarks (30) is greater than the positive (19) and neutral comments (25) (see **Table 5.1**).

5.1.8 INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

This category included bloggers’ view of the infrastructure, transportation, environment, and safety issues in Indonesia. These four tourism attributes are significant in a destination’s growth, so positive reviews can help boost tourist arrivals. According to the bloggers, the infrastructure and transportation in Indonesia are “inadequate” (2). This is linked to limited public transport and congested roads. At the time of writing, the rapid transit system (MRT) in Jakarta is still under construction. Currently available public transport is often judged to be unsafe because of pickpocketing (2). For travel between islands, air transport is considered to be the most convenient, compared to land or sea transport, but it is expensive. Overall, as discussed in Chapter 4, even though Indonesia has a history of bombings, it is deemed to be a “safe” (14) country. However, tourists always have to be on guard against petty thefts.

As also mentioned previously, regarding the environment, the bloggers expressed their concern about pollution. The negative comment below showed how the beach is grotty and not up to expectation.

“Because of that, don’t expect a pristine beach either, this one is a little grotty.” (Blogger 6)

5.1.9 OVERALL FEELINGS

This category was added to assess the bloggers' impressions of Indonesia in general. As shown in **Table 5.1**, bloggers used more positive descriptors than negative ones, which implies that their image of Indonesia as a tourism destination tends to be positive. Some of the words used by the bloggers to describe Indonesia are “paradise” (19), “magical” (15), “romantic” (11), “exotic” (9), “mystical” (9) and “extraordinary” (4). These adjectives with the tourist gaze theory, which contends that travellers romanticise their travel experience.

“I’ve never had a real butler before, what was I to do with him? Samabe provided a whole list on what the butler can do. I imagine this is what it feels like to be obscenely rich or perhaps a king/queen of a small country. The staff all around the resort from the reception desk to the poolside bar to the housekeepers knew our name. It really was like family.” (Blogger 15)

The comment above shows how the blogger felt like a king of a small country because of the fantastic service and staff at a resort in Bali, and in the comment below the blogger thought the balance between the luxurious resort and taking a part in local life makes Bintan “paradise”.

“I’ve always known Bintan for its Instagram worthy beaches, palm trees and the adventurous sea sports. However, my recent trip to Bintan showed me so much more of what Bintan has to offer than just chilling by the beaches. You know it’s more than a tropical paradise when you can unwind ‘resort style’ while also experiencing local life.” (Blogger 4)

This chapter has explored the affective component of the bloggers' image of Indonesia as a tourist destination by examining the words used to express their opinions about Indonesian tourism attributes. Of the ten attributes, eight received

positive reviews and only two negative reviews. Their overall perception of Indonesian tourism as therefore clearly positive. Whereas the attractions (urbans and natural resources), culture, people and life, food and beverage, accommodation, entertainment and activities, environment and safety were all considered to be good; Indonesian prices and quality, and the inadequate infrastructure and transportation were criticised. Despite that, the majority of the bloggers found Indonesia to be a good tourist destination – some even called it “paradise”.

Chapter 6: The Bloggers' Constructed Gaze vs Wonderful Indonesia

Previous chapter helps us to fathom the positive and negative comments of Indonesian tourism attributes. This chapter explores further by analysing the difference of the image of Indonesia as a holiday destination from the eyes of Singaporean and Australian tourists. While examining the content of the blogs, it is essential to adopt the cultural gaze of the tourists. Tourists, in constructing destination image, are influenced by their cultural background (Sun, Zhang & Ryan, 2015). Researcher took notes while analysing the content of the blogs with focus on the narratives and the main theme of the photographs. In addition to that, bloggers' positive/neutral/negative comments on Indonesian tourism attributes show their behaviour and travel preferences. In this chapter, the researcher explored the cultural values of Singaporean and Australian tourists and how it affect their words, images, and their overall perception of Indonesia as a travel destination.

The first segment focuses on the Singaporean bloggers' perceptions of Indonesia. Singaporean tourists share Confucian values with Chinese and Koreans, therefore, heritage influences their travel behaviour. This chapter will explore the preferred tourism products of Singaporean bloggers, and the significance of Confucian values. The second part will discuss Australian travel bloggers' images of Indonesia as a tourist destination. This chapter also examines Australian tourists' fondness for Bali, and how their background influences their rising concern about Bali's commercialisation. The third part will answer the fourth research question, which is the difference between bloggers' gaze and the image projected by the Indonesian tourism ministry. The researcher compared bloggers' positive/neutral/negative comments of Indonesia with the narratives and images presented by Wonderful Indonesia in the official tourism website and the media. Furthermore, considering the amount of sponsored posts included in this research, the last part of the chapter will explore how sponsorship affects the credibility of bloggers in the context of the tourism industry and in this study.

6.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 3: HOW IS THE CONSTRUCTED GAZE OF INDONESIAN TOURISM PORTRAYED DIFFERENTLY BY THE BLOGGERS FROM SINGAPORE AND AUSTRALIA?

6.1.1 INDONESIA IN THE EYES OF SINGAPOREAN TRAVEL BLOGGERS

Tourism products

"Batam may not be the most appealing of holiday destinations for me but I think the island does moderately well as a weekend getaway for a change of scenery given its proximity to Singapore." (Blogger 2)

"Every Monday morning, Colleagues will usually ask "How's your weekend?" Are you sick of answering them with boring answers like "Sleeping", "Shopping" and "Watching TV"? Head over to our neighbouring island, Batam, for a cheap and relaxing weekend without applying for any leave!" (Blogger 3)

Given the close proximity, Singaporean tourists see Indonesia as a weekend gateway. Batam and Bintan, particularly, are perceived to be relatively good destinations for short holidays as they are only a ferry journey away and are cheaper than other places. Notice how both of the comments above insinuate that the tourists typically, or initially, do not perceive Batam or Bintan Island as perfect holiday destinations; but they are adequate or satisfactory for a change of scenery.

