Exploring the Cultural Tourism of Malaysia: A Comprehensive Review

Zulayti Zakaria[1]*, Ang Kean Hua[2]

[1]Program Antropologi and Sosiologi, Fakulti Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia.
[2]Jabatan Geografi, Fakulti Sastera dan Sains Sosial, Universiti Malaya, Malaysia.

*Correspondence: zulaytizakaria@ums.edu.my

ABSTRACT: In line with the Malaysia Tourism Transformation Strategy in 2020, the government devoted enormous resources to nurture and cultivate the industry to achieve the Tourism of National Key Economic Area (NKEA). This initiative aims at re-invigorating tourism within Malaysia. The unparalleled essence of foreign tourists depends upon culture and the attributes the experience evokes. Generally, tourism choices are more influenced by the cultural part and values of undisguised cultural virtues, whether in the form of tangible or intangible distinctions. Cultural elements direct tourism guidebooks, postcards, pictures, television programs, commercials, posters, and itineraries, etc. Cultural tourism projects can be viewed as a medium to highlight group distinctions. They also serve as tools in teaching, growth, performing economic and tourism roles. The vision and attribute of heritage and culture will signify destinations in the future. The Malaysian Tourism Blueprint (2010-2020) considers cultural tourism as one of the key pivot areas of another NKEA. This article intends to delineate the existing literature pertinent to cultural tourism in Malaysia. The review of the literature attempts to provide an extensive record of the current conceptual insights within the area. Given the immense potential of the country as a culturally rich destination, there is still room for exploring experiences and insights to keep the zeal alive for cultural products of Malaysia. At the top of this, the policy frameworks are geared towards enhancing tourism. As a culturally rich country, Malaysia needs to attract tourist interests to explore and visit Malaysia's roots, its people, and the diverse community that makes Malaysia unique. The findings of this literature review are instrumental in setting the future studies agenda in order to address the existing dearth of the knowledge base.

KEYWORDS: NKEA; cultural tourism; Malaysian tourism blueprint; economic

1. Introduction

Tourism can stimulate cultural awareness, and it can serve in fostering values of particular cultures. Islanders in Britain, for instance, use tourism to generate activities and promote policies that create national identity, and through education and strong interpretational narratives, they utilize tourism to foster certain cultural values. Cultural tourism is not entirely a new area of knowledge. However, there is a certain amount of renewed interest in

defining cultural tourism. This is partly due to the recognition of the potential of cultural tourism not only in enhancing local and national economies but for more existential reasons - helping to retain or revive traditional lifestyles and craft industries and the conservation of local arts and crafts as valuable national heritage. As cultural tourism is the most unobtrusive form of tourism, using no more than attention and interest, the increase in culture-based holidays can be seen as market demand for spiritual awareness and satisfaction [1–3].

Travel motivations have evolved from social needs, economic motivations, the quest for knowledge and new experiences, to entertainment and prestige, and today, travel motivations shift from culture and heritage to spirituality and personal self-discovery. The increasing tourists' expectation for unique and authentic experiences has resulted in the growing need for increasingly refined and highly specialized products-the experiences provided by cultural and heritage environments, which are rich in aesthetic and artistic possibilities. Various tourism audiences, including visitors, stakeholders, and community residents, have been lured to the benefits of cultural tourism. The search for novelty and uniqueness nowadays is attained not only through intense social interaction, such as encounters, ceremonies, and rituals. In fact, tourists often quest for encounters in different contexts, through cultural experiences of enjoyment and/or passive observation of the activities and lifestyle of "the others" [4–6].

