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THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HOTEL AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT

THE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF ONLINE TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

SHEUNG TING LO

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

MAY 2012

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

Tourist photography has rarely been a research focus. Usually, tourist photographic practices are seen as rather superficial and self-explanatory for a rigorous study. The artifacts of their practices, the travel images, are also devalued as replicas of mass-produced images. Yet, it is important to note that the most trivial aspects of tourist behavior are indeed what shape tourism at large. Most importantly, the emergence of social media and the digitalization of photography have brought tremendous impacts on how images are produced and disseminated. Travel images can now be shared with a much larger sphere of audiences regardless of time and geographical location. The meaning of travel images can be quite different from those days when photographs were still kept within a physical album. This new form of image making and sharing indeed changes the way tourists experience time, place, and self. In light of this, my doctoral thesis aimed to provide insights on how the new form of social interaction, facilitated by the rapid evolution of media and photography technology, shapes contemporary traveling culture and tourist's sense of self.

A dramaturgical, reflexive ethnographic approach was adopted to explore the ways micro level of social interaction contributes to the formation of online travel images and tourist self image. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were adopted to recruit and select participants. Data collection and analysis was composed of two phases. The first phase aimed to examine the ways tourists control

impression others have of them through framing, selecting, editing, and posting photographs online. An ethnographic visual analysis of 13 cases was conducted to provide descriptive data of image management and impression management. Through dramaturgical analysis, how participants described and explained their practices were also examined as actions to control impressions. The 13 cases were then categorized according to their consciousness of staging, online performance, consciousness of audience impact, and their perception of other's performance.

The second phase aimed to develop a framework that illustrates the learning process of forming an ideal self through sharing photographs online. Erving Goffman's notion of performance, Jacques Lacan's conceptualization of image formation, Lewis and Saarni's taxonomy of lying were drawn upon to provide further explanation of the common patterns and variations emerged from Phase One.

Online posting actually involves deceptions to self and to others, given that the performers are also the audiences of their own performances. Hence, online tourist photography is a back and front stage performance. Some performers lean towards deceiving others by staging their online photographs consciously. Some lean towards deceiving self by denying the performative nature of their sharing. Self-image is externalized to others at the Front largely through the symbolic and internalized to self at the Back through the imaginary. Based on their consciousness of staging and audience impact, four types of performers were also identified yet to be validated in future studies.

Underpinned by John Urry's conception of the tourist gaze, tourist photographs are merely seen as a tool for researchers to understand what appeals to the tourists and to relate their significant moments or others to their travel experience. Nonetheless, the findings of this study suggest that, what tourists include and exclude from their travel images indeed involves a lot more than capturing the extraordinary and retaining the significant moments. Hence, I argue that, it is by examining tourists' personal articulations of their travel images and their photographic practices dramaturgically, we can then relocate tourist gaze into a more meaningful, personal context.

This study fills the research gap in several ways. First, it provides a framework that recognizes the role of both the performer and the audience in the production and consumption of self. The framework also illustrates how a micro level of social interaction contributes to tourist photographic practices hence the formation of self. Second, the study adopted a dramaturgical approach to examine visual and oral data so that the performative nature of their practices as well as their oral accounts of their practices could be recognized. By doing so, it is able to provide insights of how tourist photography can be shaped by a tourist's subjectivity and their consciousness of audience. It also reveals how tourist photographic practices could bring changes to the tourist's self. Third, unlike most existing studies, this study also notes and analyzes the changes of tourist performance from trip to trip and from time to time, as its unit of analysis is the individual but not the place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have been longing to write this very important part of my thesis ever since I started applying for a PhD program. There are just too many wonderful people that helped make my study possible. They might not even realize how much of an impact they had on me. It is for this reason I have been very eager to express my deepest gratitude to every one of them in here, despite the fact that I can never thank them enough.

I remember how difficult it was for an outsider to plan on applying for a PhD program back in 2007. I had no idea how to come up with a research topic and to write up a good research proposal. I kept reading and reading and hoping that one day I could finally identify a gap from the literatures. Yet, I ended up burying myself in theories. I desperately went up to Prof. Bob McKercher for advice and there he told me,

"To come up with a good topic, all you need to do is just to look around and be sensitive to things that are happening around you."

Enlightened by his words, I decided to go on a vacation. It was a great decision to be away from all books to refresh my mind and to really look at the tourists – my travel companions. My trip to Portugal helped me realize that the most trivial aspects of tourist behavior were usually not paid attention to. I was particularly interested in learning about tourist photographic practices since one-third of our trip was about photographing and that a camera could be what

excited us or frustrated us at the same time. I sent my initial ideas to Prof. McKercher and he was so kind to meet me again. During our meeting, there was a moment that I questioned the value of my proposed research after failing to fully express my ideas again and again. Nonetheless, Prof. McKercher never gave up on me. He patiently guided me through and gave me confidence with his encouraging words,

"Students always have brilliant ideas. They just don't know how to put them together."

Indeed, these words were far more than encouraging. They become ingrained in me as what shapes my teaching philosophy even until now. From that moment onwards, I was even more eager to be his student. I knew I would learn so much from a scholar like him. When I received an acceptance letter from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, I was really happy to know that I could be under his supervision for four years. It was a truly a dream came true.

During my study, Prof. McKercher continued to provide me with lots of encouragement as well as room to think for myself. There were times when I just wanted to stop thinking too much and be satisfied with what I had achieved so far. He never allowed me to stay happy with where I was. Instead, he often encouraged me to think more by telling me that I had the potential to do even better. Whenever I got myself buried in theories again, he would enliven my mind by asking me many challenging questions. Prof. McKercher is simply one of the best supervisors one can have. I am so honored and fortunate enough to be able to pursue my PhD study

under his supervision. Without his guidance, patience, and inspiration, this thesis would not be possible.

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During my PhD study, I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to spend a semester at the University of California Berkeley during Spring 2011. I have learned more than I could ever imagine during my stay there. My thesis has been tremendously improved since then. For this, I would like to thank Prof. Nelson Graburn, Prof. Wen-hsin Yeh, Ms. Rochelle Halperin, Ms. Melissa Dale, and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to make this possible. During my stay in Berkeley, I often enjoyed Prof. Graburn's seminar every Wednesday morning. The study group would have lunch together to discuss about almost everything. Interestingly enough, Prof. Graburn would still be able to relate everything back to tourism studies one way or another. It is both an honor and a pleasure for me to be strongly influenced by his knowledge and passion for tourism studies.

I was introduced to many great scholars and friends through Prof. Graburn. Many have turned out to be my life-long friends. They have given me so much

support intellectually and emotionally. I would like to thank Áurea Rodrigues, Bryan Cockwell, Linda Boukhris, Lu Jin, Madina Regnault, and Sujin Eom for their friendships and all the "serendipitous" moments in Berkeley. Because of Prof. Graburn, I was also able to stay at the International House Berkeley so that I could meet many great people from all over the world.

My stay in Berkeley has also helped fulfill one of my dreams. I was able to meet a few distinguished scholars in person who are the pioneers in tourism studies. I especially wish to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. Dean MacCannell for his invaluable advice on my research. I had never thought that I could have the chance to meet him in person not to mention learning so much from him. I remember how I went up to him feeling like a little fan to ask for photographs at the Conference on Tourism Imaginary hosted in Berkeley. Prof. MacCannell was surprisingly very down-to-earth and humble despite the fact that he is a very well known scholar. I was very amazed that he really stopped by to see my presentation. It was very kind of him to give me advice and encouragement since the conference. It has been a great honor to learn from such a distinguished scholar. I honestly do not think I could proceed further on my interpretations without his enlightenment and encouragement. I truly hope that one day, students in Hong Kong can also get to meet and learn much from this wonderful scholar.

This dissertation would also not be possible without two scholars who have strongly stimulated my interest in qualitative study: Dr. John Ap and Prof. Eric Ma Kit-Wai. Dr. Ap's enthusiasm for qualitative research shown through his teaching, has motivated me to go further on this exciting journey of research. His door was

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Last but not least, I would like to thank my late grandfather Lo Yi who has given me many great childhood memories. I still feel you no matter how far apart we are.

Writing this acknowledge reminds me of how Anais Nin articulates the essence of our encounter with others,

"Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born".

My world would have been very different without my encounters with these wonderful people. I am often told that I am a very lucky person. For some reasons, I have always met many amazing people who have given me support and made my life so enjoyable. I am very glad that our paths have crossed in many different ways.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Tourist

This study adopts UNWTO (2005/2007)'s definition of tourist as a person who pays overnight visit(s) to place(s) which is/are outside of his/her country or region of normal residency for leisure, professional, business, or other purposes.

Photography

The term photography encompasses both the photographic actions and the photographic objects. The actions are usually referred to as "photographic practices", which involves purchasing photography equipments, learning and practicing photographic skills, as well as taking, processing, reviewing, sharing, editing, saving, organizing, captioning, and talking about photographs. The terms "photo" and "photograph" are used interchangeably in this thesis to indicate the photographic objects or the visual images produced through cameras or mobile phones.

Travel photography

Travel photography can be roughly categorized into two types: photography for the tourists and photography by the tourists. The former type is usually referred to photographic images as promotional materials. It also includes those that are commercially distributed as mementos of travel (Botterill, 1987; Chalfen, 1979). Brochures and postcards are typical examples of this type of travel photography.

Tourist photography

Photography by the tourists is usually referred to as "tourist photography", which includes tourist photographic practices and the artifacts of their practices (Robinson & Picard, 2009). This study focuses on this type.

Producer

In this study, producer refer to those who post and share online text with others.

Performer

Performer is used interchangeably with producer. Nonetheless, this term helps illuminating the performative nature of their acts

Audience

In this study, audience refers to both the actual and the potential recipients of the online texts. Hence, the term audience broadly includes those who are targeted, non-targeted, actual viewers of the texts.

Social Media

Social media refers to an online platform on which users can post and share information with other users (Agichtein, Castillo, Gionis, & Gilad, 2008; Cox, Burgess, Sellitto, & Buultjens, 2008; O'Connor, 2008; O'Reilly, 2005).

Friend

The term "friend" on Facebook refers to anyone connected to the profile of the user. They can be complete strangers, family, or acquaintances of the user. Nonetheless,

they are generally labeled as "friends" on Facebook.

News

The term "news" on Facebook refers to the homepage on which user can view the latest posts shared by their "friends".

Chapter One

Introduction

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background of Study

Tourism is often seen as a product of imaginary, myth and illusion (Hennig, 2002). Tourists are the audience, consumer of the "makebelieve" and are argued to be deceived by the illusions created by tourism practitioners. Some argue that not all tourists are deceived by the "makebelieve" and that they simply enjoy the staged experience (Sternberg, 1997). Yet, by arguing whether the tourists are deceived or are not deceived by the "makebelieve," we are missing something in here:

"Why do people spend billions of dollars to get close to something they can never possess, which very often they are not allowed to touch or to breath on?" (A question raised by Dean MacCannell, 2002, p. 146.)

By raising this question, MacCannell (2002) argues that Marx's notion of commodities cannot explain the consumption mode of tourism, as we do not know what exactly the tourists own or consume in exchange of the money they spent on traveling. And if, what tourism offers is fundamentally a staged, deceptive experience, then that leads us to another question: "Why do tourists consume the deception offered by tourism?"

In many ways, the nature of tourism resembles that of the film industry as it

stages reality, offers entertainment, and manufactures dreams (Pagenstecher, 2003). It is where one enters a stage of liminality in which a momentary escape from the reality of everyday life is possible (Graburn, 1983). Sites and locals, despite their original functions and nature, become attractions for one to gaze at (Urry, 2002) and for one's camera to capture as part of a lifetime collection (Sontag, 1977).

It is often said that the attractiveness of tourism is that it allows tourists to escape from social norms (Graburn, 1983), search for uniqueness and differences (Urry, 2002), and to experience their authentic self during the escape (Kim & Jamal, 2007). Interestingly, this seek-and-escape moment made possible by tourism can also be a moment for the tourists to perform for the future audiences (Crang, 1997) and stage their travel selves through their cameras. Indeed, the tourists are found to be skillful in using such an illusion to project "romanticized" images of self (Yeh, 2009a).

Hence, photography plays a significant role in staging travel memories and the tourist self. Without understanding how tourists adopt photography to construct realities, a more meaningful and comprehensive view of tourism as a deceptive, staged experience cannot be obtained. In light of this, my thesis examined online travel-sharing as a production and consumption of tourist self. In particular, it explored how self-image can be staged and authenticated through their online photographic practices. By doing so, it aimed to shed lights on the nature of tourist consumption.

1.2 Tourism Experience and The Evolution of Photography

The bond between mass tourism and photography has always seemed to be perfectly natural. The two of them are linked in various ways. On the one hand, travel photography is widely adopted in destination promotions. On the other hand, it can be served as one's travel memento (Botterill, 1987). Tourists can choose to purchase commercial photographic services and products to keep record of their travel moments. They can also use their own cameras to document their travel experience for future reviewing and sharing. These tourist photographic practices may in return shape travel experience and constitute present-day travelling cultures (Haldrup & Larsen, 2003; Larsen, 2006; Urry, 1990).

Both tourism and photography are the products of modern society. It did not take too long for the two to transform and become a popular culture worldwide. Photography is said to be what shaped tourism since the 19th century (Munir & Phillips, 2005). Those who produced and commercialized travel photography played a role in shaping tourism as an industry. Photography was renowned for its perfection, immediacy, and accuracy in representing distant lands. During the 19th century and the early twentieth century, travel and photography were still predominately the activities of the elite. The distribution of travel image was dominated by very few who were skillful in photographic technology and experienced in traveling (Robinson & Picard, 2009). It was either practiced by the professionals as a commercial activity or the exclusives as a hobby to develop their art sense. Taking photographs was expensive and difficult. It involved a complex process that required specialized skill and knowledge to capture visual images on pre-sensitized glass plates as well as to develop these images with particular

equipment and chemicals in a darkroom (Larsen, 2008).

In 1882, Kodak introduced a roll-film camera as a replacement of the heavy, fragile glass in capturing visual images. The launching of this new technology transformed photography from a complex, expensive, and time-consuming practice to a popular, ubiquitous, taken-for-granted social norm (Munir & Phillips, 2005). Taking photographs was no longer a privilege of the elite. Ordinary people could also take photographs of their everyday life with this portable and user-friendly machine (Larsen, 2008). Almost every US and Western European family owned a camera by early 1970s (van Dijck, 2008). With the popularization of photography, recording moments of life has all of a sudden become indispensable, particularly during special occasions like an anniversary, wedding, and traveling. Without Kodak films, a vacation is imperfect in a sense that all the memorable moments were lost. A photo album was therefore a necessity in everyone's home to safeguard these travel moments (Munir & Phillips, 2005).

The invention and popularization of Kodak Film is what Robinson and Picard (2009, p. 6) argue as "the greatest single event in shaping the tourist identity." Their statement has not exaggerated the impact which photography has brought to present-day tourism. Today, traveling seems to be inseparable from photo taking. Photography is undeniably a central activity in nearly all forms of tourism (Caton & Santos, 2008; Jenkins, 2003; Larsen, 2006; Markwell, 1997; Prideaux & Coghlan, 2010). It also seems to be a cross-cultural phenomenon (Beer, 1999; Lo, McKercher, Lo, Cheung, & Law, 2010; Prideaux & Coghlan, 2010). Tourists can preview and review their experience of a distant land through visual

images (Urry & Larsen, 2011). The popularization of photography as a special interest has also contributed to the formation of a new niche of tourism in recent years (Palmer & Lester, 2005). In that sense, photography can as well be the reasons why certain tourists travel (Bærenholdt, Framke, Haldrup,Larsen, & Urry, 2004).

Digitalization of photography has driven such an impact to another level. Photography can now be practiced with light-weight devices like digital cameras and camera phones which allow instant-reviewing. Revelation and disappointment generated by film-processing after the trip can be reduced to the minimum. With the replacement of roll-films by memory cards, digital photography can be practiced with comparatively light-weight devices. One can worry less about being out of films or taking bad photographs by using digital cameras. Tourists can review their travel photographs instantly through their digital cameras to ensure that the images taken are up to their satisfaction. They can edit or delete unsatisfied images through their digital cameras and/or with photo-editing software like Photoshop. The nature of tourist photographic practices can be quite different even though tourists continue to travel with their cameras.

Nowadays, visual images can be converged with other devices like personal computer and mobile phone. Tourists can store and organize their travel photographs in their personal computers. This transformed nature of image storage has slowly replaced the traditional function of a physical photo album (Larsen, 2008). Indeed, the emergence of social media has also provided an additional channel for tourists to share their travel photographs. Before the internet became a significant part of our everyday life, passing around travel photographs during

family/social gatherings or sending photo print-outs through mails were the major ways for one to share travel photographs. This co-location form of sharing limits the number of audience as photo-sharing is often accompanied with oral narration by the storytellers – the tourists. Web and digital technology allow tourists to share their travel photographs via online applications whenever access to the internet is possible. Tourists can now share their photographs with the remote others even during their trips. This compression of time and space is said to challenge tourists' sense of "distance and being away" (White & White, 2007).

Larsen (2008) suggests that digital and web technologies have transformed the nature of travel photography from "there I was" to "here I am," which work perfectly well for a "now society'. This increasing popularity of online photo-sharing may in return influence tourist photographic practices while traveling (Larsen, 2008). Therefore, the changing nature of photography can significantly transform the ways tourist perceive and experience places, time, and space.

Given the dynamicity and importance of tourist photography, this study area still receives insufficient attention from tourism researchers (Scarles, 2009). Tourist photographs are either adopted as a research tool to examine destination image and travel experience (i.e., Groves & Timothy, 2001; Haywood, 1990; Jutla, 2000) or the impact of mass-distributed images on tourist perceptions of places and locals (i.e., Caton & Santos, 2008; Garrod, 2009; Jenkins, 2003). Some look into the social experience photography facilitates (i.e., Larsen, 2005; Yeh, 2003). Some work to examine how photographic images mediate travel experience (i.e.,

Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009) or help creating travel desire (i.e., Lin & Huang, 2005). However, other dimensions of tourist photographic practices like photography motivations and usage are still largely unknown (Palmer & Lester, 2005; Prideaux & Coghlan, 2010). In particular, why, when, how, what, and with whom tourists share their travel photographs are even less known.

There are several reasons why tourist photography has received limited attention until now. First, tourist photography is rarely seen as important or convincing enough for one to understand its role in producing tourism experience and the tourist (Scarles, 2009). Second, researching tourist photography is challenging as the interpretation of visual images can be quite open and is also subject to cultural difference (Alber & James, 1988; Rose, 2005). Third, the view of mass-produced images as the determining cause of tourist photographic acts has dominated visual studies of tourism (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Scarles, 2009). Such a view places tourist photography as rather insignificant and superficial.

Nonetheless, Scarles (2009) argues that tourist photographic practices and their objects are indeed what produce the tourists. Photographic technology, in different ways, facilitates the experience of tourists with places/objects, otherness, time, and their own self as an object. Also, with the rapid growth of social media, tourist photographs can now be disseminated widely to a large number of audiences (Lo et al., 2010). Therefore, the tourist photographic act is not as insignificant, passive, and superficial as it seems to be.

By placing mass-produced images as the determining cause of tourist

photography act, we are not able to understand the reasons why tourists are so keen on replicating the same images by themselves, if it is the case. If photography is about memory, then why do tourists capture images similar to those of the brochures as part of their memories?

Underpinned by the gaze theory and textualism, studies on visual image production tend to focus on the captured image but not on the process in depth. Larsen (2008) criticizes the tendency of simply decoding tourist photographs through content analysis and semiotic analysis for patterns and meanings as the only means to understand the phenomenon, as he notes:

> Yet photographing is absent from most theory and research that
> jumps straight from photography to photographs. They go directly
> to the representational worlds of photographs and skip over their
> production, movement and circulation. The diverse hybrid practices
> and flows of photography are rendered invisible . . . (p. 143)

This tendency of seeing marketing influence as the determining factor in tourist photographic practices and travel behavior in tourism studies hinder a deeper understanding on tourist experience and narrative. Due to this reason, tourism studies tend to value the consumption of promotional image but not the production of tourist photographic images as it may seem to be a rather self-explanatory phenomenon. Indeed, allowing alternative explanation of their practices and exploring the subtlety of the phenomenon can contribute to a deeper understanding of tourism and tourist behavior if photo-taking is an essential tourist

activity.

Also, existing studies tend to either adopt textual analysis or on-site observation to examine tourist photography. Indeed, both methods pose different challenges. The challenge of making conclusions simply based on textual analysis is that it relies solely on the researcher's interpretations (Couldry, 2000). Since the interpretations of images can vary from person to person and from culture to culture, one can risk misinterpreting the message behind the visual elements (Holm, 2008; Schmallegger, Carson, & Jacobsen, 2010). At the same time, Larsen (2008) argues that traditional form of participant observation is not able to keep track of the flow of meanings. Photography is now more mobile than ever. It takes place in different contexts and its objects can exist in different forms. Also, by limiting our study scope on on-site performance, we are not able to see what travel photographs mean to the tourists in their everyday life (Scarles, 2009). A few ask tourists to provide them with the photographs they took during the trip (i.e., Brandin, 2009; Jenkins, 2003; Larsen, 2005, 2006; Yeh, 2009b), however it should be noted that what tourists share with the researcher can be quite different from what they share with others.

The production of tourist photographs is not only about memory retention or simply building a collection of travel image. Urry (2002) argues that the production of travel images involves the selection process of what to frame and what not to frame. Hence, it is not a presentation of place but a "representation" of place (Jenkins, 2003). It is not justly an "aide-memoire" but a "reconstruction" of memory and subjectivity (Belk & Yeh, 2011; Garlick, 2002).

Recently, there has been an increasing demand for studies on how individuals adopt photography to perform. In his new book with Larsen, Urry starts to move away from only highlighting the visual aspects of the gaze to also acknowledge the performative nature of tourist gaze (see Urry & Larsen, 2011). Based on Erving Goffman's conception of performance, Urry and Larsen (2011) argue that picturing is an enactment of impression management. Along with other researchers like Garlick (2002), Yeh (2009a), and Belk and Yeh (2011), they urge for future studies to recognize tourist's sense of self in their photographic practices. In particular, Crang (1997) puts forward the notion that a more meaningful analysis of tourist photography can be conducted when it is positioned as a performance of tourist's self in relation to a particular time and space.

Indeed, one should bear in mind that tourist photographs are not only taken for the tourists themselves since they do share their photographs with others (Larsen, 2008). In that sense, tourist photography also involves a selection process of what to share and what not to share (Urry & Larsen, 2011). The rise of social media provides tourists with a new channel to share their travel photographs with a wider audience anytime, anywhere. Tourists can choose among different types of social media to post and share their travel photographs. With limited knowledge on tourist photography and even less on its online usage, tourism studies are far behind this recent transformation of tourism development (Prideaux & Coghlan, 2010).

Web 2.0 refers to online social media which allows users to post their own contents onto the websites. Certain social media, like online photo album (OPA)

and photoblog are designed with specific functions for photo management and photo display to fulfill the needs of photo-sharing. Yet, a Social Network Site like Facebook, surprisingly leads as the top photo sharing site even though it is not designed for this specific function (Owyang, 2008). Sharing personal photographs is one of the most popular ways for Facebookers to share with others their recent development. Instead of Flickr, Facebook is currently the largest photo-sharing site although it is not specifically designed for this purpose. According to Facebook.com, 850 million photos on average are uploaded every month. Recognizing the high demand of photo-sharing, Facebook has expanded the capacity of its photo album:

> We noticed that many of you wanted to create larger photo albums to display all the images from a trip or event in one place. So we've now expanded the number of photos an album can hold from 60 to 200. (Posted by Putnam, 2009)

Even in the context of tourism, Social Network Site is also found to be the leading social media for photo-sharing instead of travel-themed sites like Travel Blog, WAYN, and Lonely Planet. Based on a population study in Hong Kong, Lo et al. (2010) find that Social Network Site (SNS) is currently the most popular platform for tourists to post and share their travel photographs comparing with online photo album, blog, instant messaging, travel-themed sites, and discussion forum. However, most users also rely on more than one type of social media to disseminate their photos, especially among the younger generation. In particular, the combination of Social Network Sites and blog was found to be popular. This

seems to suggest that the younger generation is less concerned with building up digital libraries for future retrieval.

The social qualities of Web 2.0 have facilitated the rapid growth of consumer-generated contents (CGC). CGC represents a new mode of information distribution which "empowers" tourists to also play a significant part in the shaping of destination image (Grossman, 2007). This newly-emerged phenomenon is deemed to provide new challenges as well as opportunities to the travel industry in terms of information control and distribution (Akehurst, 2008; Conrady, 2007). CGC is said to change the nature of travel decision-making. Tourists no longer simply rely on information provided by marketing agencies. Instead, they also search for and exchange travel information among themselves through online social networking. Travel information shared by other tourists is usually considered as more "authentic" and "unbiased" when compared to sources from the marketing agencies. Therefore, this 'digital words-of-mouth' delivered through social media, can help shape destination image and influence travel-planning (Schmallegger & Carson, 2008).

Lin and Huang (2005) have demonstrated how online tourist photography helps in promoting tourism through a case study of a personal blog of a Taiwanese tourist. In 2003, a Taiwanese tourist posted his travel photographs onto his internet blog to share his travel photographs with his friend after visiting the Aegean Sea. Unexpectedly, his travel photographs attracted enormous attention in Taiwan, as well as in cities outside Taiwan. Without intending to do so, his blog helped promoting tourism to Greece.

Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier (2009) also reveal the potential of tourist photographic images in destination promotion. Through studying tourist videos on YouTube.com, they suggest that online tourist photography "can be a powerful tool that can be used to intensify the interest of potential travelers." Hence, online tourist photography has become an influential "digital word-of-mouth" distributed in a much faster manner to a wider public (Prideaux & Coghlan, 2010). Tourists have now become both the audiences and the producers of media culture. This challenges the traditional concept of cultural industry and media distribution.

Yet, the producers of online tourist photographs may have very different production mindset than the commercial-image producers and distributors (Lin & Huang, 2005). With online sharing, they also do not have the absolute control of whether and how their target audiences consume their photographs. Unlike a face-to-face context of sharing, title and captions of photographs substitute the absence of oral narration by the producers on social media. Audiences can flip around or have a glance at photographs which interest them the most and are not obliged to pay attention to the descriptions of photographs, if there are any.

Audiences of image are usually seen as passive in the production of images as they are merely the receivers of information. Yet, the interactive nature of social media provides the audiences with a more active role in the production of images through their reaction and response. With the emergence of Web 2.0, one is able to create and maintain multiple selves on various types of social media with different spheres of audience. Yet, the production of selves and the (re)production of

experience are not totally controllable due to the interactive nature of social media. Audience's reaction towards the shared photos can also impact tourist's performance (Cohen, 2005).

A very interesting remark has been made by Markwell (1997) on tourist photo-sharing. He finds that the expectations of viewers can indeed influence the stories that tourists tell from the photographs. To my knowledge, no research up until now has provided deep insights of how the consciousness of audience influences tourist photo-sharing.

Therefore, it is vital to conduct an analysis of tourist photographic production which recognizes the consciousness of audience in the production process. In particular, a micro-level analysis of online photo-sharing can help us in understanding how the dynamic interaction between the producer and the audience contributes to the selection process of photo-sharing.

1.3 Overview of Study: Research Question and Objectives

This study was conducted to provide insights on how the new form of social interaction, facilitated by the rapid evolution of media technology, shapes contemporary traveling culture and tourist's sense of self. In particular, it drew upon Erving Goffman's notion of performance, which recognizes the importance of consciousness of audience and idealized self image in one's act, to examine tourist online photo-sharing as an ongoing, learning process of managing impressions. It is believed that such an approach could help providing more profound interpretation of why tourist photographs are framed and shared in particular ways.

This study started off with the assumptions that impression management played an important role in tourist's selection process of images for sharing and that tourists learn to control impressions others have of them through posting travel photographs online (Goffman, 1959). Based on these assumptions, a research question was raised: How does performance of self as an ongoing, learning process take place in the production and consumption of online tourist photography?

To answer this question, three objectives were set forth:

Objective (1): To explore tourists' selection process of posting travel photographs online

In other words, what are the reasons involved in including and excluding travel images? Do these reasons differ from one stage to another during their production of travel images? By examining the selection process of image, we can have a better understanding on the role that impression management played in the production of online image and the constraints that tourists face in controlling impressions.

Objective (2): To examine the tactics tourists adopt to control impressions others have of them through posting photographs online

In other words, how does impression management take place in tourists' selection process of image sharing? By examining these tactics, how online travel

sharing is necessarily a tool for tourists to manipulate their idealized self at the front stage can be revealed.

Objective (3): To examine how tourists evaluate their performance and the consequences of their evaluations.

In other words, how do tourists perceive their own performances and what are the consequences of these self-evaluations? By examining how performances are being evaluated at the back stage, we can have a better understanding of how idealized self image is formed and how it is learned to be performed through online image-sharing.

Indeed, the research question and objectives of this study have been refined and revised throughout the whole project. The study first started out with a much broader question of "Why do tourists take photographs?" After continuous reflection and discussion with my chief supervisor, the research question was refined to "How do tourists select photographs to manage their impression to others in an online setting?" Initially, the study aimed to examine tourist online-sharing as a front stage performance. It looked into the relationship among self image, target audience, and the nature of social media in tourist's photo selection for online sharing. In particular, it aimed to look into how the closeness of audience to the performer and the audience's reactions contribute to the production of online photography. The original proposal clearly positioned the tourists as the producers and their audiences as the consumers of their online performance.

Nonetheless, as the study went on, it was found that the performers could never get to know exactly how their audiences perceived their performance. Rather, they could only imagine and learn of audience's perception in several ways. In order to do so, the performers had to be the first audiences of their own performances. Hence, the research question has been refined to also include the back stage performance in the selection process. The performers were the producers and the consumers of their own performances at the same time.

Then, why in particular has online tourist photography been chosen as the focus of study? Online tourist photography offers a very different kind of performance than a face-to-face one. Once travel photographs are posted online, they will remain online until the producers delete them.

Most importantly, there are three components that foster the nature of this performance into more illusionary and deceptive than ever: tourism, photography, and social media. Compared to face-to-face interaction, communication through online photography is less immediate. Photography captures moments that are no longer (Barthes, 1980). These captured moments are to be selected and uploaded to a social network site before they become visible to the audiences. With social media, the performer and the audience can choose when to interact and react. They perform or respond whenever they are ready. In that sense, the producer can have an extended back-stage area to get ready for the show.

Also, unlike everyday experience, our travel experience is pretty much known to ourselves only (except our travel companions if we have any). The

audiences do not need to be present at the same moment with the performers or travel with the performers to view the show. Therefore, one can enjoy higher flexibility to present the most presentable self to others through tourism and social media. At the same time, these two liminal spaces (i.e., tourism and social media) are largely visual-oriented and that photography is particularly powerful in highlighting the partial realities of ourselves we wish others to see, freeze the moments, and turn them into the only, whole, eternal truth. In that case, photography can blend very well into these spaces and help delivering these partial realities of self in a very convincing manner. Figure 1 illustrates how online tourist photography allows for a more deceptive, manageable image for sharing.

1.4 Overview of Study: Research Design

A dramaturgical, reflexive, ethnographic approach is adopted in this exploratory study. The term "ethnographic" helps highlight the characteristics of the study design. This study is rather naturalistic. A variety of data sources was adopted to provide in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon under study. Research questions and methods were opened for modifications during the whole research process. In-depth analysis of a small sample of a particular cultural group was conducted to explore profound issues of tourist photographic practices. Nonetheless, a dramaturgical approach does not aim at capturing the perspective or the voice of the participants but the means by which the performers manage the impression others have of them (Goffman, 1959).

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, an inductive approach was adopted in the research design. Inductive approach aims at developing concepts and

categories from empirical data. At the beginning of the study, an inductive approach shaped how data were collected and analyzed. A broad research question and an initial research framework were developed after preliminary literature review had been conducted. I, as the researcher, allowed myself to be as open as possible to any new insights I could obtain from analyzing empirical data. Common patterns and initial concepts were identified. At a later stage of the study, existing theories were drawn upon to further explain the common patterns developed.

In general, data collection and analysis of this study were structured into two phases (see figure 1). During the first phrase, ethnographic visual analysis, which compared visual and interview data, was conducted to explore the selection process involved in posting travel photographs online. Each individual is analyzed as a holistic case. In particular, the role of self image, reactions of audience, and the nature of social media in online photo-sharing were examined. Descriptive findings of tourist's reflection on their practices and their consciousness of audience helped modifying the research question as well as to provide direction for further literature review in phase three. Cases were also positioned and categorized according to their nature.
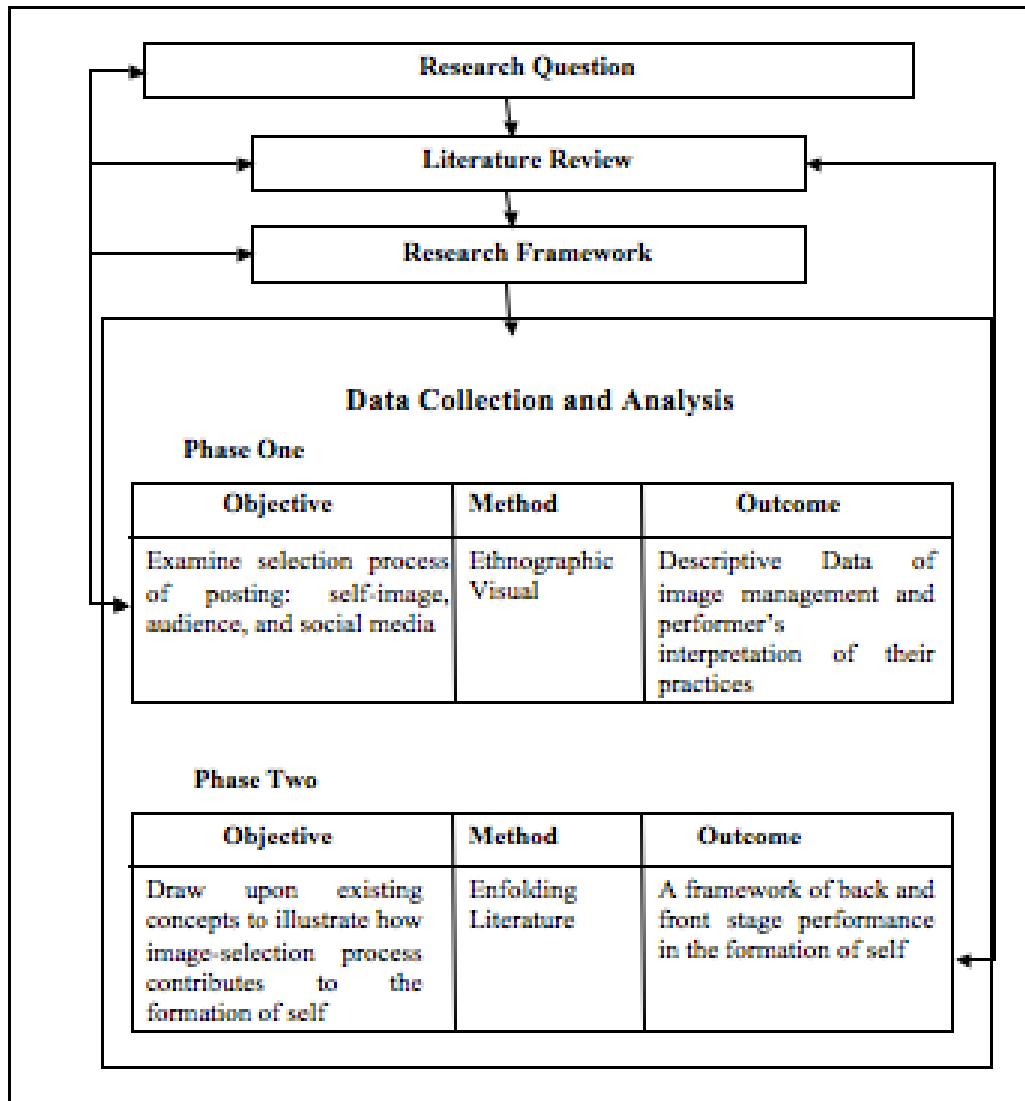
Figure 1: An Overview of Research Design

During the second phase, relevant concepts were reviewed to conduct further analysis of the data. In particular, Erving Goffman's illustration of front and back stage performance, Jacque Lacan's conceptualization of gaze, and Saarni and Lewis's taxonomy of lying were drawn upon. A final framework which illustrates the formation of self through online sharing was developed as the outcome of the second phase.

1.5 Contribution of Knowledge

As mentioned before, existing studies tend to either consider tourist photography as a research tool or examine tourist photography at the societal level. Most of the time, participants' voices are either ignored or taken at face value. How tourism and photography are adopted by the individuals to stage their self and memories of self is largely unknown. To my best knowledge, no study has provided insights of how consciousness of audience shapes the selection process of online travel-posting and contributes to the formation of self in the context of tourism.

Hence, this study fills the research gap through several ways. It provides a conceptual framework of online photo-sharing as a front and back stage performance. The framework recognizes the importance of the performer and the audience in the production and consumption of self. It adopts a dramaturgical approach to examine visual and oral data so that their performative nature can be recognized. It also provides an in-depth analysis of how tourist photography is shaped by and can bring changes to the tourist's self. Also, unlike most existing studies, this study also notes and analyzes the changes of tourist performance from trip to trip as its unit of analysis is the tourist as an individual but not the place.

In a practical sense, this study can provide tourism practitioners with the most up-to-date information about tourist online-sharing behaviors. Schegg, Liebrich, Scaglione, and Ahmad (2008) criticize the fact that most tourism practitioners are not able to take advantages of Travel 2.0. Not only is online social media an important platform for the exchange of information among tourists, it can also offer tourism practitioners invaluable and up-to-date information of their target

markets (Wenger, 2008). Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, (2009) suggest that studies which look into social media and target audience in online-sharing of travel information will help to better understand how the advancement of digital media technology impacts tourism experiences.

1.6 Scope of Study

This study only focused on still, two-dimensional, and non-commercial photographs taken by tourists. The study does not aim to represent the total traveling population. Instead, it focused only on Hong Kong Chinese tourists who post travel photos online to provide rich details about the newly-emerged phenomenon. Hong Kong was chosen to be the focus area for two reasons. First, Hong Kong Chinese are the most tech-savvy in Asia. Their internet usage is particularly high compared to other Asian markets (Nielsen, 2011a). Second, I can communicate the best in Cantonese. Hence, language barrier between the participants and me could be reduced to the minimum.

Blog and Social Network Sites were chosen to be the field sites of this study as they allowed self presentation and expression of producers in a more comprehensive manner when compared to other types of social media. Other than that, previous research shows that a significant percentage of younger social media users tend to use both blog and Social Network Sites to post and share their travel photographs with others (Lo et al., 2010). Therefore, this study took a closer look into why both media are used for the sharing of travel photographs online as well as how the different type of media and audience influence the nature of online travel photography.

1.7 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this study is the tourist. Each individual is analyzed as a case.

1.8 Structure of the Report

This report is structured according to the research process of the study. By doing so, the readers can have a better sense of how I have arrived at my final framework of tourist photography as a back and front stage performance.

The report is composed of nine chapters. Chapter Two provides a preliminary review of literature that helps forming the research framework of this study. In particular, photography theories, existing studies of tourist photography, tourism and ego enhancement, formation of self, Erving Goffman's dramaturgy, typology of social media, and impression management in an online context will be reviewed. Chapter Three discusses the methodology adopted in this study. The epistemological assumptions that underpinned the research design of this study, sampling design, data collection and analysis, validity, and limitations of study will be discussed. Chapter Four presents self-reflexivity of the researcher. How subjectivity of the researcher shaped the findings of the study will be reflected upon. Chapter Five to Chapter Eight will report findings of the study. These chapters are structured according to the level of interpretation involved. Chapter Nine will provide a concluding remark of the study and raise new questions for future research.

Chapter Two

Literature Review: Formation of Research Framework

Chapter Two

Literature Review: Formation of Research Framework

Overview of Chapter

In Chapter one, a background and an overview of this study were presented. In this chapter, literature which helped forming the initial research framework of this study will be reviewed. This chapter is composed of four parts. The first part explores the relationship between photography and tourist self. To do so, various conceptualizations of photography and tourist photography will be presented. Based on a review of the existing studies, how photographic technology allows the tourist self to experience self, time, place, and otherness in a new way will be discussed. The second part will explore the nature of tourist self. To do so, an overview of how tourism is related to ego-enhancement will first be presented. I shall then draw upon Côté's (1996) three types of identity to conceptualize the nature of self. Based on Goffman's dramaturgy of everyday life, I also discuss how micro-level of social interaction contributes to one's self presentation and formation. The third part will look into how impression management is carried out in the online world, particularly through photography. I first argue that online interaction is a form of social activity. Based on this standpoint, how micro details of social interaction contribute to online production of text will be discussed. Finally, the last part of the chapter will introduce a research framework that guided the fieldwork of this study.

Part I: Photography and Tourist Self

2.1 Defining and Theorizing Photography

The rapid development of technology facilitates the popularization of photography and tourism, which have become what constitute the everyday life of ordinary people (Garlick, 2002). Not only does photographic technology evolve over time, how photography is perceived also varies according to different historical moments. The term photography appeals to us as a rather straightforward concept. We are very familiar with what a photograph is like given that we are now living in an image-making world. Hence, it seems that there is not an immediate concern for us to define photography before we start talking about it.

McCauley (2007, p. 409) criticizes such a view by questioning "do we know what we are talking about?" It is important to note that, as she points out, "the knowledge of how the image is made, rather than anything inherent in the image, changes the way the viewer thinks of the image" (p. 422). Therefore, knowing "what photography is" and how it has been perceived can be the first step towards understanding our image-making world.

Indeed, to define photography is as difficult as defining tourism. Kriebel (2007) argues that it is not easy to either conceptualize photography based on its form or the materials which compose it. Since its invention, the subject matters which compose a photograph as well as the technology that helps producing and exhibiting photographic images have evolved significantly. From a light-sensitive plate or paper to recently a digital image composed of mathematic data, photograph

exists in various forms and is produced in various ways. Having said so, all photographs share two characteristics – up until now. First, McCauley (2007) suggests that contemporary photographs, regardless of their forms and subject matters, are indeed "visible objects in which light was involved *at some stage* in the generative process" (p. 414). Second, unlike other types of pictorial artifacts like painting and drawing, the mechanical process involved in producing a photograph is not necessarily a concern to the photographer for it to be generated (Kriebel, 2007; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Perceptions towards photography vary as much as its form and subject matters evolve. Photograph is often seen as a medium which visually captures and reflects partial reality of the world. By reviewing the history of photography theories, Kriebel (2007) argues that it is insufficient to simply think of photograph as a medium which provides us with knowledge about the world in a visual manner. How humans use and think of photography varies with different historical moments.

Indeed, how photography is perceived is closely linked to how it is practiced. During its infancy, photography was not seen as a product of technology but a magical image of light created by God (McCauley, 2007). It was then condemned as a lunatic act of the mass as follies on the one hand (Kriebel, 2007). On the other hand, photography was praised as a scientific innovation which provided accurate depiction of reality. Nonetheless, it was never seen as a form of art, not until it started to gain a place in the fine art market and museums in the 1960s and 1970s. It was seen at most as "a tool of memory, a record keeper, (or) an

archive" (Kriebel, 2007, p. 7).

The invention and popularization of light-weight cameras brought photography and its discourse to a new level. Photography continued to be perceived negatively due to its mechanical nature of production. The mass production of photographic images was seen as a reflection of the "mechanical superficiality" and "spiritual meaninglessness" of capitalism (Kriebel, 2007, p. 9). Photography is criticized by Walter Benjamin as a destruction of authenticity, aura, and uniqueness of art. Nonetheless, Benjamin gives merits to photography by suggesting its ability in unveiling what cannot be seen by the "waking eye" through the "camera eye" (Kriebel, 2007, p. 13). Photography is said to contain constructed meanings which are readily visible to the viewers. It has also made everything accessible to the public's eyes through bringing back the lights of distant items and sceneries (Kriebel, 2007; Osborne, 2000). Hence, the mass production of photographic images helped awaking and shaping the consciousness of the society. In contrast, the ability of photography to conceal was also recognized. Roland Barthes argues that photography, as a form of language, is particularly powerful in concealing and naturalizing the construction of meanings encoded by the producers and decoded by the viewers (Kriebel, 2007). Thus, photography was no longer seen as simply a reflection of reality but a representation of reality.

Photography was further argued as a denial of reality. Susan Sontag (1977), in her book *On Photography*, suggests that to photograph is to refuse what is given. The immediate experience of objects and events is refused but to be taken and seen through lens and frames. Aesthetics is whatever is photogenic. Whatever that is

photographable, is aestheticized via framing and compositing. Photo-taking is a search for and a construction of the aesthetics with the camera eyes. Therefore, to photograph is to refuse as much as to acquire at the same time. Photography represents an acquisition of aestheticism, power, and knowledge. To photograph is to have knowledge of something, at least it appears to be so. Camera empowers oneself. It provides one with the power to participate and to capture the world at a distance. It allows oneself to turn the world into a photographic collection. Everything can be photographable. Everything can become one's life collection. Nonetheless, Bourdieu (1990) argues that photographic aesthetics is indeed a symbol of class and age. Therefore, one's sense of aesthetics is not something inherited naturally. Rather, it is regulated and practiced according to social norms.

All in all, every moment can be witnessed and captured by a camera. Photography is thus an acquisition and an evidence of "I have been" (Sontag, 1977). Paradoxically, photography represents a timeless ownership of a moment as much as an infinite loss of a moment. Barthes (1980) argues that by instantly freezing and re-locating moments into "that-has-been," photography produces a sense of "no-longer" and nostalgia for the past. Hence, the infinity of a moment made possible by photography also reveals the ephemerality of the moment.