The tourist gaze theory says that people travel to other places to see things that are different from their daily lives (Urry & Larsen, 2011). This explains why Singaporean tourists are interested in nature and culture-based tourism activities, including mountain climbing, watching traditional dance, visiting traditionally popular landmarks such as Borobudur and Prambanan temples. Singaporean tourists also go to see the traditional village (*kampung*) in Bintan Island where communities depend on

each other and have few amenities. They are charmed by the simple village life. The natural resources of Indonesia are a major attraction for Singaporean tourists given the lack of similar tourism products in their own country. Given its geographical constraints, Singapore has a strong urban planning and development strategy, making it a successful compact city. But this means that Singapore's main tourist attractions are generally urban based in integrated resorts, such as Orchard Road and Marina Bay Sands. This is reflected in the Singaporean tourist's gravitation towards natural attractions of Indonesia.

A few of the Singaporean bloggers also regret the commercialisation of Bali, because the local culture and the "untouched" nature was the primary reason why they were attracted to Indonesia.

"Be it the houses on stilts, the fishing nets, the 2 huge charcoal kilns that are no longer in use or just how the children there have all the time in their hands running around chasing each other or catching little fishes, It's a sight you'll never be able to get to see in Singapore."
(Blogger 4)

"That aside, it was an interesting experience seeing the mix of houses and shops in sheds around. We're so used to order in architecture and urban planning in Singapore, so being able to see so many styles, colors and sizes of architecture along just a single row of homes was fascinating." (Blogger 6)

The statement above from a Singaporean blogger focused on villagers' traditional way of living – scenery they do not usually see in their home country. The comment below was made in regards to the overdevelopment of Bali that makes it no longer Bali.

"I noticed that our surroundings... didn't feel like Bali at all. In fact, it reminded me quite a lot of Singapore, specifically the Sentosa Cove area"

which is well known as a super fancy private housing estate.”
(Blogger6)

Compared to the Australian tourists, the Singaporean tourists were more enthusiastic and enthusiastic about their local food adventure. They were more familiar with Indonesian food and often tried dishes from street stalls to high quality restaurants. As they had been exposed to Indonesian food, they could identify whether the dishes actually represented the local cuisine or not. Singaporean tourists considered the variety of local food “amazing” and “worth to try”.

“Breakfast was slightly better. Simply because it had variety and it's a buffet to make up for the under-feeding during lunch and dinner. But again, don't expect too much. I don't think the resort represents the taste of Indonesia well.” (Blogger 2)



Street style fried banana, (photograph taken by Singaporean blogger)

Singaporean tourists were also more critical about the shopping and prices in Indonesia. Singaporean travel bloggers repeatedly suggested that tourists always barter when shopping in Indonesia. Readers were also advised to be careful when buying goods in stores recommended by guides. As mentioned in Chapter 5, given the similarity with goods available in their home country, the Singaporean tourists were more cautious in making purchases in Indonesia than the Australian tourists were.

“Arresting your attention, like a moth to a flame, the only advice to be heeded is – always bargain for a fifty percent discount off its original

price to find a meeting price (or halfway price) of something more acceptable than what was initially offered.” (Blogger 8)

“When there, the local guide is more interested to take you shopping instead of sightseeing as presumably, they get a commission when you spend at the shops.” (Blogger 2)

The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism has been concerned about the similarity between Indonesia and neighbouring countries, such as Malaysia and Thailand, generating inevitable comparisons between the destinations. The more similar tourism products are, the higher the expectations and the greater the competition.

“Honestly, we felt this meal was a rip-off compared to the great seafood we had at Langkawi a few years back. That meal was cheap, fresh and good. This one was expensive and the seafood did not taste fresh (and it was supposed to be live crabs and prawns!).” (Blogger 1)

“Akau is the famous night food bazaar in Tanjung Pinang. It’s just a car parking space by day, but at night it’s the Gurney Drive of Bintan (jac: Gurney Drive as in Penang’s famous food stretch). You go around the various stalls to order your food. Some of the stalls are self-service, others will somehow hunt down your table in that sea of humanity.” (Blogger 6)

Both Langkawi and Penang’s Gurney Drive are Malaysia’s famous tourist attractions. These remarks show a comparison to another country, and the expectations that come with it. When goods and services do not meet or exceed expectations, tourists become dissatisfied. This may affect their intention to revisit and, therefore, local businesses, in the long run.

“Banana fritters also known as Goreng Pisang, but we definitely don’t get the cheese version in Singapore!” (Blogger 6)

"I personally like animals enough, but we do get similar monkeys back home in Singapore as well, though perhaps not in such large numbers, so I wasn't really that enamored with these ones." (Blogger 6)

The comments above show how similarity disinterests the Singaporean tourists. Even a small difference can make a big impact. It is suggested in order to keep and increase Singaporean tourists' coming to the country, Indonesian Ministry of Tourism must innovate and offer a variety of tourism products that are unique, especially for the people from neighbouring countries.

Confucius value

Singaporeans share basic Confucian values with Chinese and Koreans (Englehart, 2000, as cited in Ng & Lee, 2014). Confucian-heritage societies place a high value on education and learning (With & Ciarlante, 1998, as cited in Kang & Moscaro, 2006). Singaporean tourists therefore tend to diligently gather information before their trip. This increases the potential for travel blogs to be significant sources of unfiltered information among Singaporean travellers (Crotts, 1999). Singaporean travel bloggers typically write their travel experience in narrative style so readers feel as if they are following the traveller's journey. In Singaporean culture, there is also emphasis on knowledge-sharing about the tourist sites and the tourist's feelings about the sites. Words like "good", "best", "worth", and "touristy" were frequently used by the Singaporean travel bloggers.

