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EXPLORATION OF THE 2021 SENJA DRIVE-IN VISITOR EXPERIENCE USING THE EVENT EXPERIENCE CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Inrid Agelia Floriana Wera^{1*}, Lutfiah Nur Ainun², Peni Zulandari Suroto³,
Rudi Handoko⁴, Made Handijaya Dewantara⁵
Department of Tourism, Universitas Prasetiya Mulya^{1*234}
inrid.wera@student.pmsbe.ac.id
Department of Tourism, Hotel and Sport Management, Griffith University⁵

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Abstract

Drive-in Events are a new phenomenon in the event industry in 2020, emerging as innovations to overcome social distancing policies. The researcher was interested in exploring the experience of Drive-In Senja 2021 visitors using the event experience conceptual model, which helps add to the study of event experience and provides insight for the event industry in designing event experiences, especially Drive-In event experiences. This study uses the conceptual basis of the event experience conceptual model. Qualitative approaches and phenomenological methodologies, especially IPA (interpretative phenomenology analysis), were used to examine five informants representing three categories: couple, double date, and girls' night out. The results of data analysis found 37 emergent themes that formed 11 superordinate themes, which constructed the Drive-In Senja event experience conceptual model. The Drive-In Senja event experience conceptual model differs from the event experience conceptual model, namely a personal and social realms in a more detailed event environment. As a result, there are more superordinates in the personal realm than in the event environment, which shows the limitations of Drive-In Senja organizers in designing event environments during pandemic conditions.

Keywords: Event Experience, Drive-In Event, Experience, Drive-In Senja, Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry and the creative economy are the mainstays of the country's foreign exchange, contributing to GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and employment that continues to increase yearly. Although, based on BPS data, in 2010, the tourism industry absorbed only 7.44 million workers (about 6.88% of the total national workforce), within nine years, the number of workers in the tourism sector increased to 13 million workers. They contributed 10.28% of national workers (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2020).

The event industry, including the tourism and creative economy sectors, has suffered the worst due to the Covid-19 pandemic (coronavirus disease 2019). To fight the

Covid-19 pandemic, the government has implemented Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) and physical distancing-regulated in Government Regulation 21 of 2020. Based on Minister of Health Regulation (Permenkes) Number 9 of 2020, PSBB is restrictions on certain activities of residents in an area suspected of being infected with coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) in such a way as to prevent the possibility of its spread (JDHI BPK RI Regulation Database, 2020). Since the Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) in April 2020, all events have been postponed or canceled due to crowd restrictions in some places. The Event Industry Council (Ivendo) also noted that around 96.43 percent of events in 2020 in 17 provinces had to be postponed, and another 84.20 percent were canceled (Indonesian Event Industry Council, 2020).

Even so, the event industry must continue and adapt to the new normal. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced event organizers to adapt and innovate so they can design and present experiences within limitations. It cannot be denied that events have become a lifestyle and a necessity for the community, especially young people who live in urban areas. As a result, 218 tourism and cultural events were held in 2019 (DKI Jakarta Provincial Tourism and Culture Office, 2019). This unfavorable condition for the event industry has even become a space for innovation for event activists. Drive-In events are a new phenomenon in the event industry in 2020, emerging as an innovation to overcome social distancing policies due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in many events being postponed and failing.

Drive-In event has the advantage of reducing physical contact during the event, thereby reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among visitors. Some drive-in events that have become the main attraction for this research include Drive-In Paris Fashion Week, Drive-In Fashion Show (Praha Fashion Week), Stardust Drive-In Theatre, The Parking Lot Social, and Stranger Things Drive-In Experience in several countries in Europe. In Indonesia, especially Jakarta, drive-in events have emerged, but the types are still limited namely drive-in cinemas and concerts. Drive-In Senja is one example of a successful drive-in event innovation. Since it was first held in August 2020 in South Tangerang, Drive-in Senja has received high enthusiasm from the community, so it has become a regular event. As of April 2021, it has been held in South Tangerang, Surabaya, Bali, and Bandung. Ashram Shahrivar, Co-Founder of Senja Drive-in, said this cinema carries the concept of watching in a car that used to exist in the US. "We formed because there was a saturation and trying to make something new during the pandemic. We are trying to make it a safe and comfortable event for the Indonesian people," said Ashram to Kompas.com Thursday (13/8/2020).

