

The Significant Influence of Tour Guides' Roles as Experience Creators on Foreign Tourists' Memorable Tourism Experiences in Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park

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ABSTRACT

Purpose this research investigates the significant influence of the tour guide's role as an Experience Creator on foreign tourists' Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) within the extreme and highly volatile environment of Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park (TNBTS). Research methods, the study utilized a quantitative explanatory approach with a cross-sectional design. Primary data were systematically collected via self-administered digital questionnaires (utilizing QR codes to mitigate social desirability bias) from a sample of 100 guided foreign tour-ists, determined by the Lemeshow formula. The unidimensional facilitation framework was statistically evaluated using Simple Linear Regression Analysis via SPSS. Results and discussion, empirical findings revealed that the tour guide's role as an Experience Creator exerts a highly significant positive influence on the MTE (t-count = 10.386, $p < 0.05$), explaining 52.4% of the variance in experience quality. The research establishes that a guide's journey and setting management function as critical cognitive load reducers, while their interpersonal capability acts as an emotional catalyst. Conclusively, logistical mastery and active environmental orchestration by tour guides are absolute prerequisites for profound memory formation in extreme natural destinations, superseding conventional historical storytelling.

INTRODUCTION

The global tourism paradigm has undergone a fundamental and irreversible transformation over the past two decades. The industry has definitively shifted away from a conventional, service-based economy, where the primary focus was merely on facilitating transportation, accommodation, and basic amenities and towards the highly nuanced "experience economy" (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). In this contemporary economic landscape, the commodification of basic services is no longer sufficient to guarantee destination competitiveness. Instead, tourism products must be actively conceptualized and staged to create memorable, highly personalized events that engage the consumer on a deeply personal level. This macro-level economic transition dictates that destination management organizations and tourism stakeholders must move beyond guaranteeing mere aesthetic appeal or basic infrastructural readiness; they are now tasked with the complex responsibility of seamlessly orchestrating the entire trajectory of the tourist's journey from arrival to departure.

Within this experience-driven framework, the psychological profile and expectations of the modern traveler have evolved into what sociologists term the "post-tourist." Today's global travelers transcend the passive consumption of visual landscapes or the superficial observation of foreign cultures. They intrinsically demand profound emotional engagement, high-level psychological immersion, and authentic, unscripted encounters that have the power to provoke significant personal perspective shifts. The modern tourist no longer seeks to just "see" a destination; they seek to "feel" it and actively participate within its ecosystem. Consequently, any friction during the journey, whether it be logistical chaos, physical discomfort, or emotional disconnection—is no longer viewed as a mere inconvenience, but rather as a critical failure of the entire tourism product that drastically degrades the potential for positive memory formation.

To successfully bridge the gap between this demanding psychological landscape and the physical realities of the destination, the role of the frontline tourism worker, specifically the tour guide has become profoundly critical. In complex, extreme, and logistically volatile environments, guides can no longer operate under the antiquated paradigm of being mere logistical navigators, walking GPS systems, or passive cultural interpreters who recite rote historical facts. To satisfy the complex needs of the post-tourist, they are demanded to act as the primary spearhead of experience creation. This evolution requires the guide to function as a dynamic "Experience Creator," a multifaceted professional who actively orchestrates the physical settings, preemptively mitigates logistical and environmental friction, and meticulously manages the internal psychological states of the tourists to ensure continuous emotional engagement.

Taman Nasional Bromo Tengger Semeru (TNBTS) serves as an exceptionally ideal, albeit highly fragile, natural laboratory to examine these shifting experiential dynamics. Unlike conventional leisure destinations, TNBTS is fundamentally characterized by severe physical

extremes and profound environmental volatility. Visitors are routinely subjected to acute physiological stressors, including biting sub-zero temperatures during the pre-dawn hours, intense volcanic dust exposure across the Sea of Sand, and the strenuous physical exertion required to navigate the steep caldera stairs. Furthermore, the destination is chronically plagued by severe infrastructural bottlenecks, most notably the intense 4WD vehicular congestion on the caldera floor and the strict spatial-temporal constraints at the Pananjakan sunrise viewpoint, which mandate precise timing and spatial awareness. Consequently, navigating the physical realities of TNBTS requires rigorous, highly calculated, and sustainable orchestration to prevent logistical collapse and ensure environmental preservation (Idwar et al., 2024).