Since the viewing of photographs reveals the fragility of the moments, taking photographs of the moments is the only way to own the moments "no-longer" and to make them last. And at the same time, the immediate experience is interrupted by the capturing of the moments and is reconstructed into a collection of images that represents one's identity. They are the moments

"that-was-not-supposed-to-be" without photography and are turned into "I have been" through photography to represent one's life.

2.2 Conceptualizing Tourist Photography

Crang (1997, p. 365) argues that tourist photographic practice not only consumes time and money, it also involves "sacrificing the immediacy of experience and orientating activities to (future, distant) viewers." Having said so, tourist photography might not only be about sacrificing immediate experience to prolong the consumption of attractions. Instead, tourist moments can be created through framing and performing for the cameras. This visual consumption of attractions is also said to encourage the production of place and experience (Larsen, 2005; Kim, 2010), and even of the tourists (Scarles, 2009).

The artifacts of their photographic practices, the photographs, are also said to reveal signs of self (Belk & Yeh, 2011), markers of class distinction (Leung, 2010), the cultural baggage tourists bring along with when they travel (Sobel, 2009), and tourist's subjective and collective imaginaries of places (Scarles, 2009; Urry 2002, 2011). They are able to turn one's travel moments into "a work of art" (Garlick, 2002). Thus, tourist photographs reveal the decision of tourists of what to frame and how to frame for constructing (Crang, 1997; Leung, 2010) and sharing realities of places and selves (Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Given the importance of photography in shaping one's experience, discussions of tourist photography have evolved from a periphery topic to a useful research tool to now increasingly the focus of a study. At the beginning, most

discussions of tourist photography were much of a side note (Chalfen, 1979). It then was seen as a visual consumption that shapes and is shaped by a gazing loop (Scarles, 2009). Lately, there seems to be a performative turn in studying tourist photography. Tourist photographic practices are seen as "performed" rather than "preformed" (Larsen, 2006). All in all, tourist photography is starting to take a more significant role in tourism research.

Indeed, how tourist photography is conceptualized goes hand in hand with how tourism is conceptualized. During the 70s to the early 90s, discussions on tourist photography were usually treated as a complement to one's view on the nature of tourism but rarely the focus of a study. Tourism, as a modern ritual, was seen as a means to seek or to escape. As a means to seek, tourism is a way to rejoice differences that exist in a society or to search for "inversion of the everyday" (Bourdieu, 1990; MacCannell, 1976; Urry, 1990, 2002). As a means to escape, tourism provides a liminal space for tourists to get a break from their mundane and ordinary routines. Yet, tourists are always under a strong influence of "work ethic" and the "moral feelings" attached to it. Traveling can therefore be a means for tourists to avoid being criticized for hiding at home being unproductive (Graburn, 1989). In that sense, photography was seen as an essential part of the ritual for tourists to capture the differences and bring home their memories of experiences (Graburn, 1989). It could also be a "friendly imitation of work" for certain tourists to soothe their unease of being on vacation (Sontag, 1977). And so it seems, photography allows tourists to play without feeling guilty. It also facilitates tourists to search for "the inversion of the everyday" (Bourdieu, 1990; Urry, 1990), to experience such an inversion, and to prolong this inversion by capturing the

moments.

Richard Chalfen (1979) was surprised by the lack of studies on tourist photography even though it has been one of the most common forms of tourist behaviors. He suggests that different types of tourists might exhibit different photographic behaviors and might also raise different ethical issues in terms of their interactions with the locals. How tourists practice photography could also change the ways locals presented themselves. Hence, he argues that the studies of tourist photographic practices should not be seen as a periphery discussion. Rather, serious effort should be made to examine the common patterns and the variations of photographic practices that exist among various tourist types.

Also, why tourists capture images while traveling was and is still largely unknown (Prideaux & Coghlan, 2010). Munir & Phillips (2005) argue that the special relationship between camera and travel was never a natural occurrence. It was shaped and developed through promotions and advertisements by Kodak to encourage travelers' desire of bringing back images of the unique and exotics before photography became a ritualistic practice of the tourists. Through effective promotion strategies, Kodak was able to give meanings to the newly-invented technology. Since then, photography has become what defines travel experience.

Indeed, John Urry was among the first to provide a conceptual framework in explaining the influence of mass-produced images on tourist experience and their photographic acts. Urry (1990, 2002) argues that tourism experience is largely composed of gazing. The act of gazing seems to be natural – "we gaze at what we

encounter" (Urry, 2002, p. 1), as simple as that. Nonetheless, Urry stresses that the tourist gaze is never a natural act. Tourism institutions continuously shape and construct the tourist gaze which guides and directs tourist pre-trip and on-site experience. The tourist gaze is a social construction of a need to search for the extraordinary in contrast to one's tedious life. Travel images distributed by tourism institutions tactfully remind the tourists of the repetitive and static nature of their daily life by showing them the contrary. Under the influence of the tourist gaze, contemporary tourism serves as a socially-desirable platform for one to escape from the mundane and to search for the extraordinary.

Based on this conceptualization of tourism experience, he proposes a hermeneutic circle in which the production and reproduction of travel photography take place. Travel images, which are produced and distributed by tourism practitioners and mass media, are said to be powerful in determining where tourists travel and what tourists do on site. They produces imaginaries of a place that trigger tourists to search for the projected images, to capture the images that match with their imaginaries, and to show these captured images to others as a proof of their travel. Therefore, tourist photography is seen as a replica of the widely circulated images via postcards, brochures, magazine, advertisement, etc. His framework has become the theoretical foundation of several empirical studies on tourist photography (i.e., Caton & Santos, 2008; Garrod, 2009; Jenkins, 2003). These studies were able to confirm or complete the hermeneutic circle proposed by Urry (1990, 2002).

Nonetheless, the findings of these studies fail to support their claims

without analyzing the process in between. Botterill (1987), from his study of tourist experience and photographic technology, finds that different people interpret pictorial images projected by marketing brochures differently. Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier (2009) also find that tourist videos posted on Youtube.com are indeed very much "associated with their personal preference and image, and are, therefore, far from being generic." Therefore, the relationship between projected image and travel photography is not as straight-forward as the circle suggests. Even Garrod (2009), whose study finds evidence for the hermeneutic circle, also argues that the relationship between image projection and travel photography is rather dynamic:

> . . . a more distanced and objective analysis of the two datasets, suggests that while such similarities do exist, they do not exist in every feature of the visual images captured by the two media. Of particular note was the tendency for postcards to depict a panoramic view of the town taken from one of the hills overlooking Aberystwyth, whereas tourists' photographs did not. There was also a marked tendency for postcards to feature natural features, particularly bodies of water, whereas tourist photographs were more concerned with the built features of the landscape. Yet in other respects, for example in terms of the inclusion of particular historic buildings and tourist attractions, the content of the tourist photographs and the postcards was not statistically different. This study therefore lends some support to Urry's notion of the closed circle of reproduction of the tourist gaze, but suggests that the processes involved might be more subtle and complex than simply

for the two protagonists in the relationship to mimic one other in

every respect. (p. 356)

Nonetheless, Urry's conceptualization of tourist photographic acts has led to a growth of discussions as well as interest in tourist photography as the focus of one's study. While empirical studies on this research area are still of limited number, these studies have widened academic inquiry on various aspects of tourist photography, for example, the social function of camera (i.e., Markwell, 1997; Larsen, 2005, 2006; Yeh, 2003, 2009b), the production and consumption of tourist imaginaries via photography (i.e., Jenkins, 2003; Caton & Santos, 2008; Garrod, 2009; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009), and the representation of self and otherness (Yeh, 2009). The inquiries and methodologies of these studies are usually underpinned by their assumptions on the nature of travel. These studies either see tourist photography as a visual consumption or a social, embodied experience.

Studies that see tourist photography as a visual consumption of place usually compare tourist photographs with promotional photographs to examine tourist imagery about a destination or the effectiveness of destination image promotion (i.e., Caton & Santos, 2008; Garrod, 2009; Jenkins, 2003; Kim, 2010; Schmallegger, et al., 2010; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). Studies that conceptualize tourist photography as a social, embodied experience tend to value the ability of participant observation or discourse analysis in exploring the dynamicity of tourist photographic practices. The findings of these studies reveal the roles of photography in the performance of family (Larsen, 2005, 2006), of race (Whittaker, 2009); of tourism (Edensor, 2000), of self (Yeh, 2009a); and of fantasy

(Delfin, 2009). The two types of studies suggest very different findings, or at least adopt very different interpretations of their findings. Hence, it seems that the lens of the researcher can make a significant impact on how tourist photography is researched and conceptualized.

2.3 Self and Photography

Whether tourist photography is a visual consumption or a social performance, both the photographic actions and the photographic objects facilitate different types of experience for the tourists. In particular, photography allow the tourist self to experience (1) objects/places, (3) otherness, (3) time, and (4) tourist self as an object.

"Tourist self with objects/places"

Photographs produced for and produced by tourists can facilitate imaginary travel whether they have been or have not been to the places themselves (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Those who have not been to the place can have a preview of how the places will be like when they actually reach there. Those who have been to the place before can re-experience the place again along with the memories provoked by the visual images (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). Not only photography can allow tourists to experience places without physical presence, the tourist can also see and experience places in a new way, as Pocock (2009, p. 195) suggests in his study of the Reef's bird-eye photographs:

In some instances technology has been unable to represent visual experiences, but in many others it has produced new ways of

conceiving the Reef. Furthermore, some experiences created by the

camera are only possible through these technologies."

Photographic technology thus is said to produce hyper-real experience of

places to the tourists (Robinson & Picard, 2009). It is also what shapes tourist gaze

of places. Within a hermeneutic circle, the mass-produced photographs can turn

objects and sites into attractions. The widely-circulated photographic images helps

shaping and sustaining the extraordinariness of objects and sites for the tourists to

search for. Tourists use their cameras to capture the projected image as a proof of

their travel trips (Urry, 2002). Nonetheless, how tourists capture the sites or objects

can vary from person to person (Garrod, 2009; Larsen, 2006; Tussyadiah &

Fesenmaier, 2009). Instead of passively looking and gazing at the sites, tourists can

play with their cameras and see what to frame and how to frame.

"Tourist self with others"

Tourist's experience of otherness is fostered by photography during their

pre-trip, onsite, and post-trip stages. Photographic images can facilitate one's

imaginary of otherness: other's look, other's way of life and other's culture

(Martinez and Albers, 2009). It can also allow one to gaze at other tourists and

imagine being the traveling others (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). During their

on-site experience, a camera can help connecting tourists with others regardless of

the quality of the interaction. The camera helps tourists to soothe their unease of

being in an unfamiliar culture (Sontag, 1977). It naturalizes their gaze at others as

attractions through the lens of their camera (Lanfant, 2009). In that sense, a camera

can be served as a tourist bubble for one to practice the familiar in a strange

environment. Yet, the interaction between the host and guest encouraged by photography is not always pleasant. The host might have different perceptions towards being photographed (Chalfen, 1987) and their negative reactions can lead to a sense of embarrassment for the tourists (Gillespie, 2006). Other than the host, the camera can also encourage interactions among tour participants (Markwell, 1997; Yeh, 2003). Through taking photographs together, a sense of togetherness is being produced (Larsen, 2006). Particularly for the family vacationers, photography is effective in staging tourists' "desires, fantasies, and ideals of family" (Larsen, 2005, p. 425). How tourists pose and position family members for photographing can be a performance of love, intimacy, and "familyness." The social function of photography is also extended to the participants' post-trip experience. Photo-sharing can facilitate interactions between tourists and their social network back home (Markwell, 1997).

"Tourist self with time"

Photography is said to help prolonging the travel experience. Such an extension of experience begins at the pre-trip stage. As mentioned before, tourists are able to have a preview of their travel trip before they visit the place. Photography can also help provoking tourist's memories of their travel trips (Brandin, 2009). Having said so, photographs do not only bring back memories. Through reviewing their own travel photographs, tourists can have a different understanding of their travel experience (Botterill, 1987). It is important to note that, as Scarles (2009) argues, one's own travel memories can transform in time. Therefore, photography is not merely a replacement of memories. Rather, the fractured, frozen moments can help creating and revising memories to suit their

present's needs and identities. Also, tourists do not always just see through the actual object captured by the camera. Instead, they see with their "mind's eye" when they think about their travel experience through their travel photographs (Sobel, 2009).

"Tourist self as an object"

The last linkage is tourist's subject self with tourist's object self. Through photographs, tourists are then able to gaze at themselves as an object, as another person, (Barthes, 1980) who is both familiar and unfamiliar to them. More than remembering and retaining time, tourist photographic practices are now seen as essential in one's identity formation. Tourist photographic practices, which embrace the selection process of what is photographed and what is left out within the frame, imply the construction of tourist subjectivities (Crang, 1997) and how one wants to be remembered (Bærenholdt et al., 2004). Yeh (2009a) suggests that tourist photography portrays more than a physical presence of self in a particular place at a particular time. Instead, photography allows tourists to "create a more heroic romanticized self" and to situate themselves in the world. Leung (2010) finds that tourists' framing of places and otherness is indeed a way for them to remake selves through exhibiting their worldviews. Having said so, she suggests that there are constraints in how tourists use photography to differentiate themselves as they are restricted by the limit of the two-dimensional frame as well as the collective imaginaries and aesthetic norms that are projected to them. This can be the reason why their photographs tend to be repetitive and indifferent from each other.

To conclude this part, I shall use Barthes' (1980) interpretation of self as a photographic object to illustrate the unique experience of self and otherness which photographic technology facilitates:

In front of the lens, I am at the same time the one I think I am, the one I want others to think I am, the one photographer thinks I am, the one he makes use of to exhibit 'his art' (p. 13)

Part II: Tourism, Ego, and Performance

2.4 Tourism and Ego Enhancement

Whether the tourists photograph a place, an object, others, or themselves, every photograph produced or shared by them involves a sense of self (Belk & Yeh, 2011). Hence, the examination of what tourists do and desire can help reflecting how they perceive themselves or how they want to perceive themselves (Garlick, 2002; Graburn, 1983; McCabe & Stokoe, 2004).

Travel has long been seen as a means to enhance one's ego and to gain prestige since leisure travel is still regarded as a relatively elite form of leisure (Dann, 1977; Riley, 1995). Tourism is said to be a rising form of consumption – the consumption of the symbols (Pretes, 1995). Although one's choice of leisure is not purely free and is limited to the availability of individual and environmental resources (Kelly & Ross, 1989; Rojek, 2005), a number of studies reveal the relationship between one's choice of leisure and the construction of self identity (Haggard & Williams, 1992). Within a certain level of freedom, leisure allows "us to choose what general aspects of our selves we wish to focus on at any given time"

(Haggard & Williams, 1992; Kerman & Domzal, 2001). Each form of leisure symbolizes specific identities and different layers of meaning in one society. Therefore, not only leisure can help us to obtain relaxation and positive experience, it can also help us to explore, develop, and present our ideal selves (Haggard & Williams, 1992). Stebbins (1997) suggests that tourism, as a form of leisure activity, has become a popular form of consumption to define self identity.

The choice of holiday types and destinations itself is already a representation of self and taste. Chon & Olsen (1991) suggest that tourists tend to be more satisfied with their travel experience if the image of a destination matches with the self images of tourists. Sirgy & Su (2000) further argue that the extent and scope of self-identifications may vary according to the type of tourism one engages in. They suggest that individual travel and exclusive destination can appeal more to the private self (i.e., actual and ideal self) whereas prestigious destinations, which can impress others, may appeal more to the public self (i.e., social self and social ideal self). They also speculate that age might make a difference in the relationship between self-image and tourism. Younger tourists might be more concerned with their self images when choosing destination whereas older tourists focus more on the practical value and facilities that a destination can provide.

The relationship between self image and tourism might also vary according to the type of tourism one partakes in. Stebbins (1997) sees a greater aptitude of cultural tourism in self-identifications since cultural tourism is more exclusive and is more likely to become a form of serious leisure when compared to mass tourism. Other than the type of tourism, Munt (1994, from Desforges, 2000) suggests that

distance of traveling, in addition to the image of the destination, can also help to enhance one's self image. He argues that long haul tourism of distinctive destination and practices as a taste performance can help one to reinstate one's social status or to even climb up the social ladder.

Other than the form of tourism and choice of destination, self can also be presented through various accounts of travel experience. Cary (2004) argues that travel narrative is not simply a reflection of experience. Instead, travel experience is "(re)presented, (re)produced, and (re)created" through the various forms of travel narrative like photographs, travel diary, and words of mouth.

Desforges (2000) finds that tourists have their own tactics of how to share and represent travel experiences to others. They are strategic in presenting different selves to different spheres of audience through their narrations of travel experience. Sometimes, story-telling can become a challenging task if the identity one wishes to demonstrate is not appreciated by others. Generally, tourists are aware of the potential of annoying their audience if they go "too far in impressing their experiences onto other people." Therefore, tourists are conscious of the what-to and how-to in representing and tailoring their travel experience to others during the post trip stage as Desforges (2000, p. 938) notes,

> They have to select certain parts of their experiences, cutting them
> up exaggerating for effect, making connections among different
> places: in short, using a whole host of narrative devices to
> communicate some kind of story to others. Telling stories is a central

part of conveying the meanings of travel. Like all stories, however,

they have to be worked upon and built up if they are to communicate

to others in a form that will confirm their identity.

McCabe and Stokoe (2004) further argues that that tourists' experience is often crafted into stories which contain a sense of "being a particular type of tourist." In that sense, travel narrative is not simply a representation of experience. It is also about how tourists perceive themselves and wishes to perceive themselves.

Indeed, all these choices tourists made and the sceneries that they take part in help polishing their own egos and help them to feel connected (Dann, 1977). And to draw from MacCannell's (2002) words, everything ego wants is to feel unique, attractive, superior, and aspired -"Look at me. Look up to me." (p. 149).

2.5 The nature of self

Côté (1996) suggests considering three types of identity in the formation of self: (1) social identity; (2) personal identity; and (3) ego identity. Social identity refers to the position where one stands in a society. In general, social identity is shaped by the given roles we play in the society. Personal identity is shaped by a more concrete experience of ongoing social interaction. Through ongoing social interaction, we explore, define, and negotiate our personal identity which is more individualistic in nature when compared to our social identity. Ego identity denotes the most individualistic type of identity we attain. Ego identity is largely shaped by our personality and subjectivity. Hence, three levels of identity formation should be taken into account for a more comprehensive understanding of self: (1) macro, (2)

micro, and (3) psychological.

Côté (1996) warns that studies on the macro level of identity formation should take into account the specific form of society in which study participants are situated – pre-modern, early modern, late modern, and postmodern. In a late modern or postmodern society, one's social identity is managed and performed according to different situations, for example, one can present different kinds of self online and offline, at work and off-work, being home and being away. With rapid development of transportation and web technology, one's social network can be expanded and different kind of self can be easily managed and presented to different spheres of acquaintances.

The micro level of analysis focuses on the formation of personal identity. Côté (1996) suggests that personal identity is largely image-oriented in a postmodern society. An individual's image reflects the accumulated biography of the individual and the ongoing negotiation between an authentic self and a culturally-accepted self. Last but not least, the psychological level of identity formation focuses on ego identity which involves two components: structure and process. Structure of ego identity refers to the interpretation of the life world experience of an individual: (1) how experience is managed and (2) what kind of experiences is valued. The process of ego identity refers to how an individual understands self as distinctive from others in the world. Therefore, ego identity is derived from comparison of self with others. Côté (1996, p. 422) argues that ego identities are to be explored on a continuous basis "through consumption and pleasing others" in a postmodern society. Hence, self is an unstable entity which is

always defined and redefined.

2.6 Erving Goffman: Dramaturgy of Everyday Experience

Indeed, Côté's (1996) concept of ego identity resembles the theory of "looking-glass self" proposed by Cooley (1972). The looking-glass self argues that individuals tend to think about how self is perceived by others and how others judge this perceived self. Thus, an emotional response will arouse based on the perceived judgment on self. This ongoing, interactive assessment of self can actually lead to the formation of a perceived self and an ideal self. In that sense, the reactions from our immediate others contribute largely to the formation of self. If so, then how can oneself learn of other's perception in order to achieve an ideal self?

Erving Goffman (1959) has offered one of the most influential interpretations of this learning process in forming and confirming the ideal self. Goffman (1959) uses the back/front stage theory to understand the presentation of ideal self which has been widely referred to as "impression management" (Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

Ideal self is usually seen as a "socially desirable" image by impression management studies (Tetlock & Manstead, 1985). Nonetheless, it should be noted that idealization of self varies from performance to performance, as the sphere of audiences as well as the context in which performance takes place can play a part in defining what is meant by "ideal" (Goffman, 1959). All in all, idealization of self can be understood through three principles. First, an idealization of self is built upon the assumption that everyone desires to move up the social ladder and is

reluctant to move down (Goffman, 1959). Hence, an ideal self is a beneficial image that can potentially bring the performers certain advantages (Tetlock & Manstead, 1985). Second, idealization of self is not without constraints or boundaries. An ideal self is the "best-possible" image that is realistically achievable by the performer (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Third, the expectations of the audience play an essential role in the formation of "idealization." Nonetheless, the performers can never get to know what the audiences really expect. They can only estimate their expectations based on certain clues and their previous performances (Cooley, 1972; Goffman, 1959).

Impression management is the efforts and strategy employed to manage the beneficial image of self in the presence of others. There are two tactics of impression management: (1) assertive tactics and (2) defensive tactics. Assertive tactics are applied to promote a favorable image of self in terms of attractiveness and competence. Defensive tactics are implemented to "protect or repair one's image" through excuses, justifications or accepting responsibility for previous unacceptable and negative actions (Ellis, West, Ryan, & DeShon, 2002). Although the performers desire an ideal image of self, they can make mistakes or miscalculations in managing their impressions to others (Tetlock & Manstead, 1985).

A dramaturgical approach to understanding social interaction is thus to understand the means by which the performers manage the impression others have of them. There are several key elements that shape a performance. First, a performance requires a performer(s) and an audience(s). Second, there are three

regions of a performance: the front, the back, and the residual. The front is where a performer acts to control a certain impression of self or to be in control of a circumstance. The back is where the performer prepares for and reflects on the performance. The residual region is for the outsiders. The outsiders are those who are neither the performer nor the audience of a performance and thus are blocked out from the show. Nonetheless, they can be the audiences' of another show of the performer. This is what Goffman (1959) calls the "segregation of audience." The performer has to be very careful not to allow outsiders to come into the show, as it can impact the trustworthiness of the current show as well as the show in which the outsiders are the audiences.

There are three important aspects in a performance. Goffman (1959) refers these aspects to as "dramatization of expression," "maintenance of expressive control," and "idealization." In order to control impression, the performer has to dramatize his/her expressions. One has to put in a lot of effort to dramatize the expressions but without the audiences' noticing the effort. Sometimes the performer might even end up missing out the actions by spending his/her effort in the dramatic expressions. Also, the performer has to control his/her expression in a way that it is not a reflexive expression of his/her true feelings but an expression for the desirable impression. Last but not least, each performance involves an idealization of self. In that sense, the performer is required to dramatize a controlled expression to give off an idealized impression of self in a performance.

In a dramaturgical approach, an individual is both a performer and a character. As a performer, the individual adopts different tactics and strategies to

manage the impression others have of them. The character is what the performer plays during a performance, thus it is a desirable outcome of the performance. The individual can play a different character in another performance.

Indeed, the performer can also be an audience in turn. The audience can be the performer in another show and therefore, the audience can be quite cooperative in the performer's show even if something goes wrong. Also, it is important to note that the audience is not merely a passive receiver but is also giving an impression to the performer through their reactions. It is the reason why Goffman (1959) argues that both the performer and the audience do have control over the performance. The performer always tries to take control of his/her impressions to others whether he or she is conscious of staging. The audiences are, for most of the time, not suspicious of staging but are actively checking out the possibilities of deception through uncontrollable aspects of the performance. As Goffman (1959, p. 9) argues, no matter how passive the audiences might seem in a performance, they "effectively project a definition of the situation by virtue of their response" to the performance. Therefore, both the performer and the audience play a part in defining the performance.

Part III: Online Images and Impression Management

2.7 Online Interaction as a Social Activity

As Goffman argues, a performance takes place whenever the social is involved. Through our interaction with others, our identities and knowledge about ourselves and the external world have been actively developed (Gotved, 2006). We seek to obtain a sense of belonging, a better chance of survival, and possibly a sense

of well-being through interacting with others (Nucci, 2004; Gaertner, Sedikides, Vevea, & Iuzzini, 2002; Twenge & King, 2005). Both our culture and social structure are the results of social interaction (Gotved, 2006; Levinson, 2006). The distinctiveness of human sociality distinguishes human from other species and is argued to be one of the most essential aspects that made our civilizations possible.

However, one might question whether online activity can be considered as social activity since such an activity indeed is an interaction between human and a computer. Hence it is important to define the term "social" in here.

Schatzki (1996) offers a rather broad definition of "social" by suggesting that a phenomenon is considered as social "when it pertains to human coexistence." This definition leaves any act too ambiguous to be labeled as social. Schutz (1967, p. 8) provides an overly precise definition by delimiting social behaviors to those that are "directed upon the conduct of others." This definition can leave out the imaginary aspects of social. Gilbert (1997, p. 19) includes mental connectedness in her definition of the social. She considers a phenomenon as social "if and only if it involves one person's being connected either mentally or in some causal way with another person or persons." Mental connectedness is characterized as a person having another person in mind whilst such a connectedness does not necessarily need to be symmetrical. In line with these streams of thoughts, social is therefore about human connection as well as the way they do things due to their coexistence.

From this point of view, the phenomenon of online interaction can be considered as social. Online interaction can be argued to involve human connection

in a virtual context. Some might go devaluing online relationships by seeing them as imagined and superficial (Nie, 2001; Wilson & Peterson, 2002). Yet, it is important to understand the nature of such connection from the perspectives of the users. By conducting a one-year study of students engaged in a distance-learning program, Kazmer & Haythornthwaite (2001) discover that their participants neither consider the online world as an isolated entity nor their online interactions as superficial. Rather, they perceive the online world "in terms of the people, experiences, and tasks it comprises and how it interacts with home, work, and friends." With this in mind, people are being connected mentally when they communicate with each other in the online world even though they are geographically apart.

2.8 Typology of Social Media

Recognizing the lack of insights about tourist photographic behaviors in relation to their demographic background and travel profile, Lo et al. (2010) conducted a population study of Hong Kong tourists in terms of their photo-taking and photo-sharing practices. They found that nearly 90% of the tourists took photographs when they traveled and that more than a third of them shared their travel photographs online. SNS was found to be the most popular social media for the Hong Kong Chinese tourist to disseminate their travel photographs online even though it is not specifically designed for photo-sharing or for sharing travel information. Travel-themed sites were found to be the least popular channel. In particular, the youngest cluster tended to adopt both SNS and blog for online photo-sharing.

Therefore, it seems that tourists do not favor using sites with a specific theme to share their photographs. Instead, SNS like Facebook allows tourists to share various themes or forms of texts. It has become an ideal platform for one to build a personal profile for a highly selective presentation of self. Hence, it is important to note that the design and nature of the social media can impact, whether or not as well as, the way tourists share photographs with others.

Indeed, younger users were found to be more concerned about impressing others through the usage of social media (Strano, 2008). In particular, SNS and blog are particularly powerful in impression management in different ways. SNS allows a more comprehensive presentation of self with the usage of a combination of visual images, written texts, and other online activities (Tse, 2008). Blog allow a deeper expression of self mainly through written texts with the complement of visual images (Bortree, 2005). Therefore, self-presentation was seen as a key aspect in tourist's online photo-sharing. Also, SNS and blog can provide different insight of self presentation from online travel posting.

Due to the rapid changes of social media technology, researchers have not yet come to a consensus on the typology of social media. It is important to note that the categorization of social media is becoming perplexing as many sites contain an open application programme interface which allows the development and integration of new programmes or features in order to stay competitive (Cox et al., 2008). Sites which are social-networking in nature also start to provide photo management and blogging functions (Lento, Welser, Gu, & Smith, 2006). More advanced photo-sharing sites like Flickr also allow blogging and building a list of

friends like other Social Network Sites. Groups can be formed within the sites to facilitate the growth of online communities around specific themes or photographic images (Liu, Palen, Sutton, Hughes, & Vieweg, 2008). Some researchers choose to simply label all social media with user generated content (UGC) attributes as Social Network Sites. Yet, Van House (2007) suggests that social media users are aware of the difference among photo-sharing site, blogs and social network sites when they select photographic images for online sharing. Each type of social media represents a different set of online activities and audience.

Certain social media are designed with travel as a theme to connect those who are interested in sharing experience, opinions, reviews, and comments about transportation, accommodation, cuisine, attractions, or even a destination in general. These sites can be categorized into commercial or non-commercial sites (Cox et al., 2008). Commercial sites like Tripadvisors and Expedia provide a separate section for travelers to rate and comment on their experience so as to facilitate the decision-making process of other travelers. Non-commercial sites like Travel Blog, WAYN, and Wolftrip are designed like blog or social network sites for their users to share their travel experience through writing, posting photographs and video onto their travel profiles. Users can search for information about a particular destination within the sites or directly contact the authors for further inquiries. Cox et al. (2008) suggest that most tourists find travel-themed sites more reliable than generic social network sites when it comes to travel-planning.

The users of travel-themed sites might have different mindset when they share information as most audiences are the unknown others but share similar

interests. They are part of a form of online community that holds different members together under a specific theme. To understand why tourists participate and contribute to an online tourist community, Wang and Fesenmaier (2004) categorize the members into "general participation" and "active contribution." Through surveying members of an online travel community, they find that tourists participate in an online tourist community for social and hedonic benefits. "Desire for recognition" and the reciprocal culture of online community are the two major reasons why tourists share information on the site. Nonetheless, the production of text on these sites is indeed dominated by certain active users.

Unlike travel-themed sites, SNS does not function as a community. Rather, it is a network of people who are connected to each other in various ways. The enormous growth of SNSs is said to be shaping the "landscape of social networking" these days (Westlake, 2008). SNS usage accounts for 19% of the total internet usage worldwide and that 82% of the online population are SNS users. It is also a worldwide phenomenon as its popularity is spread across the six continents. In particular, Facebook is the most influential SNS globally as it accounts for nearly three-quarters of the total time spent on SNS and can offer access to more than half of the online population (comScore, 2011).

More than e-mails and instant messaging which only provide text-based functions for communication, Social Network Sites (SNSs) allow individuals to perform many additional activities like virtual gifting, interactive online games, media-sharing, forming groups, and updating each other of one's status. Ryan (2008) suggests that Social Network Sites can indeed be a present-day campfire for

individuals to gossip, to tell stories, and to learn about hot topics in town. Interestingly, in the latest report "State of the Media: The Social Media Report" by Nielsen (2011b), it was suggested that majority of the SNS users share information online. And the most active users also tend to be more influential and active in various types of events offline.

Increasingly, SNS has become the focus of one's study. Overall, previous studies confirm that SNS is an effective platform for individuals to form and maintain social relationships of both offline and online worlds (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008; Tse, 2008). Through SNSs, individuals can stay updated and connected to their social networks regardless of their geographical locations (e.g. Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, & Espinoza, 2008). In addition, SNSs can also be used as a platform to buffer conflicts of the offline worlds (e.g., Kim & Yun, 2008). A number of studies on SNSs suggest that individuals use SNSs as a tool for identity construction, impression management, and self expression (Boyd & Heer, 2006; DiMicco & Millen, 2007; Donath & Boyd, 2004; Liu, Wang, Tan, Koh, & Ee, 2009; Manago, Graham, Greenfield, & Salimkhan, 2008; Tse, 2008; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). Information posted on SNSs can also be a source for people to make judgments about each other (Walther, Heide, Kim, Westerman, & Tong, 2008).

According to Boyd & Ellison (2008), there are four major functions of SNSs which users can enjoy. Through SNSs, users are allowed to:

- Build personal profiles

- Selectively publicize their communication with other users

- Consolidate and organize their connections

- Navigate information and profiles of other individuals with whom they are linked up to

Most importantly, their social networks become visible to the diverse others. This unique feature of SNSs provides new types of linkage among individuals which cannot be found in traditional forms of social interaction (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Indeed, the ability to build one's profile as the centre of communication and online activities is the key feature of Social Network Sites. Each profile records and presents the daily activities of the profile owner on a specific SNS. These activities are also presented as "news" to those who are in the network. Therefore, users are given a snapshot of the recent development of others who are in connection to them. They are automatically alerted to new postings on their network whether they are interested in these news or not. In that sense, access to information posted on SNS is comparably voluntary as information can be posted generically to one's network without being addressed to specific individuals (Tse, 2008).

Compared to SNS, fewer Hong Kong Chinese tourists share travel photographs through blog. Nonetheless, as mentioned before, the youngest cluster favors using both SNS and blog at the same time to disseminate their travel photographs (Lo et al., 2010). This implies that the usages of the two media can serve different purposes or provide different sharing-experiences for them. While SNS profile is like a connection hub, blog exist as a form of text-based or multi-media based online diary. However, a new type of blog like microblogging is

also gaining its popularity. All in all, Herring, Scheidt, Bonus, & Wright (2004, p. 1) define blog as "frequently modified web pages in which dated entries are listed in reverse chronological sequence." Miura & Yamashita (2007) simply describe blog as an online diary and bloggers as online diarists because of its content and format of posting. Through blogs, users can create individual entries to keep record of their daily lives, to reflect on personal experience, or to express one's opinions. These entries can be organized by date and by subjects for future retrieval.

Yet, blog is unlike personal diary as it involves a certain level of interactivity. Blog posts can be viewed by others. Bloggers can choose to open their blog to the public or merely to a selected group of individuals. The interactive nature of blog allows readers to play a role in blogger's entries by responding to and commenting on the blog posts. Yet, certain blog posts receive more attention and reactions from readers (Krishnamurthy, 2002). Response and expectation of the audience can become the motivation of bloggers to write and to post new information onto their blog. Therefore, Nardi, Schiano, & Gumbrecht (2004) argue that blog is more like an online radio broadcast than an online diary because of its interactivity and consciousness of the audience.

As of August 2009, there are more than 1 trillion blog posts identified by The Nielsen Company. Due to the popularity of blog, many celebrities, politician, and companies use blogs to reach their fans, voters, and clients. Herring et al. (2004) suggest four major types of blogging according to their overall purposes: filter, personal journal, k-log, and mixed. Filter are those which report events and happenings external to the bloggers. Personal journal are the internal emotion,

experience, and feelings of the bloggers. K-log provides knowledge of a specialized topic. Among the different types of blog, personal journal is found to be the most common type. Therefore, blogging is predominately about revealing personal experience and thoughts.

In particular to personal journal type of blog, Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz (2004) reveal five main reasons for blogging:

- To update others of recent happenings, experience, and activities of the authors
- To influence or make an impact on others
- To seek for advice or comments from others
- To treat writing as a form of self reflection
- To treat writing as a form of healing and emotional release

Similar to SNS, access to new posts in blog as users are automatically informed of new posting if they are subscribed to a certain blog (Nardi et al., 2004). However, activities on blog are less multifarious than those on SNS. Blog is predominately about posting and reading other's post. Therefore, blog can be seen as a more in-depth presentation of self whereas SNS can be seen as a less time-consuming but comprehensive presentation of self.

Interestingly, Lo et al. (2010) find that the oldest cluster favor using online photo album (OPA). This seems to suggest that age is closely related to the type of social media which tourists adopt to disseminate travel photographs. Unlike SNS

and blog, OPA is designed specifically for photo-storage and sharing. It is usually perceived as a form of digital library of visual images (Adams, Cunninghan, & Masoodian, 2007). The most well-known online photo album is Flickr. Although Flickr is not the leading site for photo-sharing, it is a key contributor of consumer-generated content as 80% of its photos are open to the public with a total of 3 billion images uploaded (Cox et al., 2008). With a photo-sharing site like Flickr, users can create a collection of digital images which can be organized into different photo albums. Users can tag their photos for further description and future retrieval of the images (Ames, 2007). Users can also set privacy control on a particular photo or album. For example, Flickr offers five levels of privacy from extremely private to completely public (Ahern, Eckles, Good, King, Naaman, & Nair, 2007). Each photo album is assigned with a specific link for further dissemination of a specific album through e-mails or other social media. Although Flickr provides functions for online social-networking, activities on Flickr are still predominately about organizing, managing, sharing, browsing and retrieving photographic images (Ahern et al., 2007; Ames, 2007). Therefore, interaction on OPA is mainly about the sharing of image and the experience which the image portrayed but not any other online activities. The lower comprehensiveness of self presentation can be the reason why OPA is less popular among the younger tourists (Lo et al., 2010).

2.9 Online Photography and Impression Management

Van House, Davis, Takhteyev, Good, Willhelm, & Finn (2007) argue that existing studies on online photography only focus on the design of photo management and photo-sharing without providing insights into the deeper layers of users' online photographic practices. By focusing only on "low-level actions (what

people do)," these studies were criticized for their inability to examine "high-level activities (why they do it).

Several studies into the meaning of blogging and photo-sharing suggest the importance of audience in online-sharing (Cohen, 2005; Nardi et al., 2004; Van House, 2007; Whitty, 2007). They find that producers are conscious of their potential audience when they select what photos to post and share on social media. Comments and reactions from the audience are what keep them going with their online production of texts. The anticipations from the audience can sometimes be a positive force or a negative baggage of obligations for the producer to post and share information online.

Strano (2008) finds that the younger generation are more consciousness about displaying selves to their peer groups when posting photos whereas the older generation are more concerned about communicating with their children. Van House (2007) finds that users tend to focus on aesthetic elements of photos if the unknown others are the target audience and are more content-oriented when shared with friends. Users also use different types of social media to differentiate spheres of acquaintance and adjust their online behaviors accordingly. Sometimes, presenting different selves to others can be a challenging task if they are connected to different spheres of acquaintance in the same social media account.

Zywica & Danowski (2008) see Facebook as an alternative platform for the younger generation to gain popularity among peer groups which they fail to obtain from the offline world. They find that photograph is one of the several determining

factors for users to obtain online popularity. Changing profile pictures is one way for them to present themselves in an attractive way as well as to avoid boredom in life.

Strano (2008) suggests that the posting and changing of profile pictures on Facebook illuminates a "display culture" of the younger generation. She finds that the older generation is less likely to change profile pictures on Facebook whilst the younger generation changes profile pictures frequently with more recent photographs to avoid boredom. Meaning of personal photography seems to transform along with this "display culture" among younger generation, as Van Dijck (2008) notes:

Showing pictures as part of conversation or reviewing pictures to confirm social bonds between friends appears more important than organizing photos in albums and looking at them – an activity they consider their parents' domain. Photos are shared less in the context of family and home and more in peer-group environments: schools, clubs, friends' houses. (p. 61)

Posting photos as a form of self presentation is not exclusive to social network sites. Bloggers and Online Photo Album (OPA) users also use photography as a form of self expression and relationship maintenance. Van House (2007) also suggests that photoblogging is about "managing other's impressions of oneself." Photograph, either artistic or fun, helps to express the "authentic" selves of the photobloggers and their personal view of the world. Unlike traditional photography

which is primarily about memory and sustaining relationships, photoblogging is more about self expression and creating new relationships online.

As for OPA users, Van House (2007) argues that most users on Flickr do not post photos to build a digital archive for future retrieval. They seldom review their photos on Flickr. They do so elsewhere instead. Their production of online image is mainly for social purposes. Van House (2007) finds that producers are highly conscious of "using Flickr to manage their image in the eyes of viewers via pictures of themselves, their lives, friends, events, and possessions, as well as those demonstrating their aesthetic or humorous sense." Photographs are shared with someone they knew, either strong tie or weak tie to create a sense of "distant closeness." However, they are also conscious of the potential exposure to the unknown others.

Photograph can help users to express self, create a sense of "distant closeness" with others, or even create new relationships. In return, their online photographic practices can become the motivation of their offline photographic practices (Cohen, 2005; Van House, 2007). In a negative way, some users feel that the sharing of photographs has become an obligation. They are tired of the practice but they "have to" keep on with it because of the audience. In a positive way, compliments and anticipation of audience can help boosting producers' offline photographic activities (Cohen, 2005).

Nonetheless, existing studies provide limited knowledge on how the micro details of social interaction contributes to the selection process of images. We are

lacking of insights on how the performers interpret the reactions of the audiences about their online-posting, and how images are filtered out from sharing due to their consciousness of audiences. Existing studies tend to focus on what is shared by the producer. Yet, it is equally important to examine what is not shared by the producer in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of online performance.

Also, limited effort has been made to provide insights of how an individual practices online photography to present different selves according to different spheres of audiences. Case studies of individuals can provide insight on their changes of behavior and can allow comparisons of the tactics they adopt. Experience-sharing often involves a presentation of self, whether it is an online or offline, oral or visual types of sharing.

With this in mind, the analysis of tourist experience-sharing should take into account of three important aspects, as Noy (2004) suggests: (1) tourist as the performer of story, (2) the audience, and (3) the sites where the stories are told. Each of these aspects can contribute to how and what kind of experience is told. More than that, it is also important to take into the consideration of how a tourist interprets the reactions of the audiences and how they act in response to the interpreted reactions, if performance is examined as a continuous learning process.

Concluding the Chapter: Towards a Research Framework

Based on the review of the literature, an initial research framework was constructed to guide data collection and analysis during the next phase of study. According to Pearce (2001), a good research framework does not imply some

definite conclusions of a phenomenon. Rather, it should serve to provide a preliminary organization of inquiry for research considerations. Such a framework was built upon several "sensitizing concepts," which were to provide reference and guidelines for field study. Unlike definitive concepts suggesting the researchers of "what to see" and "how to see," sensitizing concepts suggests the researcher of "which to look" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 164).

From reviewing literature on photography, formation of self, impression management, and online interaction, it seems that how tourists adopt photography to construct realities of self is an ongoing learning process. Such a process involves five key aspects:

- Idealization of self(s)

- Spheres of audience

- Context

- Reactions of audience

- Perceptions of audience's reaction
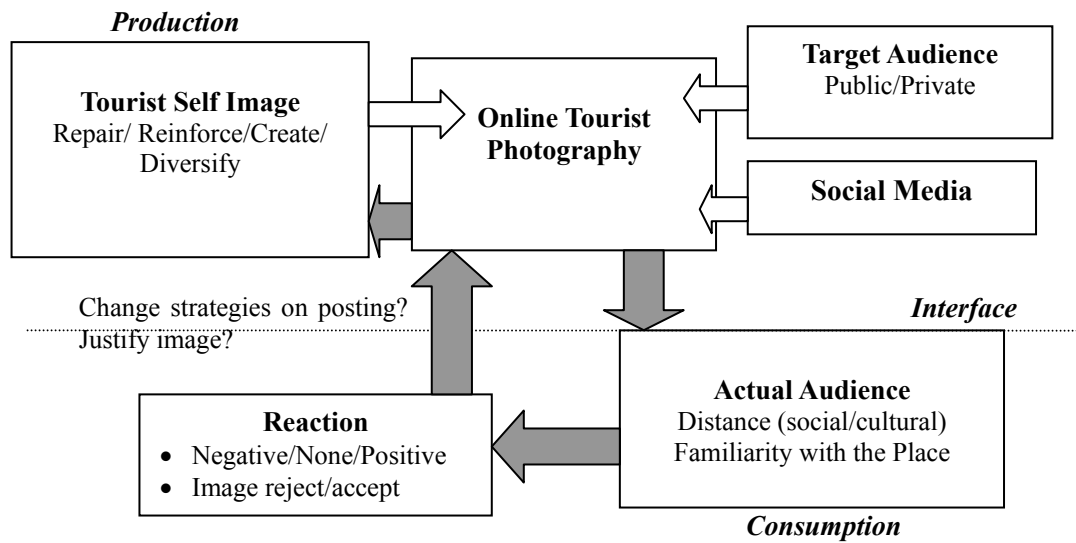
Figure 2: The Production and Consumption of Online Tourist Photography

The research framework (see figure 2) recognized online tourist photography as a front stage performance. What tourists select to post online can be seen as a result of three aspects: self image, target audience, and the nature of social media. It was also believed that tourists might adjust their posting strategies based on the reaction of the actual audience.

The production of online tourist photography can be understood through three aspects: (1) tourists – the producers of online travel photographs, (2) target audience – the targeted viewer of the shared photographs; and (3) social media on which the photographs are shared. The tourist, the producer of online images, may use photographs to reinforce the existing self or to create a different self in the context of tourism. The presented self image and the strategies used in producing self image may depend on the types of audiences being targeted at. The posting strategies may also depend on the type of social media which one adopts, as

different social media allows different forms of photo-sharing. The producers may continue, modify, or abandon the strategies, depending on their ongoing posting and sharing experience - in specifically, the reactions of their audiences. Therefore, the study of production is inseparable with the consumption of photos (Couldry, 2000; Crang, 1997). Reactions include both from the online world and the offline world, as well as those of the silent ones. Certain types of photographs may arouse more reactions from others while some may receive none (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009; White, 2010). These reactions may depend on the audience's perceptions of the photos, and of the producers. The distance of audience to the producer in social and cultural terms may have a lot to do with whether or not the photographs are being consumed and how they are being consumed.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Chapter Three

Methodology

Overview of Chapter

Chapter two provided a preliminary review of literature which contributed to the formation of a research framework to guide data collection and analysis of this study. In this chapter, I shall first discuss the particular epistemological assumptions that underpinned the methodology adopted in this study. I shall then provide an overview of the research design of this study. Sampling design including two steps of participant recruitment and selection will be discussed. A two-phased data collection and analysis will be presented in orderly details. The definition of validity in a qualitative study and the actions taken to ensure validity and research ethics will also be discussed. Lastly, limitations of study will be acknowledged.