"Surviving terrorist bombings in 1985 and the fury of Mt. Merapi's explosions in 2010, Borobudur stands colossal and proud beaming in architectural beauty and the main attraction to all who visit Yogyakarta. When you arrive at the Cultural Park that also houses an archaeological museum, the Borobudur Research Centre and Manohara Hotel, its best to get directions on the right way to enter the stupa." (Blogger 8)

The statement above is an example of how Singaporean bloggers share information or knowledge about tourist sites and advises readers how to experience the best adventure.

Compared to the Australian tourists, Singaporean travel bloggers tend to give more suggestions on what to do and what not to do. This tendency may be attributed to Confucian teachings, which say people should obey the one who is in a position of authority. Confucian heritage blog communities have deeper respect for the travel bloggers than is found among Western blog readers (Ng & Lee, 2013). This translates to a master/student relationship between the bloggers and the readers.

“Don’t forget to try this drink when you’re in Indonesia.” (Blogger 3)

Singaporean tourists also took many photographs of landscapes, self-portraits, and objects that reflect the local culture. According to Packer, Ballantyne, and Hughes (2014), the interest in natural landscapes can be attributed to Chinese and Taoist teaching that emphasises the significance of being in nature to gain enlightenment. The Singaporean interpretation of landscape can therefore be different from that of Western tourists. Also, referring back to the literature, Chinese-influenced societies desire to show their friends that they have been “there” (gaining face) (Sun, Ryan, & Pa, 2014). This Confucian trait influences the Singaporean travel bloggers’ to take more self-portraits (as seen in **Table 4.4**).

Moreover, given the Confucian emphasis on education, Singaporean tourists are more likely to study about the places – what to do, and where to go – from media, other travel blogs, guidebooks, and so on before their departure. Gretzel, Yoo, and Purifoy (2007) add that the most popular online activity for tourists during the trip planning process is reading travel blogs and other tourist’s comments. In doing so, there is a greater chance for Singaporean tourists to be exposed to the gaze projected by DMOs. As a result, Singaporean tourists are concentrated on the traditionally popular “must-

go” destinations promoted by the DMOs. It also means that travel blogs in Singapore are very influential in forming the reader’s image of a destination.

6.1.2 INDONESIA IN THE EYES OF AUSTRALIAN TRAVEL BLOGGERS

Tourism products

As shown in **Figure 4.2.2**, Australian tourists typically visited Bali, Borobudur temple, and other cities on Java Island. Other than that, there were a few the bloggers who went to relatively less well-known destinations, mainly to see endangered animals in their natural habitats. The preferred tourism products for Australian tourists are, therefore, nature and culture-based activities (such as beaches, sports, and watching traditional performances), as well as wildlife tourism. Urban Australians are relatively highly exposed to wildlife (compared to Singaporean travellers) and so develop interest in the natural environment (Aslin & Bennett, 2000). Australia has numerous globally recognised nature-based attractions and unique native animals thanks to its long geographic isolation and climate. Their natural resources and protected areas have become important aspects of Australia’s tourism marketing campaign (Packer, Ballantyne, & Hughes, 2014). Given the cultural influences, Australians prioritise natural environment and wildlife protection. Therefore, they are more interested in seeing the natural resources and native species of Indonesia than Singaporean tourists are. For the same reason, they are more likely to comment or even criticise the destination management.

“Bali has always been a mythical destination for surfers around the world.” (Blogger 10)

“The good thing is people are more aware... the bad thing is we’re bringing more people here.” So the issue stuck with me... Should I, as a

tourist, be intruding on the animals' land? Or will my presence here ultimately help them?" (Blogger 14)

The statement above shows the quandary of how to act appropriately as a tourist in regard to wildlife tourism. This confirms Kang and Moscardo's (2006) study, which indicates that Australian tourists consider responsible tourist behaviour to be important. They place a high importance in environmental protection and conservation rules.

As previously discussed, Indonesia is seen as an affordable destination by Australians. The Australian travel bloggers valued Indonesia for its culture, friendly people, and the stunning natural attractions. The bloggers also praised the resorts and the hospitality of the staff – who make the bloggers feeling like a king in a paradise.

"Indonesia is the perfect budget travel destination. It's a much loved holiday destination for Australians, and no wonder. It's one of the only countries that Australians can fly to on a budget, and once you arrive it is pretty easy to stretch your funds."(Blogger 16)



Hotel's fried-banana, (photograph taken by an Australian blogger)

Whereas Singaporeans are more attracted to street food, Australians are more careful with the hygiene. According to Cohen and Avieli (2004), Western tourists are more reluctant to eat unfamiliar food, especially in some Third World countries because of fear of illness. Australian tourists, therefore, choose to eat in restaurants with an ethnic atmosphere to feel the authenticity.

"After all the museums and walking around the Old Town, the most authentic place to have a rest is Batavia Café. It's on the main square with a view across to the old City Hall." (Blogger 14)

Australian tourists are interested in Indonesian culture. They frequently used the words "mystical" and "spiritual" in describing the tourist sites that reflect the local culture. This may reflect absence – or very different meanings – of the cultural aspect in Western spaces (Packer, Ballantyne, & Hughes, 2014). Indonesian culture is embedded in the architecture of the tourist sites, which makes them look like a very "spiritual" and unfamiliar place in the eyes of the Australians.

"There are only a handful of people here and there's a peace and serenity fitting for such a spiritual place." (Blogger 14)

Lost culture and commercialisation of Bali

Given their cultural gaze, the Australian tourists regretted the seemingly lost culture of Indonesia in certain places – especially in Bali – because of over popularisation. It is known that Australian tourists are very familiar with Bali. The travel bloggers often pointed out the same "must-visit" spots, such as Kuta Beach, Uluwatu, Seminyak, and so on. However, they also suggested the readers visit other areas of Bali to really experience the local culture because they could not find it anymore among the chaos of traffic jams and numerous burger franchises. Tourism development in popular spots in Bali was seen as having negatively impacted the local culture.

