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Brianna Wyatt, Anna Leask & Paul Barron

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Rich picture building: a visual method for future serious leisure studies

Brianna Wyatt[a], Anna Leask[b] and Paul Barron[b]

[a]Oxford Brookes Business School, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK; [b]Edinburgh Napier Business School, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, UK

ABSTRACT

Visual research methods have been gaining attention among leisure studies scholars in recent years. As a form of freehand drawing, this paper mobilizes rich picture building (RPB) for future serious leisure studies, and particularly those concerned with devotee work. Employed during focus groups to encourage discussion using pictorial representations of complex social issues, this paper demonstrates the value of RPB for generating new insights into social situations. Through an example of serious leisure via devotee work, this paper presents RPB as a means to support participant discussions since humans are thought to express themselves more easily through pictures than words. Considering serious leisure is inherently social and rooted in human activity, RPB is an innovative approach that can enhance focus group research and triangulate qualitative data across verbal, textual and pictorial data. Through RPB, this paper demonstrates how simplistic pictorial representations of ideas or topics can enhance verbal information collected in traditional focus groups and/or interviews and deepen future serious leisure research.

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Rich picture building; drawing method; visual research methods; serious leisure; devotee work; tour guides

1. Introduction and context

Serious leisure is traditionally understood as "the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that is sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of its special skills and knowledge" (Stebbins, 1992, p. 3). Such activities have been attributed to, for example, museum volunteering (Cantillon & Baker, 2020), adventure sports (Dilley & Scraton, 2010) and dance (Schupp, 2019). Within these capacities, scholars have noted the commitment to leisure activities is often dependent on "work-like" requirements (Green & Jones, 2005; Stebbins, 2001). From these discussions, a growing number of studies have explored devotees – those who "feel a powerful devotion, or strong positive attachment, to a form of self-enhancing work" (Liu et al., 2022, p. 406). Such studies have helped to advance our understanding of serious leisure and prompt important questions

CONTACT Brianna Wyatt bwyatt@brookes.ac.uk Oxford Brookes Business School, Oxford Brookes University, Gipsy Lane, Oxford, OX3 0BP, UK

about what Stebbins (2012) refers to as the professional-service leisure space – that is, a space for both work and leisure.

Yet over the last 50 years since serious leisure became a topic for discussion (see e.g. Stebbins et al., 1978), most qualitative studies of it have applied the traditional research methods of observation and interviewing, thus prompting scholars to successively advocate for new and alternative data collection methods (Hunter, 2012; Liu & Da, 2019; Scarles, 2010). This paper responds to these calls and seeks to demonstrate the value of rich picture building (RPB) as an alternative method for future serious leisure studies, and particularly those concerned with devotees.

Within the last decade, scholars have started to respond to this methodological gap by applying visual research methods to serious leisure studies (Chen et al., 2022; Cox et al., 2017; Thompson, 2019); yet, these have predominantly used photo or video elicitation. While the use of visual research methods is not new to wider leisure studies (Stewart & Floyd, 2004), the use of participant video diaries, postcard messages, photo elicitation and/or other art-based mediums (see Kono et al., 2022; Manley et al., 2023; Schultz & Legg, 2019) are less common in studies concerned with serious leisure. This unfamiliarity is particularly observed with freehand drawing techniques, which appear only three times in wider leisure studies literature (see Copeland & Agosto, 2012; Liu & Da, 2019; Yuen, 2004).

Freehand drawing techniques have been gaining attention in tourism, health and education studies, as drawing allows participants to express themselves in ways that are not always possible through other visual mediums (Liu & Da, 2019). A particular freehand drawing technique that has been gaining interest across interdisciplinary studies is RPB – a visual research method generally used in focus groups to encourage discussion, guide collective problem solving and foster a deeper understanding of collective views about a given topic or issue (Bell et al., 2019; Mills, 2010). This drawing technique requires participants to freehand draw simplistic pictorial representations of their perspectives and ideas about a given topic (Bell & Morse, 2013a). Although RPB has not yet appeared in leisure studies, its limited application in tourism studies (see e.g. Moscardo, 2012; Wyatt et al., 2021, 2024) demonstrate how it can be applied in serious leisure studies.

In addressing the value of RPB for serious leisure studies, this paper offers several contributions. Firstly, this paper provides an example of RPB as it was applied in a series of focus groups, which sought to explore tour guide perspectives concerning the design and management of their heritage attractions' interpretation. In what will be later explained in this paper, many of the guides came into their role out "occupational devotion", which Stebbins (2001, 2012, 2020) refers to as a form of serious leisure since it is within these roles that many are able to make meaningful connections, develop a sense of belonging and find personal fulfilment. Such thinking was reflected in the findings of the RPB sessions, which revealed deeply passionate group perspectives concerning the interpretation and their role as tour guides. Thus, through this example, this paper not only extends the existing studies that have explored tour guiding as a form of serious leisure (see e.g. Orr, 2006; Qian & Yarnal, 2010), but importantly, it also serves as a practical guide for future scholars to apply RPB in their socially grounded research, thereby expanding the literature's methodological possibilities.

Secondly, and considering RPB has also been argued as beneficial for organizations to self-evaluate and problem-solve (Gates, 2023), this paper can further instruct industry practitioners in how to use RPB for identifying and resolving internal issues (Bell &

Morse, 2013a). This form of self-evaluation can encourage inclusive problem-solving discussions of contentious issues within serious leisure arrangements and wider working environments (Bell et al., 2019; Wyatt et al., 2024).

This paper commences with a review of current serious leisure scholarship, drawing attention to the methodological gaps that are observed in the literature. It proceeds with a discussion of RPB as a form of freehand drawing to allow readers a better understanding of the technique and its specific value for serious leisure studies. Next, an example of RPB is presented as it was applied in a series of focus groups involving tour guides, thereby providing scholars with a practical guide for applying RPB in future serious leisure studies.

2. Literature review

2.1. Serious leisure – a brief review of current scholarship

Some have argued that serious leisure studies remain preoccupied with "old" ways of knowing (Schultz & Legg, 2019). Such arguments are grounded in the recognition that serious leisure studies have an overt preference for interviewing (in person and online) (see e.g. Bowness, 2020; Punch et al., 2021; Xie et al., 2024) and open-ended/survey questionnaires (see e.g. Cheng et al., 2016; Lee & Ewert, 2018; Lee & Payne, 2016). Seldomly, alternative or experiential methods have been applied, such as participant notetaking and/or video diaries, and photo elicitation (see e.g. Chen et al., 2022; Cox et al., 2017; Heo et al., 2010; Thompson, 2019).

Beyond data collection methods, Lee (2019) highlights an additional issue with current serious leisure scholarship in that it generally focuses on individuals and individual experiences, thereby limiting the potential for greater understanding of collective experiences and their sociocultural contexts. Lee (2019) draws on Breeze's (2013) work, which argued the focus on individuals in serious leisure studies neglects the wider social circumstances of serious leisure activities. As such, Lee (2019) calls for greater attention to the collective experience of serious leisure, including enablers and barriers to participation, shared values and norms of the activity community, and the collective actions and individual interactions that facilitate the activity.

