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## **Understanding Students' Learning Experience on a Cultural School Trip: Findings from Eastern Indonesia**

*Despite the current increase of studies on school trips and experiential learning, questions remain about what aspects of school trips best contribute to students and how it affects students' learning experience. This study attempts to explore students' learning experience participating in one-day cultural school trips in Papua, eastern Indonesia. Conducting trips to two cultural venues (a cultural museum and cultural village) and integrating topics in secondary schools' curriculum (Papuan local content and Papuan art and culture), we evaluated student learning experiences against Bloom et al (1956) Taxonomy of educational objectives. The study found several emergent categories: students' previous experiences, emotional experiences, impressions on seeing new perspective, reidentifying cultural identity, cultural awareness, personal effect and framing and comparing learning strategy. The results provide insight into the effectiveness of school trip in the cultural setting in less developed countries and suggest areas for further study.*

**Keywords:** *Experiential learning, school trip, cultural venues, Indonesia, Papua.*

### **Introduction**

Much research on school field trips has accumulated over the last forty years. These studies have tried to identify whether school field trips contribute to school-based teaching and learning; factors that may contribute to such learning; and, to a lesser extent, the kind of learning outcomes that can result from this experience (DeWitt & Storksdieck, 2008). In addition, many have studied the potential for learning outcomes by utilizing informal settings outside the school environment such as museums, zoos or a specific geographical landscape, and comparing learning in these settings with the learning process of traditional instruction in the classroom (e.g. Behrendt & Franklin, 2014; Hofstein & Rosenfeld, 1996).

This study concentrates on student participants' self-reported learning experiences on a cultural school trip. Three main questions were formulated in a desire to understand their experiences: First, the reason students participated in the trip is identified and presented; what were the motivations of both experienced and inexperienced students to participate in a trip linked to topics taught in the classroom? Second, the learning that occurred during the trip through experiential learning is discussed; how do students perceive the learning experience during the trip? Third, the last question is an effort to understand students' post-trip point of view and shed light on the difference between learning via traditional teaching and on a school trip; how did this non-traditional learning experience affect students after the trip? These three stages are examined against the established learning models of Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, (1956) and Kolb (1984) in order to illustrate the higher levels of cognitive and personal development that can be achieved.

Obviously, previous studies have discussed school trips (see Patrick, Mathews, & Tunnicliffe, 2013; Tal, Alon, & Morag, 2014; Tomik & Mynarski, 2009). It is well recognized that field trips, despite their extra work, offer valuable educational experiences to students (Cater, Low & Keirle, 2018) However, most of this work has been conducted with students in western countries, often involving extended periods of travel. Comparing a one-day cultural school trip experience that is feasible for less developed settings to other types of school trips (i.e. those focused on geography, biology, nature conservation or science) would be helpful to illuminate the issue of cultural school trips, particularly from the perspective of students in developing countries.

### **School trips and learning experience**

It could be argued that all travel has elements of learning, even though the explicit purpose may not be education (Dale, 2007; Smith, 2013). Traveling to learn has a long history, for example the so-called 17<sup>th</sup> century Grand Tour was a subset of tourism in which the European upper classes sent their sons on an extended tour for educational experience, a rite of passage which later become a cultural norm (Brodsky-Porges, 1981). During and after this period, educational tourism developed further and diversified into many forms; its complexity includes the school trip as a sub-category of educational tourism (Ritchie, Carr, & Cooper, 2003).

Indeed, according to Bodger et al (cited in Mohul (2009:23) the term educational travel 'could be expanded to any of a spectrum of travel opportunities: from the school child going on a study holiday to a Mediterranean Cruise with a guest lecturer; or a language student studying abroad; other educational study tours; or travel packages for adults where education is a major or the prime objective'. Mouton (2002) argued that travel provides a reflective experience and travelers are able to obtain learning values, while (Wong & Wong, 2008) indicate it helps to stimulate critical thinking on factual issues in the field. Although it is not always the primary reason for motivating a person to travel, learning from travel is certainly one of the prominent factors. Through the concrete experience and the discovery of new things during travel, it will provide a way in which travelers can reflect on experiences and create learning. According to Mitchell (1998) this travel experience could be either obtained deliberately and planned prior to the travel or could be incidental and unintentional.