"Though it is an island that has been tainted by extreme commercialization and a never-ending influx of tourists from all corners of the globe, the island manages to retain its mystical charm luring in anyone who visits her. You just have to seek out those magical places, locations you won't commonly find people talking about. Put off

by the over crowded streets along Kuta, menacing touts and a large number of intoxicated tourists among the island's popular retreat provinces, I soon realised that, that wasn't exactly what Bali was all about." (Blogger 7)

"They came for the Island of the Gods, the special getaway with the mysticism of the jungles and the serenity of the beaches. What they created, with their endless planes of arrivals, was an urban chaos. Traffic, development and overt commercialisation have not only clogged up the infrastructure, they have suppressed much of the culture." (Blogger 14)

In the statement below, the blogger believes there is “good” and “evil” about Bali. The overt commercialisation of certain places of Bali damages the authenticity of the surrounding beaches and the practice of the culture. However, it also means that other parts of Bali can preserve their “authentic” cultural lives.





"This is what I perceive as the evil of Bali. A selling of a beautiful soul to hordes who come to ravage, not appreciate. It's a short-sightedness that has allowed the rampant expansion without the thought of infrastructure investment or cultural regulations to preserve the heritage. Which is sad, because there is a good to Bali still. Ironically, perhaps, the concentration of visitors to the beach areas around Denpasar has meant that much of the rest of the island has escaped the cultural vandalism. (Blogger 14)

These comments show a paradoxical aspect of Australian tourists. Although they complimented the luxury resorts, they also regretted the development of Bali. Furthermore, one cannot help but wonder, if the bloggers keep suggesting that tourists to explore other parts of Bali, won't that create more another cultural vandalism?

6.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 4: HOW DOES THE TRAVEL BLOGGERS’ GAZE DIFFER FROM THE GAZE OF WONDERFUL INDONESIA?

The national tourism campaign Wonderful Indonesia, focuses on the beautiful nature, unique culture, varied food, hospitable people, and price competitiveness of Indonesia. This research compared the gaze projected by Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and the travel blogger’s gaze by analysing the featured words and images.

Table 6.2 Wonderful Indonesia vs Travel Bloggers

Wonderful Indonesia		Travel bloggers	
<u>Beautiful Nature</u>			
Words	<p>Richness in biodiversity and natural landscape.</p> <p>Nature is part of the local people.</p> <p>Eco-friendliness.</p> <p>Untouched nature and wildlife.</p>	<p>Beautiful natural attractions.</p> <p>Relaxing.</p> <p>Magical.</p> <p>Breath-taking.</p> <p>Inefficient conservations.</p>	
Images	 	 	
<u>Unique Culture</u>			

Words	<p>Exciting and colourful historical heritage.</p> <p>Maintained ancestral values and ancient traditions.</p> <p>Wisdom.</p> <p>Richness in value and crafts.</p>	<p>Rich in culture and tradition.</p> <p>Fascinating.</p> <p>Ancient.</p> <p>Spiritual.</p> <p>Local culture should be preserved.</p>
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Images		
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Varied Food

Words	<p>Stimulating.</p> <p>Diverse culinary delights.</p> <p>World-class treats.</p>	<p>Variety of delicious local food from stalls to high class restaurants.</p>
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Images		
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Hospitable People

Words	Friendly. Warm. Peace loving. <i>"Our society is 99% smiles."</i>	Friendly and smiley locals. Religious society.
Images	 	   
<u>Value of money</u>		
Words	Highly competitive. Within your means.	Rising concern of the prices in Bali. Some goods not worth buying
Images	No image	No image

The above table features two columns: (1) words and images from the campaign Wonderful Indonesia which were taken and translated from the official tourism website, and the Ministry of Tourism's statement when the campaign was launched in 2011; and (2) the narrative/tourists' feelings and perceptions of Indonesian tourism attributes (see **Table 5.1**), and photographs from the travel blogs.

As seen in **Table 6.2**, the gap between bloggers' image of Indonesia and the projected image by the Ministry of Tourism is relatively narrow. The places the bloggers gaze upon are the ones that have been anticipated by the DMO; for example, the natural landscapes of Indonesia, culture based activities, and local food, which are among Indonesia's strongest tourism attributes, according to the Ministry of Tourism (Susanti, 2011).

The words that the bloggers used to describe Indonesian tourism were more factual and honest, but the sentiment was similar. So are the photographs taken by the travel bloggers. Even though the focal theme or the object was similar, the general vibe in the photographs was different. For example, in under the “Beautiful Nature” heading, bloggers are looking at beaches, waterfalls, mountains, and the exotic komodo dragon, as advertised by Wonderful Indonesia. Under the “Unique culture” category heading, bloggers gaze upon the iconic Borobudur temple, sculptures, and traditional performances. The other similarity lies on how the Indonesians are projected. In images distributed by Wonderful Indonesia, the friendly locals appeared to be living in a traditional way – making arts and crafts and undertaking traditional activities. This constructed gaze was confirmed by the bloggers who found the traditional living of Indonesians attractive. It is also noted that the bloggers captured more cultural diversity among the locals by also taking photographs (see **Table 6.2**) of the Indonesian Muslims, who make up the largest proportion of the country’s population – about 209 million Muslims as of 2010 (Pew Research Center, 2015). Wonderful Indonesia has not included this aspect of Indonesia in any of the promotional marketing tools. This may be because they want to appeal to all international tourists regardless of their religious beliefs.

The bloggers also took photographs of locals selling snacks on the streets, and smiling Indonesian children in run down surroundings – something is not shown in the official promotional and marketing resources.

