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A MIXED-METHOD STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF PHOTO ELICITATION THERAPY (PET) ON STRESS REDUCTION IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract:

This study focuses on the use of Photo Elicitation Therapy's (PET) effectiveness as a therapeutic approach for stress management among academicians. The purpose of this study is to evaluate and valuate the approach of therapeutic photography's potential, particularly in Malaysia. This study using mixed-method research method, participate by academic staff members of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Malaysia. Participant were interviewed in addition to taking the DASS 21 exam between the PET research design. The outcome indication to the pre- and post-scale levels of the DASS 21, while the interview refers to the research question that fits the subject (1) How to determine picture for stress reduction. Resulted, PET has helped reduce stress with the highest keypoint of discussion follows (1) Emotion (2) Representation (3) Motivation and (4) Emotional Impact.

Keywords:

Photo Elicitation Therapy (PET), Therapeutic Photography, Stress Reduction

Introduction

The therapeutic process perform as Creative Art Therapy which is visible in between therapy protocols (Chiang et al., 2019). For example, taking photographs while travelling or listening to the music while relaxing. The adjustment of stress management is perceivable. As stress is established as a short term feeling, people usually do not talk about it and this strains the evidence of feeling incomplete if the results of the main problem is not settled (Harriet, 2018). The function of therapeutic therapy is apparent to a coherent argument in the therapeutic process. Evidently, Art Therapy triggers the individual mind. Several case studies found that Art Therapy is performed as a medium to feel rational, evaluate processes, and stabilise the situation. The sources show consistent and well-reasoned results from (Van Lith, 2016), (Lee et al., 2019) and (Lobban et al., 2019).

The study explores Therapeutic Photography using Photo Elicitation Therapy (PET) as a approach for treating stress. Photo Elicitation Therapy (PET) is offered as an alternative to traditional therapeutic approaches.

Table 1 : The Study Mixed Method

Photo Elicitation Interview (PEI) + Pre-Post DASS 21 = Photo Elicitation Therapy (PET)	Qualitative - Open interview - One to one Interview	Process 1: Present one/two visuals Process 2: Interview for process Process 3: Result and analysis

Adapted by (Weiser, 2015a)

PET fits into a broader category of Therapeutic Photography which is the general approach of using photographs as a therapeutic tool. The participants will be academicians from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) holding government grades 45 (lecturer) and 52 (senior lecturer). It is focuses that both grade levels have identical job tasks and comprise the majority demographic at UiTM. The participants will be approached through visual media and in fieldwork locations in Malaysia.

The study uses Photo Elicitation Therapy (PET) approach, choosing to discuss either from a set of provided images, or they may share one of their own photos for discussion. A video recording will be made of each participant (with permission). An interview process will be designed to ascertain the participant's frame of mind before and after the Photo Elicitation process. Before the interview, researcher will determine the respondent using analysis Depression, Anxiety & Stress Score (DASS) 21 as the researcher not qualified in medical, only respondent from stress score 1 to 24 will be approach in participate to PET.

While during the interview, the participants will be asked to answer the designed questionnaire. NVivo software will be used to analyse the participants' verbal interview to measure their visual preferences and willingness to opening up throughout the interview. The research intends to determine if photographs can be utilised as a tool for stress relief and the advantages or disadvantages of Photo Elicitation Therapy (PET) as a therapeutic approach for stress relief in university institution Malaysia. If the research shows potential, a paradigm can be established for further research and a broader application of PET stress reduction approach in the workplace can be suggested.

Embedded in between stress reduction and the use of photograph as a medium, the study hopes to reduce stress through Therapeutic Photography, it will be a reference as a contribution to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. Namely to attain the source of understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda THREE (3) on the indicator for 3.4 under International Health Regulations (IHR) capacity and health emergency preparedness, Noncommunicable diseases and mental health: By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being. Statistically, stress is a part of a mental health trigger point. Mental Health is fundamental in the human body . It is the main point of how we act and the way we process (Christian, 2017).

