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Elshaer, A

Tourists' selfies storytelling: preferences, intentions, and concerns for practice in the tourism and hospitality industry

Abdallah Elshaer[1], Rong Huang[2], & Asmaa Marzouk[3]

1&3 University of Sadat City, Egypt,

2 University of Plymouth, UK

As a popular tourist activity, photography has recently received a great deal of academic attention. Tourist selfie practices, however, have not yet been thoroughly examined by tourism scholars. The purpose of this study is to pique researchers' interest in investigating tourist selfies storytelling. The study looks into whether tourists' selfies at tourist destinations uncover specific aspects of the host destination, implying an embodiment of particular preferences, intentions, and motivations. An exploratory analysis using a two-step qualitative approach was carried out in this study. A semiotic analysis of 317 tourist selfie photos, and two phases of in-depth interviews with eleven tourists visiting Egypt on a 7-day packaged tour. The findings show that tourists prefer to capture host communities' appearance and attributes in their selfies for different motivations and intentions. Impressions, advertisements, suggestions, and descriptions for these attributes were the intentions that shaped the tourists' selfie practice. This study extends knowledge of the content of travelling-related selfies and tourist behaviours at destinations. It suggests management implications to help tourism and hospitality practitioners, to better engage with, and profit from, tourists' selfies practice.

Keywords: Tourist's selfie, Tourist practices, Social Media platforms, Destinations' marketing, Egypt.

Introduction

Recently, tourist selfies have received a great deal of attention from academics when they examine photos of destinations (Chen et al., 2017; Trinanda and Sari, 2018; Sigala, 2018). Self-photography (selfies) has become a vital component of the modern tourist experience, especially with recent technological advances and a developing online culture stimulating the act of self-presentation through photography at tourist destinations and instantly sharing with an intended audience (Weiler et al., 2021). According to Trinanda and Sari (2018), a selfie is a practice, in which an individual takes his or her photos, preferably with an intriguing background, to show that he or she has already visited a location or had an interesting experience. Current communications trends based on content creation, also identified as User-Generated Content (UGC), have inspired people to share their tour packages with others online by posting images and opinions on Social Media Platforms (SMPs). In terms of UGC, the "selfie" is a kind of self-portrait that has recently been popularized by social networks as a way to present oneself using technology (Camprubi and Rojas, 2021). Selfie practice is commonly understood as a combination of physical and social processes, including taking photos with a camera in an interesting environment and sharing them online (Svelander and Wiberg, 2015).

Thanks to digital platforms, travelers are no longer passive recipients of travel information; instead, they are empowered to express themselves and share their opinions (Marzouk, 2021). For instance, they can now comment on, change, and share content by writing descriptions and posting selfies about tourist destinations (Kim and Fesenmaier, 2017). According to Caton and Santos (2008), photography has evolved into a tourist product that uses people and locations as a backdrop, regardless of the captured content. Recent tourist selfie content has had a significant impact on how prospective travellers plan and make decisions (Larsen, 2018). Over 70% of visitors are thought to use UGC to plan their vacations

in the context of tourism (Cheung et al., 2022). Tourists are therefore exposed to UGC containing diverse message appeals, such as emotional descriptions of tourism activities and functional descriptions of information, and characteristics of events and hospitality services, which are revealed to tourists (Sotiriadis, 2017).

The majority of prior research conducted indirect analysis on the metadata encoded in photos, which fell into four major areas in the tourist field (Li et al., 2018): focusing on analysing the image of visitors using user-related data (such as user ID and photo ID) in the photo (Zhang et al., 2018), analysis of textual content (description, title, and label) to determine the best tag to define the destination (Spyrou and Mylonas, 2016), temporal data (date of taking and uploading), and analysing the spatial patterns characteristics of tourism destinations using geographic information (Bae and Yun, 2017). However, this indirect analysis represents the beginning of the deep learning technique (Arabadzhyan et al., 2021), particularly in the tourism field, where research examining the characteristics of tourist photography' content is lacking (Nikjoo & Bakhshi, 2019; Uchinaka et al., 2019).

Furthermore, previous studies on selfies (Christou et al., 2020; Lyu, 2016; Taylor, 2020) have primarily examined selfie-sharing from a social and psychological perspective. Most studies concentrate on how selfie-takers behave, connecting them to personality characteristics, narcissism, and unsustainable behaviours. Consequently, it is still a relatively new area of study (Lim, 2016), particularly in the tourism context, where research revolves around identifying the psychological characteristics of selfietakers (Lim, 2016; Taylor, 2020). According to Camprubi and Rojas (2021), the literature in this field has not yet addressed the content and backgrounds shown in selfies. Similarly, Douglas and Cardell's (2018) interdisciplinary approach emphasizes the storytelling power of selfies, which has not yet been thoroughly investigated.

Additionally, Georgakopoulou (2016) also investigates the practise of sharing selfies in the context of short stories. The findings imply the need for in-depth research on the story-telling elements of travel selfies and how the narrative functions, which is especially important for tourist destinations considering how these photos may affect their projected image and promotion. In this regard, Dinhopl and Gretzel (2016) and Mkwizu and Mtae (2018) argue that future studies should strongly emphasize investigating selfies in terms of content and patterns.

Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap, especially given the scarcity of studies investigating the marginalised indications present in tourist selfies about tourism destinations (Fox and Rooney, 2015). Bearing this in mind, the objectives of this study are threefold, as follows:

(1) To examine the set of characteristics that recur in tourist selfies,

(2) To verify the host destinations' image in tourist selfies,

(3) To explore the tourists' preferences and motivations to take selfies, as well as intentions for online photo-sharing, and

(4) To investigate the ethical concerns of selfie practise from the tourists' perspective.

The current study builds on prior research in the field (Christou et al., 2020; Marzouk, 2021; Nikjoo and Bakhshi, 2019; Uchinaka et al., 2019) by focusing on a unique destinationsetting: Egypt, the Middle East's major tourism destination with rich culture and remarkable history (Marzouk, 2021). This research examines selfies within the context of the tourism and hospitality industry. The study's methodology is then constructed, outlining the rationale and procedure for using a two-step qualitative approach. The paper's main section then examines the findings of the two qualitative stages before discussing the findings and their implications. Finally, limitations and recommendations for future studies are presented.

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The study contributes significantly to the tourism literature. First, the study enhances the knowledge of host destination-tourist interaction in a tourism and hospitality context by examining recur tourist selfies' content characteristics. Second, the study adds to the academic understanding of the tourist behaviour relevant to selfie practises by empirically exploring the embodied preferences, motivations, and intentions for selfie practise, thereby adding to existing tourism literature on understanding tourist behaviour in vacations (Pearce and Wang, 2019). Third, the study addresses the identified gaps in the literature surrounding selfies storytelling and extends the current understanding of one form of conspicuous production in the context of tourism and hospitality marketing (Sorokowski et al., 2015; Taylor, 2020), i.e. taking and sharing of vacation selfies on SMPs.