Conducting a study in the form of school travel for secondary-school geography students in Israel, Orion & Hofstein (1994) highlighted that novelty is the key factor affecting learning ability. Their findings emphasized that travel leads to gaining knowledge and practical skills based on concrete interaction with the venues. Adopting a qualitative case study in Hong Kong, Lai (1999) suggested that school trips help students to construct knowledge and improve their understanding in terms of experiential learning through trip activities. These experiential activities in geography indicated that students can positively relate theory in the classroom and reality in the field and thus gain new perspectives.

One of the key supporting arguments for the place of experiential learning is the increased cognitive development that comes with such domains. Portegies, De Haan, Isaac, & Roovers (2011) point out the importance of contextual learning as a 'best practice for knowledge production in the field of tourism' (112). Drawing on the well-established model of cognitive educational objectives by Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, (1956), elements of *Knowledge* and *Comprehension* developed in the classroom can be augmented through field experiences to facilitate *Application* and *Analysis*, which can be further developed in reflective practice to *Synthesis* and *Evaluation*. These stages are further ratified in Kolb (1984) experiential learning cycle model of effective learning. Here a student progresses through a cycle of four stages: of (1) having a concrete experience followed by (2) observation of and reflection on that experience which leads to (3) the formation of abstract concepts (analysis) and generalizations (conclusions) which are then (4) used to test hypothesis in future situations, resulting in new experiences.

Going further, other studies which examined this type of learning experience illustrated that gains were not solely in the context of cognitive outcomes. Fägerstam (2014) emphasized that the 'educational aspect' of a trip contributed to students' experience through communication, shared experience, as well as expansion and confirmation of academic knowledge. Besides improving students understanding and fostering acquisition of practical skills, school trips are claimed to contribute to various learning outcomes, including stimulation of students' curiosity (Falk & Dierking, 1997), individual growth (Rickinson et al., 2004; Stone & Petrick, 2015) and social and interpersonal impacts (Dohn, 2013; O'Brien & Murray, 2007).

Further work by Bloom et al (1956) highlighted the equal importance of the affective and psychomotor domains of learning, which can be enhanced through experiential learning. However, it is important to note that literature linking school trips to with these diverse learning outcomes are limited, particularly in the context of developing countries such as Indonesia.

## Materials and Methods

This study was conducted in two secondary schools located in Jayapura, the capital city of Papua province in eastern Indonesia. Prior to the main school trips, an initial pilot study with six students and one teacher recruit was organized to research sites to assist with trip planning, including learning design and testing instruments for data collection. This pilot study was useful primarily in solving logistical issues, time allocations in each location and improving the structure of interview questions used with students.

Fifty student-participants participated in the main trips from two high schools in the city (table 1).

**Table 1. Details of student-participants and activities**

<i>No.</i>	<i>Secondary Participants</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Activities/Details</i>
1.	SMAN 1 Jayapura		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 27 participants (20 male and 7 female students; 5 Papuan and 22 Non-Papuan, 16 Moslems and 11 Christians)</li> <li>- Age between 15-17 years; all first year students</li> <li>- Two locations (Cultural museum of Cenderawasih University and Abar village)</li> <li>- Interview (1<sup>st</sup> week to 2<sup>nd</sup> week after trip)</li> </ul>
2.	SMAN 3 Jayapura		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 23 participants (15 male and 6 female students; 21 Papuan and 2 Non-Papuan, 1 Moslem and 22 Christians)</li> <li>- Age between 15-17 years; 21 first year students and 2 second year students</li> <li>- Two locations (Cultural museum of Cenderawasih University and Abar village)</li> <li>- Interview (1<sup>st</sup> week to 2<sup>nd</sup> week after trip)</li> </ul>

This research adopted a qualitative methodology in which the data is sought on the participants' experiential perspective and meanings related to the school trip. Qualitative research is grounded on constructivist and participatory perspectives. As Creswell (2009) suggested, it can include multiple meanings of individual experiences that are socially and historically constructed. Therefore, this approach was suitable to analyze and describe the experience in the participants' own words without the intermediary of the researcher and being constrained by the framework design imposed from the researcher (Veal, 2006). Thus, two techniques, observation and interviews, were applied. Veal (2006) notes that observation is about looking and presenting a perspective on a situation which is not apparent to the individuals involved. This was useful for providing background to the learning activities and the interactions between students and their learning environment. During observation, field notes were taken regarding activities and the phenomena on the spot. Reflective notes were used to record observer point-of-view and reflections. As the goal is to develop a holistic understanding of complex social settings and relationships, as well as to improve data collection, validity and interpretation, this technique helps researchers to have better understanding of one particular context or phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Kawulich, 2005), in this case educational school trips.