The biggest gap between the projected and perceived image relates to wildlife protection. Wonderful Indonesia used the word ‘untouched’ to project an image of tourists being able to look at native animals living in their natural habitats. However, according to the bloggers, the zoos and conservation areas – especially those that are meant to protect endangered orangutans – are poorly managed. Although the bloggers realised this is not necessarily the fault of the DMOs but rather because of deforestation for palm oil plantations and wildlife crimes by the locals. Forest Watch Indonesia (in World Economic Forum, 2016) reports that Indonesia lost 990,000

hectares of natural forest between 2010 and 2013. A local staff member pointed out that locals could not help but open up the palm oil plantation because “that’s where the money is.” This issue has not been discussed only by the bloggers, but also by the international media. Considering the power of bloggers in influencing the decision making of potential travellers, Indonesian tourism and local authorities need to enforce the law and educate the society in saving the exotic animals from harm.

The second gap identified between the official tourism gaze and the gaze of the bloggers concerns the “lost culture” of Indonesia. This remark has been repeated by the bloggers mostly in the context of central Bali. As discussed in Chapter 5, big malls with American food franchises and luxury malls have filled parts of Bali to the extent that sometimes “it does not look Balinese at all.” Urry (2011), who draws the Tourist Gaze theory from Foucault (Urry & Larsen, 2011), explains that when looking at native people or a destination, the tourists exercise their own judgment as if they have authority to determine the “correct” or the “authentic” way of living. Therefore, the expansion of the tourism facilities was considered to be “alarming”. Local tourism authorities are advised to balance development and “authenticity” of Bali. Nevertheless, the bloggers believe the growth of the tourism industry has not significantly affected the spirituality of the Balinese. In spite of the changing surroundings, the locals still preserve their traditions and rituals.

“Value of money” is one of the tourism aspects that Wonderful Indonesia wants to promote. Indonesia is generally considered to be a budget destination by the majority of the Australian bloggers. Unfortunately the same does not apply to the Singaporean tourists. There is growing concern about prices, particularly in Bali, as the tourists used the words such as “expensive”, “overpriced”, “pricey”, and “rip-off” (**Table 5.1**). With the growing number of Chinese tourists to Bali, there is the possibility of further increase in prices, and this may negatively affect the arrival for Singaporean tourists in Bali.

The effectiveness of Wonderful Indonesia

As it was mentioned in Chapter 2, the Minister of Tourism, Mr Arief Yahya, recognises that Indonesia does not have a strong nation brand to boost the tourism industry (Wulan, 2016). Nation brand is defined as the sum of people's perceptions of a country across six specific aspects tourism, exports, governance, people, culture and heritage, and investment and immigration (Anholt, 2002). As a result of the weak brand nation, the Ministry of Tourism is focusing on tourism brand awareness through the campaign Wonderful Indonesia. According to Anholt (2006), once a negative image of a country is ingrained in people's minds, it can be hard to change. Indonesia has been linked to past terrorism attacks, radical Islam, and political instability. The words "peace loving people" in the brand guideline was included to endorse an image of a peaceful and safe destination. Although the bloggers consider Indonesia as a safe country, there was no reference to "peace loving" local people in the blogs.

One of "Wonderful Indonesia's" main objectives is to promote destinations other than those traditionally thought of as tourist hotspots. The industry has recognised the popularity of Bali, and has constructed another 10 "New Balis" to reduce dependency on Bali itself.

Indonesia wants to project the image of a "world of wonders" where tourists can find any kind of exciting tourism products with good value of money. Based on the results of this study, the bloggers are not yet aware of these "New Balis". "The island of a thousand temples" is still regarded as the must visit destination in Indonesia. However, under the administration of President Joko Widodo, the country has now waived its visa requirements for 90 countries and foreign cruise ships are now allowed to embark and disembark at major domestic ports. This shows the dedication of the Ministry of Tourism and the government's attitude in prioritising the tourism industry.

A successful place branding needs more than a memorable catchphrase; it also needs action – facilities have to be built and policies have to be changed (Hildreth, 2010). As shown in **Table 5.1**, the tourism attributes considered to be negative are price/quality and infrastructure/transportation. Additionally, there were also negative comments about badly managed wildlife protection. In all of the other categories studied, the gap between the Ministry of Tourism projected image and the destination image perceived and reported by the bloggers is narrow. The government realised that the desired image projected through Wonderful Indonesia should match with the reality of tourists' experiences of Indonesia, or at least be somewhat similar (Andika, 2016). Therefore, the government has also invested a large amount of money – US\$123 million – in infrastructure and amenities to support the tourism brand positioning (Susanty, 2016). Wonderful Indonesia has shown its biggest progress in the last two years since President Joko Widodo made tourism a national priority. This is an application of Hildreth's theory (2010) that branding works better when it is a part of the national programme.

However, unlike the “100% Pure New Zealand” brand, which is cited frequently in travel blogs (Sun, Ryan, & Pan, 2015; Tang, 2015) as the image carrier of New Zealand, Wonderful Indonesia has not yet made the same impact on the bloggers. When in Bali, the bloggers mentioned the tagline “the island of a thousand temples”. However, none of the bloggers made any reference to Wonderful Indonesia. The brand equity of Bali clearly is stronger than the nation brand, which confirms the concern of the Ministry of Tourism as mentioned above. The brand Wonderful Indonesia might be successful in projecting the image, but the brand itself is not yet well-recognised.

As discussed in the previous chapters, Bali is the representation of Indonesian tourism. It is the first thing that comes to mind when people think of Indonesia – like German cars or Paris' Eiffel Tower. When Bali is mentioned, beach, sunset, and Hindu temples come to mind. But Bali also has a negative side – its dark bombing history. Through Wonderful Indonesia, the destination authority wants to project that Indonesia is a peaceful, safe country that is more than just Bali. The Ministry of

Tourism wants to direct the tourists' gaze to less well-known and popular destinations by sponsoring travel bloggers, who are a powerful image formation agent. However, sponsored content can question about the credibility of the bloggers.