Literature review

Tourist selfies

Selfies are arguably twenty-first-century phenomena, with the epithet "selfie" first originating in literature in 2002 (Weiler et al., 2021). Selfies are photos taken with a phone or camera and typically shared on different social media sites with a networked audience (Christou et al., 2020). Sigala (2018) argues that the practise of taking selfies was initially viewed as a form of narcissistic conduct, but it has since evolved into a common tourist activity. Consequently, it is now quite typical to witness a tourist spending most of his or her vacation taking a selfie for social media accounts and other purposes (Lyu, 2016; Marzouk, 2021). According to Sari et al. (2019), this phenomenon is frequently utilised as a tourism marketing technique.

Many researchers have studied the selfie practises of travellers (e.g., Fox and Rooney, 2015; Kim et al., 2016; Lyu, 2016; Pearce and Wang, 2019; Dinhopl and Gretzel, 2016). Kim et al. (2016) claim that selfie practise includes the everyday selfie, food selfie, social selfie, hobby selfie, travel selfie, leisure selfie, and commercial brand/item selfie. According to

Dinhopl and Gretzel (2016), the nature of taking selfies permits anyone to transform anything into an image, and everyone is free to do it. Consequently, tourists can serve as both actors and narrators by taking selfies and sharing their travel experiences as they occur (Cahyanto et al., 2016). As a result, it is critical to analyse tourist selfies since they directly affect how potential visitors perceive and experience a destination (Zhang et al., 2018) as well as the lives and well-being of people photographed at the site (Scarles, 2013). Specifically, a gap in dissecting the content of selfies contributes to formatting the destination image (Stylianou-Lambert, 2012).

Tourists' selfies storytelling

This concept identifies tourists' preferences, intentions, and concerns regarding selfie taking. Past research has addressed the travel selfie phenomenon within the context of tourism. Selfobjectification, narcissism, and moving the lens to the side of specific destination attributes are common and recurring characteristics and behaviours in travel selfies (Christou et al., 2020; Lyu, 2016). However, other studies have classified selfies as a cultural phenomenon that enriches the traveller's experience. According to Marzouk (2021), posting photos online is a performative aspect of travel writing that enables the traveller to interact with "others," including the readership of travel writing and people they encounter when they are abroad.

From a marketing standpoint, other studies have focused on subjects such as analysing the level of engagement and the impact that selfies have as a promotional tool in social networks; or the human element that selfies hold, as well as other more generic marketing techniques. According to Bond and Falk (2013), a person's desired identity can be portrayed in photos taken and shared during a vacation. An idealised view of one's travel experience is neither positive nor negative, but it unquestionably aids the traveller in crafting his or her narrative and enables focus on oneself or specific aspects of the journey. Almost everyone

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does this without much consideration (Pearce and Wang, 2019). Hence, it is all "Hey, I'm here!" has replaced "This location is amazing." Therefore, tourists seek objects that can be used to authenticate their photographs (Lyu, 2016; Caton and Santos, 2008).

From a psychological perspective, Fox and Rooney (2015) argue that psychological characteristics may drive tourists to take specific types of photographs that focus on a specific aspect such as social environment (e.g., local habits, whether good or bad, and localities), community services (e.g., transport and crowding), and physical settings of hospitality places (staff, customers, asymmetry). According to Dinhopl and Gretzel (2016), selfies democratise all types of tourist experiences by allowing travellers to choose how they want to present themselves during their trip encounters. Sontag argues that having a camera transforms a tourist into an active participant, a voyeur (cited in Garlick, 2002, p. 291). Tourists take anticipated pictures while taking photos but do not always look at what they are photographing, so they never realise or comprehend what they have captured on camera (Lee et al., 2022).

Other studies highlight this practice's drawbacks when applied to the tourism context. For example, Stylianou-Lambert (2012) argued that when international tourists visit less developed countries, they believe they are reporters tasked with documenting the lifestyles of others. Stalker (cited in Li, 2015, p. 38) comments, "tourist photography is aggressive, hostile, and predatory, and a camera may be considered a gun." Based on the same perspective, the photographic process operates as an "extremely selective filter, removing, absorbing, and altering everything that passes through it" (Teymur cited in Li, 2015, p. 38). Most studies reported that the content of tourist photos could be influenced by preconceptions (Feighery, 2009), actual travel encounters (Garlick, 2002), and the close relationship between tourism and photography (Cilkin and Cizel, 2022). Such views imply negatively co-create selfperceptions and personal meanings (Fox and Rooney, 2015) relative to potential tourists.

Stylianou-Lambert (2012) claims that tourists attempt to take a succession of shots to achieve their favourable position and angle in these photos. As a result, photography has inherent selectivity as visitors seek and construct subjects to fit their preconceived notions and preferred narratives of the destination as it is actually encountered (Ateljevic and Doorne, 2002).

It has been demonstrated that UGC storytelling effectively conveys messages about tourist experiences because it is more engaging, better rated, and easier to remember than explicit messages (Hay et al., 2022). In this regard, Xiang et al. (2015) explain that using the internet in travel and tourism frequently includes impressions, suggestions, experiences, and emotions. In addition to the content of the selfies, the motivations for taking photographs while travelling has been investigated. Tourists take and post selfie photos for a variety of reasons, such as to document significant experiences (Li, 2020) or to express their thoughts and feelings (Chen et al., 2017) that satisfy their tastes or standards (Sigala, 2018) in a highly personal way. However, no prior study in this field has examined the content of travel-related selfies as embodied storytelling based on the selfie-characteristics. Therefore, this paper aims to analyse the context of tourist selfies and explore tourist preferences, motivations, intentions, and concerns that might shape selfie storytelling.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Egypt, a prominent tourist destination with a wide range of tourism activities and locations attracting millions of visitors, making tourism the country's most important industry (Marzouk, 2021). Contrary to academic research that theorises the meaning and reasons for the travel selfie within a certain community (Chen et al., 2017; Sorokowski et al., 2015; Uchinaka et al., 2019), this study seeks to comprehend the storytelling of tourist selfies through the use of a qualitative and inductive approach that allows for in-depth knowledge.

To comprehend the storytelling of a travel selfie, we must examine it through the eyes of travellers and audiences. Selfies are primarily defined by the subject or component of the photo as well as the tourist behaviour involved in taking that particular selfie. In the tourism and hospitality context, the combination of preferences and motivations to take selfies, as well as intentions for posting them, all play a significant role in the meaning-making of selfie practises. As a result, in the current study, a semi-directive interview was combined with the semiotic analysis method (SA) since combining different research approaches can be highly advantageous in providing a thorough study (Ritchie et al., 2014).

A study is credible when its findings are plausible and the methods used to reach them are reliable. Three criteria were identified to address the significant risks of compromising trustworthiness: subjectivity, conformability, and transferability (Fusté-Forné, 2022) as summarized in Table 1.