2. Definition and Significance

For many countries without any substantial built attractions, cultural tourism provides an alternative for generating tourist revenue. Furthermore, the presence of historical sites in these countries helps from a product differentiation perspective. People want to learn, be entertained and broaden their cultural horizons in other countries because they are curious and because they are constantly under the influence of mass media. The positive effects of cultural tourism are numerous and often very significant, at both the destination and national levels. Cultural tourism helps to preserve and promote cultural heritage and to forge bonds of understanding among nations; it indirectly creates a demand for the work and can help to maintain cultural authenticity and local identity. Additionally, it is considered to be less resistant to mass tourism and it can be applied in remote border areas, offering them a more diversified economic base, in addition to export and trade [7–8]. Cultural tourism refers to the kind of tourism where the visitor's activity primarily involves cultural activities, namely travel to other countries, engage in observing, learning, or participating actively in cultures or lifestyles of the people in these respective countries. When one discusses culture, one is looking at a broader aspect which includes people's way of life, religion or belief systems, customs, practices, rituals or ceremonies, festivals, visual art, music, dance, drama, and heritage, among others. The products of cultural tourism can be many and varied. Cultural tourism has been identified as the tourism phenomenon that incorporates heritage (tangible elements), folklore, creative art, exhibitions and conservation works, and can also include festivals as well as other expressions and activities related to the social systems and ways of life of the various segments of the population (intangible elements) [9–10].

3. Historical and Cultural Background of Malaysia

Malaysia as a nation is quite young, and as a country is only about 50 years old. Merdeka Square (Independence Square) in Kuala Lumpur was where Malaysia was declared free on

August 31, 1957. The then Prime Minister of Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman, declared it as Malaysia's "Independence Day" significance, making people aware of the fact that Malaysia is an achieved entity composed of 13 effectively self-sufficient states joined together. Furthermore, Malaysia also has two other federal territories with Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya. Linguistically, the heritage of colonial rule means that English is widely used, and many people understand and speak it. A recent study on college students in Malaysia observed that English is preferred as a medium of instruction, especially at the tertiary level with 61.3%, followed by Malay (18.6%), and Mandarin (4.8%).

As a multicultural and multi-religious country, Malaysia displays a rich cultural diversity that has been developing from four major archetypal roots, namely Orang Asli, Malay, Chinese, and Indian. Each major ethnic group has its own set of cultures and customs that shape the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-cultural, and multi-religious ethnic groups today. Geography has played a significant role in the history and culture of Malaysia. As a country located at the heart of Southeast Asia and straddling the trade routes, it has been historically linked to Indian, Chinese, Arab, and Malay empires. It was the strategic trade position of Malacca that took it to the center of a complex web of commercial and diplomatic relations. Thus, a melange of cultures and traditions is still evident today. The Portuguese occupation of Malacca in the 16th century has left an indelible influence on Malay customs and culture. The British further enriched the regional cultural fabric by bringing in the Tamils from Southern India to work in the plantations of Malaya, now part of Peninsular Malaysia [11–13].

3.1. Ethnic diversity and cultural heritage.

The country's rich culture and heritage are reflected not only through its diverse plural society, but also in the form of its vernacular architecture. The country is known for its tangible and intangible traditional heritage, including historical buildings, folktales, customs, beliefs, dances, fashion, music, and cultural events. The tangible heritage includes a representative collection of various types of historical buildings, such as private and public residential, religious buildings, commercial centers, and government buildings. The intangible heritage, in contrast, involves the traditional performing arts (dance, music and song, storytelling), ceremonies, customs, beliefs, handicrafts, and numerous cultural events such as traditional weddings, religious festivals, and staged performances. Cultural tourism complements traditional tourism that is more nature-oriented and allows the tourists a chance to be engaged in activities that culminate in richer and more satisfactory touristic experiences. Malaysia is known for its economic affluence, multi-ethnic culture, and numerous cultural and natural attractions. The country is undoubtedly known for its cultural diversity and natural beauty. The country is home to a harmonious blend of different ethnic groups such as the Malays, Chinese, Indians, Iban, Kadazan, and many others. This multi-ethnicity forms a unique plural society, distinctiveness, and cultural vivacity in the Malaysian nation. It is this ethnic diversity that is the nucleus behind the country's slogan "Unity in diversity", which represents a blend of cultural diversity, unity, harmony, and integration among its population [14–16].

3.2.   Key attractions in Malaysian cultural tourism.

A myriad of tourism products can be created from local ethnic arts, cultural presentations, traditional architectures, indigenous natural environments, and traditional crafts. Cultural performances, sculptures, traditional dances, silverware, woodcarvings, and batik are not only a part of a place's architectural aesthetics but also constitute an essential source for the cultural tourist. Mainly, products must be unique and distinctive to attract not only tourists but also researchers in the field of academic studies. Examples of tourism products are handicrafts, artwork, exhibitions, cultural performances, festivals, floating markets, open-air markets, etc. Small local products will be enticing for tourists and consumers not only as souvenirs but also to support the local economy [17–18].

