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Archaeotourism and its Attractiveness in the Context of Heritage Tourism in Malaysia

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Abstract

This article discusses the growth of archaeotourism in Malaysia. Archaeotourism is part of heritage tourism which is one of the growing tourism sectors in Malaysia. In terms of its significance, this sector is increasingly rapidly and, in fact, has recently been contributing towards the national income. Unlike in Western countries and in Japan, Korea, or Turkey, archaeotourism in Malaysia is rather behind in this sector. As a matter of fact, Malaysia has a very rich in heritage, particularly archaeological sites, monuments, and historic buildings in addition to its unique nature. Therefore, in the 9th Malaysian Plan (RMKe-9) and the 10th Malaysian Plan (RMKe-10), the Malaysian government made various efforts to improve facilities, particularly infrastructure, in order to attract a bigger number of tourists to visit the heritage sites. Aspects such as the definition, the scope, and the concept of archaeotourism are discussed and explained in this conceptual paper. Using qualitative methods, field observations, and interviews with several relevant respondents, this study tried to get feedback on the prospects, issues, and constraints that are affecting the development of archaeotourism. The study found that, although there are many heritage sites in Malaysia that are still not optimally developed, it was discovered that the archaeotourism sector has a high growth potential. In particular, the government has focused on providing various facilities in the vicinity of the heritage sites to attract tourists. This is because the archaeological sector is seen to be able to provide job opportunities to the local community and simultaneously to improve standards of living.

Keywords: Archaeology, heritage site, National Heritage Act 2005, heritage tourism, archeotourism

Introduction

Tourism is one of the most rapidly growing industries in the world. This phenomenon also has an impact on the countries situated in Southeast Asia including Malaysia. Although Malaysia is relatively new to the field of tourism at the international level, the latest trend shows that it has a potential to develop like other countries in Southeast Asia. In fact, Malaysia has been ranked in the top 10 countries based on the number of tourists and in the top 15 countries based on the tourism revenue (*Economic Transformation Programme: A Roadmap for Malaysia*, Chapter 10).

In reality, tourism is progressing along with several other sectors that are also closely connected, such as transportation, accommodation, attractions, or unique locations and food services. In addition, a famous tourist site is usually very likely to stimulate economic growth and to benefit the surrounding community. The measure of success of the tourism sector will be reflected through an increase in income or a change in the community's standard of living.

Background

In Malaysia, all matters related to the Malaysian tourism programme are placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia. All matters related to the preservation and conservation of heritage sites are managed by the Department of National Heritage, which is also under the same ministry. The formulation of the National Heritage Act 2005 was an initiative to ensure that national heritage continues to be dignified and sustained. For instance, in order to determine that a certain site or object is categorised as a 'heritage' or 'national heritage' site, specific guidelines and criteria have been specified. In short, the formulation of the National Heritage Act 2005 was a stepping stone in the efforts of the authorities to promote heritage treasures in this country.

Before 2015, the National Heritage Department had gazetted a number of heritage sites which included archaeological sites, monuments, and historic buildings in the country. Out of all these, 8 archaeological sites were gazetted as "heritage" under the National Heritage Act 2005, namely Bukit Bunuh (Perak), Gua Tambun (Perak), Kota Tampan (Perak), Gua Teluk Kelawar (Perak), Pulau Kalumpang (Perak), Gua Harimau (Perak), Tapak Megalitik Pengkalan Kempas (N. Sembilan), and Kota Johor Lama (Johor) (Adnan, J., 2016). While a total of three sites have been designated as "national heritage" from 2011 to 2015, namely Sungai Batu archaeological site (Perak), Gua Gunung Runtuh Lenggong, and Bukit Jawa archaeological site, Lenggong (Perak).

