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THE EFFECT OF PLACEMAKING ATTRIBUTES ON TOURISM EXPERIENCES: A CASE STUDY OF PETALING STREET IN MALAYSIA

Tan Hwee Xiang¹, Diana Mohamad²

¹ *PARKROYAL COLLECTION & Pan Pacific Serviced Suites Kuala Lumpur*

² *School of Housing, Building and Planning,
UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA*

Abstract

Cultural heritage tourism, a form of tourism in Malaysia that is vital for identity and place attachment, has a positive influence on the country's economy and society and helps individuals build a strong sense of place. Petaling Street is a well-known traditional street in Malaysia. However, in light of the tremendous increase in tourism and urbanisation, it now faces the threat of losing its Chinese cultural heritage due to commercialisation and touristification, which also affects the tourism experiences (TEs) of its tourists. Although placemaking is a relatively new concept in Malaysia, it is becoming an increasingly important component of the community as it is able to create a bond between a place and people. As such, the government is pushing for the concept to be included in urban regeneration. The findings indicated that placemaking attributes (PAs) may actually influence TEs at cultural heritage sites. This present study also identified three new factors. As the results indicate that PAs closely relate to TEs, it can be concluded that Petaling Street's TEs would be enhanced if it were to provide the appropriate services and facilities; which are considered PAs.

Keywords: Placemaking, Petaling Street, Cultural Heritage Tourism, Tourism Experience

² Lecturer at Universiti Sains Malaysia Email: diana_mohamad@usm.my

INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage tourism plays an important role in the formation of identity and place attachment. It not only has a significantly positive impact on the economy and society but helps people develop a strong sense of place. It can also assist in the effective management of the preservation of Petaling Street. This can be accomplished by using culture as a major resource to promote understanding between people and support its culture (Ismail et al., 2014). According to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the collective memory and unique heritage of a locality or community are irreplaceable and sets the foundation for all current or future developments. Meanwhile, the identity of a location distinguishes it from others, thereby, making it distinct and symbolic. Differentiation is essential as it represents the identity of a location (Shamsuddin & Ujang, 2018). Tourist attractions draw a large number of visitors due to the pull of the culture itself. Therefore, cultural heritage tourism is an important global industry that significantly impacts the economy of a country and also contributes to its identity.

Petaling Street is one of the oldest streets in the city of Kuala Lumpur. These streets, which were traditionally retail-oriented, have retained their physical and social identity by maintaining their street activities and human interactions. These factors play a crucial role in shaping the city's character and economic vitality, particularly in the tourism industry. However, Petaling Street's reputation as Kuala Lumpur's Chinatown is presently at risk of losing its ties to the Chinese culture. Some the factors contributing to this scenario include the recent proclivity of migrant traders working and setting up enterprises along the street, the local Chinese community moving out to be replaced by modern businesses as well as a lack of concern for the historical preservation of the street (Ahmad et al., 2015). Therefore, the preservation of Petaling Street's Chinatown reputation must be prioritised as a matter of historic concern as it is an important component of good placemaking and yields many benefits.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Street Markets

According to Gemzoe (1999), street markets originated in metropolitan towns that had economic links to rural communities, particularly in terms of agriculture. By blocking off a street for pedestrian use, street markets make it possible for people to exchange products and connect with each other. It also transforms a thoroughfare, that often receives vehicular traffic, into an area for human activities (Balsas, 2019). Multiple studies as well as point-prevalence surveys (PPSs) have fundamentally examined the factors affecting the quality of pedestrian streets, particularly in terms of tourist marketing, and public spaces throughout the world (Pimamorn & Nutthachai, 2021). According to Azmi et al. (2020), a journey is incomplete if shopping is not involved as it is a significant

motivating factor for tourists to reach their destinations. Therefore, walking a street market may play a crucial role in the development of the tourism sector (Swanson & Horridge, 2006). Zhao et al. (2020), however, state that the term “identification” has a narrower connotation than “feeling” or a “sense of place.” Lynch (1964) defined “identification” as the degree to which a person can distinguish a place as distinct from others; such as being special in their own style. If this is true, individuals may recall a place based on its unique characteristics and that place has a distinct “a sense of place” (Pimamorn & Nutthachai, 2021).