This section provides the primary sources of Malaysian cultural tourism in terms of both tangible and intangible levels. This essential information is necessary to enable patterns of correlation between the tangible and intangible aspects to be established. The intact preservation of tangible cultural heritage is often related to the level of cultural traditions. Traditional images and activities are essential in identifying a place, mainly addressing the tourism industry. If one were not aware of the importance or the existence of a local traditional concept, any promotion and preservation of the local heritage would be neglected. Cultural performances will only be presented when a festival is held, whereas non-tangible aspects exist regardless of festival activity. Respect and preservation of the local culture are very crucial.

4. UNESCO World Heritage Sites

First of all, it is essential to emphasize the significance of this paper, which involves conducting an extensive review of the relevant literature on the interconnected issues of cultural heritage and cultural tourism. With this comprehensive analysis as a foundation, the study proceeds to develop a wide-ranging research framework focused on the subject under investigation. This framework aims to provide a series of thought-provoking questions that demand careful consideration. Within the realm of this study, several research issues emerge as crucial focal points. Of specific importance to the authors are inquiries into the management of Malaysia's World Heritage Sites within the cultural tourism system. Additionally, the parameters defining the cultural tourism experience in Malaysian World Heritage Sites are examined. Furthermore, the perceptions of various key stakeholders, including local community residents, tourism entrepreneurs, and tourists themselves, regarding Malaysian World Heritage Sites, are explored. By studying these perceptions, the authors aim to uncover the implications of these sites on the socio-cultural lives of the local hosts. The implications of the socio-cultural lives of these local hosts on the sustainability of the Malaysian World Heritage Sites also serve as a pivotal concern for the authors. They recognize that the theories employed in this study, as well as the chosen methodologies, underscore the significance of addressing these research issues. By employing qualitative research methods, this paper diligently presents its findings. Subsequently, it engages in an in-depth discussion centered on the exploration of cultural tourism in Malaysia and the broader implications this has on how the socio-demographic backgrounds and issues of culture formation among hosts may shape the character of the experience. Furthermore, this study acknowledges the unique composition of Malaysian society as a multi-ethnic entity and

the implications this has on World Heritage Sites. By taking into account the diverse cultural fabric within the country, the authors are able to paint a more comprehensive picture of the intricacies surrounding the practice of sustainability in these sites. Ultimately, this paper offers valuable insights and analysis that contribute to a better understanding of the cultural tourism landscape in Malaysia and its implications for both the local hosts and the preservation of World Heritage Sites.

In fulfilling the criteria, the property value of the cultural heritage represents a masterpiece of the human creative genius and it exhibits a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or a civilization, or is an outstanding example of a type of building. Malaysia has three cultural properties listed in the World Heritage List of properties to be protected and conserved as being of outstanding universal value and these include Melaka and George Town, Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca (2008), Archaeological Heritage of the Lenggong Valley (2012), Royal Belum State Park (2003) and Kinabalu National Park (2000). Therefore, recognizing the richness of Malaysian unique cultural tourism resources, the study of the world heritage sites in Malaysia with a comprehensive investigation that integrates various perspectives of cultural heritage under one signature research portal is perceived as timely and worthy of an academic pursuit.

