

Overview of tourism in malaysia tourism essay



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This chapter is designed to provide an overview to tourism in Malacca and the background of Jonker Street. It is divided into few sections to explain about culture as a factor for travel among tourists, tourism situation in Malacca, background of Jonker Street, problem statement, research objectives, significance of study, limitations of study, definition of terms, methodology as well as research organization.

Overview of tourism in Malaysia

Tourism sector in Malaysia is the second largest economic contributor to the country's Gross Domestic Product after oil and gas production. Authorities has been giving attention to this sector as it helps in generating employment opportunities, increasing economic revenue as well as creating the opportunity for development. Malaysia is a country that boasts with its natural environment such as sandy beaches, tropical islands, national parks and mountains, which one of it is known as Southeast Asia's highest mountain - Mount Kinabalu that is situated in the state of Sabah. Furthermore, Malaysia is home to a mixture of unique identities, featuring multi-racial and multi-ethnic communities; hence, Malaysia has become a country rich in culture, arts and traditions.

Over the years, this industry in Malaysia has its ups and downs in tourist arrivals and receipts (refer to table 1), due to economic downturn and natural disasters. The most significant decline in number of tourists was experienced in year 2003 when an outbreak of disease - Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome [SARS] hit the world environment. However, despite facing the world economic recession in year 2008 and H1N1 flu disease in

2009, tourist arrivals to Malaysia continued to grow by 57.32% which is from 15.7 million tourists in year 2004 to 24.7 million tourists in year 2011.

Table 1: Tourist Arrivals to Malaysia from 2002 to 2011

Year

Tourist Arrival (million)

Tourism Receipts (RM billion)

2002

13.2

25.8

2003

10.5

21.3

2004

15.7

29.7

2005

16.4

32.0

2006

17. 4

36. 3

2007

20. 9

46. 1

2008

22. 0

49. 6

2009

23. 6

53. 4

2010

24. 6

56. 5

2011

24. 7

58. 3

Source: Tourism Malaysia (2012)

Cultural Tourism in Malaysia

In today's world of travel, the process of learning and experiencing different cultures has been cited as a common and growing factor for travel among tourists (Lynch, Duinker, Sheehan, & Chute, 2011). This factor was not a favourite among tourists when a poll was conducted in the 1980's at the country of United States by Lou Harris, however, in the 1990's, citing "visiting cultural, historical and archaeological treasures" was important to most of the survey's respondents (Lord, 1999). This occurrence indicates that cultural tourism has long been in demand from the tourist's perspective. According to Richards (2007), cultural tourism has the potential to be a new form of alternative tourism among local and international tourists. Therefore, cultural tourism is now a widespread tourism phenomenon. Cultural tourists seek authenticity in their travel (MacCannell, 1973), hence, it is important for a destination to preserve its own unique identity.

Malaysia is a country rich of natural beauty and cultural diversity. As more tourists are into the notion of traveling for the purpose of "learning other cultures", Malaysia's promotional board, Tourism Malaysia, has created the slogan "Malaysia, Truly Asia" as an effort to attract tourists. Besides, Malacca has also created the slogan "Visit Historic Melaka Means Visit Malaysia" (Hamzah, 2004).

Cultural tourism has become a factor that has lured tourist arrivals to Malaysia and had turned out to be a potential form of alternative tourism for both international and domestic tourists (Mohamed, 2005). Two out of thirteen states in Malaysia are popular destination for cultural tourism, which are Malacca and Penang that has gained listings into UNESCO Heritage List on 8th July 2008. Malacca and Penang both share similarities regards to elements of heritage in the state. For example, both cities depend on historical colonial buildings of the city as main physical attraction for promoting tourism (Ismail, Baum, & Kokranikkal, n. d.). Besides, these two cities are located along the Straits of Melaka and were important trading port in the past, had illustrated the multi-culturalism it possesses in the city.

(explain the stats)

1.3 Overview of tourism in Malacca

For this cultural tourism study, the city of Malacca has been chosen as the study's destination due to the fact that it has been the focal point of Malaysia's history. On 15th April 1989, Malacca was then declared as a Historical City to promote its image as a historic tourism destination in Malaysia and was seen as an effort to zone land for tourism and urban conservation (Ismail et al., n. d.). Malacca together with Georgetown Penang has gained listings into UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage List in its Culture Category as "Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca" in year 2008 due to its historical and cultural factors. Among the criteria that has made Malacca into the list are - representing the multicultural trading town in East and Southeast Asia; tangible and intangible multi-cultural living heritage whereby different Asian

religions, ethnic, language, dance, costumes, art, food and music coexisted; reflects a unique blend of Asian and European colonial influences on its architecture, townscape and culture, especially, its' shop houses and townhouses with some originating in the Dutch and Portuguese periods (UNESCO, n. d.). However, in order to keep the title of being a " World Heritage Site", Malacca has to conserve, preserve, and sustain the true unique, beautiful historical and cultural parts of Malacca.