********** Please see Table 1 *********

Research stages

Stage one: Semiotic analysis of tourists' photos

The choice of an appropriate sample for the analysis process and identifying the intended audience are the initial steps in implementing this method. Facebook was used to gather data. Because Facebook continues to be the most used social media site and boasts daily photo uploads of 300 million, it was determined to be the most suitable platform for this study (D'Souza, 2017). Initially, we searched through Facebook for images that fit the definition of the tourist selfie taken while on vacation in Egypt. A systematic, random sample of 317 travel-related selfie posts was collected over the last two years, from March 2019 to March 2021, using the opportunity of launching an advertising campaign called "Egypt Selfie." In order to consider ethical release, the photos of the Facebook profile holders were

contacted to obtain their permission to analyse their posted photographs about Egypt, but not to use them in the visual documentation of the publication. This step substantially resembles those of prior tourism research, such as Uchinaka et al. (2019) and Marzouk (2021), who gathered data from a social media site during Japan's biggest holiday season and Egypt's summer vacation, respectively.

A visual methodology was developed based on SA and content analysis (CA) (Ge, 2019) of tourist selfies. According to Hunter (2016), tourists' online selfies can be viewed as reflections of online culture. Culture is described by Jenks (1993) as a context-dependent semiotic system, so SA and CA are used to fulfil the first and second study objectives. Semiotics is utilised to identify and interpret denotative and connotative content conveyed by tourist selfies found online. Denotation refers to the literal or actual meaning conveyed by the content, while connotation refers to the value-laden or social implications of denotation (Barthes, 1977). Hunter's (2012) framework is used for the visual analysis in this study. This method is comprised of five steps: (1) define sampling (using various hashtags as keywords); (2) content analysis (recognize unique connotative themes); (3) semiotic interpretation with a reflexive perspective (interpretation of cue features within and across photo types); (4) recognising the denotative aspects (identify implications) and; (5) synthesising (describing implications and making conclusions).

Stage two: In-depth interviews

The third and fourth study objectives were achieved through conducting in-depth interviews. A group tour during vacation is the context for this study interviews. The sample comprises a group of international tourists who are visiting Egypt for the first time, allowing for a more accurate understanding of the tourist selfie phenomenon by examining all their non-native activities and behaviours of interest (Rossiter, 2011). As participants were chosen for the

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study based on how closely they met the pre-defined criteria, a purposeful sampling technique was used (Jennings, 2001). Following the selection of a tour, the tour guide introduced the researcher member to all participants. After everyone agreed that the researcher could accompany them on their tour, the tour was confirmed. There were eleven tourists on the group tour; the tour was entirely conducted in English. The interviews were divided into two parts. Initially, the questions were tested and modified to make them more understandable to the interviewees (Brotherton, 2015).

The first part consisted of open-ended questions developed from relevant studies on travel attitudes and motivations (Stylianou-Lambert, 2017), patterns in tourists' selfie-taking and sharing (Konijn et al., 2016), as well as thoughts and feelings (Gillet et al., 2016). The second part of the interview explored tourists' perspectives on some selfie practises using the photoelicitation technique. Related questions addressed participants' perceptions of the considerations and ethical views related to taking selfies. This part was semi-structured: it relayed an interview guide to maintaining consistency across participants and interview sessions; however, participants were encouraged to elaborate, and case-specific follow-up questions were asked.

All interviews were performed face-to-face, lasting 15-25 minutes on average. After receiving permission from the interviewees, each interview was recorded and transcribed before conducting data analysis. Based on Mehmetoglu and Altinay's (2006) application in hospitality research, this data analysis pursues the grounded theory analysis method. Nvivo was used to organise and interpret data from interviews. Following the breakdown of the data, codes are compared, and similar codes are grouped into categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Findings

Findings of stage one (SA)

Three hundred seventeen posts were published in 2019 (38%), 2020 (47%), and 2021 (15%). Following Stylidis et al.'s (2016) process, selfie photos were classified into five groups: photos with a background of 'entertainment service,' 'cultural heritage and leisure,' 'a social environment,' 'community services,' and 'a physical work environment,' as demonstrated in Figure 1. This shows that the scenario tourists want to capture in their selfies depends on the tourist places and activities they decide to partake in a while on vacation. Another criterion considered in this analysis is the predominant selfie backgrounds or selfie-takers. In each group, two types have been identified: (1) photos with close-ups in which the background is almost two-thirds of the photo and tourists occupy only a small space of the frame, and (2) photos that signify the equal importance of both the background and the tourist, which could be due to visitors' desire to highlight and convey the cultural customs and attractions they incur.

********** Please see Figure 1**********

Almost one-third of the sample featured cultural heritage and leisure elements in the background (37.22%). Among them are cultural and architectural heritage sites, buildings, and scenery involving beaches, mountains, and landscapes, as shown in Figure 2. These exemplify Egypt's stunning culture and remarkable history (Elshaer and Marzouk, 2022). Second, entertainment services (folklore, cinema, souvenir shops, shopping markets, and traditional artworks) account for 26.50% of the backgrounds of tourist selfies, illustrating both traditional and modern society culture and services. These findings demonstrate that traditional selfies of oneself are no longer popular within an entertainment context, and selfies among a cohort of people are becoming the pattern in tourist selfies.

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Community services comprise the third presence (15.45%), with two prominent places (public services and public transportation). In contrast, selfies taken at hospitality places (restaurants or accommodation units) and during cultural traditions (cultural festivals & local rituals) were classified as part of the physical environment (11.67 %) and social environment (9.14%), respectively. Consequently, it can be affirmed that the presence of community services, the physical environment, and the social environment that appears in the photo is unconditioned by tourist attractions in tourist selfies. The most significant finding is that 69.82 percent of selfies' backgrounds focus on other destination attributes/aspects rather than key touristic attractions.

The most captured elements in tourist selfies

An online coding system was used to classify tourist selfies based on the backgrounds and captions of their online travel selfies. Through analysis, five themes and fifteen subcategories were identified in the backgrounds of tourist selfies (Figure 2).

**********Please see Figure 2**********

Regarding selfies associated with 'cultural heritage and leisure', the presence of animals in the background, as well as unknown tourists, residents, and houses, are all included in this genre of images. For example, in Image 1, animals (camels and horses) appear in the background of a tourist's selfies shot at historical sites (e.g., pyramids area). In contrast, 'entertainment services-related selfies' backgrounds' included the presence of local shops in the background, unknown tourists and locals, and some local interactions and lifestyles. Image 2 shows a small souvenir shop, where older adults or tourists appear in the photo as passive actors who are completely uninterested in the camera. It seems that the tourist captures the moment and discovers an ideal topic for narrating on social media, focusing on

the presence of the locals' lifestyles. While photos of ' social environment' are included in the background, unknown tourists, unknown people, or children are in the background. This type of photo includes the presence of some type of social interaction/behaviour of unknown locals in the background. Image 3 shows some Egyptian men and women in the background of a selfie shared by tourists on social media. Locals captured in image 3 appear to be unaware of the act of photographing.