5. Cultural Festivals and Events

Entertainment programs will also be organized and should be the focus for cultural tourists to learn about the highly prestigious traditional crafts and arts borrowed from the national treasures. As the government realizes the dying tradition and culture, these concepts have been utilized as an element in developing ecotourism, resulting in a great impact for both the environmental and cultural heritage of indigenous people, and at the same time benefit financially while no exclusion of total participation in the tourism development in Malaysia. Most festivals in Malaysia are either religious or cultural in origin and are swathed with traditions and customs that extend down to the level of food served. Since the vast majority of Malaysians do not observe fasting, but are more than happy and willing to share the joy in sophisticated gastronomy. Yearly colorful events accompanied by food-faring and merchandise vendors significantly contribute not only to the economies of local businesses but also provide a platform for exposure to local culture in an interactive manner. The month of Ramadan, celebrated by Muslims in high spirits, is also one of the more festive seasons of the year. Visitors to Malaysia must not only take the opportunity to feast on the incredible number of food choices here, but also join in the many wonderful celebrations such as Hari Raya, Chinese New Year, Deepavali, Christmas, Wesak, and Gawai, among others. Cultural festivals and events have put Malaysia on the world map, and most of these festivals and events are attended by local and foreign tourists. The diversification of cultural festivals and events in Malaysia also promotes the country as the most exotic stage when it comes to boosting tourist arrivals, attributed to national unity among different races. Malaysia is the melting pot of Asia, being so race and culture rich that this fact alone has attracted millions to it every year.

5.1. Hari Raya.

For religious ceremonies during Hari Raya, firstly, there will be morning prayer sessions in specially allocated locations. It is usually held in a nearby mosque so that the residents can

easily embrace prayers in congregation. The drive and fervor that draw the community together can be sensed from a distance when Muslims practicing the faith proceed to the mosque. They are keen and keen to complete the fasting period and to be present at the morning prayers. After achieving the righteousness of the annual month of fasting, the sense of achievement is apparent in both men and women, old and young, as they grasp their heritage fast to be in congregation and to start the festival in an atmosphere of calmness and spiritual joy. Hari Raya (Eid Mubarak or Eid al-Fitr) is a religious festival celebrating the end of the month of Ramadan for Muslims worldwide. It is celebrated with much joy and enthusiasm in Malaysia. It is a public holiday in Malaysia, which involves prayers in the morning and the following custom of 'open house' where Muslims invite friends, relatives, and neighbors, irrespective of race and religion, to visit. Food is served as well as drinks. Hari Raya is said to be the most popular festival and the most significant celebration in Malaysia. There are many factors contributing to the popularity of the event such as the unique and various traditions of the festival, the spirit that is harmonious, the themes of merry-making, the faith people have, and the incredibly sumptuous food. Three principal aspects of the festival that are celebrated are the religious ceremonies, the cultural events (which demonstrate the excitement and fun of the festival), and the quintessential Malaysian food which is prepared.

5.2. *Chinese New Year.*

Seri Tanjung Pinang (STP) Malaysia is the place that has successfully maintained its traditional and cultural heritage related to the Chinese community in Malaysia. The pioneer development in STP has managed to keep its cultural and traditional elements alive, with the establishment of a few Chinese clan houses (Bangsa Satu) within the development scheme area. The unique heritage of the architecture, along with carved wooden and porcelain wares that could be dated back to hundreds of years ago, are still maintained and preserved. The preservation of these heritage elements has indeed created a unique selling point to attract visitors to STP. These activities will enable local residents, especially younger generations, to understand and appreciate the cultural heritage and historic significance of the Chinese New Year Festival while ensuring that the culture is enriched further. Thus, the carrying out of these activities is in line with the elements of interpreted culture that make cultural tourism a unique tourism product in STP. In Malaysia, Chinese immigrants can be traced during the Malacca Sultanate era (1400-1511), which was also the era where intermarriages between the Malaysian natives (Malays) and the Chinese community became common. The multi-ethnic matrimonial society eventually resulted in the formation of a new community known as the "Baba and Nyonya" (Straits Chinese). However, to date, this term portrays more clearly as the Peranakan, which means locally born descendant in Malay. Their descendants usually have a mixed parentage culture of their heritage, which consists of both Malay and Chinese cultural traditions. Chinese New Year is the most important festival for the Chinese community, signifying the beginning of a new year. It is also known as the "Lunar New Year." This festival is celebrated not only in China but also in other East Asian countries and also in Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia. This festival is distinctive as it embodies rich tradition and culture among its descendants.