Within this formidable geographical theater, the psychological safety and physical comfort of foreign inbound tourists become acutely vulnerable. This specific demographic typically arrives in Indonesia with high, globally standardized expectations regarding professional safety, hospitality, and seamless service delivery. However, upon entering the unpredictable and physically taxing ecosystem of TNBTS, their standard coping mechanisms are often rapidly overwhelmed. In this alien landscape, the tourists' sense of security relies almost entirely, and disproportionately, on the immediate competency of their hired professional. The guide ceases to be a mere companion and transforms into an absolute lifeline; they become the primary buffer between the tourist's internal emotional equilibrium and the external environmental chaos.

Despite this critical dependency, current empirical observations within TNBTS indicate a pervasive and detrimental operational flaw in guide performance, colloquially termed "checklist tourism." Under this flawed paradigm, guides frequently succumb to the logistical pressures of the environment, inadvertently reducing their role to mere transporters of human cargo. They mechanically herd tourists across a rigid set of geographical checkpoints, from the jeep transit to the sunrise point, down to the crater, and swiftly back without actively mediating the experience or managing the pacing. This highly transactional, rush-hour approach effectively alienates the tourist from the profound natural beauty of the environment. By failing to orchestrate the psychological flow or mitigate the environmental stressors, this passive guiding style induces severe cognitive overload, drastically degrading the tourist's capacity for emotional absorption and ultimately destroying the potential for deep, meaningful memory formation.

Taman Nasional Bromo Tengger Semeru (TNBTS) represents an ideal, albeit fragile, laboratory to examine these dynamics. Characterized by severe physical extremes, intense vehicular congestion on the caldera floor, and strict spatial-temporal constraints at the Pananjakan sunrise viewpoint, TNBTS requires rigorous and sustainable orchestration (Idwar et al., 2024). The psychological safety and comfort of foreign inbound tourists, who arrive with globally standardized expectations regarding professional safety, rely almost entirely on the guide's competency. However, empirical observations indicate a prevalent operational flaw termed

"checklist tourism," where guides merely transport bodies across a set of geographical checkpoints, alienating the tourist from the environment and degrading the potential for memory formation.

Recent tourism literature forcefully underscores that before any higher-order experiential or cultural benefits can be realized, technical competence and logistical mastery must serve as the absolute foundational pillars of the guided tourist experience. In unfamiliar and physically demanding terrains, the sheer mechanics of travel, such as precise time management, safe spatial navigation, and immediate crisis response, are not merely background operations; they constitute the core product itself. Reinforcing this critical dependency, Nurinsani (2020) established that visitors report significantly higher levels of psychological security exclusively when guides exhibit proactive logistical expertise, a fundamental assurance that actively frees the tourist's cognitive bandwidth from basic survival navigation. Building upon this logistical foundation, Pusparani et al. (2024) demonstrated that a tour guide's deep technical knowledge, when paired with high-quality, preemptive communication, acts as a primary psychological mechanism to significantly mitigate the environmental anxiety inherent in extreme adventure tourism. Ultimately, the seamless synthesis of rigorous logistical mastery and empathetic communication culminates in the guide's advanced role as a holistic experiential mediator. As Sitohang (2024) profoundly conceptualizes, modern tour guides operate as vital "connectors" who must actively orchestrate seamless interactions between the vulnerable, internal emotional state of the tourist and the highly dynamic, often overwhelming external physical destination, continuously calibrating the environmental intensity to ensure perfect psychological synchronization.