Table 1. List of Heritage Sites (Archaeological) in Malaysia

Category	Heritage	National Heritage
Archaeological site	1. Bukit Bunuh (Perak) 2. Gua Tambun (Perak) 3. Kota Tampan (Perak) 4. Gua Teluk Kelawar (Perak) 5. Pulau Kalumpang (Perak) 6. Gua Harimau (Perak) 7. Megalitik Pengkalan Kempas (Negeri Sembilan) 8. Kota Johor Lama (Johor)	1. Tapak Arkeologi Sungai Batu (Kedah) 2. Gua Gunung Runtuh (Perak) 3. Tapak Arkeologi Bukit Jawa (Perak)

Meanwhile, about 52 monuments and historic buildings (including a number of colonial buildings, ruins of cities or forts, palaces, mosques, churches, temples, and prisons) have been gazetted under the National Heritage Act (Adnan, J., 2016). A total of 34 monuments and historic building sites have been gazetted under "heritage" category, while 18 historic building sites have been designated as "national heritage" from 2011 to 2015 (50 National Heritages, National Heritage Department). So far, one of the biggest successes of the country in relation to the preservation and conservation of heritage is the recognition of Malacca and George Town as world heritage sites at the 32nd meeting of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Quebec, Canada on July 7, 2008. The impact of this recognition will definitely boost the country's position as one of the potential destinations to be visited by tourists from around the world. This development will indirectly provide an opportunity for local residents to generate income through the various forms of economic opportunities provided.

Table 2. List of Heritage Sites (Monuments and Historical Buildings) in Malaysia

Category	Heritage	National Heritage
Monument	1. Menara Condong Teluk Intan (Perak) 2. Tugu Negara (Kuala Lumpur) 3. Bastion Middelburg, Kota Melaka (Melaka) 4. Kota Santiago (Melaka) 5. Runtuhan Gereja St. Paul (Melaka)	1. Stadium Merdeka (Kuala Lumpur) 2. Tapak Tiang Bendera Malaya (Kuala Lumpur)
Historical Building	1. MCKK (Perak) 2. Penjara Taiping (Perak) 3. Bangunan Pejabat Daerah dan Tanah Larut, Matang dan Selama (Perak) 4. Bangunan Bekas Jabatan Kerja Raya Selangor (Selangor) 5. Bangunan Canselori UM (Kuala Lumpur) 6. Bangunan Carcosa (Kuala Lumpur) 7. Bangunan Jabatan Penerangan (Kuala Lumpur) 8. Bangunan Mahkamah Tinggi (Kuala Lumpur) 9. Bangunan Pejabat Pengawal Pos Wilayah Persekutuan (Kuala Lumpur) 10. Bangunan Pejabat Ugama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan (Kuala Lumpur) 11. Bangunan Residensi (Kuala Lumpur) 12. Bangunan Sekolah Menengah St. John (Kuala Lumpur) 13. Bangunan Stesyen Keretapi (Kuala Lumpur) 14. Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Victoria (Kuala Lumpur) 15. Muzium Negara (Kuala Lumpur) 16. Bangunan Sultan Suleiman (Selangor) 17. Bangunan Stadhuys (Melaka)	1. Bangunan Suloh Budiman UPSI (Perak) 2. Muzium Perak (Perak) 3. Bangunan Dewan Bandaraya (Kuala Lumpur) 4. Bangunan Ibu Pejabat Keretapi (Kuala Lumpur) 5. Bangunan Parlimen (Kuala Lumpur) 6. Bangunan Pejabat Pos Besar (Kuala Lumpur) 7. Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad (Kuala Lumpur) 8. Dewan Perhimpunan Cina KL (Kuala Lumpur) 9. Institut Penyelidikan Getah Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur) 10. Institut Penyelidikan Perhutanan Malaysia (FRIM) (Selangor)
Palace	1. Istana Jahar (Kelantan) 2. Istana Kenangan (Perak) 3. Istana Sri Menanti (Negeri Sembilan)	1. Istana Negara (Kuala Lumpur)
Synagogue	1. Gereja All Saint (Perak) 2. Masjid Ubudiah (Perak) 3. Masjid Jamek (Kuala Lumpur) 4. Gereja St. Mary (Kuala Lumpur) 5. Kuil Sri Subramaniar Swamy (Selangor) 6. Masjid Diraja Sultan Suleiman (Selangor) 7. Masjid Alauddin (Selangor) 8. Kuil Sri Poyyatha Vinayagar Moorthy (Melaka) 9. Masjid Hiliran (Terengganu)	1. Gereja St. George (Pulau Pinang) 2. Masjid Negara dan Makam Pahlawan (Kuala Lumpur) 3. Gereja Christ (Melaka) 4. Masjid Kampong Hulu (Melaka) 5. Masjid Kampung Keling (Melaka)