6. Cultural Tourism Infrastructure

The prime function of the cultural museum is to unite both historical and cultural entities of an ethnic nation. Cultural art parks are one of the new tourism attractions for people. It gives the visitors a meaningful experience about the place, the people, and the setting. Clear settings as tourists can understand and appreciate. It makes the real value of the art and culture clear. Furthermore, arts are a means to foster thoughts and create joy with small children and adults in a relaxed atmosphere and help increase the seek in the completeness of the vacation. Art can connect history and area and become an individual attraction element that increases the need for the wish to visit. Parks, theaters, feature art museums have their own pleasure. A cultural monument, as a principal reform of a cultural art garden or park, can be identified by its ability to attract people. Parks of culture give guests the possibility of travel and enjoyment. Malaysia has created cultural tourism infrastructure for the encouragement of cultural tourism activities such as cultural centers and museums, cultural villages, and cultural theme parks, among others, in order to facilitate tourists who come to Malaysia. The cultural center and museum have a main role in society, showcasing local arts, culture, heritage, tradition, and customs. These institutions play an important role in spreading information and education of arts and culture. The museum has played a significant role in introducing visitors to local and international tourist destinations. Besides cultural attractions, these institutions have a vital role to educate the community and promote intercultural communication, helping to understand each other's perceptions and life experiences through objects and artifacts.

6.1.   Museums and heritage sites.

The museums in Malaysia vary in themes such as culture, heritage, nature, architecture, history, transportation, creativity, science and technology, industry, agriculture, anthropology, military, communications paraphernalia, health, arts, ideas, and preaching. Regular educational activities such as cultural talks, workshops, seminars, forums, performances, art classes, temporary exhibitions, historicise English guide services, overnights at museums, museum sleepovers, exploring cities by night, cultural food bazaars, movie screenings, and storytelling at museums are available almost every week, month, and year-end holidays. Anime, time travelling, and custodial work experience are some of the niche activities that are tailored to the target audience. Institutional visit activities include organizing convocation photography sessions, improving language soft skills, fire drills, recce of architectural firms, and holding court cases. Museum collaborations with private stakeholders like shopping malls, education companies, retail stores, and radio stations have also brought exceptional enchantment to the community. Countless special projects with local and international corporate firms, embassies, schools, universities, and colleges have been successful for event launches, TV advertisements, publicity and set design, awareness campaigns, contests, and interns/lecturer/student working experiences. The independence celebrations of Malaysia, exhibitions, and public performances that follow national and social festivals are given priority in all these museums. Prep talks or pre-visit sessions between the institutions and the guides or teachers are tailored in a personalized approach.

Malaysia has more than 350 museums, over 270 registered lifetime private galleries, and hundreds of temporary art exhibit venues and smaller-scale institutions throughout the

country, with efforts from both government and private sectors. Among these museums, more than 80 are operated by the Department of Museums of Malaysia showcasing cultural heritage, arts, ethnography, archaeology, history, and more. An enriching cultural tourism experience can be provided from these museums and along with their heritage building settings that are well-preserved. Different ethnic groups or general community culture and lifestyles are also portrayed through the architecture and collection of exhibits.

6.2.   Sustainable cultural tourism practices.

What we see today says a lot about the beliefs, experiences, values, and behaviors of our ancestors. Preserving and interpreting our cultural heritage also provides a powerful way to sustain and enhance our contemporary lives. By its actions, a society may also build the ability to enable future generations to appreciate the past and devise a variety of cultural tourism programs, specialty museums, crafts festivals, and folk-life programs. Traditional heritage neighborhoods are important sources of culture and experience. Modeling is used to address the issue of 'curiosity', i.e. given visiting this type of activity in this location, and many visited other urban activities, why was this locale visited. The focus of the current study is to determine characteristics that differentiate and attract overseas tourists. A tourist policy and a governance system that can handle the challenges of locally sensitive marketing are needed if such high-value tourism is to be conducted. Little is known about the way in which potential visitors view cultural products that are purely the outcome of traditional crafts, dance, song, etc. Once the primary data development phase is completed, researchers can estimate behavioural models for cultural tourist response and estimate visitation. After completion, a better understanding can be gained of the full economic role of cultural tourism and develop better tools to measure both market and non-market impacts.

