Practice of Active Participation to Photo Exhibition using Facebook

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Abstract: In this research, the authors evaluate a practice promoting active participation of visitors to a photo exhibition using facebook. One of the issues of museum education is that visitors passively receive information edited by curators. It is, however, important to make visitors actively learn in the exhibition. Therefore, in this research, the authors designed a photo exhibition using social network service in order to enhance visitors' interest and understanding. The objective of the photo exhibition is to enhance interest and understanding on the West Africa by active participation. The visitors use a mobile device such as an iPhone or an iPad to ask questions through facebook to those who went to West Africa as Japan overseas cooperation volunteers and those who live/lived in West Africa. The visitors are expected to think more deeply on West Africa by communicating with those relating with West Africa. In this research, the authors employed questionnaire to evaluate of this photo exhibition from viewpoints of plus, minus and interesting points. The data was collected from 130 out of 400 visitors. As a result of data analysis, it was found that the visitor motivated themselves by posting questions and understood cultures, value and ideas of West Africa from various viewpoints by referring to comments uploaded by other, and felt more sense of participation by connecting with other visitors, staffs and those who give comment to the questions.

Keywords: Photo exhibition, ICT, facebook, iPhone, iPad, West Africa

RESEARCH BACKGROUNDS AND OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research is to evaluate a participatory photo exhibition practice. The photo exhibition was held in December 2012 at university in Kyoto. The objective was to enhance visitors to have more interest and deeper understanding on the West Africa. However, it is not easy to promote the visitors to have more interest and deeper understanding on West Africa since they are not familiar to West Africa at all. Therefore, in this practice, the authors made use of ICT to link the visitors with those who concerned with West Africa.

ICT is a powerful tool to realize an authentic learning environment (Kishi 2012). In the practice, the authors connect the visitors with those who concerned with West Africa- Japan overseas cooperation volunteers who worked and those who live/lived in West Africa - through facebook. Therefore, the role of the visitor is not only seeing photos displayed in the exhibition but to contribute to describe more clearly about West Africa they saw, thought and felt by asking questions based on photos. The authors provided a little information to visitors to promote their questions. The visitors wondered and thought, "What is this?" "What is it for?" "What does he/she do?" Etc, and then, made questions about the culture, life, history, religions and social situation of west Africa. After the visitors had asked questions, they received the answers about their questions from those who concerned with West Africa. The authors displayed the information gotten by the visitors on the wall as to share with other visitors. Thus, the visitors made the exhibition collaboratively. In the practice, the visitors used a mobile device such as an iPhone or an iPad to communicate with those who concerned with West Africa.

PROCEDURE OF THE PRACTICE

The procedure to participate the photo exhibition has six steps. First, the visitor received orientation from authors as staffs. Second, the visitors looked around in the exhibition with thinking questions based on photos. Third when the visitor found the picture that they got interested in ,or they had a question of it, then they took a picture and posted it through facebook with questions using a mobile device. Fourth, they waited for the reply about their questions from those who concerned with West Africa for a few days. Fifth, the visitors check the answer through the facebook. At the time, they could see other's post on facebook. At last they received the answers about their questions. The information gotten newly by visitors was displayed in the exhibition day by day.

PHOTO 1. The process of participation to the photo exhibition

1. Orientation	2. Seeing photos	3. Posting questions by a mobile device
4. Waiting for replay	5. Checking others' post	6. Receiving reply about the questions

RESEARCH METHDOLOGY

The authors distributed the questionnaire of free description to all visitors and collected data from 130 out of 400 visitors. The authors analyzed data according to plus, minus and interesting points by putting codes. The generated codes were categories with groups that indicate similar meaning.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As a result of it, we found that there are four plus points, five minus points and four interesting points on the practice of active participation to photo exhibition using facebook.

(A) Plus points
1. Communicating with those who concerned with West Africa was authentic for the visitors.
2. Sharing ideas and information with others through facebook was helpful to understand West Africa from multiple viewpoints.
3. Actual tools such as musical instrument and toys stimulated the visitors to think of questions.
4. The serious of photos helped the visitors to think of questions.
5. Facebook was appropriate tools to communicate with others because the visitor got used to use it.
6. A little infromation stimulated the visitors to have curiouse on photos.

(B) Minus points
1. It was difficult for the visitors to think of questions with a little information about photos.
2. The size of pictures was enough big to see clearly.
3. It took time to get answers after posting questions.
4. There are visitors who are reluctant to use facebook because they wanted to show their ID for this exhibition.
5. Making question is not easy for some visitors.

(C) Interesting points
1. The visitors took more time to see photos more than usual.
2. Combination of photos, videos and actual tools promotes the visitors to think of questions.
3. Participatory photo exhibition through using SNS was interesting for the visitors.

CONCLUSION

As a result of data analysis, it was found that the visitor motivated themselves by posting questions and understood cultures, value and ideas of West Africa from various viewpoints by referring to comments uploaded by other, and felt more sense of participation by connecting with other visitors, staffs and those who give comment to the questions. Some visitors said that they enjoyed communicating with a lot of people not directly but through facebook. This participatory exhibition made visitors enhance understanding of West Africa. On the other hand, some visitors said that it took time to receive answers after posting questions, although they wanted to get a quick response. Other visitors said that they had a great deal of resistance to use SNS because they felt uncomfortable to show their privacy. In conclusion, facebook was useful for make visitors participate to the exhibition and enhance understanding of other countries by visualized questions and by connecting people. However it should be considered about the visitors' privacy and the time delay of posting on facebook.

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