6.3 SPONSORED VS UNSPONSORED BLOGS



Ever ready for their cover shot – Indonesian, Malaysian and Singaporean bloggers at work! (Blogger 6)

Twenty-four out of the 106 blog entries analysed in this study – nearly a quarter – were sponsored by either the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism, hotels, or city councils. All of the sponsored reviews acknowledged the sponsors, along with a statement that the opinions are all travel bloggers' honest thoughts. Nonetheless, it is believed that there is a difference in the writings between the sponsored and unsponsored posts. After reading the content over and over again, the researcher could not identify a gap in the Australian blogs between sponsored and unsponsored posts. Australian travel bloggers were forthright in describing their travel experience. For example, one blogger who was sponsored to go to a conservation site pointed out the weaknesses of the project despite it being endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism. By contrast, a few of the Singaporean bloggers did seem to use more explicit and upfront words in

unsponsored posts. However, this may be because of dislike of the particular travel experience.

Travel bloggers are influential in shaping readers' image of a destination and potential travellers' decision making because of their reliability as a key source of "unfiltered" information (Crotts, Mason, & Davis, 2009). However, the increase number of sponsored blogs may challenge the "trust" between the readers and the bloggers. According to Reijmersdal et al. (2016) there are conflicting findings about the effect of sponsorship on the perceived credibility of the blogs/bloggers and the intent of the writing. These differences might be caused by the context of the blogs and the sources of the disclosure. Lu et al., (2014) claim that in regard to the travel industry, sponsored content is still seen as credible – as long as it was disclosed by the bloggers themselves. Sponsored reviews not only affect the relationship between the readers and the bloggers, but also between the readers and the brand, as they may evoke negative evaluation of the sponsoring party (Boerman, van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2012). However, when reading a disclosed sponsored post, readers' persuasion knowledge is activated and triggers cognitive/affective resistance against the content. It does not, however, lead to negative brand attitudes and decision making (Reijmersdal et al., 2016). Hence, Schmallegger and Carson (2008) suggest that disclosure has to be made to public because sponsoring blogs may otherwise raise substantial ethical issues.

As discussed in the Literature Review in Chapter 2, the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism actively invites international bloggers and celebrities to Indonesia to introduce other-than-Bali areas. Most of the bloggers who visited the non-traditionally popular destinations – such as Kalimantan, Komodo Island, and South Sumatra – were invited by the Ministry of Tourism or by regional authorities. This illustrates the desire of the government to encourage tourists to visit other parts of Indonesia. It also suggests that the Ministry of Tourism acknowledges the power of bloggers, and is using their influence to promote the "New Balis." Disclosed sponsored posts about these less-known places received many response comments from the public as well as

fellow bloggers. This suggests the continued popularity of blog posts regardless of sponsorship.

6.4 DOES WONDERFUL INDONESIA REPRESENT THE REAL INDONESIA?

The Literature Review in Chapter 2, showed that tourists evaluate bloggers' reviews of a destination more credible than information shared by the DMO. In this context, bloggers represent the truth or reality of Indonesia more believably than Wonderful Indonesia – the national tourism brand. The correspondence theory of truth argues that a proposition is true and only true if it corresponds to the fact (Haig & Borsboom, 2012). As seen in **Table 6.2**, even though generally the words used by the bloggers and Wonderful Indonesia are similar, they are clearly not the same. Therefore, the bloggers' perceived destination image of Indonesia does not correspond exactly to the image projected by the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism. This suggests that Wonderful Indonesia involves some degree of falsification in projecting a perfect image of the country. However, it is important to note that the gap between the officially projected image and the bloggers' perceived image is small. Apart from price competitiveness and the concern for wildlife protection, overall, the blogger's assessments did not fall far from the utopian image the DMO wants to project to public.

This chapter explored the difference between Singaporean and Australian bloggers images of Indonesian tourism. Given Indonesia's proximity, Singaporean travel bloggers perceive Indonesia, especially Batam/Bintan Islands as a weekend gateway. Influenced by their Confucian value, Singaporean tourists gravitated towards the natural attractions of Indonesia and put more emphasis on pre-trip information gathering, which highlights the importance of travel bloggers as image formation agents. Conversely, the majority of the Australian travel bloggers were attracted to the natural/cultural and wildlife of Indonesia. Given their cultural gaze, Australians are more likely to be concerned about the ineffective wildlife conservation and the commercialisation in Bali than their Singaporean counterparts. The constructed gazes

of the bloggers from the respective countries of origin are therefore slightly different both from each other and from the image projected by Wonderful Indonesia.

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Chapter 7: Conclusions and Implications

7.1 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarises and concludes the research. The main purpose of the current study was to identify travel bloggers' images of Indonesia as a tourist destination. The approach used in this study is different to the traditional methods of questionnaires in destination image studies. This thesis adopted content analysis on travel blogs written by the bloggers about the key markets of Indonesia, Singapore and Australia.

Before the Internet, destination image was produced and delivered by the destination marketing organisations (DMO). Because of the intangible nature of travel products, this image projected by the DMO becomes significant, as it represents the place and influences tourists' decision making. As the competition between destinations increases, it is necessary for the DMOs to be successful in creating a desired image that differentiates the destination from others. The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism launched the national tourism brand “Wonderful Indonesia” to reflect Indonesia’s *beautiful nature, unique culture, varied food, hospitable people, and value for money*. However, this image is challenged by travel bloggers who are perceived as more reliable and truthful. First, the most frequently used words by Singaporean and Australian bloggers were identified. Bali appeared more often than Indonesia itself, and as the most visited destination for both Singaporean and Australian tourists, is undoubtedly the representative for Indonesian tourism. Apart from Bali, Jakarta, Batam/Bintan Island, and Borobudur Temple were also popular among tourists, confirming previous research by Euromonitor (2016) that suggests despite the vigorous promotion of other destinations (10 “New Balis”), these places are still the ones that first appear in tourists' minds when it comes to Indonesia.