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants. This technique is placed among other strategies for collecting qualitative data by reconstructing the knowledge of the participants (Mason, 2002). It is widely used by tourism and education researchers to focus on participants' perception of events, experience, and give access to the participants' opinion and attitudes (see Campbell-price, 2014; Fägerstam, 2014; Griffin & Symington, 1997; Stone & Petrick, 2015). Students were interviewed individually. The locations (near the school) were arranged by both parties, and interviews were conducted between 9 to 3 pm. The participants were interviewed approximately one week after the trip. The interview length was approximately 13–23 minutes per student, and all interviews were recorded. The questions were covered an introduction about the school trip, thoughts on the experience during the trip and reflection after the trip.

All data was transcribed in Microsoft Word, cleaned, and imported to NVivo (v. 11). The process of initial coding was based on identifying relevant information in data collected into theme and sub-theme. There are four basic stages to be applied: becoming familiar with the data and generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes, defining and naming themes; and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Direct quotes (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006) are reported in the results from this study as the emphasis was on allowing 'the respondents to impart their own reality, cataloguing the socially constructed knowledge of informants rather than the hypothesizing of the investigator' (Riley, 1995:636)

Ethical issues were a concern throughout the research since the participants were all inexperienced and vulnerable. Fontana & Frey (2006) highlighted three points of concern related to studies of this type: informed consent, confidentiality, and harm protection. Two forms of consent, both written and verbal, were collected from both parents and students prior to the interview, coupled with sharing the researcher's personal background, information about the project, and participants' rights, following ethical procedures of the University. All data gained from participants were recorded in digital form and transcriptions were stored using cloud storage system provided by university and researcher's personal external hard disks. The data was password protected so as not become accessible to unwanted third parties. In addition, regarding data presentation, all participant information was anonymised to protect personal data and ensure confidentiality.

### ***Site selection***

This research took place in Papua, the eastern-most province in Indonesia. 'Papua is a multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multi-religious region with a high influx of migration' (Ananta, Utami, & Handayani, 2016:458). Whilst the indigenous population of Papua is mostly Melanesian, several decades of transmigration policy have significantly diluted the dominance of these ethnic groups, particularly in cities such as Jayapura, where the study was located. Whilst this was a source of ethnic tension in the province for many years, recent changes in government policy, and significantly greater autonomy for the region since 2001 have led to a renewed interest in indigenous culture that is partly expressed in the school curriculum. This paper does not examine the specific threats to Papuan culture, rather it is interested in how experiential learning can contribute to cultural awareness and preservation. In this we focus on the *processes* of experiential learning rather than the products and outcomes which are covered elsewhere (author, forthcoming).

The selected trip venues, the Cultural Museum of Cenderawasih University and Abar village, had many aspects which could be linked to the in-class curriculum. To take full advantage of these opportunities, and stress the availability of experiential learning implicit in the school curriculum (Priest, 1986; Scarce, 1997), the teachers from the participating schools and the researcher identified which material was appropriate and should be linked and offered by tour guides in both locations. Fortunately, almost the entire syllabus of art and culture, as

well as the local content at all levels of the secondary school curriculum had a strong connection, such as Papuan traditional two- and three-dimensional crafts. Other than that, teachers were involved in the process of discussing these topics in class. Apart from the related curriculum, some other elements were also considered at each venue (i.e. safety, facilities, tour guides and the cultural values presented).