Within the serious leisure discourse, some have explored the collective experience through for example, climbing clubs (Dilley & Scraton, 2010) and dance clubs (Brown, 2007), while others have explored it through larger networks and culture, such as competitive dance (Schupp, 2019) and tattooing (Thompson, 2019). The collective experience has also been explored through devotee work within professional organizations and institutions, such as volunteer guides within museums (Orr, 2006; Stamer et al., 2008) and volunteers at sporting events (Lee & Kim, 2017). Much of this research draws on Stebbins (2020, p. 24) conceptual development of occupational devotion, which is based on a person's "powerful devotion, or strong, positive attachment, to a form of self-enhancing work … for which the worker gets paid and which amounts to a significant part or all of a livelihood". Yet, as found within the wider leisure literature, studies concerning the collective experience, and those concerning devotee work, have predominantly relied on interviewing, observation and survey methods, with the seldom use of auto/ethnography (see e.g. Liu et al., 2022; Luyk & Doi, 2022; Morgan et al., 2022; Russell et al., 2022).

The use of traditional methods is often limited in serious leisure studies, and scholarly research more broadly. For example, participants' willingness to answer questions about a given topic can limit the data collected in interviews (Alexander et al., 2019; Nunkoosing, 2005), while participants' literacy and understanding of questions can limit data collected from a survey (Wei et al., 2015). Similarly, surveys are not always able to capture contextual details of a participant's experience (Mittelstaedt, 2001), whereas observational studies may struggle to obtain participant consent (Annear et al., 2013). As such, Liu and Da (2019) suggest freehand drawing as a useful medium for studies that seek to understand different perceptions of a leisure pursuit, and particularly the psychological and social characteristics of collective experiences, as well as the environments in which those experiences take place.

2.3. RPB – a freehand drawing technique for serious leisure studies

Over the past decade, visual research methods (i.e. the use of photographs, films and/or videos, postcards, e-images, artworks, print media) have been gaining ground in qualitative leisure studies (Johnson, 2014; Rakić & Chambers, 2012). This is largely due to visual methods allowing research participants to express difficult to explain information (Rakić & Chambers, 2012) through images representative of how they see and experience life events (Stewart & Floyd, 2004). More specifically, Hunter (2012) argues visual "arts-based" methods (i.e. first-hand creation of images via sketching, drawing, painting, diagramming) allow for a deeper understanding of participant perspectives since these methods are self-reflexive, allowing participants to blur their subjective ideas, perceptions and memory of what is to be drawn with the objective representations that are drawn. As such, visual arts-based methods can encourage participants of serious leisure studies to become more deeply engaged in the actual research process, prompting questions and encouraging their feeling of empowerment to "de/re/construct their experiences and/or perspectives" (Gray et al., 2021, p. 318).

Within the scope of visual arts-based methods exists RPB – a freehand drawing technique that involves a group of people collectively drawing pictorial representations of the varied elements within a complex situation (Grant et al., 2019). These drawings can be conceptual abstractions and/or pictorial representations (Farthing, 2013), and are generally of a low-threshold, which Martikainen and Hakokõngäs (2023) explain as not requiring participants to have technical or artistic skills, nor considerable materials needed to create the pictures. While this low-threshold may produce basic, rudimentary images, participants are able to better express themselves concerning topics where words fail, or concerning that which photographs and other visual techniques cannot express (Anderson, 2018; Radic, 2019; Scarles, 2010). Such freedom of expression can be useful for studies concerned with, for example, children, who are often limited in language when expressing their perspectives (see e.g. Buzlu et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2023) and/or participants with language impairments and/or speech impediments (see e.g. Farias et al., 2006; Vendeville et al., 2015). Moreover, drawing pictures can help participants who struggle or are unwilling to speak about a given topic (Alexander et al., 2019; Nunkoosing, 2005), or are unable to read and/or understand questions on a survey (Wei et al., 2015).

Unlike photos, which capture a moment in time, drawings allow participants to capture reality and fantasy, the real and the imagined, the past, present and future

(Liu & Da, 2019). Drawings therefore allow for greater possibilities of data than what photos or other visual research methods might allow. Moreover, they rely on an interplay of subjectivity and objectivity, which enhances the epistemological value of what is drawn (Anderson, 2018). Yet, a common challenge with the drawing technique is participants' anxieties with drawing or with not knowing how to draw their ideas (Martikainen & Hakokoöngäs, 2023). Thus, Anderson (2021) notes some drawings may include words, numbers and/or explanatory symbols to confirm the picture's meaning. In this way, drawings can be hybrid images, involving both visuals and text to fully reflect the drawer's thinking (Anderson, 2021; Hunter, 2012).

2.3.1. Applying RPB to focus group studies

Emerging out of the soft systems methodology (SSM) approach (see Checkland, 1985), RPB is generally used within group settings to understand a problem situation, including what the situation is, what it looks like, how and why it developed, and what the circumstances are occurring in and around it (Checkland, 1985). The intention of RPB is to visualize the complex conditions of a problem situation and communicate the human experience of these complexities (Berg et al., 2019). Such a technique could prove valuable for studying aspects of devotee work within serious leisure, such as the advantages and disadvantages of being a volunteer museum guide (Cantillon & Baker, 2020).

Although RPB was established as a step within the SSM process, it has been found useful as an independent data collecting technique. Highlighting the flexibility of RPB, Berg et al. (2019) argue the technique is appropriate for most exploratory studies of groups of people. This is particularly so since the rich picture (RP) that is produced captures meanings, associations, emotions and feelings that can often convey a greater understanding of the group's social complexities than words alone (Berg et al., 2019). Other scholars have held similar views and thus have applied RPB without using the full SSM approach (see e.g. Gates, 2023; Grant et al., 2019; Moscardo, 2012; Wyatt et al., 2021, 2024).

When applied in focus group settings, the collective drawing process of RPB can help to reduce the potential of groupthink (i.e. concurrence), as each group member is able to contribute to the collective RP (Yuen, 2004). For a focus group RPB session to be successful, participants must have the necessary drawing materials (e.g. poster paper, colour markers or pens or crayons, post-it notes, practice paper), everyone must draw and drawings should be relevant to the given prompt (Bell & Morse, 2013b; Beynon-Davies, 2021; Cristancho et al., 2015; Moscardo, 2012). There is also a consensus concerning the planning and preparation of a RPB session. As with any qualitative data collection method, Gates (2023) suggests participants should have direct knowledge and/or experience of the study topic. This will help to ensure the images drawn in the full RP are relevant in terms of the study focus. Reinforcing the low-threshold argument, Pearce and Pearce (2017) add the researcher must emphasize importance of the drawings' content and not participants' drawing abilities. Thus, to create a safe and encouraging drawing environment where all participants feel secure in expressing themselves, researchers are advised to provide a brief presentation of what RPB is and how to draw meaningful RPs (Berg & Pooley, 2013; Booton, 2018; Gates, 2023).