*************** Please see Images 1-6 ***************

Photos of 'the physical work environment' often include background utility furnishings or a theme, servers or busboys at work, a bartender, and customer interaction. Image 4 shows a group of diners in a restaurant or the decoration and furnishing of a hotel/guest house in the background. In this photo, tourists experience local food and lifestyles and discuss their differences or similarities. At the same time, locals and public transportation are in the background of selfies taken near 'community services (e.g., railway stations). Image 5 shows a very old train in Cairo – the capital of Egypt. There are now very few of these trains exist in Egypt, and the government has been working for many years to revitalize the city's transportation system. It appears that tourists respond better to olderlooking objects (Nikjoo and Bakhshi, 2019). However, not all tourists take the same approach and some post photos that reflect the positive image of a country as a tourist destination. For example, image 6 shows a photo of modern and different aspects of the country's transportation (e.g., the Nile cruise that presents a classical element of Egypt).

Poster.us, an efficient online tool for extracting information from social media, was used to analyse the content of the uploaded photos (Cakici et al., 2017). Photos and captions were examined to determine whether a post had subjective (sentimental) or objective captions

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(non-sentimental elements). Based on Uchinaka et al.'s (2019) study, four basic code types were developed: impression, description, suggestion, and advertisement. After that, two axes arise from the test coding procedure to characterize the intention analysis. The vertical axis indicates whether a selfie post has emotive aspects, objective caption, or subjective caption. The horizontal axis indicates whether a selfie was taken to convey a message about a place, shop, or event information or without the intention of influencing the audience/ followers' views about ongoing or previous reports of events.

According to their Facebook posts' captions, the majority of tourist selfies relating to cultural heritage and leisure activities are classified as a type of "impression and advertisement," in which tourists are impressed by seeing a camel or a horse. According to their online descriptions, most entertainment services-related selfies are characterized as a kind of "description and impression" of customs and gadgets of local hosts. Based on an analysis of selfie captions, the majority of images shot by tourists with residents in the background (social environment) are deemed a form of "description and impression" of the culture of the local society.

According to tourist captions, the majority of photos taken by tourists in restaurants or hotels are a "suggestive and descriptive" representation of local foods or themes. The majority of photo captions that include community services in the background can be categorised as "impressions and descriptions." By analysing the content of the selfies' backgrounds and captions, Figure 3 provides a summary of tourists' intentions with their selfies. The majority of tourist photos (54.55%) were taken with the intention of making an impression. Tourists shared their impressions of historical sites, the weather, natural landscapes, and the local way of life. In terms of advertising, tourist information centres emphasised cultural and traditional activities at historical sites, such as camel and horseback riding. All the participants visiting Egypt for the first time and gaining first-hand knowledge may have influenced tourists'

impressions and advertising selfies. The primary intent was to make suggestions centred on restaurants, hotels, and beautiful scenery. This is explained by the traditional tourist role theory, which suggests that interest is maximised when both new and familiar elements are incorporated into an experience. In restaurants and hotels, tourists may wish to provide feedback on what they are currently experiencing and how it differs from what they have in their home countries. In contrast, the description was the selfie intention observed in photos that demonstrates the culture of the local society, community services, and entertainment services in the background. The latter finding strengthens Stylianou-Lambert's (2012) assertion that when visiting less developed countries, tourists may feel like reporters tasked with describing other people's lifestyles.

***********Please see Figure 3*************

Findings of In-depth interviews

A total of 11 interviews were conducted. Table 2 shows an overview of the personal information of this group's participants, including demographic information, whether they are traveling alone or in a group, as well as travel experience, their preferred selfie photo topic, and their selfie post type. Six males and five females who fall into the age range of 26 to 65 years old make up the participants.

*********** Please see Table 2 ***********

At this stage, data was gathered up until what Lincoln and Guba (1985) called the "qualitative informational isomorph," or the point at which there is no longer any need for additional data due to information redundancy. Table 3 shows the coding characteristics of the unique features that our group thinks about Egypt before this visit, their preferred selfie photo

characteristics, and their intention that may describe their selfie photos when posting on Facebook as a result of this visitation.

********** Please see Table 3 **********

Three photos were chosen from the material earlier analysed for the semiotic analysis to be shown to interviewees using the photo-elicitation approach. Each photo was chosen based on its relevance to this part's purpose (considerations and ethical perspectives on selfie practise (selfie-taking and sharing) and its frequent appearance in the collected materials. The recognised perceptions are presented in Table 4 below.

********** Please see Table 4 **********

Based on the photo-elicitation technique, many respondents indicated that if these kinds of pictures were posted online, they would give them a negative impression of the destination. The unsatisfactory background of the selfie, which contained non-tourist attractions that do not correspond to the nature of vacation activities, induced these emotions. Moreover, a significant number of respondents recognised unethical concerns when photographing others without their permission (locals' lifestyle and livelihoods, which may be incompatible with residents' culture and interests) since it turns individuals into objects that can be metaphorically possessed.

By combining the findings from this study with existing literature, the study offers a comprehensive method for comprehending the photography concerns raised by tourists' selfie practices, as demonstrated in Figure 4.

********** Please see Figure 4**********

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As depicted in Figure 1, findings revealed a preference for taking pictures with destination-specific characteristics, particularly in services relating to the community, social environment, cultural heritage, and leisure activities. This finding proves how the tourist selfie storytelling is about the essence of these local nodes and hidden aspects of the host locations, thereby demonstrating that the tourists' perspective (interest) is documenting all the places, occasions, and interactions they experience. These findings are consistent with prior studies on travel photography (Caton and Santos, 2008; Fox and Rooney, 2015; Nikjoo A and Bakhshi, 2019; Scarles, 2013; Stylianou-Lambert, 2012), where it was even claimed that tourists preferred to present the local appearance of the host destinations in their selfies at the host destination.

Discussion

This study focuses on popular tourist phenomena, such as selfies at tourist destinations and settings, analysing how selfie content may depict specific local characteristics of host destinations. The study has identified the most common types of undisclosed aspects of tourist destinations/places which appear in travel selfies that may irritate the tourism and hospitality industry. This study validates previous research on technology's positive and negative aspects by analysing tourists' selfie narratives. In addition, the study revealed the most prevalent preferences, motivations, intentions, and concerns by analysing how the selfie-taking and sharing practise.

In particular, based on the examination of tourist selfie backgrounds, the findings indicate that some tourists like to demonstrate their photographic prowess by integrating locals and localities that are more akin to their preconceived notions about that society and its inhabitants. This finding validates the findings of previous research. For instance, Caton and Santos (2008) argued that tourists like characteristics with a local appearance, such as

residents and children dressed in local attire, local rituals, streets, public transportation, and infrastructure. Moreover, their selfies may include utility furnishings, the theme of a place they visit, or customers and staff. This conclusion is in line with Markwell's (1997) notion that tourists want their images taken at a place to reflect their expectations about locations, and they have only their camera to validate their expectations. Although potential visitors could perceive the existence of locals or physical settings in the background as a good opportunity for exploring the destination, this might not be the ideal projected image for DMOs and tourism stakeholders to be captured and posted on SMPs. Additionally, such UGCs on social media could undermine DMOs market position in promoting and managing their destination (Cheung et al., 2022; Marzouk, 2021).