### ***1. Cultural Museum of Cenderawasih University, Papua***

The Cultural Museum of Cenderawasih University was inaugurated in 1973, and currently has 2,500 items in its collection. However, due to limited space, the museum runs rolling exhibitions, with only perhaps half of its total collection displayed at any given time, and replaced after five to seven years. The main collection of this museum are ethnographic objects derived from 270 tribes in Papua consisting of kitchen utensils; equipment related to living livelihoods such as farming equipment, hunting and fishing; jewelry; traditional weapons; equipment for exchange (dowries, fines, etc.); sacred objects; transportation equipment; and musical instruments (Association of Indonesian Museum, 2010).

**Figure 1. Students in Museum of Lokabudaya Cenderawasih University**



Designed to serve an educational purpose, this museum works in collaboration with educational institutions (schools and higher education institutions) in field trip programs and research. Museum tours are mostly guided by two of its educational staff, and by request, by a professional member of the academic staff working in anthropology.

### ***2. Abar Village***

Abar village is one of the main potential tourism attractions in Papua, known for its traditional clay pottery. This village is located on the outskirts of Sentani Lake in the district of Jayapura, and contributes to increase local revenue (Behabol, Darsono, & Respati, 2017) . The village can be accessed by road, or by boat, crossing Sentani Lake. Nowadays, people mostly arrive by boat due to the poor state of the road and shortened travel time. The village offers various tourism activities. The process of making traditional pottery and the local lifestyle are considered the main cultural attractions. Visitors are assisted in understanding the history, values and functions of traditional pottery by local guides. Aside from the pottery,

visitors also enjoy the beautiful scenery of Cyclops Mountain and traditional villages across Sentani Lake, as well as the boat trip while crossing the lake.

**Figure 2. Students with craftspeople in Abar village**



Similar to the museum, Abar village has expanded its function to not only serve passively as a tourist attraction, but to actively provide a place for experiential learning. Schools can use the village to gain more understanding about the local culture and give students the opportunity to practice making pottery and be immersed in the cultural life of locals.

## **Findings**

The responses of students to the experience on the educational trip came in many ways. These findings focus on themes identified first from the motivations to participate, while responses during and after the trip relate to the interface between their trip and in-class learning.

### **Reasons to participate: Knowledge and Comprehension**

Student responses when asked why they chose to participate came in several forms related to gaining knowledge (Bloom et al., 1956) via a concrete experience (Kolb, 1984). Students indicated their desire 1) to have new experience; 2) to have fun and gain knowledge and; 3) purely to gain knowledge. In general, students admitted that previously their school had never organized such a trip. For them, engaging means obtaining new experiences and fulfilling their curiosity about the trip, venues, and learning process, linking to the novelty identified by Orion & Hofstein (1994) above. Phrases such as “I have never been there” often came out, expressing the eagerness for a concrete experience. One male student of SMAN 1 Jayapura articulated this as follows:

*“I have never participated before, so I want to know how it feels to do a trip and learn at the same time” -*

Several participants claimed that they had been interested in an educational trip because they will obtain knowledge, and at the same time, travel with their friends. For them, an educational trip not only aims to gain more understanding about a specific issue, but also offers enriching interpersonal experiences. Some illustrative comments were quoted by female students from both schools as follows:

*“Firstly, I want to have a new experience with my friends, secondly I have never been there before, so I want to know” -*

*“Actually, to improve my knowledge because I think that would be good to learn directly in the place without looking the text spontaneously and. make it with my friends and have a chance to visit places that I have never been” -*

In addition, some students who had experienced a previous school trip expressed dissatisfaction with these, indicating the previous trip was full of physical activity and lack of expertise in presentation. For example, one female student described her previous school trip as a hiking activity, rather than a chance to learn about biology and conservation. Interestingly, she indicated that her reason to participate in our trip was to obtain pure knowledge.

*“I want to know many things that I have never seen before like historic relics in Jayapura. Furthermore, to know about cultural relics that still exists today. Also want to know more about such statues, drums, and boat rowing....”*

### **During the trip: Application and Analysis**

During the trip students were able to both apply and analyse the material presented to them because of the focus on experiential aspects.