Generally, RPB is observed as a single session followed by a plenary discussion that delineates the pictures drawn (Gisby et al., 2023). Yet, it is also observed as an iterative

process of drawing, discussing and more drawing (Grant et al., 2019). To support participants in feeling more comfortable with RPB, a warm-up exercise is suggested (Gates, 2023), as well as individual practice drawing time (Wyatt et al., 2024), and/or the use of an icon legend (Berg & Pooley, 2013). While RPB appears to be more commonly applied in focus groups or multi-group settings, RPB has also been conducted with participants individually (see e.g. Köstinger & Matteucci, 2024), and remotely (see e.g. Kado et al., 2023). Within each of these settings, RPB is useful for triangulating data and giving researchers a new way of knowing participant perspectives and emotions (Copeland & Agosto, 2012).

3. Methods

The focus of this paper is to demonstrate the practice and value of RPB for future serious leisure research, and particularly those concerned with devotee work. RPB was applied during focus group sessions with tour guides at three heritage attractions in the UK and Ireland. The attractions were purposively selected as case examples of attractions that use re-enactment tour guiding as the primary method for interpreting the history of the plague: The Real Mary King's Close in Edinburgh (RMKC), the Sick to Death museum in Chester (S2D) and the Gravedigger Ghost Bus Tour in Dublin (GGT).

The guides were invited to participate in the RPB sessions based on their knowledge and experience with the design and management of the interpretation at their attraction. Throughout the process, it was found that most of the guides came into their guiding role because of their passion for history, acting and/or working in the public history sector. Some were history or heritage tourism students and chose to become a tour guide as a way to engage with their subject in a practical way, while many others were theatre actors who chose to become a guide as a way to engage with acting in a different way. Such revelations reinforce Liu et al. (2022) argument that devotees perform self-enhancing work through feelings of devotion or strong positive attachment. As such, the guides' devotion to their individual interests and practice has led them into a professional-service leisure space (Stebbins, 2012), and thus, for the purposes of this paper, they may be considered serious leisure devotees.

As outlined in Table 1, the RPB sessions were organized based on the attractions' time in operation and number of employees. In this regard, it was noted that RMKC was longer established and had more employees when compared to S2D and GGT. To ensure adequate representation across the three study locations, two focus groups were conducted at RMKC and composed of those that had been employed for over two years and those of under two years. The purpose of this arrangement was to ensure diversity and information adequacy. For each focus group, the guides were asked to confirm their agreement to participate in the focus groups by signing a consent form that ensured their anonymity and to comply with the authors' University policies for ethical clearance.

Table 1. Case locations and participants.

Attraction	Time in operation	Focus groups	Guides
The Real Mary King's Close	Opened in 2003	2	5/group
Sick to Death museum	Opened in 2016	1	2
Gravedigger Ghost Bus Tour	Opened in 2012	1	3

As outlined below, the RPB sessions were each conducted in line with the literature's recommendations.

3.1. Step one – introduction to RPB

The guides were first introduced to RPB, which as Berg and Pooley (2013) suggest, included an explanation of how it is used to inform research, why it is a valuable technique, and how they could use it in future for organizational and/or self-evaluation. They were also shown examples of RPs and varying ways they could draw their perceptions, feelings and emotions. It was during this time the guides were informed that the value of the RPs were in the content of what they would draw and not their artistic abilities. Finally, the guides were given the RPB prompt: *What is your perception of the design and management of interpretation at your attraction?*

3.2. Step two – warming up to RPB

Following the introduction, the guides were asked to practice drawing their thoughts about the prompt. They were given 10 minutes to individually practice using A4 size paper and pens, which Booton (2018) suggests as beneficial for participants to feel comfortable with drawing. During the practice time, the author remained silent to prevent any influence over their drawings.

3.3. Step three – practicing RPB

The guides were next given 30 minutes to work together using colour markers and poster paper to create a collective RP in response to the prompt (see Figures 1–4). During this time, the author used an audio recorder to capture the verbal discussion of the group as they worked together to create their collective RP and took observational notes of the group dynamics as the RPB session went on. Each group started the RPB process with a discussion of what they had individually drawn during the practice session. This led to deeper conversations about the prompt, including similar perspectives and differences in opinions.

Each group had a drawing "leader" who started drawing their discussions on the poster paper. Each group also had at least one dominant voice that led the drawing discussion. While this did not influence the equal contributions of guides in all of the groups, the author had to intervene at multiple points with one group to ensure all voices were included in the RP. In these particular instances, one guide had been contributing verbally to the discussion, but not pictorially to the RP. The author therefore asked that guide how they might depict what they were saying in pictorial form. After the first few instances of this, the guide appeared to develop the necessary confidence to draw freely throughout the remainder of the focus group session. With another group, there were several instances in which the discussion of the prompt went off topic, resulting in the guides debating over broader operational issues. The author intervened at these times to ask how those discussions related to the prompt, resulting in clear rationales that were then added in pictorial form to the RP. Additionally, when verbal discussions appeared to overshadow the groups' collective drawing, the author asked the guides how

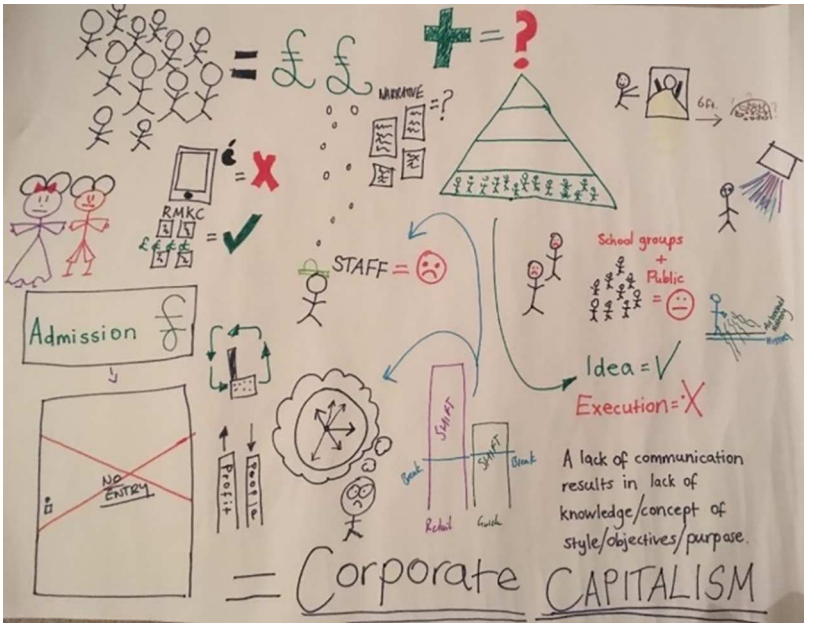

Figure 1. RMKC focus group 1 rich picture.