So far, the development of the tourism industry continues to gain the attention of the Malaysian government. Every year the government allocates a large amount of its development budget in order to develop the tourism industry in Malaysia. This is because consistent visits

from tourists will contribute to the national income. For example, in 2006 alone, 17.55 million foreign tourists visited Malaysia and generated an income of more than RM36,271,000.00. In 2007 the number of foreign tourists increased to 20.97 million (Mohamad Zaki, et al., 2008). The increase in the number of tourist arrivals to Malaysia indirectly reflects the increase in the national income. Now, the tourism industry generates economic growth and is a major contributor to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2008, Malaysia recorded 22,052,488 tourist arrivals, an increase of 5.1% compared with 20,972,822 in 2007 (Er Ah Choy, 2013).

There is evidence that, since the 8th Malaysia Plan (2001–2005), efforts to preserve cultural and heritage sites have been given more attention. More than 60 monuments and 25 historic sites have been upgraded as tourist attractions. This policy was continued in the 9th Malaysia Plan (2006–2010) when heritage tourism was recognised as an important agenda item. In this context "the conservation of historic sites, buildings, and artefacts will continue to be the step to preserve the country's historical heritage and increase the number of tourist attractions" (Mohamad Zaki, et al., 2008).

Tourism and Heritage

The term tourism is quite wide and it can be viewed from various perspectives. According to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), tourism means 'adventure activities of an individual to a place outside his original environment and staying for not more than one year for the purpose of leisure, business and so on'. Meanwhile, according to Leiper (1981), tourism is 'an open system that has a wide relationship with the environment, a people element which is tourists, a surrounding element which is the generating area, transit and chosen destination, an economic element which is the tourism industry, and a dynamic element which consists of an individual who travels for leisure far from the place of residence for at least a day'. Whereas, according to Zeppelin and Hall (1981), tourism refers to the activities of visiting, vacationing, or travelling to some other place that is more than 50 miles from the place of residence for not more than one year for the purpose of recreation or leisure.

Heritage is also a term that is closely related to the concept of inheritance. UNESCO interprets heritage as a property that is movable and immovable that is significant to each individual. This includes monuments, art, history (whether of religious or archaeological sites), groups of historic buildings that have a history, and unique sculptures, works of art, manuscripts, books, objects of art, and scientific collections (UNESCO, 1954). Meanwhile, in the Charter for the Preservation of Quebec's Heritage Conference, heritage is defined as a combination of invention and natural products with humans that makes up the living environment (ICOMOS, 1982). According to the National Heritage Act 2005, heritage is something received as a legacy by a person or group of people from the previous generation (National Heritage Act, 2005). In short, heritage is the legacy of former times handed down from generation to generation. It includes customs, cultural, regional, archival material or elements that have aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific, social,

spiritual, linguistic, or technological values. In other words, heritage is described as the memory of the entire life of a nation and thus it represents its intellectual achievements and civilisation.

