

Sustainable Design Model for Social Wellbeing among Che Wong Community towards Photojournalism

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Abstract

Development and modernization have caused biodiversity disruption that affects the stability of the forest ecosystem. Indigenous people (Orang Asli) are severely affected as their daily life activities depend on the forest. One of the initiatives to improve the situation is through resettlement program. However, studies have found that the program was less than successful as some of them prefer traditional life, while others cannot embrace the new modern living conditions. Hence, the main objective of the current study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the current phenomenon from the perspective of the Orang Asli. The study is underpinned by the sustainable design model with the adoption of a photojournalism approach. However, what is lacking in this model is the inclusion of residents' culture and art, also known as aesthetics. A qualitative research design with ethnography approach was employed. Data were collected through the combination of Talanoa and Performative method, a newly applied method in the context of indigenous communities study. Theoretically, the findings contributed to a comprehensive sustainable design model. The findings were also instrumental for the government in formulating and implementing programs. Additionally, the study is expected to produce a systematic documentary of the livelihood of the Orang Asli.

Keywords: Che Wong Tribe, Ethnography, Systematic Documentary, Photojournalism

Introduction

Modernisation had slowly overtaken the traditional lifestyle culture of the Che Wong community (Rosli & Noh, 2020). Exposure to modernisation is inevitable and should not be blamed on their lack of these traditional practices. This would have an effect on the process

of passing down their culture to the next generation, resulting in obsolescence, depravity, and eventual extinction (Razali & Jamal, 2020). In addition, the young generation has already lost interest and have no desire to maintain the tradition of their native visual arts because they are now already exposed to outside modern influences and are having trouble maintaining their cultural identity. Observation on the culture of Che Wong is so limited, and that it cannot survive long without concrete action of documentation. Needham (1955) argued that "it is our duty to record, while we have the chance, as much as we can learn on Siwang (Che Wong) culture and social organisation." However, Fadli (2012) drew attention to the usefulness of reference materials such as video and print media in providing continuity of their ancestor's stories of the people, and eventually maintaining the originality of theory of visual arts. This is because audio and visual recording devices are now able to capture in detail all the techniques, actions, practices, stories, language, songs and dances (Rosli & Noh, 2020).

Meanwhile, resistant, anti-development and marginalisation are examples of factors for poor sustainable living among indigenous communities. This issue has been discussed by JAKOA seriously. The resistant issue for sustainable living attracts serious attention by the government. Lack of understanding of sustainable design for new settlement areas is also seen as a contributing factor for this resistance. Therefore, photojournalism is important in filling the understanding of sustainable design for new settlement areas. Sustainable design is vital in reducing the resistance for new designs of settlement areas. The new sustainable design contributes to the social wellbeing among indigenous communities. Therefore, developing a new photojournalism model in understanding sustainable design can help to ensure social wellbeing among indigenous communities. Talanoa method is new as applied in the context of the indigenous communities, as it provides in-depth discussion and is more inclusive of understanding on the issue.

Information

With the current state of development, it is perceived that the Orang Asli need to be developed and integrated into the mainstream community, and therefore they need to be guided and protected (Idrus, 2011). In line with this objective, various programmes have been set up by the Government of Malaysia in an effort to bring about an inclusive development of two types: public development and planned development. Public development impacts the general community while planned development targets specific communities. In the mean time, the villages of Orang Asli are more accessible now. The government provides sufficient facilities and services, including healthcare, police security, communications, and education. All these efforts have been made with an intention to improve the quality of life of the Orang Asli so that they are not marginalised by development and modernisation (Mustapha, 2013) However, the Orang Asli communities have consistently been under pressure to embrace development and modernisation. Failure to integrate into the new economy has always been associated with their resistance and anti-development attitude (Wan Zawawi, 1996). As a result, the geographical locations of the Orang Asli communities are scattered across different states in Malaysia and the degree of exposure to development and modernisation also differs. Studies have also found that despite various government initiatives and assistance, the Orang Asli have not been able to integrate into the mainstream community. For example, marginalisation from the context of education, health, standard of living and wealth are still prevalent (Abdullah et al., 2019).