3.1 Epistemological Assumptions

This study is, to a great extent, underpinned by social constructionism epistemologically. Reality and knowledge are not seen as an objective truth approached through controlled methods. Instead, any existing knowledge is unavoidably a product of interpretation. Hence, the purpose of this research is not to obtain reality but to open up dialogues for possible interpretations of a phenomenon.

Social constructionists are concerned with issues related to how social

norms and reality are constructed through intersubjectivity and how these objectified reality and knowledge shape subjectivity. Social interaction is seen as what influences individual behaviors, mediates the subjective experience, and shapes the social norms and structure (Benzies & Allen, 2001). Social world is deemed to exist as an aggregation of human interactions; and therefore, "social reality is nothing other than the conjoining of lines of interaction" (Layder, 1981, p. 38). Hence, social reality constantly varies along with the interactive activities of people and that the individual's evolving sense of self can also be obtained through these on-going interactions (Plummer, 2000). The objectivity of social reality is constructed through a continual negotiation and reduction of subjective meanings of action. In return, individuals draw upon this intersubjectively-constructed reality (i.e., the "natural attitude") to understand their everyday life as well as the meanings of other's actions (Schutz, 1967).

Aligned with such a perspective towards the nature of reality and knowledge, social constructionists constantly challenge the taken-for-granted norms of the researched world and the researchers' world. Empirical data is not seen as an objective fact but an interpretation by the researcher who is also a subjective being. Theories are not to capture the objective reality of the world. Rather, the values of theory lie in its ability to question the "truth," to allow alternative ways of thinking and approaching facts, and to anticipate events ahead of us (Smart, 1996).

This study recognizes the fact that the process of reality construction is not always readily observable from our everyday life experience. Although individuals

can reject and recreate norms, norms are often unquestionably learned and adopted by the individuals to maintain the orderliness and comprehensibility of their everyday life (Maynard & Clayman, 1991). The value of research thus lies in challenging existing norms and assumptions which are seen as self-evident (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 1999) so as to awake the consciousness of the society. The most trivial aspects of society are indeed the most salient for research as they can reflect how social reality is constructed and is adopted in our everyday life. It is by exhibiting the complexity and patterns of these mundane details of interaction that more significant and fundamental societal issues can be illuminated (Linstead, 2006; Lynch & Peyrot, 1992). It is by exploring the "how" underneath that we can come closer to a more reliable understanding of the "why" (Garfinkel, 1967).

Nonetheless, we can never get to understand a phenomenon without any prior assumptions. Through theories, we are able to illuminate the hidden patterns and values which give rise to a phenomenon. Through theories, we are able to interpret a phenomenon with different lenses. Through theories, we make decisions on how research should be conducted. Therefore, theories are an integral part of research. The key is to reflect on the theories that underpinned our way of thinking, that guide our research, and how they are developed from empirical data, so as to better understand how we arrive at our interpretation of a phenomenon (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 1999).

3.2 Research Design

Stemming from the aforementioned assumptions of objectivity and knowledge, a reflexive, ethnographic approach is adopted in this exploratory study.

In recent years, there seems to be no clear boundary between an ethnographic approach and a qualitative approach. The historical development of ethnographic research and qualitative research makes the two almost indistinguishable. Ethnography was usually seen as a form of research to produce rich and thick description of a particular culture (Gold, 1997). Due to the rapid change of the researched world and the researcher's world, ethnographic approaches are now adopted to explain urban phenomenon as well as to build theories upon empirical findings and existing concepts (Hine, 2000). Ethnographic approach is also adopted to examine the online world, which is still an ongoing debate among researchers whether it can be considered as a "natural setting." Some choose to term their approach as "virtual ethnography" or "nethnography" to distinguish it from traditional ethnography. At the same time, qualitative researchers started to borrow from ethnographers their fieldwork techniques to conduct data collection and analysis. To ensure validity, the voice of the participants and thick description of the phenomenon under study similar to an ethnographic report is encouraged. Therefore, the research process and methods adopted by ethnographers and qualitative researchers are now very similar.

Nonetheless, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) argue that there are still distinctive characteristics of what ethnographers normally do to produce knowledge. These distinctive characteristics are the reason why the study approach is labeled as "ethnographic" instead of "qualitative." First, ethnographers conduct their research in a "natural setting." In other words, the ethnographers do not conduct experiments or fully structure the interviews. They record what people say and do through participant observations and informal conversations. Ideally, the

participants are not always conscious of being researched. Second, ethnographers use a wide range of methods to collect and analyze data. They keep their options open and change their strategic plans accordingly. Research design and even research questions themselves are not fixed but are always ready to be modified during fieldwork. It is due to the fact that most ethnographic studies are exploratory in nature. Third, ethnographers usually work on a small number of cases for in-depth analysis. They also restrict their samples to a group of people who are within the same cultural group or at least share similar practices. Quantitative methods can be used as one of the data sources to inform the study but not as the major method.

Instead of labeling this study as "ethnography," the term "ethnographic approach" is more appropriate for the research design of this study. Quite often, ethnography provides rich, in-depth knowledge of a particular cultural group (Hine, 2000). This study does not aim to provide thick description of a culture. Rather, it adopts the research process and the particular attitude of an ethnographic research. Therefore, a distinction is made in here to avoid confusions. In many ways, this research is qualitative in nature. It relies on qualitative methods and validity procedures to produce knowledge in a rigorous manner. Nonetheless, the term "ethnographic" can highlight the specific characteristics of the research design of this study. This study is largely naturalistic. It records the practices of the participants as well as their accounts of their practices. It also adopts a variety of sources to provide in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon under study. The researcher is a participant of the phenomenon (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). It leaves both research questions and methods open for modifications during the

whole research process. It also focuses on examining a few cases within a particular cultural group to explore various dimensions related to the performative nature of online tourist photography (Gold, 1997; Hine, 2000). Despite these characteristics, this study resembles many other qualitative studies.

To understand the research design of this study, it is important to note that the main difference between a quantitative and qualitative study is not the methods being adopted but their particular way of thinking towards research. Firstly, qualitative researchers adopt an inductive approach to explain, to explore, or to describe a phenomenon. Research questions and conceptual frameworks are set up to guide but not to restrict data collection and analysis. Data are not to test or confirm researcher's assumptions but to inform and help modifying the conceptual framework of a study. Knowledge-inquiry is thus seen as a circular process of continuous refinement of research questions and conceptual frameworks until a report is written up (Maxwell, 2005). Writing is seen as a critical part of the analysis process but not merely as a mechanical summary of findings. Secondly, findings of a qualitative study are not seen as a result of an objective, accurate interpretation of the phenomenon under study but a subjective yet reflexive process of knowledge-inquiry. Qualitative researchers acknowledge the subjectivity of research. The key is not to "avoid" or to "reduce" subjectivity but to be conscious of it and reflect on it during the research process. The voice of the researcher is being recognized and valued in a qualitative report (Clifford, 1983). Thirdly, validity of a qualitative study is not defined by the dependability and the generalizability of findings. Instead, the value of a qualitative study lies in the new knowledge it can bring through an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon (Bansal & Corley, 2011).

Unlike quantitative research, there is no rigid set of criteria to confirm the validity of findings. Rather, the meaning of "validity" is always open for redefinition. Depending on the specific nature of each study, qualitative researchers can work to enhance validity in various ways (Cho & Trent, 2006).

This study has also adopted data collection and analysis techniques from case study and grounded-theory approach. Its overall research process also resembles the two approaches. First, an inductive approach dominated data collection and analysis at the beginning of the study. An inductive reasoning prioritizes empirical data as the foundation of theory-building. Data collection was less theory-driven to allow flexibility for the development of new ideas. I, as a researcher, was open to any new information that emerged from the analysis of empirical findings. Hence, careful case selection was vital, especially in the initial stage. Second, tourists were analyzed as individual cases. Each case was seen as a holistic unit. Within-case analysis was conducted to recognize the dynamicity of each case. Cross-case analysis was also conducted to identify common patterns and concepts. Third, theories and existing concepts were drawn upon at a later stage when concepts and common patterns emerged. Enfolding literature was found helpful in forming an integrative framework that went beyond descriptive knowledge of cases at the final stage of the study. The individuals are also presented as cases in this report so that the readers can be introduced to the specific characteristics of each case.

It should be noted that most case study and grounded theory work are built upon the premise that objectivity can be approximately approached through

adopting relevant validity and reliability procedures in a qualitative manner (Perry, 1998; Yin, 2003). Researchers are expected to demonstrate how objectivity is retained when the two approaches are adopted. As mentioned before, the research design of the study is based on the notion that all knowledge is a product of interpretation. Subjectivity cannot be avoided and is not to be avoided. Hence, grounded theory and case study are not the most appropriate methodology to guide data collection and analysis in this study even though a mixture of techniques from the two approaches was found very helpful in the overall research design.

A reflexive ethnographic approach is indeed what holds all the stages and methods together in this study. In particular, the term "reflexivity" can truly reflect the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the research design. With a reflexive approach, no data is considered as raw or unmediated (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). It recognizes the fact that no researcher is free of assumptions prior to entering the field. It also rejects the view of the researcher as the channel through which reality can be revealed (Pink, 2001). Rather, good research should recognize the possibilities of other ways of interpretation and the assumptions of the researchers that contribute to the findings (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). Most importantly, the final framework resulting from this study is not seen as a definite answer to the research questions as all knowledge is unavoidably a subjective interpretation. Rather, it is seen as a more refined proposition developed from a triangulation of various sources of data and theories through inductive and abductive reasoning (Frankfurt, 1958).

Details of sampling design as well as the two phases of data collection and analysis will be presented in the following sections.

3.3 Sampling Design

3.31 Purposive and Snowball Sampling

Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were the techniques adopted to select and approach cases. Purposive sampling can also be named as criterion based sampling as participants are selected based on the special backgrounds or qualities they have or they do not have (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003). With purposive sampling, one approaches and selects informants based on the information required in order to answer the research question. Usually, criteria are to be set up to purposively identify cases which help to shed light on the phenomenon under study (Tongco, 2007).

Unlike purposive sampling, snowball sampling relies on the referrals by existing informants or a few access points. The sampling size can grow as time goes by. Indeed, snowball sampling is one of the most common sampling techniques in an ethnographic study, particularly in the beginning of a field study. It is a usual practice to get a few access points first and be introduced to other informants through them. The two techniques do not take probability into consideration. Rather, they rely on theoretical saturation to determine the sampling size of a study (Maxwell, 2005).

According to Maxwell (2005), purposive sampling can be done in different ways to achieve possible goals. One is to select cases which can demonstrate the typicality of the phenomenon. Another one is to select cases which can reveal variations within the phenomenon. The analysis of marginal cases can also help to

shed light on the norm. Last but not least, one can set up conditions for case selection in order to illuminate the reasons for variations among different individuals or settings.

Based on literature review, it is believed that an analysis of tourist photographic practice in terms of cases can provide in-depth information about how micro level of social interaction as well as its context shape tourist's image selection process. Similar to an ethnographic study, case study starts fieldwork with an open-ended question (Eisenhardt, 1989). Without a theory to drive data collection and analysis at the beginning, Eisenhardt (1989) suggests that defining sample is a vital step in contributing to the feasibility and rigor of a case study. Nonetheless, in a more globalized and mobilized world, it is now less easy to set boundaries for fieldwork. Therefore, one challenge about researching online interaction in an ethnographic manner is: How should one justify where and who to start with?

Glaser and Strauss (1967; from Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: p. 33) suggest two sampling strategies: first to minimize "the differences between cases to highlight basic properties of a particular category; and then subsequently maximizing the differences between cases in order to increase the density of the properties relating to core categories, to integrate categories and to delimit the scope of the theory."

The findings of Lo et al.'s (2010) study were able to help narrowing study scope for sampling. Age and type of social media were deemed to be the key

attributes in defining the criteria of participant recruitment. Samples were restricted to the Cantonese-speaking population in Hong Kong. In particular, the younger generation cluster was found to be interesting. First they were the majority of the social media users who posted and shared travel photographs with others. Second, a good number of them also used both SNS and blog to disseminate their travel photographs. Third, their self image is less stable when compared to that of the older generation (Sirgy & Su, 2000), and in particular, social media is used as a tool for them to explore and to confirm their self images.

In light of this, four criteria were set forth for participant selection:

(1) a Cantonese-speaker who is a local resident in Hong Kong

(2) a social media user who posts and shares travel photographs with others on either blog and/or SNS

(3) is aged from 18 – 35

(4) who has traveled to destinations outside Guangdong province of China within the past two years

Instead of conducting a cross-population study, I have decided to only focus on the Hong Kong population in this study. The major reason why it was important to focus on a single population is that the interpretation of visual image indeed varies largely from culture to culture. Ideology, which is shared within cultural groups, shapes how images are read and understood (Alber & James, 1988). Hence, it makes a lot more sense to examine and compare performances within a single population in this exploratory study which aims to examine the micro details of social interaction that contributes to self image formation. One should also take

note of the fact that there are also subcultural groups within a population. Therefore, it is very important to identify the subcultural groups which are highly involved in this newly-emerged phenomenon.

To serve these purposes, we have conducted a population study in Hong Kong to understand who shares travel photographs online and where they share travel photographs online (please refer details to Chapter 4).

Hence, two major steps were taken in case selection in order to facilitate the identification of common patterns, variations among cases, and the reasons of variations. First, homogenous samples of individuals belonging to the same subculture were chosen to demonstrate the typicality of the phenomenon (Ritchie et al., 2003). Four criteria were set forth in phase one. Second, three conditions were set up so that a comparison of individuals and settings was possible. Initially, three conditions of production were set forth for case selection. The development of these conditions was based on the research framework modified in phase one. These conditions could help achieving the second and the fourth goals. These conditions were:

Condition 1:   Users posting travel photos for public audience on Facebook and/or Blog

Condition 2:   Users posting travel photos for private audience on Facebook and/or Blog

Condition 3:   Multi-media user using different type of media to tailor different level of publicness – both public and private audience

Conditions were also set up for the consumption part. Nonetheless, it was found in phase two that the perspectives from the producers were able to tell a lot more about their photographic practices and their formation of self. Therefore, the conditions set up for the consumption part are not presented in this report since the perspectives of the actual audiences were less relevant and important in this study.

3.32 Step one: Building a Pool of Candidate

First step of participant selection was to build a pool of candidates for selection. For this reason, three social media sites were chosen to reach the potential participants:

- Xanga
- Yahoo! Blog
- Facebook

Xanga and Facebook were chosen for their enormous popularity among Hong Kong Chinese users. Hitwise (2008) reports Facebook and Xanga alone have already comprised more than 70% of social media users in Hong Kong. Yahoo! Blog is less popular when compared to Facebook and Xanga in terms of production. Yet, public blog posts on Yahoo! Blog are searchable by Yahoo! general engine if the producers allow public view of their posts. According to Alexia.com, Yahoo! is ranked as the most popular internet site among Hong Kong locals, followed by Facebook. Therefore, the level of publicity of Yahoo! Blog posts can be extremely high among Hong Kong locals. From the personal experience of the researcher,

public Yahoo! Blog posts can easily show up during one's search on travel information. Through Yahoo! Blog posts, I could easily identify blog posts by Hong Kong Chinese on various travel topics when searching on Hong Kong Yahoo! search engine.

After three sites were identified for reaching potential participants, different invitation methods are proposed to reach different types of producers:

To reach users specified in Condition 1

- Search on Yahoo! Blog (under the category travel by searching keywords: backpacking, independent travel, travel, travel photo in Traditional Chinese)

- Search on Xanga (under the category travel by searching keywords: backpacking, independent travel, travel, travel photo in Traditional Chinese)

- Send "friend request" to those who actively participate in Facebook public groups which are particularly for Hong Kong locals.

To reach users specified in Condition 2

- Use snowball technique by asking the researcher's acquaintance to forward invitation via Facebook, Yahoo! Blog, Xanga, and personal e-mail

To reach users specified in Condition 3

- Search on Yahoo! Blog (under the category travel by searching keywords: backpacking, independent travel in Traditional Chinese)

- Search on Xanga (under the category travel by searching keywords:

backpacking, independent travel in Traditional Chinese)

- Send "friend request" to those who actively participate in Facebook public groups which are particularly for Hong Kong locals.

The methods used for condition 3 were similar to methods used for condition 1. However, users were sent an invitation with several screening questions which can help distinguishing users of condition 3 from users of condition 1. These screening questions will be explained in details. For more information on the invitation letter, please refer details to Appendix I.

Other than the above-mentioned methods, fieldwork on Facebook began in since Feb, 2009 to gain access to a number of Facebook profiles. Without a Facebook account, one is not able to view any Facebook profiles even if they are setup as public. Therefore, an account and a profile had been setup on Facebook for the purpose of this research. The profile included a personal photo of the researcher as the profile picture as well as a public description of the researcher. To encourage participation and facilitate recruitment of participants, a group named "旅遊相片研究計劃 Travel Photography Project" had been set-up on Facebook. Currently, more than 150 SNS users who were unknown to the researcher have accepted "friend request." Their profiles were, therefore, accessible for online observation. An announcement had also been posted via Twitter.com so that a wider group of potential participants could be reached. However, recruitment on Facebook.com seemed to be more effective.

3.33 Step Two: Selecting Cases Purposively

Screening questions were sent along with an invitation letter (see Appendix I) to the participants via private inbox of the social media they used. These questions included:

- Whether the candidate use both SNS and/or blog to post and share travel photos with others
- With whom the candidate shares travel photos on SNS and/or blog according to three levels of closeness
- Places where they have traveled to during the previous two years
- The range of their ages

If candidates were interested in participating in this study, they were encouraged to answer the screening questions and send them back to me. Participants were first selected according to the four criteria set forth. Ideally, participants were to be selected according to the three conditions set forth and that the screening questions could provide direction on the selection of cases.

As the study went on, it was found that most participants do not allow public access to their travel albums on Facebook (except one). Hence, the degree of publicness was modified into close (i.e., "close friends only") and far (i.e., "everyone I know") to indicate the general degree of closeness for condition 1 and 2 instead. Variations among the cases on their openness of photo-sharing will be reported in the findings.

It was also found that quite many were only interested in answering the screening questions but were not interested in being interviewed. Hence, I did not have a variety of choice for me to select from based on the conditions set forth.

After a few interviews, it was found that the cases of condition 1 and 2 were more complicated then I had expected. One could befriend a few strangers although "friends" on Facebook were thought to be acquaintances. One could claim to be connected to close friends only but was indeed connected to those whom one barely has communicated with for years. Some also restricted a few "friends" from viewing certain travel photographs. Hence, it seems that the distinction between condition 1 and 2 was not possible through screening questions.

Also, two participants indeed fell into condition 3 even though they were originally thought to be in condition 1 or 2 through screening questions. It was only after the interviews I could find out their social media usage and closeness to their audiences. Having said so, the cases of condition 3 indeed helped illuminating the key aspect of performance – "segregation of the audiences."

In sum, a total of 13 cases were recruited and examined. Condition 1 and 2 were represented by 7 cases whereas condition 3 was represented by 6 cases.

Snowball technique was more effective in recruiting participants than online recruitment. There were very few successful cases through recruiting complete strangers on Facebook and on Blog. I had to rely mostly on snowball sampling. However, it was found that there were advantages derived from using snowball sampling in this study. Snowball sampling was found particularly helpful

in identifying and approaching cases which reveal variations within the phenomenon. Participants of my study helped informing me and introducing me to interesting cases, for example, a user who posts a large amount of travel photographs on Facebook, a user who travels to take photographs, as well as a user whose travel albums have drawn a lot of attention from the audiences. It also allowed me to compare data of those who traveled together. I was able to find out different sides of a story and different selection of images of a same trip. All in all, I was able to recruit participants from closest friend of mine to complete stranger through online recruitment and snowball sampling.

The recruitment of participants ended when theoretical saturation has been reached. In total, thirteen cases were recruited. Although variations existed among the thirteen cases in terms of their accounts of their photographic-sharing practices and image selection, all cases confirmed the conceptual framework of online photo sharing as front and back stage performance, which will be introduced in chapter five.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

This part aims to demonstrate the research process that helps in developing the conceptual framework. As mentioned in Chapter One, data collection and analysis were developed into two phases. The following sections provide details about the steps taken in each phase (also see figure 3). The objectives, methods, and outcomes of each phase will be presented in each section.

Phase One (3 stages)

Stage One: Ethnographic Visual Analysis

Step 1 Semi-Structured Interview	Step 2 Content Analysis of Interview	Step 3 Semiotic Analysis of Visual Data	Step 4 Within Case Analysis

Stage Two: Dramaturgical Analysis

Stage Three: Cross-Case Analysis (Categorization)

Phase Two

Enfolding Literature
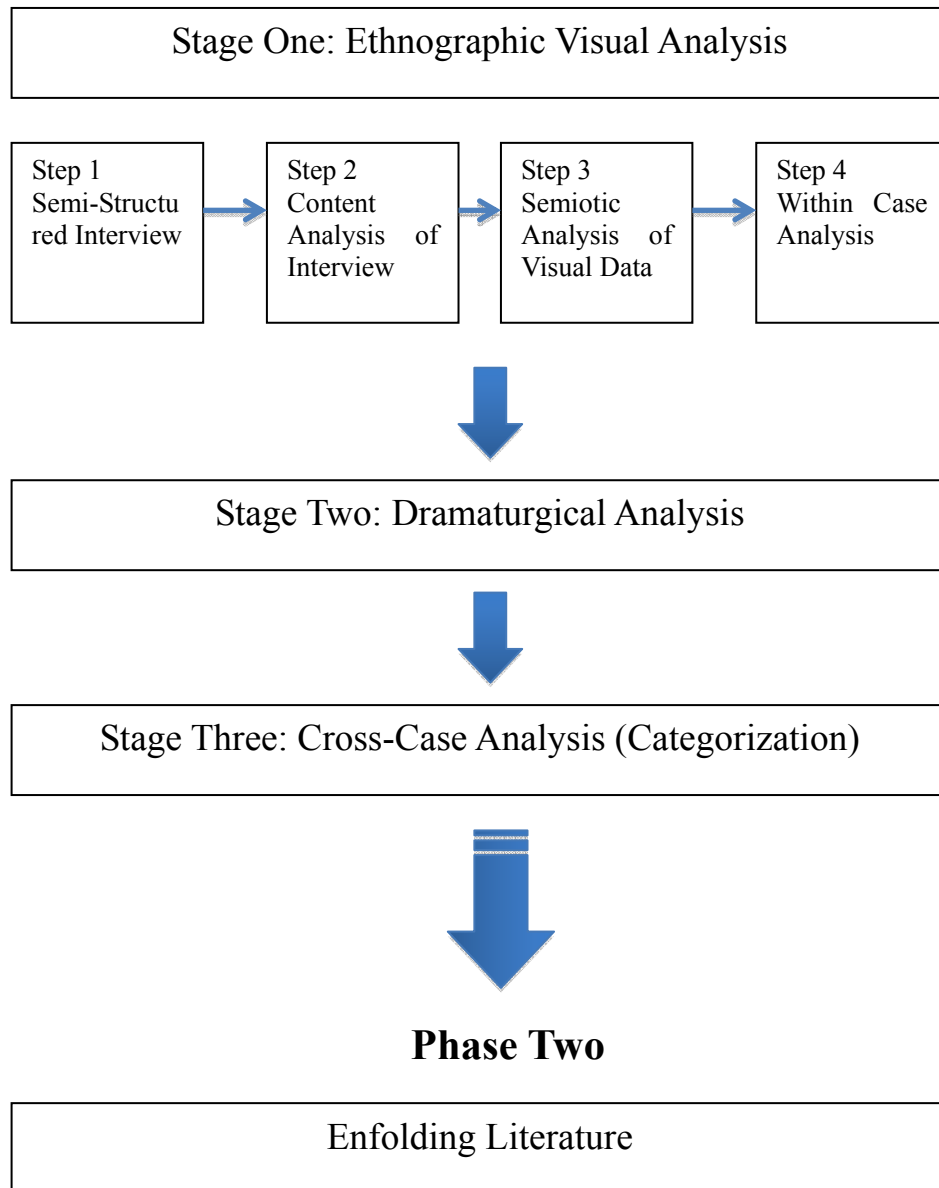
Figure 3: The Two Phases of Data Collection and Analysis

3.41 Phase One

Objectives of Phase One

Several objectives were set forth for phase one:

(1) To examine the role of self-image, target audience, and social media in tourist image selection process

(2) To examine the consumption and the reception consequences of online tourist photography

(3) To examine the impact of audience's reaction in producers' sharing strategies

Data Collection and Analysis of Phase One

Overview: "Three Approaches of Data in Phase One"

Phase one is designed with three approaches of data: case study analysis, ethnographic visual analysis, and dramaturgical analysis. These approaches of data shape the process and the nature of data collection and analysis in phase two. Ethnographic visual analysis was the main method of data collection and analysis. It helps linking the photographic images with social experience and relationship. Case study analysis provides frameworks and directions on the analysis of qualitative data. Each individual was analyzed as one holistic case. Once within-case analysis was conducted, each case was then compared to other cases for cross-case analysis. Dramaturgical analysis provided a lens for me to interpret the cases and the interviews. Data resulting from the participants' photographic practices and the interviews was examined as a product of social performance.

In general, data collection and analysis was composed of three stages. During the first stage, ethnographic visual analysis was conducted to relate and compare visual images with participants' accounts of their images as well as their practices. Four steps were taken to achieve this objective. First, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the participants. Second, content analysis of the interview data was then conducted to develop primary codes to facilitate

comparison with the visual data. Third, semiotic analysis of online visual images was conducted. Fourth, within-case analysis was conducted to study each individual's data holistically. During the second stage, dramaturgical analysis was conducted to highlight the performative nature of the data. After that, cross-case comparison was conducted to categorize cases into types during the final stage.

Stage One: Ethnographic visual analysis

Ethnographic visual analysis was adopted as the main method of data collection and analysis in phase one. Four steps were taken in this stage to obtain both interview and visual data for a holistic analysis of each case.

Ethnographic visual analysis is particularly helpful in revealing how social relationships and subjectivity contribute to the meaning and the production of images (Pink, 2001). Unlike other textual analysis, ethnographic visual analysis acknowledges the voice of the participants in analyzing photographic images. It focuses more on the relationship between interview data and the visual data (Holm, 2008; Pink, 2005). One advantage about talking to participants about their photographs is that the researchers can also learn about images which they delete or not share with others and the reasons why they do so (Pink, 2001). Therefore, semi-structured interviews were conducted in addition to content and semiotic analysis of online photographs. Each of the participants was examined as an individual case with data collected from ethnographic visual analysis and online observation of participants' Facebook activities. How participants explain their online photographic practices was compared with what they actually do and post online. Narrated travel experience was also compared with the shared visual images.

Although the data collection and analysis procedures are presented step-by-step in here, I had to always go back and forth among different stages and steps.

Step One: Semi-structured interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain participants' accounts of their images, their photographic practices, their travel experience, and their sharing experience. A semi-structured interview allows room for the researcher to explore viewpoints of participants on complex and personal issues by starting with a set of key questions but also being able to probe further on key points (Barriball & White, 1994).

The objectives set forth for the semi-structured interview were:

- to examine how the producer shares his/her travel experience with others through online travel photos

- to examine whether and why the producer shares certain or different types of travel photos on SNS and blog

- to examine the impact of audiences on the photographic practices and narrative of experience of producers

- to compare the self image of producer projected through travel photos and the self image of his/her everyday life

- to examine the impact of audience's response on producer's self image and narrative strategies in the future

Prior to each interview, the participant's online photographs, comments from the audience, and background information about the individual obtained from

their blogs or SNS profiles were first familiarized. The participants were then invited to the PolyU campus for a face-to-face interview. A laptop computer was set up during the interview to display the online travel photographs posted by the interviewees. The use of photographs in an interview, as Holm (2008) suggests, was able to help revealing interviewees' "hidden views and values." The interviewees were encouraged to talk about their travel experience and recall their memories about past events while viewing their online travel photographs. Each interview was audio-recorded and lasted about 80 – 160 minutes. Some interviewees were approached for follow-up interviews. Most of the interviews are conducted according to the guiding questions as follows.

In general, the agenda of each interview started with two ice-breaking questions:

- "Can you briefly introduce yourself to me?"

- "Can you share with me your most unforgettable travel experience?"

- "Can you tell me the type of travel you prefer?"

The participants were asked to introduce themselves to allow a comparison of their descriptions of self with their online photographs at a later stage of the analysis. Nonetheless, it was found that this question could create an intimidating atmosphere. They did not know how to introduce themselves and often asked me what to tell instead. Hence, this question was dropped out. The second and third questions were found to be more effective as an ice-breaker. Most participants tended to look more relaxed after sharing their most unforgettable travel experiences.

Once the interviewees started to feel comfortable to share their thoughts with me, questions which allowed a comparison between their narrated experiences with their visual images shared online were asked. Without looking at any of their online photos, the participants were asked to share their travel trips within the past two years. Once they were exhausted with stories, they were asked to take a look at their own travel photographs on Facebook and to talk about their photos. They were also asked to select their favorite photos and to explain the reasons why they liked them the most.

Usually, the atmosphere of the interview was at its best once they started talking about their online photographs. Such an atmosphere allowed me to ask a more straightforward question: "Why do you share your travel photographs with others?"

Whenever the interviewees answered that they wanted to share travel information or their travel experience with others, "why" as a probing question was usually asked again to follow up on their responses. This also applied to other answers. Their body languages were paid close attention to and were considered as important data for analysis. At the same time, I acted with a cheerful and curious tone, as if I was only interested to learn about their thoughts but not to make them feel uneasy about their sharing. The participants were also told to feel free to take their time to think when they laughed about themselves for not being able to provide further answers. "Why" as a probing question usually ended after the second attempt so that the participants would not feel too uneasy. Sometimes, this

question came a lot later in the interview, depending on the ambiance of the conversation as well as the reactions of the participants.

The participants were also asked to provide details about their image selection. For example, how they selected what to photograph, when they took photograph, who was responsible for photographing if there were travel companions, as well as the time they spent on photographing and reviewing their photographic images during their trips. Then they were asked about when to share photographs, what to share, and how to share online. If they adopted different media or accounts for posting, then more questions were asked to understand the different posting strategies and experience on the different media or accounts. Specifically, they were also asked whether they selected out certain photographs from posting.

The participants were usually asked about the comments they received from others on their shared images after they shared with me their image selection process. Looking into the comments with them helped to open up the dialogues and to ask them who the commentators were. Depending on the nature of the comments, they were also asked whether the comments changed the ways they shared photographs or perceived their travel trips. This way, I could tell whether they remembered the comments or were conscious of the comments from their immediate reactions. Offline reactions that could not be observed were also asked. The participants were then asked whether the audiences had any impact on their photographic practices. The interview usually ended with the last question about their non-travel photographic practices.

Although guiding questions were set up (see Appendix III), the interviewees were still encouraged to lead the conversation especially if they were proactive in communication. I found that some of the interviewees relied heavily on me to ask them questions at the beginning but are usually opened up to talk freely whenever they were asked about their travel experience or photographic practices. I took note of the impression that each performer gave me during the interview to triangulate with other types of data. For example, some of the aspects which I took note of were:

(1) What were their facial expressions when they answered the "why sharing" question?

(2) Were there any signs of embarrassment when they answered some of the questions?

(3) Were there any pauses or thinking eyes when they answered some of the questions?

(4) Did they look nervous or confident during the interviews?

(5) Did they look excited when talking about others' photographs?

(6) At what point did they look relax or intense during the interviews?

These aspects were taken note of immediately after each of the interview.

Step Two: Content Analysis of Interview Data

In the initial stage of analysis of interview data, content analysis was conducted to generate primary codes to facilitate in-case and cross-case comparison

and as well as information retrieval. Content analysis is the most common textual analysis as it can be applied to both quantitative and qualitative studies. According to Altheide (1987), qualitative content analysis is substantially different from quantitative content analysis in terms of data collection, analysis and interpretation. Quantitative content analysis starts with a preconceived set of categories to verify and test hypothesis. Qualitative content analysis aims to verify as well as to discover theoretical relationships and hidden patterns of social practices. Therefore, the researcher usually starts with several categories for content analysis whereas new categories will emerge along with further analysis whenever appropriate. With qualitative content analysis, the researcher is fully involved in the process of data collection and analysis. In this study, qualitative content analysis was conducted, as the hidden patterns of social practices were what it aimed to discover.

Although researchers are required to leave their minds open to information, which is deemed to be important to the interviewees, the researchers are also required to bear in mind of their research question when analyzing qualitative data. In respect of this, there were several aspects that I aimed to focus on when coding the interview data. These aspects were developed mostly from the sensitizing concepts of the research framework and partly from intensive discussions with other researchers at various research seminars:

- The type of travel the participant has taken

- The participant's perception of traveling

- The type of travel experience the participant desires

- The nature of travel experience the participant shared online

- The participant's account of the why of online posting

- The participant's account of their selection of image (on-site and post-trip)

- The participant's perception towards photography

- The participant's perception and usage of social media

- The why of posting on different types of social media if any

- The how of posting on different types of social media if any

- The participant's perceptions of their own photos and posting

- The participant's perception of other's photos and posting

- The participant's perception of online and offline reactions towards their travel photos

- The participant's perception of other's impact on their behavior

- Social relationship with target audience and the actual audience

- Reaction and perception towards audience's response

- Changes of behaviors (i.e., photography, sharing of photographs, usage of social media, traveling, etc.)

Instead of doing a line-by-line coding, the interviewee's accounts of the above-mentioned aspects were taken note of. Other aspects which were deemed to be important, such as their perceptions of self, their perceptions towards others tourists or practices, their perceptions towards their travel companions, their reactions towards viewing their own travel photographs, etc. were also taken into consideration. During this stage, primary codes in relation to the abovementioned aspects emerged.

In general, the post-interview analysis involved three major steps. First, while viewing travel photographs shared by the participants, the audio-recorded

interviews were listened to several times as a way to familiarize with the cases. Analytical thoughts were taken note of immediately. Second, the whole interview was subdivided into small audio clips for coding. By doing so, relevant sections of the interview could be easily retrieved. Third, primary codes among the interviews were compared to look for similarities and differences in which initial themes and ideas could emerge.

Step Three: Textual analysis of Online Photos

Textual analysis indeed began before the interview. As mentioned before, the participants' online images were viewed before the interview and during the analysis of interview data. Once primary codes were developed from the analysis of interview data, further textual analysis of the participants' online photos was conducted. In particular, semiotic analysis was adopted to obtain deeper understanding of the shared photographs.

All in all, the objectives of semiotic analysis of travel photos are:

- To examine the symbolic image of producer projected through online travel photo
- To examine the experience, activities, and places of a travel trip which the producer emphasizes through online travel photos

Textual analysis is a methodology to study text. A text can be a picture, a film, a drama, an artwork, a necklace, or even a party. Basically, a text is something which allows us to read and "make meaning from" (McKee, 2003, p. 74). A text "is both produced by and reproduces cultural attitudes"(Thwaites, Davis, & Mules,

1994, p. 72). As different cultural groups and subcultural groups understand reality in various ways, the same text can indeed deliver different messages to different cultural groups (McKee, 2003, p. 74). It is important to recognize and understand such differences to avoid miscommunication. Through textual analysis, researchers can better understand how a certain cultural group makes sense of the world. More specifically, how they "make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live" (McKee, 2003, p. 74). Hence, textual analysis provides opportunities for researchers "to uncover the attitudes and beliefs that motivate social actions" and to predict the impacts generated by them (Thwaites et al., 1994, p. 72).

One challenge about textual analysis is that the producer can read the same image differently from the audience. Also, images can be interpreted differently from culture to culture. It is the reason why Alber and James (1988) stress upon the importance of the researcher to share the same ideology with the producer or the viewer while analyzing the images. Hence, researcher needs to be familiar with or be part of the community in order to fully understand what lies beneath (Stokes, 2003, pp. 54–72).

Among the various methods of textual analysis, semiotics is comparably subjective but effective if the purpose of a study is to analyze the meaning of a text (Stokes, 2003, pp. 54–72). Semiotics "is about how the producer of an image makes it mean something and how we, as readers, get meaning out" (Stokes, 2003, pp. 54–72). Unlike content analysis, a text is analyzed as a whole with semiotic analysis (Alber & James, 1988). Semiotic analysis focuses on the relationship of

signifier and the signified. Signifier is a visual component of an image. The signified is the intentional message or possible meaning that the signifier represents (Thwaites et al., 1994). The subject in an image should be analyzed in relation to other possible signs. Whenever written text is available, it should be taken into consideration and be analyzed as what encodes meaning onto the image. Last but not least, by comparing the image with other contrasting or similar images can help revealing the underlying pattern of the image being analyzed (Alber & James, 1988).

Instead of analyzing every photograph the participants posted online, each travel album or travel trip as a whole was examined as a whole. The reason why a whole album or a trip was examined as a text was that when the producers posted travel photographs online, they did not think of an individual image for posting but an overall impression of their experience in a visual sense. They view the album as a whole. In that sense, a researcher could be overwhelmed by the amount of signifiers that existed in the shared images while overlooking the big picture. Hence, the focuses of framing in each album or in each trip were strategically analyzed as key signifiers. The following aspects were also looked into in order to seek for potential signs from each album or shared trip whenever possible:

- Color tone of the photographs
- Self inclusion
- The presentation of self, travel companions, and locals
- The presentation of objects, sites, and sceneries
- Captions

- Title of albums

- Number of photos in an albums

- Number of albums for a single trip

- Ratio of travel albums to non-travel albums

- Organization of photographs

- Photo-editing

- Change of posting style

It should be noted that number of photos and number of albums in here are not taken as the frequency of content but a sign to indicate a message. I also compared photos of different trips and performers to reveal the uniqueness or commonality of images.

Step Four: Within-Case Analysis

The last step of ethnographic visual analysis was to examine each case holistically. The objectives of within-case analysis were:

- To relate the identified signs from semiotic analysis with the producers' accounts of self during the interview as a triangulation of data

- To compare the symbolic travel experience portrayed by photographs with the experience portrayed by the producer's oral account

- To compare the travel images with non-travel text shared by the producer

- To examine the online reactions the producers received from their audiences and the impact of these reactions had on the producers' perceptions towards their travel photographs

Drawing upon Collier's (2001) framework of ethnographic visual analysis, interview data and visual data were related and compared through a five-step procedure:

First, the profiles of the participants were observed in order to obtain an overview of the shared photographs, including both travel and non-travel photographs while replaying the interview tapes. Intuitive feelings of the viewing experience and the style of photographs were noted down immediately.

Second, the shared travel photographs and the travel experience portrayed by the participants during the interview were compared. The denotative and connotative signs were analyzed along with the primary codes and concepts developed from the interview transcripts as well as the cultural beliefs and attitudes of Hong Kong Chinese. In particular, the decomposed signs of photographs and primary codes of interview transcripts were compared in terms of two aspects:

- self image projected from photographs and self image portrayed by producers

- experience (re)presented by photographs and experience by producer's oral accounts

Third, the travel photographs were compared with non-travel photographs to identify similarities and differences between the two types of photos. The whole profiles of the participants were also examined. The impressions given off by the participants in different contexts were also triangulated: self presented in a

face-to-face interview, self presented through travel photographs, self presented through written texts, self presented through other types of photographs, self presented in different travel trips, and self presented with or without a romantic partner. If travel photographs were shared on different profiles or different social media, the images were also compared. Different self or the self which one highlight of the different accounts or media were taken note of. The participants' account of their experience of the different social media was also related to their sharing.

Fourth, how participants react to a successful or unsuccessful performance was also taken note of, for example, why was the performance successful or unsuccessful from their perspectives and the consequences of the success or failure of their performance.

Finally, the overall impression about the shared photographs and the projected self-image was taken note of.

Stage Two: Dramaturgical Approach of Data

Dramaturgy sees all social interaction as a performance. Whenever there is social interaction, there is a performance going on. A dramaturgical approach primarily looks into the nature of a performance, the meaning being projected to the audiences, and the process involved in projecting the meaning (Feldman, 1995). Not only does it examine the ways through which impressions are controlled, it also sees interview itself as a performance between the interviewer and the interviewee. Hence, a dramaturgical approach also takes into the consideration the power

relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. In particular, how the relationship of the interviewer and interviewee contributes to the information provided by the interviewee (Berg, 1995). A dramaturgical view of data indeed aligned with the social constructionist's perspective on research. As Miller and Glassner (2004) suggest, what we can obtain from the interviews are stories produced by others or through our interactions with others. As a researcher, all we can do "is to understand how and where the stories are produced, which sort of stories they are, and how we can put them to honest and intelligent use in theorizing about social life" (p. 138). This approach of data illuminates the limitation of interview in "capturing" the reality of the informants and allows one to go beyond the manifest meaning of words and actions. In this study, dramaturgical analysis was conducted to examine both interview and visual data of their performative nature, the impressions which were given off through oral and visual presentation, and the actions taken by the participants to control the impressions on-site, online, and during the interviews.

Drawing upon Feldman (1995), this study took into the consideration several aspects in the analysis of data during the second stage of phase two. These aspects are:

(1) The impression being projected by the performers

(2) Through what actions and tools in particular the performers take control of the impression online

(3) Through what actions and tools in particular the performers take control of the impression during the interview

It should be noted that a dramaturgical approach does not aim at capturing the perspective or the voice of the participants but the means by which the performers manage the impression others have of them (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, one has to be careful not to take the interview data at its face value (Couldry, 2000) but to also recognize it as a staged performance. Instead of using content analysis to build theories upon the manifest and latent meanings of the performers' account of their practices, the interview had to be analyzed as a whole. The participants' facial expression, tone of voice, and the closeness between the participant and me were considered as important sets of data. The responses given by a participant at different points of the interview were compared as a means to examine the interviewee's consciousness of staging and audience's impacts on their behaviors. Sometimes I had to rely on my own intuitions to determine whether the interviewees were unaware of the performative nature of their sharing practices or were simply unwilling to admit staging as a means to protect their ego. Sometimes, I also had to draw on my personal experience of posting travel photographs online to triangulate with the data.

Stage Three: Cross-Case Analysis

Case study approach is particularly helpful in revealing common patterns and variations among individuals. Cases are usually selected based on pre-set criteria. Each unit of analysis is a case itself and is examined holistically so that rich information about the special characteristics of the cases in relation to their specific contexts can be produced. Cases are also compared so that common patterns and variations among cases can be brought to light. Not only does cross-case analysis

allow the identification of hidden patterns, it can also help to reveal why variations exist through reporting rich information about the context of each case.

In this stage, cases that shared similar characteristics were placed in the same category. In particular, five main aspects were compared:

1. Online performance
2. Impression given off during the interview
3. Their accounts of the why of posting
4. Their accounts of audience's impact and the actual impact
5. Their accounts of how they perceive others' performances

The categories were then positioned according to their consciousness of staging and audience's impact.

3.42 Phase Two

Phase two aims to develop a framework that goes beyond the descriptive nature of data, to illustrate the authentication of tourist self through online photo sharing. This phase involves going back to the literature again to review concepts that can help provide deeper understanding of the interpreted data (Andersen & Kragh, 2011; Eisenhardt, 1989). I have also presented my work at various conferences, sought advice from well-distinguished scholars like Prof. Nelson Graburn and Prof. Dean MacCannell. I have also partaken in scholarly discussions with the Tourism Studies Working Group as a visiting student researcher at the University of California Berkeley. After seeking advice from other scholars, several

theories were found most helpful in explaining the common patterns of the data. In particular, Erving Goffman's conceptualization of self-presentation was revisited. Jacque Lacan's conceptualization of image formation, Lewis and Saarni's taxonomy of lying, and existing conceptualization on the tourist gaze were reviewed and adopted to reflect on the data.

Through cross-examining interview data, visual data, and the existing concepts, a framework was developed to conceptualize online tourist photography as a front and back stage performance that contributes to the formation of tourist self. Chapter Eight will provide in-depth illustration of how the triangulation of data and existing concepts helps in forming the final framework.

3.5 Validity of Findings

Walle (1997) and Decrop (1999) argue that most qualitative studies in tourism research are devalued by their limited effort in justifying why their approaches are valid and sound. Even when effort is made, most quantitative researchers are unfamiliar with qualitative terms and criteria which appear to be confusing. As mentioned before, the meaning of "validity" in a qualitative research is always opened for redefinition. There are many perspectives of how to achieve validity of qualitative findings. Most qualitative researchers refer to Dezin and Lincoln's (2005) five criteria in achieving validity in qualitative research. These criteria were in some ways translated from quantitative perspectives of validity and reliability to suit the particular needs of qualitative research. Quite many qualitative researchers in tourism studies see validity as "how accurately the account represents participants' realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them," as Creswell and Miller (2000) proposed. Nonetheless, this should not be seen as the

only way to evaluate the validity of findings in a qualitative study.

To ensure validity in qualitative research, several studies review the existing approaches adopted by qualitative researchers to ensure validity as well as the historical development of qualitative study. Creswell & Miller (2000) suggest that different paradigms can adopt different criteria to evaluate validity according to their views of reality and research perspectives. Nine major criteria are categorized into three paradigms and three lenses: lens of the researcher, lens of study participants, and lens of people external to the research. Cho and Trent (2006) disagree with Creswell and Miller (2000) by arguing that validity is a knowledge-inquiry process (i.e., how the researcher's assumption is progressively challenged and transformed) which depends on the approaches (i.e., transactional and transformational) and the purpose of a specific piece of research (i.e., truth-seeking, thick description, developmental, personal essay, praxis/social). Criteria are adopted to the advantage of a research but not as a rigid, standardized way to judge validity in qualitative research. Maxwell (2005) also argues that validity is not achieved by marking off a checklist of criteria. Rather, researchers are to identify potential threats to the current study and adopt relevant techniques to reduce the threats.

This study does not aim to "capture" the voice of the participants "accurately." Instead, a dramaturgical approach is adopted to examine the performative nature of social interaction. Validity is seen as an intellectual-seeking process, as what Cho and Trent (2006) suggest, that the researcher's assumption is constantly challenged and transformed. I, as the researcher, also need to be

conscious of any potential bias and thus corresponding techniques can be adopted to reduce the threats whenever possible.