With the concept of watching from inside the car, the Drive-In Senja event is safe to visit during a pandemic. Not only showing movies, but Drive-In Senja also features cosplayers which add to the excitement of visitors while watching movies. Cosplayers with characters such as zombies, pennywise, and *kuntilanak* adapted to the films currently being shown. Cosplayers are only available in the special edition of Drive-In Senja with the theme "Scarlet Night," which shows horror genre films. Cosplayers come to the visitors in the car to give a tense sensation while watching a horror movie.

Thus, creating an atmosphere is crucial for creating a positive visitor experience (Gibson & Connell, 2011). Many visitors provide reviews about the excitement of their experience watching Drive-In Senja on various social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, so the experience of watching Drive-In Senja is interesting for further research. The well-known Senja Drive-In phenomenon among young people is the main attraction for researchers to research the drive-in event experience of Senja

Drive-In visitors. Research on event experience is needed so that the characteristics makes the experience more meaningful. It also can be better understood so that event elements and activities are designed and utilized effectively to increase the impact of the event experience (Ziakas & Boukas, 2014).

Previous research on event experience by Geus et.al. (2016) produced an event experience conceptual model developed into an event experience scale to measure visitor experience. Inspired by previous past research, the researcher wants to explore event experiences, especially event experiences at Senja Drive-in. Research on event experience is helpful to add to the study of event experience and provide insight for the event industry in designing event experiences, especially drive-in event experiences.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Events

Events are often conceptualized as a "special" type of experience that is unique and a precious time and is often seen as an event that is enjoyed as special moments to be treasured (Gleick & Heberger, 2014). Events give visitors a unique perspective and opportunity to get involved with a collective experience guaranteed to be a novelty because it rarely happens and the times are different (Tassiopoulos & Johnson, 2009). From a marketing perspective, (Wood, 2009) defines events as "live events with visitors," the reason that if someone is present at an event, "then the message or experience is being shared, transmitted, generated and, therefore, all events could potentially communicate something."

In the academic field devoted to creating knowledge and theory about planned events, namely event studies, events called with the term planned event because of the series of activities that provide experience for those visitors is designed, designed, and planned by event designers (Getz, 2022). Event designers want visitors to get the best experience if it has been designed (Getz, 2022). Therefore, events related to the human experience of attending a planned event are essential in the experience industry.

2.2 Experience

Research in philosophy and psychology makes essential contributions to understanding experience; for example, (Hoyer et al., 2020) emphasizes that experience is the subjective reality of each individual. Furthermore, (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2023) argue that experience occurs due to external stimuli, and research by (Gonzalez et al., 2022) which explains that various experiences can be distinguished and measured empirically.

Experience is described as interactive sensations triggered by a product, service, or events that affect physical and cognitive levels over some time specific (Taves & Asprem, 2017). Research on experience continues to grow. It started in the early 2000s involving a study about the extraordinary experience by Pine and Gilmore and then followed by Mair and Weber (2019) which resulted in the concept of "The experience in the development of research experience in various fields and perspectives, making the definition of various experiences". Subsequently, more continuous studies were conducted such as the topic of peakstarting (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020) and peak experience (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2021).