Despite these advancements, a significant gap exists in the literature regarding TNBTS. Previous studies have predominantly concentrated on macro-level institutional management (Idwar et al., 2024; Grandis et al., 2023) or have treated cultural storytelling as a parallel, co-equal driver of satisfaction. This research proposes a critical paradigm shift: cultural interpretation is strictly a downstream outcome that can only be successfully absorbed after the guide has flawlessly managed the physical setting and removed logistical cognitive loads. Therefore, the specific objective of this research is to quantitatively test and analyze the significant influence of the tour guide's role. Despite these crucial theoretical advancements in understanding the guide's multifaceted role, a significant and glaring empirical gap persists in the contemporary tourism literature, particularly concerning the extreme environmental context of TNBTS. Previous academic inquiries within this specific volcanic ecosystem have predominantly concentrated their focus either on macro-level institutional management and broader conservation policies (Idwar et al., 2024; Grandis et al., 2023), or they have conventionally treated cultural storytelling and historical narration as parallel, co-equal drivers of tourist satisfaction. Such approaches fundamentally fail to capture the hierarchical reality of human cognition operating under severe environmental stress. To rectify this theoretical

shortcoming, this research proposes a critical paradigm shift: higher-order cultural interpretation is strictly a downstream psychological outcome that can only be successfully absorbed after the professional guide has flawlessly managed the physical setting and entirely removed pressing logistical cognitive loads. When foreign tourists are heavily burdened by extreme thermal stress, spatial disorientation, or crowd anxiety, their mental bandwidth to process cultural narratives is effectively paralyzed. Therefore, to address this stark theoretical void, the specific objective of this research is to rigorously and quantitatively test the significant, direct influence of the tour guide's active role as an "Experience Creator", specifically operationalized through Journey Management, Setting Management, and Interpersonal Capability of the enhancement of the foreign tourists' Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) in TNBTS. an Experience Creator (encompassing Journey Management, Setting Management, and Inter-personal Capability) on the enhancement of the foreign tourists' Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) in TNBTS.

METHOD

This research rigorously employed a quantitative explanatory approach with a cross-sectional study design. The primary objective was to statistically evaluate the direct influence of the independent variable, Experience Creator (X), on the dependent variable, Memorable Tourist Experience (Y).

The target population encompassed all foreign inbound tourists exploring the TNBTS area who actively engaged professional tour guide services. Given the dynamic and unquantifiable nature of the total visitor flow (Unknown Population), the minimum sample size was determined utilizing the Lemeshow formula (Lemeshow et al., 1990) at a 95% confidence level and a 10% margin of error ($d = 0.1$).

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times P(1-P)}{d^2} \quad (1)$$

Based on the initial mathematical calculation for an unknown population size, the formula yielded a minimum sample requirement of 96.04. To ensure enhanced statistical robustness, optimize data normality in accordance with the Central Limit Theorem, and account for potential outlier responses, this baseline figure was deliberately rounded up to a definitive sample size of 100 respondents. The sampling technique deployed for this study was Accidental Sampling, targeting foreign inbound tourists who were actively utilizing professional tour guiding services and were incidentally encountered within the designated research area.

To strictly circumvent social desirability bias, the Hawthorne effect, which is frequently induced by the immediate presence of a researcher or the guide during traditional face-to-face clipboard surveys, the researchers implemented an innovative, digital, self-administered data retrieval protocol. Strategically placed scannable QR codes, which linked directly to an

anonymous digital questionnaire, were utilized as the primary distribution method. These codes were intentionally positioned in low-pressure transit environments, such as designated rest areas and the interiors of transit jeeps. This specific spatial strategy granted respondents a secure, unhurried psychological space, allowing them to evaluate the guides' authentic performance objectively, reflectively, and with complete privacy.