In particular, self-reflexivity of the researcher (reported in Chapter Four), peer-review, and disconfirming cases (reported in Chapter Eight) were adopted in this study.

Peer review was conducted to avoid me as a researcher to dominate the interpretation of the phenomenon under study. For this reason, I have shared my findings with a few of those who are not participants of this study but are also part of the phenomenon. They post travel photographs on Facebook and also view others' posting. Most of the time, peer review is done with academics who study the same phenomenon since they are the experts. Nonetheless, those who post travel photographs online are the experts of this phenomenon as they are the performers themselves and they know the performance well. During my attachment at UC Berkeley, I had shared my interpretations with both undergraduate and graduate students to seek for their advice. These students were from different countries: China, United States, Korea, France, and Serbia. After my framework and categories of cases were developed, I had shared them in plain language with two of my acquaintances, who were also Hong Kong Chinese and had shared travel photographs on Facebook. Both of them reacted positively to my framework and categorization of cases. I had also consulted tourism scholars like Prof Dean MacCannell and Prof Nelson Graburn for their advice on relevant theories and concepts to explain the phenomenon.

Disconfirming cases, which do not conform to the identified patterns of the study, are reported in Chapter Eight. The inclusion of disconfirming cases in a report can help increase the transparency of the findings and provide directions for future studies (Cho & Trent, 2006; Creswell & Miller, 2000).

As I have learned from existing studies of the importance of member-checking, I have also taken into consideration the participant's perspectives on my interpretation. Given the dramaturgical approach of study, member-checking was not to check with them if I have "captured" their "voice" accurately. Rather, it was to confirm with them my framework and the typology that emerged. Yet, I was only able to bring back my interpretation to one member who was more open in seeing his/her practice as a performance. I did not feel comfortable to share my findings with the rest of the participants. Nonetheless, my experience of member-checking helped me to realize that member-checking could also be a performance itself. As Goffman (1959) argues, whenever the social is involved, there is a performance taking place. In that case, member checking as a means to ensure validity could not serve its purpose in my study.

3.6 Research Ethics

Indeed, I had a lot of struggles in terms of member-checking and presenting findings. I often believe that self-image is a very sensitive issue and thus bringing back my interpretations to my participants might cause disturbance to them. Presenting my findings of the individual cases might also bring potential negative impact to them even if the chance is slim. I brought this concern of mine up to many scholars and it seems that there was no consensus of how to strive for the balance

between rigor and ethics. In general, it is believed that as long as the participants agreed with the terms and conditions set forth then I should be able to use the data obtained from their Facebook profiles to present my findings. It is also believed that bringing back my findings to the participants might not cause negative impact but might even encourage them to work on this study with me collaboratively. There were successful cases from other ethnographers as it seems to be the future trend to work collaboratively with the participants and to even involve them in the analysis and writing process. Nonetheless, I have to think for the participants. Even if they agree to the terms and conditions set forth (see Appendix II), they might not be aware of the potential impacts. Also, I was able to tell that many of the performers were very reluctant to see their practices as a performance of self. Therefore, bringing back my interpretations to them is to challenge their projected self-image. It also means that they would have to "act" towards my interpretations of them and thus I could claim that I had achieved validity through "member-checking." Ethics of research should always go before knowledge-inquiry. As I always bear in mind what Professor Eric Ma Kit-Wai had advised us, "Remember, your knowledge is not as precious as your participants. Think for them."

In order to reduce any potential negative impacts this research can bring to my participants, I have to be particularly careful in ensuring anonymity. Berg (1995) warns qualitative researchers that the assurance of anonymity does not only confine to the non-disclosure of participants' names. Instead, we should be very careful about disclosing information which can lead to the identification of participants. Hence, audio-clips of the interviews will not be provided as they can disclose sensitive and personal information of my participants. Names of the participants

were altered in this report. Photographs of the participants were provided on a minimal level and were selected to be included in the report only if:

(1) the images are approved by the participants for publication

(2) the inclusion of certain images is necessary

(3) the participant will not be easily recognized from the images

I would also like to ask for the cooperation from my readers. If in any case you are able to recognize a participant, please keep this within yourself. As you will see in my findings that my participants are very sensitive to how they are seen by others.

3.7 Limitation of Study

The biggest challenge of this study is its inability to confirm whether the participants were unaware of the performative nature of their practices or they were simply unwilling to be seen by me as a performer. I had to rely on my own intuition and interpretation of the participants' reactions to my questions. Due to time constraint, a more extensive literature on the stability of self image as well as self awareness was not included to provide a stronger conceptual foundation for the categorization and positioning of cases. Also, data that supported the categorization and positioning of cases had not yet reached saturation before this study came to an end. . It seems that there can be more categories and that each category will require more samples to validate the characteristics that sustain the category. Yet, it should be noted that this study does not aim at "approaching reality" but at challenging convention norms and providing alternate perspectives on the phenomenon under

study. Hence, theoretical saturation as an indicator of the completion of data collection and analysis might not be as significant in this study. Also, new concepts and insights were "endless" due to the exploratory nature of this study. Hence, it was almost impossible to end the study until "nothing new is found."

Another limitation of this study is that I was unable to relate the findings back to existing frameworks on the nature of tourist and tourism. I had great struggle about whether this study should be more theory-driven or data-driven at the beginning of the study. A theory-driven approach could help provide linkages between the typologies of tourists and the categorization of cases. Nonetheless, such an approach could also hinder the exploration of new themes by relating participants to a particular type of tourists beforehand. Hence, a data-driven approach seemed to be more appropriate for this exploratory study even though it means that the samples were not positioned in a broad tourism framework. Also, the homogeneity of sample could also mean that the identified common patterns might not be applicable to other populations. Having said so, the categorization and positioning of cases were still included in this thesis to serve as an open dialogue for future studies.

Other than that, self-images projected by the participants in other contexts were either not included in this study or were concealed from me. This study only focuses on travel photographs shared by the participants. Non-travel photographs were not given full weight in the analysis. Yet, travel photographs only constituted part of the participants' online self-image. Hence, the strategies the participants adopted to control impressions online was solely based on their travel postings.

Also, this study is not longitudinal in nature. Any changes of behaviors or perceptions from the participants after the data collection period were not identified. Most importantly, I could not ensure whether the participants provided me a full access to all of their travel postings since Facebook enables users to set different levels of privacy without being recognized by the audiences. Having said so, I had tried my best effort to obtain as much relevant information as possible from each case.

As mentioned before, it should be noted that any kind of research findings is unavoidably a product of interpretation. On a positive side, the subjectivity of the researchers can help forming research questions and refining the scope of study to a more feasible level. On the negative side, the subjectivity of the researchers can restrict the way data is obtained, interpreted, and presented. Recognizing this nature of research, I have reported self-reflexivity of the researcher in Chapter Four. I have also included voices of the participants whenever possible to increase the transparency of findings. However, I could not provide certain information about the participants for ethical issues, especially some of their travel images that can reveal their identities. Also, the difficulty of translating the contexts of the online and offline interactions into written texts as well as Cantonese into English could also limit the ways the readers of this thesis "re-experience" my fieldwork and understand how I have reached to my conclusion. Having said so, it is believed that the new perspectives brought by this study can outweigh these limitations.

Concluding the Chapter: Summarizing the Research Design and Methodology

Table 1 provides a summary of the epistemological assumptions, research

design, validity, and limitations as discussed in this chapter. My assumptions of knowledge and attitudes towards the value of research have largely shaped how this study was designed. I believe that subjectivity is unavoidable in any kind of knowledge produced by human beings. Reality, if it exists, cannot be approached "objectively" as it is inevitably generated, interpreted, and mediated through inter-subjectivities. Hence, subjectivity is not to be avoided but to be recognized. The value of social science research thus lies upon its ability to reflect on and to challenge existing norms and conventional assumptions. Research can be seen as an opportunity to open up dialogue for alternative ways of seeing of "what is happening to us and around us?"

Aligned with my assumptions of research and knowledge, a reflexive ethnographic approach was adopted to explore the ways tourists perform through posting photographs online and the impact of their online-sharing experience. Purposive and snowball sampling were adopted simultaneously to recruit and select participants. Data collection and analysis were structured into two phases. The first phase was composed of three stages. Stage one aimed to examine the relationship between image management and impression management through ethnographic visual analysis. Semi-structure interviews, content analysis of interview, semiotic analysis of online posting, and lastly within-case analysis were conducted. Stage two involved the analysis of visual data and oral data dramaturgically. The findings from stage two helped leading to the categorization of cases in stage three. During phase two, relevant theories and concepts were reviewed to further explain the common patterns that emerged from phase one. This phase contributed to an integrative framework as the final outcome of this study.

Validity is achieved through three aspects: self reflexivity of the researcher, peer review, and reporting disconfirming cases. Research ethics was taken very seriously in this study as it is related to one's self image and sense of self. Hence, the anonymity of the informants was to be ensured through various measures other than the alteration of names. Member-checking was found to be problematic as it could also be a performance between the informant and me. It could also make my informants feel uneasy to be seen as performing through sharing photographs online and responding in interviews.

This study suffered from several limitations. I could not ensure whether the participants were conscious of their practices. I could only rely on my own interpretations of their reactions. Also, my subjectivity could restrict the ways data was collected and analyzed. Other than that, a full picture of the participants' self images in different contexts was not obtained. I was also not able to ensure the information I saw online was identical to those they shared with different audiences since they were able to restrict access of certain audiences from viewing particular albums. Other types of photographs shared by the participants were not examined in depth. Also, I could not report some of the information about my informants in this report for ethical reasons.

Epistemological Assumptions	- All knowledge is a product of interpretation - The value of research is its ability to reflect on and challenge existing norms and conventional assumptions - Research is conducted to open up dialogue for alternative way of seeing but not to approach reality

Research Design and Methodology	• Exploratory and naturalistic in nature • Dramaturgical, reflexive, ethnographic approach
Sampling Design	• Purposive and Snowball Sampling
Data Collection and Analysis	First Phase Stage One: Ethnographic Visual Analysis Stage Two: Dramaturgical Analysis Stage Three: Cross-Case Analysis/Categorization Outcome: Descriptive Data of Image Management and Impression Management
	Second Phase Enfolding Literature Outcome: An Integrative Framework
Validity	• Self Reflexivity of the Researcher • Peer-Review • Disconfirming Cases
Research Ethics	• Ensure anonymity of informants • Issues with member-checking
Limitations	• Unable to validate categorization of cases • Scope of Study • Issues of Access • Ethical Issues

Table 1: A Summary of Research Design and Methodology

Chapter Four

Self-Reflexivity of the Researcher

Chapter Four

Self-Reflexivity of the Researcher

Overview of Section

In this section, I will report how my subjectivity shaped my data collection and analysis, hence my findings. This section will be structured into three parts. The first part discusses the levels of self-reflexivity that are most relevant to this study. The second part reports the assumptions, attitude, and experience that I brought along with me to the study. The third part reflects on how my subjectivity shaped the research process. The chapter will then be concluded with a figure that shows the level of subjectivity involved in shaping the findings in each stage of data collection and analysis.

4.1 Two Levels of Self-Reflexivity

Knowledge produced by research is inevitably a product of multi-layered interpretation. Self-reflexivity is an "interpretation of interpretation" (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 1999, p. 9). Although Alvesson and Skoldberg (1999) have identified four levels of interpretation, they suggest that researchers should not blindly cover all four levels but reflect upon them whenever appropriate. The most important purpose of self reflexivity is to reflect and to report on the "ways of seeing" of the researcher that contributes to the findings of study.

In this study, I have found that their first two levels were most helpful in

guiding my reflection of this process of knowledge-making. The primary level of interpretation has more to do with how data are collected in the first place. Even before the literature review has been conducted, it is unavoidable that the researcher can bring in assumptions to the study. These assumptions contribute to what and how literature is reviewed. The scope of the study is usually narrowed down according to the propositions made based on the literature review. The questions being asked in the interview or even informal conversation are unavoidably shaped by the assumptions. The researcher also has a certain impact on the answers given by the interviewees. His or her reactions might give the interviewees an impression of what is an appropriate answer. The follow-up questions asked are also shaped by the interest of the researcher. The theory or concepts which were chosen to guide or to narrow down the scope of study, the influence of the researcher has on the interviewee's answer, how the researcher selects what is interesting and what is not as the research goes on. The second level of interpretation involves the reflection of why data are interpreted in particular ways and whether the researcher realizes that other interpretations can also apply.

4.2 Researcher's Assumptions

This part reports my personal experience and assumptions of tourist photographic practices which I brought along to the study. I will first talk about what photography meant to me as well as how I viewed photography before I started this study. I will then talk about my own online sharing experience as a tourist.

The connection between tourist and camera has always fascinated me. My

feelings towards photography can be seen as a mixture of annoyance, hatred, curiosity, and fondness. When I was a child, I very much disliked to be photographed. I remember how annoying it was for me to stop playing in the middle of a game just to pose for the camera. Then there was a moment when I realized that a camera could actually mean attention. It was more or less due to the constant comparison of my elder sister and me. I remember growing up as a child who usually received less attention from the others, especially with the presence of my sister. It was almost like my habit to observe how my sister was always treated nicer by my relatives. There I started to notice that my sister was usually the focus of the camera. I was the one who was left out from most of the pictures. There was a time when I got extremely jealous. I decided to run into the picture with my sister so that my relative would notice my existence. Yet, my relative stopped photographing as soon as I ran into the picture. He yelled at me by saying, "go away! You are ruining the picture!" Ever since then, I started to realize that photography was not simply about the pausing of my little games for a flashing machine.

Looking back on photographs of and in my life makes me realize that my time spent on photography is usually worthwhile. There are things, people, and stories that I cannot recall without the aid of these frozen lights. I can also gaze upon a still image of myself, of others, or of a place for a very long time like I am in a different time and space. Having said that, there are moments I prefer to experience without the lens of my camera. I remember how my friend missed out the sunrise of Koh Samui just because he was struggling with film reloading. I remember how my travel companion bypassed many types of scenery in Portugal because she tried so hard to figure out how to use her semi-manual camera.

Sometimes we could feel deeply depressed if we lost all the pictures we took along the way due to film exposure or malfunction of a camera. Sometimes we carried extra clothes just so we could look differently in the pictures to represent the everyday of our trip. Sometimes we repeated taking the same photo for 5, 6 times until everyone in the group was satisfied with how they looked in the picture! I cannot recall how many times my female friends complained about how they looked in the photos when they reviewed them on the tiny screen immediately after the photos were taken. They were simply reluctant to be taken photographed of when they felt the photographer (i.e., mostly me and my male friends) was not able to capture how they wanted themselves to be in the photos or when they felt like they were having "a non-photogenic day!" Such a disappointment could impact the whole day!

Therefore, I started off this study with a mixed feeling of annoyance, fondness, and fascination, curiosity towards tourist photographic practices. My annoyance derives from my way of seeing photography as a disruption to the travel experience of self and other. My fondness derives from the ability of photography in turning the ordinary into the extraordinary. My fascination derives from the view of photography as a reflection of the strong desires of humans to remember the past at the cost of sacrificing the present moment. My curiosity derives from how one wants to remember oneself and be remembered through photography.

I started using Facebook from the end of 2007. I was invited by a friend and was encouraged to test the media out. At the beginning, I posted a few photographs as a means to test out its function and design. I was not connected to many friends

back then as Facebook was still unpopular among most of my friends and acquaintances. Rather, I have used MySpace and Friendster a lot more as several of my friends whom I was interested in keeping in touch with were on there. I posted some of my travel photographs on Friendster but I was not very active on either of these social media as there was not much going on except peeking on each other's profiles. Most of my friends started to become more active on Facebook from 2008 and I saw a lot more "news" from those whom I have lost contact with for a long time. The whole idea of Facebook became a lot more interesting for me. I started to go back to my computer to look for photographs to post on my profiles. These photographs included my trip to Portugal, to Thailand, as well as my internship in Guam.

I posted 37 photos in total of my trip to Portugal. They are not my favorite photographs but at least they were acceptable for posting. When I first started posting these photographs, I was only able to find some of the images we had taken in Portugal as I did not manage my photographs very well in my computer. Among the limited choices, I chose pure scenic photographs with bright, clear blue sky as the background. I did not know why I chose these images. As most of my participants said, "they are pretty!" I would think, perhaps these images stood out as travel photographs since we rarely have blue skies in Hong Kong. I also chose a few photographs in which I looked pretty and funny. Such a mixture of images helped me to feel less pretentious but at the same time I can show those whom I had not been in touch with for a while that I have been doing well and I look better than I used to be. I chose Portugal for posting because it is a less visited destination among Hong Kong tourists. Hence, my experience could be seen as more unique. My

choice of travel could be seen as more unique to them. Having said so, I did not think this deeply when I chose what to post. I just thought the trip was cool, the place was cool, and the colors of images were pretty cool. It was not until later when I started this research that I reflected upon my own self and the way I chose photographs for sharing.

I also shared my travel photographs to Koh Samui. This trip was posted for two reasons. One was to share the images with my travel companions since there were eight of us in total. The other reason was to let some of my audiences know of this luxurious, king-like trip we had in Koh Samui. We had stayed in a luxurious, five-star villa for a very good deal and that we also had great seafood dinner for an unbelievably low price. By posting my photographs, I was able to get a sense of reconnection with my travel companions whom I had spent five good days with. I felt a sense of loss after coming back to Hong Kong from the trip as I missed the time we spent together in the villa. When I selected photographs for sharing, a lot of memories came back to me. I also wondered how my travel companions would feel and react once they saw these images I shared online. I particularly chose some of the pictures which would interest them so that they would react and feel reconnected. I also chose some of the photographs to impress my audiences. Some images were particularly chosen to create that "wowing" effect. Nonetheless, I was not as conscious as I am now to the actions I took. At that time, I looked into the images and thought "this one looks nice," "this one I look terrible in it," "this one I look great," "this one shows the amazing villa in full view," and "this one shows the seafood dinner we had." I also thought to myself, did I choose too many photographs of self? Would I look too narcissistic?

I also viewed photographs shared by others. When I viewed others' photographs, I had a sense that some of them were bragging about themselves through their travel images by telling others "I have been here and I have been there, "I have tried all these good things and amazing things on earth," and "I look pretty." Some of my friends, as I have noticed, had deleted certain photographs due to negative comments from their audiences. Some of them were able to receive a lot of attention and reactions from audiences for whatever images they shared. I had a sense that some of my friends were a lot subtler in their sharing. Their posts rarely showed on my "news" and they kept sharing images even though not many reacted to their posts. Somehow I wonder: "why would they continue to post photographs if no one was reacting?"

Hence, I brought along with me three assumptions when I first started the study. First, travel photographs were selected and shared to enhance one's self image. Second, certain producers were more concerned about the reactions of their audiences. Third, certain producers might change posting strategies according to the reactions of their audiences while some might not.

4.3 Subjectivity and the Two Levels of Interpretation

So how did my personal experience impact the findings of this study? As mentioned before, I reflected upon the impact of my assumptions and experience had on the two levels of interpretation.

The first level of interpretation aims to reflect on this question: "How data

were collected at the first place?" In a way, my personal experience helped building the research question and my initial framework. The initial framework recognized the importance of consciousness of audience in one's online posting. The questions I asked my participants during the interview reflected my assumptions about the performative nature of their online postings. Hence, my personal experience was indeed my primary data of this study (Finlay, 2002).

My personal experience also allowed me to interpret the reflective experience of the participants which goes beyond words. Sometimes, there were moments in which the participants did not feel comfortable being too straightforward about their feelings that they had to rely on me to "simply get the message." The participants tended to say "I'm sure you understand what I meant" whenever they could not express in words of their feelings or when they talked about the face-giving practices on Facebook. Since my participants and I were of the same generation, I was able to know what to ask and how to ask during the interview. I have witnessed the evolution of photographic practices from film photography to digital photography to online photography like they did. During the interviews, I could feel for them when they told me about their changing experience of sharing physical photo albums in the old days and now sharing travel photographs on social media.

Nonetheless, it also means that my personal experience could also restrict the ways I interpreted the data. Therefore, it was important for me to bear in mind the importance of asking questions which might seem "pointless" or "unnecessary" to the participants. For example, I often probed further to ask them why they

excluded "unpretty self" or "ugly self" from sharing. Usually I was given a look as if I was from the outer space. I also probed further to ask the participants why they enjoyed sharing new places or new attractions for their friends. Instead of accepting their answers as how they were, I tried to probe further whenever possible. Nonetheless, there were also times where I had to stop before the interview started to become too uncomfortable to the participants. I tried to maintain a relaxing atmosphere for them to talk about their practices as much as possible while still being able to ask "weird" questions. It was quite challenging indeed. This is when my personal experience came in helpful. I could make them feel that we had common interest and feelings, and that I understood how they felt.

Since I had a hard time to recruit more complete strangers on blog and Facebook, I had to rely on snowball sampling to recruit participants. Hence, my participants included my closest friends, long-lost friends, acquaintances, friends of friends, and complete strangers. One disadvantage about recruiting close ones for the study was that I could bring into my dramaturgical interpretations of them in other contexts into the analysis of their cases. I had also tried not to incorporate the information I obtained from those I was acquainted with into my analysis but saw them purely as "participants" when I analyzed their cases. It was helpful for me to give them new names so that I could see them in a different way, like a new person. Despite this disadvantage, the different level of closeness between the participants and me indeed helped illuminating the performative nature of interview. Those who are the closest to me or are of intermediate closeness to me, tended to be more reluctant in acknowledging the staging aspects of their photographic practices. The complete strangers tended to be more open in bringing up the staging aspects of

their practices. Nonetheless, they were usually less active in sharing too personal information with me. I have acknowledged the difference in my interpretation of their accounts for the categorization of cases. Nonetheless, for ethical reasons it would be improper for me to identity their closeness with me.

The second level of interpretation aims to reflect on this question: "Why were data interpreted in a particular way?" During the interview, I was also a performer. I could sense that some of my participants actively sought to understand what I tried to ask from them so that they could "help me." I could also sense that some of them tried to interpret my intention of asking certain questions while at the same time consciously took actions to control impressions. I had to make sure that I did not show my assumptions about online-sharing to my participants so that they would feel free to talk about their online photographic practices. Hence, the whole interview was a stage between my participants and me. Both parties had to interpret each other's actions and reactions while at the same time perform to control impressions for various purposes. It was for this reason that a dramaturgical analysis of the interview was found to be important to go beyond the face value of the accounts given by my participants.

Although I constantly drew upon my own experience to help interpreting some of the data that I could not make sense of or could not probe further from my participants, I had indeed allowed myself to stay as open as possible for any new patterns or concepts which I had not thought about before. New data constantly challenged my initial assumptions as I allowed my interviewees to lead the conversations as much as possible. As a matter of fact, this study was loosely driven

by theories at the beginning, as this area of study received very limited attention back in 2008. Also, I had a hard time to completely integrate Goffman's notion of performance into the online photo-sharing without empirical data on hand. I also overlooked the fact that Goffman had mentioned about back stage performance – when self is an audience and a performer. It was due to the fact that I brought along my assumptions with me when I first started this study, that online-sharing was largely a front stage performance. It was not until later when I sent my work to Prof. Dean MacCannell for his advice that he kindly pointed out the importance of incorporating and acknowledging Goffman's notion of back stage in which intimacy and coziness were also performed to create a sense of the "back stage."

There were pros and cons to be less bounded by existing theories for an exploratory study. It could be very frustrating for me to decide what to do and how to start the study as there could be many things to look at and many ways to approach information. It was extremely hard for me to know what to ask from my participants and how to analyze their online photos. I could often get lost in the data. There were many times when I reviewed literature in Phase Two that I thought to myself, "how I wish I knew this!" Nonetheless, getting lost could also mean I was given room to emerge myself in the empirical data and to think for myself. I was often challenged by the information I observed and obtained from my informants. It was the reason why my research framework and question were constantly modified as the research went. And when I went back to the literature, I was able to compare my findings with existing theories in a more concrete manner.

Concluding the Chapter: Level of Subjectivity in Findings

As mentioned before, subjectivity is unavoidable and is not to be avoided. Rather, it is by reporting and reflecting on how one's subjectivity shapes the findings that the research process can become more transparent to the readers. Chapter Five to Chapter Eight reports findings of various levels of interpretation. Generally speaking, the more descriptive the finding, the lower level of subjectivity is involved in the shaping of it (see figure 4).

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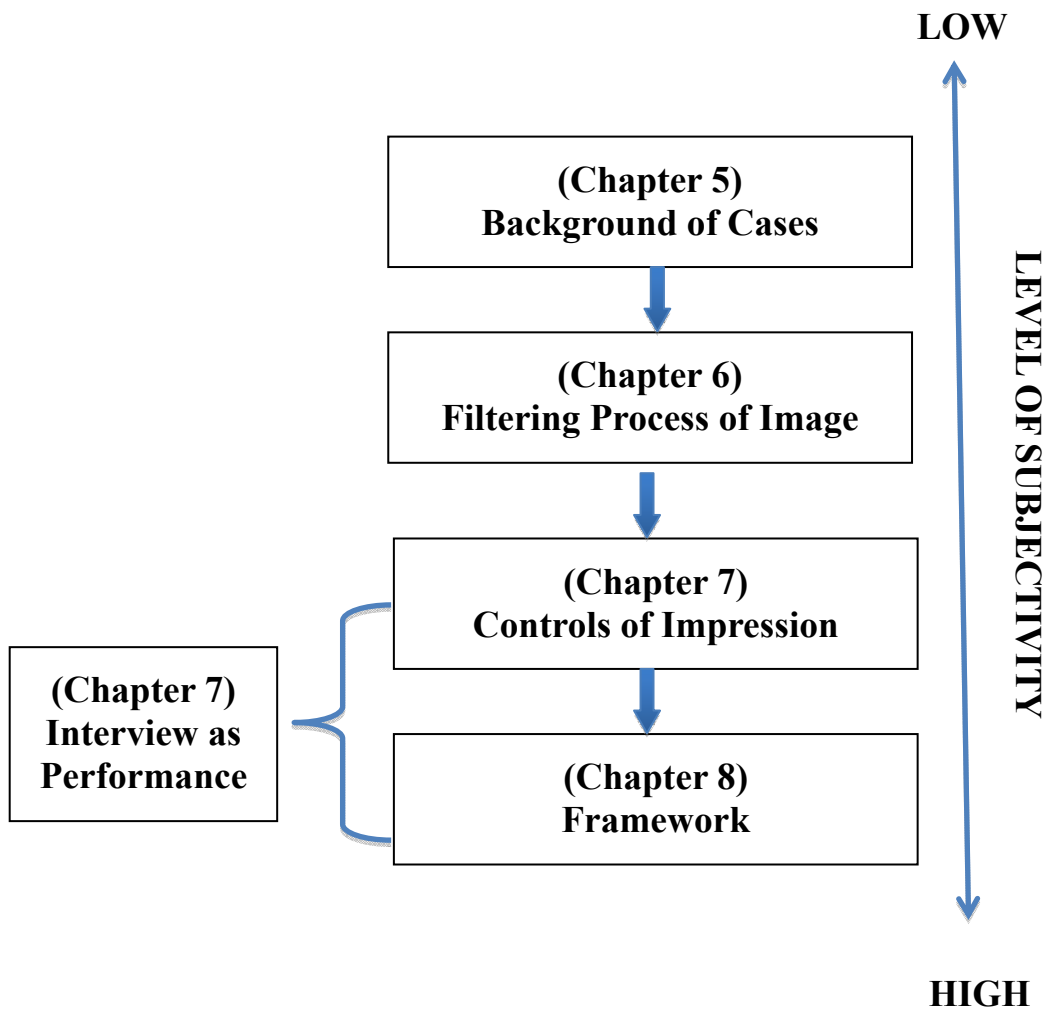
Figure 4: Findings and their Levels of Subjectivity

As shown in figure 4, the next few chapters will report findings from lowest level of interpretation to highest level of interpretation. It is important to note that findings from dramaturgical analysis of interview helped to inform findings in Chapter 7– 8, particularly the framework and categorization of cases. In general, these chapters can help answering the following questions:

WHO are the participants?

Descriptive findings in terms of who the participants were, what are their characteristics, what they did, and what they shared online will be reported in *Chapter Five.*

WHAT is the selection process?

Descriptive findings in terms of what causes the inclusion and exclusion of image from framing and sharing will be reported in *Chapter Six.*

HOW are impressions controlled through image selection?

Common themes in terms of how tourists manage their impressions at the front stage through online-sharing, how they evaluate their performances, and the consequences of these evaluations will be reported in *Chapter Seven.* The impressions the participants controlled during the interview will also be presented in this chapter.

HOW does performance as a learning process take place?

A framework integrating findings with existing theories will be presented in *Chapter Eight.* The framework was constructed to explain how performance as a learning process take place at the front and back stage in the form of online photo-sharing.

Chapter Five

Introducing the Performers

Chapter Five

Introducing the Performers

Overview of Chapter

This chapter is structured into two parts. Part I provides an overview of the 13 cases. In particular, the participants' demographic backgrounds, travel profiles, social media usages, and their photographic involvement will be present. Part II presents the findings of ethnographic visual analysis with a brief description of each case to highlight the aspects which give rise to the variations exists among cases. The chapter will then be ended with a brief discussion of the sample characteristics in this study.

Part I: An Overview of Cases

5.1 Demographic Information of Cases

No	Case	Sex	Occupation	Education Level	Social Media
1	Pak	M	Hospitality	Tertiary	Facebook
2	Yang	M	Printing	Tertiary	Facebook
3	Sandy	F	Unemployed	Tertiary	Facebook
4	Tracey	F	Housewife	Postgraduate	Facebook, Blog
5	Kit	F	Urban Planning	Postgraduate	Facebook, Blog
6	Ria	F	Graphic Design	Tertiary	Facebook, Blog, Forum

7	Disney	F	Teacher	Postgraduate	Facebook, Blog
8	Fung	M	Multimedia	Tertiary	Facebook, Flickr
9	Kelly	F	Multimedia	Tertiary	Facebook
10	Vivian	F	Lecturer	Postgraduate	Facebook, Blog
11	JC	M	Fashion	Tertiary	Facebook
12	Billy	M	Information System	Tertiary	Facebook
13	Lily	F	Entertainment	Tertiary	Facebook

Age

My participants are mostly the post 80s generation in Hong Kong. They were all below the age of 35 during the study.

Gender

Majority of the participants are female. Still, males contributed to more than one third of the participants.

Occupation

Most of the participants are currently employed (except Sandy and Tracey at the time of interview) in various fields: tourism, education, design, printing, multimedia, information system, entertainment, and urban planning.

Education

My participants are also well-educated. All of them obtain tertiary education. Four of them even have partaken in postgraduate studies.

Social Media Usage

Since the recruitment from Facebook and snowball sampling was more successful, all participants predominantly used Facebook for the dissemination of their photographs. Seven of them use purely Facebook to share their travel photographs with others. Five of them use both Facebook and Blog to disseminate their photographs. One of them uses Facebook and Flickr at the same time. Nonetheless, those who used blog to post photographs either stopped using it or had reduced their usage of blog due to the popularity and ease of use of Facebook.

5.2: Travel Profile

Case	Leisure Trip	Business Trip	Frequency of Travel	Trips
Pak	Y	N	1 – 3 trips per year	Independent travel to Japan and Taiwan with girlfriend
Yang	Y	Y	1 – 3 trips per year	Independent travel to Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand with girlfriend, Business trip to UK, New Zealand
Sandy	Y	N	More than 1 year just traveling	Working holidays trips in Australia, Visit friends in Europe
Tracey	Y	N	0 - 1 trip per year	Independent travel to Japan with fiancée (then) and to Singapore with husband and daughter

Kit	Y	Y	2 – 4 trips per year	Independent travel to Europe with friends and to Thailand with mother Business trip to Shanghai
Ria	Y	N	1 - 3 trips per year	Independent travel to Yunnan, Beijing, and Taiwan with family
Disney	Y	N	1 – 3 trips per year	Independent travel to Europe and Japan with friends
Fung	Y	N	Rarely travel	Independent travel to Japan with friends and girlfriend (then)
Kelly	Y	N	Rarely travel	Independent travel to Japan with friends and boyfriend (then), and to Thailand for family visit
Vivian	Y	Y	0 – 2 trips per year	Partly leisure partly work type of trips to Japan with a friend, and an independent trip to Taiwan with a friend
JC	Y	Y	3 – 5 trips per year	Independent trips to Beijing with friends and girlfriend, and to Thailand with girlfriend Business trips to UK, US, India
Billy	Y	N	1 – 3 trips per year	Independent trips to Beijing, Sabah, Taiwan with friends
Lily	Y	N	1 trip per year	Independent trips to India with sister, and to Bohol with

				boyfriend (then)

Nature of Trips

The occupations of Kit, Yang, and JC allow them to also travel outside Hong Kong apart from their own leisure trips taken during annual leave. Sandy was the only one who quit her job to travel around Australia for a year with a working holiday visa. Kelly also went for her working holiday in Australia after the interview and is still currently traveling around Australia. Fung traveled the least. He had only been outside the Guangdong area once. The rest travel outside Hong Kong one to three times per year in average, depending on their availability of time and money. Mostly, their trips were short trips ranged from 3 – 6 days within Asia.

Travel Background of Participant

Most of my participants were once mass tourist. They joined packaged tours and traveled on a strict schedule set forth by a travel agency. As they gained more travel experience, they started to look for alternative ways of traveling. They strongly dislike their packaged tour experience. They enjoy the price that a travel agent can offer. Yet, they also enjoy the freedom of deciding their own travel schedule and the search of more "authentic" experience. Such a change of travel behavior can be seen as a result of a more mature society in terms of travel experience. Most of them rely on travel guidebooks or online information to plan for their travel trips instead of travel agents. They usually sought out the places or sites which interested them. Then they would communicate with their travel partners to come up with their mutual interest. They usually listed out places of "must-go" and other interesting sites to plan for each day of their trips. Most of the

time, they visited 2 – 3 sites per day. They were open to minor changes on their travel plan, depending on their actual experience of the places. Yet, they would not allow the possibility of missing out the "must-go" ones.

Meaning of Leisure Travel

Exactly as Urry (1990, 2002) has suggested, traveling to them is to see more and to escape from the ordinariness and the stressfulness of their everyday life. The word "Kin Man" (見聞), a combination of two Chinese characters "see" and "hear," indicating knowledge gained from actual experience, is often used by some of the participants to describe the benefits that one can get from traveling. Most of them regard traveling as a "must-do" on an annual basis to balance their lives. Many of them have much complaint about their current work life or even life in Hong Kong in general. Way of life in Hong Kong is usually less appreciated and is often compared with other ways of life that they have experienced during traveling.

Constraints of Leisure Travel

During the interviews, their struggles between reality and dreams were also expressed. They always wished that they could travel more often. Those who have never been outside Asia expressed their wishes of traveling further and seeing more. In reality, they did not have enough time and money to fulfill what they aspired to do. Hence, a short trip within Asia could at least give them the opportunity to escape from their everyday life and to be refreshed once in a while.

5.3 Social Media Usage

5.31 The participant's usage of social media: an Overview

They have continuously experienced change of photo-sharing behaviors.

From face-to-face sharing to e-mail to online photo album to blog, and now to Facebook, they have moved from one channel to another for sharing their travel photographs with others.

5.32 The participant's usage of social media: Facebook Usage

Case	NOF	NOA	NOTA	NOP/A	NOTP	C	Frequency of Usage
Pak	189	20	6-7	60	4	N	7 – 8 hours per day (mostly at work)
Yang	192	47	6	30	5	Y	Everyday
Sandy	231	128	72	8-150	4	Y	Everyday
Tracey	118	17	2	70	2	N	Almost everyday
Kit	259	58	26-29	100	13	N	Everyday
Ria	287	38	6	20 - 80	3	Y	Everyday
Disney	72	0	0	6	2	N	Rarely
Fung	359	82	5	20-50	1	N	Everyday
Kelly	418	22	1	20	1	Y	Once in a while
Vivian	239	6	2-3	30 -60	1	Y	All the time
JC	414	52	17-20	2-200	5	N	Everyday (mostly at work)
Billy	289	69	5	100	2	N	Everyday
Lily	386	60	16-17	60	5	Y	Everyday

Note: NOF = No. of Friends, NOA = No. of Albums, NOTA = No. of Travel Albums, NOP/A = No. of Photos per Album, NOTP = No. of Trip Posted, C = Caption

Facebook Usage

Since most of the participants relied on Facebook for their photo-sharing, I spent most of my effort in recording their Facebook activities. All of them used Facebook on a daily basis, except Disney and Kelly. Especially when they were at work, they would be on Facebook more often. Some of them never log out from their Facebook account so that they could surf around the "News" whenever they had time. The real usage could range from 1 – 4 hours per day. Facebook then functioned in a similar way as traveling to them. It is about escaping and seeking. Being on Facebook could help them to escape from the reality of their work life for a while. It should be noted that those who are active on Facebook are not necessarily also an active producer of online texts. They might just simply consume others' postings instead of posting their own texts.

Number of Friends

The number of friends each participant had on Facebook ranged from 72 to 418. Disney, who rarely used Facebook, had the least number of friends. Most of the participants expressed that they only accepted those they knew in person as their friends on Facebook. Nonetheless, more details about their "friending" were revealed from our conversations. Quite a few expressed that they also accepted strangers when they first used Facebook. Once in a while, they revised their friend lists by deleting "friends." They tried to eliminate "unnecessary friends."

Number of Online Albums

Except Disney, all of them had created online albums on Facebook to share their photographs. Almost half of them had created more than 50 albums in total.

Number of Online Travel Albums

Most of the participants had created fewer than 10 albums for their travel posting. In particular, Sandy, Kit, JC, and Lily created more online travel albums when compared to the rest. They were the ones who traveled further, more frequently, and for a longer period of time. Their travel albums contributed to at least one-third or even half of their online images. Disney did not have any travel album. Nonetheless, 6 out of 8 of her online photos were her travel trips.

Number of Travel Photos

A few participants expressed to me the limitation of photographs per each album, which Facebook had designed, was one of the reasons why more photographs could not be posted. At the beginning, Facebook only allowed them to share 60 photos per album. Some preferred to consolidate all photos of a single trip into one album but could not do so. They were quite happy that Facebook had made change to this limitation. They were allowed to post up to 200 photos per album since May 2009 (Posted by Putnam, 2009). Nonetheless, some of them remained to post fewer than 60 photos per album.

Caption

Six out of 13 participants had provided captions for their travel photographs.

Others only titled their photo albums with the name of the destination to indicate that it was a travel album. Among the participants who provided captions for their photographs, information about the place, how to travel, what to do and what not to do was rarely given. Ria was the only participant who provided information about train, accommodation, and the opening hour of an attraction. Nonetheless, the information was given on an occasional basis.

5.33 Segregation of Audiences

Channels	Case	Spheres of Audiences
Multiple Media/Accounts	Vivian	Facebook (2 accounts): closest friends/students Blog (3 accounts): public
	Disney	Facebook (2 accounts): closest friends/students Blog (1 account/closed): closest friends and public
	Ria	Facebook (1 account): anyone she knows Blog (1 account): forum members and public Discussion Forum (owner): online friends and public
	Kit	Facebook (1 account): public Blog (1 account): closest friends and public
	Tracey	Facebook (1 account): anyone she knows Blog (1 account): closest friends and public
	Lily	Facebook (1 account): anyone she knows Blog (1 account): closest friends and public
	Fung	Facebook (1 account): anyone he knows Flickr (1 account): public

Single Channel	Sandy	Facebook (1 account): friends of friends
	Yang	Facebook (1 account): friends of friends
	Kelly	Facebook (1 account): anyone she knows
	JC	Facebook (1 account): anyone he knows
	Billy	Facebook (1 account): anyone he knows
	Pak	Facebook (1 account): closest friends

Multiple Media/Accounts

Seven out of 13 participants used more than one media or one Facebook account to disseminate their travel photographs. In particular, Vivian and Disney set up two Facebook accounts to segregate their students from their closest friends. Ria adopted the most diverse forms of social media to share her travel photographs. She was an owner of a pet forum and her blog was served as a means to entertain her forum members. Kit was the only one to open up her images to the public. Interestingly, she only opened her travel images to the public but restricted public access to other information she shared on Facebook. She also only disclosed her blog to her closest friend only although it was opened for the public.

As for Disney and Tracey, blog was for their closest friends as well as for the public. They rarely let others know of their blog unless they were certain that their audiences could understand them and were interested in their writings. Most, except Lily, were quite concerned about showing photographs which included their faces on blog. They tended to say, "Everyone can see so I have to be careful."

All of them except Vivian expressed that blog required too much time and

effort for posting. It required too much thinking in terms of what to write and to choose photographs that matched with the theme. Thus, many of them rarely post photographs on blog these days. Vivian had to continue posting on blog as she had been building her career as a travel writer through blog. Other than that, it seemed to me that they had a kind of anticipation towards many unknown possibilities that blog could bring them. They anticipated that they might be able to meet someone who truly appreciated their feelings and shared common interests with them.

Single Channel

Six out of 13 participants used purely Facebook to share travel photographs with others. Three of them shared with anyone they knew in person. Two allowed "friends of friends" to view their travel photographs. It should be noted that JC also had a separate account for his family and closest friends. Nonetheless, he did not share travel photographs on that account. Most of my participants shared their travel photos with those who were of intermediate closeness to them. Pak was the only one to share his travel photographs with only his closest friends on Facebook. He was particularly concerned with the safety issues of online posting. He worried that there could be unethical usage of his images by the unknown others. Quite a few of them enjoyed the design and functions of Facebook but most importantly, the majority of their friends was on Facebook. Hence, Facebook was their preferred channel for sharing.

Facebook can be a channel for them to get closer to those whom they are not very close to. This kind of closeness is not the kind of closeness they can get from their face-to-face interactions with close friends. The closeness they obtain on

144

Facebook remains on Facebook. Yet, somehow this way of communication can help make weak ties closer:

I mean through Facebook, I can get closer to certain friends whom I rarely talk to. But not really that close. It's like when we see each other, then we still don't talk so much but at least it's a little better. But you know that it's more like we are still not that close but somehow it's better. I guess through this media, certain side of ourselves can be released. (Case 11: JC)

It should be noted that although these participants used single social media and account for sharing photographs, some of them remained using email, MSN, or CD-ROM for sharing images with travel companions. These travel companions might not have Facebook accounts. Some of them disliked the low resolution of photographs on Facebook and strongly requested to have the "original" versions. Some of them simply disliked being posted on Facebook and being seen by the unknown others.

5.4 Level of Photographic Involvement

The participants' level of photographic involvement varies. In general, their involvement can be roughly categorized into four levels.

The most involved ones are JC, Fung, Billy, Vivian, and Kit. They are keen on developing their photographic skills. JC, Fung, and Billy even aspire to be seen as a photographer some day and once joined camera clubs to learn from others. All

of them practice their photographic skills as a leisure activity even when they are not traveling. JC, Fung, and Billy posted quite a few of their photo-shooting works on models. Kit was more interested in photographing babies. She bought various types of cameras to test their colors and special effects. Vivian photographed Hong Kong culture to demonstrate to her students her photographic skills and perspectives.

Participants like Lily, Ria, Yang, and Sandy also enjoy photography. They sometimes play with their cameras to capture interesting aspects of life in Hong Kong. Nonetheless, they only did so whenever it was convenient to take a camera along. They seldom create the chances just to practice their photographic skills. Lily carries a light-weight camera with her on a daily-basis so she can capture images whenever she sees something interesting. Ria also purchases various types of cameras but she did not spend great effort to learn about technical aspects of cameras. Yang spent effort in learning about cameras but he only carried a camera along whenever it is convenient. Sandy does not know a lot about photography. Yet, she enjoyed taking photographs at various special occasions. She used to take photographs of anything she encountered although she has reduced the number of photographs she takes now.

Participants like Disney, Kelly, and Tracey rarely carry a camera with them in Hong Kong. They might do so once in a while whenever there was special occasion. Most of the time, they relied on others to take photographs of them. They enjoyed being taken photographs of rather than to take photographs of others. For example, Kelly relied on Fung who used to be her romantic partner to take photos

of her whenever he was around. Tracey relied on her husband to take photographs of her daughter and her. Disney disliked the fact that her friends had to take photographs of everything. Nonetheless, she also appreciated the fact that there were always cameras ready for every occasion so she did not have to worry about bringing her own.

Pak is the only person who does not like photography at all even during traveling. He thinks that there are many feelings which photography cannot capture. Indeed, he hates to bring a camera along with him and that he can get irritated when he is asked to be in photographs. He thinks that Hong Kong people are too obsessed about photography. There are cameras and photo-taking in every occasion and that such a phenomenon is becoming too annoying to him. Nonetheless, he will still accept to be in photographs with others when invited.

Part II: Findings from Within-Case Analysis

Overview of Section

The information presented in this section is the results of ethnographic visual analysis. The section is structured into two parts. In part I, cases will be presented individually. All cases will be presented first with a travel photograph shared by the participant. The selected photograph represents one of the favorite photographs chosen by the participant during the interview. After an image is presented, a brief description of what the participant posts on Facebook will then follow. My interpretation of the oral data will also be presented to triangulate with my interpretation of the visual data to shed light on why certain images are or are not posted on Facebook for sharing. By presenting cases on an individual basis, the specific context that gives rise to the variations exist among cases will be illuminated.

Case 1: Pak

Picture shared by Pak of his first trip to Tokyo:

Brief Description of Case:

"Pak," connected to 189 friends on Facebook, has created 20 albums in total, which include 6 – 7 albums of his travel photographs to 3 different destinations: Tokyo, Taiwan, and Osaka. His travel photograph of his first trip to Tokyo, which is his most unforgettable travel trip, is categorized into the album "Memories." This album mostly includes pictures of him and his friends taken in different years. The favorite photo shown above is also from this album.