Cultural Heritage Tourism

Cultural heritage tourism intersects culture, tourism, and experiences in the tourism consumption process (Zhang et al., 2020). Academic studies on cultural heritage tourism are not new and provide insights into idea definitions, cultural or heritage contexts, marketing segmentation, as well as visitor perceptions and experiences. These types of travels also enable visitors to become acquainted with and immersed in indigenous practices, ways of life, heritage, and cultures. In terms of demand, cultural heritage tourism reflects the desire of many modern tourists to personally experience and consume various past and present cultural landscapes, performances, cuisines, handicrafts, and participate in activities. Apart from the economic benefits, cultural heritage tourism may also help revitalise local cultures and traditions, instil a sense of pride in its people, and create more engaging experiences for tourists. Therefore, by recognising the characteristics that contribute to the “sense of place” of a destination, it may help the destination identify, maintain, and develop assets that contribute to its character (Rajala et al., 2020).

Place Identity, Place Attachment, & Placemaking

Place identity is inextricably tied to the meanings and perceptions that people have of their surroundings. A loss of identity hinders the formation of a profound meaning, attachment, and diversity of experiences at a destination. It also alludes to a lack of connection between the physical landscape and the meaning of the place, which is embedded in its broader physical, cultural, and emotional context (Timothy & Boyd, 2006). The meaning of a place relates to its social development, particularly psychological development, which affects the perceptions that people have of it. The identity of a place relates to the culture and way of life of the locals while the cultural characteristics of a place is the first component to affect the development of a place's image identity, which is critical for tourism (Anuar et al., 2021). New developments in traditional city centres, undoubtedly, modify a space as well as the meanings and attachments associated with its society and culture. As such, it is imperative to maintain the elements and identity of a cultural heritage as they contribute to self-identification, a sense of community, and a “sense of place.”

The identify of a place affects the attachments that are formed to it, which can be used to create a “sense of place” (Maricchiolo et al., 2021). Therefore, place identity is defined by the relevance of the place attachment. Both these factors contribute to the development of the emotive attachment that tourists form to a place during their visit. It also affects their emotion, knowledge, beliefs, behaviours, and actions. In other words, place attachment may affect the ability of a place image to be influenced by experiences and culture. Apart from influencing the identity of people; be they tourists or the local community; the environment of a place creates and reinforces the correlation between sociocultural values and way of life (Anuar et al., 2021).

The concept of placemaking was introduced in the 1960s by urban planners Jane Jacobs and William Whyte. Academic interest in placemaking increased in the 1990s across a variety of disciplines, including architecture, urban planning, landscaping, geography, social sciences, and tourism (Zhao, 2019). Placemaking demonstrates that the development of a place transcends its tangible elements and involves its sociability, uses, activities, access, connections, comfort, and image to form bonds between people and a “sense of place.” Placemaking and cultural ecosystems were developed to address urban issues by creating better environments for people to live, work, visit, explore, and enjoy in place-specific ways (Cheer et al., 2022). Although the terms “space” and “place” are frequently used interchangeably, they indicate very different things, depending on the context. The act of placemaking gradually enhances an area over a lengthy period of time by implementing numerous minor initiatives and activities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research was conducted by using survey questionnaire as the data collection instrument. The dependent variable (DV) was tourism experiences (TEs) while the independent variable (IVs) was placemaking attributes (PAs). A number of extraneous variables; such as socio-demographic characteristics; were also examined. The items of the survey questionnaire were constructed based extant studies on the correlation between placemaking and TEs. A pilot study was conducted in the first week of April 2022 before the actual data that was used in this present study was collected in the middle of April 2022. In 2021, the total number of domestic tourists in Kuala Lumpur was 9.1 million people (Census and Economic Information Centre (CEIC), 2022). Krejcie & Morgan’s table was used to determine the required sample size based on this population. Therefore, this present study gathered and analysed 384 samples for the data collection.