Malacca has divided its tourism sector to 12 different subsectors and each subsector has its own unique selling point. Two of the main subsectors in Malacca's tourism context, is heritage tourism and cultural tourism. This is due to the fact that Malacca is a state rich with multicultural society and surviving artefacts that dates back into the 15th century. For instance, Malacca has a mix community of Baba and Nyonya, " Kristang" (Portuguese-Eurasian or Portuguese-Malaccan), Chitty, Chinese, Malay and Indian; each with its unique cultural identity. Hence, it can be summarized that tourism activities that is based on heritage and culture is significant in Malacca because besides historical aspects, Malacca also has the uniqueness of tangible and intangible cultural heritage which is not available in any other states in Malaysia, for example the Dutch Square and A'Famosa.

Figure : Tourist Arrivals in Malacca

Source: (Melaka-Tourism-Promotion-Division, 2012)

Figure 1 shows numbers of tourist arrivals to Malacca for the past 5 years. Before the declaration of Malacca as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, tourist arrivals recorded by the Melaka Tourism Promotion Division (refer to figure <https://assignbuster.com/overview-of-tourism-in-malaysia-tourism-essay/>

1) was as much as 6, 023, 311 people in year 2007. However, despite facing world economic recession in year 2008 and 2009, Malacca after the UNESCO declaration, tourist arrivals has shot up by 19. 62% to the number of 7, 205, 492 tourists in year 2008 and an increase of 23. 59% by year 2009 with a total of 8, 905, 273 tourists. The increase in numbers of tourist arrivals has shown that Malacca has the attractions that could catch the attention of tourists who are mostly domestic tourists.

After the world economic crisis, tourism was projected to rebound strongly in year 2010 and 2011 in international tourist arrivals and receipts (Kapiki, 2011). Conversely, in year 2010 and 2011, although there is an increase in the number of tourist arrivals, it is noticed that the number had increase by a smaller percentage. For instance, tourist arrivals in year 2010 has an increase by 16. 28% compared to arrivals in year 2009; and 17. 49% in year 2011 compared to arrivals in year 2010. In other words, although number of tourist arrivals recorded in year 2011 was 12, 165, 866 tourists, which is the highest record than previous years, however, the arrivals of tourists had reduced while the world economy has slowly improved. This has prompted the question of whether Malacca's attraction is able to provide the authentic experience which is seek by cultural tourists.

1. 3 Background of Jonker Street

History of Jonker Street, according to a documented research done by Lim and Jorge (2006), dating in the 15th centuries, Jonker Street was one of the densely- populated area of merchants and artisans during the reign of Malacca Sultanate. It continued to be so during the period of Portuguese and Dutch. Following the defeat of Portuguese power to the Dutch, Jalan Hang

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Jebat was named as Jonker Straat (Nobleman's Street) by the Dutch. With the strategic location of Jonker Street situating near the sea, it has helped in prospering the area and became home to most well-to-do people.

To ensure a better landscape is seen in Jonker Street, the Dutch government in the mid 1600's, had implemented rules and strict regulations to the houses design, size of brick, position of windows, walls and drain, so that all houses are conformed to the same building standards. In the 1800s, more Chinese merchant bought up houses at Jonker Street, thus, adding Chinese architecture and designs to the façade of buildings. There is a mix community of Chinese, Dutch, Muslim and Portuguese-Eurasian noted staying at Jonker Street until the 19th century, bringing in a diverse of culture and architecture.

At the present time, Jonker Street is a five hundred meter long street with a stretch of buildings by both sides of the road. The facade of these buildings features a mixture of Dutch and Chinese architecture. Many of these houses are as old as 300 years. Although the width of houses along Jonker Street seems narrow, however, the length of these historical buildings is at least 50 meters long (Ong & Ong, 2004) and creates a space in the middle of the house as courtyards for better air ventilation. Furthermore, the width of Jonker Street is narrow; hence, this historical settlement was designed without a sidewalk for pedestrians.

Jonker Street - also known as Jalan Hang Jebat, was selected to form a part of the " World Heritage Site" listings for its residential and commercial values. It is basically, a street that is full of small businesses, cafes, art

gallery, handicraft shops, antique shops and clothes shop, which has made it into a shopping zone in the area. However, it could be noticed that some of the shops conducts two or three types of businesses in one shop lot to increase revenue. For example, the owner of an ancestral hall had rented out half of the lower ground of the building to an enterprise to sell local food product and traditional Chinese wedding accessories such as bed linens, wedding attire and red packets and so on; In addition, a shop selling souvenirs and antiques, is also selling desserts. These shops are mostly operated by Malaccan residents whereby some of the shops are being passed down from generation to generation such as an antique shop known as Abdul Company.