Except pictures from this album, he never smiles in his photographs and rarely includes himself in photographs of his everyday life. He includes self more

often in his travel photographs, in which he is usually pictured with his girlfriend. He tends to look quite unhappy in his travel photographs in contrast to his girlfriend who always smiles in them. His travel photographs are mostly about his girlfriend, his girlfriend with him, food, buildings, local signs, sky view from the plane, temples, night view of the destination, and his post trip experience.

Indeed, photographs are taken to satisfy his girlfriend's request, for he says he does not think it is important to take photographs. If photographs have to be taken, he preferred pure scenic photos as he thinks he is not good-looking enough to be in a picture. Although his first trip to Tokyo was his favorite trip so far, he was not able to share many of the photos as they included his ex-girlfriend. Interestingly as well, he is selective in which trips he brings a camera. He confided to me that some of his trips are 'secret' trips taken with friends that few people are supposed to know about. As a rule of thumb, therefore, no one brings a camera along. He also told me that after viewing his travel photographs again during the interview, he regretted posting some of the photographs in which he looked terrible. He felt like deleting them but he could not do so as others could notice the deletions.

Case 2: Yang

Picture shared by Yang of his trip to Japan:

Brief Description of Case:

"Yang," connected to 192 friends on Facebook, has created 47 albums in total, which include 6 albums of his travel trips to Japan. The albums are titled as "Japan Travel" followed with the travel date each album represents. He only wrote captions for his day one album in which most of the photos record his meetings with an old friend who studied in Japan. Other than this album, his girlfriend is usually the attention of the camera is even presented like a model on a travel magazine with the plum blossoms as a background. This favorite photo of his is one of his series of the plum blossoms and has received a number of positive comments from his audiences on his photographic sense.

Although Yang has traveled to the UK, New Zealand, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Thailand within the past two years, he has only posted photographs of his trip to Japan. Indeed, Japan was his favorite trip of all. His trips to the UK and New Zealand were for business purposes; hence he did not have time to take too many photographs. He was particularly disappointed with his Taiwan trip as it rained the whole time. He did not realize that he did not post photographs of his trip to Taiwan until the interview, and suspected that he gave up posting as his girlfriend who traveled with him had already posted the photographs on Facebook. It was not certain whether his not posting was also due to his unpleasant experience in Taiwan.

During the interview, he was particularly proud of the fact that he was able to meet with his childhood friend in Japan as well as the new friends he had made from the trip who were of high social status. He also received gifts from his new friends, which were also displayed through his photographs. Although most of his travel photographs were produced under the instruction of his girlfriend, he was quite proud of his travel photographs as he receives quite a few positive comments on his photographic sense as well as inquiries for travel advice. He wants to continuously improve his photographic skills, as he feels photography has become a competition.

Case 3: Sandy

Picture shared by Sandy of her working holidays in Australia:

Brief Description of Case:

"Sandy," connected to 231 friends on Facebook, has created 128 photo albums in total, which include 72 albums of her travel experience to 5 different destinations in Australia, Europe, and Thailand. Most of Sandy's photographs of Australia are in bright colors with lots of sunshine and blue skies although she captioned that it often rained in Australia. Her photographs of Australia are mostly filled with friends from all over the world, food, drink, gatherings and celebrations, local events, and her home-staying experience with the locals. Most of the items are photographed in pairs or groups. When she is in photographs with others, she often leans towards them to create a sense of closeness.

Sandy mostly uses English to write captions and titles of her travel album. Occasionally, she uses traditional Chinese to write captions and respond to her

audiences' comments. Her captions are filled with words like happy, happy life, dancing, drinking, fun, love, yummy, wonderful, nice, and awesome to describe her on-site experience. She often expresses her appreciation and love to her friends in Australia for valuing her and also how much she misses them through her album captions.

Nonetheless, she felt lonely and bored in Australia. She was not able to make close friends while she was working in Australia. She used to love taking photographs of sceneries and people, but now she has lost the interest in taking photographs constantly. Although she has lost interest in photography after her trip to Australia, she has created 27 photo albums in total after she came back to Hong Kong from Australia within 4 months.

Case 4: Tracey

Picture shared by Tracey of her family trip to Singapore is not included in here as the participant expressed her wish to not include the child for publication. Her favorite photo portrayed her daughter holding a balloon in her hand, running in motion while having a big smile on her face.

Brief Description of Case:

"Tracey," connected to 118 friends on Facebook, has created 17 albums in total, which include 2 albums of her travel trips to Japan and Singapore. Before her child was born, Tracey posted fewer photos onto Facebook. She had posted 2 albums before the birth of her daughter shortly after she joined Facebook. One is her honeymoon trip to Japan and one is about her wedding. Since her child was born, she has posted more photos per album. Most of the photos of her Singapore trip were about her daughter, herself, and the whole family, except that there were a few animals and a waterfall captured alone. Rarely did she post pure landscape phtographs.

I have noticed some changes in terms of how she poses for the camera. Before her daughter was born, she only includes photographs in which she poses for the camera. When she is photographed with her husband, her husband is usually the one who holds her close to him, while she rests her hands in the front or on the side. After her daughter was born, she also includes photographs of her without looking into the camera as the focus of the picture becomes her daughter but not her.

Her Singapore trip was her daughter's first trip. She explained to me in the

interview that she was not a professional photographer, thus it was meaningless to take and post pure landscape photos which one can obtain from postcards. To her, travel photo is meaningful only when the loved ones are present. It is not about the landscape. It is about her—the traveling her.

Case 5: Kit

Picture shared by Kit of her trip to Europe:

Brief Description of Case:

"Kit," connected to 259 friends on Facebook, has created 58 photo albums in total, which include 2 –29 albums of her travel photographs to 13 different destinations in Europe, Thailand, and China. The travel photographs of Kit are organized into albums with the names of the destinations and the year of travel. However, some of her travel photographs are also categorized under the name of the camera being used to take photographs. These albums are usually captioned as 'everywhere in the world'. Mostly, her photographs are displayed to show the effect of the camera being used.

Her photographs of Europe are generally in bright colors except Belgium.

Many of her scenic photographs in Europe are usually historic buildings with a slice of blue sky on the side or artworks from the museum. She rarely includes herself in her photographs, except with her artworks, with food, and with some iconic tourist sites. When she is included in the photographs, she tends to look happy and smiley.

During the interview, Kit expressed to me that she tended to wear shabby clothes without make-up when she traveled. Hence, she preferred not to be in her travel photographs. Food is one of the very few reason why she included herself in a photograph. She loves eating and does not care about gaining weight or minding like her manner other Hong Kong girls.

Kit has traveled widely in Asia and Europe. Up to now, she enjoys traveling around Europe the most as she deeply appreciates the sense of aesthetics that western historic architectures can offer. It was her first trip to Italy that she began to fall for photography. However, her trip to Belgium was a huge disappointment. She hopes to let her friends know of the traps she fell into in Belgium although she offers no captions but only images of the place on Facebook.

Case 6: Ria

Picture shared by Ria of her trip to Yunnan:

Brief Description of Case:

"Ria," connected to 287 friends on Facebook, has created 38 photo albums in total, which include 6 albums of her travel photographs to 3 different destinations: Beijing, Yunnan, and Taiwan. The number of travel photographs per trip being posted by her on Facebook keeps rising. She also includes more captions in her latest travel albums of Taiwan in which a brief description of her daily travel, accommodation, and attractions are provided.

Compared to other travel destinations, her photographs of Yunnan contain fewer pictures of herself but more of locals, scenery, heritage, and ways of life. Images of herself in Yunnan tend to be more restricted and subtle than photographs of herself during her trips to Beijing and Taiwan. Here a lot more of playful self and travel companions are shown.

Interestingly, Ria expressed to me that the Yunnan trip was her most unforgettable trip so far as she enjoys traveling to areas where tourists rarely visit. Beijing was mostly for her parents; and therefore, she visited many iconic tourist sites during her trip to Beijing with lots of planning involved. Her trip to Taiwan was well-planned by her sister who relies heavily on the travel books which Ria dislikes.

Case 7: Disney

Picture shared by Disney of her trip to Japan:

Brief Description of Case:

"Disney," currently maintains two accounts on Facebook: one personal account for her close friends and relatives, and one professional account for her students and colleagues. She is connected to 72 friends on her personal account. She has not created any photo album per se but she posted eight photos in total which include six photos of her trips to Japan and Europe. These photos were posted when she first joined Facebook. All photos include her as the focus of which the background is not easily recognized. There are no captions or titles. A very decent self of her with proper poses and a big, childlike smile is usually presented in

her travel photos. With the help of an application, her favorite photo of herself in Japan was even edited into a billboard poster of self.

Indeed, Disney told me that editing photographs was to explore herself by playing different roles in a fun way, and this time she was transformed into a model. To her, the background of the photo did not matter as much as how she looked in the photo. Nonetheless, Disney was discouraged to post more as she did not receive much response from her audiences on her posting. She perceives Facebook sharing as boring and meaningless.

Case 8: Fung

Picture shared by Fung of his trip to Japan:
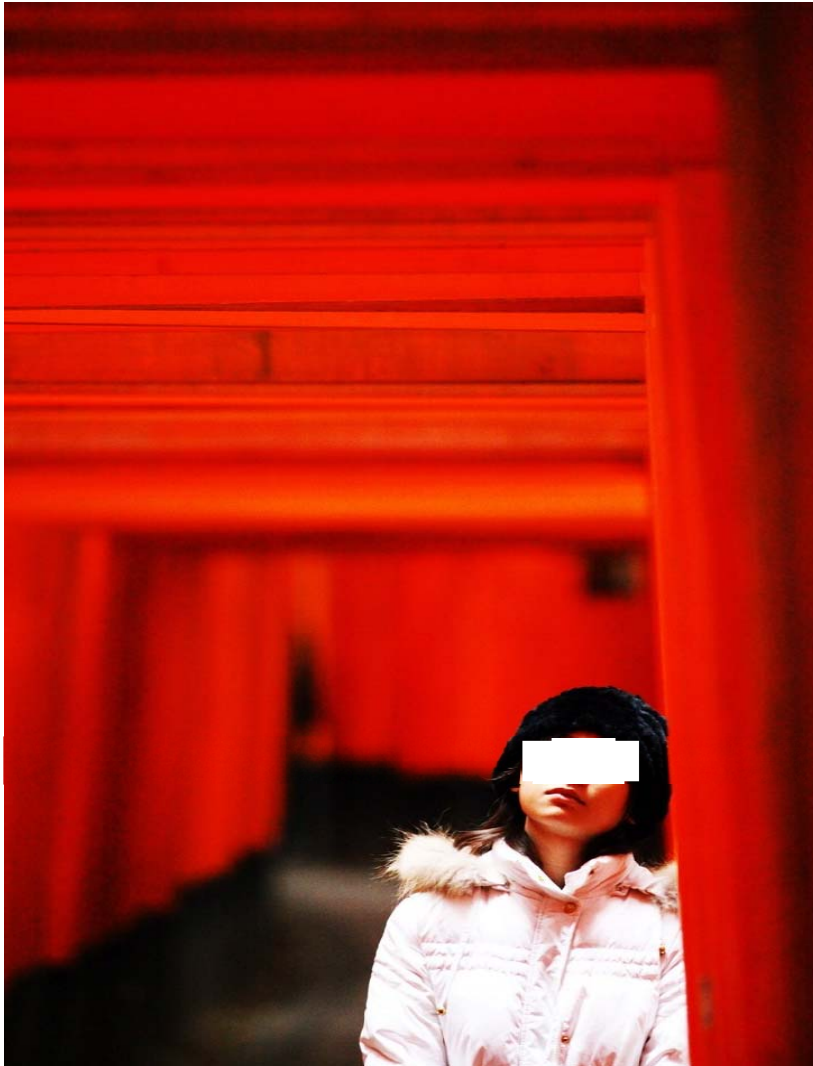
Brief Description of Case:

"Fung," connected to 359 friends on Facebook, has created 82 photo albums in total, which include 5 albums of his travel photographs to Japan. Most of his photographs captured the scenery of red leaves and locals. He rarely includes himself in his photos except when he is with his travel companions. Mostly, the locals and travel companions whom he photographs do not look at the camera while the backgrounds are usually blurred.

He traveled to Japan with five other colleagues. His girlfriend, Kelly (i.e., Case#9), was one of them. He went to Japan mainly to see some red leaves in fall and to take some nice photos. Nonetheless, he was more into photographing people than scenery as he finds human's facial and body expression more interesting and unpredictable. Unlike typical travel photos, he thinks that this favorite photo of his travel companion, unlike a typical tourist photo, is able to create a sense of others as reflective, emotional beings

Nonetheless, he was very ashamed of himself for taking photographs that look as if they were taken from inexpensive digital camera even though he has brought full set of photographic equipment with him. He has often aspired to be a great photographer. He felt like deleting the photographs but he could not do so as tey involved his travel companions.

Half a year after my first interview with him, Kelly broke up with him. He has completely deleted all the travel photo albums. I asked him why his travel photo albums were the first to go. He told me that the memories were too intense and intimate. It seems to me that he does not realize the fact that he still has photographs of Kelly in some other photo albums.

Case 9: Kelly

Picture shared by Kelly of her trip to Thailand:

Brief Description of Case:

"Kelly," connected to 418 friends on Facebook, has created 22 photograph albums in total, which include 1 album of her travel photographs to Thailand. She also went to Japan with Fung (Case#8) and other colleagues but did not post the photos. Rarely do her photos portray pure scenery of Thailand except this favorite photo of hers that portrays the peaceful and romantic dining atmosphere she enjoyed a lot.

A majority of her photos display a big group of relatives and her having fun in all kinds of events, for example, parties, water festival, and dinner gatherings. Her travel photos portray the wild, sweet, fun, and sexy side of her being beloved

by many. The purpose of this trip to Thailand was to visit her relatives in Bangkok with her mother. Although she was still with Fung when she went to Thailand, her photos show closeness of her with different males without clarifying whether they are her relatives or not. In one photo, she hugged a guy on a bike with the captioned "my boyfriend in Thailand" as a joke. Her travel albums receive lots of attention from her friends with several humorous comments sending back and forth.

Although she has traveled with Fung twice, none of these trips were shared. She explained to me that photos of the two are for themselves but not for others. Nonetheless, it is not certain whether her not posting was due to the fact that she was no longer interested in being his girlfriend. After she broke up with Fung, she went to Australia for a working holiday. Intimate pictures of her and her new boyfriend were shared.

Case 10: Vivian

Picture shared by Vivian of her trip to Japan:

Brief Description of Case:

"Vivian" uses several blogs as well as two Facebook accounts to segregate her audiences. On her student account, she is connected to 239 friends and has created 6 photo albums in total, which include 2 – 3 albums of her travel photographs to Japan. Rarely do her photos include self. When self is included, an aesthetic and decent self with makeup is presented. Other than that, most of her photos were pure scenic, foods, locals, transportations, etc. Most of her photos are with captions to describe the places, her feelings towards the place, as well as what she can reflect upon from her experience of the place. One of her close friends left a comment on her photo and laughed, "why are you this skinny all of a sudden?" She commented back by saying "please go to my other account!"

Indeed, she is an excellent example of how a tourist can successfully use

blog to become a travel writer. In 2007, the publisher invited her to write a book for beginners to travel to Japan due to the huge success of her blog. Since 2005, she started posting travel information and photos of Japan on blog. A combination of various kinds of photos was helpful in attracting more readerships. Aesthetic sceneries are to impress the audience. Food and souvenirs are to attract comments and reactions. Signage, iconic sites, and buildings are to serve as a symbol for her readers to find the places easily. On her blog, no photo of self is posted. She said that she is no superstar and that she is not what attracted her audiences. Therefore, it is not necessary to post any travel photos that include her.

She also started teaching Chinese, communication, and journalism at a university in Hong Kong. An additional Facebook account was then opened particularly for this purpose. Ever since then, her photographic practice changed. She needs to think about her audiences when she takes photos since she will need to demonstrate her capability in front of her students. Indeed, this favorite photo of hers has helped her to win a photography competition.

Although I was not allowed to access to her personal account, she explained to me that she dared to post funny photos of herself on her personal account on which she is only connected to very close friends. She did not post these photos on her student account to "maintain her self image." Having said so, she still selects out photos in which she closes her eyes and looks fat for her personal account.

Case 11: JC

Picture shared by JC of his trip to Beijing:

Brief Description of Case:

"JC," connected to 414 friends on Facebook, has created 52 photo albums in total, which include 17–20 albums of his travel photographs to Koh Samui, Beijing, UK, US, and India. Indeed, he went to Beijing twice and has posted both trips on Facebook.

His first trip to Beijing was with Billy (Case#12), his girlfriend and a friend of his girlfriend. The whole album includes a balance of various focuses: self, self and travel companions, travel companions, architectures, and local foods. Self and travel companions are usually presented as playful and happy. A variety of poses and facial expressions are also displayed. Chinese historical architectures are shown through various composition and colors. Blue sky, sunset, and nighttime of

Beijing creates different viewing experience of his trip: energetic, gloomy, and playful.

His second trip to Beijing was a business trip in which he only brought his inexpensive digital camera with him. Here a lot more decent self and others were displayed although the background was still the same.

Indeed, he was very happy with his leisure trip to Beijing since all of them were able to take many nice photos. Three of the travel companions are serious amateurs (i.e., JC, his girlfriend, and Billy). Therefore, they started off the journey with a sense of competition to see who could take better photographs. After the trip, the three of them sat together in his office to evaluate and comment on each other's photos in regards of the potential to edit and to post online. He was able to receive many positive comments, which he sees as "decorations" to his online photos.

He confided to me that he has restricted a few of his colleagues to view his travel photo albums as they gossiped too much. Some of them are very jealous of the fact that he can always travel with company expense so he has to be careful not to display it like he was having lots of fun when he shared photographs of his business trips. Nonetheless, he also wants his friends to know that he has travelled to these many places therefore he chose to post. This Facebook account is also a second account that JC opened. He has completely deleted an account along with some photos after his ex-girlfriend and him had broken up.

Case 12: Billy

Picture shared by Billy of his trip to Beijing:

Brief Description of Case:

"Billy," connected to 289 friends on Facebook, has created 69 photo albums in total, which include 5 albums of his travel photographs to Taiwan and Beijing. He has also been to Sabah but he did not post the photos. He went to Beijing with JC (Case#11), JC's girlfriend and her friend. His favorite photo of the trip portrays JC's girlfriend gazing up under a spotlight. His album of Beijing was titled as "Beijing Trip Day 1" but then it was the only album he has shared on this trip so far. Most of his photographs display his travel companions and himself as playful, happy, and humorous. The female ones usually are the focus of the camera. His photos display a similar focus to those of JC. Nonetheless, the attractions are not experimented with different colors. Quite a few photos capture certain signage as focus of the image. He has also presented objects or scenery that showed the city life of Beijing. Fung did not receive many reactions from the audiences except one

commented on the absence of his girlfriend.

His photos of Taiwan capture many local girls in different parts of Taiwan. Some of the girls were not aware of the camera. Some were aware of the camera but did not smile in them, whilst some were even in photographs with Billy and his travel companions. His travel companions usually kept distance from each other and rarely put on a big smile in the photographs.

Indeed, his trip to Taiwan was his favorite trip. It was when he still travelled with an inexpensive digital camera. He went to Taiwan with all his male friends and felt like he was free to do anything he wanted and say anything he had to say. He has done only minor editing works on his photos of Taiwan, as he was not yet "serious" about photography back then. It was after his trip to Taiwan he started to invest more time and money on photography.

To him, his trip with JC to Beijing was only "ok" (i.e., acceptable). There was nothing in particular that exceeded his expectations. He also seems to complain about his female travel companions quite often during the interview. It seems like he finds them quite annoying, and in particular for restricting the guys from having fun. Having said so, photos of his travel companions are the priority for posting given that he has no time to post all. He also considered the photo of JC's girlfriend as his favorite photo of the trip as it was able to deliver his intense feeling he had of the place.

All in all, he was not particularly enthusiastic about sharing travel

photographs online. Although he still had many more to share, he would rather wait until other photos were shared. Billy thinks that audience's comments are usually meaningless and discouraging.

Case 13: Lily

Picture shared by Lily of her trip to India:

Brief Description of Case:

"Lily," connected to 386 friends on Facebook, has created 60 albums in total, which include 16–17 albums of her travel photographs to five destinations: Silk Road, Philippines, India, UK, and Japan. For her trip to India, she has posted 9 albums with an average of 60 – 100 per each album. Each of the albums is titled with "travel India leisurely and slowly" and followed by name of place being

portrayed. Macro view and close-up shots of attractions are both displayed whereas a combination of pure scenery, her elder sister, and local is presented in her albums. Self is included on a limited basis. Nonetheless, one album displayed 88 photos of self as the focus of the camera. In this album, attractions are displayed as background. Travel companion, locals, and animals are displayed occasionally as addition to self. A comment was left by her audience saying "I finally get to see you in here!" while she responded to the comment with "You said you wanted to see (me), so I gave you the whole album!"

Compared to other trips, the number of photos of her trip to Bohol, the Philippines, is significantly less. The album is titled as "curious george @ bohol 2009." All photographs are without anyone but her stuffed animal "Curious George," which is always smiley, as the focus of the camera.

Lily expressed to me that her trips to the UK and India were her favorites. Even though there could be negative experience in each trip, she accepted them as part of the unavoidable experience of locality. Having said so, her trip to Bohol was an exception. To her, the trip was boring as there was not much to do on the island. Most importantly, her only travel companion (i.e., her ex-boyfriend) was extremely boring as well. Hence, she would rather photograph "Curious George" instead. Indeed, she started traveling with "Curious George" since her trip to Japan. Especially when she travels alone, "Curious George" could represent her in the photos. She thinks that this travel buddy of hers can help enlivening the photographs.

Concluding the Chapter: A Brief Discussion of the Samples

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the samples were selected based on five criteria to first minimize the difference so that typicality of the phenomenon could be illuminated. Hence, all participants shared the same characteristics: they all shared travel images on Facebook, aged 35 or below, were Cantonese-Speaking Chinese who resided in Hong Kong, and had traveled outside the Guangdong area from 2007 – 2009. Yet, the differences among samples were then maximized to reveal variations existed within the phenomenon. The 13 cases represented different level of photographic involvement, travel experience, sphere of audience, as well as social media usage for online sharing.

An ethnographic visual analysis of the 13 cases showed that although certain tourists might share similarities in terms of what they posted online, their reasons for posting or not posting could vary. Except Disney and Lily, all favorite photos chosen by the participants were non-self photos. Pure scenic photos and travel companions were usually chosen as their favorite images of the trips. Even if self is included in the favorite photo, self is usually not the only focus of the image but is accompanied by significant others or friendly locals. Disney is the only exception with the fact that all of her travel photographs were with self as the focus and that places were not as important of her aesthetic self.

It is not certain whether the participants purposively chose non-self photographs as quite a few of them strategically shared a mixture of self, others, and place to avoid being seen as self-obsessive. Hence, they might feel uneasy to

choose a picture of self as their favorite photographs for me as one of their audiences. Alternatively, the participants might have low self-esteem on their own physical appearances. It seems to me that many of them hated to see self in photographs.

It should be noted that the specific contexts of each case could gave rise to the variations among them in terms of what they shared with others. In particular, the status of relationship has a lot to do with the performers' travel posting. The four cases, Pak, JC, Yang, and Fung, all posted photographs of their girlfriends. Nonetheless, Fung had suffered from the instability of his relationship. Photographs were deleted right after Kelly broke up with him. This seems to imply that the emotional suffering can also be the reason why certain images are excluded from sharing. Yet, other cases show how impression management takes place in one's online posting when relationship status changes. Pak could not post his favorite trip due to his relationship status as well. Yet, he was also obliged to put on photographs of self to avoid misinterpretations by others. Yang's images were very much directed by his girlfriend and that his girlfriend is often the focus of the lens. Although Lily had a boring trip with her ex-boyfriend, she still chose to post photographs of Bohol. Yet, "Curious George" was used to enliven her album and that ex-boyfriend and her were completely excluded from this album. The travel images shared by Tracey also differed according to the change of her identity. From a decent wife to a caring mother, the focus of her travel images has shifted from the sweet, loving couples to the happy, energetic daughter. Both emotional constraint and impression management are taken note of in the filtering process of image in Chapter   6.

Chapter Six

Filtering Process of Image Production

Chapter Six

Filtering Process of Image Production

Overview of Chapter

Chapter Five provides an overview of the thirteen cases. Chapter Six introduces the primary codes that emerged from the interview data which helped exploring the filtering process of producing travel photographs online. It will start with asking why certain images were taken. It will then highlight the reasons why photographs were not taken to enrich our understanding of the selection process. It will present the participants' own accounts on how they decided to include or exclude images for online sharing. A filtering process of image will then be introduced as a summary of the chapter.

6.1 Meaning of Photography—Why did you take these photos?

Several codes emerged from content analysis about why participants took certain photographs when they traveled. They are "mo liu" (boredom, nothing to do), fulfill other's request, as artwork, new perspectives, sudden whim, and as an aide- memoiré, competition, enhancement or alternatives of experience.

A camera could indeed help lightening up tourist moments when they were bored. Sometimes when asked why they took particular photographs, the participants responded by saying that "I was simply bored." For example, Kit told me that some of her photographs were taken when she had nothing to do in the hotel

room. Lily told me that sometimes she spent time photographing simply because her travel companion was busy taking photographs and that she had no other things to do.

Also, certain participants were told to bring back photographs for sharing after the trips. Their audiences wanted to see how the places were like and what happened to them during the trip. Photo-taking could somehow be an obligation. For example, Pak would not have taken photographs at all if it was not for his girlfriend. Although he dislikes photography, he took quite a few photographs of him and his girlfriend. Participants like Disney and Vivian would take photographs of food because they knew that their audiences enjoyed viewing them. Tracey also took photographs intentionally for her blog if she had something in mind to write about.

It seems that those who were more involved with photography tended to also see photography as a kind of artwork. They would work to make sure they photographed the places from a unique perspective. For example, Billy categorized his photographs into two types: one type was purely for aide-memoiré. Another type was his art. Here is what he says about travel photographs:

> There are two types of travel photos. One is Xie Shut (a Cantonese word: to write the actual) and then another one is Xie Zhun (a Cantonese word: to write the real). With Xie Zhun type of photo, it does not look like a travel photo at all. I believe there are people out there who take this type of photo. Now when I travel, half of my trip

is for photography.

With the latter type, he did not aim to take photographs to remind him of the place but his feelings towards the place or a particular moment. Hence, the ultimate goal of producing an art form like photograph was to capture and express his feelings of the moment through photography.

Fung sees photography as an artwork but at the same time a way to show others how he sees the world. He sees self as not good at talking. So photography was a safe way for him to interact with others. Through the images he took, he wanted others to see the way he sees the world. JC shared similar thoughts of photography with Fung that photography was a way for him to show others of the world he sees. He often enjoyed capturing the various lives of others to show his audiences not only what he sees but also what makes him think: *"For example, why can this guy sleep while he works? Is that all Chinese are like this? I mean photo like this can make you think."*

Indeed, many participants had a hard time to explain why they took certain photographs. They tended to say they took photographs whenever they saw something unique, "Duk Yee" (i.e., cute, unique, interesting), aesthetic, symbolic, unique, new, or authentic. They tended to run out of words after providing a few of these adjectives. Usually, they would end the conversation by saying, "I don't know. It is really hard to say what to take. It's a feeling." This is what Pak called "the sudden whim." Although he did not like photography at all, he still had the compulsion to take photographs when he encountered breathtaking landscape:

" . . . sometimes when I see really nice landscape, I have that impulse to take out my camera and take pictures of it. It's all about a sudden whim."

It is an unexplainable feeling that made one like Pak who did not enjoy photography also wanted to take photographs. Another example would be Kit. Kit rarely took photographs of herself when she traveled. Nonetheless, she could not resist standing right next to an iconic site like Eiffel Tower for a photograph. When asked why, she said, "I don't know. I just know I had to do it!"

And for someone who is very much into photography like Billy, one remarkable photograph is what makes a trip worth:

Be able to find something unique, something I have never encountered before, something that gives me special feelings, and if the combination of these different objects can allow me to take one aesthetic photo, it is worth the whole trip.

Nonetheless, they usually could not explain further of these words "duk yee" (i.e., cute, unique, interesting), aesthetic, and unique. Certain participants, like Fung and Lily, were especially attracted to sunrays. It was a special feeling that they recognized but could not explain. JC was able to provide the most explicit clarification of what he meant by "duk yee" among all. He was able to explain in details what interested him the most:

There are two things in particular which I must take photographs of: the elderly and the kids. I mean look at the eyes of the elderly, They look very vicissitudinary in any countries. And with the kids. Their smiles are never pretentious. Especially the foreign kids. They are really cute. For example, the elderly, I really want to show you this photo but it's no longer here. I mean the elderly just sat there looking at the front, the sun shone on him, and there was this kid riding on a bike. You could tell that the elderly was so helpless. This is what I call 'moody.'

Unlike JC, many participants did not have particular objects or themes that they considered as "Duk Yee." "Duk Yee" can mean something interesting in Cantonese. It can also mean something new, unique, or cute. "Duk Yee" might not be something meaningful or significant to the participants. Instead, this feeling is usually developed through a comparison of what they can see all the time and what the producers and the audiences rarely see. This rareness also includes those that only happen once in a lifetime, like how Yang put it, "Anything that will not happen twice I'd take photographs!"

Photography is also a way for them to capture the authenticity of a place. Certain participants think that it is more authentic to see images of places taken by themselves. Unlike postcards or commercialized photography, their photographs are a product of their first-hand experience. Many rely on their travel photographs to recall upon their memories of certain travel moments.

Nonetheless, there seems to be a discrepancy between the "truthfulness" of moments which photography captures and the "enhancement" of the moments through different angles of photographing, editing works, and the eliminations of the "unacceptable." At times, the participants stressed the fact that "photograph won't lie." At times, they took pride of the fact that they could make a place more appealing to others through their exceptional photographic eyes and perspectives, if not necessarily their skills. Usually they would take multiple shots of the same attractions to get a "best" version of it. Sometimes, their pictures could also surprise others that the attractions could be presented as this aesthetic through their photographs. For example, Yang took photographs to show his friends new travel ideas. Nonetheless, photography was also a competition of travel moments and photographic skills. When asked whether his photographs would provide his audiences an altered image of a place, he said:

Well not necessarily. Cause photography is to capture my moment. My moment is not your moment. I just think it will enhance the attractiveness of the attractions. Whether you can capture the same angle, it really depends on your photographic skill. But it pushes you to do better in photography. Well other than sharing with others, just when you view the photographs yourself, they are more appealing to you. And for those who view your photos, they are also more appealing to them. So they will leave a remark to me and to others.

Billy believes that photography is not about capturing things the way they truly are. Instead, it is about showing others what he is interested in and what gives

him special feelings:

No, not the full picture of it. It's really plain to photograph like that.
I want to focus on a particular spot not necessarily the whole thing. I
mean photography is not about recording everything. Oh here is the
cabinet, so what? It's about showing others what you see and the
partiality of it can help them to focus on what you want them to see.
I mean look at these three cats! They are so cute!

Photography can also offer them the alternative way to experience what
they cannot experience. For example, JC could not experience local foods as they
were out of his comfort zone. Through photography, he was able to consume what
he could not consume:

I mean look at this. Starfish, scorpions and cockroaches! Who's
gonna eat it. But I have taken photographs of it. It's like I don't have
to eat them but I can take photos.

Hence, taking photographs can be an alternative and safer way for tourists
to have a "taste" of locality and to take part in something that is completely outside
their comfort zone.

6.2 Meaning of Photography—Why not taking photographs?

There were times during conversations with the participants that I could ask
them the question "why did you not take photographs?" This helped understand at

what point the participants stopped taking photographs for what reasons. This could help shed light on why certain images exist and why certain images of their experience were left out.

Several primary codes emerged. They are "mo liu" (i.e., nothing special, pointless), nature of trip, safety, not permitted, too occupied, unacceptable self, bored of photography. Most often, the participants did not take photographs because what they encountered with was of nothing special to them. It was pointless to take photographs of things that they could see everywhere. Sometimes they anticipated taking photographs of what they had expected prior to the trip like Eiffel Tower. Yet, sometimes they refused to take photographs of what they have expected. For example, Lily did not take photographs of the dirt and dust in India as she thought that it was what she expected already. Hence, it was of nothing special to her.

Sometimes, the specific nature of their trips could also reduce the number of photographs they took. It could also discourage them to carry a camera along. For example, Pak could not even bring a camera along for some of his trips, as they were some secret trips of his travel companions. The existence of camera was "risky" in that sense as the leakages of images could bring them inconveniences. Hence, travel companions could play a decisive role of whether they took photographs or not. Like Kelly, she rarely took photographs whenever Fung was around as he was good at it. Fung was not able to take good photographs due to the fact that they had to rush through each attraction. It was not nice to have others to miss out some of the attractions because of him. After all, it was everyone's first

time to visit Japan.

Other than secret trips, non-sightseeing trips like sun and beach could also reduce the number of photographs taken, as the purpose of the trip was relaxation. In addition, whether it was safe to bring a camera along could discourage participants to engage in photography. In that case, safety in a way can mean the concealment of secrets. The concern for safety can also apply to the photographic equipment itself. Participants might not carry a camera along if their cameras could be easily stolen or ruined. For example, Pak did not carry cameras with him when he visited Southeast Asia, especially when he was out at the beach. Lily did not take photographs when she felt like her camera could be ruined. Yang did not get to take a lot of photographs in Taiwan because of the bad weather.

Sometimes, participants were not permitted by the locals to take photographs. For example, Yang was not able to take photographs of an infamous local snack as the owner of the shop told him not to do so. He thought about taking photographs of the snack further away from the shop as many others did. Yet, he decided to respect the wish of the owner so he did not take any photographs. Ria was also told not to take photographs of certain locals in Lijiang. Nonetheless, she secretly took a few photographs of them. Participants also could have a difficult times photographing themselves. For example, Lily could not take many photographs of self when she traveled alone in the UK. Tracey rarely got a photograph of the whole family as she did not want to keep bothering others to take photographs of them. Kelly could not take photographs of the dances and nightlife on the boat that she enjoyed a lot since it was hard to photograph without sufficient

light.

Some participants like Kelly, Billy, Sandy, and Kit told me that their most exciting moment in the trip was shopping. When asked why their shopping activities were not in their photographs, they gave answers like, "of course, I am already too excited about shopping, I don't even remember my camera anymore!" Rather, they usually photograph their souvenirs by displaying them on their beds when they are back in the hotel.

Sometimes, participants did not take photographs particularly because of their physical appearance. For example, Kit rarely included self in photographs when she traveled as she usually wore shabby clothes without make-up. Like Kit, Fung and Pak also disliked seeing their physical selves, hence they either got into photography to avoid being photographed or held a negative attitude towards photography.

When photography is overly practiced, it can become annoying and boring. For example, Disney and Pak think that most Hong Kong tourists are too obsessive with photography and are disturbed by the fact that most tourists just take photographs pointlessly. Thinking back of her trips, Ria thinks that photography could sometimes distract from her experience of attractions. Sandy even got bored of taking photographs since her trip to Australia. She thinks that she has seen too much already:

Because when I was in Australia I have taken too many

photographs and it could get so boring to take photographs. So I only took photographs when I visited a new place, or had some gatherings with my friends. Plus I had been working for a while so I didn't get to have the time to take photographs. So yes, going to some new places, or oh our farewell parties, then I took photographs. So I haven't taken photographs for a whole year. I started to feel like there are certain things I don't' need to take photographs of.

6.3 Online Photo-Sharing—What to include, what to exclude?

When participants were asked how they selected photographs for sharing with others, cases like Vivian, Disney, Ria, Kelly, Sandy, and Lily were more proactive in the selection of photographs whereas participants like Pak, Yang, Kit, Tracey, Fung, JC, and Billy were more passive.

Those who were proactive in their selection of photographs tended to have images in mind of what to share. They selected particular types of photographs for sharing. Those who were passive in their selection of photographs tended to explain what they selected out from posting. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the passive ones could also be very selective. For example, Yang only shared 20% of his photographs of Japan even though he expressed that he simply shared everything online. Kit could only share 20% of her photographs of Europe as she had taken "too many photographs" of that trip.

Those who answered with what to share tended to say that they would select anything that is "Duk Yee," aesthetic, iconic, symbolic, authentic, humorous,

accommodation and food when they thought of their selections. These categories are quite similar to the ones most participants mentioned when they were asked what to take photographs of. In particular, aesthetic photographs seemed to be the priority for sharing. Interestingly, most participants mentioned about taking photographs of aesthetic places or objects but rarely mentioned about taking photographs of their aesthetic selves. And when they were asked about what to share, participants like Disney and Ria proactively selected aesthetic photographs of self. Vivian purposively selected one to two photographs of "energetic" self for sharing with her students. It could be due to the fact that many of them were not used to self-photographing while traveling.

The term "humorous" was also rarely mentioned in the participants' on-site photographic practices. Nonetheless, it has become one of the criteria of selection for participants like Kelly:

Because normally I view each photo and then judge whether I should post it up or not, see whether it is humorous or not, haha, and then think it's ok, then I open an album and find the folder to upload the photos.

Certain participants like Lily and Kelly also proactively selected photographs that could deliver a certain message to their audiences. Lily stressed upon the importance of taking and posting aesthetic photographs. Nonetheless, she also posted photograph of the unaesthetic if she had messages in mind to tell through images. Here is a conversation between Lily and me:

Lily: " . . . when I wanted to tell them about certain things…for example, post offices are not pretty. But I wanted them to know that the post office in India is like this. So yes that is. "

Iris: "what makes you want to tell them about the post office in India?"

Lily: "well, actually because I often send postcards to others whenever I travel. So I tend to take photos of post offices everywhere to tell the differences among them. Because the post offices in India were too simple. I wanted to let them know that I actually did wait painstakingly, haha, because it was so difficult to find a post office in India. It was so hard to find postal for mailing postcards. But it was fun. It was still ok."

Iris: "Oh I see!"

Lily: "And even if I look ugly and if I found some stories interesting I would still share."

Compared to Facebook, it was harder for the participants to share a large number of photographs on blog. They could only select a few which they liked the most or which complemented the themes of their written texts. To them, photographs on blog were to help attracting the audiences and to enliven the texts.

Most of the time, self is not included in their photographs on blog.

Those who were rather passive in photo selection rarely mentioned what to select for posting. Instead, they usually talked about what not to share. All participants stressed on selecting out repetitive and blurry photographs. These are the types of photographs that first came into their minds. Other than that, those who were more into photography tended to select out photographs of low quality, for example, out-focused, photographs, images which were not taken intentionally, or images which were not captured in a way they wished.

Most female participants stressed on excluding photographs of unpretty self or ugly self. Sandy and Kelly chose to select out "unpretty" self. When asked what it meant by "unpretty" or ugly self, participants found the question very odd, as it is a very "normal" practice to exclude "unpretty" or "ugly" self from sharing. For example, Sandy responded in this way:

What? I mean, hmmm . . . what? How to say this? I mean sometimes you were snapshotted by others when you are chewing a gum, well anyway when I see the side of myself which is not pretty. I mean you too, right? If you have a profile picture you also will choose a pretty photo of yourself. It has to be my happy, pretty self. Well, actually just one word - pretty. Any photo in which I look pretty.

Those who performed certain social roles like teacher and mother also

tended to exclude "indecent" self from posting. For example, Vivian did not share her "funny" self on her student account. Disney also mentioned about not posting photos of self when she was having a big laugh for her student account.

A few participants also mentioned about excluding photographs of their travel companions who were not willing to be seen by the unknown others. To them, it is a courtesy act. It is also a means to respect others' wishes. Billy intentionally selected out photographs of one of his travel companions of his Taiwan trip as he explicitly told him not to. Kit also selected out some of her travel companions from posting even though they did not explicitly tell her to do so. The participants tend to be more careful when it comes to those who are not on Facebook as they are not used to the sharing culture of images online. Nonetheless, if their travel companions were also active producers on Facebook, they tended to assume that it was "ok" to share the photographs.

Participants were also concerned about the intimacy of photos. They tended to reduce the number of photographs which portray the couple only as they think that these types of photographs are between the two but are not for others to view. Previous romantic partners are also a must to be selected out from posting. Nonetheless, the intimacy which family photos portray is seen to be different. Rather than sharing pure scenic photographs, Tracey purposively selected photographs of the family for sharing since these images are non-replicable:

Well, if I travel, I rarely take photos without people in them. We are not photographers. Why don't you simply buy postcards if you want

pure landscape picture? Even if there's scenery I want to take photos of, I still need a person in the photo. Most of the landscape photos were taken by my husband. And I don't think they are something special. I want to share with others that, well this is my travel trip. Or it's our family's travel trip. So that's why I don't post many landscape photos on.

Participants like Ria, Sandy, and Lily posted a mixture of self, otherness, and pure scenery. Ria explicitly expressed to me that posting too many photographs of self might lead others to see her as narcissistic. Hence, a good mixture of self, travel companions, and pure scenic photographs can be a way for certain participants to avoid being seen as self-obsessive.

6.4 Consciousness of Audience and Image Selection

Other than asking the participants directly what they included and excluded from their online-sharing, responses given to other questions also revealed some of their posting strategies. Although most participants insisted that their online photos were for them but not for others, they were indeed very concerned with whether and how their audiences viewed their online-postings. For example, when asked "will your friends' comments change the way you take and post photos in the future?" Lily said,

Well, I don't care what they think. The photos are mine. They are for me. I post them (the photos) here. If they want to view them, fine. If they are not interested in them, it is fine as well. It doesn't bother

me.

Nonetheless, a different answer was then given by Lily when asked why she selected photographs for posting:

"I don't post many photos online. The thing is if you post too many, people are going to lose interest . . ."

Hence, drawing audience's interest in one's travel photos contributes to the inclusion and exclusion of images for online-sharing. It is especially the case among those who adopted more proactive posting strategies. These participants were able to list out certain types of images that could interest the audiences. For example, aesthetic, food, and souvenirs were usually considered as the types of images that could draw audience's attention. Having said so, the participants expressed that it was impossible to predict audience's preferences. In other words, the participants often encountered difficulties in knowing what kind of images was considered as "aesthetic" to their audiences. Hence, they tended to choose images that appealed to self first. For example, when asked why unpretty self was to be excluded from posting, Kelly said: "Well I guess if I don't even like to view it, others will not like to view it too."

In that sense, providing good viewing experience to the audiences is a key principle for one to select what to post and how to post. To be able to provide good viewing experience, the performers have to make sure their online postings are appealing to themselves first.

Concluding the Chapter: Filtering Process of Image Production

This study recognizes that image selection occurs at different stages of a travel trip. A filtering process of image, which recognizes the importance of impression management as well as other reasons or constraints in tourist's selection for sharing images online, is presented in Figure 5.

First, one will need to decide whether or not to bring a camera along to the trip. As mentioned before, sometimes a camera is not allowed in certain trip. Sometimes, due to safety concern, one might also not bring a camera along. One might not need to bring a camera if one does not find the need to take photographs since travel companion can help taking photographs. Sometimes, one might even not be interested in taking photographs at all.

One might decide to bring a camera along when taking photograph itself is considered as an enjoyment. Most often, a travel trip is seen to be worth keeping a record of. Hence, those who do not take photographs in Hong Kong might also bring a camera with them when they travel. Sometimes, one might bring a camera along as an obligation, for example, Pak brought a camera along to fulfill his girlfriend's request.

One will need to decide when, how, and whether or not to take photographs during different moments of their on-site experience. Images are not taken mostly because what the tourists encounter might seem to be too ordinary or meaningless to them to take photographs of. There is simply nothing special to take their camera

out for photo-taking. Sometimes the tourists can be too occupied and excited that they have no time for photographs. They may have even completely forgotten about their cameras. There are times when images of self are not taken as the tourists are not satisfied with how they look. And even if they are happy to be in photographs, they may not be able to take too many photographs of self when they travel alone. For example, Lily could not take too many photographs of herself in the UK. Tracey often wanted more photographs of the whole family but she could not as she did not want to keep bothering others for photographing. Sometimes, tourists are not allowed to take photographs due to local customs or policies. They can also be bored of photographing when they have taken too many photographs. Most importantly, the tourists all review their photographs on-site. Some of them like Yang, JC, and Pak might delete images with which they were unsatisfied right away.

Images can be taken as an aide-memoire to the tourists. They want to remember particular special moments or people they encountered. They can also take photographs because certain attractions or objects appeal to be unique, aesthetic, iconic, or authentic to them. This type of photo taking is rather unexplainable as they simply feel like they have to take photographs. There are also times when tourists take photographs to fulfill other's requests for photographs of food and attractions. Tourists might also need to take photographs for their travel companions when they request for them. For example, Yang took photographs under the instruction of his girlfriend. As mentioned before, certain images were taken when the tourists were simply bored and had nothing to do. Hence, images are not always taken because the photographed objects or persons are significant or

special to them. Sometimes, tourists also use photo-taking as a way to consume what they cannot consume.

Once images are taken, then tourists will need to decide whether or not to share the images online with others. Certain trips are simply not shared due to the fact that their travel companions have already shared the photographs. Hence, it can be unappealing to their mutual audiences as the posting can seem repetitive. Blurry, repetitive photographs, and unacceptable self are not shared as they can seem unappealing to the audiences as well. Nonetheless, tourists might not be able to predict or know what their audiences prefer or like, hence they will choose images which appeal to self first. If the images are not even acceptable for self-viewing, then they should not be online for others to view. Sometimes, images are not posted to respect other's wishes or to protect those who are not used to the sharing culture of Facebook. Photographs of couples are usually reduced to the minimum as they seem to be too intimate for sharing. Some of the photographs can be too pointless or meaningless for others to view as they do not share the same experience. Sometimes tourists might also be dissatisfied with the images when they view them again on their computer screen. Certain images are also not shared to maintain self image. For example, Vivian excludes any funny photographs of self from posting on her student account. Certain images are not shared to avoid misinterpretation. For example, Pak excluded his ex-girlfriend from posting even though it was his most unforgettable trip.