In addition, Stylianou-Lambert's (2012) findings are verified by the current study, which also presents evidence that tourist selfies can function as a report about whatever your selfie is about and that local community aspects play a significant component in tourist selfies. As a result, this practise in this way could eliminate any link between tourists and locals as two autonomous individuals. This outcome is significant because it demonstrates that, if improperly handled, this practise may irritate not just the people of the host destination (Garlick, 2002; Larsen, 2018) but also the industry's stakeholders.

Furthermore, this study developed a specific categorisation of tourist selfies-generated content as well as mapping tourist selfie intentions and motivations. Lyu (2016) indicates that taking selfies and posting them on social media is influenced by either community- or selforiented incentives, which is related to shifting from attempting to secure joy and happiness during their travel. In addition, produced social media material to capture their friends' attention and demonstrate that they could experience the ordinary daily life of the local community and form deep communication with its members (Stylianou-Lambert, 2012). Importantly, contradictory to the most recent findings from other research (Arabadzhyan et

al., 2021; Kim and Fesenmaier, 2017). These findings suggest that sharing tourist selfies online may significantly alter how potential tourists see and experience a place. Potential tourists can see and read tourists' footsteps (impressions, descriptions, suggestions, and advertisements), which Bigné et al. (2001) state to be influenced by subjective interpretations when taking photographs. According to our analysis, description and impression were the most popular aspects of their selfie posts. Tourists are more eager to demonstrate their abilities by describing specific situations or displaying their impressions of host community lifestyles. This finding is compatible with Marzouk (2021), who argues that social media photos have shattered the barrier between the destination product, tourists, and followers. In addition, this study demonstrates that tourists are aware of ethical photography practises. In this regard, Sigala (2018) claims that tourists must adhere to selfie morals and meticulously manage their online profiles and postings.

Conclusion and recommendations

Theoretical implications

Theoretically, this study contributes to understanding vacation tourists' behaviour in terms of tourist selfie storytelling by expanding research into their preferences, motivations, and intentions for selfie practice while on vacation.

This study contributes by examining the content of tourist selfies that could create a projected image of a particular location or destination, particularly in light of the paucity of research examining the marginalised indications of tourism destinations in self-presentation patterns on social networking sites (Fox and Rooney, 2015). Uncovering the hidden aspects of host destinations conveyed by tourist selfies provides new insights for comprehending tourists' selfie storytelling by recognising what interests the tourists during their vacations.

There is still a lack of studies examining the characteristics of tourist selfies content (Nikjoo & Bakhshi, 2019; Uchinaka et al., 2019). This study adds significantly to theory and

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practise by conducting a semiotic analysis of tourist selfie photos shared online, as well as two phases of in-depth interviews with a tourist cohort visiting Egypt, by revealing that different preferences, motivations, and intentions shape the tourists' selfie practice. In this regard, Galí and Donaire (2015) argued that photographs shared with others are more likely to favour certain aspects of the destination while ignoring others. Therefore, it contributes to the existing marketing literature by responding to recent calls for research on the significance of examining tourist selfies in terms of characteristics and travel photo-sharing patterns (Dinhopl and Gretzel, 2016; Mkwizu and Mtae, 2018).

This study is one of the first empirical studies to investigate the two aspects of selfie practise-taking and sharing online-using two phases of in-depth interviews with tourists on a packaged tour and the SA analysis of shared selfie photos. This study contributes to vacation marketing literature, such as travel selfie content, by elucidating the motivations and intentions that shape tourists' selfie practises, arguing that both aspects of selfie practices can be a significant and valuable informational trigger in tourism marketing research.

Furthermore, by using the photo-elicitation technique to examine tourists' awareness of ethical concerns associated with selfie practises, this study advances prior research in the area of tourist behaviour. By decomposing the awareness of ethical concerns, this study demonstrated that tourists are aware of ethical problems that may be depicted in selfies, such as violating privacy and disclosing the unimpressive performance and appearance of the unseen host destinations aspects. Moreover, the study's findings contribute to a renewed understanding of the practise of tourist selfies in host destinations, which is essential to the advancement of digital tourism marketing.

Managerial implications

The practical implications of the study are of interest to industry professionals. This study confirms that in various tourist places, this practise reflects both the behaviour of tourists and the actuality of the destination, giving the practise credibility and realism. According to Camprubi and Rojas (2021), selfies depict the host locations' features and services more genuinely and indicate a first-hand encounter with a specific location. Stakeholders should be aware of this if they want to maintain the current market and draw in new potential markets.

This study depicts a significant tourist practise during tourist tours at host destinations; however, not all tours are harmonious with the recreational aim of the vacation. Therefore, the travel agency that brings tourists should be more creative in selecting the appropriate locations and places for tourists to ensure a better pleasant visitation and contribute to projecting a more satisfactory destination image through the group destination selfie practice.

Additionally, marketing representatives of DMOs would need to consider modifying and promoting this practise in light of the DMO's strategic marketing plan in order to take advantage of the rapid development of information technologies. Moreover, DMOs must ensure that their social media presence is so pervasive that their official OSMPs are always accessible whenever prospective visitors seek information. Additionally, they should encourage residents to serve as marketing advocates for their community.

Furthermore, the current study suggests that tour companies should inform tourists of following an ethical code of conduct when using cameras in public and sharing on social media so that tourists would be aware of the potential influence on the destination.

Limitations and future research

Some study shortcomings hint at future research directions. This work sheds light on the hidden messages conveyed by tourist selfies about various aspects of the destination; these elements must now be investigated further. Also, there are some other approaches to

uncovering the messages conveyed by these photos, such as observing the gestures and behaviours of tourists when taking the selfie or analysing the core focus of photos. In light of the current study's findings, the tourism setting may provide the potential for additional investigation and analysis of tourist selfie content on other social media platforms. For example, future research may dive deeper into determining how much tourist selfies change tourists' views of a specific destination, and how they embrace their travel information search.