With regard to the documentation, based on previous research about Che Wong resettlement, the younger generation has departed from the native life of their people. They seem to have lost interest and have no desire to maintain the tradition of their native visual arts as they are now already exposed to outside modern influences and are having trouble maintaining their cultural identity (Fadli, 2013). There is strong indicator that they will in the long term be facing with their ethnic social and cultural loss. This resettlement program has brought about the destruction of the cultural, historical and indigenous crafts which are the identity of the Che Wong.

The lack of study regarding the issue of resettlement of indigenous community may have negative impact significantly on the social welfare, health and education. Hence, there is a need to do empirical investigation using photojournalism momentous so that a more pragmatic approach can be introduced to resolve the matter. In this case, the conflict may be resolved between the older and the younger generations of Che Wong tribe. The differences may end up in the loss of culture and heritage. In photojournalism, various types of shot may display the juxtaposition. To be specific, juxtaposition happens when two opposite matters are put together, and the contrast of these two things becomes interesting. Generally with juxtaposition, one makes a statement through the contrast of elements put in the frame.

Literature Review

Che Wong in Kuala Gandah, Lanchang Pahang

Kuala Gandah is a village inhabited by the indigenous people from Che Wong tribe. Nearby the village, there is an elephant conservation area undertaken by the Wildlife and National Parks (PERHILITAN). The Che Wong tribe is a fraction from Senoi tribe, found only in Pahang. One of the five villages in Kuala Gandah is under the same Tok Batin. Four of these five villages are known as Sungai Beranti, Lata Tujuh, Bayek and Sungai Enggang. Meanwhile, the population of the indigenous people for these five villages is estimated at 400 to 500 people. Che Wong tribe has a long history as any of the other indigenous people. At the initial stage, they lived in the village of Titi in Kuala Pahang. However, after the Rawa War, the indigenous people began to move to Temerloh. In a few years later, they moved to Lanchang, Bolok, Ulu Terih and eventually in to Kuala Gandah area.

Through modernization, it has brought a new perspective to religious point of view in order that they can practise a better way of living. Some of them, who did not convert to Islam, also adhere to the living style of the Che Wong Muslim. In terms of clothing, they accept all types of clothing that people give to them, hence it has become rare to come across those who only put on the loin cloths.

The development projects around the forested land in Kuala Gandah have tremendously impacted the Che Wong tribe. The forested land they used to thrive has been taken away and ever since, this has resulted in the resettlement of the tribes (Gani, Mahdzar, & Razak, 2018). Some of the communities are still living in the jungle because they do not like the noise, the crowd nor the hot weather. Being sustainable, in the jungle, they are free to search for their own food and do their own work looking for forest products like rattan, aloes and other things that can be sold.

This indigenous minority tribe is still lagging behind in education, economy and business. Hence, it is directly creating motivation, awareness and encourage the successful ones to share their experience with those who are currently involved in the small business and the potential ones (Simpong, 2018). Social growth is important for achieving a high quality of life. To enhance the quality of life of the whole population, including the Indigenous in Malaysia,

social development programmes have been implemented. While several Social Development Programs have been introduced, the results in terms of schooling, health, income, and participant problems are not very promising.

Underpinning Model

Sustainable design model developed by Trajković and Aleksandra Milovanović is based on several concepts namely social interaction, behaviour for daily functions, functional structure, authentic visual elements, articulation, transparency, exterior and interior design as well as domestication of technology. All these concepts are based on function, residents daily behaviour, interior and exterior designs, individual lifestyle and the use of technology. However, what is lacking in this model is the inclusion of residents culture and art, also known as aesthetics. Therefore, the inclusion of photojournalism aesthetics is important for the development of new sustainable design for new settlement area for Orang Asli.

Photography as Sustainable Design in Visual Communication

As in Emphasis by Mustaffa (2013), photography is similar to the language or written words considered as a fundamental medium of communication. Photography exists in various genres of different functions. The photography field especially digital photography dominating the world today is a combination of art and technical skills, seen to be providing contributions to other fields like business, science, arts, sports, medical and so on. With the availability of reference materials such as video and print media, it is possible to provide continuity of their ancestor's stories (storytellers) of their people, and eventually maintaining the originality of their visual arts (Fadli, 2013).