Images can be shared to fulfill certain obligations. For example, Billy placed group photographs as priority for sharing even though he found his female

travel companions quite annoying. Images can be shared because they are appealing to self. As mentioned before, tourists can only estimate what images will appeal to their audiences based on their past experience of posting and other's posting experience. Hence, they tend to choose images which appeal to self first. Images can be shared to help delivering certain messages to the audiences or to stimulate discussions. Images can also be shared to avoid misinterpretation by the audiences. Last but not the least, images can be shared to proactively enhance one's self image. For example, Yang proactively selected images of unique places in Tokyo to strengthen his image as an explorer. JC actively shared images which were edited and were "ready-to-go" to enhance his image as a photographer. Vivian actively shared images which showcased her ability in travel and photography to enhance her image as a well-qualified instructor to her students.

Images can also be deleted even if they are shared online. Fung has deleted his travel albums due to the pain he suffered from breaking up with Kelly. He has always wanted to delete these images anyway as he was quite dissatisfied with their quality. Nonetheless, images might not be deleted sometimes even though the producers are ashamed of them. The images might involve others who might still need them. The deletion of images may also not help maintaining the producer's self image if others would notice the deletions. Sometimes the photographs are not deleted as they are simply not viewed by the producers again. For example, Pak never viewed his online postings again until the interview. Most of the time, the images remained online as the producers are simply satisfied with the images.

So what can this filtering process of image tell us? It has been often

suggested that photography in general is largely about capturing the significant and what is worth to remember (Chalfen, 1981; Sontag, 1977). Indeed, my findings challenge this perspective of tourist photography. At least it is not always the case. Sometimes participants simply captured objects which they had no idea of but just "photogenic." This is the reason why Susan Sontag (1977) suggests that photography is more than about confirming the experience but also "refusing" the experience "by limiting experience to a search for the photogenic, by converting experience into an image, a souvenir" (p. 9). To a certain extent, it is quite true. Some of my participants did not aim to capture "reality" but to search for ways to enhance the "reality." They refused the "reality" by enhancing the "reality" and searching for better visual experience through framing, or even editing. Nonetheless, I would think that more than to refuse the experience, it is also a way to create the experience as Scarles (2009) suggests. A camera helps to build a link between the tourist and the attraction.

MacCannell (2011) argues that Urry's conception of the gaze has so far provided one of the most reasonable articulations of the linkage between the tourist and the attraction. Nonetheless, he suggests that there is indeed more than one type of gaze in tourism and in particular, there are two types which have already been theorized. The first type is the Foucaultian gaze that Urry references from. What tourists see is what tourists get. It is a product of the commercialization of tourism attractions. The first gaze also involves the power relationship between the gazer and the gazee. The locals are said to behave and present themselves through the eyes of the tourists. The second gaze is the Stendhalian gaze which involves freeing oneself from the first gaze. Yet, MacCannell argues that the first gaze is

paradoxically what creates the second gaze. The first gaze focuses on the extraordinary and the visible. The second gaze focuses on what goes beyond the visible. The first gaze creates the boundary of ways of seeing shaped by institutions, and at the same time, produces the absence of what is outside the boundary of tourist gaze. Therefore, the visible creates the invisible. The second gaze is the consciousness of the invisible. If the first gaze is about the search of the extraordinary, then the second gaze is the search of the hidden and the beyond.

Filtering process of image

With or Without a Camera

Without:
1. Nature of Trip
2. Safety concerns
3. No Need

With:
1. Enjoyment
2. Aide-Memoire
3. Obligation

Image NOT Taken:
1. Nothing special
2. Too occupied
3. Unacceptable self
4. Not permitted
5. Bored of photography
6. Deleted

Image Taken:
1. Aide-memoire
2. Sudden whim
3. Fulfill other's request
4. Boredom
5. Alternative of experience

Image NOT Shared:
1. Unappealing to audience
2. Unappealing to self
3. Respect other's wishes/protect others
4. Intimacy
5. Pointless/meaningless
6. Maintain self image
7. Avoid misinterpretation

Image Shared:
1. Obligation
2. Appealing to self
3. Appeal to audience
4. Help delivering a message
5. Avoid misinterpretation
6. Enhance self image

Image DELETED:
1. Painful memory
2. Dissatisfaction/shameful

Image Remain ONLINE:
1. Satisfied with the postings
2. Other may notice deletion
3. involve others

Figure 5: Filtering Process of Image

The findings of this study seem to suggest that these two types of gaze are helpful in explaining certain photographic acts of the participants. The first type helps provide insights on the particular feeling they had towards certain attractions, especially the breathtaking feeling or the "must-see" feeling. For example, the participants usually could not explain why there was a "sudden whim" or the feeling of "must-have" when they encountered an attraction or scenery. They simply did not know how to describe in words why the attraction was appealing to them. They knew that these attractions were "extraordinary," "unique," "aesthetic," or "iconic" to them. Like Urry (2002) suggests, extraordinary is always shaped by a comparison with one's everyday world. My participants often stressed upon the search of things that they could not find in Hong Kong. Things especially they could only experience once-in-a-life-time.

Indeed, quite a few participants also expressed the necessity of escaping from the Foucaultian gaze. The Stendhalian gaze helps conceptualizing this type of escape. This type of escape is not the escape which Urry focuses on. Urry's notion of escape is about escaping from the ordinariness of everyday life. What I found in my study is that the participants also want to escape from the ordinariness of tourism norms. They often stressed upon their refusal to make "typical" tourist photographs. They specifically looked for what went beyond the tourist gaze, to what MacCannell refers to as the Stendhalian gaze. Indeed, it seems to me that the two types of gaze share one thing in common. At the end of the day, they both aim to break oneself free from the norms set by others, although one is a socially-shaped desire to search for the extraordinary visible whilst the other one is a consciousness to free oneself from the socially-constructed visibility.

These two types of gaze help illuminate another interesting aspect of the filtering process – the escape from repetitiveness. This study found that repetitiveness is a curse in tourist photographic practices. They require uniqueness, novelty, difference but definitely no repetitiveness. Nonetheless, as an audience of their photographs, I have found that many photographs were quite repetitive to each other. Leung (2010), based on her study of the backpacker's photographs, argues that there are constraints in how backpackers use photography to differentiate themselves as they are restricted by the limit of the two-dimensional frame as well as the collective imaginaries and aesthetic norms that are projected to them. Nonetheless, this explanation cannot solve my puzzle on the repetitiveness of their photographs since they stressed on the fact that no repetitive photographs should be shared. If it is due to the constraints of framing, then the tourists can simply select out the repetitive photographs. I still do not understand why my participants do not see their photographs as repetitive, like the way I see them.

Perhaps Roland Barthes' (1980) concepts of the "punctum" and "studium" can help explaining this interesting phenomenon. Barthes was very intrigued by the fact that some photographs could retain his attention and leave a mark in him, while others could not. Sadly, no theories of photography could help enlighten him in respect of this. Reflecting on his own experience of photography, he realizes that the least noticeable details of a photograph can indeed make a great impact on his viewing experience. He calls these details the "puntum." According to him, a photograph encompasses two elements. "Studium" represents the facts or what the photograph tries to portray. "Punctum" represents the unremarkable details that

trigger the viewers' emotions and subjective experience they have towards the photograph. Not all photographs contain "puntum," the element that strikes the viewer like an arrow (Barthes, 1980). Therefore, very slight differences of two photographs may provoke different emotions and viewing experience to the producers. Other than that, we have to bear in mind that the producers' emotions are largely derived from their travel memories. Therefore, these seemingly repetitive photographs are not "repetitive" in the producer's eyes.

The presented filtering process of image acknowledges the power of tourist gaze in tourist photographic practices. Yet, it only serves as one of the few reasons why images are produced. The descriptive findings suggest that tourist's image selection is far more dynamic than reproducing the widely circulated ones. Tourists are often in the position to free themselves from the ordinariness and repetitiveness of social norms, yet are also very concerned with "fitting-in" or even impressing the audiences at the same time in their image selection. Also, their reasons for including or excluding images can differ from stage to stage. The closer it is to the end of the filtering process, the more conscious the tourists are of managing their impressions to others through travel image production.

Chapter Seven

Controls of Impressions

Chapter Seven

Controls of Impression

Overview of Chapter

Chapter Six presented the various reasons why particular images were shared or not shared. As mentioned before, whether it is a pure scenic photo or a photo of self with an attraction, there is already an impression given off when the image is shared. This chapter focuses on addressing the tactics the performers adopted to control impressions others had of them through producing travel images online. It also will take into consideration the oral accounts provided by the participants as a means to control impression.

7.1 The Art of Explaining the Whys

The "why sharing" question seems to be the most challenging question for most of my participants to answer. Except Tracey, Fung, and Kelly, all addressed that they wanted to show others a new place and share with others their experience. When probed even further, most of them paused for a while or even could not provide a deeper answer.

Some participants briefly mentioned that their practices either involved bragging or the desire to be acknowledged by others after other reasons were discussed. For example, Disney rejected her first attempt by suggesting that sharing is a way to brag oneself. Here is a conversation between Disney and me:

Iris: "Why do you want to share your photos with others?

Disney: "Perhaps there are some unique sceneries, unique food, and, so I post them. Perhaps some people find them interesting and worthy to visit so I share. They might find these information invaluable."

Iris: "Right I see. So you want to let others know about invaluable information of places is that right?"

Disney: "Well, not really, I guess at the end of the day, it's just to show off. I mean these are indeed really **mo liu** (i.e., A Cantonese word with a meaning close to "pointless," "meaningless," or "not worth to mention about" in English), ha ha! Isn't it? Sharing! Sharing! Actually the word sharing is very **mo liu**. What's the point of sharing? At the end of the day, every one just wants to brag!"

The concern for ego-enhancement, if ever mentioned, was usually talked about in brief when the participants ran out of reasons to explain their practices. For example, JC responded in this way when asked why he enjoyed showing others new places to vsit:

Err . . . actually, I guess it's about sharing with others…can I say it's a practice? Actually I don't know. Perhaps it's the nature of my job. I have to supervise my staff to provide things for everyone to see. This

is one of the reasons why. I am not going to admit or deny if there is any hidden reason there. But the most important thing is, the things that I have done, for example I have done this, and for this, you know, I want to tell others and recommend others what I have seen and experienced. If you are interested, you can ask me for information I will tell you. And I would also say, there is a little bragging too. Just a little ha ha.

Those who had a hard time giving out an answer were usually encouraged to take their time to think. When they took their time to think for an answer, various responses were given. Some emphasized their ability to teach others about new places and new ways of traveling. They usually indicated that Facebook could be a great platform for travel information-exchange. Yet, such an exchange is not an equal one as they usually saw themselves as the ones offering travel advice instead of receiving it. They tended to adopt a leadership rhetoric when explaining why they shared photographs. For example, Yang responded in this way when asked why he enjoyed showing his friends new places for traveling:

> For example, some friends might ask me about how to travel. So it's not just about showing them where you have been, it's more about encouraging information exchange among friends. For example, I have friends who really want to travel around Tokyo and they might not know how to travel around so we can teach them how to so that they can also travel like us.

Some chose to see sharing as an obligation to fulfill other's expectations. They expressed that their friends were expecting their photographs and therefore, it was best to simply share everything on Facebook so that those who were interested in their photographs could view. It was an obligation to fulfill other's curiosity of their experience. Yet, when analyzed deeper, their answers revealed different patterns.

On the one hand, online sharing can be a means to stimulate online discussions. For example, Fung first expressed that his trip involved his colleagues hence it was necessary for him to share the photographs back with his travel companions. Indeed, he shared these photographs with them by using USB since his travel companions demanded from him the original version of the photographs. When I asked him why he found the need to share his photographs with those who did not travel with them, he said,

> Err . . . well most of the time my photos are about my colleagues, so whenever I take photos I want to share with them and discuss with them, so it's natural to post and let them view the photos . . . my colleagues are the ones who got me into photography so most of the time I feel like sharing photographs with them and discuss with them.

On the other hand, online sharing can also be what encourages others to travel and to enrich other's worldviews. For example, Lily first expressed that she enjoyed sharing interesting places and stories with her friends. When asked why,

she said,

> Well, because they will ask me about them anyway. And if that's the
> case, why don't I simply share with everyone all at once. I mean,
> you might have never been here before, and you might have a
> certain perception about this place, but my perception can be
> different from yours so I want to share my view. And then you may
> get to know, oh actually the place is not like that. That India is not
> that…well actually it's really that dirty but it's a lot more than being
> dirty. So me, myself I have encountered this. And next time if you go,
> see if you are going to encounter something else. Beause I think
> everyone can encounter different things when they travel. So I have
> encountered these and you may think that they are interesting and so
> you may want to visit this place, and next time if you go, you may
> have something else to share with others.

Regardless of the various reasons given, the participants usually argued that they had already taken the photographs hence it would be a waste not to share them with others. Travel was their happy moments and that sharing one's travel moments involved no risk. Therefore, they tended to ask me in return—"why not sharing?"

7.2 Concealment of Intention

When analyzed further, the responses given by the participants were often found contradictory to their actions. The contradictory nature of their answers and actions implies that online-sharing is largely a tool for one to control impressions

proactively or protectively, even though most participants did not express this concern during the interviews.

For example, Kit expressed that her posting could encourage others to travel and help broadening the worldview of her audiences when asked why she enjoyed showing others interesting places:

> Err . . . I don't know . . . Perhaps it's to make everyone's life less boring. Well, perhaps they are often in Hong Kong, I think their worldview is very narrow. And perhaps I am working in this industry, and I think that tourism can help the world in many ways. So I think we should go out and see more. I want to tell them: don't restrict yourself in Hong Kong. The world is indeed very big. Hong Kong is just one point in the world and it is so little. There are many things out there to see.

Having said so, most of her friends loved travelling to a variety of places and that she was not certain whether her online photographs could encourage her friends to visit more places. Although Kit believed that her sharing was to encourage travel, she expressed that she was not concerned whether her audiences actually viewed the photographs or not. This is how she responded when she was asked about how to attract others to view her travel photographs, "I don't really care enough to think how to intrigue them. I mean, if they get to view them, then view them. If not, that's fine haha."

As for those who expressed their wishes to provide travel advice to others,

their travel albums rarely presented negative aspects of their trips. Although captions were sometimes provided in addition to photographs, most of their captions offered very limited travel information to their audiences. When asked how they provided travel advice to their audiences through online visual images, they tended to say that the audiences would ask them for more information if they were interested in visiting the places.

It seems that most participants desired enhancing their egos through travel posting. Yet, they were reluctant to be seen as so. Those who mentioned about ego enhancement as one of their ultimate goals of sharing photographs online also found this side of self as "unspeakable." They tried to avoid saying it out loud until they ran out of explanation. When this "unspeakable" side of self had to be mentioned, they usually shared the "embarrassment" with the general others by saying that "I am just like everyone else" and laughed off about it to soothe the unease. Those who did not mention about ego enhancement tried hard to find convincing reasons to rationalize their practices. Yet, their reasons usually contradicted with their actions. Hence, ego-enhancement as one of the whys of sharing is to be concealed from the audiences in order for it to serve its purpose well.

Indeed, Facebook is a preferred platform for impression management for this reason. What the performers appreciate the most is its non-intrusive nature. They do not need to inform their audiences directly about their postings like how they do on blog and other social media:

I have tried several media before but I never used them anymore.

Like MySpace, Yahoo!Blog. I think they are extremely bad, not

user-friendly at all. Beause they are not good for photo-sharing. Plus

you need to have a stable group of audiences who keep checking out

of your updates, unlike Facebook, they can just view whenever you

post things up. (Case 2: Yang)

On Facebook, the performers do not need to announce the new post to a

specific group of audience in order to induce attention. Instead, what they share is

shown as "news" to their network. These audiences within the network have

developed the habit of checking out the "news" of their own networks. They have

the option to choose what to view. They can also choose to view in details or

quickly scan through the images anytime they want.

Most importantly, the performers can lower the possibility of being seen as

showing off and annoying. This type of sharing offered by Facebook is usually

perceived as more ideal when compared to a face-to-face sharing. The

non-immediacy and non-intrusive nature of interaction can also reduce the unease

caused by pretentious behaviors of both the performer and the audience:

I think people can view your photos when they have time if you post

them online. If you bring your photos out to a gathering, they are

forced to view your photos even if they are not interested in them.

They can view my photos any way they prefer when the images are

online. You can simply have a quick look at them in general, or you

can view them one by one. That's their choice. I think it's more

comfortable for both parties in this way. (Case 4: Tracey)

On the one hand, the performers can conceal the ego-enhancement purpose of sharing by uploading the visual images without indicating to whom the show is for. The photographs are posted because the performer is obligated to share or is requested to share by certain audiences within the network. Hence, they might not be posted for you although you are viewing them now. In that case, the performer will not look as bad even if the audiences are not interested in viewing them. On the other hand, the performer can also avoid annoying the audiences, which can potentially bring negative impact to one's self-image.

7.3 Calculative Impression Management

Indeed, visual image as a form of travel sharing was a lot more preferable to the participants than written text. The participants disliked the fact that they had to write and to think too much for sharing. With blog, the participants often expressed that they had to be in the mood to write so it could take them longer time to share on blog. Although blog was viewed as a better way to provide travel advice since it offered better design for written texts, most adopted Facebook as the only platform for sharing. Blog does not offer competitive photo-sharing function when compared to Facebook. It is another reason why quite a few participants abandoned blog.

One interesting point to make is that these participants indeed frequently shared text messages as their "status" on Facebook. Hence, written text was still a preferable form of sharing for their everyday life encounter on another social media. Quite often, these written texts revealed their negative emotions and difficulties

they encountered in life at that particular moment of sharing.

Unlike postings of everyday encounter, travel posting is less impulsive. Participants usually waited until they come back from their trips for online-sharing even though limited photographs were sometimes shared when they had access to the Internet. This seems to suggest that sharing travel experience through written texts may require a lot more thinking than a comparatively impulsive-thought-for-sharing. It involves memory recall and reconstruction. It involves a longer selection process for sharing.

Indeed, sharing images on Facebook is not effortless. To some, it could also be a tedious and painful process. In general, the time required for sharing photographs on Facebook could range from 1 hour to several days. Although many participants considered the production of visual images could be an enjoyment itself, the time and effort it required to select, edit, organize, and upload photographs can still exhaust them. Sometimes the participants even described the process as a "waste of time." It could be even worse if their show was ruined before it was on. For example, Lily complained that she spent enormous time and effort to select, reduce, organize, adjust, and write about the images but then sometimes her effort went in vain when the computer died down. In that case, she would feel too depressed to redo everything again.

If so, then why would the participants be more willing to spend these efforts for sharing on Facebook? Indeed, Facebook is preferred because most of the target audiences are there. Even though online photo album like Flickr can offer better

functions for visual image management, participants like Yang and Sandy were discouraged to continue using Flickr as "no one is there." Fung continued sharing photographs on Flickr and Facebook at the same time but Flickr was mainly served as an archive for himself since a majority of his friends were on Facebook. Hence, Facebook is adopted for photo-sharing although it is not the most ideal social media for displaying and archiving visual images.

Despite the challenges involved, a majority of the participants held positive attitude towards sharing photographs on Facebook. Many enjoyed the immediacy of information and experience exchange it offered. Some appreciated the fact that they could re-experience their trips during the selection process. The participants were also able to find their ways to get through the process if it became too tedious and time-consuming. For example, Sandy would get away from her computer to do something else while her photographs were being uploaded. This could help her to feel like she had not wasted too much time on posting. Lily would take a break from sharing and wait until she picked up the mood to redo everything again. JC and Billy believed that one would need to enjoy the process in order to produce quality "products."

Hence, impression management has to be cost-effective, meaning that the performers would be discouraged to continue sharing if the effort spent outweighs the perceived outcomes. Most participants compared their sharing experiences on physical albums, online photo album, blog and in face-to-face context with that on Facebook to explain why Facebook was a preferable sharing platform. Although they also held negative attitudes towards their sharing experience on Facebook,

they would still stay with it for a while as long as their target audiences remained to be active in there.

Other than calculating the effort and perceived outcomes, impression management in the form of online travel sharing also involves the struggle between novelty and quality. This struggle takes place during on-site production and online production. Most of the time, the performers have to make a decision between searching for the new and capturing the "best" shot of the attraction while traveling. They have limited time to do so much. If they spend time taking quality photographs, they will have less time to see more. For example, Fung had to rush through many attractions since it was his first time to Japan. Hence, the quality of photos had to give way to novelty:

> When I traveled, I didn't photograph very carefully since we were always in a rush to see more. So I could only take photos of whatever I wanted to see. In fact, I find that many photographs are quite bad

He hoped to visit the same place again so he could spend more time to take quality photo. Yet, as of this time, novelty had been given priority in terms of photographing and sharing. Hence, it seems that the more familiar one is with a place, the more one is expected to enhance the quality of the photographs to compensate for the seemingly-ordinariness of the place for a better performance.

Having said so, travel is already a unique occasion in itself hence the

novelty of it can somehow offset image quality. Most participants expressed that it was particularly important to post photographs while they were still excited about the trips. They wanted to make sure that the photographs were still "fresh." To certain participants, it was more about the quality of the photographs than the "freshness" of the photographs. Hence, they preferred to take their time editing the images in their "best" forms before sharing them on Facebook although they wished to share these images as soon as they could:

It's like an on-going, long-term subscribed magazine. And you are the chief editor. There is a regular schedule of publications. It doesn't feel right if you skip one, like I have travelled to all these places but I don't make any publications of it, I don't feel right. Except my trip to Shanghai, I really want to make sure that I can have the best version of it before I post, they are very nice photos, I can tell you they are very pretty but I prefer to make sure that I take my time to present them at their best before posting. That's why I still have not published this album. (Case 11: JC)

7.4 Segregation of Audience

As mentioned in chapter two, one's sphere of audience and the nature of social media are closely related to how impressions are managed. Most of the time, the sphere of audiences on Facebook are more diverse, ranging from close friends to acquaintances. When it involves audiences who are of intermediate closeness to the producers, more actions are taken to control impressions. For example, JC had to be careful of showing himself of having too much fun in his business trip. Female

participants are also more concerned about their physical appearance when selecting images for posting on Facebook. They often were particular about sharing at least their "normal" and decent selves if not "pretty" selves.

With blogs, spheres of audiences are usually extreme. They are either the closest friends of the producers or completely strangers online. It seems that most blog users usually had the anticipation of encountering someone who might better understand them by "fate." Hence, the performers can express more on blog about their deeper self and can write more about their self-reflections. For example, Kit expressed that she could be more negative on blog whereas she tended to remain a positive person on Facebook as it involved several spheres of audiences. Having said so, the projected self on blog is usually an "unidentifiable" self. Except Lily, none of the blog users included themselves in their photographs. Tracey shared images of her daughter but planned to stop doing so once her daughter grew to a certain age. In that sense, the performers can enjoy higher flexibility of sharing other sides of self on blog without being identified by others, except their closest friends.

Social media are adopted to segregate audiences for effective impression management. Sometimes, two accounts can be set up within one social media to control impressions to different target audiences. Vivian offers a perfect example of how one segregates audiences by using social media. She strategically allocated her travel photos to three accounts to control impressions:

Well, I'd choose those with better composition. The front of the

shrine of course I'd post. Or something that is very unique. Err . . .

something that I accidentally encounter that is really pretty I'd post.

It's really hard to tell what type. The exterior of the site definitely I

need to post on blog. For my personal account I just simply post

everything. Except the repetitive ones, I'd just choose the one with

better angles if there is any duplicate. Other than that, I just upload

everything. For my student account, I have to choose carefully since

I teach mass media. I teach them about the production of magazine.

In here, Vivian tries to maintain three different impressions. The first one is her being as a travel writer. This image is projected through sharing informative and aesthetic photographs on blog to attract readership. The second one is her being as a close friend. This image is projected through sharing "everything" including her funny self on her personal Facebook account. The sharing of "everything" symbolizes sincerity and intimacy in her friendship. The third one is her being as an expert in mass media. This image is projected through "carefully-selected" photographs to exhibit her capability in teaching this subject.

Other than controlling impressions through different channels, the segregation of audiences can also help the performers control the outcomes of the performances in certain ways. Most participants restricted the public from viewing their travel photographs to avoid potential risks. They were not sure what these audiences would do to their photographs but it was always good to play safe:

I just feel uncomfortable, well what kind of risk can you have? I

have nothing to hide. It's just that I feel uncomfortable that my photos can be viewed by complete strangers. You don't know what they think. They might not simply think about landscape. They can be like "hey, this chick looks really pretty" and keep looking at the photos. That's why I won't do that. (Case 1: Pak)

Some expressed great concerns about allowing public access, worrying that their performances could potentially be stolen by the unknown others. Sometimes, the whole performance can be stolen to become someone else's show. For example, Disney once found her travel sharing being displayed on another blogger's post as if it was the authentic version. This negative experience discouraged Disney to use blog even though it was her preferred sharing platform.

7.5 Performing for Memories

Like a theatrical performance, a stage is essential for a show to take place. Online tourist photography requires two stages for performance: onsite and online. To produce online travel images, the performers have to perform before the show is on. This on-site performance contributes to the kind of images that are available for the performers to choose from. As mentioned before, the performers sometimes have to sacrifice quality in order to capture more. They may also have to sacrifice the immediacy of their experience to create memories for display. For example, Ria regretted that she did not fully enjoy her dolphin-watching since she was too busy photographing the dolphins:

Sometimes I do think that photography can distract my experience.

Now when I think back, I wish I could just simply watch the dolphins with my bare eyes instead of taking pictures like crazy.

Indeed, most online photographs captured the least "natural" moments of the participants and their travel companions, as there was always a lot of posing involved. Their poses looked very natural like it was how it was – nothing more nothing less. Yet, whenever the locals were captured in the images, they were often not posing for the camera and were not even aware of the camera. Most importantly, it seems that the nature of their poses did not fully represent their level of enjoyment. Sometimes, the travel albums in which the performers and their travel companions performed different types of poses as well as the closeness among them were indeed the trips which the producers did not find most enjoyable or memorable.

Drawing from my discussion with Prof Nelson Graburn as well as my colleagues at the seminar group, it seems that whenever one is very engaged with his/her experience, one would not take photographs. It is after the moment the tourist then remembers about photographing in order to leave a visual record of the memorable moment. Therefore, this could mean that tourist photographs rarely capture the "peak" moments but the aftermath of their "peak" moments, although photography itself can also be an enjoyment or the "peak" moment sometimes. The "moment" captured through photography is never truly the same "moment" anymore. To re-perform the "peak moments" for camera, the participants had to dramatize their expression of excitement. This is what I call "performing for memories." This concept challenges the conventional belief that photographs capture the most significant and unforgettable "moments" of the tourists.

7.6 Staging Memories Online: Functionality of Visual Image

If on-site attractions provide a stage for the production of performance, online stage is the actual Showtime. Online photographs are the key components of one's travel performance. During the interview, participants were asked to talk about their online postings. By comparing the meanings of the various online photos from the participants' perspectives with the findings from a semiotic analysis of these visual images and the reactions of the audiences to these images, the different roles of online travel images on Facebook were revealed. In general, online postings of the participants and their accounts of their images show that their online images can at least serve five main roles. They are eye-catcher, decorative, symbolic, honesty, obligation/relationship maintenance, and relationship enhancement. One photograph may serve one or multiple roles. The symbolic images tend to be the most dominating role in one's performance. All performances involve symbolic images. Most of the time, other roles tend to act as the supporting ones in a performance.

Eye catcher

Some photographs can create a "wowing" effect and may help to draw audience's attention. These photographs usually receive a lot of 'like'. This "wowing" effect can be due to the level of aesthetic which the images offer, the unique content of the images, and the level of humor which the image delivers.

Decorative

Sometimes, photographs can help to create the ambience or set the tone for the whole experience. The image itself may mean nothing to producers at all as they may not even recall what they have captured. Rather, they tend to see these images as simply pretty. Usually, these images capture the partiality of objects or attractions. The ambience of the images is created through lighting. However, travel companions, locals, and scenery can also be served as decorative images as a means for the producers to avoid being judged as narcissistic.

Symbolic

Certain photographs contain hidden messages. Like what Kelly explained, that her photographs were selected to deliver messages to her audiences. Some of the messages she aimed to deliver were the riots in Thailand, the fun she had during the water fest, and the lovely ambiance of a restaurant which she enjoyed.

Lily chose to post photographs of the post office so that her audiences knew how difficult it was for her to send mail in India. Nonetheless, I have also found that the hidden messages can also be more than what the participants explained to me. Through semiotic analysis, several types of symbols are found. They are bodily performance, possessions, atmosphere, iconic tourist attraction, and non-iconic tourist attraction.

The bodily performance of the producers and their travel companions can indeed be an indicator of the quality of their travel experience and the type of person they are. For example, Pak rarely smiled in his photograph to indicate his negative attitude towards photography. Sandy leaned towards her local friends to indicate her closeness with them. Ria, Billy, and Kelly displayed various humorous poses with their travel companions to indicate their playfulness and the fun they had together.

Possessions of the producers include their cameras, souvenirs, foods, and gifts from the locals. Indeed, their romantic partners can also been seen as their possession. For example, Yang tended to photograph his girlfriend like a model and selected these images for sharing with his audiences. JC also took pride in the beauty of his girlfriend as sometimes he received positive comments from his friends about her. Usually these types of images symbolize what they are capable to acquire and consume. Food is the most frequent symbols among my participants'

photographs.

Ambience can also be a good indicator of one's experience. This symbol is quite similar to the decorative function of certain images. Hence, decorative images can also be symbolic if they can help delivering certain impressions of the producers and/or their trips to the audiences. For example, Sandy shares photographs of wines and drinks to indicate that she had very good times with her local friends. Image of blue sky can be decorative as well as symbolic since it can

help setting the tone of the whole album as well as delivering a message to the audiences that the weather was good and that the trip was good.

Images of iconic tourist attractions are usually posted to let their audiences know immediately where the producers have visited. They are like a "stage setting" in a drama. Participant like Kit has even chosen an image of the Eiffel Tower as the cover of her album.

Images of non-iconic tourist attraction are usually posted to let their audiences know of the new attractions to visit. Sometimes, these attractions can be a good indicator of the "non-typical" nature of one's travel trip. Participants like Yang and Ria are particularly proud of their images as their audiences were surprised by the fact that they had seen other sides of the destinations which others had not seen before.

Honesty

Certain images are posted to show one's honesty. It is almost like a

shout-out, saying that "I have nothing to hide from you!" For example, Pak shared photographs of him and his girlfriend to avoid any misinterpretation by others and his girlfriend. Kit shared photographs of her negative experience as it is nothing to hide from others but to warn others of potential traps.

Relationship Enhancement/Maintenance:

Certain images are posted as an obligation to friends. For example, Lily took photographs of Taj Mahal for her friends who requested for it. She also shared a whole album of herself in India to fulfill one of her audience's requests. Billy chose group photographs to share first as they involved others. Fung could not delete some of his travel images as his travel companions might need them. Hence, online images can be a result of others' expectations or a way to not upset others. Other than that, images can also be shared to indicate the importance of certain persons. For example, Sandy shared many photographs of her local friends with touching captions like "I miss you" and "Lots of Luv (i.e., Love)."

Staging Memories Online: Protective and Proactive Performances

Two types of actions taken to control impressions online were noted. These actions were either protective or proactive in nature. Yet, it is very important to note that each action one takes due to the presence of an audience is already a performance. Hence, each performer can partake in many performances.

Performance—Protective

Certain performances are carried out to avoid potential problems. Actions taken in this kind of performance are similar to the concept of "defensive tactics" in

impression management. The case of Pak provides a very good example of this kind of performance. Although the photographs of Yang and Pak also focused on their girlfriends, Pak was not particularly happy about taking and sharing photographs. He took photographs to simply satisfy his girlfriend's request. He did not post many photographs of his most unforgettable trip to Tokyo since they included his ex-girlfriend. He also could not even take photographs in certain trips due to their undisclosed nature.

Other protective measures were also found. For example, JC purposively restricted a few of his colleagues to view his travel photo albums. He also chose his photographs carefully if it was for his business trip so that no one could gossip about it.

Performance—Proactive

Certain performances are carried out proactively for ego-enhancement or at least to draw audience attention. Actions taken in this kind of performance are similar to the concept of "assertive tactics" in impression management. Contrary to Pak, Yang only shared his favorite trip. He took pride in his photographs even though they were also taken under the instruction of his girlfriend. The shared images symbolized what he took pride in, for example, on-site friends, aesthetic girlfriend and place, as well as his photographic sense. Unlike Pak, he looked happy and energetic in the photographs. He even provided captions to highlight aspects which he wanted the audiences to pay attention to.

Other performers like Disney, Kelly, Lily, and Vivian also highlighted aspects to orient the gaze of their audiences to what they intended to emphasize. For example, Disney only chose photographs of her aesthetic self so that self would be the only focus of the audience's gaze. Lily created a whole album of self to fulfill her audiences' request. Vivian purposively selected different types of photographs to satisfy the different needs of the audiences. Kelly proactively selected photographs of partying and humorous self and others for sharing.

Proactive performance also involves editing photographs in addition to choosing them. For example, JC and Billy selected and edited their photographs together after the trip. Disney edited her favorite photograph of self into a billboard poster so that she could have a taste of self as model.

Performance—Protective and Proactive

Certain performances contradict largely to the on-site experience of the performers. Unlike Yang who selected out unpleasant trips from posting, Sandy shared numerous photographs of her working holidays in Australia even though she felt miserable there. In particular, her images portrayed the extreme opposite to her perception of the trip. This incongruity of projected images and perceptions also occurred in the cases of Ria and Billy. The trips which Ria and Billy considered as less satisfactory were presented through their playful selves and others. These performances can be seen as both proactive and protective at the same time. The performers proactively create a different version of reality through dramatizing their expressions to protect their self-images.

7.7 Evaluation of Performance: Performer as Audience

Preview of performance is often conducted before photographs can be shared online. The performers often have to view their travel photograph twice before it is allowed to be on stage. Usually they took a look at the photographs to decide whether another shot should be taken. It is not unusual that more than ten shots could be taken on the same scenery to ensure that at least one photo could be up to their satisfaction. Some participants deleted photographs which were not up to their satisfaction right away. Some waited until they could view the photographs again on a computer screen before any deletions were made:

> With pure scenic photos, I need to view them carefully before I post them on. For example, some of them looked quite ok on site, but then when I came back I realized, 'what? This angle of the site is quite ordinary. To post it online seems to be a bit awkward. Or perhaps no matter how I tried to modify I still could not express the image I had in my mind at that moment. But no, I don't delete photos on-site. You never know if you can save the photo or not, so I usually wait until I can see the photos on the computer screen. It's really hard to view them from the small screen (i.e., the camera screen). I always try my best to rescue the photos whenever possible. (Case 12: Billy)

As mentioned in chapter six, the performers do not really know what is considered to be appealing to the audiences. They have to select photographs which appeal to them first. Hence, the production and consumption of online tourist

photography are inseparable. Images are produced and consumed at the same time. The performers are indeed the first audiences of their own performances. By being an audience, the performers evaluate how their performances will be received before releasing their shows. Interestingly, whenever the performers are to share new photographs, they tend to view their previous performances again.

In general, there are two ways for the performers to evaluate their performances. The first way is to learn from previous experience. Through the audience reactions, the performers can get to learn of sharing strategies. For example, Lily found that too many photographs could ruin her show:

See . . . this place (i.e., posted in her album "Day One" of India) is

not my favorite and the photos are not that nice but these people just

"like" them, and then the one I like better (i.e., album of her last day

in India) only two people "like" just because I posted too many

albums and this happens to be the last one . . .

One can also find out the kind of images the audiences usually provide positive reactions on. For example, Vivian often found the need to attract audience's attention and the "likes" she received from her audiences previously could tell her how:

Some photos receive more comments. They'd ask you where to

dine? Or they'd say something like, oh it looks delicious! My friend

just recently recommends me to a new blog site, Style.com. It's even

a lot easier to see their reactions on that site. You can see that whenever you talk about cosmetics, food, or souvenirs, they react quickly. They care so much about what to eat and what to buy.

When asked about the comments they received, most of the time the participants could recall immediately what photographs attracted more 'like' and the kind of comments they received for their online photographs. It seems that the number of "likes" and positive comments one receives can be an indication of how successful a performance is. For example, Kelly believed that her "messages" were successfully delivered because she received many "likes" and comments from her audiences. Fung believed that his performance was a failure as he did not receive many "likes" on his favorite photographs. The performers usually evaluate the reasons for receiving "likes" from the audiences. These reason can be the uniqueness/aesthetic of the photo content, the participant's know-how of travel, photographic skill or sense of the participant, the participant's unique way of seeing or photographing, and the humorousness of the images.

Having said so, some participants did not find this as a reliable way to evaluate their own performances. Some found that "likes" and positive comments could be an act of face-giving. For example, Lily found that those who usually clicked "likes" on her first album immediately whenever she shared photographs online could be simply an act to indicate that they cared to view her photographs. Ria knew that sometimes the "likes" she received could be an act of face-giving as she did the same to others' online postings when she was an audience. Some found that the culture or design of Facebook could be a hindrance for one to receive

positive reactions:

> And you know with Facebook, there is something awful about it. If
> you go to the 'home', it randomly picks news for display. So even
> though I have more than 200 friends, not every one of them gets to
> see my photos. (Case 12: Billy)

Online comments like "nice," "beautiful," "yummy," or "good" can be quite superficial and ambiguous to the performers. They do not know how to react to these comments unless the commenter asks for specific information. The function of "like" is even more ambiguous to participant like JC as he complained,

> I don't really know what you like about. Did you like the place, the
> girl in the photo, or what? And I can't even see your facial
> expression. I can't tell what you really think about my photos.

The performers can be surprised with the number of 'like' they receive on certain photographs but are not sure what the audiences really like about them. This type of reaction may not be sufficient for the performers to evaluate their performances.

Despite of the ambiguity of online reactions, the performers are still happy to receive them. Positive online reactions can help decorate the profiles of the performers and be the motivators for them to spend more time and effort in sharing photographs online. They are simply "nice to have" is how Ria and JC described it.

Hence, these online reactions can also become a key component of their performance in return. They can help confirming the images which the performers work to control. And it is for this reason the performers are very concerned with what interests and appeals to the audiences since the positive reactions they receive online can help enhance their performances as well as their egos.

Most found offline reaction a more reliable indicator to evaluate their performances. The participants usually saw offline comments as more constructive and meaningful. The face-to-face interaction among their audiences and them could help them to understand what they really liked. They could also share more information, advice, and stories that their online images could not fully express. Hence, participants like Pak usually chats with his friends about each other's online images in a face-to-face context.

Yet, variation also existed among the ways participants interpreted offline reactions. Some think that their audiences might not comment on their photographs even though they have viewed their online images. For example, Billy thinks that it is quite uncommon to come up to someone to talk about online images these days as everything can be done online:

> Well, no one really comments on your photos these days offline. Everything is done online these days. No one will really come to you face to face and say something about your photos like oh yes I have seen your photos on Facebook . . . (Case 12: Billy)

Hence, interpreting audience's reactions alone might not be sufficient for the performers to evaluate their performance. Another way to do so is by being an audience of others' performances. All of my participants viewed other's travel postings on Facebook although they often claimed that they were quite busy with their own lives. Since the performers do not have time to view everything shared by their "friends" on Facebook, they have to be selective in terms of what they view and how they view.

The participants usually first surfed around the 'news' and had a quick scan of the new posts before they chose what to look into. When they chose among various texts shared by "friends," some chose to view postings by particular persons who were close to them or whom they were interested in knowing more about. However, most chose the attractiveness of photographs and places over their relationship with the image producers when it comes to travel postings. Places that they had never been to and were interested in making a visit to were usually the priority in their consumption of photographic images. Photographs could also capture their eyes if they were aesthetic and unique.

Indeed, the more they viewed others' photographs, the more they learned who usually shared 'better' photographs or 'interesting' places on Facebook. Some even followed closely with the postings of a particular producer whom they admired. Some think that others' photographs could remind them of their own happy moments when traveling, hence viewing others' photographs could trigger their desires to travel again. Aesthetic photographs could strengthen their anticipations of destinations which they longed to travel to. Some considered

other's travel photographs as a source of inspiration. They could learn of new travel ideas or photographic perspectives. Having said so, many participants also complained that most places which others shared were nothing special. Disney even expressed to me that most of the travel photographs she saw on Facebook were of low quality as her friends were not professional photographers.

The performers might not purposely view to compare but a comparison of self with others is unavoidable. For example, Fung often looked at others photos online, be it on Flickr or Facebook. Whenever he viewed others' photographs on these social media, he wished he could take photographs as nice as theirs. He started to dislike his own photographs after such a comparison: "It looks kind of okay to me when I first posted them but now when I look at them, they are really terrible."

Such a comparison can result in a sense of success and failure. For example, Yang, Ria, and Sandy took pride in their own travel postings also due to a comparison with others. Being as audience can also help the performers learn about how to produce better performance:

Most people don't write captions but I love to write captions. Because I am not like others who simply click 'all' and boom here you go. I have to choose carefully what to share because there are some that cannot be seen by others, some of them also are very terrible, and some of them are mo liu (i.e., pointless, meaningless). I think those who view my photos, I mean I am also one of those who view others' photos as well, so I think some people just share everything and their posts are so boring, (In that case) I won't click each photo for viewing

240

but may only view them as a whole album or as a set of photos instead. And so I took my time, I had to choose photos, view each of them slowly, and then write captions, so I can waste two to three hours for each album I post. So each day I can only post one to two albums in average. (Case 3: Sandy)

Lily also learned from her sister's experience to explain the importance of being selective:

My sister takes a lot of nice photos. Her photos are amazing. But she posts too many! Look at hers, people are starting to get bored of her photos even they are nice!

Hence, there are three aspects the performers can learn from being an audience of other's performances. First, they can learn about how well they perform when compared to others. Second, they can learn to interpret audiences' reactions. Third, they can learn of a more suitable posting strategy for their own performances.

7.8 Evaluation of Performance: The Consequences

The evaluation of one's performances can lead to several consequences. These consequences can be seen as two types. The first type is the consequential actions. Some of these actions are related to their online sharing decisions. Performers can adjust or continue their existing posting strategies. They can also completely abandon Facebook as a performing stage. For example, Vivian came up with her winning formula of online-sharing due to her interpretation of audience's

reaction. Disney stopped posting travel photographs on Facebook due to the lack of attention. Billy prioritized other types of photographs for posting as he received limited positive reactions from the audiences on his travel postings.

Some of the consequential actions are related to the frequency of viewing their own performances. It seems that those who were satisfied with the quality of their performances tended to view their online images more often. For example, Kit and Vivian tended to view their own travel postings all the time, especially whenever they were bored or frustrated at work. Their performances could be a remedy for their unhappy moments. Ria, Yang, JC, and Kelly also viewed their photographs again after posting but mostly when others had commented on their postings. Participants like Pak, Disney, Fung, and Billy, who were not satisfied with their performances, rarely viewed them again. Billy only viewed his online photographs when he received comments on his photographs. Yet, he received very limited comments on his travel photographs. When he felt like viewing his travel photographs again, he preferred viewing printouts than his online photographs as in the case of Disney.

Some of the consequential actions are related to their travel decision-making or photographic practices. For example, Pak intended to visit Tokyo again but in a different way, following the advices given by his audiences. Tracey rethought how to balance the needs of the adults and the child when planning another trip. Participants like Ria and Yang were motivated by the positive reactions of their audiences to do better in photography and to spend more time and effort in preparing for their performances. JC and Billy would take the advice given

by their audiences to take better photographs of the same attractions if they ever visit the same destination again.

Another type of consequence resulting from evaluation of performance is the consequential perceptions. Some of these perceptions are related to how they see the nature of sharing on Facebook. For example, Disney criticized that sharing on Facebook was meaningless as it was merely for people to brag about themselves. Billy perceived the design of the "news" on Facebook as what caused unfairness to some of the performers.

Some of the perceptions are related to how they see their own performances and other's performances. For example, Fung received more comments and 'like' on photographs that he thought was "so-so." He then saw these "so-so" photographs differently because of the unexpected reactions. Participants like Kit and Lily think that online comments could add more perspectives to their interpretation of an image or a culture.

Some of the perceptions are related to how they see themselves. Viewing one's own travel postings can also lead to a sense of shame. For example, Fung disliked his own travel photos and doubted his ability to be a good photographer. He felt like he had all the photography knowledge and equipment but sadly he lacked an artistic sense and creativity. He was very ashamed of himself for producing such an incompetent performance:

They look like they are taken from a common digital camera. Why

can't I take nice photos like others? Even though those who do not

know anything about photography can take better photos than me . . .

It's such a shame that they are there.

Successful performances could lead to ego enhancement. For example, Yang saw himself as a travel adviser to his audiences. Ria, Sandy, and JC took pride in their online photographs and often saw themselves as different from typical Hong Kong tourists. Vivian was even able to build a new image unexpectedly from her successful performances.

7.9 Interview as a Performance

As mentioned before, the participants' responses often contradicted their actions. Hence, what they said during the interview was closely related to how they wanted to be seen. Hence, performances took place during online-sharing as well as the interview. In light of this, it is essential to go beyond the face value of the interviewee's accounts of their practices by recognizing the performative nature of an interview. In this part, I shall discuss the impressions which were given off by the participants to me during the interview. This helps to understand why certain responses were given during the interview. In other words, why did they say what they said?

A dramaturgical analysis of data takes into the consideration that the responses given by the participants are the actions they took to control impressions. Both interviewer and interviewee are performers (Berg, 1995). During the analysis, I paid attention to how the controlled impressions are related to their accounts of

their practices, specifically the why of posting, audience's impact, and their views of others' performances as part of the actions which they took to control the impression during the interview. Table 3 in Appendix IV presents a cross-case analysis of the actions they took to control impressions online and during the interview.