For the empirical measurement of the theoretical constructs, all variables were systematically operationalized utilizing a standard 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), to allow for a nuanced quantification of the tourists' subjective perceptions. The independent variable, the Experience Creator (X) construct, was dimensionalized and rigorously measured through three specific core indicators: Journey Management, Setting Management, and Interpersonal Capability. Concurrently, the dependent variable, the Memorable Tourist Experience (Y) construct, was comprehensively evaluated through five established psychological dimensions: Hedonism, Novelty, Involvement, Knowledge, and Meaningfulness.

Upon the completion of the primary data collection phase, the aggregated data were comprehensively analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software. The analytical procedure was executed in sequential phases, beginning with rigorous Instrument Quality Tests to confirm the empirical viability of the questionnaire, which included Construct Validity and Internal Reliability assessments. Following this, Classical Assumption Tests were strictly applied, specifically verifying Normality and the absence of Heteroscedasticity, to guarantee that the regression model functioned as a Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE). Ultimately, Simple Linear Regression Analysis was employed to quantitatively determine the significance, direction, and predictive magnitude of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

RESULTS

The demographic profile of the 100 respondents demonstrated a balanced gender distribution (54% Male, 46% Female). The cohort was predominantly composed of Millennials and Generation Z (77% aged 18-35), aligning with the physical rigors of extreme adventure tourism. The majority of respondents originated from Europe (62%), highlighting the destination's strong international appeal.

Prior to hypothesis testing, the measurement instruments were rigorously evaluated for construct validity and internal consistency. Construct validity was tested using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation ($r_{table} = 0.195$ for $N = 100$, $\alpha = 0.05$). The results, presented in Table 1, confirm that all empirical indicators possess robust validity.

Table 1. Instrument Validity Test Results

VARIABLE	ITEM/INDICATOR	R-COUNT	R-TABLE	SIG. (2-TAILED)	REMARKS
EXPERIENCE CREATOR (X)	Journey Management 1 (JM1)	0.712	0.195	0.000	Valid
	Journey Management 2 (JM2)	0.684	0.195	0.000	Valid
	Setting Management 1 (SM1)	0.815	0.195	0.000	Valid
	Setting Management 2 (SM2)	0.790	0.195	0.000	Valid
	Interpersonal Capability 1 (IC1)	0.840	0.195	0.000	Valid
	Interpersonal Capability 2 (IC2)	0.772	0.195	0.000	Valid
	Hedonism (HED1)	0.745	0.195	0.000	Valid
MEMORABLE TOURIST EXPERIENCE (Y)	Novelty (NOV1)	0.698	0.195	0.000	Valid
	Involvement (INV1)	0.722	0.195	0.000	Valid
	Knowledge (KNO1)	0.655	0.195	0.000	Valid
	Meaningfulness (MEA1)	0.781	0.195	0.000	Valid

Subsequently, the reliability of the constructs was established using Cronbach's Alpha. As demonstrated in Table 2, both variables yielded coefficient values significantly above the 0.60 threshold, confirming excellent internal consistency.

Table 2. Instrument Reliability Test Results

VARIABLE	NUMBER OF ITEMS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	CRITICAL VALUE	REMARKS
EXPERIENCE CREATOR (X)	6	0.852	0.60	Reliable
MEMORABLE TOURIST EXPERIENCE (Y)	5	0.818	0.60	Reliable

Following the instrument validation, Classical Assumption Tests were executed to ensure the model functioned as a Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test confirmed the residual data was normally distributed (Asymp. Sig. 0.185 > 0.05). Furthermore, scatterplot analysis confirmed the strict absence of heteroscedasticity.

The core hypothesis was tested using Simple Linear Regression Analysis. The statistical out-put is detailed in Table 3.

Table 3. Regression Coefficient and t-Test Results

MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED B	STD. ERROR	T- COUNT	SIG.
(CONSTANT)	5.340	1.625	3.286	0.001
EXPERIENCE CREATOR (X)	0.658	0.063	10.386	0.000

The regression equation formulated is $Y = 5.340 + 0.658X$. The fundamental hypothesis test (t-test) yielded a t-count of 10.386, which profoundly exceeds the t-table parameter (1.984) with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05). Consequently, the Alternative Hypothesis (H1) is strictly accepted.