Method

Research Methodology

An ethnographic approach has been implemented, with the researcher visiting and living with the Che Wong community at Kuala Gandah, Lancang, Pahang, over a period of one year of active participant-observation. The combination technique was involved through the data collection utilizing the Talanoa and Performative Modes. The detailed research design was developed by asking specific research question to meet the research objectives, selection of population sampling as well as the research instruments used and the procedures of data analysis undertaken.

Data Collection Phase 1

The first step of the data collection looked into Che Wong community in the resettlement program (RPS). Based on the affected sites or spots, instruments such as Digital DSLR Camera, Video Camera and unmanned aerial vehicle UAV (drone) were used. These equipment were used to get the overall scenery of the environment and to record all visual observations. Besides, observing the present and current practices by respective authorities were carried out during the observation.

Data Collection Phase 2

Monitoring the current indigenous community in the resettlement program (RPS) and performing the Talanoa approach helped to connect elements through story telling.

Integrating Performative Mode: Performative documentaries focus on the involvement with their subject, using his or her personal experience or relationship with the subject as a

jumping-off point for exploring larger, subjective truths about politics, history, or groups of people. This performative mode was relevant to build the trust between the Che Wong community and the researcher. The latter is often asked to capture the documentary production process, as well as intimate footage that illustrates the direct and often personal relationship between the researcher and the subject. This provides the advantage of studying the indigenous community behaviour qualitatively in different ways, namely Talanoa, focus group and in-depth semi structured interviews. Talanoa is now is a contemporary qualitative tool that emphasizes more on connecting people through story telling. It requires the involvement of an insider who plays a very critical role as an embodied expression of the vanua (informed) concept (Rochelle et al., 2017).

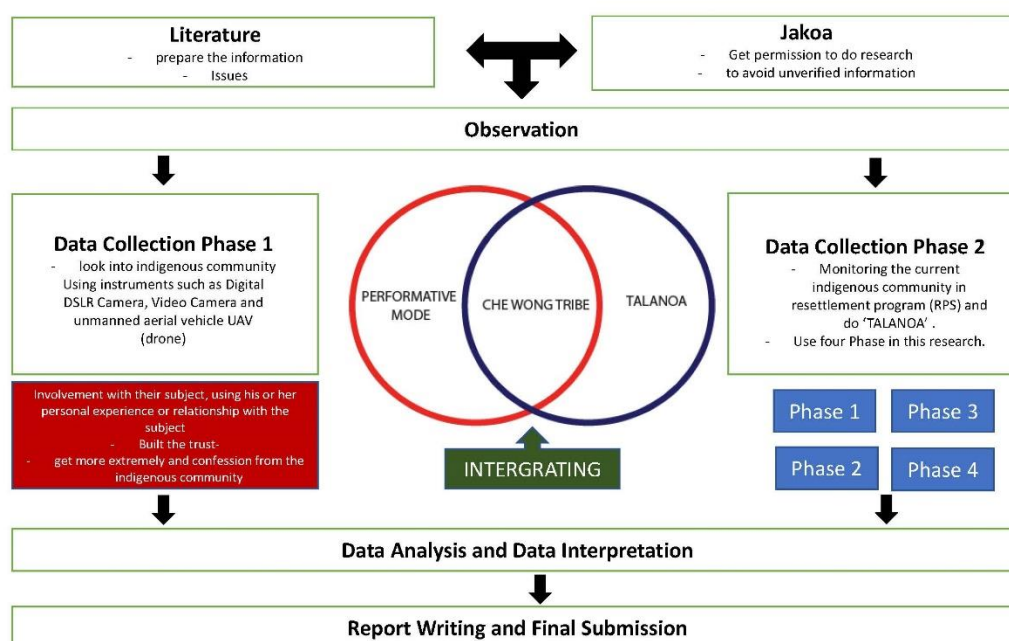


Figure 1: Flow Chart and Research Activities of Integrating Performative Mode and Talanoa in a Sustainable Design Model For Social Wellbeing among Che Wong Community towards Photojournalism

Instruction

There are several steps of conducting the Talanoa technique:

Phase 1: Conception-collaborating with the insider from the indigenous people. The person has to be definitely a member of the team research. The insider was chosen from the indigenous community based on their familiarity in the language.

