

The Impact of Heritage Tourism to Local Culture and Economy

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ABSTRACT

Heritage tourism has impact on host community and their way of life. Preservation and appreciation of cultural heritage elements, both tangible and intangible have socio-economic values that could be promoted through heritage tourism. The study shall examine the potential cultural and economic impact of heritage tourism in Kampung Morten, Melaka, where local Malays living in the city provide homestay accommodation. The result of this study indicated that the majority of respondents agree that heritage tourism has affected their socio-culture through the display of culture in their daily life activities, however, the activities does not play significant role in enhancing micro-economy. A top down initiative in the form of funds from government agencies as well as training programmes are needed to strengthen this sector of the economy.

Keywords: Heritage tourism, homestay, tourism programme, tourism

INTRODUCTION

Built heritage comprises as buildings, monuments, landscapes, urban areas, countryside, maritime sites, buried remains and objects (UNESCO).

In Malaysia, there are two tourist cities: Melaka and Penang, which are famous because of their heritage status.

As mentioned by Tiesdell (1996), cultural heritage can contribute pedagogically and educationally to the culture and memory of a place. Cultural heritage tourism refers to tourism oriented towards the cultural heritage of the location concerned.

Melaka, is one of the cities where a prominent built heritage can be found, and is listed as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO in 2008. Melaka can promote a distinctive multicultural architecture with strong

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Islamic, Chinese and Western influences, religious practices, folklore traditions, and social customs. Melaka also being considered as a living heritage city due to the existence of local community where they do not want to living within the rules and regulations that do not allow them to make changes to their properties.

Heritage tourism in the form of homestay tourism was introduced by the Ministry of Tourism in 2001 as a means to multiply tourism products. The programme served as a “double-edge sword” i.e. widening rural economic base and diversification of income and creating local jobs, and at the same time promoting community-based conservation of local traditional culture and lifestyle. According to Farah and Nor Hafizah (2016), the dynamic of the homestay experience is based on the encounter between the guest and society.

This study examines the perception towards heritage tourism among local people in Kampung Morten, Malaka; a traditional Malay village in the heart of Melaka. Named after J.F Morten, a former collector for Land Revenue, Kampung Morten nestled in a bustling modern city (Majlis Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah, 2010). The village is well known for its hospitality and where Malay culture and tradition is showcased to visitors. The village has evolved to become a hub for the Malaysian tourism industry.

METHODS

The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative method to gather information. The main aim of the questionnaire to

solicit information regarding the effect tourism activities on the host community. Besides that interviews were carried out to obtain qualitative information particularly respondents perspectives on what they feel about having tourist coming and going whilst the try to live their daily life. The questions were designed to give an insight on the perspective of the respondents on heritage tourism activities at their place as well as on the impact of tourism local culture and economy. Cultural impacts might be from the incoming of tourists through several types or sources. According to Manap, Aman and Rahmiati (2011), the negative impacts of cultural will cause the degradation of the environment and also to the evolution of cultural traditions. It will be a good example if there will be a positive exchange in culture between these two populations. Furthermore, there might be two types of tourists whether they are interested to know in details about the local culture or merely a visitor.

Questions asked in the survey were designed to gather overall pictures of what is happening in Kampung Morten and to what extend heritage tourism has affected the way of life of the occupants. Often, in Malaysia, people who stayed at the same village are family related. The extended family relation created a unique socio-cultural tradition. It has also influence the socio-economy of the occupants. It is common for the younger generation to continue the occupation of their elders. Where, there is stability in home economy, there are no needs to search for other jobs. The survey looks at the type of

occupation of the respondents in order to identify how many of them run a homestay and benefitted from the tourism industry. Questions on how the respondents benefitted from the industry and how they accept changes brought by the tourism programmes were asked to study the social impact of tourism to the people.

Heritage Tourism in Kampung Morten

Economic impacts also need to be considered and was addressed in the survey. Tourism is capable to increase in the standard of living of host residents and helps the host community and country earns foreign exchange. Furthermore, numerous studies may be focused on the employment opportunities, standard of living, the revenue that a community derives from tourism activities, and cost of living (Manap et.al., 2011). Economic gain from heritage tourism comes in many form. Community-based social entrepreneurship, inherent in the small units of societies (Smith & Barr, 2007), plays a very important role in impoverished populations and rural communities. Homestays as a form of social entrepreneurship and operated in rural communities can be stepping stones towards sustainable development by reducing poverty and enriching destination image (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013).

Economic gain can be measured in the numbers of local tourism projects. As a host, Kampung Morten would provide several paid services to accommodate the tourists during their visitation. Homestays pay equal attention to maximizing utilization of

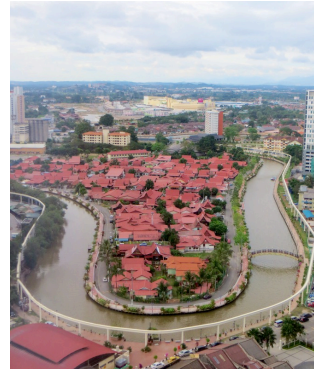


Figure 1. Aerial view showing Kampung Morten in Melaka

Source: Hunt, 2014

local resources and regeneration of tourism products, for examples, transportation services, food and beverages, and also small business incubation. Tourism provides job opportunities to the local community and will increase their standard of living.

The Melaka Structure Plan 2000-2010 outlined the State Government's policy to encourage the development of the heritage tourism industry and to strengthen heritage tourism products (Majlis Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah, 2010: p2-2). Another aim was to 'obtain local participation and acceptance of conservation projects with active participation of the community in projects' (Majlis Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah, 2010: p2-3).

Maintaining and preserving heritage tourism assets should a joint effort between local authority and the residents.