Secondly, the results suggest that travel bloggers had a mixed image of Indonesia as a destination. Indonesia was perceived positively in terms of destinations (urban/tourist sites and natural attractions), culture/history/art, people/life, food and beverage,

accommodation, entertainment/activities, environment and safety. In addition, the natural and cultural attractions subcategories received most positive comments, indicating that Indonesia's greatest attractions are its natural and cultural resources. The tourists take delight in undiscovered authentic beaches that made them feel "exotic", and the traditional local culture/customs. Therefore, these attributes should be used to maximise and reinforce the image of Indonesia as a tourist destination.

Even though majority of the dimensions perceived positively, two of the attributes – price/quality, and infrastructure/transportation – were perceived as negative. Singaporean and Australian tourists' opinions differed about price/quality in Indonesia. While Singaporean tourists displayed their concern about rising prices in (especially Bali), and how some of the offered products not worth buying, the Australians deemed Indonesia as a great budget destination overall. The emphasis on this result is the value for money. The Ministry of Tourism wants to encourage tourists to spend more by highlighting Indonesia's "favourable" currency (Wonderful Indonesia, 2016). Although Indonesia, taken as a whole, is considered a budget destination, the tourists might find the quality of the goods were not worth the price asked. It is suggested the tourism practitioners improve the quality of the existing products. Otherwise, the projected "value of money" aspect in Wonderful Indonesia will be seen as empty promise. In addition, both Singaporean and Australian tourists believed the inadequate infrastructure and limited transportation in Indonesia could be improved.

This thesis examined the difference between Singaporean and Australian gaze, as the results could be used for marketing strategies. Confucian heritage values education and emphasise the substance of being in nature to obtain enlightenment. As Singapore and Indonesia are geographically closer, they share more similarities in products and food. Hence, the Ministry of Tourism should push more natural/cultural attractions for Singapore markets, and offer a variety of tourism products that are unique for the tourists from neighbouring countries. Likewise, Australian tourists are interested in the natural/cultural-based tourism activities, and Indonesian wildlife. The ministry

therefore should highlight these attributes in promotional products for Australian market.

This study contributes to both academic discipline and Indonesian Ministry of Tourism by comparing the words and images used in blogs and Wonderful Indonesia. The results imply that the bloggers' perceived destination image of Indonesia does not correspond to the image projected by the Ministry of Tourism. However, it is worth noting that the gap was relatively narrow. The biggest difference lies in the conservation or preservations of wildlife and natural resources. Wonderful Indonesia used the word "untouched" in advertisements; however, the bloggers showed their distress about the poor management of endangered animals, and westernisation of Bali that interrupted the "authenticity" of the place.

7.2 IMPLICATIONS

7.2.1 ACADEMIC IMPLICATIONS

Academically, this research helps to fill a gap in the English-language research on the destination image of Indonesia. Despite the large amount of research on destination image, studies involving South East Asian countries are still limited. To the best of our knowledge, no empirical research has yet identified the image of Indonesian tourism in the eyes of travel bloggers. Destination image has evolved from structured methodologies to a qualitative approach (**Table 2.5**). However, in terms of content analysis, the majority of the research still focuses on text-based analysis. Stemler (2015) adds that the future content analysis lies with visually based data. The explosion of popular social media such as Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube might push the needed research on visual documents. The large amount of photographs uploaded in the blogs suggests the growing role of pictures in shaping the destination image. Therefore, this application of textual and visual content analysis can be used as a reference for further studies on destination images.

According to Leung (2015), assessing validity of qualitative research starts from the ontology and the epistemology of the paradigm—which in this case is post-positivism. The epistemology is modified objectivist (**Table 3.2.1**), and content analysis as the chosen methodology has provided the researcher the appropriate findings. The result of this study is objective, but culturally and contextually variable.

The essence of reliability is consistency and whether or not the measures yield the same results in different occasions (Leung, 2015). This research employed the qualitative data analysis software, Nvivo10 for word counts, and the discussions included references to the quantitative aspects. Hence, the margin of variability is considered narrow. Additionally, for the image analysis, the researcher has asked other two postgraduates to verify the focal theme of the travel photographs (triangulation) in order to improve the accuracy.

Generalisability of the study deals with the extent to which the findings confirm or contradict existing knowledge in the same field. Referring back to the limited destination image studies of Indonesia (**subchapter 2.6.4**), this research largely confirms the previous results. Indonesia is indeed perceived as a destination with *beautiful natural attractions, warm and friendly people, distinctive and tasteful food, rich with culture, history and art, good entertainment and tourism activities* (Kim & Park, 2014; Pratminingsih, Rudatin, & Rimenta, 2014; Utama & Komalawati, 2015; Tafiprios et al., 2016). However, this study contradicts previous studies (Kim & Park, 2014; Utama & Komalawati, 2015; Tafiprios et al., 2016) that suggest a *well-developed tourism infrastructure*. It is worth noting that the aforementioned papers concentrated only certain areas of Indonesia. As the current research covers all the destinations blogged by the bloggers, it is suggested that Indonesian tourism infrastructure in general is still not well developed. This research also confirms Utama and Komalawati's (2015) study that suggests negative images are linked to environmental problems, the westernisation of Bali, and traffic congestion. However, there was no reference to immigration procedures or lack of tourist information centres, probably because the data sample for this study can be considered as

experienced travellers, and the recent visa waiver from the government to Australian tourists. Overall, the perceived destination image of Indonesia noted in previous research were evidenced in this study.