A descriptive data analysis was conducted to summarise the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in percentages and frequencies in a table format and a brief explanation. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to identify factors from the observable variables. As the data comprised a

large number of variables, an EFA was used to minimise the number of variables and combine those that shared similar characteristics. The correlation between the IV and DV was demonstrated by means of graphs in a Spearman correlation analysis while multiple regression was used to test the hypothesis and build a suitable model, as identified by the F-ratio and t-test statistics.

Respondents' selection criteria are as follows: (1) the study demands that the respondents must be older than 18 years old, as adults have the ability to make appropriate judgement. (2) The second criteria is that respondents have visited Petaling Street recently (2021-2022) in order for them to have an accurate perspective of the current issues in the area. (3) The third criteria is the respondent has to be domestic tourist, as this study was exclusively focuses on the domestic tourists than foreign tourists, the responders must be locals.

The study area is approximately 12.8 hectares in size. Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock surrounds the area from the north to the end of Jalan Petaling in the south, while Jalan Sultan borders the area from the east to Sungai Kelang in the west. These streets define as parts of Kuala Lumpur Chinatown where pre-war shophouses and other new development were built on top of existing shophouse lots along the main roads of Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock, Jalan Tun HS Lee, Jalan Petaling, and Jalan Sultan. There are numerous pocket spaces of alleys at the rear and sides of the building blocks that are used for street activities and pedestrian circulation. Petaling Street, or Jalan Petaling, is Kuala Lumpur's oldest traditional street, cutting through the study area and intersecting with Hang Lekir Street.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Reliability test

Reliability is the consistency of the results produced by a research instrument. That is, whether the measuring instrument can reliably measure the property or variables. Therefore, this study assess the measurement items' consistency using the coefficient from the pilot test analysis. In general, when Cronbach's reliability coefficient is more than 0.70, the data reliability is acceptable. The Cronbach's α values for the preceding five sections are all greater than 0.9 (Table 1), indicating that the actual data questionnaire's question reliability is high and strong. Meanwhile, the corrected item-total correlation (CITC) value for all items are more than 0.5, meaning that no items need to be removed, implying that all items are accepted. As a result of the above analysis, it can be conclude that the questionnaire has a high degree of reliability. Thus, it can be use it for further analysis.

Table 1: Factor loading results

Construct	N of items	Item delete	Cronbach's Alpha
IVs			
Uses & Activities	10	-	0.956
Comfort & Image	10	-	0.956
Access & Linkages	7	-	0.909
Sociability	7	-	0.941
DVs			
Tourism Experience	14	-	0.968

Respondent profiles

Of the 369 respondents [1], 44.4% were women and 55.6 % were men [2] aged 25 to 34 (50.9%), 35 to 44 (16.5%), 18 to 24 (14.6%), 45 to 54 (11.4%), 55 to 64 (4.9%), and above 65 (1.6%) [3]. In terms of education, 76.7 % had completed tertiary education, 16.1% had secondary education, 3.8% had primary education, and 3.5% had no formal education [4]. In terms of occupation, 20.9% were self-employed, 13.6% were government staff, 12.7% were students, 7.3% were unemployed, and 45.5% worked in the private sector [5]. Of the 369 respondents, 49.1% had visited Petaling Street more than three times, 27.1% had visited it twice, and 23.8% had visited it once in 2022.

Relationship between Comfort & Image, Uses & Activities, Accessibility and Tourism Experiences

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.972, which is extremely close to 1 and excellent. As the p-value passed Bartlett's test ($p < 0.05$), the data was suitable to be further analysed using EFA. As seen in Table 2, three factors had Eigenvalues greater than 1. Items that had a factor loading of less than 0.6 according to the factor analysis were excluded. Post-rotation, the variances of these three components were 30.491%, 22.311% and 21.670%. Furthermore, the cumulative variance that was explained following the rotation was 74.472%. The total percentage of variance indicated that the three components were able to extract 74.472% of the informational content of the 34 items in the survey questionnaire.