Meanwhile, in terms of definition, heritage tourism is based on the attractions of the historical landscape and the natural attractions of the tourism area. It is the activity of visiting the historical heritage sites of a country. Typically, it involves archaeological remains, historic buildings which are historically connected with the place, individuals who became the pride of the community, or natural attractions. For instance, some world renowned heritage sites, such as the Pyramids (Egypt), Machu Picchu (Peru), Petra (Jordan), and others have become tourism locations that welcome millions of visitors each year (Chris, 1999). The practice of conservation and preservation of heritage buildings in several European cities has successfully drawn large numbers of visitors each year. For instance, historic buildings are functionally converted into museums, art galleries, restaurants, or tourism centres. This phenomenon has become the norm in several European countries such as England, France, Italy, and the Netherlands. Historic cities such as York, Bath, Oxford, and Cambridge in England; Paris in France; Venice, Pisa, and Florence in Italy; and Amsterdam in the Netherlands have managed to preserve and protect most of their old buildings and monuments (A Ghafar, A. 1994). In short, history and heritage-based tourism has a high development potential as it will add value to the economy and it will involve the local community.

Archaeotourism

Archaeotourism is a combination of two words; archaeology and tourism (archaeo-tourism). It is closely related to tourism destinations in locations based on archaeological heritage sites, monuments, and historic buildings. In order for archaeotourism to work, there has to be conservation and preservation. Archaeological heritage sites, monuments, and historic buildings needs to be developed to make tourism destinations attractive. In reality, archaeotourism is an effort to attract tourists to visit archaeological sites. From the visit, not only do the tourists get information about the site but they also enjoy the satisfaction of their appreciation of the heritage of a country. Basically, the concept of archaeotourism focuses more on tourism development activities in the surrounding area of the national or local heritage sites.

In general, there are two goals that can be achieved through the archaeotourism concept, namely;
   a) Improving the infrastructure in the vicinity of heritage sites
   b) Cultivating the creativity of the local community to improve their economy.

Archaeotourism has a connection with heritage tourism. However, the scope of heritage tourism is actually even broader as it also includes other aspects such as socio-cultural elements and the belief system of a certain location. Therefore, the emphasis in this article is on the location of archaeological or historical site. In that regard, there are several views from scholars on the definition of heritage tourism.

Table 3. Terms and Definitions

No.	Researcher	Term and definition
1.	Razak (2006)	As a form of tourism to see all the heritage treasures that have been inherited from the previous generations such as history, culture, art, nature, artefacts and others.
2.	Poria *et al.* (2001)	Heritage tourism as part of tourism, based on the historical attractions found in that tourism area.
3.	Hall and Arthur (1998)	Heritage is formed by the elements of the past that a community wishes to maintain. However, not all heritage is considered as heritage tourism products, only certain heritage sites which are selected and considered valuable by society.
4.	Swarbrooke (1994)	Heritage itself is the key pillar of the products offered and heritage is the main motivating factor (booster) for visitors or tourists to visit.
5.	Dallen & Stephen (2003)	Heritage tourism is part of tourism, in which the main motivation for tourists to visit a heritage site is the character of the heritage site.

Based on the above table, it is clear that archaeotourism is an economic activity that is closely related to heritage tourism. The goal is not only for the purpose of creating understanding between culture and environment and ecosystem conservation, but it is an attempt to allow involvement of the local community in 'socio-economic activities with positive impacts'.

Archaeotourism in Malaysia

Despite having a number of archaeological and historical heritage sites, the development of the archaeotourism sector in Malaysia is relatively slow compared to European countries, the USA, Japan, Turkey, and Korea. The heritage assets in those countries have been developed comprehensively and the potential has been exploited optimally. Therefore, the tourism sector has been one of the increasingly important sources of national income.

In this matter, Malaysia is actually very fortunate to possess a lot heritage in the form of archaeological sites, monuments, and historic buildings that are interesting and have the potential to be developed. This is because our country's unique geographical and historical background has provided an interesting archaeotourism landscape and has the potential to be developed. Archaeological sites, monuments, and historic buildings in Malaysia are scattered everywhere whether in the Peninsular or in Sabah and Sarawak. This does not include several other heritage sites located on the coast of the Peninsular or Sabah and Sarawak.