Experience is one of the leading research interests and has many calls for understanding this more in the context of hospitality, tourism, and events (Wood, 2009). Research on experience becomes a research interest. It is mainly because (Manners et al.,

2014) define and manage experience attendees are now an essential factor in the event's success.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The methodology used in this study is a qualitative approach focusing on the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach. This methodology was chosen based on literature by Moustakas (1994) which said that phenomenological researchers focused on describing what all informants felt and experienced while experiencing the phenomenon. 'Phenomenology' is a method used to simultaneously study people's consciousness and behavior (Moustakas, 1994). The choice to use the scientific method in research is because the scientific approach can provide opportunities for new and novice researchers to explore, in more detail, the 'life experiences' of research informants (Smith, 2009).

In this study, the researcher aims to explore the experience of Drive-In Senja visitors. The IPA method allows several individuals (informants) who experience similar events to tell their stories without distortion or being forced. The researcher interviewed five informants who visited Senja Drive-In with the theme Scary Night in April, representing three categories: girls' night out, couples, and double dates for diversity in this study. The process for conducting data analysis in IPA is carried out in several stages. The first stage is reading and re-reading. At this stage, the researcher processes the data (interview results) into a transcript.

The second stage is initially noted by giving exploratory comments. After giving exploratory comments, the next step is developing emergent themes. In this step, the researcher creates a theme based on the results of previous exploratory comments, which are then narrowed down again to become superordinate themes. At this stage, similar themes are combined, and some emerging themes can be eliminated (Smith, 2009). Determining the requirements for superordinate themes requires at least three subordinate themes consisting of at least three keywords or direct quotations from informants (Smith, 2009).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before conducting the interviews, a pretest was carried out to ensure informants could understand and answer the questions asked. The following are the results of the pretest that was conducted on April 15, 2021, via zoom meeting:

- a. Have a light discussion breaking the ice before proceeding to the core question.
- b. Informants can understand questions well.
- c. The informant's answers follow the questions asked filed.
- d. The interview can be continued.

After doing the pretest, the researcher decided to interview informants who only visited the Senja Drive-In in April. Therefore, informants in the pretest can answer the questions asked by researchers. Still, much information cannot be explored further because informants did not clearly remember the experience they felt. After all, the interview time with the duration of the informant visited the Senja Drive-In was sufficient.

The purpose of this research is to explore visitor experience. The Senja Alam Sutera Drive-In uses the Event Experience concept. First, the researcher understands the experience of informants at Drive-In Senja based on the event experience conceptual model developed by Geus et al. (2016), which is divided into three parts consisting of condition, core, and outcomes. From an understanding of the previous conceptual model,

researchers adapt and interpret then produce a conceptual model, especially for the drive-in event experience. It is found that there are 11 superordinate themes and 43 emergent themes in the drive-in event experience concept model.

The results of data analysis in the condition section show emergent themes of distinctiveness, novelty, and co-presence. It forms superordinate themes and extraordinary conditions—unusual conditions (not as usual) found. There are unusual things that happened in the context of this study, namely the newly emerging drive-in event during the Covid-19 pandemic. There are regulations such as events that cannot be organized and regulation of Large-Scale Restrictions (PSBB). Thus, drive-in events be an option because, with the concept, visitors are only allowed to be in the car, so it is safe to organize during a pandemic situation because visitors do not make contact or direct interaction with other visitors. The results of the interpretation of each informant's statements from the interview transcripts resulted in 11 superordinate themes of the experience of watching Drive-In Senja.

In the core section, the results of data analysis show superordinate and emergent themes appear the most in this section. Same as in the previous research model, there were two parts, namely the personal realm and event environment, where the visitor's event experience is modified by the level of involvement and attachment of these two things. In the personal realm, research found a new superordinate: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, emotional expression, and immersion. In the research model, there was previously motivation, but in this study, the researchers divided motivation into two parts, namely intrinsic and extrinsic. The superordinate themes of emotional expression are formed from six emergent themes: excitement, fun, happiness, surprise, disappointment, and frustration. This matter shows that emotion or feeling is an essential element in event experience, both positive and negative feelings. In addition, because of intimate moments and connections with others, so they lose track of time and feel time passing faster.