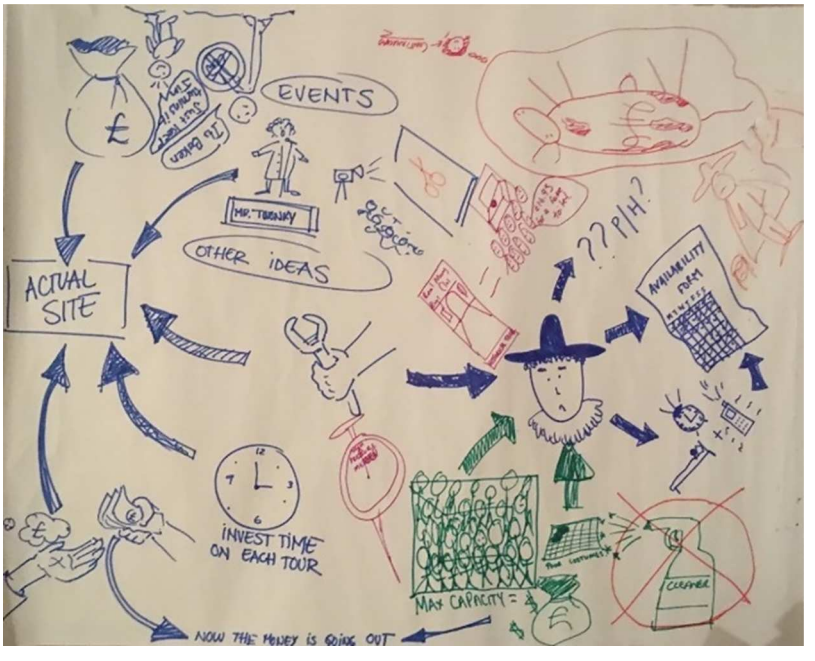

Figure 2. RMKC focus group 2 rich picture.

they might depict what they were discussing in pictorial form. While this often led to a tangential discussion about how to draw particular points about their discussion, it also provided a means for new thoughts concerning the initial discussion to emerge.

Figure 3. S2D focus group 3 rich picture.

Figure 4. GGT focus group 4 rich picture.

3.4. Step four – RPB plenary

Once the drawing time had ended and concluding the RPB sessions, the groups were asked to explain their RP, including their rationale for including each drawing, the meaning behind them and how they link together in composing the whole RP. Within

this, the groups also explained that their use of words over pictures in some instances was related to their struggles with finding the right way to draw those words or thoughts. This supports Anderson's (2021) arguments that some drawings may involve both visuals and text to fully reflect the drawer's thinking. This discussion led to greater insights of the RPs and particular points made, and extending Grant et al. (2019), it led to additional drawings for the RPs, as the guides would think of additional points whilst explaining the existing drawings.

3.5. Step five – RPB analysis

Following the RPB focus group sessions, the RPs were analysed using Carney's (1994) seven-step process for critiquing art. The decision for choosing this particular analysis technique was based on Bell and Morse's (2013a) explanation of the technique in being useful for merging art interpretation with formal analysis. Others, such as Kado et al. (2023), have applied a visual content analysis technique, deconstructing RPs into patterns, codes and themes through the identification of main components and linkages that make the RP whole. Such deconstructions may limit an RP's pictorial rationality with respect to the whole picture (Lynch, 1991). Thus, Bell et al. (2016) note the value of "reading" the whole picture for its overall context, including the colours used, size of pictures and shapes, use of text, space between pictures, drawn linkages and associations, boundaries and empty space, direction and style. In support, others (e.g. Matteucci & Önder, 2018; Wyatt et al., 2024) agree on the importance in reading a RP for its compositional design elements, which Williams (2019) suggests can support the participants' perceptions of an image and the researcher's interpretations of the full RP. However, given the notion "a picture is worth a thousand words", Bell et al. (2019) suggest reading a RP in segmented parts can help to reduce themes more easily whilst at the same time ensuring the different voices within the whole picture are considered.

3.6. Analysis and discussion of the RPs

Following Bell et al. (2019) suggestion, the RPs were each quartered into four parts. Then following Bell and Morse's (2013a) guidance, the authors applied Carney's (1994) art critiquing process, which started with identifying the RPs' context using their characteristic features. In review of the overall context, as reflected in Figures 5–8, the key themes that the groups drew (and talked about) were of the visitor experience, design ideas, operations and logistics, and their general concerns and overall morale. There were clear influences underpinning these themes relating to the context of each focus group. Figure 5 was drawn by guides who had been at RMKC longer than 2 years, and therefore had deeply rooted feelings towards the way in which the interpretation and their roles had evolved over the years. Figure 6 was drawn by guides who had been at RMKC for less than 2 years, and within that time there had been a significant commercial expansion to the attraction, but little attention given to the actual tour they are responsible for. Figure 7 was drawn by guides at S2D who were also responsible for the daily operations of the attraction, and thus, had a balanced view of the interpretation and operations overall. Figure 8 was drawn by guides at GGT who were also responsible for designing the experience and thus, also had a balanced view of the interpretation and operations overall.

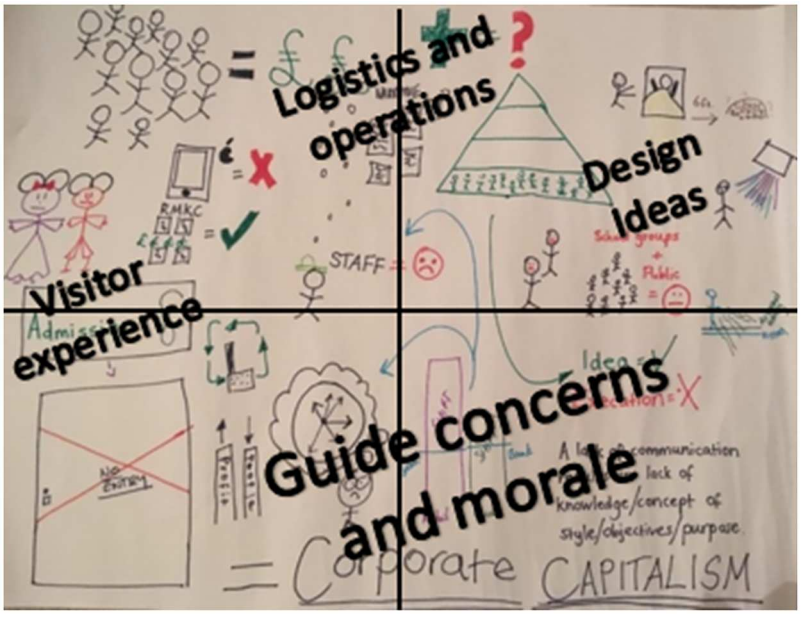

Figure 5. Analysing RMKC focus group 1 rich picture.