#### ***Impressions on seeing new perspectives***

The following questions regarding their impression of locations confirmed they responded strongly to the cultural values of both locations. They recognized that limitations in understanding and comprehending cultures seemed to affect their prior impression. Students admitted in general that what they had in their mind previously were simple cultural artifacts such as “Noken” (a traditional bag), and “Koteka” (sheath traditionally worn by highland tribes in Papua). Responses indicating that, following the trip, they realized that Papua is rich in culture and history, and the unique life of tribes often came up during the interview. One female participant described one example of this analysis:

*“I got many things. First of all, when we went to museum. I just don’t realize there we have so many ehm... relics of Papua. Entering the building, we are welcomed with a big and tall statue. It is so tall almost reach the ceiling. I was really amazed like in Papua we have that kind of thing. The Satan clothes were also interesting”*  
(

The impression also came in term of traditional values, observing the bonds between indigenous peoples when compared to modern cultures. For example, one female student described her opinion about it during her observation as follows:

*“I could see they are living in an unpretentious way. I learn a lot about it. Like their bond. It is like they have something precious in their village”*

Another male student argued that he previously knew little about traditional crafts made Papuans but could now compare them to other parts of Indonesia and their uniqueness impressed him

*“... like traditional craft in Abar village. We in Papua in general know that this craft mostly made in Java Island. But the fact, we also have this craft in Papua as well and the traditional technique is unique”*

However, when asked which trip element they preferred, Abar village made a stronger impression than the Museum, further emphasizing the importance of the interactive elements at this site. Abar village seemed to be an important element of the trip, especially in relation to its uniqueness in offering more applied activities coupled with students' inexperience in visiting such places, as well as the novelty of the boat trip. Some verbal expressions about crossing the lake using the boat, and during activities in the village showed amazement; words such as "cool", "wow", and visible smiles were observed. Students were impacted by three opportunities for application provided by Abar village: the crafting process, the scenery, and the warm welcome from the villagers. Below were comments that highlighted the elements from both schools participants.

*"Abar village impressed me because I can make handwork using clay with my friends"*

*"We had also lunch in the village traditional port which was really beautiful. The mountain can be seen clearly and the water is clean so we also could see the fish swimming"*

*"Perhaps when we arrived in Abar, they warmly welcomed us. We were like people new to them; but we were treated very well"*

These were engaging experiences, and in some cases creative experiences for the students which allowed greater application of knowledge, highlighting higher levels of Blooms taxonomy.

### ***Reidentifying own culture***

Questioning of their own culture during the trip can also be seen from the student participants' comments. Despite having something new at each venue, they seemed to be comparing the trip presentation to their previous understanding of their own culture. Many small discussions among students occurred to reidentify and confirm their own cultures' characteristics, and this continued after the trip. In the interview, some Papuan students put it this way:

*"I am from Netar tribe. We are just famous with traditional dance and use to perform in Festival of Sentani Lake. I was surprised when he described where my tribe originally came from and our traditional tools from the past that I have never known before" (S3.EL-FE9)*

*"It was a shield. You can find it near the black statue. I was told that they brought it from Waikimo. Females are forbidden to see it. It can cause infertility according to myth. I felt surprised when I heard that, I then called my father to ask but he did not know about that collection" (S3.GR-FE17)*

These comments clearly show a level of analysis, comparing different cultural elements and questioning the reasons behind them.

### ***Emotional experience***

Experiential learning also relies heavily on affect, as feeling is one of the key elements identified in Kolbs concrete experiences, and these are also emphasized in Blooms affective learning domain. These were clearly identified in student narratives. Emotional feelings about the trip were expressed as excited, afraid, curious, and brave. In general, excitement was the dominant feeling during the trip. Expressions such as "I am happy" and "I enjoyed" were

consistently stated during the interview as it was represented by a male student .