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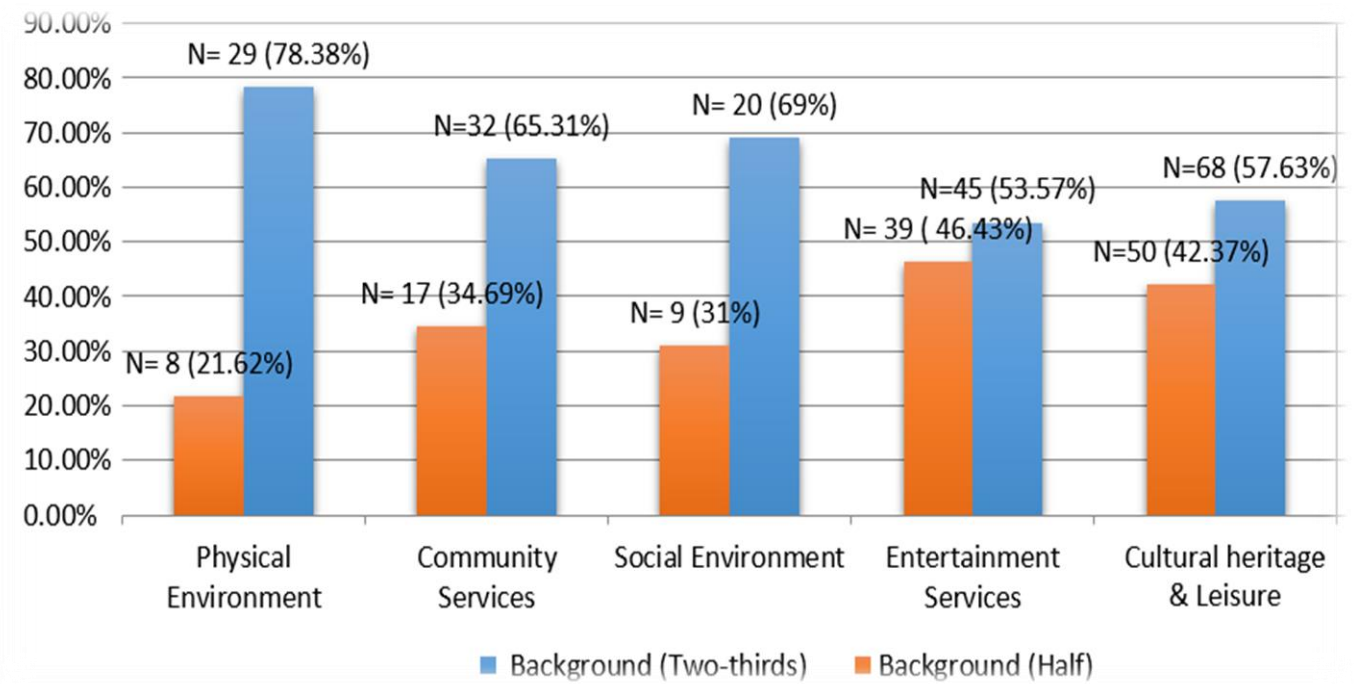
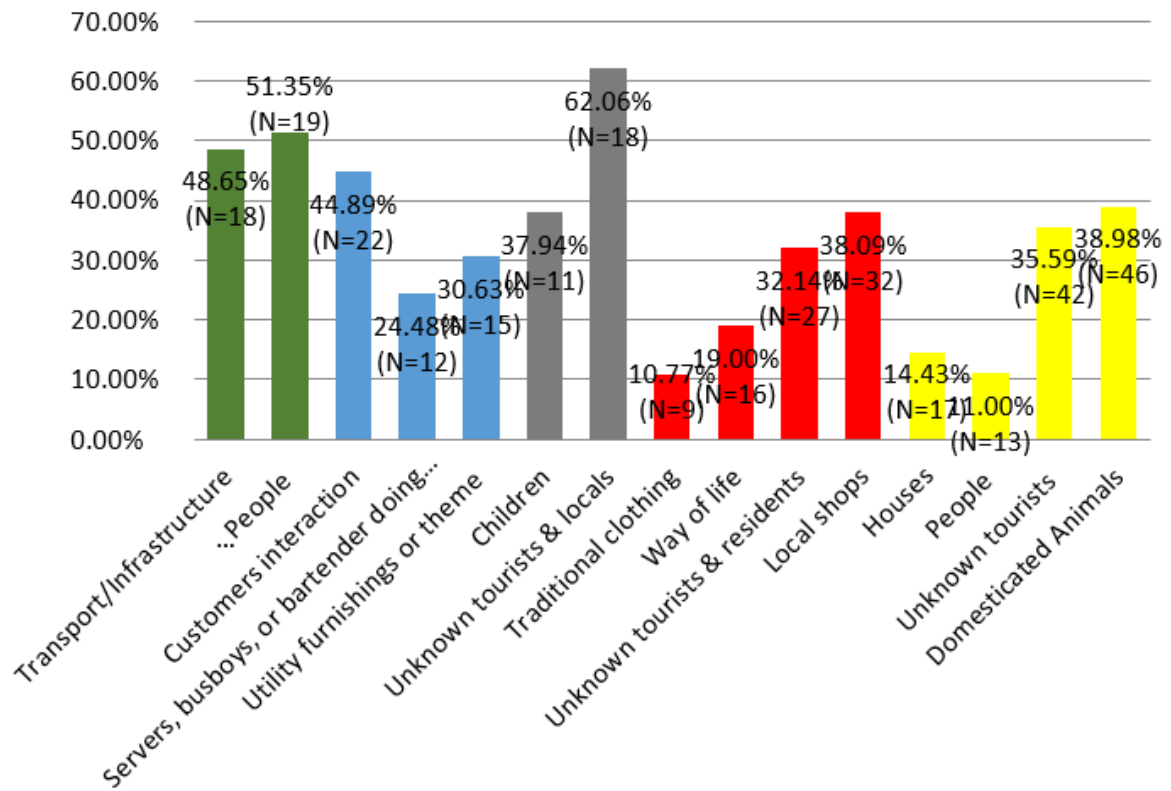Figure 1. The categories and its presence in the background of tourist selfies.

Figure 2. Weight of the subcategories of tourist selfies' topics.
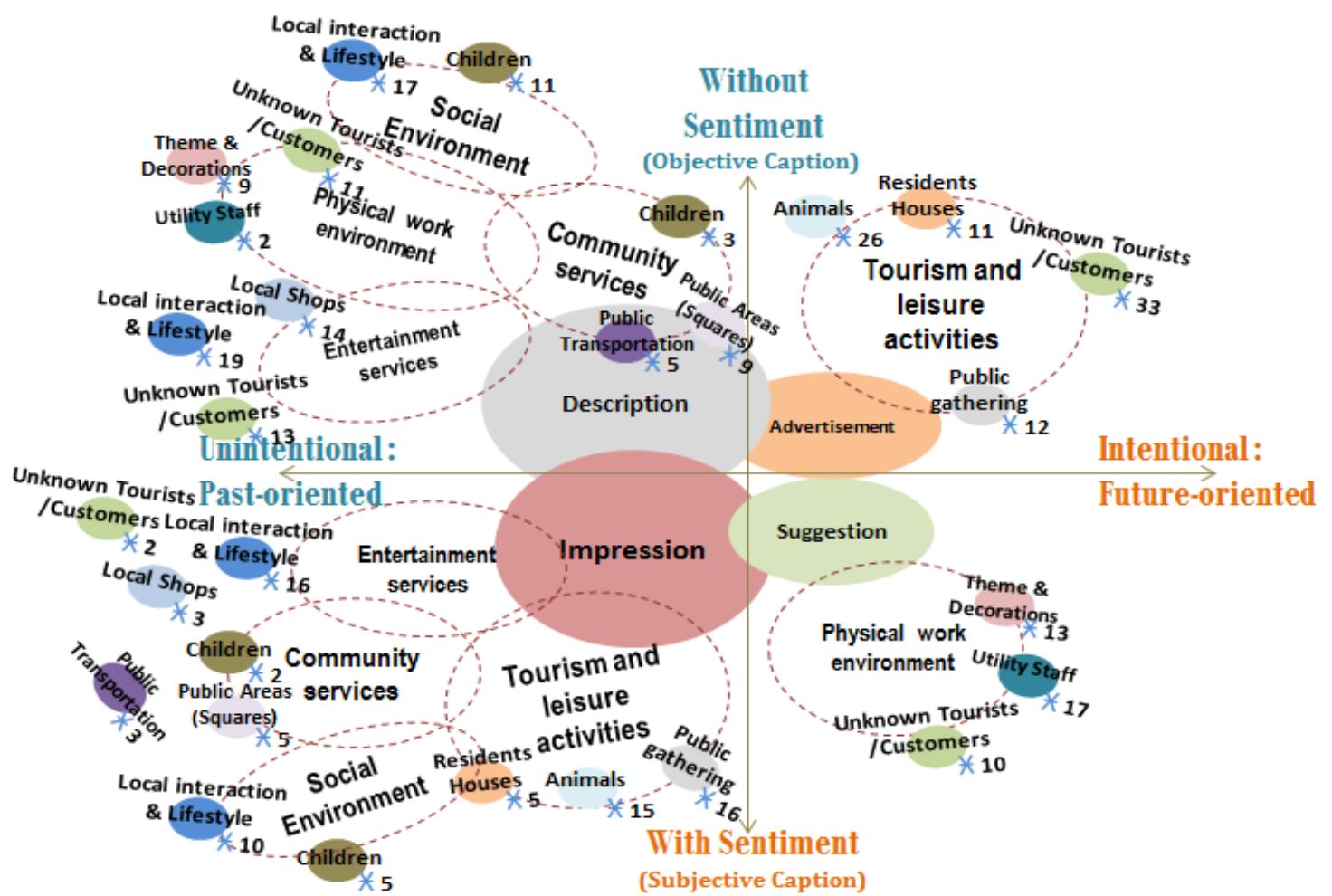
Images 1-6. Tourist selfie images.