Step 1: Chosen insider from indigenous community

Step 2: Get help from the insider to call for a discussion or dialogue with other indigenous community

Step 3: Researcher and insider conducted a dialogue and discussion related to issue discussed in this research

Phase 2: Presenting the appreciation to the insider with respect to the indigenous protocols and values

Phase 3: The process of power sharing in completing the research

Step 4: Consolidate and Summarize the overall finding with indigenous community

Step 5: Summarize with insider about the finding

Phase 4: Reporting/Analysis/Writing that needed to be verified by Talanoa and to check what the researcher had learned

Step 6: Analyze and validate the finding with insider

Town hall or discussion or dialogue with indigenous community (several ethnics) has also been suggested for the current study as it does need collective discussion amongst the indigenous community chosen as the respondents. This is very much suitable when resources are limited when investigating coping behaviour among indigenous people. This would again involve the following stages as follow.

Stage 1: Defining the goals of the study, whereby, Talanoa approach could help more here

Stage 2: Data collection, which focused on the preparation of town hall style of discussion

Stage 3: Focus on data analysis by using Thematic Analysis leading to the final stage

Stage 4: Reporting.

Results and Discussion

This research could potentially provide a resolution to practical problem with clearer clarification. That includes survival value in indigenous community after the resettlement program (RPS) through photojournalism. It may help policy maker to improvise (SDG No 1: No Poverty) mechanism in order to lessen poverty in this country. SDG No 1 is about ending poverty in all its forms everywhere. This goal is achievable through visual documentation which can help create awareness about the existing issues and spread the message of eradicating poverty. Visual documentation includes photographs, videos, infographics and other visuals that can be used to capture the current state of poverty and its effects on people's lives. Through visual documentation, we can understand the magnitude of this global issue and come up with solutions to address it.

Visual documentation helps us to see how people are affected by poverty in different parts of the world, while photojournalism provides an even deeper insight into their struggles. Through resettlement programs, we can also get an understanding of how poverty affects families and communities over time.

With reference of documentation such as video and print media it will also help the young generations of indigenous community maintain the originality of their visual arts due to the influence and difficulties that could cause the extinction of their own social and cultural aspects. The younger generations can learn about these aspects of their lives, apart from the art form from their elders, hence will continue to do so in the future. By preserving this unique art form, the Che Wong Tribe ensures that its traditions remain alive for years to come.

Aside from this contribution, this research may help to update data about the indigenous culture, providing valuable information that can be used in research and education initiatives.

Furthermore, this research may contribute in working with local government, such as the Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli (JAKOA) Malaysia, in order to advocate for better services and support for the indigenous population.

Conclusion

Academic Gap

Extending Sustainable Design Model by the Inclusion of Photojournalism

By integrating Talanoa method and Performative Mode help to develop new method for photojournalism research. The combination of these techniques involved in getting data via the Talanoa and Performative Mode. This is a new theory that has been adapted in the methodology to get vivid and clear confession from the indigenous community. This research helps to generate new knowledge by using this method of study. From the educational point of view, the theory from this research can be a guideline to be adapted to image-makers in another process of documentation. The mix of Talanoa and Performative Mode is a new alternative method of data collection in photojournalism study.

New finding from this study is the inclusion of photojournalism aesthetic as new dimension on Sustainable Design model. It will help policy maker to improvise (SDG No 1: No Poverty) mechanism in order to lessen the rate of poverty in this country. With reference to the documentation such as video and print media, it will also help the young generation of the indigenous community maintain the originality of their visual arts. Through influences and difficulties, these elements may provide the drive for the next generation to ensure that causes of extinction of their own social and cultural aspects are sustained. Aside from this contribution, this research also provides significant contribution in terms of information and updating data for the indigenous community to sustain the authenticity of cultural, historical and original crafts of indigenous community to the Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli (JAKOA) and Ministry of Human Resources.

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