Literature Review

Academician have a tight work routine and its including stress. Case study by Noor Hassim Ismail et al. (2016) on Occupational Stress among Academician in a Research University founded 22.1% lecturers were stress. In the study also shows the comparison with several university, local and oversea. The study using DASS-21 and Stress Source Questionnaire (SSQ) to measure their level of stress resulted main factors that can contribute to stress increasement, which are workload, building the career, and relationship. In their recommendation, study suggested to include qualitative method to have proper tools for treatment. In addition to shave all the life achievement target, lecturers end up develop multi health complication and its burden to their family and affecting their work (Zakaria et al., 2015).

The study conducted by Surijah et al. (2019) experimentation on Therapeutic Photography using Smart Phone for stress management therapy using DASS-42 to measure the stress level which divided into two sessions or target groups, with and without DASS-42. Later, combine with 12 session/every week of activities, indicates total 12 weeks. The study has analyse using binomial logistic regression to measure the therapy session and to get the result, the statistic has also adapt Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. The study concluded to have positive improvement among participants, for both target groups and suggested for further study on the topic. Study also found the process can be source to the therapy sessions in point of problem sharing and source for stress management.

Creativity often the best choice in healing therapy process. Several case study show the consistency and well-results, such as Lee et al. (2019) on creative use influence in therapy practice and Lobban & Murphy (2019) found the evident the validity of therapy into healing process. Among several options of therapy, one of the article by Borkin et al. (2016) suggested the use of photography would help persons in relieving stress. The article profile healing method as photography activities which is; bring the camera out together when go on walk, concentrate on small things such as flower or insects and last options is to make photography past of the reason to talk to strangers. Therefore, study by Nikmat et al. (2015) on the study of health well-being in Malaysia, conclude the use of communication would encourage participants and people surrounding understand more about the real problem. From the conclusion, it can be suggested that communication would be a key point to help reducing stress.

Therapeutic is branch of healing and remedy treatment of inner and psychological emotion. Meanwhile, photography is the universal action of photo taking activities and practice.

Additionally, Therapeutic Photography is an ideal practice of photo activities for purpose of healing (Raniszewska, 2017). On the other hand, Costanzo (2021) describe that therapeutic is the philosophy that must come with the exercise for gain more knowledge. Therefore, the use of therapeutic as platform for healing help the human interactions (Banerjee, 2021). According to Saita et al. (2019), picture therapy's storey of good language development may convey a great deal of information. According to Pachmayer et al. (2017), the effect of photos would elicit recollections from participants depending on their experiences. Therapeutic photography entails more than just shooting pictures. It also incorporates additional photo-interactive activities such as examining, posing, planning, debating, or even just remembering or envisioning images (Weiser, 2015b).

Consequently, a component of the research methodology is the Photo Elicitation Interview (PEI). The most popular therapeutic photography tool is PEI, a qualitative technique. It is frequently applied to social research and marketing. Several case studies with positive outcomes have been assessed Edmondson et al. (2018), Macdonald et al. (2012),Rayment et al. (2019), Tonge et al. (2013), Anwandter (2006),Epstein et al. (2006), and Buckley (2014).

Adding, Photo elicitation interviews are especially beneficial for studying sensitive or difficult themes in which participants may be reluctant to express their thoughts and ideas openly. The images may serve as a neutral introductory step, allowing people to participate in the debate in a more natural and pleasant manner (Fredrickson, 2001). In general, picture elicitation interviews might give a wealth of information that is often acquired via conventional interviews and surveys.

According to a 2020 study conducted by the Malaysian Department of Statistics, financial challenges were the biggest cause of stress among malaysians, followed by work-related issues, family issues, and health worries (Bahar Moni et al., 2021). Added, in Malaysia, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased levels of concern and anxiety, particularly around job security, financial stability and health.