As seen in Table 2, 13 items recorded a high factor loading for Factor 1, which reflected Comfort & Image (CI) in the context of this study; seven items recorded a high factor loading for Factor 2, which reflected Uses & Activities (UA) in the context of this study; and six items recorded a high factor loading for Factor 3, which reflected Accessibility (A) in the context of this study.

Table 2: Factor loading results

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Petaling Street has clear signage to access the place.	0.617	0.154	0.491
Petaling Street has a clear information board to access the place.	0.805	0.209	0.261
Petaling Street has a good flow of traffic.	0.707	0.040	0.388
Petaling Street is comfortable to walk in.	0.716	0.319	0.297
Petaling Street feels safe to walk in.	0.791	0.292	0.157
Petaling Street is clean enough to walk in.	0.841	0.258	0.129
Petaling Street respects historical preservation and conservation.	0.765	0.463	0.191
Petaling Street provides a historical experience.	0.729	0.476	0.206
Petaling Street has suitable places to enjoy the environment.	0.819	0.332	0.185
Petaling Street's communities respect their identity.	0.684	0.479	0.298
Petaling Street's communities respect their culture.	0.708	0.466	0.257
Petaling Street has engaging and interactive street cultural activities.	0.717	0.456	0.271
Petaling Street's communities have a positive attitude that makes you feel like home.	0.790	0.308	0.206
Petaling Street has a variety of cultural experiences to choose from.	0.367	0.733	0.340
Petaling Street has a variety of activities to choose from.	0.405	0.729	0.268
Petaling Street businesses are run by locals.	0.309	0.623	0.379
Petaling Street provides opportunities for people to gather and enjoy the activities.	0.479	0.752	0.212
Petaling Street celebrates cultural festivals.	0.436	0.720	0.268
Petaling Street has social activities (Market Street), which affects its sense of place.	0.432	0.736	0.301
Petaling Street's communities maintain its original/traditional activities for future generations.	0.609	0.616	0.175
Petaling Street provides easy access to different cultural places (e.g.; temple, museum).	0.101	0.253	0.861
Petaling Street is walkable for all social group (e.g.; elderly, differently-abled individuals).	0.300	0.130	0.788
Petaling Street has easy access to public transportation.	0.181	0.173	0.848
Petaling Street provides good access to public places (e.g.; restaurant, retail shop, workplace).	0.266	0.244	0.831
Petaling Street has multiple uses (e.g.; business, entertainment, recreation, education).	0.354	0.378	0.630
Petaling Street has a variety of food to choose from.	0.036	0.588	0.675

Source: Author's Calculation

Table 3 shows the correlation between Comfort & Image, Uses & Activities, Accessibility and Tourism Experiences. It is learned that Comfort & Image recorded the highest correlation with Tourism Experiences ($r=.908^*$, $p=.000$). Meanwhile, Accessibility and Tourism Experiences, which had the least correlation strength ($r=.827^*$, $p=.000$). Therefore, Accessibility to a place had the least impact on Tourism Experiences. According to Guildford’s Rule of Thumb, each of the IVs had a highly significant correlation. It was also determined that all of the IVs had a positive and strong linear correlation with Tourism Experiences as well as the three IVs, which were Comfort & Image, Uses & Activities, and Accessibility.

Table 3: Correlation between placemaking and tourist experiences

		CI	UA	A	TE
CI	Pearson Correlation	1	.842**	.733**	.908**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	369	369	369	369
UA	Pearson Correlation	.842**	1	.807**	.870**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	369	369	369	369
A	Pearson Correlation	.733**	.807**	1	.827**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	369	369	369	369
TE	Pearson Correlation	.908**	.870**	.827**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	369	369	369	369

Source: Author’s Calculation

Despite the high correlation seen in Table 2, the computed means were not, similarly, positive. A 5-point Likert scale, with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree was used. As the computed mean of CI was 2.612, tourists felt that Petaling Street did not maintain its Comfort & Image. As the computed mean of Uses & Activities was 2.838, tourists felt Petaling Street did not really provide them with a cultural heritage experience while the computed mean of Accessibility (3.270) indicated that

tourists had neutral feelings about Petaling Street providing great Accessibility to cultural heritage goods and places. Lastly, the computed mean of Tourism Experiences (2.868) indicated that tourists felt that Petaling Street did not provide them excellent Tourism Experiences throughout their visit.