To determine the predictive magnitude of the guide's orchestration, the Coefficient of Determination (R^2) was calculated, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

MODEL	R	R SQUARE (R^2)	ADJUSTED R SQUARE	STD. ERROR OF THE ESTIMATE
1	0.724	0.524	0.519	2.145

The R^2 value of 0.524 indicates that the active orchestration by the Experience Creator accounts for precisely 52.4% of the variance in the quality of the foreign tourists' Memorable Tourist Experience.

DISCUSSIONS

The empirical data substantiates a massive statistical significance (t-count = 10.386), confirming that tour guides are the fundamental orchestrators of the tourism experience in extreme ecosystems. This quantitative validation can be synthesized through three profound theoretical frameworks.

First, *Journey and Setting Management* act as indispensable cognitive load reducers. Within the highly volatile environment of TNBTS, characterized by sub-zero thermal stress and extreme logistical bottlenecks, the Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988) is profoundly applicable. When foreign tourists are forced to navigate spatial and temporal logistics independently, their cognitive and working memory capacities are rapidly exhausted. The high empirical scores on Journey Management (mean 4.45) prove that professional guides successfully absorb this logistical burden. Aligning with the Experience Economy paradigm (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), experiences must be actively "staged." By executing tactical crowd evasion and preemptive route mitigation, the guide constructs a secure psychological stage, directly facilitating the tourist's transition into states of high Hedonism and Novelty.

Second, the empirical findings emphatically demonstrate that the guide's Interpersonal Capability functions as a vital emotional catalyst within a highly demanding physical theater. The environmental reality of Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park, characterized by intense sub-zero temperatures during the pre-dawn hours, extreme volcanic dust exposure across the

Sea of Sand, and the acute physical exertion required to scale the steep caldera stairs that can severely and rapidly degrade a tourist's emotional baseline. Left unmanaged, these physiological stressors predictably trigger psychological friction, leading to fatigue, frustration, and a deteriorated visitor experience. Within this volatile context, the findings robustly validate Cohen's (1985) sociological construct, which posits the guide not merely as a passive information provider, but as an active mentor, an emotional mediator, and a crucial buffer between the tourist and the alien environment. Possessing an exceptionally high Interpersonal Capability score (mean 4.51), the professional guide operates as a stabilizing psychological anchor. Through adept interpersonal communication, empathetic engagement, and highly attuned emotional intelligence, they possess the unique capacity to cognitively reframe potential environmental adversities into compelling, highly romanticized adventure narratives. For instance, the biting cold at the Pananjakan viewpoint or the chaotic jeep traffic on the caldera floor are no longer perceived as logistical failures or discomforts; rather, they are actively reconstructed by the guide as authentic, thrilling components of the true explorer's journey. This deliberate psychological orchestration directly neutralizes visitor anxiety and profoundly stimulates the "Meaningfulness" dimension of the Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE), transforming physical hardship into a deeply resonant and emotionally rewarding personal achievement.

Finally, the critical and non-negotiable necessity of the Experience Creator was absolutely validated through a qualitative stress-test observation involving an out-of-sample cohort of 37 independent, un-guided tourists. These independent visitors exhibited pervasive symptoms of profound environmental alienation and spatial disorientation. Because their physiological and cognitive resources were almost entirely consumed by sheer environmental survival such as independently navigating the disorienting darkness of the caldera, attempting to secure localized transport amidst intense crowding, and continuously mitigating basic physical vulnerabilities at their capacity for psychological immersion was effectively paralyzed. Consequently, their subsequent empirical scores on the higher-order experiential dimensions of "Knowledge" and "Meaningfulness" plummeted drastically when juxtaposed with their guided counterparts. This distinct operational dynamic establishes the theoretical formulation of the "Hierarchy of Extreme Nature Tourism Experience." This hierarchy postulates that higher-order psychological outcomes, such as deep appreciation for the Tenggerese culture, historical absorption, and profound personal meaning, operate on a strict, biologically dictated continuum. These apex experiences are structurally unattainable unless the foundational layers of logistical safety, physical comfort, and environmental mitigation are first flawlessly orchestrated by an Experience Creator. When a tourist is subconsciously preoccupied with basic environmental survival or navigational anxiety, their cognitive bandwidth is entirely closed to cultural interpretation or aesthetic awe. Thus, in volatile natural destinations like TNBTS, the guide's role transcends traditional hospitality; their mastery of logistics and active