Conclusively, an availability is among the benefits of alternative art therapy. This may not involve a consultation or a diagnostic tests, and it can be conducted inside the comfort of one's own home. It also provides a safe and decision climate for individual people to start exploring one's emotional responses and creatively express themself. Those who are painful with traditional talk therapy and who would advantage from the more hands-on approach may find an alternative art therapy especially beneficial. Additionally, it can be implemented in combination with other forms of diagnosis to enhance the healing process. Alternative art therapy provides individuals with such a creative and engaging means to connect about themselves and their emotions, facilitating self-expression and self-awareness, and support for its interests well-being.

Objective (s) of the study
The study seeks to archive three (3) objective regarding research topic:
1. To assess the prevalence of stress among participants.
2. To study the image preferences among participants.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of Photo Elicitation Therapy (PET) as part therapeutic approach of stress relief.

Research question

This research have limitation and delimitation according to the research question, as follows:

1. What the pervasiveness stress level among participants?
2. Why the suitable image is preferred by participants in stress reduction?
3. How to determine the images/photos assist in reducing stress?

Research Methodology

Figure 1: The Flow Chart of Photo Elicitation Therapy (PET)
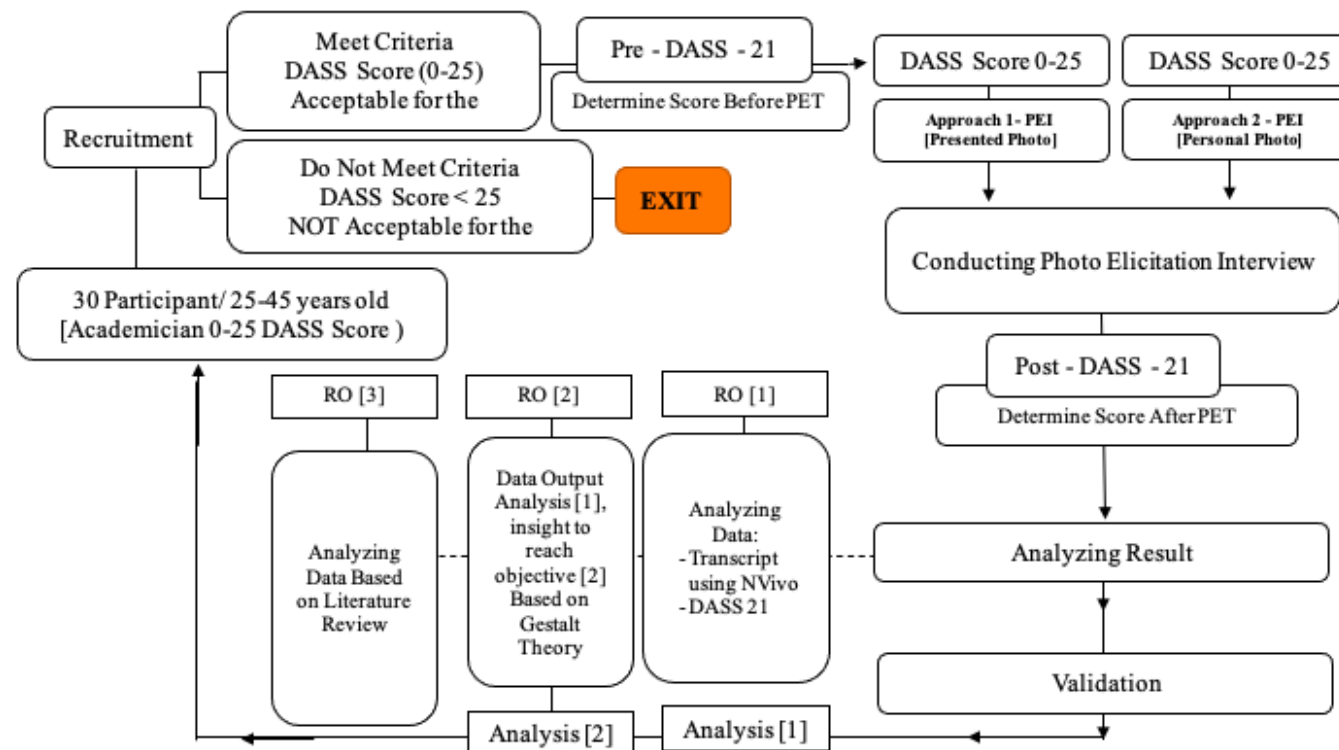
Refering to the Figure 1, the study emphasis the method as show in the flowchart conducting Photo Elicitation Therapy (PET) as main method. In this particular flow, study recruited 30 participant, academician age between 25-45 years old who participate in pre selection questionnaire and by the attended participate in Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS) 21 test. Resulted from pre selection data, researchers offers all academician to participate in PET one to one video conference interview. Certainly, all interview recorded and transcribed for analysis.