6.3.   Community involvement and empowerment.

In Bali, Indonesia, for example, specialists call these traditional stage performances the "tourism dance" as they cater to tourists from all over the world. The dance, music, and performances are adjusted to accommodate tourist demands - by shortening the time of the event, adding extra instrumentalists or more rows of dancers. Through various shows, it appears that Balinese become more dedicated to Hinduism and the arts. In Africa, popular dances and rituals are also offered to tourists coming from different parts of the world. Today, there is a high demand for African dance due to the cultural tourism sector that encourages artistic events. Thus, cultural performances can be advantageous to the actors, artists, and dancers involved and become a stable source of income for the community or even the country. The comprehensive brand of culture and heritage that exists in Malaysia provides a rich source of tourist sights for the income and economic prosperity of the people. Thus, people are willing to get involved in cultural performances because of the rewards and returns available from such activities. In many cultures around the world, the involvement of people in rituals, performances, and the commercialization of dance, music, theatre, and other oral traditions have become prerequisite elements of tourism.

7. Challenges and Opportunities in Malaysian Cultural Tourism

The social and negative impacts are mainly seen in local people not adapting to welcoming or serving tourists, the decline in respect for culture, the local community does not have the opportunity to improve their future educational level, the failure of locals to benefit, and the increasing negative impacts of development. In terms of investment, the short-term nature of investment and the lack of commitment by potential investors are evident. Management's inability to relate the importance of heritage tourism products to development and growth leads to a lack of utilitarian value placed on knowledge or skills related to ethnic products. The creation of cultural attractions is often based on commercial principles, resulting in dilutive heritage artifacts. On the other hand, there is a lack of infrastructure facilities in deteriorating native land. Ethnic communities believe the government is sidelining them and is not concerned about them. Agro-tourism programs are not suitable for native preferences. Some of the challenges of the human and social dimensions include the following: - The local people do not adapt to luring or serving tourists. - The attitude of the community is not positive in heritage management and business. - The community is unaware that heritage can be a prospective wealth creation tool. - The public has insufficient awareness of the importance of safeguarding their ethnicity, traditions, and cultures to ensure that interesting socio-cultural products are available. - The younger generation, adapted to a new culture, feels inferior and embarrassed when interacting with other communities. - The indigenous people affected by the development of destination areas are unhappy and feel that they are being exploited by outsiders. Some of the major problems in the development of Malaysian cultural tourism are the lack of human adaptability for cultural tourism, inappropriate investment in cultural tourism, social impacts, and some other negative impacts of cultural tourism.

8. Over-tourism and Conservation Efforts

Malaysia's cultural tourism resources are continually being developed and suffer from overcrowding. Historical cultural sites that serve as icons for cultural tourism in Malaysia are Jamek Mosque, St Mary's Cathedral, Christ Church, Menara Kuala Lumpur, and Sultan Abdul Samad Building and are continually well maintained and renovated. Such overdevelopment has led to the excessive congestion of public and heritage areas. For more than a decade, Malaysian cities have been promoting their heritage quarters that appear to be sincerely engaged in heritage conservation yet entwined with rapid tourism development. Every 10th City could improve the condition of its surrounding environment. The government has implemented public-private partnerships, the leasing of heritage buildings, and the public investment model to rejuvenate these inner-city areas. "Over-tourism" is often cited as one of the reasons for the degradation of cultural resources due to the demands of mass tourism, reducing the authenticity and cultural value of the sites. This over-commercialization of the destination is driven by construction and development by the authorities in anticipation of an influx of cultural tourism sustainably without jeopardizing the quality of the destination. Host-guest confrontation, local resistance, loss of local benefits, social erosion, stress on infrastructure, environmental problems, and landscape degradation have been linked to over-tourism at both destinations and public venues. The question is not about which and what, but how cultural tourism has caused negative effects measured by the

parameters of tourist satisfaction and destination tourism competitiveness. To alleviate these negative effects, it is better to identify the root causes of visitor dissatisfaction and address them through appropriate cultural resource management. Such identification can guide various tourism strategies supporting destination survival.