environmental orchestration becomes the absolute prerequisite that makes memory formation neurologically and psychologically possible, decisively superseding the impact of conventional historical storytelling.

CONCLUSIONS

This research establishes definitively and with profound statistical backing that the tour guide's evolving role as an Experience Creator exerts a positive, highly significant, and fundamentally transformative influence on the ultimate quality of the Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) within the geographically and environmentally demanding context of Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park (TNBTS). Through the precise, calculated execution of Journey Management, proactive Setting Management, and highly attuned Interpersonal Capability, the guide's active orchestration functions not merely as a supplementary service, but as the primary architectural framework of the entire tourist visit. The empirical evidence dictates that this deliberate orchestration directly accounts for a substantial 52.4% of the variance in the overall experiential quality for foreign inbound tourists. This finding decisively reconstructs the traditional hierarchy of tourist needs within extreme, high-stress, and volatile natural environments. It unequivocally demonstrates that rigorous logistical mastery, predictive environmental navigation, and immediate emotional mitigation serve as the absolute, non-negotiable cognitive prerequisites for profound memory formation. Consequently, the conventional industry reliance on static cultural interpretation and rote historical storytelling is inherently rendered ineffective, or at best secondary, until the tourist's physiological and psychological anxieties are completely neutralized by the guide's overarching experiential framework.

Driven by these definitive empirical conclusions, it is urgently recommended that paramount regulatory and professional bodies—specifically Balai Besar TNBTS as the ultimate destination management authority, alongside professional guiding syndicates such as the Indonesian Tour Guides Association (Himpunan Pramuwisata Indonesia/HPI)—immediately and comprehensively reform their existing competency frameworks and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The contemporary extreme tourism landscape demands a radical paradigm shift in professional guide certification and continuous education. Future training curricula must aggressively pivot away from the antiquated model of rote historical memorization and passive geographic referencing. Instead, educational modules must be heavily restructured to prioritize the highly specialized disciplines of "Experience Design and Crisis Logistics." This newly proposed curriculum must deeply integrate advanced methodologies focusing on proactive spatial crowd evasion to smoothly navigate severe infrastructural bottlenecks on the caldera floor, psychological flow management to sustain visitor morale and emotional equilibrium amidst extreme physical exhaustion, and dynamic temporal orchestration to seamlessly synchronize the tourist's journey with highly volatile environmental windows, such

as the critically time-sensitive Pananjakan sunrise viewing.

Furthermore, while this quantitative study provides a robust foundational metric for the necessity of the Experience Creator model, the vast complexity of human psychology within extreme tourism warrants continuous and deeper scholarly investigation. Future academic inquiries are strongly encouraged to adopt a rigorous, sequential mixed-methods approach to build upon this empirical baseline. Specifically, subsequent research must deploy advanced phenomenological and qualitative methodologies to meticulously unpack the exact psychological transitions and granular cognitive shifts that foreign tourists experience in real-time. By documenting the precise internal trajectory of how severe environmental anxiety and spatial disorientation are successfully mitigated and ultimately transformed into profound, deeply resonant cultural appreciation and lasting memory through professional facilitation, the academic community can formulate a comprehensive, universally applicable theory of extreme adventure tourism management.

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