30 participants from total 89 participants were selected. The study encourage the snow globe method sampling, participants passed the knowledge on the study and participant willingness to participate on their own terms. There is no determination between DASS-21 result because the purpose of study is to see the influence of image preferences on academician in order to reduce stress.

Following the arrow of chart, the study require participant to once again to contribute their self-assessment mental health through DASS-21. The study called this stage as Pre DASS-21. The stage is to determine their health score level before one to one interview, Photo Elicitation Therapy (PET). As the Pre DASS-21 recorded, participant divide into two groups.

Each group with separate approach. In detail, approach one (1), participant view random images taken by photographer or researcher. And, approach two (2), participant share their personal photo taken by participant him/herself. Both approach including in the interview session, establish interview questions which validate by the professional in field. After the interview process, participant once again ask to participate in self-assessment DASS-21, in this study it form under Post DASS-21. The purpose of Pre DASS-21 and Post DASS-21 is to measure the level of stress before and after the interview.

After completed data collection, the study analyze data in order to seek the answer for the research question. Several software require such as Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for quantitative analysis, and NVIVO Plus for qualitative analysis. The reference as show in the flowchart.

Result
The study obtained 113 responses to the distributed questionnaire. There are 30 questions organised into three sections. A participant's background comes first. The second section is devoted to participant pre-selection based on comprehension, and the final section conducts psychological evaluations of the participants. The purpose of the questionnaire is to collect data on the following topics: (1) participant interest in the photograph, (2) participant comprehension of the photograph, (3) participant emotional state, and (4) participant pre-selection using the DASS 21. The objective of the questionnaire is to facilitate the analysis of images and the creation of a participant photography gallery.

Currently, the gallery has undergone development in both online and print formats, in response to the travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the online interview proposed. Thirty (30) participants were selected for this study via snowball sampling due to time and travel constraints.

Quantitative Data

Thirty (30) participants were selected for this study via snowball sampling due to time and travel constraints.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Demographic Data

Variable (n=30)	n	%	Mean (±SD)
Age			35.9 ± 3.53
Gender			
Male	11	36.6	
Female	19	63.3	
Marital status			
Married	18	60.0	
Single	10	33.3	
Divorced/Widow/Widower	2	6.7	
Designation			
Lecturer	10	33.3	
Senior lecturer	20	66.7	
Years of service			8.15±5.0
Perceived psychological wellbeing			
Poor	1	3.3	
Average	5	16.7	
Good	20	66.7	
Excellent	4	13.3	

The preceding table specifies six subcategories, each containing thirty participants. A total of eleven males and nineteen females with a mean of 35.9 ± 3.53. Twenty academics out of thirty are senior lecturers. Furthermore, the average psychological wellbeing of lecturers was found to be good, with five lecturers rated average. However, four lecturers reported excellent psychological wellbeing, and one lecturer indicated a poor perceived psychological wellbeing.