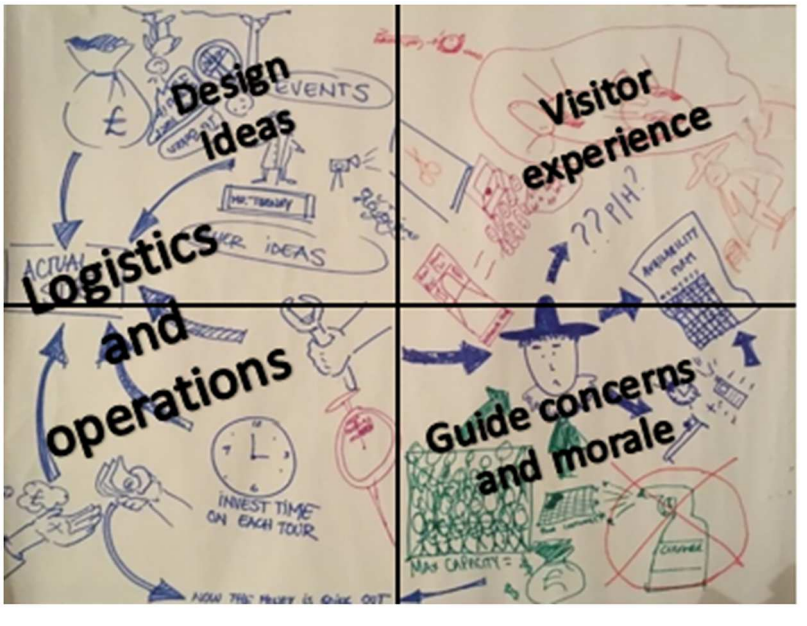

Figure 6. Analysing RMKC focus group 2 rich picture.

Following, preliminary judgements were made about the RPs' descriptive features and structures (e.g. colours, shapes, size, arrangements), which revealed a similar drawing style, as all of the RPs used a range of stick figures, geometric shapes, pictorial representations and colour. While some text was used, it was used sparingly, and when used, the guides

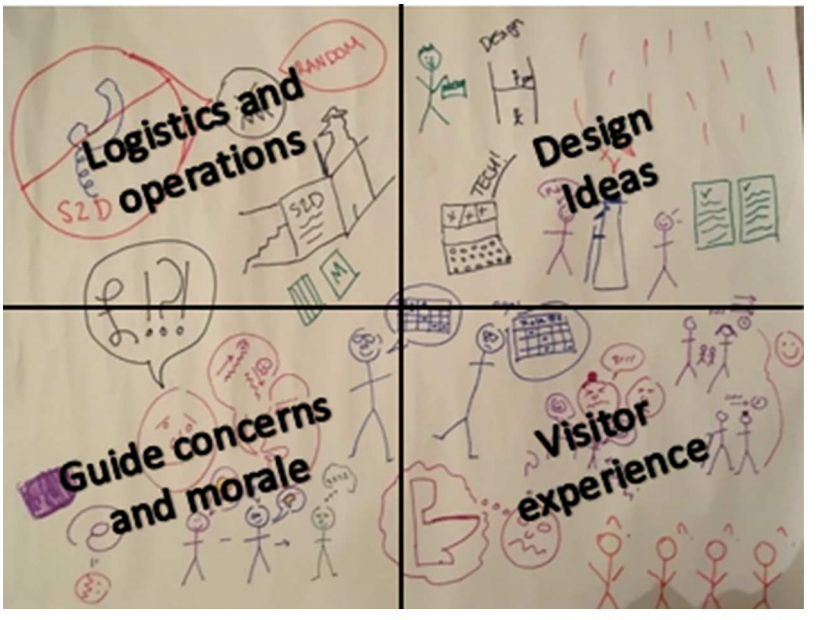

Figure 7. Analysing S2D focus group 3 rich picture.

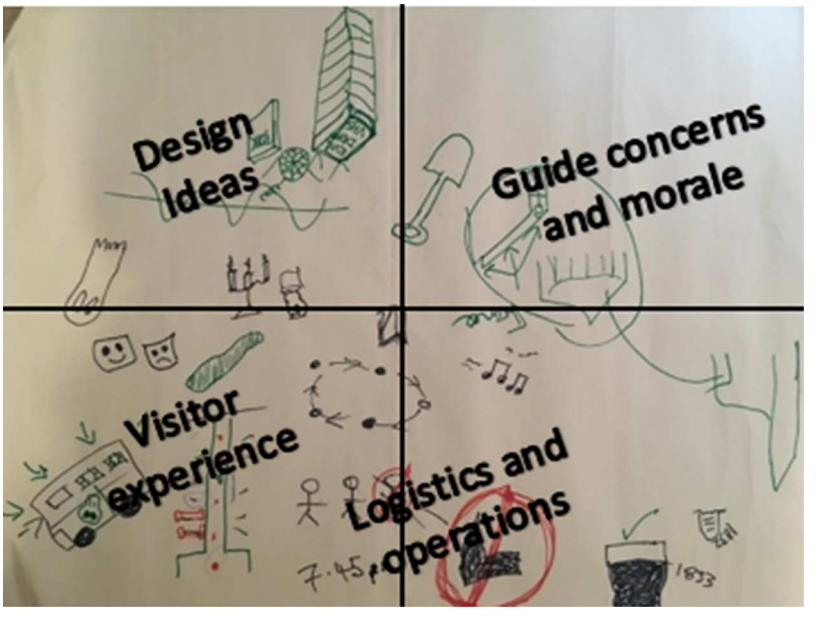

Figure 8. Analysing GGT focus group 4 rich picture.

explained this was to help signal an issue that they could not think of how to draw. These preliminary judgements next allowed for an assessment of the RPs' primary aesthetic features (e.g. dominant representations and expressive images), as well as the content value features (i.e. if images are grouped or not) (Bell & Morse, 2013a; Carney, 1994). As reflected in Figures 5–7, there was an equal distribution and sizing of images in the RPs,

while Figure 8 is seen to have more images grouped on the left side of the RP and a larger dominant single image on the right. This was reflective of where guides were sitting around the table for the RPB session. Moreover, Figures 5, 6 and Figures 8 appear to have a dominant colour within a range of colours used. Figure 5 – dominant black colour. Figure 6 – dominant blue colour. Figure 8 – dominant green colour. This was reflective of the person who had the dominant voice in the group or who had been deemed the drawing leader. Figure 7 appeared to have a balanced use of colours which corresponds to the balanced discussion and contributions that occurred within that RPB session. Moreover, where larger, dominant images appear, the observational notes taken during the RPB sessions revealed the guides held strong, and sometimes vocally loud, opinions about the topic of discussion and chose to draw larger images to emphasize their points.