Besides, Jonker Street is also a place with a variety of artisans and craftsmen such as goldsmiths, watch repairers, clog makers, beaded shoemakers and local chefs. Furthermore, religious activities are conducted at places such as temples, clan buildings and ancestral halls, located along this road. The presence of temples and clan buildings had not only served its purpose in representing the needs of its clan members, but it had also strengthened the cultural elements of Jonker Street.

By looking at its past, it is evident that Jonker Street is rich with different architectural styles, and traditional shops that had made it outstanding. However, measures to promote this priceless treasure have not served its purpose. Malacca tourism officers had noted Jonker Street's heritage and cultural value, thus, to further promote it as a tourism spot, more cafes, shops and accommodations emerged; and in June 2000, the local authorities had added a weekly activity at Jonker Street - which is "Jonker Walk", where

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it became a street that is popular for its weekend flea market that opens every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Jonker Walk is a popular attraction for tourists as there is an array of products to be sold, ranging from, snacks, souvenirs, apparel and accessories.

According to a study on tourist movement patterns in Malacca done by Rahman, Ismail, and Wai (2011) in observing 8 tourist zones, which is Dataran Sungai Melaka, St. Paul's Hill, Kota Street, Laksamana Street, Temenggung Street, Kampung Pantai, Tokong Street and Jonker Street, it is proven that the tourist attraction with the highest number of tourists, occurs at Jonker Street. Streets in Melaka World Heritage Site such as Tokong Street, Temenggung Street and Kampung Pantai share similar character as Jonker Street; for instance, these streets have traditional traders such as goldsmiths, tin smiths, shop houses and business traders. However, one factor that makes Jonker Street outstanding is the design of its buildings. According to Rahman et al. (2011), Jonker Street was the most visited tourist destination in Malacca as it provides shopping, hotel and catering facilities to the tourists all in one street. Hence, Jonker Street is chosen as the study's destination. Furthermore, Jonker Street together with Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock, has formed the oldest heritage zone in Malacca, and were introduced by Malacca as its "living museum" (Ong & Ong, 2004).

Problem Statement

Malacca is a state rich in history and culture, which some of it, could not be found in other states of Malaysia. Therefore, plenty of efforts have been made to develop tourism products in Malacca and actively promoting it both within and outside of the country. Jonker Street is one of the examples where

by the authority had recognised it as a tourist attraction due to its advantage as the oldest heritage zone in Malacca.

1. 4. 1 Influence of Chinese architecture and presence of Chinese clans

When the British took over in the 1825, most of the properties at Jonker Street were acquired by Chinese merchants and changed the architecture of houses at the street with Chinese facades as more wealthy and influential Chinese merchants began to arrive. Soon in the 1900's Jonker Street depict strong Chinese influence with the presence of nine Chinese clan associations and temple for worship. Traditional skills such as goldsmith, carpentry, bricklaying, boatbuilding and baking were also brought in by the Chinese community.

1. 4. 2 The beginning of commercial area

Shortly, in 1927 Eurasian community begin to appear at Jonker Street. This was when Jonker Street begins to build its reputation as a commercial area with shops selling liquor, repair shops, furniture shops, car showroom and etc. By the end of World War Two and the Japanese Occupation, many residents had moved out of the place, making room for local businesses to start serving the basic needs of Malaccans.

1. 4. 3 Increase of employment opportunities

Tourism sector is now considered as one of the three main source of fiscal strength in Malaysia besides sources from petroleum and industry (Hoffman, 1979). This sector has provided local people with a lot of employment opportunities; it is also seen as a main indicator that contributes to the

economic growth of a place. Malacca is a state rich with cultural diversity, this in hand, has given Malacca the opportunity to develop its cultural tourism sector.

Conceptually, Jonker Street represents the characteristics of rich historical and multi-cultural background of Malacca. Being in a unique cultural setting has also provided opportunity to the multi-cultural society to transform their culture into a saleable object. For instance, tangible culture of Chinese and Baba Nyonya heritage could be sold to tourist through food such as chicken rice balls, nyonya laksa and traditional nyonya cakes; clothes such as nyonya kebaya, wooden clogs and beaded shoes. This popularity has attracted a variety of new art gallery, curio shop and restaurant operators to begin business in the area. Besides plentiful of shopping choices, the arts and culture of Jonker Street was also reflected through orchestral music performances, dance lessons, food and souvenirs. Jonker Street is now deemed as a cultural attraction by the Melaka Tourism Promotion Division.