Table 2: DASS-21 Data : Score Before & After PET Session

DASS Category	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Pre DASS_Depression	3.93	2.72	29	7.89	.000
Post DASS_Depression	2.33	2.36	29	5.39	.000
Pre DASS_Anxiety	4.80	3.48	29	7.53	.000
Post DASS_Anxiety	2.90	2.78	29	5.70	.000
Pre DASS_Stress	5.56	3.86	29	7.88	.000
Post DASS_Stress	3.43	3.13	29	5.99	.000

The preceding table illustrates the decline in levels of anxiety, stress, and depression from the pre-to-post period. In this study, the stress mean total before DASS was 5.56 and it peaked after DASS was 3.43, representing a difference of 2.13 standard deviations and a mean of 2.13.

Table 3: DASS-21 Data : Score Before & After PET Session By Category

Outcome variables (n=30)	Pre DASS n	%	Post DASS n	%
DASS (Stress)				
Normal	29	96.7	30	100
Mild	1	3.3	-	-
Moderate	-	-	-	-
Severe	-	-	-	-
Extremely Severe	-	-	-	-
DASS (Anxiety)				

Outcome variables (n=30)	Pre DASS n	%	Post DASS n	%
Normal	24	80.0	29	90.0
Mild	4	13.3	1	6.7
Moderate	2	6.7	1	3.3
Severe	-	-	-	-
Extremely severe	-	-	-	-
DASS (Depression)				
Normal	28	93.3	30	100
Mild	2	6.7	-	-
Moderate	-	-	-	-
Severe	-	-	-	-
Extremely Severe	-	-	-	-

The DASS-21 was utilised to compare the scale of categories prior to and following PET administration. The variation between the interviews is reflected on a scale ranging from Normal to Moderate, with nearly all participants exhibiting a Normal Scale response following PET administration.

Qualitative Data

Table 4: Theme 1 On Photograph Relationship In Stress Reduction

No	Total Occurred	FAM	TIM	FRI	PET
	N = 10				
1	T7	x			
2	T1		x		
3	T1			x	
4	T1				x

FAM: Viewing picture of family help in stress relief
TIM: Spending time with family help stress relief
FRI: Friendship in workplace help in stress relief
PET: Sharing personal picture of pet help in stress relief

The response rate peaked when the number of individuals stated that viewing family photographs would alleviate stress. P9, P5, P12, and P13 indicate that viewing family photographs aids in stress reduction and temporarily alleviates workplace problem thinking. P16 further stated that engaging in photography activities with children at home following work aids in stress relief.

Table 5: Level Of Interest In Photography Preferences

Variable (n=30)	n	%
Family		
Extremely Interesting	9	30.0
Very Interesting	16	43.3
Moderately Interesting	3	10.0
Slightly Interesting	5	16.7
Not Interesting	-	-

Therefore, family photographs will be the primary option for relieving stress, per P19.

> *the most important is family picture*
> *Yes, it can greatly reduce stress. So, if I really don't have anything to do, sit in the room, sit on the bed. Look at this picture.*
> *Maybe it has already a mindset; it's already related to family.*

Family picture is the main one, if we look at it. Maybe it makes us not feel down or stress free.

But if it's a picture, a picture of a child, a picture of a person. Usually family. Then, it will release a little bit of stress ... indirectly we do not think the problem was. Literally, we will lose the feeling of stress.

When I come back from work, I find that the child feels like a stress reliever. Mostly, I do take pictures.

Conversely, P27 employed the convocation image as a metaphorical device to convey not only the essence of communal joy but also the impetus to develop one's self.

Yes, I think so. I mean sometimes I look back at this picture. This was the time when I happy. And that....it give me strength to continue.

As stated in P13, viewing photographs from previous workplaces serves as both a reminder to maintain positive relationships with coworkers and motivation to navigate a new work environment.

This is a picture in the previous company. The picture of close colleague, good teammate. It's fun because we've been working together for a long time..... So, when I work right now. It's a new place for me. When I look at this picture, it seems to miss the situation like this time.