These early assessments allowed for an understanding of the RPs' full content and meaning, and thus, low-level interpretations were developed suggesting there were a range of operational issues that were impacting the interpretation and guiding role, and as a result, were creating deep frustrations among the guides. The frustrations were represented by the expressive images of frustration, unhappiness and confusion, most of which included unhappy and angry looking faces, question marks and bold red lines. Following Bell and Morse's (2013a) guidance, these low-level interpretations were compared to the guides' explanations of their RP. As reflected in Figures 9–12, the guides' explanations revealed clear frustrations with the lack of reinvestment into their sites and daily operational issues, which in turn, were impacting their sense of personal fulfilment and overall morale.

Confirming the low-level interpretations of the RPs, one guide explained:

> If I was actually showing them the history of the site, instead of some lie or whatever just to bring in more money, then I would actually do my job better. It would be more interesting and I would more-so want to do it. (RMKC Guide)

With reference to images that they referred to as representations of a "speculative" narrative and an "airbrushing" of the history (see Figure 13), another guide explained:

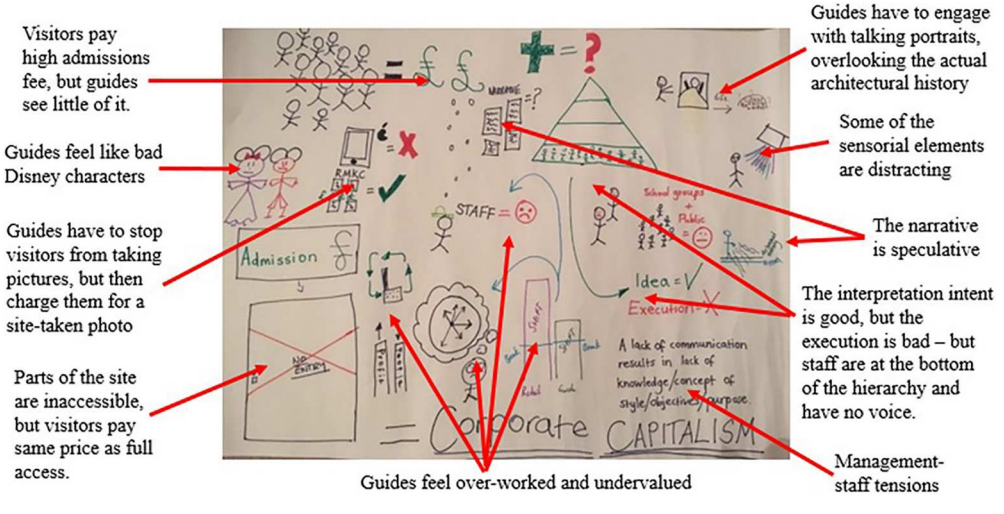

Figure 9. Plenary review of RMKC focus group 1 rich picture.

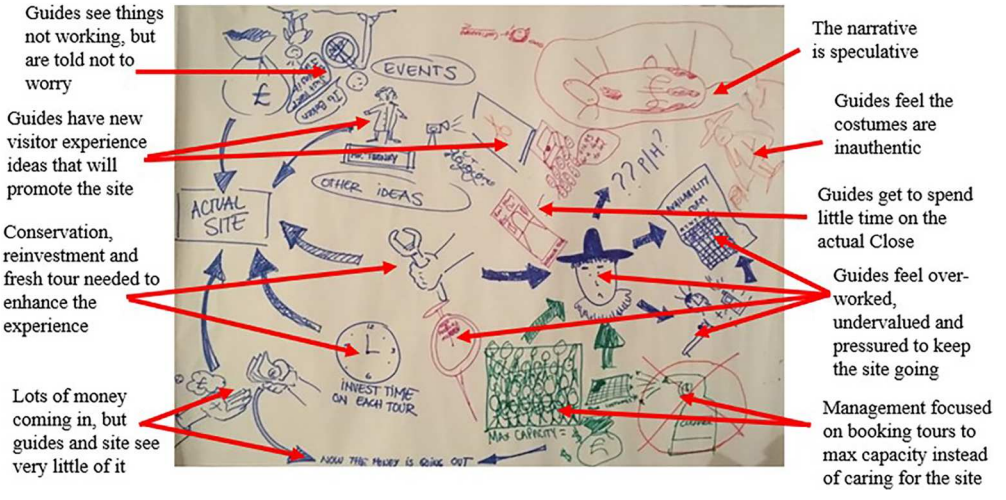

Figure 10. Plenary review of RMKC focus group 2 rich picture.

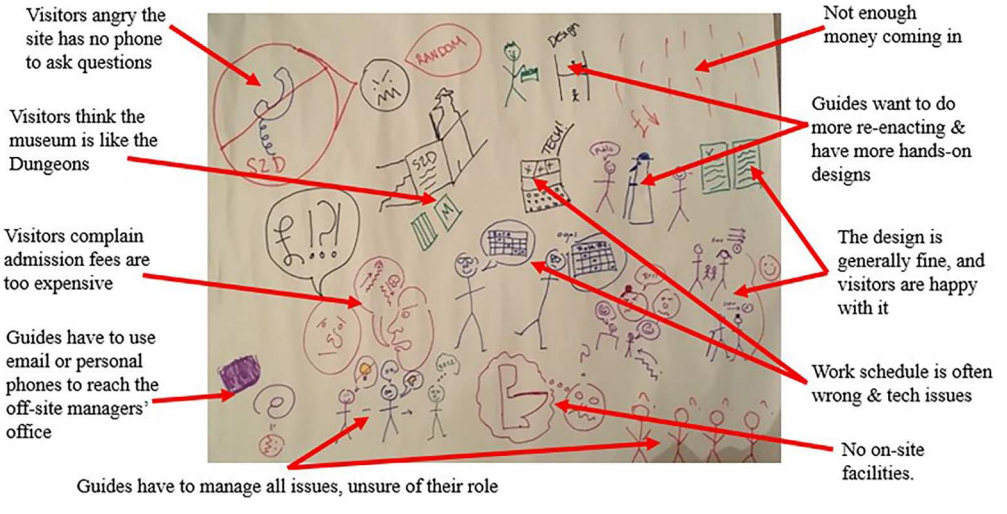

Figure 11. Plenary review of S2D focus group 3 rich picture.