Pak seems to be an exceptional case in many aspects. For example, he is the only one who does not smile in his travel photographs. He is also the only one who expressed to me about not bringing a camera along to some of his trips. During the interview, he often presented himself as someone who did not care about how others saw him. He simply does what he likes. When asked whether the reaction of his audiences could bring any impacts to him, he said, "The photographs are mine. If you don't like them, then don't view them." Nonetheless, he had learned about new attractions and new routes of traveling around the places he shared online from his audiences. He talked about how helpful his audiences' comments were for his future travel when he was asked about other aspects of his practices.

During the interview, he also presented himself as a very caring person. For example, he cared about the feelings of his girlfriend so he was in photographs with her and shared them online even though he did not find the necessity in doing so. He cared about his friends so he did not bring a camera with him when on secret trips with them. He also restricted the unknown others from viewing his photographs to protect his loved ones. When asked why he shared travel photographs on Facebook, he expressed that it was to fulfill other's requests. He also thinks that the sharing culture on Facebook is very helpful to him as he could learn about new travel ideas

from the photographs of others.

Similar to Pak, Tracey also expressed that sharing images online was to fulfill others' request. During the interview, she presented herself as a very caring mother. She rarely talked about the quality of her travel images but the special moments the whole family had, especially how happy and energetic her daughter looked in the photographs. She rarely mentioned about selecting photographs to strategically impress the audiences. Like Pak, she held a "view it or leave it" attitude. During the interview, she often tried her best to provide answers and examples to my question. When asked about audience's impact, she took a while to think for an answer. She did not answer yes or no. Instead she asked, "Do you need an example?"

She then recalled that some of her friends criticized the fact that she cared too much about her daughter when she made travel plans and overlooked the needs of the adults. Hence, she discussed this issue with her husband although they still believed that it was important to place their daughter as their priority.

As for Lily and Kit, they shared many similarities during the interviews. It seems that both of them presented self as a sincere, understanding, humble yet inspiring person. They also presented self as a positive thinker. Kit expressed that posting travel photographs is to help her friends to have a broader view of the world in a way as they usually are upset by minor incidents in Hong Kong. Lily hoped to provide her friends with a more positive view of India through her photographs as she thinks India is not as negative as her friends perceive. Having said so, both of them often expressed that everyone has their own way of seeing the world and there

246

is no better or worse in respect to that. Hence, audience comments on their photographs will not change the way they see things but enrich how they view the same image or place. When they talked about viewing others' photographs, they both seemed very excited about the topic and were very into talking about what they enjoyed viewing.

Yang, Sandy, and Ria appeared to be very confident of themselves during the interview. They often took pride of themselves as the travel advisers to their friends. They also seemed to be very conscious of the way they answered the questions as well as what I tried to get from them. For example, at the end of the interview, Sandy asked me with a curious tone, "It seems to me you like to analyze people a lot, right?"

When Yang answered my questions, his tone of voice often appeared as if he was acting. It was especially so when he explained that that sharing photographs on Facebook could allow him to also learn from his audiences. When asked for specific example of how he learned from his audiences, he was stunned by the question and could not think of any particular advice he received from his audiences. He laughed and said he needed the time to think. When allowed to do so, he laughed with embarrassment. He then said that most of the time it was him and his girlfriend who gave travel advice while their friends listened. Ria also often talked about how she provided travel advice to her friends. When asked why she shared photographs on Facebook, she first said that it was to let her friends know of some good places for traveling. When probed further, she looked a bit overwhelmed by the question. She then answered with a pair of thinking eyes, "well,

I think I have already travelled to these places and took photographs, so why waste them?" Similar to Yang, she also expressed that she enjoyed viewing others' photographs as she could learn of new places for travel. Yet, she also could not think of examples. Rather, she expressed that most of the photographs she saw so far were of places she was familiar with. Both Yang and Ria were particularly happy when were asked about the offline comments they received from their audiences.

JC, Vivian, and Disney were also quite conscious of what I tried to ask them about, especially when I asked them about the "why sharing" question. They first started to talk about showing others new places like most participants did. Then when probed further, they all briefly talked about how sharing travel photographs could help one in building self image or to brag about oneself with a big laugh. They also tended to say that they were just like everyone else. Billy shared similar reaction like the three of them. Nonetheless, he did not laugh about it. Instead, he answered the question with confidence that, just like every other photographer, he wanted his products to be recognized by others. When they were asked about audiences' impact, they tended to be very aware of the impacts as they could answer the questions without much thinking. Except JC, all of them expressed that others' travel photographs were usually too ordinary for viewing. Nonetheless, there were times when they enjoyed viewing some of the travel images shared by others. JC, Disney, and Vivian expressed that they enjoyed viewing the images of certain producers. Billy explained in detail the specific types of images he enjoyed viewing the most. They all sounded very excited when they talked about these images of others that interested them the most.

Fung and Kelly appeared to be quite humble and nervous during the interview. They both showed concerns about their capability in answering my questions before the interviews. Fung said, "I don't know if I know how to answer your questions, would that still be okay?" whereas Kelly also seemed to be quite worry by saying that "I don't know much about traveling. I actually did not travel much compared to others, haha!"

At the beginning of the interview, Fung never looked to me in the eyes. His hands were also shaking. He started to be more relaxed when he asked me about some theories of photography. It seems that he was less tense when he became a listener. Kelly seemed to be a lot more confident when compared to Fung. She often laughed and sounded cheerful during the interview. She also seemed to be conscious of my reactions in order to adjust her tone of voice or way of answering my question. When asked about viewing others' photographs, both of them talked explicitly about what they enjoyed viewing. Fung even compared his own photographs with others' photographs and questioned his own ability in being a good photographer.

Hence, it seems that some of the participants were very conscious of what they aimed to achieve while some of them were not. Among those who were conscious of their acts, some chose to unveil their intentions to me as part of their impression management. Some chose to conceal their intentions to maintain the images they projected online.

Concluding the Chapter

This chapter presented some tactics that the performers adopted to control impressions projected online. Ego-enhancement as a reason of sharing travel photographs is to be concealed from the audiences so that the purpose can be achieved. Facebook is a preferred platform for sharing for three main reasons. First, its nature of sharing helps concealing the ego-boosting component of sharing. At least it is the case from the performer's perspective. Second, the process of sharing requires less time and effort with higher level of enjoyment when compared to other forms of sharing. The sharing of visual images is usually more effective in enhancing one's ego. Third, most target audiences are now active users of Facebook who constantly check out updates from the performers.

The production of online photographs requires framing and posing on-site. Yet, the framing and posing for photographs involve constraints for one to produce an ideal performance. Sometimes the performers can be too occupied and excited for posing and framing. Sometimes the performers are not provided with the best tools or resources for the performance. Nonetheless, there are several ways through which one can perform for memories. On-site performance can be carried out through dramatizing one's expression on site for the camera. Any reflexive expressions are to be controlled in front of the lens so that an idealized performance can be carried out. Places, attractions, objects are captured many times in various ways to ensure the idealization of performance. Hence, the captured moments are inevitably a performance for memories of an ideal self.

Ideal self can be projected through the various roles of online photographs. Some images are selected to create the "wowing" effect in order to draw audience's attention and reaction. Some images are selected to create the ambience for the overall viewing experience. Some images contain hidden messages which are delivered through various types of symbols. This type of image tends to act as the dominating role in one's performance as every single performance requires the symbolic ones. Some images are shared as a shout-out to claim one's honesty and sincerity. Some images are shared to maintain or enhance relationships with the audiences.

Online performance can be carried out through proactive or protective actions. With protective performance, the selection of images for online sharing involves the adoption of defensive tactics to avoid potential embarrassment or misinterpretation of self by the audiences. Usually, images which play the roles of honesty and relationship maintenance are included in a protective performance. Pointless, repetitive, blurry, and intimate images are excluded to avoid negative impacts to one's self image. Self can also be excluded from sharing to avoid being seen as narcissistic or unsightly. Sometimes, otherness can also be excluded when the existence of them are seen as destructive to one's self image.

With proactive performance, the selection of images for online sharing involves the judgment of what is appealing to the audiences or not. The performers desire positive online audience reactions as they can help enhance their online performances. Usually, images which play the role of an eye-catcher are included in sharing to capture audiences' attention and to cultivate positive reactions.

Nonetheless, the performers can never be certain of what are considered as appealing to others. Thus, the selection of appealing images can be achieved in three ways. First, they will have to choose images which appeal to self as an audience. Second, they will have to learn from their previous performance in terms of how their audiences reacted to their online postings. The number of "like" one receives can be a good indicator of appealing images. Third, they will have to learn from other performers as well as the reactions of the audiences to their performances in order to learn how to perform.

Having said so, the performers can find the audience reactions too ambiguous for a reliable evaluation of their own performances. They usually have these questions in mind when interpreting the reactions of the audiences:

1. Was the positive reaction an act of face-giving?

2. If they really liked the image, what did they like about it?

3. Why did I not receive positive reactions from the audiences?

To answer the first question, the performers usually evaluate the quality of audience reactions. If the reactions are brief and are only given at a certain point of the performance, especially at the beginning of the performance, then it can be merely an act of face-giving. If the audiences discuss about their images and experience or ask about certain aspects of the trips explicitly, especially in an offline context, then the performance is more likely a successful one.

To answer the second question, the performers usually reflect upon their previous performance to look for patterns of the audiences' preferences. The

performers may find that certain images like food and souvenirs can help drawing audiences' attention. The performer may also find that the number of images one shares can overwhelm the audiences. The performers can start to build up their sharing strategies through evaluating the patterns of audience reactions.

To answer the third question, the performers can choose among one of the three reasons to explain why positive reactions are not given by the audiences. First, the performers can consider the non-responsiveness of the audiences as part of Facebook culture. Hence it would be normal to not receive any positive responses from the audiences. Second, the performers can interpret the non-responsiveness as the consequences of the poor design of the media. The show is not well-received since the audiences did not even get to view the show. Third, the performers can relate the non-responsiveness of the audience to the quality of their own performances and consider them as a failure. A comparison with other performances and the reactions of the audiences on others' performances can contribute to one's sense of failure.

An evaluation of one's performance can bring consequences to the behaviors as well as the perceptions of the performers. In terms of behaviors, such an evaluation can bring changes to the way they perform online (i.e., selection of images, use of media for performance) and the way they perform offline (i.e., travel and photographic behaviors). In terms of perceptions, evaluation of performance can bring changes to the way they see their performance as well as their own selves.

To protect their self-images offline, some performers are willing to be seen as performing for an ideal self through online-sharing. To maintain consistent

self-image, some performers are unwilling to be seen as performers. Their willingness and unwillingness can shape the responses given during the interviews.

Chapter Eight

The Framework

Chapter Eight

The Framework

Overview of Chapter

Chapter Seven presented the tactics which performers adopted to control impressions online and offline. This chapter presents an integrative framework as my final interpretations of the empirical data. Existing concepts and theories will be drawn upon to help explain the common patterns revealed in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven. A categorization of cases will be introduced to explain the variations that exist among performances.

8.1 The Framework

The final framework (figure 6) is a result of my interpretation of the data following the qualitative analytical procedures and referencing from existing perspectives on performance, formation of self, and deception.

It is very important to note that the framework here does not differentiate what is considered as an authentic self and what is considered as an inauthentic self. It is beyond the scope of this study and my ability to confirm the existence of a true self, and if so, whether and how, true self can be approached by the researchers.
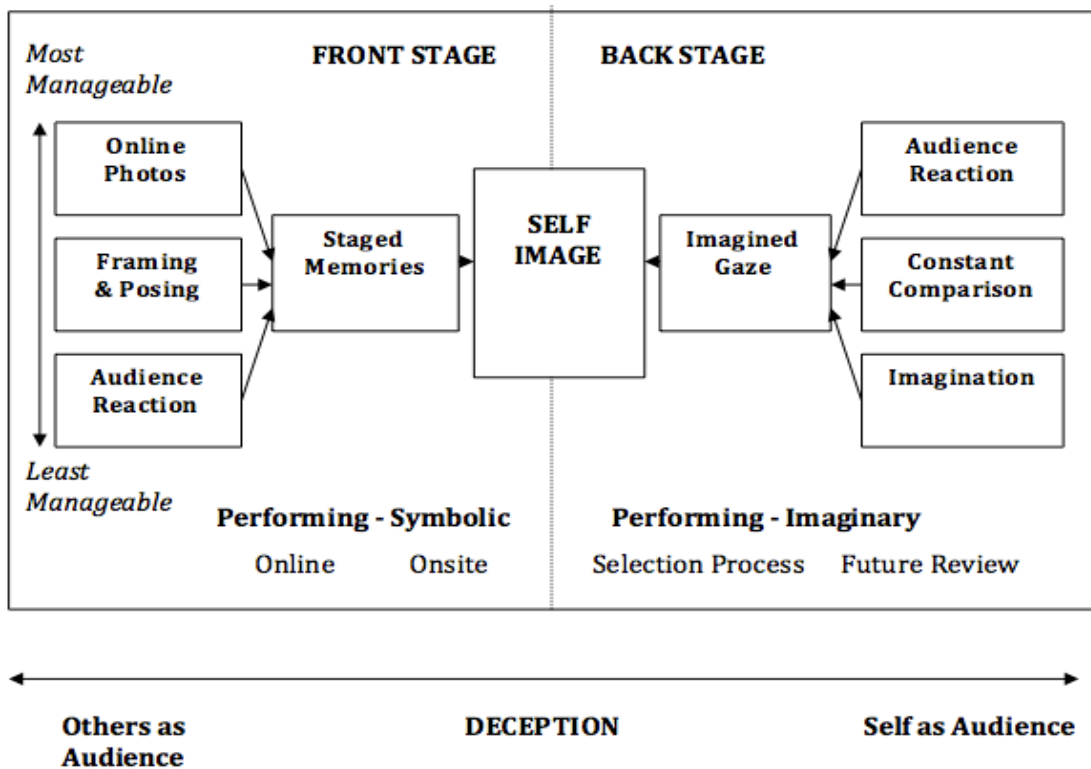
Figure 6: An Integrative Framework of Online Authentication of Ideal Self

Instead, the data of this study is able to articulate how self-image can be constructed and negotiated through online photo sharing. Unlike studies that consider tourism as a way for one to experience an authentic self (i.e., Kim and Jamal, 2007; Johnson, 2007), my findings suggest that an authentic self is not apparently experienced or sought after by the performers from their online photographic practices. Rather, various types of deceptions are involved in their performance, be it at the Front or at the Back. Hence, the framework of study does not confine itself to the back stage area as where an authentic self is experienced. Rather, it is where one prepares for and reflects on their front stage performance (Goffman, 1959). Reflections on one's front stage performance requires oneself to also be the audience for his or her own performance, largely through imagination

(Cooley, 1972). Self is thus constructed and negotiated by the performers with their audiences. The ideal self or the best-possible self is what one works on to make it "real" and "authentic." Hence, online tourist photography is a staged authenticity of an ideal self. It is a process of authenticating one's ideal self.

The term "performance" involves a sense of deception. In a performance, a performer plays a role at the front. The performed role might not be consistent with how one really is at the back. Such a performed role is expressed through idealization, control of inappropriate actions, and dramatization of expression. To perform is to achieve an ideal self by fulfilling certain social expectations. To perform an idealized self in front of the audience, the performer has "to forgo or conceal action which is inconsistent with their idealized image" (Goffman, 1959, p. 41). The performer may also need to maintain different fronts for different spheres of audience, so as to ensure that the idealized self is the only reality of self.

Nonetheless, Goffman (1959) argues that it is very important to note that self is not always the cause of a performance but an end product of it. There are countless reasons why a show is on. To construct a particular self-image is not the only motive for putting on a show. Whenever there is a social interaction, there is a performance. Whenever there is a performance, there is an impression being given-off. Therefore, the performer has to control the audience's impression of him/her whenever he/she is in a performance.

Goffman suggests that the word "person" denotes "a man in a mask." Therefore, we are deceptive in nature. Goffman argues that some performers are

conscious of the performative nature of their acts while some are not. Therefore he suggests two extreme spectrums of performance: the sincere and the cynical. Sincere acts are when the performers truly believe in the truthfulness of their presentation whereas cynical acts are when the performers are highly conscious of the deception of their presentation. He argues that neither extreme is desirable for a good performance. However, the performers are sometimes expected to give cynical acts to their audiences. The cynical acts can also become sincere acts as time goes by. Our everyday performance is indeed "continuous" and "developmental" (Silverstone, 1999, pp. 68–69), and that it is rather a doing of our identities. Therefore, our everyday performance not only allows the performer "to present herself (himself) to the other but to reveal herself (himself) to herself (himself)" (Silverstone, 1999, p. 70). Goffman gives an example of a married couple that ran the Shetland Hotel in which he once worked. They were of a humble origin but had to perform themselves as the middle class to interact with the guests. As time went by, they started to consider themselves as the middle class. Therefore, what is projected at the front can impact what is conceived at the back. Interestingly, he (1959, p. 20) suggests that this "cycle of disbelief-to-belief" can also be in reverse, "starting with conviction or insecure aspiration and ending in cynicism." Self-illusion is what sustains the transition from cynical to sincere, sincere to cynical. Therefore, a performance involves deception to self and to others.

The most interesting aspect about this type of performance is that there is no guarantee that there will be any audience. Indeed, through the selection process of posting and sharing photos online, tourists produce and consume their travel photographs at the same time. They are the first audience of their own performance.

259

They are also allowed to view their own performance even when the show is still on. When self is the only performer, self is also required to be the audience of his/her own performance for its success.

But how can it be possible? How can one be the audience and the performer at the same time?

The Contradicting Self:

Statement A: "I'm a sincere, carefree person."

Statement B: "I exclude ugly self from posting."

These two statements contradict with each other. If I am a sincere person who does not care how others think of me, then how can I exclude certain aspects of myself from posting? If I am not an audience, the problem does not exist. If I am an audience, then I cannot perceive myself as a sincere, carefree person. The initiation of defense mechanism is required to balance off this contradiction. It is by denying the performative nature of sharing that the performer can feel released from the contradiction. Nonetheless, the performer cannot simply deny the second statement. Without a convincing reason to justify one's act as non-performative, the performer cannot deceive himself or herself into believing Statement A: "I'm a sincere, carefree person."

Hence, Goffman argues that self-illusion or self-alienation can become necessary if self is the audience as well. This is a very important concept since it is what sustains this framework. This explains how performance can be carried out at

the back stage as well. Through presenting self and gazing at self as an object, the self (object) is revealed to self (subject) (Silverstone, 1999). Through presenting self and gazing at self as an object, the self deceives self.

Then how is self as an object being formed? It is formed through two performances: the front stage performance and the back stage performance. The projection of self at the Front is largely a symbolic activity whereas the consumption of self at the Back is operated largely through the imaginary. This conception draws upon Lacan's idea of the imaginary and the symbolic worlds.

Jacque Lacan proposes a framework that explains how a person comes to understand self, the world, and the others. The framework is composed of three registers: the real, the symbolic, and the imaginary (Bailly, 2009). In particular, his concept of the symbolic and the imaginary were found very helpful in explaining the selection process of posting photographs online.

To Lacan, the relationship between the imaginary and the symbolic indeed resembles the correlation between the signified and the signifier in semiology. The signified is an idea whereas the signifier is a representation of the idea (Bailly, 2009). Lacan proposes the idea of a "mirror stage" in which a baby learns of the first signifier - the mother. The image of the mother is reflected through the mirror. The baby learns that it is only an image, a reflection of its mother but not the mother as a subject. The mother points at the mirror image of the baby and calls its name. The baby learns of the second signifier – the self. It plays with different gestures in front of the mirror. The mother confirms the baby's self-recognition through her

positive reaction. It is the moment when the baby learns about the wholeness of its body. It is the moment in which a realization of self as an object takes place (Bailly, 2009).

The mirror stage provides a sense of unity for the baby's self. Without the mirror, the baby can only see its fragmented bodies (Bailly, 2009). The baby is said to be in a stage of chaos and is incapable of mastering the fragmented self. In front of the mirror, the baby gets to see the wholeness of itself for the first time. The illusionary unity of self image provided by the mirror stage is thus a vital step for the self to develop ego stability (Markham, 1999). It is also where the self learns to translate "an image into an idea" (Bailly, 2009, p. 30). Hence, the mirror stage is where the symbolization of self begins.

Indeed, this mirror stage continues beyond childhood. Whenever our self images are threatened, destabilized, or are inconsistent with each other, we re-enter the mirror stage to look for a sense of coherence for the self (Markham, 1999). Other's reactions become an invisible mirror to us in our everyday life (Cooley, 1972). Not only that we can learn about others and ourselves through viewing our photographs, we can also get to view our physical travel self, our extended selves (for example: girlfriends and family members) and our experience through the eyes of others, as I borrow from what Marie-Francoise Lanfant (2009) called "the imagined gaze." There is always a sense of being gazed at whether they were actually being gazed at or not. Subject of seeing becomes the object of being seen. However, it is not the panoptic type of gaze proposed by Foucault. They do not only behave according to the expectations of others. They simply enjoy being gazed at.

Through the reactions of the audiences, they can convince themselves of the images they project to others (Rosenberg, 1986). Interestingly, photographic images are still, fragmented, selected, and editable. Therefore, they are more deceptive, illusionary, and effective than the mirror image.

Another important concept is the impact of the activity on the audience as what Goffman argues "*(the activity) which has some influence on the observers.*" This study finds that whatever happens at the front has an impact on the performers at the back in terms of how they see themselves as well as how they prepare for their next performance. The performers might not be aware of the impacts but they are there. The performers might not even be aware of the performative nature of their practices, as what Garfinkel suggests, our performance can become taken-for-granted when it is practiced continuously. It becomes natural. It becomes inbuilt. Sharing travel photographs online is becoming something natural as "everyone does it" whenever one travels. And since "everyone does it," we are given with a very strong justification for our practices. We do not feel ashamed for posting and sharing travel photographs online as it is a natural practice and that it is nothing harmless as "we simply share our happy moments with others." Nonetheless, our travel photographs can become meaningless if we share exactly like what everyone else is sharing. Thus, we distinguish ourselves through sharing pieces of experience that are "unique" and "new" to our audiences. We often view other's performance, compare others with ours, and see what went wrong with theirs. We hope to do better. Yet, such a distinction has to be within an acceptable boundary. This boundary is based on our imagination of others' expectations and judgment (Cooley, 1972).

8.2 The location of the Front and Back

The front stage and back stage are usually examined as physical spaces. Quite often, public area of the hotel, work place, tourism attractions are examined as the front whilst home, sleeping room, back office area of the hotel are conceptualized as the back. Nonetheless, the physical division of front and back is insufficient in explaining the front and back of online tourist photography. Not only do performers select, edit, and upload travel photographs at home, they also do so in a public setting (i.e., at work, at a hotel, and on-site). Therefore, the division between front and back is a mental one. This study conceptualizes the back region as a state of mind instead of a physical space. To emblematize the two regions, the Front can be seen as the travel photos presented online and the moments when the camera is in action. The Back can be seen as moments when the performers select and review their travel photos. Therefore, in this study, the front happens mostly online and onsite. The Back usually takes place during the selection process as well as future review.

It should also be noted that the division of front and back is a matter of relativity. Based on his observations of tourist experience, MacCannell (1973) differentiates six degrees of staging: from the forefront in which the tourists are very aware of the staged experience and to the very back region: the comfort zone that the locals wish to conceal. According to him, this back region always seems mystical and thus is the experience that the tourists are most curious of. In between the two spectrums, there are regions in which the front and the back are confused. In light of this, the photograph that is selected, edited, and scripted for online-sharing

is the forefront of tourist's staged-performance. The extreme end of the back stage represents the moments when the performers become the audiences of their own performance. In between the two extremes, some moments of self and others are chosen for sharing but only limited to few audiences. Some moments are hidden in the deepest part of the computer. Some moments are even deleted when they are not even desirable for future review. These moments are not even allowed at the back stage area for self to view as the future audience.

8.3 The Interacting Front and Back

The framework of this study locates self image in between the front and the back. Self image is projected to the others at the front and internalized to self at the back. The terms "self image" and "self concept" are often used interchangeably in tourism studies and even in many psychological studies (Bailey, 2003). Nonetheless, they are not the same although they are closely linked. Self-concept is how one understands and experiences self. According to Epstein (1973), self-concept comprises of an internal mechanism that unifies and organizes one's experience, knowledge, and images of self that can change and grow over time. Without a consistent concept of self, one can experience frustration and uncertainty. In order to reduce such anxiety, a defense mechanism will be initiated unconsciously. Indeed, our defense mechanism is said to be essential in maintaining our mental health (Cramer, 1998). Self-concept is thus an accumulated knowledge of self and a subjective experience, which involves both the conscious and the unconscious, that guide our behaviors and distinguish ourselves from others. It has to be noted that others cannot experience one's concept of self, as it is largely an internal experience.

Unlike self-concept, one's self-image can be externally experienced and delineated. It is a conscious perception of self that can be projected and interpreted. The word "image" is referred to as a copy or a reflection of something. In that sense, an image is not the object itself. Therefore, an image is usually seen as inauthentic, illusionary, and deceptive. Having said so, it has to be referenced from the object. It can also be authenticated. In fact, an image can be perceived as more real than the original object in a postmodern world. The existence of and the meaning of originality and authenticity are greatly challenged (Baudrillard, 1994). Similarly, self-image can be internalized and become part of one's self-concept. It can confirm, change, or even challenge how one perceives self. Unlike self-concept, self-image does not require unification and consistency. It can be multiple and can vary from context to context. It can be adjusted according to different audiences. It can be created, experimented, and can also be idealized. Such an idealized image of self is usually termed as the ideal self, the best-possible self, or the desire self (Epstein, 1973; Markus & Nurius, 1986). It is the self that one desires to achieve. Yet, it has to be realistic, usually socially acceptable and favorable.

This study only focuses on self-image. It is not the purpose of this study to examine one's self-concept in the production and consumption of tourist photography. Nonetheless, any sensations experienced by the performers in terms of sharing or signs of defense mechanisms are noted and reported to enrich our understanding of their back stage experience.

8.4 Deception: Others and Self

Hyde and Olesen (2011) argue that in order to give out convincing performances to their audiences, tourists also perform at the private settings to maintain the consistency of their self-identities. Goffman (1959) also suggests that when the performing team is at the back stage area, the team members will also need to perform intimacy among them to create a sense of closeness and the non-performative nature of the back stage. In that sense, the back stage is not necessarily a place where performance does not exist. Sometimes, the performance at the front has to be consistent with what happens at the back so that the performance can be carried out in a more convincing manner. Sometimes performance has to take place at the back to deceive oneself that performance does not happen at the back.

In particular, Lewis and Saarni (1993) differentiate three types of lying: deception with self-awareness, deception toward others that requires self-deception, and self-deception. Case like Sandy will be a good example of deception with self-awareness. She knew that she was bored and lonely in Australia. She knew that her pictures were to showcase her ability in traveling alone and making foreign friends to impress her friends. Hence, her pictures were chosen to present closeness of her with the locals, how exciting her life was in Australia, and that she was able to make friends with all walks of life.

Most interviewees claimed that they did not care of what others think about them, but were indeed very aware of the reactions of the audiences on their performance. They could even recall right away the types of comments they

received from others whether online or offline. Those who expressed their practices in the rhetoric of a leader could be deceiving me (the interviewer) with self-awareness. Those who expressed their practices in the rhetoric of a caregiver could be deceiving themselves in order to deceive me. At the end of the day, these two types of deception are still towards deceiving others.

Those who completely deleted pictures of ugly self from their computers or even from their cameras belonged to the last type – self deception. They are the ones who could not accept how they looked in a certain way. They had another image of themselves. Very often, they considered bad photos of themselves as "abnormal" self. They would say, "at least I have to look like myself." Hence, it seems that they already had a picture of themselves in mind. This picture of them is usually an acceptable version of self. If the photographs matched with their imagination of self, then they were considered as "myself." If the photographs depicted a self which they did not desire, then they immediately rejected the image and considered it was a "bad photo" only - "it is not how I look."

Indeed, Fung's case also illuminates another type of self deception in tourist's online photographic practices. Half a year after I first interviewed him, he deleted all his photographs to Japan. I realized that Kelly, who traveled with him to Japan, broke up with him. It seems like Kelly is now with another person. I asked him why he had to delete his travel photographs, as he rarely looks back at them. He hesitated to talk about it as he is still suffering from the break-up so he simply responded to me by saying that "Yes I deleted them." He then paused for a long while. I then asked him whether it was due to the quality of his photographs or it

was also because of the break-up. He agreed by saying that it was for both reasons. I asked him why his travel photographs had to be the first to go. He said, "Well, the memory is too intense—is the two of us you know."

As I know that he still has photographs of Kelly in his other online albums, I asked him, "how about other photos? Why not delete them as well?" Nonetheless, it seems like he did not realize that there are still photographs of Kelly online. He asked me with a very curious tone, "what other photos?" It shows that he no longer focused on the quality of his photographs in Japan but also the "romantic memories" between Kelly and him.

To him, the deletion of his photographs in Japan symbolizes the deletion of his most intensive moments with Kelly even though he rarely looks back at his travel photographs. The meaning of his travel photographs changes from a sense of pity and regret (i.e., he was not able to take nice photographs in Japan) to a sense of bitterness and pain resulting from his nostalgia of sweet moments with Kelly. The producer deceives himself into believing that by changing the forefront, the back stage will also be changed. By deleting the photographs that he rarely views, the memories will no longer be there to haunt him.

Unlike Fung, Lily and Pak also post their trips with their previous romantic partners but without anyone in them. They only post pure scenic photographs of this kind of trip. When I interviewed Lily, she rarely talked about her trip to Bohol. Rather she spent a lot of time talking about her trips to India and the Silk Road. I realized that she posted fewer photographs of her trip to Bohol (in the Philippines)

than any other trips so I asked her why. She replied, "Yes, this trip is nothing special. Basically it's very boring."

Later I found out that it was a trip with her ex-boyfriend. She was not particularly pleased with the way he acted during the trip. It is not certain whether her view of the trip changed after their break up. Although the trip was boring, she still posted some photographs while excluding her ex-boyfriend from her online posting. Instead, she posted photographs of Curious George as a replacement of her ex-boyfriend. This type of posting can be a way to deceive others as well as self.

How can one identify when self-deception take place? Von Hippel and Trivers (2011) suggest that there are two fundamental signs of self-deception. First, deception often involves the selection of favorable information over unfavorable information. Second, there are motives or benefits behind such a selection of information. When favorable information is selected for self in order to fulfill certain motives, it is most likely that self-deception is in action.

8.5 Front Stage Performance

Staged Memories

While celebrated for producing visions and memory, tourist photography's 'small world' of positive extraordinariness produces invisibility and forgetting. Tourist images produce 'calculated memory', the way one would like to be remembered and to remember places. They conceal as they reveal. They represent a reality that is a projection of their maker's desires. (Bærenholdt et al.,

2004)

When I say front stage memories, it means what tourists display at the forefront to others about their travel experience. The staged memories are indeed composed of three elements: their online photographs, the framing and posing of these photographs, and the reactions of the audiences. All these three components contributed to the overall performance at the forefront to the audiences. First, the tourists have to pose for their photographs. Most of the time, their photographs contains of their unnatural acts. They also need to frame what they see in order to turn it into a two-dimensional image. Once the image is framed, they would then have to decide whether or not the image should be saved, deleted, or shared. If the image is suitable for sharing, then how should it be shared? This is the most manageable component of performance as they can even edit the image before they share. The least manageable component is the reaction of the audience. Audience reactions at the front are indeed part of the producer's performance. The number of "like" and the positive comments of audiences can indeed contribute to the success of their performance—the idealization of their self image. They can learn from previous experience to increase the possibility of a more favorable reaction from the audiences. They can also learn from other performers to deliver a more impressive performance. Nonetheless, the performers can make mistakes in their performances. Hence, front stage performance is where performers control impressions to others but the outcomes are not always manageable and ideal.

8.6 Back Stage Performance

Imagined Gaze

"I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides." (Lacan, 1998, p. 72)

Tourists are being gazed at the ways they gaze, or at least they imagine the gaze of others on how they gaze. Based on my findings, I argue that the "imagined gaze" is shaped through three principles: (1) audience reaction, (2) constant comparison, and (3) imagination.

First, the producer's imagined gaze is largely a product of one's experience and a reflection of others' reactions towards the shared photographs. Quite a few cases of this study showed that not only did the performer learn from their own performing experience, they also were aware of others' performances and learned from theirs. They also compared themselves with others constantly to get a sense of how well they did. They were able to locate themselves in a certain position by comparing self with others, in which a sense of pride and shame follows. Indeed, social comparison as a form of self-evaluation is usually conducted with similar others (Festinger, 1954). Hence, the performers usually viewed the posts on Facebook on a daily basis as these posts were mainly from their acquaintances. These acquaintances may do slightly better or worse than the performers. Such a slight difference can allow more realistic comparisons.

Nonetheless, it should be noted the importance of the role of imagination at the back stage. First, the performers can only "imagine" other's perception based on

the audiences' reactions. Whether the reactions were favorable or not, they could never get to know exactly what their audiences thought about their performance (Cooley, 1972). Some audiences might provide favorable reactions just to "give-face." Some provided negative reactions but might actually have enjoyed viewing the performance.

Another way the performers can "imagine" other's perception is by viewing their own performance as an audience. As mentioned before, this requires self alienation. They imagine themselves as others so that they can have a sense of the viewing experience from the perspectives of the audiences. For example, Sandy expressed that she spent lots of time and effort to select and edit photographs to provide the best viewing experience to the audiences. To do so, she had to be the audience to view the photographs herself in order to choose what to post and what needed to be edited.

The tourists may not be aware of the process itself when they choose photographs for posting and may see their online posting as a pure outcome of their subjective sense of aesthetics and uniqueness. However, the "imagined gaze" and the shaping of it seem to play the most important role in their decisions of photo-sharing, based on the conversations I had with the producers.

As mentioned in Chapter Seven, performance as a learning process requires self-evaluation. This continuous evaluation of self, as to what shapes the "imagined gaze," takes place at the back stage area. Existing psychological studies argue that self-evaluation often involves self-deception in order for one to maintain mental

health or to be able to perform better at the front stage (Sedikides &Alicke, 2012; Von Hippel & Trivers, 2011). Like a front stage performance, self-image can be enhanced or protected for self to consume. Nonetheless, such a performance of self to self is not without threats. Negative audience reactions or unfavorable social comparison can threaten the formation of an ideal image to self.

Having said so, there are several ways for one to reduce threats. In particular, self-serving bias, better-than-average effect, and selective self-memory as a form of self-deception can help minimizing the threat to one's ideal self (Sedikides & Alicke, 2012). Self-serving bias allows performers to blame others for perceived failure. Better-than-average effect can allow performers to see themselves as better than other performers on average. Selective self-memory can allow performers to selectively recall the positives of the performance. Also, performers who have higher self-esteem can be more resilient to threats in self-evaluation whereas those who have lower self-esteem can be more vulnerable to the negative aspects of the performance (Steele, Spencer, & Lynch, 1983).

Also, the ideal self can be shaped at the back stage in various ways according to one's motive of self-evaluation. These motives can shape the way front and back interacts. Specifically, four self-evaluation motives were found to be very helpful in explaining the different back stage experiences of the participants in this study. These motives are self-improvement, self-enhancement, self-assessment, and self-verification.

Self-improvement is the desire to learn to improve one's performance for

the formation of an ideal self (Corcoran, Crusius, & Musseweiler, 2011; Green, Sedikides, Pinter, & Van Tongeren, 2009). Upward social comparisons is usually conducted to achieve self-improvement, meaning that the performers can get to improve their performances by learning from the better ones. Negative reactions from the audiences are accepted as part of the learning process (Corcoran et al., 2011).

Self-enhancement is the desire to maximize the positive view of self by suppressing negative information about self (Sedikides & Alicke, 2012). In particular, downward social comparisons can facilitate self-enhancement. In other words, the performers can hold a positive view of self through comparing self with inferior others. Threats to one's ideal image caused by unfavorable audience reactions can also be reduced through downward comparisons (Corcoran et al., 2011).

Self-assessment is the desire to learn about oneself and to minimize uncertainties about self. Usually, performance of this kind can lead to either favorable or unfavorable sense of self (Sedikides & Strube, 1995, 1997). Existing literature usually considers self-assessment as the need to seek for an "accurate" view of oneself (Green et al., 2009). In this study, all performance involves deceptions including those who desire to learn about themselves. Hence, self-assessment as a motive in here does not entail the "accurate" assessment of self. Rather, it is referred to as the motive to assess the boundary and possibility of an ideal self.

Self-verification is the desire to maintain the existing self-images.

Performances are conducted to uphold their existing self images whether these images are positive or negative (Sedikides & Strube, 1997). Instead of seeking only for positive reactions, the performers seek for information which helps confirming their views of self whether these information are favorable or not (Chen, Chen, & Shaw, 2004).

Hence, performance as an ongoing, learning process can take place in various forms. The next section will provide further illustration of the variations.

8.7 Categorization of Cases and their Authentication of Ideal Self

Based on my findings from dramaturgical analysis of interview and visual data, I have grouped similar cases into categories. Such a categorization can help explaining the variations that existed among performances.

During the analysis, I paid attention to how the interviewees' online and offline impressions are related to their accounts of their practices, specifically the why of posting, audience's impact, and their views of others' performances. According to their similarities and differences on these aspects, four categories of cases were identified. Table 2 presents a categorization of cases with references to the actions they took to control impressions online and during the interview.

Table 2: A Comparison of the Four Categories of Cases

	Leaning towards deceiving others		Leaning towards deceiving self		
	Diplomatic	Leadership	Learner	Caregiver	
				Inspirer	Guardian
The Why of online sharing	Self image construction or affirmation	To show and to teach others of new places and ways of traveling	To stimulate discussions and to encourage interaction online	To inspire others, to encourage travel, and to change their audiences' world perspectives	Their significant others are the main reasons why photos are taken and shared
The Performance	Outcome-based performance, is certain about the image of self to be projected and is conscious of this when posting photos	Conceal or downplay negative aspects of their experience, places and people are equally important in their performance	Learn about self through their own performance, post what interest others and stimulate reactions	Focus on places rather than on self for presentation	Focus on their significant others rather than on self for presentation
Perceived Impact of Audiences	Learn from their audiences' reaction to better their next performance, evaluate their performance based on others' reactions	Other's comments have minimal impact on them as they are the explorer, yet their positive reactions can encourage them to spend more effort on posting	Conscious of the impact their audiences on their posting strategies, online comments are the indicators of the successfulness of their performance	Are not concerned about what others think of their photos, yet they enjoy learning from their audiences' comments as an add-on to their existing perspectives	Audiences' reactions have no impact on their practices but some might help them to rethink about their travel
View on other's	Some performance are	Most performance are	Can learn much from other's	Other's performance can	Other's photos are sources of

277

perform ances	exceptional whilst some are a waste of time to view	incompatibl e with their own	performan ce and enjoy viewing other's performan ces	remind them of their own travel photos and next trips	travel ideas
Exampl es	Disney, Vivian, JC, Billy	Sandy, Yang, Ria	Fung, Kelly	Kit, Lily	Pak, Tracey

Four categories of cases were identified based on the performer's consciousness of staging and audience's impact on them. The word "consciousness" is used in here instead of simply differentiating their "level of staging" or "level of audience's impact on their practices." It is due to the fact that, one way or another, all travel photos shared by the participants are staged and that they are indeed all very sensitive to their audience's reactions whether they are aware of it or not. Therefore, they are all performers who may or may not be conscious of the performative nature of online sharing. Figure 7 positions the cases according to their levels of consciousness of stage and audience impact.
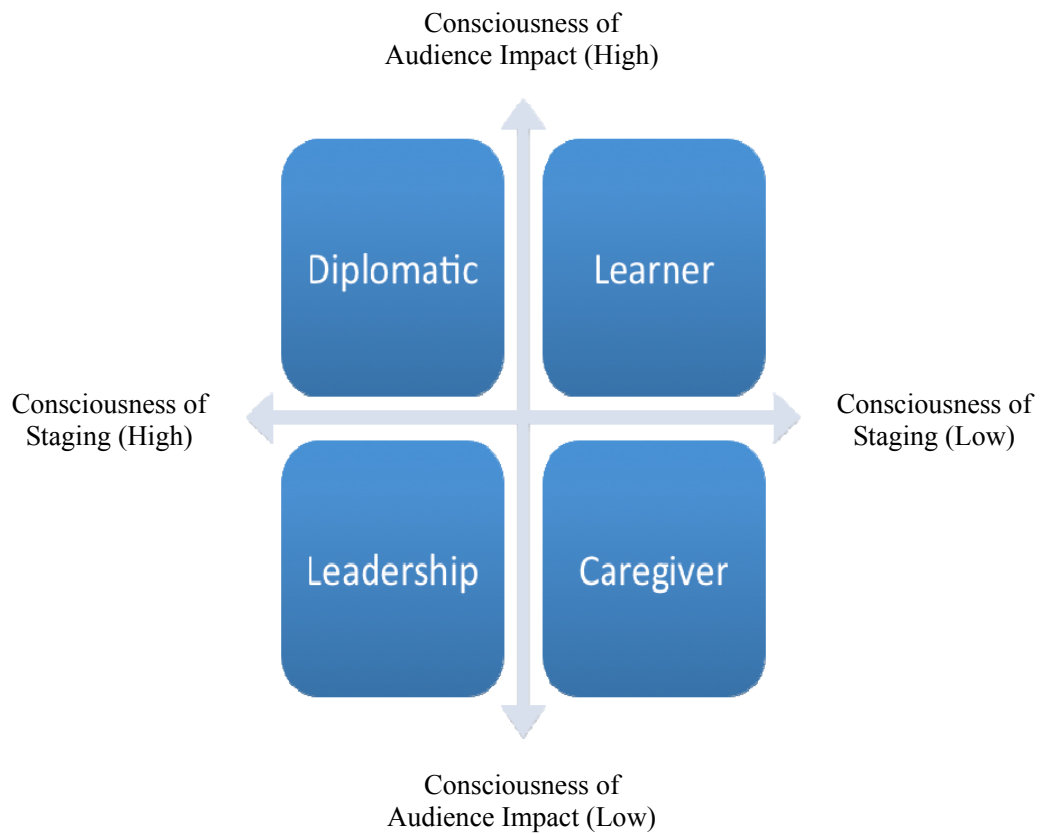
Consciousness of
Audience Impact (High)

Diplomatic   Learner

Consciousness of   Consciousness of
Staging (High)   Staging (Low)

Leadership   Caregiver

Consciousness of
Audience Impact (Low)

Figure 7: Positioning the Cases: Performers and their Consciousness of Staging

Deception is thus an integral part of a performance. It takes place in a two-way flow: to others and to self. By analyzing the performers' consciousness of staging and audience impacts with their justifications of sharing intention and view of other's performances, various forms of deceptions were revealed. Some lean towards deceiving others by staging their online photographs consciously. Some lean towards deceiving self by denying the performative nature of their sharing. When deception succeeds (either to ourselves or to others), we experience pleasure

and pride. When deception fails (either to ourselves or to others), we experience shame and discouragement.

It should be noted that this study is not trying to neglect or deny the existence of a variety of reasons why photos are shared. It is not the purpose of the study to put forward the idea that sharing is merely a means to brag about one-self. Instead, it suggests that whenever the photos are shared, there is a certain degree of staging in the shared memories. The performers might feel simply obligated to share their photos with others without any intention to brag at the beginning, but as soon as they share their photos with others, their travel memories become a front-stage performance. They are able to control impressions others have of them through online travel posting.

8.71 Descriptions of the Four Categories

In this section, I shall discuss how various forms of performance take place through an illustration of the four categories of cases. In particular, the nature of the ideal self in each category and how it is being formed will be presented through four sub-frameworks.

The Diplomatic Ones

This category of cases represents those who were more conscious or at least were comparably more frank with the intention of their photographic practices. They see self-image construction or affirmation as the one of the reasons why travel photographs are shared online.

Reality or authenticity of experience being presented is relatively less important in their photographs posted, although they believe that they are able to enjoy and promote to others the authentic experience that their friends always miss out when traveling. They aim at presenting the best visual images of their travel experience or of themselves.

Photographs were selected to confirm, enhance or create their desired self images. Their performance was outcome-based. They are certain of the type of self-image to be projected and use audience's reaction as an indicator of the success of their performance.

If their performances are successful, they reflect on the elements of success and learn to carry on these elements for their next performance. If their performances are unsuccessful, they do not see self as the reason of failure. Rather, they tend to complain about Facebook culture or their audiences for the failure.

Such a failure can discourage theses performers to post more travel photos online. The cases under this category tend to adopt a diplomatic rhetoric to explain their practices. They are very conscious of the fact that positive audience reactions can help authenticating their ideal selves. Hence, they tactfully learn from the reactions of their audiences, and thus share what might seem appealing to their audiences so that they can get positive reactions from them in return to help project their ideal selves at the front. They tend to see themselves as better travelers than others but are also open to learn from other performers if their performances are exceptional.