Figure 3. Map of tourist selfies' sharing intentions on SMPs.
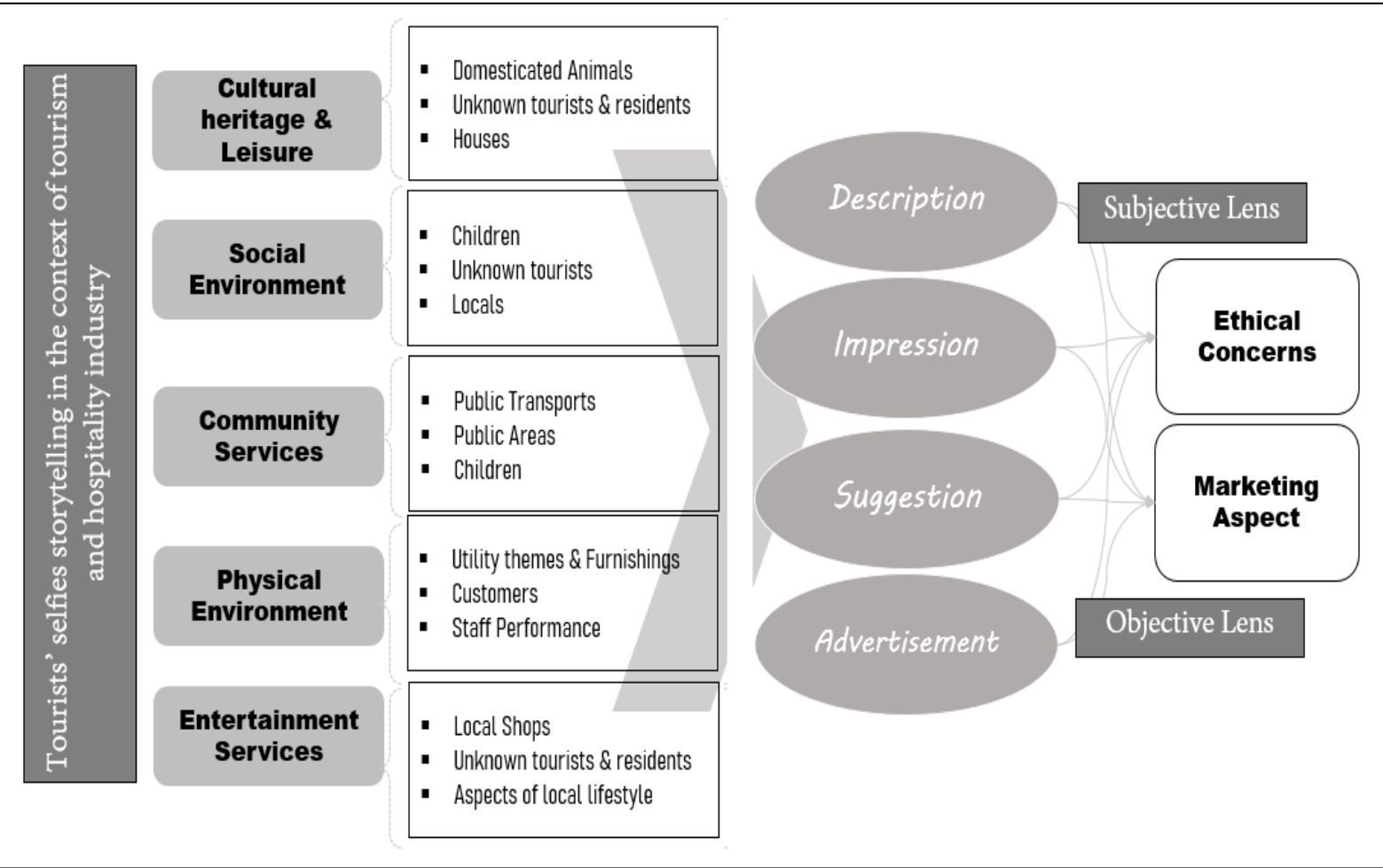
Figure 4. Summary of research findings.

Table 1. Summary of trustworthiness criteria

Subjectivity (Krefting, 1991; Strauss & Corbin, 1998)	Confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ritchie et al., 2014)	Transferability (Strauss & Corbin, 1998)
- A wide range of interpretations from participants, including dissenting voices.	- Method triangulation: a visual methodology based on evaluation content and semiotic analysis, as well as two-step of in-depth interviews. - During interviews, multiple participants were checked and direct questions were asked.	- Study repeatability: accurate reporting of study design methods and procedures.

Table 2. Participants' characteristics.