> It creates a bad vibe personally for the guides, which means you're treating your customers with contempt, and then it means that they are not getting the full experience. (RMKC Guide)

Adding to these, and with reference to images concerning the reinvestment in the site and interpretation, several guides across the focus groups commented to their drawings (see Figure 14) with similar sentiments:

> There is just so much to the site that we are not being given the time to research and fully understand … and it has been cheapened by the fact that there is no money coming into it, and then the tour suffers … the guides suffer. (RMKC Guide)

> We sell ourselves as a good history attraction and they have all this money that they have invested in things to make money and not in the site. Ninety percent of what we do is in poor conditions. (RMKC Guide)

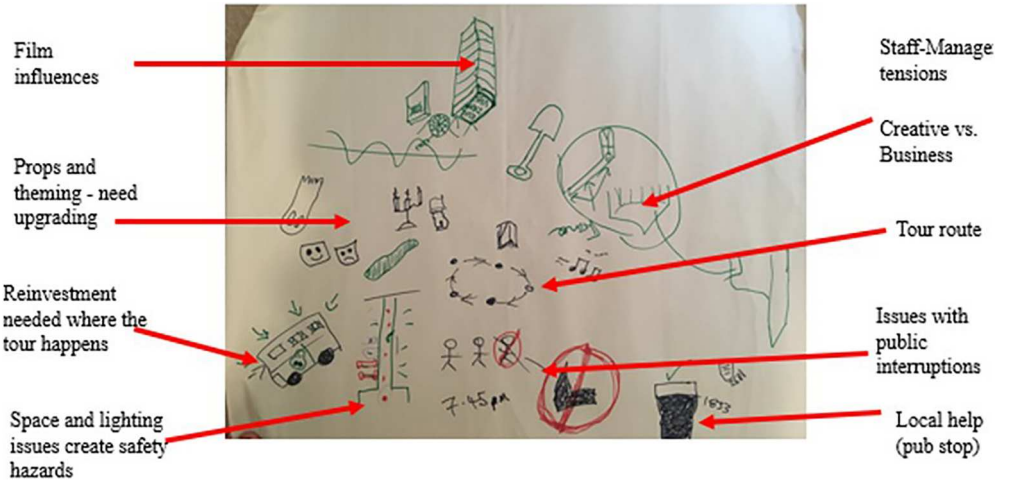

Figure 12. Plenary review of GGT focus group 4 rich picture.

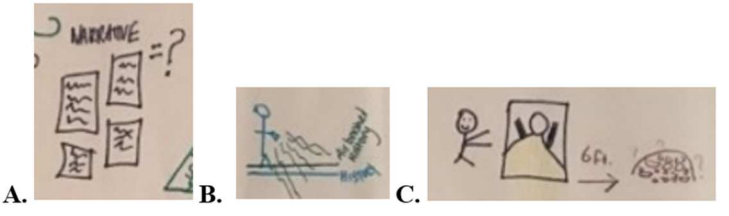

Figure 13. RMKC focus group 1 issues with the interpretation. (A) The narrative is based on loose interpretations of history. (B) The tour script is speculative and history is softened, which impacts the sense of historical accuracy. (C) Staff have to engage with talking portraits instead of explaining the actual history of the site.

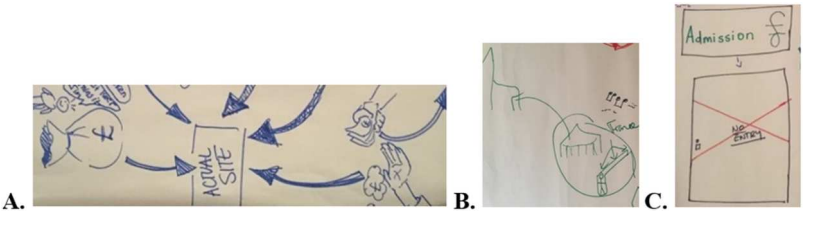

Figure 14. Focus group issues with the reinvestment. (A) Reinvestment is needed, specifically into the actual site. (B) Owners/managers are never on-site to see the experience in action and where reinvestment is needed. (C) The attraction is making money off high admission fees, but the site continues to degrade.

> Yes, in a sense it is successful as a tour because it runs all the time, but asking for money to reinvest back into it hasn't been done … From the owners' point of view, they see it as a successful tour that is bringing in money, so they are kinda like 'well we don't need to fix it'. (GGT Guide)

The comparisons between the low-level interpretations and the guides' explanations allowed for high-level interpretations, which revealed there are clear management-

guide tensions concerning the interpretation and daily operations of the sites. These tensions appeared grounded in root operational issues, such as poor communication, hierarchical structures of decision-making and the physical working environment. A key issue that came through all of the RPs was that the guides felt they had no autonomy or voice to make decisions concerning their attractions' interpretation. In this regard, a few guides commented:

> The management of [the interpretation], we don't have a voice I don't think (RMKC Guide).

> I think that we should be able to just say 'we work here, so we think that this would come across well if we did this as an event' and then start putting it together. (S2D Guide)

Importantly, the high-level interpretations revealed the guides are passionate about their attractions' history, which is why the RPs displayed a sense of frustration.

As the final stage of Carney's (1994) process, a final critical judgement about the RPs was made. The RPs each had a strong message that the guides are passionate about their role, the history of their site and the manner in which their site is presented through the interpretation. The collectively made RPs not only revealed issues with the design and management of the attractions' interpretation, specifically relating to issues of change and reinvestment, there were unexpected revelations about the attractions' operations that had created underlying tensions between the guides and management team. As such, the final critical judgement about the RPs is that each reflected the same operational issues impacting the design and management of the interpretation at each attraction.

3.7. Post-RPB reflections

At the time of the RPB sessions, it was unclear if the management teams were aware of the issues and tensions that were discussed and uncovered in the RPB sessions. Through images of unhappy and confused faces, coupled with the plenary discussions, the RPs made clear the guides' morale was low and impacting on the overall visitor experience. However, what was not fully featured in the RPs were the positive comments the guides had made during the RPB sessions. For example, with only a few images denoting these, several positive comments were made: (see Figure 15)

> A positive is the fact that the site is quite an amazing site and we have pretty good access to it as well. (RMKC Guide)

> I know it is debated in terms of the quality of the tour, but the actual physical stones in place are good … it's so full of history and it is a beautiful place to be. (RMKC Guide)

Figure 15. Focus group positives. (A) The idea for the tour is great, but the execution is not quite there. (B) The narrative and themes are good, the public seem to be happy. (C) The idea and design are good, but it needs updating since everything happens on the bus.

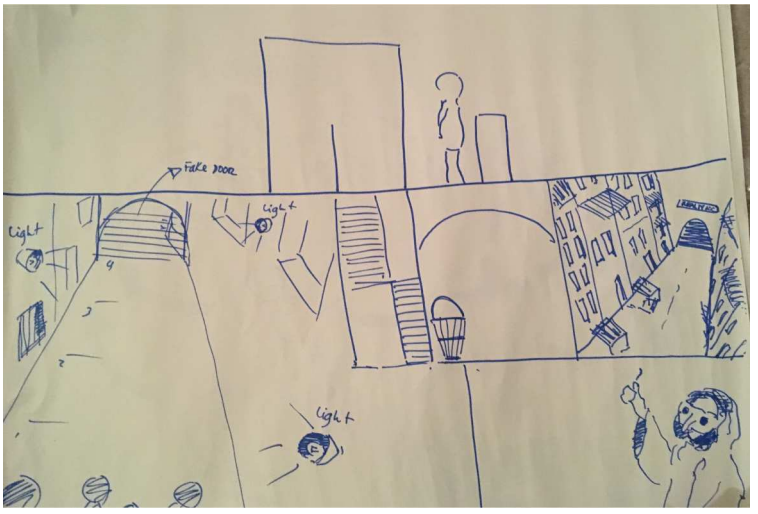

Figure 16. RMKC focus group 2 resolution.