Drive-In Senja offers a viewing experience from a car, thus making the viewing experience different from watching in a cinema or theatre. Although there are restrictions on interaction between visitors, interaction is limited and only occurs in each car visitor. Drive-In Senja offers two capacity ticket types: tickets for two people and four people. Analysis results show that even though the interaction is limited, the interaction still occurs. Interaction is related to the atmosphere and feelings experienced by the informant. Therefore, interaction can create and build a supportive atmosphere informant's experience when watching Senja Drive-In.

In the event environment, four superordinate themes are found: online social interaction, on-site social interaction, physical environment, and service/product environment. In the past literatures, there are aspects of social events in the event environment; in this study, the researchers found that social interaction can be divided into two more specific parts: online social interaction and on-site social interaction. The results of the study found that interaction does not only occur when the event takes place. Interaction also occurs online through social media, namely social media action, social media interaction, social media influence, and social media impressions. Then on, on-site social interaction only found two emergent themes: prank and ghost cosplay attraction. It is not very superordinate on-site social interaction felt by informants. The reason is that the Covid-19 pandemic restricts visitors from interacting with other visitors, so informants can only interact with friends in the same car. Therefore, two were found to be superordinate, and the informant felt less. It is because there were only two emergent

Drive-In Senja, the event experience conceptual model is the extension from the event experience conceptual model; namely, a division of motivation into a more detailed personal realm and social in the event environment (Wood, 2009). There are more superordinates in the personal realm than in the event environment (Manners, Saayman, Kruger, 2014) which shows the limitations of Drive-In Senja organizers in designing event environments during pandemic conditions. The following is the Drive-In Event Experience conceptual model, adapted from the conceptual model of event experience (Geus, Richards, Toepoel, 2016).

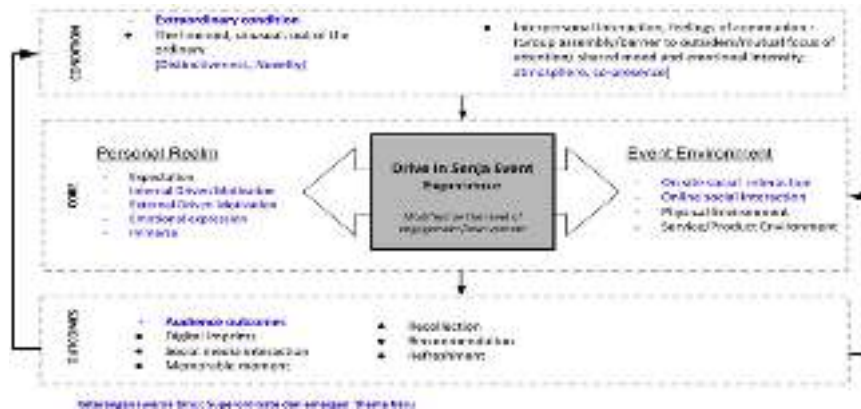


Figure 2. Drive-in Senja Event Experience Conceptual Model

5. CONCLUSION

This research produced a conceptual model of event experience, especially the drive-in event experience. This conceptual model was developed from the conceptual model of the event experience by Geus, Richards, Toepoel (2016) (Geus et al., 2016). Based on the research results, several suggestions from researchers for parties who can benefit from this research, namely as a recommendation for Drive-in event organizers. It is recommended to use the conceptual drive-in event model as a reference for designing the visitor experience by paying attention to each superordinate and subordinate of the research results in this.

It is hoped that the drive-in event organizer can deal with the physical and social aspects of the event environment, which has become very limited due to the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. Then as a recommendation for further research. Subsequent research can be conducted on different types of drive-in events, for example, drive-in concerts, drive-in fashion shows, or drive-in comedy shows to add to research studies on the drive-in event experience. Thus, they can contribute to creating a conceptual drive-in model. in event experience by conducting research with different categories of informants, such as families, to gain insight into differences in experiences based on informant categories. It is hoped that future research informants will be more heterogeneous regarding age.

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