However, in reality, not all archaeological sites and historic sites in the country can be developed. Apart from not meeting the criteria outlined, most of these heritage sites are inaccessible by road, especially due to topographic factors. The locations of the sites are also separated by the long distance between them and the cost of developing suitable infrastructure is very high. However, there are a number of archaeological sites and historic sites in Malaysia that have great potential and can be highlighted as tourist locations. Here are examples of heritage sites suitable for development as the locations to be prioritised by the government:

Table 4. Heritage Sites and Criteria

No.	Location	Criteria
1.	Bujang Valley, Kedah. (Evans, I. H.N. 1931), (Adi, 1998), (Nik Hassan, 1998), (Nik Hassan, 2009), (Jamaluddin, 2009), (Zuliskandar, et al., 2012), (Zuliskandar, et al., 2013), (Zuliskandar, et al., 2014)	• Archaeological sites with the discovery of temples, Buddhist-Hindu statues, ceramics, beads, stone tools, pillar bases, and so on • Consists of Sungai Mas, Pengkalan Bujang, and a number of other sites • The latest site discovered was the Sungai Batu complex
2.	Lenggong, Perak. (Zuraina, 2003), (*World heritage Malaysia,* 2013)	• Archaeological discoveries such as Perak Man skeleton, stone tools, metal tools, etc. • Natural phenomenon of attractive limestone caves
3.	Malacca. (*World heritage Malaysia,* 2013)	• Discovery of bastion city which is part of the forts built by the Portuguese • Remnants of buildings, forts, and cities built by the Dutch • The port and administrative centre of Malacca sultanate
4.	Niah Cave, Mulu Cave, Sarawak. (Harrison, 1959), (Harrison, 1967), (Nik Hassan, 1998), (Zuraina, 2003), (*World heritage Malaysia,* 2013)	• Archaeological discovery of early human skeleton, boat, stone tools, etc. • Natural phenomenon and interesting karst topography
5.	Bukit Tengkorak, Mansuli, Sabah. (Harrison & Harrison, 1971), (Zuraina, 2003), (*World heritage Malaysia,* 2013)	• Prehistoric archaeological site in Sabah

In addition to the sites listed in the table above, there are still many other heritage sites scattered across the country. The scattered locations of the heritage sites are due to the hilly geographical features and the natural landscape. This situation has made a communication system difficult and, at the same time, it makes it difficult to develop the sites.

Attraction of the Heritage Sites

Because of the growth in the tourism sector and the potential to increase national income, the government had to take several initiatives. This is because, in order to successfully generate national income, serious attention must be given by the government to this sector because of its ability to involve all levels and classes of people. Accordingly, in the 9th Malaysia Plan (RMK-9), a total of RM1.8 billion was allocated to the tourism sector to upgrade infrastructure, provide tourism facilities, and to develop more tourism products and innovative services (Fatimah, H. & Fauziah, C.L. 2007).

Indirectly, the sites that are selected or that are considered as meeting the criteria will be upgraded to make them more convenient and attractive for tourists to visit. For instance, the government will establish a communication system and infrastructural facilities which will allow tourists to visit the sites easily in a fast and user-friendly manner. Among these facilities are roads, parking facilities, public phones, Internet/Wi-Fi, information centres, exhibition galleries, public toilets, recreational facilities, food stalls, crafts, hotels, homestays, guesthouses, car rental, tour guides, information signboards, and so on. This is because the success of the archaeotourism sector in a country is determined by many factors that are closely related to each other. Therefore, the authorities should provide various infrastructural facilities in order to attract tourists. Among other things, this is closely linked to the following elements:

a) The uniqueness of the site

The term "uniqueness" is subjective, but the measure of uniqueness is often associated with an element of being impressed or pleased. Uniqueness is expressed in the sense of pleasure when faced by beauty, being mesmerised by extraordinary natural beauty, having the nostalgia of the past evoked, becoming associated with the cultural elements of ancestors, or the history of a location. It is more special if the heritage site is located near or within an area (complex) that allows tourists to visit easily and quickly. For instance, the uniqueness of the Lembah Bujang/Bujang Valley which comprises of the remains of temples, religious statues, and the discovery of the remains of archaeological artefacts were exhibited in the Bujang Valley Archaeological Museum. Some monumental remains of temples such as Candi Bukit Pendiat, Candi Bendang Dalam, Candi Bukit Pahat, and Candi Pengkalan Bujang were also found in the area surrounding Bujang Valley which added to the uniqueness of this site. The uniqueness of the Bujang Valley is also supported by the recent discovery of the Sungai Batu complex by the Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) research group. Tourists or researchers who want to

understand certain information particularly related to historical heritage sites will typically choose a site that still retains its original features.

b) Infrastructure

Transportation networks must be prepared and should be able to provide rapid and high quality services. In addition, access or infrastructure has to be supported by facilities for other needs. For example, facilities such as parking areas, public phones, taxis (or boat rental for a site that needs river transport), information centres, toilets, information signboards and so on. The existence of recreational facilities and playgrounds in the area close to the heritage sites is an advantage. If the heritage sites are located relatively far from one another, a complete infrastructure needs to be provided to facilitate tourists, such as good resting or waiting areas.

c) Safety

The failure of the authorities to provide a safe and conducive environment at a site will affect tourist arrivals. Snatch theft, extortion, fraud, and life-threatening criminal elements need to be curbed by the authorities so these crimes do not happen in the heritage sites. Apart from that, famous and frequently visited heritage sites are also bothered by the presence of hawkers, fund-raisers, and beggars, whether they are children or adults. Therefore, the authorities need to control these problems so that the comfort of the tourists is prioritised. An example of good heritage site management in Indonesia would be Candi Borobudur and Candi Prambanan. The environment of the heritage site complex is controlled to ensure that the tourists feel that their safety is assured.

d) Food and Beverages

Normally, famous tourist attractions provide the facilities for visitors to get food and drink. It is hard to control the price rate and any difficulty in getting food and drink is very bad for the tourism industry. At some famous heritage sites, these facilities are provided. However, in relatively isolated sites that are far from towns and cities, these facilities are usually provided by small business owners or hawkers. For some famous sites, there are tour packages that include the cost of food and drink. The package is typically geared more towards introducing the traditional local food as a tourist attraction. Besides being able to taste the traditional food, tourists also have the opportunity to learn how to cook, to find out about the ingredients used, the traditions and processes in the production of the traditional food of a particular ethnic group or community.

e) Accommodation

Availability of accommodation is a major factor in making locations popular with visitors. Accommodation can be either in the form of hotels, homestays, guesthouses, or rental rooms that are suitable. It is better if the location of the accommodation is

arranged or placed within a complex to make it easy for the tourists to spend the night if necessary. In addition, this also makes it easier for the authorities if they wish to provide a form of entertainment such as dancing and singing traditional songs, cultural performances such as wayang kulit, menora, dikir barat, and others. Tourists also have the opportunity to purchase craft items such as batik, rattan, or bamboo furniture, beads, accessories, and so on.

f) Access to information

Apart from the access to information obtained from books, newspapers, radio or TV, recent developments also found that the attractiveness of a location is also associated with the Wi-Fi or Internet facilities. Therefore, the authorities should provide access to information facilities in order to attract tourists.

Conclusion

Even though archaeotourism is relatively new in Malaysia, recent development has shown overwhelming changes. The archaeotourism sector in Malaysia will grow more easily if the government plays an active role by providing various facilities in the vicinity of the heritage sites. In addition, a holistic collaboration involving multiple agencies from the central government, state government, private sector, and individuals is crucial in achieving the objective of empowering archaeotourism in Malaysia.

It is undeniable that the uniqueness of the heritage sites is very important in attracting tourists. However, tourists' attraction to a heritage site destination is also influenced by a number of other aspects. Among these aspects are the existence of infrastructure, a safe and conducive atmosphere, convenient food and drink, accommodation, and access to information.

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