Authentication of Ideal Self as Self-Improvement and Self-Enhancement
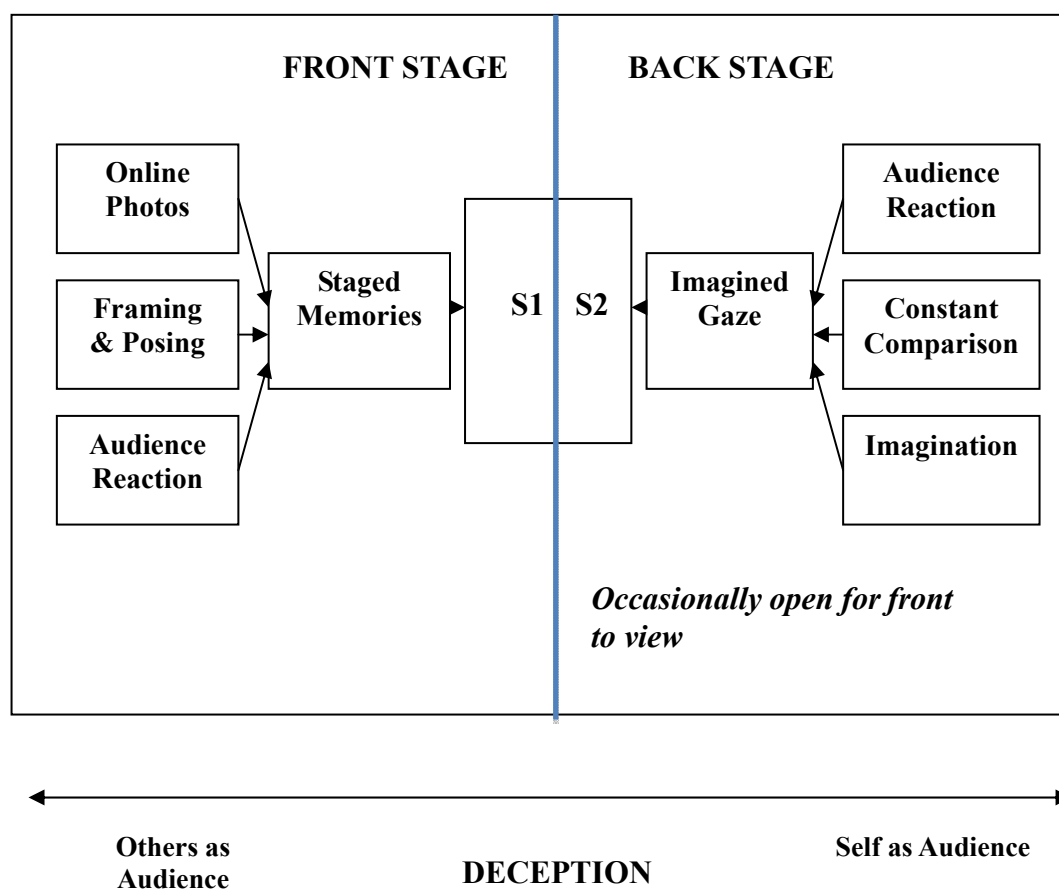
Figure 8: Performance of the Diplomatic Ones

Note:

S1 = Ideal Self (i.e., travel advisor, photographer, artist, teacher)

S2 = Performer, Multiple Self

Performance of this type is what Goffman argues as the cynical one. It is conducted with a clear line separating the front and back. The performers are certain of the images they aim to project (S1) to the front and are constantly learning better ways to successfully project the ideal image. The performers are aware of the other side of self (S2). This side of self adopts online travel posting as

a way to boost ego or to seek for acknowledgement. They want to conceal this side of self (S2) from the front and want their front stage audiences to see S1 as their only selves. Occasionally, the back stage area (S2) is open to certain audiences for viewing if it helps to express sincerity and honesty. S2 also represents other sides of self that are not disclosed to certain spheres of audiences but can in turn be the self to be projected at other fronts.

Performance is carried out to achieve two motives: self-improvement and self-enhancement. Self-serving bias as a form of self-deception is adopted to excuse self from the failure of performance. If performance is successful, they enjoy their own show at the back as an audience. If the performance is unsuccessful, they find other stages to view their back stage performance instead. This helps the performers to hold positive views of self. Hence, what happens to the front (projection of S1 to others) has less impact on the formation of ideal self (imagination of S1) at the back. Having said so, upward social comparisons and evaluation of positive reactions are conducted to learn of better ways to perform.

In sum, the diplomatic ones aspire to view the positive aspects of self and learn from the success of their own performances as well as other performances to improve the projection of an ideal self at the same time.

The Leadership Ones

This category of cases represents those who are also very conscious of the fact that online-sharing is largely a staged performance. Having said so, they try to avoid being seen as performers. Instead, they want to be seen as explorers who are

willing to help others in getting creditable travel information. They are to show and to teach others of new places for traveling and ways to travel better. In order to maintain or build such an image, they tend to conceal or downplay negative aspects of their travel experience. They also tend to see the negative experience as a result of uncontrollable factors like bad weather, travel companions, and the local culture.

Through posting a combination of aesthetic and unique places with happy self and others, they convince their audiences that they have the capabilities and experience to be their travel advisers. They are very confident of their own performance and their travel capabilities. Thus, audience's comments have minimal impact on them. They will still post even if no one responds to their performance. Yet, positive reactions from the audience can encourage them to spend more effort on choosing, editing, and captioning their photographs. To them, others' performances are mostly incompatible with their own. They are less interesting and meaningful as theirs since other performers usually travel to typical touristic sites and are unable to seek authentic experience like them. These performers complimented Facebook as a great platform to share travel ideas and information among friends but when probed further, they could hardly think of any advice they were able to seek from their friends.

Authentication of Ideal Self as Self-Enhancement
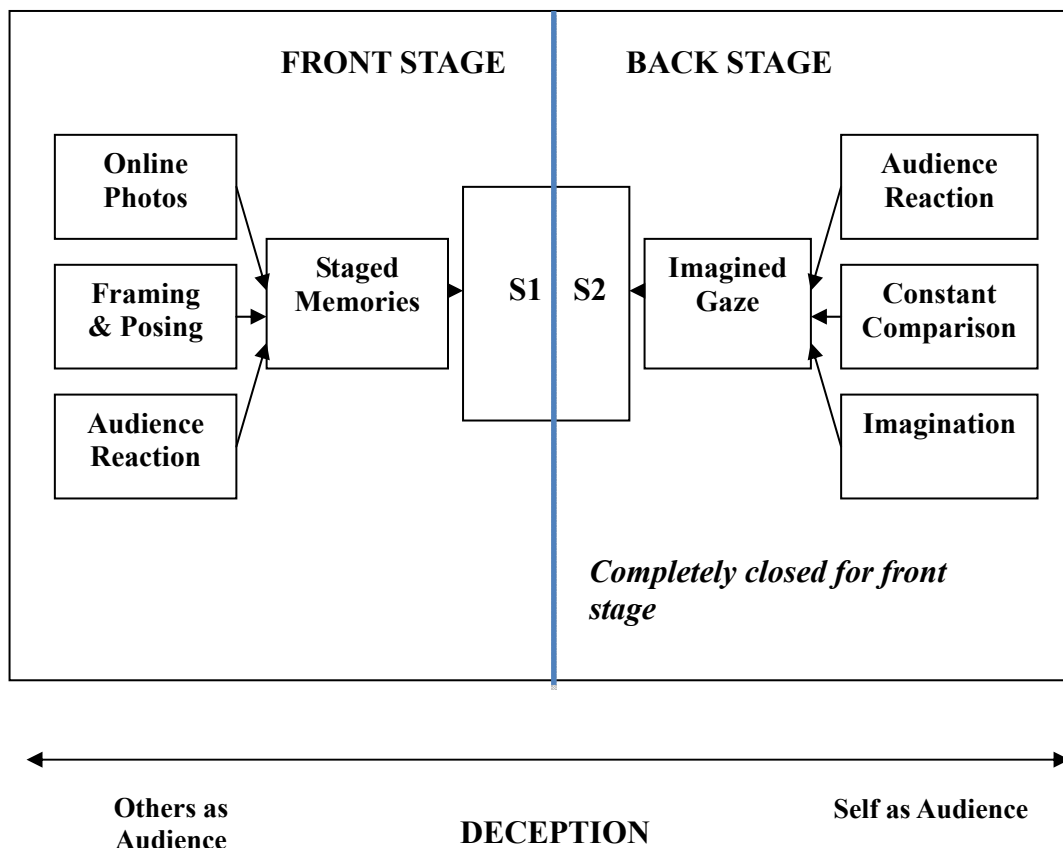
Figure 9: Performance of the Leadership Ones

Note:

S1 = Ideal Self (i.e., travel advisor, photographer, artist, teacher)

S2 = Performer, Negative Self

I categorized these cases as the leadership cases since they often expressed their ability of being a pioneer and teachers in travel. Their audiences were their followers and students who simply listen to them and seek information from them.

Performance is carried out to authenticate ideal self through self-enhancement. Similar to the diplomatic one, performance of this type is also a

cynical one. There is also a clear division between the front and the back. The performers of this category are also certain of the images to be projected to others at the front (S1) and are aware of the other side of self (S2) to be concealed from the audiences at the front. This side of self shares images as a way to project ideal images (S1) at the front even at the cost of twisting realities. They want to conceal any negative side of self (S2) from the front and want their front stage audiences to see S1 as their only selves. Hence, self at the back as a performer and incapable traveller (S2) is not to be opened for viewing at all.

Unlike the diplomatic ones, back stage performance is not to help building performance strategies but to strengthen or confirm projected images to self as audience. Downward social comparisons as a form of self-deception help strengthening idealization of self at the back. Self-serving bias is adopted to excuse self from the failure to produce an ideal on-site performance. Hence, what happens to the front (projection of S1 to others) has less negative impact on the formation of an ideal self (imagination of S1) at the back since the performers only consume favorable information and reaction that helps confirm the ideal self.

The Learners

Two cases were categorized into the "the learner" category. These cases represented those who are relatively less conscious of staging. They do notice that online photographs are what represent them as a person but they also can find very convincing reasons to avoid seeing their posts as a performance of self. They post to learn from others, to encourage interactions among friends online, or to strengthen their ties with the remote others.

They tend to present themselves as humble learners and are open to explore images which are well-accepted by others and at the same time are possible for self to develop. They are very conscious of audiences' impact on their posting and photographic strategies. If their performance is successful, they will start to see stronger linkage of themselves with the characteristics or qualities presented, and carry on with this type of performance in the future. If their performance is unsuccessful, they will start to doubt the ability of self to build certain images.

Online travel photos are not about places but largely about who they are. They see others' performances as very interesting and can be a role model for self to learn from. I categorized these cases as the learner cases. They presented to me as if they were still at the stage of exploring and testing the boundaries of self through posting photographs online. They seemed to rely heavily on others to understand themselves and the kind of performances that were acceptable in presenting these favorable selves.

Authentication of Ideal Self as Self-Assessment
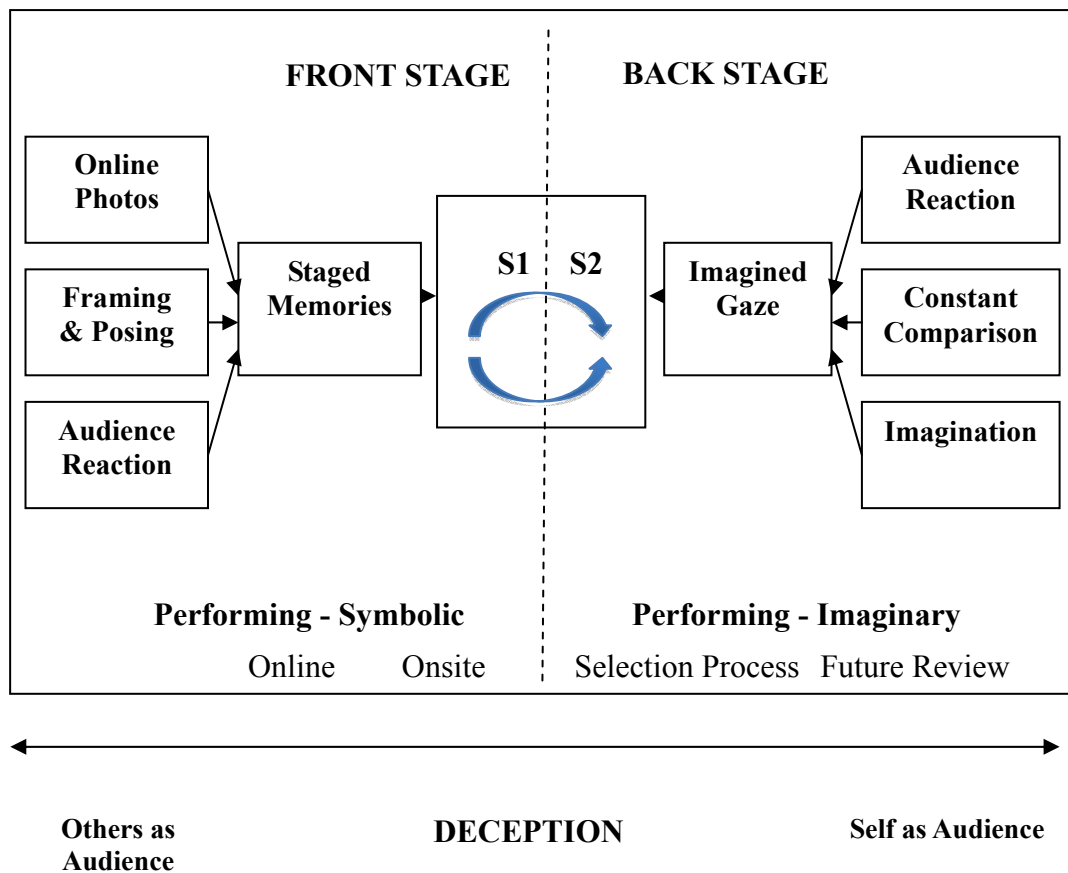
Figure 10: Performance of the Learner Ones

Note:

S1 = Ideal Self as Best Possible-Self-to-Be

S2 = Uncertain Self (To-be-confirmed by others)

Performance is carried out to authenticate ideal self through self-assessment. There is a less clear division of front and back when compared to the diplomatic and leadership categories. Indeed, there is a lot more interaction between the image projected at the front and the image consumed at the back. The ideal image in this type of performance is the most fragile one. It relies greatly on the audience reactions for the formation of it. Since it is very vulnerable, the performers have to

conceal their intention of performance even from themselves so that the ideal image can also be formed at the back stage. If performance is successful, ideal self can then start to form at the back. If performance is unsuccessful, the achievability of ideal self can be greatly challenged.

Care-giver (Inspirer and Guardian)

Four cases were categorized into a category labeled as "care-giver." The performers of this category do not see their posts as a type of performance. They post travel photos online mainly to fulfill other's requests or to make it a better world. Yet, they want self and others to see self as someone who is unconcerned about how others think of their performances. They usually adopt the "take it or leave it" attitude.

Under this category, I have recognized two subcategories. They are the "inspirer" and the "guardian." I will first talk about the inspirer. The inspirers believe that their photos can inspire others and encourage their audiences to travel more. They hope to change others' perspectives through their travel photos

Unlike the leadership case, they believe that others also have unique perspectives, which in return can help broaden their own worldviews. Their performances usually focus more on places than on themselves since they believe that their appearances are not the selling point of the performance. During the interviews, they stressed that they are not concerned about how their audiences view their photos and that comments from the audiences have no impact on their practices. They are who they are and will not change for others. Yet, they enjoy

learning from their audiences as they can help them to see things with multi-perspectives. They enjoy viewing others' performances since their performances remind them of their own travel and arouse their desires to travel again. They often view their own travel photos when they see others' performances, when they are bored, and when they are unhappy at work. Their travel photos can serve as a remedy to temporarily fulfill their travel desires and to cure them of their negative emotions.

Unlike the leadership case, the inspirer case focuses more on ways of seeing than places. They value others' perspectives as equally valuable, yet they do see themselves as having broader view.   They are also confident of their own performances like the leadership ones. Nonetheless, they are not to lead but to accept others and to help others. They are not trying to force others to see the way they see things but hope that their audiences can learn more about the world and can see things with better eyes. Therefore, they are like the inspirers.

Two cases were categorized into the category labeled as the "guardian." The performers of this category are least conscious of their performative practices along with the inspirer cases. They also see their online posting as a means to fulfill others' requests. Nonetheless, they do not post to inspire others. Rather, their significant others are usually the focus of their posts and the main reason why photos are taken and shared. They tend to adopt passive posting strategies. They are least selective as they simply select out repetitive and blurry photos from posting. Yet, they are also concerned about their physical appearance and do not wish to post photos in which self looks indecent and ugly. Like the inspirer, they are

less conscious of audience's impact on their photographic and sharing practices. They do not care what their audiences think of their photos as these photos are their memories and they are largely for self-remembrance. They believe that it is normal that their audiences do not understand their performance as they do not share the same memories, if in any case their performance is not appreciated by others. Nonetheless, some comments do help them to rethink the way they travel. To them, others' performances are sources of travel ideas. They learn from their online photos of new places to visit.
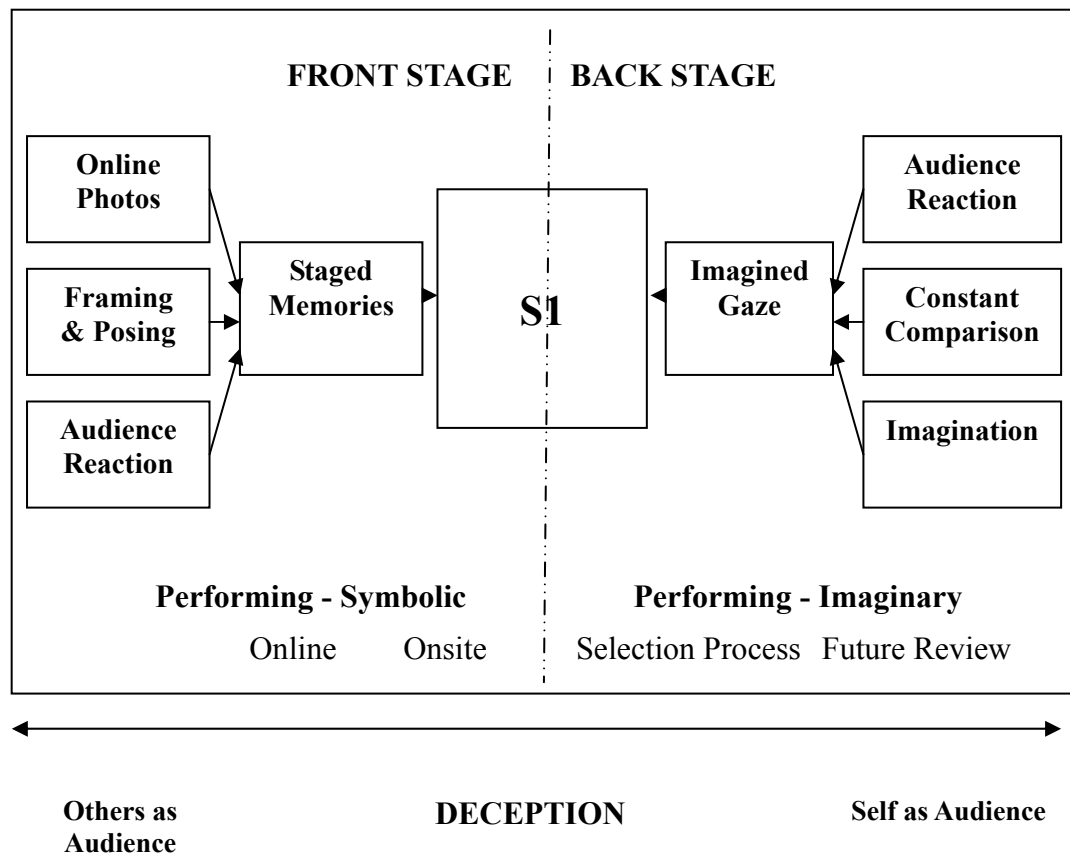
Authentication of Ideal Self as Self-Verification

Figure 11: Performance of the Caregiving Ones

Note:

S1 = Ideal Self as True Self

Performance is carried out to authenticate ideal self through

291

self-verification. Ideal self in this case is the existing self and is enacted through being sincere to others. Hence, performance of this type is what Goffman argues as the sincere one. The performers truly believe in the projected image (S1) as real and unperformed. It is exactly how they are at the back stage. Hence, this type of performance is conducted with unclear line of front and back. Through showing self to the front, the performers deceive self at the back that the ideal self is the "normal" self. Ideal self is formed largely through an imagination of self as object.

8.72 Discussion of the Four Categories

Most performers did not like to view or to acknowledge the performative nature of their sharing. Performance involves a sense of insincerity and masking. Therefore, it is shameful and condemned among "friends." Participants of the learner and caregiver categories could provide more convincing explanations of why photos were posted. They deceived themselves with selfless reasons of sharing so that they could deny the performative nature of their practices in a more convincing manner even to self. Participants of the leadership category were aware of their performance but were disinclined to admit so. By framing their sharing as a performance, the credibility of them as a travel adviser to others could be impacted. Participants of diplomatic category were also reluctant to frame their sharing as a performance but were comparatively open to bring it up briefly when probed further.

Participants of the leadership and the caregiver categories were less conscious of the audience's impact on their practices. They tended to view or explain their sharing as for the benefits of others. Online-sharing was to help, to

teach, to inspire, to encourage, or to fulfill others. They rejected the ideas that they would adjust their posting strategies in response to the audiences' reactions. They tended to immediately respond to my question on audiences' impact by saying that "the photos are mine," "the trip is mine," "I don't care whether they view or not," "I don't care whether they like them or not," In particular, participants of the leadership and the inspirer categories were very confident of their own performance. Especially the inspirer ones, they were skillful in seeing the negatives through positive lenses. They tended to think that negative aspects of travel are part of the experience. These negative experiences could be used to help others or to become some interesting stories for sharing. Negative comments can be seen as witticism of the audiences. Unlike the inspirer cases, the leadership cases tended to only present the positive aspects of their travel and thus were very satisfied with their online travel photos if not the experience itself.

Except those of the learner cases, all performers demonstrated a strong antipathy to "typical Hong Kong tourists" during the interviews. They often complained about the superficiality of the way of traveling and photographing of the Hong Kong tourists. They refused to be seen as one of them and often took chance to explain to me how they were not typical Hong Kong tourists.

It should be noted that certain cases might fall between two categories. Sandy seems to be a diplomatic one in terms of her response to the question "why sharing." Unlike Yang and Ria, she explained her sharing with a more diplomatic rhetoric. The reason why I categorized her into the leadership one was that she adopted a more leadership rhetoric throughout the whole interview. She often

expressed that she did better than others in terms of traveling and selecting photographs for sharing. Also, she did not shy away from admitting her performance like those who adopted a diplomatic rhetoric. Although she also continued talking about showing others new places when I probed further, she spoke out with a very confident tone, "I want to show others that Sandy is capable and bright!"

Another disconfirming case can be Lily. Lily seems to be very strategic in terms of how she shared and what she shared with others in order to attract audiences' positive reactions. Other caregivers like Pak, Tracey, and Kit appeared to be less strategic in terms of collecting "likes" and positive comments. Despite this fact, Lily shared a lot of similarities with other caregivers. Hence, cases were allocated into the same categories when they shared a majority of similar characteristics if not all.

Concluding the Chapter

This chapter presented a framework that explains the common patterns that emerged from the analysis of empirical data through the lens of existing theories and concepts. This final framework articulates how performance as a learning process takes place in the form of online photo sharing. Imagined gaze, which is largely shaped through self-evaluations, is fundamental in how one stages travel memories online. Under this framework, different types of performances can be carried out to authenticate an ideal self of diverse natures.

Despite the differences, deception was found to be present in both the front and the back stage of a performance. It is essential in the formation of an ideal self

as it can help concealing the unfavorable intention of sharing from others and from self. It can also help the performers to project ideal self to others and to self through filtering out unfavorable aspects of self and of one's travel experience. Last but not least, downward comparison, self-serving bias, and better-than-average effect can help deceiving self at the back stage to facilitate the formation of an ideal self.

Although ego enhancement has been proposed by previous studies as travel motivation, how ego is being enhanced has rarely been discussed in depth. This chapter provides insights on how ego enhancement can be achieved through performing for travel memories and consuming the travel self as a gazed object. It also provides insights on the successful and unsuccessful cases in enhancing one's ego through sharing travel photographs online. Most importantly, it revealed how ego can be enhanced through various types of deceptions.

It should be noted that not all performers share travel images to feel superior. Some share to protect their existing self-images. They are less concerned about the extraordinariness of experience and the quality of photographs as a means to cultivate positive audience reactions for the formation of their ideal self. Rather, sharing is largely about avoiding troubles and fitting in. Egos might not be enhanced through tourism in this case. Although this "I-have-done-what-I-am-supposed-to-do" attitude of sharing minimizes the enjoyment one can experience through photographic practices, it can also help reducing threats to one's ego when their online travel-postings are not well-received by others.

Chapter Nine

Concluding Remarks and More Questions

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This study was conducted to provide insights on how the new form of social interaction, facilitated by the rapid evolution of media and photography technology, shapes contemporary traveling culture and tourist sense of self. It aimed to do so by raising a research question, "How does performance of self as an ongoing, learning process take place in the production and consumption of online tourist photography?"

In light of this, a dramaturgical, reflexive ethnographic approach was adopted to explore how the micro level of social interaction contributes to the formation of online travel images thus tourist's self.

Three objectives were achieved to help answer the research question:

Objective (1): To explore tourists' selection process of posting travel photographs online

The findings of this study suggest that filtering process does not only involve the decision of what to frame and how to frame. It also takes into the consideration of whether the whole performance can be, or is necessary to be,

viewed by future audiences. The reasons why a camera is or is not taken along can be voluntary or involuntary in nature. The nature of one's trip, one's travel companion, and one's perception of photography can contribute to this first stage of image selection. If a camera is taken along, the second stage of image selection then takes place throughout the whole trip. Images can be excluded from one's visual records when self or what the performers encounter appears to be too ordinary or unacceptable for viewing. They can also be excluded when photography is not allowed due to different circumstances. Images can be deleted if they are not up to the performers' expectations. When images are up to the performers' standard, they can be taken as an obligation to the future audiences. They can also be taken to fulfill the immediate emotional needs of the performers or their potential demands in the future. The performers may choose to view these selected images while traveling or to review them through a different setting when they return home. They can completely delete images that are not helpful or they can choose to reserve them for the back stage audience only. Images that are up to their basic standards can be shared to the front by performers who adopted passive-posting strategy. Those who adopted proactive-posting strategy tend to choose what they consider as appealing for their front stage performance. Yet, the performers can never get to know what appeals to their audiences. Hence, they can only choose images that appeal to self first. Images can be included for or excluded from online sharing as a respect or an obligation to others, or even as a means to avoid the misinterpretation of self by others. Nonetheless, the filtering process does not end here. Images can be deleted from one's online-postings due to the changing nature of memories or perceptions of images. Yet, unsatisfactory images can still remain online if they involve others or if there is a possibility that others would notice the destructive act to one's self

image. Hence, impression management plays a significant role in the filtering process of image. The closer it is to the end of the process, the more one's selection is shaped by the controls of one's self image.

Objective (2): To examine the tactics tourists adopted to control impressions others have of them through posting photographs online

The findings of this study suggest that the concealment of ego-enhancement as the intention of sharing is vital to the success of one's performance. This can be done through various controls. First, the performers can deny this unspeakable intention to others or to self with alternate reasons of sharing. Second, the performers can adopt a non-intrusive form of sharing to shy away from their needs of ego-enhancement. Yet, the performers can still ensure readerships by selecting appealing images for posting and by adopting sharing platform on which most target audiences remain active. Third, without indicating whom the images are for, the online-posts can be seen as a request fulfillment to the unknown others. In that case, threats to one's self image can be reduced even if the performance is not perceived to be successful. Yet, ego enhancement as an intention for sharing can also be revealed if such a revelation helps in managing impressions.

Also, it should be noted that no matter how important it is for one to ensure the idealization of self, impression management has to be cost-effective. If the works are not an enjoyment themselves, the perceived outcomes of controls should outweigh the efforts and time spent. Online travel-posting often involves a longer selection process for sharing when compared to other types of sharing. Yet,

travel-postings are usually seen as more effective for ego-enhancement. Therefore, the performers still spend time to select, edit, and upload images even though the process can be quite painful and tedious sometimes. Having said so, their time is not unlimited. They have to choose between quantity of novelty and quality of images, especially during their onsite production.

Indeed, the most important aspect of impression management is the segregation of audiences. The emergence of social media facilitates effective segregation of audiences, which allows higher levels of control in delivering appropriate performance to the right audience, so as to ensure ideal outcomes. Performances can involve risks. Precautions are thus taken by the performers to help avoid any loss and damages.

To ensure an idealization of online performance, the performers have to sacrifice the immediacy of experience and to dramatize expressions in front of the camera to perform for idealized memories. Images of various roles are also selected to help control the viewing experience as well as the reactions of the audiences. Protective and proactive measures can be taken to avoid destruction to existing self-images or to enhance ego. Reality of self is thus constructed through performing for memories and through staging these performed memories online with the application of these tactics.

Objective (3): To examine how tourists evaluate their own performances and the consequences of their evaluations

It is argued that through evaluating one's own performances, the tactics for impression management can be learned. The performers are often the first audiences of their performances. By viewing their own performances, they can imagine how self can be gazed by others as an object. They can also learn from their previous experience to obtain a more reliable evaluation of their performances. Audience reactions are essential in this learning process. The performers can analyze various reasons why positive reactions are obtained or are not obtained. Another way to obtain an accurate evaluation is by comparing their own performances with those of their immediate others. This allows a more realistic comparison as these immediate others are closer to them in terms of ability, resources, and knowledge. Through viewing others' performances, they can also get to learn better how to obtain a more accurate interpretation of the audiences' reactions. They can also build up a more suitable posting strategy for self.

The evaluation of one's own performances can lead to two types of consequences: the consequential actions and the consequential perceptions. The outcomes of evaluation in terms of actions can be changes in online sharing strategies, an increase or decrease in self-viewing, and changes in travel or photographic behaviors. In terms of perceptions, the outcomes can be changes in perceptions of self, of one's own performance, and of the nature of sharing on Facebook. Hence, the filtering process of image as a means of managing impressions online is an ongoing, learning process of self-formation.

In this regard, two types of process in relation to tourist photographic practices have been introduced in this report. First, it is the filtering process of

image. Second, it is the learning process of performance. The learning process is found to be what shapes the imagined gaze, which in turn helps shape the filtering process of images, especially during the later stage of image selection. Such a process unavoidably involves deception. Some performers can be conscious of the deceptions when projecting selective images of self to others. Some performers can deceive self to soothe their unease of being deceitful. Therefore, deception can take place at the front as well as at the back.

More than thirty years ago, Chalfen (1979) has already urged the need to examine the different photographic behaviors exhibited by different types of tourists so as to examine the potential impacts that their photographic behaviors can bring. Until now, limited effort has been made to identify the differences that exist among tourist photographic behaviors, not to mention developing a typology of tourists in term of their photographic behaviors. What hinders the development of research in this area of study is that tourist photographic behaviors are usually seen as rather homogenous and superficial. Contrary to this conventional perception, the findings of this study show that tourist photographic acts actually involve a long process of selection and evaluation no matter how mechanical and reflexive as these acts can appear to be. Although more efforts have been made to explore the various aspects of tourist photography in recent years, how tourists control impression through their travel images has not been examined in depth. This study helps fill in the research gaps by examining the tactics that tourists adopt to project an idealized image of self through sharing travel photographs online. Several forms of authentication of ideal self through online photography were identified. The

potential of developing types of image-producers according to their front and back stage performances were also revealed.

I believe that by examining tourist photography as a performance of self, the specific nature of tourist consumption can be illuminated. At the beginning of the report, I have brought up this question raised by MacCannell (2002, p. 146):

Why do people spend billions of dollars to get close to something they can never possess, which very often they are not allowed to touch or to breath on?

I tried to help answer part of this question by suggesting that the deceptions offered by tourism are indeed what make tourists to travel far and to spend money on seeing and gazing. Tourism provides a stage for the tourists to authenticate their ideal self through multi-layered deceptions. Tourism attractions, tourists as the performers, and sometimes the audiences, all play a part in constructing the "idealized" realities through travel images. Online tourist photography is thus a co-creation of deceptions. Although deception is essential and unavoidable in driving economy and in balancing one's mental health, it is usually despised and concealed given that it signifies all the negative actions and nature of things: lies, fakes, and hypocrisy. Yet, history shows that whenever there are insufficient resources to be shared equally among societal members, deception is what helps to stabilize a society (Lemert, 1997). In that sense, deception can be an intangible yet unrecognized resource that helps bring positive impacts to a society. Hence, tourism as a performing stage for the construction of idealized realities might

indeed serve a more fundamental role in contemporary societies besides boosting one's economy, celebrating the differences in societies, and facilitating cultural exchanges.

Indeed, the rapid evolution of media and photography technology has contributed to the higher feasibility of deceptions in one's staged memories. Through social media and digitalized images, the back stage area is enlarged for a more controllable front stage performance. With the digitalization of images, the performers can now take as many photos as possible for the most idealized performance. The performers can review photos right after they are taken and then review them again before sharing. Hence, back stage performance takes place at least twice in order for online travel images to be produced. With the rapid development of social media, the performers can now view their own performances anytime, anywhere. By saying that, it also means that the performers can deceive self and imagine self as a gazed object more often than ever. Most importantly, the online-sharing culture popularized by social media facilitates intensive social comparison among tourists. The more one engages in online social comparison, the more one considers online posts by others as an indicator of the quality of their own experiences (Chou & Edge, 2012).

Urry (2002) argues that tourism is a consumption of the extraordinary. He argues that the socially-constructed desire to search for the extraordinary is sustained by mass-produced travel images which constantly remind consumers of the ordinariness of their everyday life. If that is the case, then what kind of desire can this search of the extraordinary really fulfill? Through a study of online tourist

photography, it was found that the search of the extraordinary is not exclusively about the extraordinariness that tourism attractions can offer. Rather, it is the desire to gaze at the ideal self - a socially acceptable "me" which is at the same time superior and extraordinary when compared to the immediate others. The extraordinariness of travel moments are constantly compared in the process of forming and evaluating ideal self.

So what does it mean? It means that the extraordinary is not only shaped by the mass media. It is also shaped by a constant comparison of self and the immediate others. This study finds that some performers enjoy learning from others whilst some strongly refuse to repeat others' footsteps. This seems to suggest that tourists, as active producers of online travel images, can either help promote a place and certain ways of travel, or on the contrary, make certain travels less attractive given that it is widely-practiced by others. When tourists learn that everyone else shares similar images, they will have to either capture new attractions or to capture the same attractions in a unique way in order to distinguish self from others. This helps to explain why, as Urry (2002) suggests, that the extraordinary can become ordinary in the course of time. In that sense, the view of tourist photographs as a effective means to promote destination can be overly-simplistic and optimistic.

Hence, such a comparison of macro level and micro level of social interaction in the formation of image helps raise new questions: how is the tourist gaze being shaped now considering that the mass-media has lost its dominating role in image construction? More specifically, if extraordinary can be projected through mass-distributed images and can also be spoiled when images are shared repeatedly

by the immediate others, then at what point can extraordinary be constructed or destroyed through the repeated exposure of image? With the emergence of new norms on social media, can the extraordinary be now confirmed more through positive audience reactions (i.e., the number of "likes" and quality of online comments)? Indeed, a typology of performers seems to be essential in answering these questions. The four categories of cases suggest that different performers may perceive audience reactions and other's performances differently. Some performers are more conscious about searching for and showcasing the extraordinary in terms of a comparison with other's travels. Some rely more on the audience's reactions to confirm the extraordinary value of images. Some are more about fitting in and that other's performances can serve as an indicator of the norms to follow. Hence, the tourist gaze can be shaped in various ways according to the nature of one's back stage performance. Unfortunately, the sampling design of this study hindered the exploration and validation of the types of performers. Such a typology of performers has the potential to help shed light on the various ways that the tourist gaze can be shaped. The presented findings were only based on 13 cases limited to Hong Kong local Chinese and the younger generation for a typology of producers to be validated. It should also be noted that this study was only able to provide a snapshot view of the performers at a single point of their lives.

Nonetheless, the four categories of cases identified in this study imply the possibility of developing and validating more types of performers in future studies through larger sample sizes and other methods. Future studies can work to examine whether older tourists exhibit different performance and experience of self through photo-sharing. Longitudinal studies can be conducted to examine changes that take

place on the performers in the long term. Future studies can also examine whether certain types of tourists are more likely to be a specific type of performer. For example, can the leadership and inspirer cases be related to Plog's (1974) allocentric tourists? It will also be important to explore if there are more influential audiences on one's self-evaluation and image selection. Last but not least, future studies should work to examine the possible impacts that social comparisons among tourists can bring to the changing landscape of tourism.

The findings of this study reveal the complexity and dynamicity of image selection and formation. Tourist photographic practices are way more complicated than a search for or a replica of some widely-circulated images as a means to fulfill a socially-constructed desire of the extraordinary. Tourist photographs cannot be understood through counting the focuses of images or through a rather straightforward comparison with mass-produced images. Instead, more researches should be done in order to bring out the subtlety of this taken-for-granted norm. This study shows that the consequences of tourist photographic practices are not limited to the promotion of destination or enhancing the satisfaction of one's travel experience. The consequences are way beyond what we have known so far. An in-depth analysis of thirteen individual cases shows that image selection as an ongoing, learning process can help shape one's perception and experience of self, otherness, and place in various ways.

Facebook, as an online social networking platform, helps reserve tourism memories. Nevertheless, it is also a factory of imaginary and illusions. Social media revolutionizes the way people store and share memories. The front stage is now enlarged so as the back stage area. This new form of memory retention helps

illuminate the specific nature of tourism, or at least the changing nature of tourism facilitated by the rapid evolution of technology. Tourism is largely sustained by the staged authenticity of attraction and of the tourist's self. In this regard, this study rejects the notion that the authentic self of the tourist, if it ever exists, can be experienced through escaping from the social norm of one's origin of place. In front of the lens, another social norm is being enacted. In front of the lens, another reality is being created and authenticated. If travel photographs are what makes tourist's imaginary of place possible, I argue that online tourist photographs are what facilitates tourist's imaginary of self as an object through the eyes of others.

Appendices

Appendix I

Invitation Letter

你好:

我是香港理工大學酒店及旅遊業管理學院的博士研究生。我現正進行一項有關旅遊照片的研究計劃,以作為我的博士論文研究。你的參與可以讓我從你的角度更加了解旅遊與攝影的關係,集思廣益。

如果你是香港本地居民,能操粵語,而又同時使用社交網站(如 Facebook,MySpace,Window Live Space 等)及其他網絡媒體(如 博客,網上相簿,網上論壇,旅遊主題網站等) 作旅遊照片分享,你便是這一研究項目的理想對象。我衷心的希望你可以積極參與這一項有趣及有意義的研究。在完成參與後,你將會得到小禮物一份以示感謝。

你的參與將會包括以下的範疇:

1. 允許研究人員從你的社交網站及有關的網絡媒體收集資料,以作研究的一部分
2. 允許研究人員和你在香港理工大學進行約一至二次的訪談, 每次
約六十分鐘 (面對面,記錄式的訪談)
3. 允許研究人員聯絡幾個可以查看你的網上旅遊照片的有關人士
4. 允許研究人員發表以上研究活動的有關結果(匿名 - 以保障你的私隱)

如果你有興趣參與這一項研究,請回答以下的問題及把你的答案轉遞到我的 Facebook 私人郵件系統。你亦可以通過我的電子郵件: sheungting.lo   與我聯絡。

如有任何疑問,歡迎致電 3400-3144 (辦公室)查詢。我期待著你的參與!

盧湘婷 (Iris) 博士研究生
香港理工大學
酒店及旅遊業管理學院
謹啓

****
請回答以下的問題及把你的答案轉遞到我的電郵或 Facebook 私人郵件系統:

1. 你有沒有在你的社交網站 (Social Network Site)上與他人分享你的旅行照片?
a)有 b)沒有

2. 在你的社交網站上，你通常會與誰分享你的旅行照片？
a）任何人 b）任何我認識的人 c）只與少部分朋友或熟人分享

3. 你有沒有在其他網絡媒體 (online media) 與他人分享你的旅行照片？
a）有 - 請列出使用的媒體:
b）沒有

4. 在這些網絡媒體上，你通常會與誰分享你的旅行照片？
a）與社交網站一樣 b）與社交網站不同的人

5. 在過去兩年內，你曾到訪過香港以外哪些地方？

6. 你的年齡介乎於？
a) 18 歲以下
b) 18 - 25 歲
c) 26 - 35 歲
d) 36 - 45 歲
e) 46 - 55 歲
f) 56 歲或以上

你的聯絡資料
姓名：
電話：
電郵地址：
社交網站網址：
其他網絡媒體網址：

Appendix II

<u>知情同意書</u> (Informed Consent)

我誠懇地邀請你參與「旅遊照片」研究計劃。 你的參與可以讓我從你的角度更加了解旅遊與攝影的關係，集思廣益。

在此讓我向你解釋關於這研究的幾個要項:

1. **研究計劃名稱**：
   旅遊照片研究計劃

2. **參與的範疇**：

   - 允許研究人員從你的社交網站及有關的網絡媒體收集資料，以作研究的一部分
   - 允許研究人員和你在香港理工大學進行約一至二次的訪談， 每次約六十分鐘 （面對面，記錄式的訪談）
   - 允許研究人員聯絡幾個可以查看你的網上旅遊照片的有關人士
   - 允許研究人員發表以上研究活動的有關結果（匿名－以保障你的私隱　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　）

3. **保障和權利**
   你絕對地有權拒絕參與或隨時退出此研究計劃。有關你的研究活動亦會以匿名發表，以保障你的私隱。

4. **關注和疑問**
   如你對有此研究計劃或自身的權利有任何疑問，你可以與香港理工大學酒店及旅遊業管理學院 博士研究生 盧湘婷 聯絡。

Appendix III

Interview Guide

Interview Agenda:
- **Explanation of Study to Participant**
- **Informed Consent**
- **Audio-recorded Interview**

Interview Questions:
(1) Self -Introduction of the Participant
- Can you briefly introduce yourself to me?

(2) Traveling Self/Type of Tourist

- Can you tell me the type of travel do you prefer?

- Why do you like traveling?

- Can you share with me your most unforgettable travel experience?

- How was your trip to _____?

(3) Image Selection

- Take a few minutes to have a look at your own photos

- Tell me about your trip

- Tell me about your photos

- What are your favorite photos?

- Why did you take this photograph?

- Why did you not take a photograph of _____?

- What did you take photograph of?

- What did you not take photograph of?

- Who? (took photographs)

- When? (put them online)

- What? (kind of cameras)

- To whom? (audience)

- How? (selection strategy, editing, organization) – look through album, choose 2 – 3 favorite photos

- Why sharing?

- How did you select what images to share and what not to share?

- What did you share? Why?

- What did you not share? Why?

- Self (do you also view your own photos once in a while? Do they impact how you view your travel experience? – flip through the albums again, ask whether they portray something different from the interviewee's travel experience)

(4) Audience
- Expectation? (any response, what kind of response?)

- Response from audience (<u>online</u> – look through the album, who, what does the message mean to you?)

- Response from audience (<u>offline – any offline reaction, who and what were the reactions</u>)

- Perception of their response

- Impact of their reactions (i.e. on the way you take photograph, on the way you share photograph, on the way you see your photograph, on the way you see your travel trip, on the way you travel in the future)

(5) Repeat steps for other social media (if more than one social media was used for posting)
- Why two media for posting and sharing?

- Facebook/Blog usage (how often, when, and why?)

(6) Photographic practices in general

- At what occasion do you normally take pictures?

- What types of pictures do you share with others via these media?

- What types of picture you do not share with others these media?

- How do you manage your travel photos and other types of photos?

Appendix IV

Table 3: A Cross-Case Analysis of Performance

	Why Sharing?	Online Performance	Audience Impact	View of Other's Performances
Pak	To fulfill other's request	Non-smiling self with smiley girlfriend	No impact, "View it or leave it", Yet travel advices from audiences can impact his next trip	Helpful in generating new travel ideas Helpful in generating new travel ideas
Tracey		Happy, energetic daughter and self as caring mother	Other's comments made her rethink of her ways of travel	
Kit	To fulfill other's request, to expand the worldviews of others and encourage others to travel	Focus on sharing pure scenic photos, images of negative experience shared	No impact but others' comments could provide her with new perspectives	Enjoy viewing other's travel photographs, especially food
Lily	To fulfill others' request and to provide them with different perspective of a place	Macro and micro view of attractions are displayed, unpleasant trip and experience are displayed		Excited to talk about others' travel photographs
Ria	To show others new places and ways of travel	Shared images in contrast to her actual experience, a mixture of self, otherness, and places	Others' comments could motivate her to post more	Cannot think of anything special
Yang		Favorite trip shared, unpleasant trip not posted	Audiences provided helpful advices, could not think of examples	Helpful in generating new travel ideas, but mostly "it's me to tell others"
Sandy	To show others of new places	Shared images in contrast to her	No impact, Does not care what they	Others' postings are

	and attraction, and to show her capability	actual experience, a mixture of self, otherness, and place	think	non-selective, others' travel are terrible
Billy	To be acknowledged by others of his photographic skill	Shared images in contrast to his experience	Received limited comments from others, holds negative attitude towards the design of Facebook and certain audiences	Most are usually ordinary but some are quite interesting
Vivian	To show students of her ability in media production	Focus on places with a reflection of her experience, No funny self	Learned from their reactions for strategic posting	A few producers were able to provide images of unique places
JC	A habit to produce, like a magazine, with a little bragging	A mixture of various focuses, playful self and others in leisure trip only, restricted a few from viewing	Provided helpful photographic advices for better images, feels good to have 'like'	Follow the work of a particular producer closely
Disney	To brag oneself	Places are not important, focus on aesthetic self	No comments from others, discouraged from posting more and using Facebook	Most photographs on Facebook are not good, some producers' photos are worth viewing
Fung	To trigger discussions	Focus on the others as reflective being	Can impact his perception of his photographs and himself as photographer	Others' photographs are so much better
Kelly	To share with relatives	Focus on the playfulness and closeness of relatives and self, appeared to be single	Can help confirming whether her messages were delivered successfully	Enjoy viewing others' travel experience

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