> Interpretation-wise, I feel like we don't have that much to say about it because I think we both think it is very good. (S2D Guide)

The near-absence of the guides' positive comments in the RPs suggests that when considering the prompt, the negatives outweighed the positives. This is reinforced by one guide having to remind their group about the need to find balance in their discussions:

> Bear in mind this is not a chance for us to vent. This is about us speaking out our thoughts on what we think goes into making the design of the site. It is positives as well as negatives. (RMKC Guide)

Finally, while each group discussed potential resolutions to some of their grievances about the issues addressed, only RMKC Focus Group 2 created a visual representation of their solution. As reflected in Figure 16, this was produced during the plenary as they explained their ideas from their RP to improve the interpretation design and overall visitor experience.

4. Discussion

Extending the literature, the application of RPB was shown to be a valuable tool for aiding the focus groups in their discussions concerning the given prompt. The creation of RPs encouraged the guides to engage in the research process and in deeper conversation about their perceptions and conflicting understandings concerning the design and management of the interpretation at their attractions. As scholars who have used RPB have argued (e.g. Radic, 2019; Scarles, 2010), inviting the focus groups to create a RP through the RPB process allowed for topic-related revelations, greater expression of personal feelings and strongly-held opinions that might have otherwise remained omitted or softened in interviews and/or traditional focus group discussions. In addition, and as Grant et al. (2019) also found, the plenary was essential for not only helping the author to better understand the meaning behind each RP image and the RPs in full,

but it also provided an opportunity for new ideas to form, resulting in additional images, thereby enhancing the final RP creation.

4.1. RPB for future serious leisure research concerning devotee work

Serious leisure has been studied through a range of interdisciplinary fields, including leisure studies (e.g. Bowness, 2020; Cheng et al., 2016; Dilley & Scraton, 2010), sociology (e.g. Breeze, 2013; Cantillon & Baker, 2020; Thompson, 2019), information science (e.g. Cox et al., 2017), sporting (e.g. Green & Jones, 2005), heritage tourism (e.g. Orr, 2006) and museums (e.g. Yang, 2015). This developing scholarship has provided a breadth of valuable insights pertaining to the debate of work and leisure. Traditionally, leisure has been viewed as an activity or experience of relaxation, recuperation and freedom, whereas work has been characterized by obligation, responsibility and paid employment (Green & Jones, 2005, p. 165). Yet, studies that have explored devotee work within the scope of serious leisure have demonstrated there is such a place as a professional-service leisure space (Stebbins, 2012), in which people find a career out of their pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist or volunteer activity (Stebbins, 1992, p. 3) driven by their feelings of devotion or strong positive attachment to what they find as self-fulfilling work (Liu et al., 2022, p. 406). This understanding has been made possible through a range of traditional research methods, including interviewing (e.g. Liu et al., 2022; Luyk & Doi, 2022; Morgan et al., 2022; Russell et al., 2022), survey or questionnaire (e.g. Gould et al., 2008; Lee & Ewert, 2018) and auto-biography/ethnography (e.g. Hirst & LeNavenec, 2022; Manfroi et al., 2022).

Indeed, the above-stated traditional methods have provided useful insights into the characteristics of devotees and their serious leisure work. For example, Cheng et al. (2016) found devotees who become involved with gardening tend to give more effort and energy when they find it is an important part of their lives. Similarly, Russell et al. (2022) found devotees enjoy making a living doing what they are passionate about, and many use the opportunity to hone their skills, knowledge and experience. Yet, and as earlier noted, some of the challenges with applying traditional research methods, such as surveys, have been linked to issues with developing a full understanding of how personal and social circumstances impact characteristics of serious leisure, and particularly devotee work (Lee et al., 2021). Although interviewing is useful for providing contextual information, it has also been discussed as limiting in its requirement of triangulation with other methods to provide more holistic results (Liu et al., 2022). Moreover, traditional methods may not fully capture the social factors or mutual influences of collective experiences (Breeze, 2013; Lee, 2019; Lee & Ewert, 2018). It is for this reason that this paper encourages RPB for future serious leisure studies, particularly those concerned with the collective experiences of devotees.

Because RPB involves a collective drawing session based on a group discussion concerning a given prompt, it can help to uncover both personal and social circumstances that impact characteristics of devotee work, as was found with the RPB example presented. In this example, the RPB data showed individual perspectives, which were reinforced by comments made in the plenary. However, these individual perspectives were commonly held by the full group, as indicated in the collaborative RP in full. Moreover, a comparative review of the RPs across the four focus groups reveal

common issues despite the differences in location and business. Such revelations demonstrate how RPB can be used both in practice, as an organizational self-evaluation tool, and in response to calls for future serious leisure studies that engage with more diverse samples and a focus on causal relationships (Lee & Ewert, 2018; Lee et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2022).

5. Conclusions

This study aimed to demonstrate the value of RPB as an alternative and valuable method for future serious leisure studies, and particularly those concerned with devotees. It did this through an example of how RPB was applied to a series of focus group sessions involving tour guides of heritage tourism attractions across the UK and Ireland. The intention of these RPB sessions were to explore the guides' perspectives concerning the design and management of interpretation at their attractions, which was accomplished, and in doing so, several common operational issues impacting the guides' role and overall morale were revealed. While it is possible much of the findings may have been revealed through traditional focus group sessions (without RPB), or through individual guide interviews, the RPB process demonstrates the value of drawing pictorial representations of individual and/or group perspectives about a topic. This value was reinforced by the guides' discussions about their images as they drew them, as well as in the plenary, which, in both instances, inspired further discussion and new images that were then added to the RPs for more holistic outputs.

As with all scholarly research, the use of RPB has its challenges. Firstly, participants may have anxieties about drawing (Martikainen & Hakokôngäs, 2023). However, as Anderson (2021) notes, drawings may include textual information to confirm the picture's meaning. Secondly, the analysis of both images and text (from the audio recordings of the RPB discussions and plenary) can be time-consuming (Stewart & Floyd, 2004). Yet, following Bell and Morse's (2013a) explanation of Carney's (1994) process for critiquing art is one way in which art interpretation and formal analysis can be done in an effective and efficient manner.

Future serious leisure research, and leisure studies more broadly, are encouraged to use RPB for studies seeking to evoke and record insight into social situations. This is particularly encouraged for studies exploring the collective experience of serious leisure since, as Bell and Morse (2013a) suggest, this particular visual research method allows participants to tap into their subconscious and reveal deeper sentiments and understandings, thereby enhancing a study's findings with a triangulation of rich pictorial, textual and verbal information.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in Edinburgh Napier University Research Repository at http://researchrepository.napier.ac.uk/Output/2455103, 338.4791 Tourist Industry.

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