The objective of multiple regression analysis is to use the independent variables whose values are known to predict the value of the single dependent value. In the context of this study, it is used to determine the value/strength of each assessed factor (Comfort & Image, Uses & Activities, and Accessibility) in influencing Tourism Experiences. The multiple regression results indicated that the coefficient of determination (R^2) of the model was 0.889. Therefore, the Placemaking Attributes assessed were able to explain 88.9% of the variance in Tourism Experiences. As the model passed the F-test ($F = 970.167$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), it, therefore, had a substantial model fit with a high variance within that scope. This indicates that, at least, some of the Placemaking Attributes affected Tourism Experiences. Therefore, there was a significant correlation between the IVs and DV, where a 1-unit change in TEs increased Comfort & Image by 5 units ($B = 0.566$, $SE = 0.034$), Uses & Activities by 1 unit ($B = 0.184$, $SE = 0.038$), and Accessibility by 2 units ($B = 0.287$, $SE = 0.032$). The Placemaking Attributes revealed that Comfort & Image was the most significant attribute affecting Tourism Experiences as its t (16.867) was higher than that of Uses & Activities (4.846), and Accessibility (9.090). Therefore, the new equation was:

$$Y = -.073 + 0.566 (CI) + 0.184 (UA) + 0.287 (A) + e$$

Y: Tourism Experiences (TEs)
bo: Interception or constant value
b1: Comfort & Image (CI) unstandardised coefficients value
X1: Comfort & Image (CI) slope
b2: Uses & Activities (UA) unstandardised coefficients value
X2: Uses & Activities (UA) slope
b3: Accessibility (A) unstandardised coefficients value
X3: Accessibility (A) slope
e: Error terms

CONCLUSION

Tourist walking and movement activities can be maximised by creating a movement network that has readable, convenient, and secure designs as well as user services. Fair access, public transit, and related services should also be provided to places and if they affect the mobility and safety of individuals. These suggestions were derived from well-explored links to locations and various modes of transportation. Streets play an important role in the development of public spaces as they facilitate social interaction and are avenues for cultural expression. Samir et al. (2019) and Mohamed et al. (2020) reported similar

findings. Cultural and heritage places should provide authentic experiences and activities to make such places liveable, memorable, and enjoyable as well as help tourists and visitors have better TEs during their visit.

The literature review indicated that the cultural element correlates with the concept of placemaking as they both encompass a number of characteristics. Culture should not be classified as a single category as, when it is dissected into its component concepts, its terms are clearly dispersed over all four categories of the placemaking diagram. Furthermore, the historic core of a city is, typically, what distinguishes one place from another, generates a “feeling of place”, its identity, and offers authentic experiences. Although this essential feature of placemaking, typically, relates to the Comfort & Image of a specific area, it also commonly relates to other aspects of placemaking. For instance, this is why some towns and cities prioritise emphasising their historical character to attract tourists. Therefore, this present study verifies that the Tourism Experiences of tourists are highly influenced by Placemaking Attributes.

The original model differs from the new model as the former was mostly adapted to an entire city while the latter primarily focuses on specific cultural heritage sites within a city; such as Petaling Street. This is because the respondents had different perceptions of the city and the cultural sites. Most of the Placemaking Attributes did not significantly affect existing Tourism Experiences at Petaling Street as it, currently, does not provide sufficient facilities and amenities. However, Placemaking Attributes would significantly impact Tourism Experiences at Petaling Street in the future if sufficient facilities and amenities are provided. The tourists also reported moderate feelings about A to Petaling Street significantly affecting their Tourism Experiences while visiting the place.

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