*“But overall... I feel happy and I do not think I can get this experience from other people and I feel so lucky obtaining lots of knowledge and learning materials in the locations”*

Moreover, feeling afraid was mostly related to the boat trip. For example, one female student participant described her feeling on the boat trip as between excited and scared:

*I did scream a bit (laugh...). But the other friends kept telling me jokes so I felt between scared and funny (laugh...). But it was really a good experience. I will not forget it for whole my life (smile...)*

This student indicated that her friends kept telling jokes during the trip to distract her from nervousness. This nervousness was visible when they boarded the boat; the fifteen-minute trip to Abar village by boat was not easy, particularly for the inexperienced students. The trust and comfort among some of them (including teachers who were mediating actors in certain situations) can be assumed to have developed previously. Another male student also commented that her first-time trip to the museum was frightening, indicating superstitious elements:

*“Everything was important. But the statue of Asmat tribe could be the one. Every time I passed the statue I was like having goosebumps. The tour guide explained that after the war they must kill their enemy and their head will be put on it” (*

Although this raises some ethical issues regarding the place of emotions in experiential learning, other authors have emphasized that being overwhelmed is an important part of the learning process (see Cater, Low, & Keirle, 2018; Portegies et al., 2011). Indeed as (Weber, 2001) notes, educational practices involving an element of risk often lead to greater levels of learning and gaining insight as a direct result of the activity.

### **Post trip: Synthesis and Evaluation**

Following the trip students were able to synthesize and evaluate the learning experience in a variety of ways.

#### ***Concept of cultural awareness***

The first theme that emerged during the interview on the post-trip experience was the new concepts and ideas they obtained, including expanded cultural awareness. Most research participants commented the school trip affected them, shaping their cultural awareness. Experiencing and observing the places in addition to their classroom-based learning added to their awareness of cultural degradation, and their perception that the severity of this issue has grown in recent generations. This experience seems to have brought them to believe that cultural preservation should be taken more seriously. This concern was indicated in the interview of a female Papuan student

*“I am afraid we are going to lose all traditions in the future. Things in the museum are so old and many people have no interest to visit and the making of Sempe is dominated by women. It looks to me young people have less interest in Papuan cultures”*

Their responses also highlighted an aspect of cultural identity, having the responsibility

to preserve Papuan culture. One female participant articulated her idea about the trip and at the same time being Papuan as follows:

*“I feel more challenged to maintain and preserve Papuan cultures. Especially after having tour and seeing collections. I am Papuan so I have responsibility to preserve my cultures”*

### ***Personal development***

Post-trip questions on personal development show mostly positive effects, not just in cognitive function, but also in psychomotor skills and affect domains (Bloom et al., 1956). In general, participants admitted they obtained more evaluative understanding compared to what they have gained in schools. Apart from having an opportunity to practice and improve skills at pottery-making, all participants, including teachers, felt that their bonding and interpersonal skills had increased during the trip. Many comments indicated that they felt closer after the trip. Spending time together outside of school was seen as a very rare and valuable experience in their life.

In addition, participants said that observing local people in Abar village brought value to their lives, teaching them to appreciate their life and be grateful. For example, one female Papuan participant expressed these feelings after she found out local craftspeople do not receive proper education due to a lack of money to pay for school, and as a result, making crafts is their only livelihood option. She said in the interview,

*“I think I get new experience and knowledge on cultures. While in Abar, I feel like if I have a chance to save books then I will save it. It is good to share used books with them. I also feel grateful with all I have got right now. I still can have education because my parents raised me with good education. This gratitude spurred me to be more active in learning”.*

In addition, the results of interviews showed that the trip also changed students' personal interaction outside the school environment. Interestingly, it seems to be implied that social interactions during the trip can affect the way participants interact at home. An example of this can be described in the following sequence from one of the female students' interviews

***Interviewer*** : ***Could you identify changes after the trip?***

***Student*** : *My point of view. Also, (before) I tend to spend my time in my room. Somehow after the trip, I love to chat with my family*

### ***Framing and comparing learning strategies***

Participants indicated what they did during the school trip was a much better learning strategy compared to traditional teaching in the classroom. Participants stressed the fun atmosphere, authentic values, active learning and real experience during the trip, as well as novelty of presentations at the venues all facilitating synthesis of learning. In contrast, participants described school as full of talks, note-taking, theories, and pressure. Others indicated that the guides in each venue made different contributions to the learning process due to their expertise, which teachers were unable to match. Some selected extracts from interviews from both school participants show the contrasting opinions,

*“It would not feel the same. In school you cannot experience the atmosphere, the details. In the location, you experience everything. You only need to explore because they prepare everything and know and experience better about the material”*