9. Future Trends and Innovations in Cultural Tourism

The increasing willingness of tourists to cross the world disparities, advantages, prices, and different treatments is an enticing invitation both for the host and tourist communities. In the age of the electronic era, it is a challenge to take towards the commodification of the culture-tourism experience without lingering either on the intentions people take to bring to an experience when it offers a mnemonic conduct or the effort many tourists make when going through the commercial brands of culture. Although society in tourism destinations is providing increasingly fewer mnemonic endowments and fewer opportunities for mindful learning and willing reflection, these rites of passage and cornerstone events are already there signals that throughout these ages the atavistic reflexive and heredeath circuits of the human brain, rooted in all phylogenetic and experiential developments, have survived and are recognized to occupy an inevitable role in attracting and generating the main current interests represented by the archaeological, historical, cultural, pilgrimage art, ritualistic, psychological, and educational-based forms of cultural tourism [19].

As the world becomes more and more industrialized, cultural tourism may well become more prominent as a tourist motivation based on a pursuit of spiritual achievement and a satisfying retirement, providing economic, social, and environmental benefits to the society in tourist destinations. However, the issues, such as the lack of a universally agreed definition of the essence and scope of cultural tourism activities, the debated status of the role of cultural tourism in tourist society both in developed and developing countries, and the identification of the possible pollutants and socioeconomic, sociocultural, and psychological impact of cultural tourism on both the tourist society and the host community, must be adequately addressed before this slow tourism is allowed to develop without controlling restraints. If the community in tourist destinations, including those with rich cultural heritages, are to benefit from its potential, this paper argues that future tourism should interleave and sustain those elements such as time, place, authenticity, and self-finding reflective learning or the self-imposed form of space-time pilgrimage increasingly missing in mass tourism [19].

10. Digital Technologies and Virtual Tourism Experiences

Virtual tourism experiences are experiences that are attained by having tourists experience physical tourism sites without them being physically present at the site. A virtual experience could range from augmented reality (AR) to holograms, and even apps that use smartphone renders of the physical sites. Researchers have been trying for many years to assess the effect of the use of new technologies in the field of cultural and tourist assets for the creation of virtual experiences. They are now creating, testing, and implementing services in order to increase the global appreciation of the visitors. The use of intents, highly suitable for everyone, allows the fruition of different paths and storytelling: a part of digital and multimedia uses such as augmented reading, providing multimedia hyper-text and other information, while 3D virtual recreations use virtual 3D models. Others prefer the realization of new contents using Augmented Reality or virtual reconstructions such as hologram or 3D

print and time travel experiences. The aim of this research is to understand if the tourists appreciate the use of digital technologies during the fruition of the cultural heritage and what are the reasons [20].

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

Cultural tourism is one of the focuses of Malaysian tourism, with the objectives to introduce and develop traditional customs to tourists, both domestic and foreign. It aims to deliver Malaysian cultural diversity that has become one of the national tourism themes. Presenting various aspects of culture such as dance, music, dramatic arts, theatre, visual arts, and craft are included as part of cultural tourism. Malaysia is actually rich in interesting cultural resources, but the information available is not yet widespread. Our country's diverse culture has the attraction for us to develop cultural resources in the Malaysian tourism industry. The tourism potential of cultural resources can contribute to the increasing number of local and foreign tourists. This is because people are generally interested in the origins of the lifestyle and traditions of others. The more unique and exotic the culture presented, the easier it is for the people. Cultural tourism is the main pillar of the tourism industry in Malaysia. The Ministry of Arts and Tourism (1981) stated that cultural tourism activities could provide great hope for the country's economic future. Over the years, the Malaysian government has strived to develop and promote cultural tourism both locally and internationally. Cultural tourism has a positive economic impact on local communities and involves local participation in efforts to promote it. Because of the uniqueness and interest of each culture, cultural tourism has been able to attract tourists of various races to travel to Malaysia and participate in the various cultures offered. Malaysia's continued support for this product of existence has made Malaysia a popular cultural tourism destination.

Competing Interest

All the authors declared no conflict of interest.

References

[1] Adnan, A.H.M.; Shah, D.S.M.; Haniff, M.; Tahir, M.; Salim, M.S.A.M.; Muhyiddin, A. (2021). The lived experiences and non-formal education of Malaysian 'Orang Asli' (Native People) youngsters. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *11*(9), 682–695. http://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v11-i9/11050.

[2] Ali, K.K. (2022). A discourse on the Malay cultural identity within the Malaysian society. *Kajian Malaysia: Journal of Malaysian Studies, 40,* 83–107. http://doi.org/10.21315/km2022.40.1.5.