Finally, pet images are the preferred image for P22 to alleviate stress. A personal gallery of cat photographs would serve to remind one another of one's relationship and alleviate stress.

Table 6: Theme 7 On Reflective Photograph In Stress Reduction

No	Total Occurred	OUT	PER	REL	PEF	EVH	REM	CDS
	N = 18							
1	T1	x						
2	T6		x					
3	T1			x				
4	T6				x			
5	T1					x		
6	T1						x	
7	T2							x

OUT: Outdoor activity   REM: Recall memory   PER: Personal relation Picture
CDS: Viewing picture Calm down stress. REL: Viewing picture relief negative feeling. PEF: Viewing picture have an effect
EVH: Plant picture evoke hobb**y**

In the matter of stress, viewing and talking about pictures reflect to several outcome such as P28 felt the pictures definitely relief the stress but it has to balance with the outdoor activities. However, if the picture have personal meaning, likely the it would help with the stress relief. For example, P14 preferred to watch children video to overcome stress, P10 looking at pictures

from an old album, P26 feeling calm when viewing parents pictures, P8 overcome stress by looking at parents, nature and pet pictures.

And, generally P22 like to scrolling picture from personal gallery would relief negative feeling. In the other hand, few participants agrees viewing pictures have an effect. P5, P23 viewing pictures degrade bad feeling and calm down stress. P24 relate that stress would reduce with the god willing. Other, P28 found that looking again the pictures bring back memory of good and it will ease and lesser the stress level including the outdoor activities. P29 imagine to be in the pictures and make a plan to ease the stress.

Therefore, when come to emotions P15 & P3 felt scrolling picture have an effect if missing someone dear to heart. Meanwhile, P7 share the opinion that by viewing the picture create the process of learning and evoke hobby. Other, P25 reflect the picture as recall memory while in stress relieve process, which supported by P25, P21 and P23 that looking back the pictures reduce stress if viewing good memories pictures. It give a sense of purpose and meaning, which may be especially beneficial for those battling with feelings of despair or lack of motivation.

Discussion

The study resulted to into quantitative data which shows the decrease level after PET process. The study identify the suitable images based on the supporting quantitative data from the DASS 21. The indicator of which photo preferences of choices and the level of stress before and after the PET process. By referring to the quantitative result data from 5.1.9 Table 7: Means for DASS-21 Data : Score before & after PET session and 5.10.1 Percentage Data : DASS-21 score before & after PET interview.

Table 7: Mean Data Pre-Post DASS 21

	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Pre DASS_Stress	5.56	3.86	29	7.88	.000
Post DASS_Stress	3.43	3.13	29	5.99	.000

Referring the stress section on Table 7, the distinction between both the pre-DASS mean of 5.56 and the post-DASS mean of 3.43 is 2.13 mean and 3.13 sample variance. The decrease of stress level respectively shows the value of photograph in PET approach would help the academician to find curricular alternative in stress reduction. The selection of images perhaps to determine regarding the participants background. The frequency of type of images and how many times selected will be discuss in the section of Table 6.3: Summary Photo Demographic Data.

The visual data may stimulate and facilitate memory recollection (Roach et al., 2016). By emphasising integrated knowledge as a sort of visual creativity, the human brain may interpret all memory material via visual experience (Borkin et al., 2016). Therefore, a solid framework will allow the visual artist to evoke a cognitive response from the audience via the transformation of visual rhetoric topics into metaphor and argument. According to (Maes et al., 2008), visual segmentation results in Visual Metaphorical Expression, that is, the indication and development of visual, Literal Meaning, which is the purpose of development, and the advertiser's Message to convince the viewer to purchase, view, or interpret the product.