7.2.1 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Destinations have usually focused on their products, or what they have to offer. However, the best way to succeed is through a customer-oriented approach, which highlights knowing the wants of prospective tourists, and understanding the competition in the market as well as external forces (Kotler & Gertner, 2011). Indonesian tourism authorities are focused on product development, and currently, brand awareness. However, it is also important to know the strengths and weaknesses of the country, and how cultural framing influences tourists' travel preferences.

Positive comments on travel experience in Indonesia were observed far more frequently than negative ones. Nonetheless, the negative remarks should not be underestimated and overlooked, such as the value for money, inadequate infrastructure, traffic, westernisation of Bali and lack of maintenance of tourist sites and natural attractions. Given its dependence on natural resources, Indonesia is not placing enough emphasis on environmental sustainability. Deforestation that endangers the native species and water management should become national priorities along with infrastructure and transportation. Law enforcement and crime investigations are needed to protect the natural environment, wildlife, and natural resources.

In addition, international tourists are still concentrated in the traditionally popular regions or cities, such as Bali, Jakarta, and Batam/Bintan Island. Wonderful Indonesia desires to direct the tourist's gaze to the "New Balis". In order to do this, Indonesia should stick with the "untouched", authentic concept that works in the marketplace. Bali was first famous for its unique, protected culture and nature. The

commercialisation/westernisation of it raises concerns; therefore, protection of cultural and natural aspects of Indonesia is essential.

It is important for authorities to build a compelling brand for the country as a whole. Although the island of Bali already has a strong brand that is widely known across the globe, Indonesia as a whole has not. In contrast with New Zealand's widely successful tourism campaign "100% Pure" that "floods" the blogs (Sun, Ryan, & Pan, 2015; Tang, 2015), Wonderful Indonesia has not been mentioned in the blogs. The current emphasis of Wonderful Indonesia is "a world of wonders", which seems a little bit inconsistent with tourists' emphasis on the beautiful, exotic, natural and cultural attractions of Indonesia. It is suggested the tourism practitioners evaluate the branding strategy, or develop products for specific markets. For example, as discussed in the findings, Singaporean tourists are familiar with Indonesian food and culture. Therefore, to keep their interest, destination authorities should consider introducing new natural/cultural attractions and offer appealing unique tourist activities. That way, the tourists will be more interested in spending more time in Indonesia and truly experience the "world of wonders".

7.3 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research was done within the boundaries of a post-positivist paradigm, therefore the researcher brought a certain degree of explanation to the quantitative aspects of the study. However, the social constructivism paradigm might allow greater depth of understanding into bloggers' real thoughts and motivations.

This research focuses on Singaporean and Australian travel blogs, as the representations of the industry's key markets. Thus, it may not express perceptions of bloggers from other countries. Travel bloggers, however powerful, arguably represent only a relatively small proportion of Singaporeans and Australians. To fully comprehend the image of Indonesia as a tourist destination, further research should be

done in the growing Chinese markets, or among other international tourists who are not familiar with Indonesia.

Furthermore, the words for analysis in this study were analysed in isolation. Applying other qualitative data analysis software such as CatPac or Leximancer that shows linkage between words and concepts might help explore the possible causal explanation for the words used.

This research recognises that bloggers' gazes are influenced by their cultural backgrounds. One could also argue that culture should not be defined by nationality. Tourist behaviour and preferences can be influenced by numbers of variables, including socio-demographics. Also this study does not capture tourist wealth which could influence their awareness and characteristics. However, Kang and Moscardo (2006) show in their cross cultural study that national culture is a significant variable in influencing tourist attitudes. It is suggested further studies examine the impact and intensity of cultural framing.

Possible visitors view bloggers as credible, truthful sources of information. Therefore this thesis treats bloggers as representing reality, as opposed to the DMO that created the utopian image of Indonesia. A comparison between two images was created based on narratives and photographs. Further research should examine the link between the words and images, and how it contributes to tourists' overall feelings and perceptions of the nation. In addition, considering the popularity of other visually-based social media, such as Instagram and YouTube, further studies should analyse the users' visual gaze of Indonesia.

7.4 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

The overarching research question of this study is "What is the gaze constructed by bloggers of Indonesia?" The results show that overall Singaporean and Australian

bloggers tended to have positive image of Indonesia as a destination; and Bali becomes the representation of Indonesian tourism. The “untouched” natural and cultural attractions of Indonesia were regarded as the country’s main assets. This research was conducted in an attempt to understand Indonesia’s image as a tourist destination. In this globalized world, a country has to differentiate itself by having a good and powerful image. It is absolutely necessary for a country to know how it is perceived by the rest of the world through their assets, weaknesses, people and products. This study suppositionally has filled in that gap.

This research is a challenging project for the researcher due to the lack of similar studies and methodologies in current literature. Majority of cross cultural destination image studies adopted structured methodology, such as close-ended questionnaires. However, it is argued that such methods lead to limited outcomes. In this respect, this thesis has established a benchmark for future work in words and images analysis. The causal relationship between the two is a stimulating topic for future research.

It is necessary to evaluate the image projected by the destinations and how it was perceived, since image forms customers’ expectations, and failures to reach the expectations lead to bad word-of-mouth. Although this study was demanding, it was also thought-provoking as the results have many practical implications, especially for the tourism practitioners in Indonesia. The perceived positive attributes should not be taken for granted, and the negative comments should be used to improve the nation. Wonderful Indonesia, just like any other tourism brand, is still evolving. Although bloggers’ perceived image does not correspond to the projected image, it is suggested constant evaluation and correct specified marketing strategies can lead the projected image to be perceived as authentic. As Scott Cook put it, “a brand is no longer what we tell the consumer it is – it is what consumers tell each other it is.”

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