Participant	Demographic information	Travel Experience	Travel mode	Preferred selfie photo topic		Selfie posts' type
Isabel	Woman Age range: 26 – 35 University degree	Little Experience	Traveling Alone	1	Archaeological Sites	A suggestion for a visit
				2	People	
				3	Way of Life	
				4	Outdoor/Adventure	
				5	Architecture/Buildings	
				6	Tourism Facilities	
				7	Food	
				8	Festivals and Rituals	
				9	Leisure Activities	
				10	Transport/Infrastructure	
Marten	Man Age range: 36 – 45 University degree	Very experienced	Traveling Alone	1	Outdoor/Adventure	A tourist attraction's description
				2	Festivals and Rituals	
				3	Tourism Facilities	
				4	Archaeological Sites	
				5	Leisure Activities	
				6	People	
				7	Food	
				8	Architecture/Buildings	
				9	Transport/Infrastructure	
				10	Way of Life	
John	Man Age range: 46 – 55 High school	Experienced	Traveling Alone	1	Archaeological Sites	A suggestion for a visit
				2	Leisure Activities	
				3	Tourism Facilities	
				4	Outdoor/Adventure	
				5	Food	
				6	Architecture/Buildings	
				7	Festivals and Rituals	
				8	Way of Life	
				9	People	
				10	Transport/Infrastructure	
Lili	Woman Age range: 26 – 35 Master's degree	Experienced	Traveling with Elena and Claire	1	Outdoor/Adventure	A tourist attraction's description
				2	Leisure Activities	
				3	Archaeological Sites	
				4	Tourism Facilities	
				5	Way of Life	
				6	Food	
				7	People	
				8	Festivals and Rituals	
				9	Architecture/Buildings	
				10	Transport/Infrastructure	
Elena	Woman Age range: 56 – 65 University	Very experienced	Traveling with Lili and	1	Leisure Activities	
				2	Festivals and Rituals	
				3	Archaeological Sites	

	degree		Claire	4	Tourism Facilities	Tourist attraction/event impression
				5	Transport/Infrastructure	
				6	Food	
				7	Architecture/Buildings	
				8	People	
				9	Outdoor/Adventure	
				10	Way of Life	
Daniel	Man Age range: 26 – 35 University degree	Experienced	Traveling with Nathan and Luis	1	Tourism Facilities	A tourist attraction's description
				2	Festivals and Rituals	
				3	Archaeological Sites	
				4	Leisure Activities	
				5	People	
				6	Way of Life	
				7	Food	
				8	Architecture/Buildings	
				9	Outdoor/Adventure	
				10	Transport/Infrastructure	
Nathan	Man Age range: 36 – 45 High school	Experienced	Traveling with Daniel and Luis	1	Leisure Activities	A tourist attraction's description
				2	Festivals and Rituals	
				3	Archaeological Sites	
				4	Tourism Facilities	
				5	Outdoor/Adventure	
				6	Architecture/Buildings	
				7	Food	
				8	Transport/Infrastructure	
				9	People	
				10	Way of Life	
Luis	Man Age range: 26 – 35 High school	Experienced	Traveling with Nathan and Daniel	1	Food	Tourist attraction/event impression
				2	Festivals and Rituals	
				3	Leisure Activities	
				4	Tourism Facilities	
				5	Archaeological Sites	
				6	People	
				7	Way of Life	
				8	Outdoor/Adventure	
				9	Architecture/Buildings	

				10	Transport/Infrastructure	
Emiliano	Man Age range: 36 – 45 University degree	Very experienced	Traveling Alone	1	Outdoor/Adventure	Advertisement for the destination
				2	Way of Life	
				3	Archaeological Sites	
				4	Tourism Facilities	
				5	Leisure Activities	
				6	Festivals and Rituals	
				7	Food	
				8	People	
				9	Architecture/Buildings	
				10	Transport/Infrastructure	
Mary	Woman Age range: 36 – 45 University degree	Little Experience	Traveling Alone	1	Way of Life	A tourist attraction's description
				2	Leisure Activities	
				3	Festivals and Rituals	
				4	Archaeological Sites	
				5	People	
				6	Food	
				7	Tourism Facilities	
				8	Outdoor/Adventure	
				9	Transport/Infrastructure	
				10	Architecture/Buildings	
Claire	Woman Age range: 26 – 35 University degree	Experienced	Traveling with Lili and Elena	1	People	Tourist attraction/event impression
				2	Festivals and Rituals	
				3	Way of Life	
				4	Outdoor/Adventure	
				5	Food	
				6	Archaeological Sites	
				7	Leisure Activities	
				8	Transport/Infrastructure	
				9	Tourism Facilities	
				10	Architecture/Buildings	

Table 3. Overview of tourists' preferences and motivations for selfie practice.

Participant	Egypt's characteristics as a tourist destination	Preferred selfie photo characteristics/elements	Motivation for selfie-taking practice	Motivation of selfies-sharing on Facebook
Isabel	Desert and rocky. Inhabited by the Bedouins. Giza: Pyramids and Sphinx, ruins and monuments. Open space, hot, and camels.	Gorgeous surroundings mean more flattering selfies; great pyramids, temples, and fascinating landscape.	Saving my memories when travelling abroad and visiting notable attractions.	Recognition & status.
Marten	Sunny and good weather. Feel good in contact with people. Beautiful scenes in Red sea. Monuments.	Touching the reality of my host destination; landscape, people life, traditions, and landmarks.	Sharing my experience with my family and friends.	Sharing information
John	Kind people. Safe. Beautiful country.	Contains the main attractions of the country.	Saving my travel memories for the future.	I'm having fun describing what I've been through.
Lili	Nights exciting. Mix of urbanized and traditional life. Adventurous.	A selfie that includes trying new things, visiting unusual places, and displaying the appearance of the surroundings.	Joy and fun. Sharing my experience with my family and friends.	Enjoyment
Elena	Beautiful scenes. Archeological sites. Bedouins and Nubians.	Bright photo full of joy and movement with my friends.	Enjoyment. Feeling special moment with my friends.	Sharing information
Daniel	Large, open desert spaces. Monuments. Less developed livelihoods. Middle East traditions and customs.	Famous attractions and places. Nice people. Exciting events.	Send it to my family and friends.	Disclosure of the travel experience.
Nathan	Beautiful beaches. Swimming and	Lovely gatherings and events.	Fun and communication.	Enjoyment

	snorkeling. Lovely hospitality.			
Luis	Monuments. Friendly people. Nice weather and landscape.	Photos that capture good memories.	Memory	Expressing what has piqued my interest
Emiliano	Rich history. Culture and ambiances. Busy places. Food.	Recording every moments; my actions and reactions.	Documenting my visit.	Recognition & status
Mary	Touristy. Natural and monumental sceneries. Fascinating (sea and mountain world).	Recording my special moments; interactions and actions during my visit.	Capturing my friends' attention and showing them my visitations.	Communicating crush to others
Claire	Good atmosphere. Fascinating temples. Good people.	Including elements of my interests in my selfies; fascinating places and people.	Entertainment	Disclosure of the travel experience

Table 4 Photo-Elicitation results

Photo showed	Representation of destination/business image	Ethical perspectives on selfie practice (selfie-taking and sharing on social media)	Phrase of mental reaction
1. Selfie at a restaurant	Yes: 4 (36.37%) No: 7 (63.63%)	- Privacy - Staff appearance - Overall performance	Poor service and place
2. Selfie in Bazar area	Yes: 6 (54.54%) No: 5 (45.46%)	- Privacy - Bad habits - Crowding	Crowding and randomness
3. Selfie in a public area	Yes: 6 (54.54%) No: 5 (45.46%)	- Asymmetry	Chaotic and mismatching (does not reflect the gate to touristic Bazar)