Table 8: Outcome Variable Pre-Post DASS 21

Outcome variables (n=30)	Pre DASS		Post DASS	
	n	%	n	%
DASS (Stress)				
Normal	29	96.7	30	100
Mild	1	3.3	-	-
Moderate	-	-	-	-
Severe	-	-	-	-
Extremely Severe	-	-	-	-

The variation here between pre-DASS mean of 5.56 and the post-DASS mean of 3.43 is 2.13 mean and 3.13 sample variance support the outcome photo of choice. DASS-21 findings prove the focus of this section before and after PET administering. Its measurement respectively Normal, Mild, and Moderate exemplifies the discrepancies in between interviews, and after PET administering, as in almost all participants indicate Normal Level. The choice of images relate to the decreasing the level of stress after PET has administered. The component based on the final data discuss further in 6.0.2 (c) research question 3. The discussion define the mean data together with interview data.

On the basis of a data sample, statistical technique used to draw conclusions about a larger population. It entails analysing a sample and then drawing inferences or generalisations about the entire population from which the sample was drawn. The premise of inferential analysis is that a representative sample can provide accurate information about a larger population. On the basis of sample statistics, inferential analysis can estimate population parameters (such as means, variances, and proportions) using statistical methods and probability theory.
The component finding found the keywords based on the structure below:

Figure 2: Final Research Question (2) Component
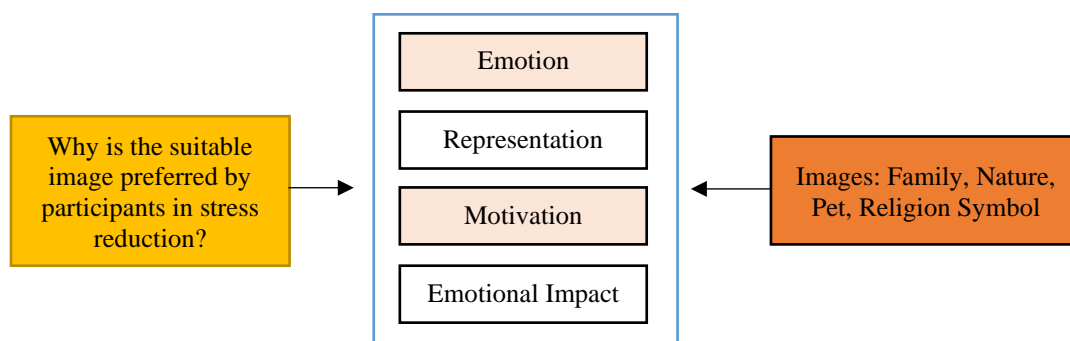
Indicating the figure above, the study found 13 themes resulted the feedback from the participant's interview. Chart above extract from the 13 themes, following the research questions and objective of the study. Referring literature review 2.1 under Gestalt Visual Image understanding. It's outlined the seven (7) aspect of human photo interact through pattern and shapes. The images and theory relation following the founded themes. The listed theme such as (1) Emotion (2) Representation (3) Motivation and (4) Emotional Impact.

Summary

Conclusively, the appearance and significance of a picture are determined by the photographer's aim to make audience react with the photograph, the context in which it is seen, and the viewer's feedback, interpretation and viewpoint. The central emphasis continues to be placed on a solitary therapeutic photography technique in the realm of phototherapy. Incorporate the DASS-21's quantitative findings into your research in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of stress reduction. As a result, the objective of the DASS-21 final result was to validate the increase and decrease in stress levels experienced by participants prior to and throughout the interview. The utilisation of DASS-21 quantitative data will enable the research subject to ascertain the most suitable methodology for photographic investigations. This matter thus aids in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 3, which is to improve the standard of mental health.

Recommendation

The inquiry is restricted to a solitary facet of therapeutic photography. Further exploration of the topic of mental health, including the outcomes of the Depression and Anxiety sections of the DASS-21, is recommended. Further expansion of this dataset is necessary to ascertain the most effective therapeutic photography technique. Further investigation into analogous subjects utilising any component of therapeutic photography is recommended. Moreover, anxiety and depression are mental health conditions that are induced by stress. To contend that further investigation into mental health will benefit the general populace.

Acknowlededgment

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