*“In our school, teachers who teach us Papuan art and cultures are not teacher who specialized in this subject. They are biology and religion teachers. The school has no resources in teaching this subject so we understand it. The museum guide has lots of experience in the museum. He knows every collection and has experience in traditional stuffs of Papuans. So, in the museum we have the expert and see the real object not just pictures like in school”*

*“The atmosphere is the difference. If we make a trip seems like we are learning while traveling. In school we feel like being caged and must do learning activity from 7 am to almost 5 pm. I think if we ask them to visit our school (instead), there will be no difference on learning atmosphere. If we go out, we can have refreshment like relaxed and enjoy the lesson*

## **Discussion**

This research seemed to indicate that, in a less developed country context, having very limited or no opportunity to engage in school trips previously was an important feature for students to get the most out of a trip. For such participants, being involved in a trip outside the regular learning setting can fulfill their curiosity but also contribute towards the educational objectives outlined by Bloom et al., (1956). This finding was in line and consistent with what Conceição & Skibba (2008:25) suggest, where educational travelers participate mainly ‘to learn a new place and culture’. The form of experiential learning is shaped through interacting with the environment, learning and participating in craft making and building relationships with local people on-site. In addition, participants assumed the school trip was related to venues they have never previously experienced; knowledge taught in school about the venues before the trip made the opportunity to take the trip worth seizing. For the small number of experienced participants, having previous experience possibly influenced their choice, citing gaining knowledge as their motivation. As well as these cognitive elements, the affective domain was important as the interview results also indicate that interpersonal experience was involved in the success of the trip. As Xie (2004) described, this factor plays a central role in successful educational endeavors in terms of knowing and building intimacy among participants.

The findings during the school trip revealed that emotional experiences were often expressed both during learning activities and throughout the journey, yet these were positive elements of the learning environment (Portegies et al., 2011). As mentioned previously, excitement was the most frequently mentioned emotion, while negative feelings, such as fear, came next. However, participants’ peers and teachers played an additional role as trusted facilitators and “calmers”, enabling students to tackle the challenge. In addition, feeling afraid related to the educational presentations in the museum, possibly due to immersion in the cultural setting, and it involved imagination through feeling pleasurable fright (Soren, 2009) related to beliefs regarding superstitious elements.

The core element of students’ impressions can be identified based on their synthesis and evaluation of life at home and school and what they have seen and experienced at locations on the trip. Seeing new and authentic things expands their horizons and enriches their perspective on cultures and history. According to both Conceição & Skibba (2008) and Deale (2007) these direct experiences can result in authentic situated learning. Likewise, many participants indicated the opportunity to develop psychomotor skills in Abar village, beyond the scenery and local welcome; this was not surprising, due to the more active learning that took place there, compared to the museum. When a trip activity involves active learning, where participants are free to get messy with clay, a productive atmosphere of learning then follows. This is also the benefit of a school trip, when firsthand experiential learning takes place. All participants successfully adapted to a new learning situation and such informal settings give

choices and control over what aspects of the lesson they want to focus on (Anderson, Piscitelli, Weier, Everett, & Tayler, 2002; Falk & Storksdieck, 2005; Nunan & Lamb, 2000; Pugh & Bergin, 2005). In other words, the appropriate concepts, ideas or theories of cultures found in a textbook can be directly practiced.

This trip also had an effect on participants reconfirming their cultural identity, although this was found mostly in Papuan students. Participants raised in Papuan cultures obtained their early understanding about their own cultures from their parents, and they questioned and reconfirmed their cultural identity while visiting the venues. Post-trip, participants in the current study addressed the concept of promoting cultural awareness, including awareness of cultural degradation and preservation. The interview results indicated that this concept came to their awareness as an important issue faced by Papuans. Participation in cultural activities through experiential learning brought a new dimension to how they view cultural issues and positively react to them. As Williams (2005) noted, these activities help to bridge interaction of participants with concepts and themes from various multicultural perspectives, essential for building cultural awareness. In both venues, for example, they realized that collections of traditional crafts are part of their combined cultural heritage. Reflecting on their own environment and seeing examples of where modernity and globalization have affected the way people, particularly the younger generations, see cultures, leads participants to take the need for preservation more seriously.