[3] Ariffin, W.J.W.; Shahfiq, S.; Ahmad, F.; Ibrahim, A.; Ghazalli, F.S. (2023). Handicraft innovations: A strategic approach to preserving intangible cultural heritage of Malaysia. *ISVS e-Journal*, *10*(7), 137–146.

[4] Baharuddin, S.A. (2020). Cultural diversity in Malaysia and the reconciliation for integration. *Jebat: Malaysian Journal of History, Politics & Strategy*, *47*(3), 308–331.

[5] Boon, K.M. (2022). 'The only thing is you have to know them first': Protest policing and Malaysia's BERSIH protests (2011–2016). *Small Wars & Insurgencies, 33,* 868–901. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2021.2025287.

[6] Cai, Z.; Fang, C.; Zhang, Q.; Chen, F. (2021). Joint development of cultural heritage protection and tourism: The case of Mount Lushan cultural landscape heritage site. *Heritage Science, 9,* 86. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40494-021-00558-5.

[7] Ezenagu, N. (2020). Heritage resources as a driver for cultural tourism in Nigeria. *Cogent Arts & Humanities, 7,* 1734331. http://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2020.1734331.

[8] Cheng, Z.; Chen, X. (2022). The effect of tourism experience on tourists' environmentally responsible behavior at cultural heritage sites: The mediating role of cultural attachment. *Sustainability*. *14*, 565. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14010565.

[9] Juanis, B.; Saleh, Y.; Ghazali, M.K.A.; Mahat, H.; Hashim, M.; Nayan, N.; Kurnia, R. (2022). Knowledge, attitudes and practices of youths towards the intangible cultural heritage elements of Dusun ethnic in Malaysian environment. In *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science, 975*, 012008. https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/975/1/012008.

[10] Kalvet, T., Olesk, M., Tiits, M., Raun, J. (2020). Innovative tools for tourism and cultural tourism impact assessment. *Sustainability*, *12*, 7470. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187470.

[11] Kamaruddin, N.; Rogers, R.A. (2020). Malaysia's democratic and political transformation. *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, *47*, 126–148. http://doi.org/10.1080/00927678.2020.1715046.

[12] Viken, A.; Höckert, E.; Grimwood, B.S. (2021). Cultural sensitivity: Engaging difference in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *89*, 103223. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2021.103223.

[13] Mehtiyeva, A.; Prince, S. (2020). Journeys of research, emotions and belonging: An exploratory analysis of the motivations and experience of ancestral tourists. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, *20*, 85–103. https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2020.1728376.

[14] Razali, A.F.; Barkauskaitė, H.M.; Naivkas, V. (2021). Malaysian product design identity: Review on the 'keywords'. *European Journal of Economics and Business Studies, 8*, 156. http://doi.org/10.26417/ejes.v8i1.p156-175.

[15] Rina, N. (2021). Tradition, cultural contact and English for tourism: The case of Mentawai, Indonesia. *Heliyon*, *7*, e07322. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07322.

[16] Lai, S.; Zhang, S.; Zhang, L.; Tseng, H.W.; Shiau, Y.C. (2021). Study on the influence of cultural contact and tourism memory on the intention to revisit: A case study of cultural and creative districts. *Sustainability*, *13*, 2416. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13042416.

[17] Tomasi, S.; Paviotti, G.; Cavicchi, A. (2020). Educational tourism and local development: The role of universities. *Sustainability*, *12*, 6766. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12176766.

[18] Wang, S.; Blasco, D.; Hamzah, A.; Verschuuren, B. (2023). Tourists and 'philosophers': Nature as a medium to consciousness and transcendence in spiritual tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *99*, 103543. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2023.103543.

[19] Richards, G. (2018). Cultural tourism: A review of recent research and trends. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *36*, 12–21. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2018.03.005.

[20] Baran, Z.; Baran, H. (2022). The future of digital tourism alternatives in virtual reality. In Handbook of Research on Digital Communications, Internet of Things, and the Future of Cultural Tourism; Baran, Z., Baran, H., Eds; IGI Global: Pennsylvania, United States, pp. 58-84.