Sustainable regional economic development requires that tourist numbers to such places remain consistent and that tourist expenditure is sustained. Kampung Morten provides this opportunity. Nonetheless, to

sustain the source of income, resources for maintenance and for promotion must be found from the expenditure of the visitors. This adds to the sustainability of the total product, and reduces the regional dependence on government budgets, which are becoming increasingly tight (Ciegelski et al., 2001). Furthermore, Butler (1999) argues that there is no universally accepted definition of “sustainable tourism” except that the form of tourism can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basic Profile of Respondents

The respondents consist of 192 local people who had lived in the village for generations. Data analysis indicated that 7.8% are the

homestay operators. In term of household monthly income, 70% of the respondents earn less than RM2000 monthly. Majority of the homestay owners had operated the business for less than 5 years and none received any kind of fund for maintenance and providing for tourism activities.

Respondents’ perception on the economic impacts of heritage tourism activity

Seven (7) questions (Table 1) related to the economic impact of heritage tourism (HT) revealed: majority of respondents agreed that HT creates local jobs (58%), generates more stable monthly income of household/ tourism operators and increased the price of land and property values. The feedbacks was generally positive.

Table 1
The economic impact of tourism activities in Kampung Morten Melaka

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	n
1. Heritage tourism creates job opportunities to the villagers.	1	11	22	111	47	192
2. Heritage tourism helps to generate income by providing opportunities for a diverse economic.	0	12	20	115	45	192
3. Economic activities can helps to protect income levels by create the opportunities for pluriactivity.	0	5	31	104	52	192
4. Heritage tourism cause the price of land, property, goods and facilities increase.	0	4	25	89	74	192

Table 1 (continue)

5.	I am fully depending on the economic activities in Kampung. Morten for my source of income.	9	73	40	45	25	192
6.	Homestay programme can promote the area as tourism sites.	0	2	26	122	42	192
7.	Local community can earn an additional income from homestay programme.	0	6	29	95	61	192

Source: Author, 2016

Respondents’ Perception on the Socio-Cultural Impacts Of Heritage Tourism Activity

To study the perception of residents regarding the socio-cultural impact of HT activity, nine (9) questions were asked (Table 2). 46% of respondents agreed that cultural exchange between villagers and visitors can affect the everyday life of the local community. The activities inevitably create a platform for the villagers to promote local culture. The residents also agreed that visitors contribute to greater awareness and revitalization of local customs, crafts and cultural identities. 63% of the respondents agree HT helps to increase social contact between the villagers and the visitors and increase the unity between local communities and the

visitors (50%). Most respondents stated that they enjoy the presence of the visitors in the village. .

The respondents also agreed that by establishing homestay programme in this area; it can introduce the traditional lifestyles either to the tourists or to the young generation as well. 48% believes that younger generation should involve in this community based programme in order to sustain the activities. They need to be exposed on how homestay programme could benefit their local economy and how to move forward to make the programme successful.

Nevertheless, 35% of respondents stated that HT has created congestion and crowding, impinging on their privacy.

Table 2

The socio-cultural impact of tourism activities in Kampung Morten Melaka

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	n
1. The incoming of visitors give a greater awareness and the revitalization of local customs, crafts and cultural identities.	0	3	46	98	45	192

Table 2 (continue)

2.	Heritage tourism helps to increase social contact between the villagers and the visitors.	0	5	29	121	37	192
3.	Congestion and crowding happens which impinges on the day to day life and privacy of local residents.	1	38	52	68	33	192
4.	Heritage tourism creates a space for cultural exchange between the villagers and the visitors.	1	4	51	96	40	192
5.	Many facilities and attractions are built to ensure the ongoing incoming of the visitors.	0	7	31	90	64	192
6.	The exchange culture between the villagers and the visitors effect the everyday life of the local communities.	1	16	40	88	47	192
7.	The maintenance and support of local services will be increased.	0	5	40	92	55	192
8.	Heritage tourism helps to increase the unity between local communities and the visitors.	0	3	32	96	61	192
9.	Homestay programme can promote traditional lifestyles among the young generation in this area.	0	3	34	93	62	192

Source: Author, 2016

From the data collected it can be concluded that most of the respondents feel that heritage tourism is a good thing. They would be happy and pleased if Kampung Morten is promoted as an international tourism destination.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study has solicited crucial information from the host community

regarding the economic and cultural impacts of heritage tourism on residents. Heritage tourism as described by the respondents could potentially create local jobs in tourism and other tourism-related activities, and provide a satisfactory household income. From the socio-cultural point of view, heritage tourism offers huge potential for promoting local culture to tourists, enhancing cross-cultural learning and creating awareness

and education among visitors. However, heritage tourism development and its progress in Kampung Morten is without its challenges including (a) lack of training; (b) lack of assistance from relevant agencies (funding for training/human capital and infrastructure, development grants, etc); (c) monitoring of heritage tourism progress towards sustainability etc.

(a) Lack of training

The local authority needs to welcome more local community to participate in the homestay programme by increasing the number of homestays and pointing out the economic benefits of this business.

(b) Lack of assistance from relevant agencies (funding for training/human capital and infrastructure, development grants, etc)

Small financial loans from the government may be necessary to facilitate the development of additional homestays in the region (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013). and thereby increase participation in this sector.

(c) Monitoring of heritage tourism progress towards sustainability etc.

Like many programmes either initiated by the local authority or the community, progress monitoring is important to ensure its sustainability. Being a nation's Heritage Village, a good

conservation management plan (CMP) is crucial. Residents and the authorities should work together to ensure the implementation of the management plan. Economic regeneration scheme should be included in the CMP to support the local economy. Regeneration of local economy would serve as a catalyst for future improvement to Kampung Morten to enhance the quality of life of the residents.

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