Regarding personal effects, bonding and interpersonal skills, seem to be the most relevant personal elements highlighted by most of the participants. This is in line with many previous studies, which have found that interpersonal relationships, in particular, those of students to students or students to teachers, are affected by experiences such as this (see Dohn, 2013; Lai, 1999; Orion & Hofstein, 1994). In addition, personal development, such as appreciating life and being grateful, can also be highlighted as important elements, shown by students' reports of reflecting and comparing their life during and after the school trip. Interestingly, this has even affected participants' personal life in the environment outside school, including the family circle, showing evidence in changing participants' capacity for openness. Long-term effects on interpersonal relationships from the trip remain; the openness and bonding among participants contributed to changes in personal social development and interaction.

Comparing learning strategy, schools are seen full of formalities, theories, talks, note-taking and boring activities, while experiential learning elements in the trip provided a good atmosphere, authentic values, active learning and concrete experiences. The trips were also suggested to positively release feelings of being under pressure. This is in line with what Lai (1999) claimed, that a school trip as a break in school routine offers an escape from the boredom and constraint of the classroom, and could reduce feelings of isolation. Moreover, the trip was one way to overcome teachers' weaknesses in instruction on different cultures. Offering more learning strategies for student-centered learning, student participants were encouraged to actively explore and experiment. As Hofstein & Rosenfeld (1996) suggested, this allowed them to physically interact with and manipulate objects on the spot, which normally would not take place in a traditional classroom.

## **Conclusion**

Previous studies have reported that further discussion of the learning experiences of cultural school trips is necessary. Most previous studies engaged small numbers of participants, and little research has been conducted on the implications of experiential learning on a one-day school trip for students' learning experience in less developed settings. Using a semi-structured interview, intensive observation, engaging more participants, and integrating the school curriculum with a trip to cultural and historical venues, important points can be reached.

Previous experience on such school trips matters in motivating students to be involved. For students, the absence of trip experience is a kind of push factor, leading them to fulfill their curiosity on what exactly a school trip might be. In contrast, for those who have previous experience, being involved has a greater knowledge focus. It is seen that emotional experiences expressed during the trip were illustrated by both excitement and fear, but these were potential contributors to learning. Indeed, participants seemed to be impressed mostly by venues that offer more active sensations (such as boat trip, scenery and welcome by locals), and by venues with which they can actively engage, such as the opportunities provided by Abar village.

A limitation of this study was the lack of experience among the guides in the venues at linking the school curriculum with the materials presented. As a result, they had to follow our learning design and change their presentation style accordingly. This may affect students' learning experience. In addition, the different responses of both native Papuan students and non-native Papuan students should be explored deeper in future studies. For example, comparing differences in learning experience, or the differing effects of cultural school trips on participants with different cultural identities. Further longitudinal work on this and extent of student learning over the long term would be useful.

Obviously, we would not wish to propose that field trips should replace traditional learning, as this is clearly still central in terms of curriculum coverage. Resources also clearly limit the potential for experiential learning activities, particularly in less developed countries. However, this study emphasizes the profound impact that experiential learning can have on student learning across all of the domains identified by (Bloom et al., 1956) and the higher levels that can be achieved therein. We would recommend that teachers seeking to develop experiential learning activities think carefully how these can best be linked to curriculum, so that gains can be maximized. Similarly, we feel that teachers need to work closely with venues and attraction managers to ensure a structured program that meets both their capacities as well as the needs of students.

The elements of experiential learning during a school trip have important effects not only on students' understanding of cultures and history, but also in giving them free choice and control regarding the aspects upon which they want to focus. It is effective in stimulating the concept of cultural awareness, promoting two core issues, cultural degradation and preservation, particularly in Papua. In addition, such a school trip helps students in shaping their own cultural identities by reflecting on their own cultures through critically observing, questioning, and experimenting with the materials presented. Finally, school trips provide an escape from the routines of traditional learning. For participants, the learning strategies of traditional teaching are unable to provide the same enjoyment as the learning experiences on a school trip. More importantly, the gap between theory and practice can be filled by the experiences of a school trip, nurturing more balanced learning outcomes overall.

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