Jonker Street is being promoted as a shopping district, emphasizing on things to buy such as antiques and souvenirs rather than its unique architecture buildings and culture. Undeniably, generating sales is a must in a tourism destination in order to obtain economic benefits from the tourists, yet, are the products sold reflect the culture of Jonker Street? Are the tourists able to remember where they get that piece of product from?

Jonker Street has been chosen as the case study based on previous research citing that there is vagueness to the meaning of Jonker Street as a cultural attraction despite possessing criteria that proved it is. According to Ong and

Ong (2004), whose study is based on “ Jonker Walk”- the weekend night activity in Jonker Street, has garnered evidence that the project has received negative criticism from the public, citing that it is a negative development on Jonker Street and it is a poor idea in conserving Malacca. One of the criticism mentioned in Ong and Ong (2004), was from Elizabeth Vines (Unesco Asia-Pacific representative) noting that the development of “ Jonker Walk” as a tourist attraction has changed its original character into a commercialised tourist attraction; Vines also mention that in order to bring success to tourism development and promotion of the state, the State Government and entrepreneurs has to consider Malacca’s “ character, soul and authenticity”.

Furthermore, Lim and Jorge (2006), has also point out that the development of Jonker Street as a night market on weekends, has become the means of destruction of the street’s heritage by evicting traditional craft masters and demolition of heritage buildings. For example, premises of goldsmiths from the 1800s to year 2000 were renovated, taking away antique painted glass panels and wall mirrors to accommodate a fast food outlet, a craftsman of traditional Chinese bound foot shoe maker as well as incense and joss stick maker were evicted from their premises and demolished the buildings to make way for new multi-storey hotel which had failed to happen.

More to the point, this issue was also brought up by Lindt (2012), Jonker Street is an example of culture street in Malacca that had been transformed into a tourist destination which is less authentic, citing that liquors, batik linens and cheeky T-shirts are among the products sold to tourists at the centuries old heritage street.

From the discussion above, the most significant problem being discovered is since the local authorities implemented a new project named “ Jonker Walk” to add to the attractions of Jonker Street, this has raised the question of whether this development affects the cultural values inherent to it? How much of culture value in Jonker Street still remains after the transformation? What cultural experience does Jonker Street offer? Hence, this research is to study what are the products that are provided at Jonker Street in relation to culture tourism elements; and the authenticity of cultural products at Jonker Street from the perspective of stakeholders.

1. 5 Research Objective

The main objective in this study is to examine whether tourists perceived Jonker Street as an authentic cultural attraction. From this main objective, three sub-objectives are formed, as listed below:

To study the existing product provided at Jonker Street in relation to culture tourism elements

To study the authenticity of cultural products at Jonker Street from the perspective of stakeholders (government, Jonker Walk Committee, entrepreneur and tourist)

1. 6 Research Question

As an investigative research study, the research questions developed are based on the objectives of the research. The research questions are as below:

What product is provided at Jonker Street in terms of cultural attraction?

What are the demographics of tourists in Jonker Street?

What is the interest to visit Jonker Street?

What is the perception of stakeholders towards authenticity in Jonker Street?

Table 1: Summary of Objective and Research Question

Research Objectives

Research Questions

To study the existing product provided at Jonker Street in relation to culture tourism elements

What product is provided at Jonker Street in terms of cultural attraction?

What are the demographics of tourists in Jonker Street?

What is their interest to visit Jonker Street?

To study the authenticity of cultural products at Jonker Street from the perspective of stakeholders

What is the perception of stakeholders towards authenticity in Jonker Street?

Significance of study

Jonker Street is among the famous tourist attraction in Malacca. The authorities have to ensure that Jonker Street has its unique selling point that would be able to attract tourists revisiting the place again. Tourist influx to the street has generated income for some of the residents at the area by selling souvenirs, clothes, food and so on. However, it is noted through

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observation that products sold at Jonker Street, especially souvenirs are mostly imported goods from other countries and does not symbolize or reflect cultures of Jonker Street. Hence, this research is to study the authenticity of cultural products at Jonker Street.

Authenticity is related with cultural tourism as authenticity in tourism context means “ the desired experience a tourist gets associated with visits to tourism destinations; the result of encountering a culture different than of the tourist” (Smith, 1989) which is similar to the objective of cultural tourism that is for the tourist to learn and experience the culture of other nations. This study will be significant to the tourism promotion boards of Malacca as it tries to understand the attractions at Jonker Street, characteristics of tourists and stakeholders’ perceptions. Perceptions of stakeholders determine whether Jonker Street is able to provide the authentic experience that tourists seek in a cultural tourism destination. This in turn helps tourism planners of Malacca to further enhance cultural tourism in its state, whilst maintaining the culture of Malacca people.

1. 8 Scope and limitation of study

This study is limited to stakeholders related to Jonker Street, Malacca only. It is focused on stakeholder’s perception of authenticity of cultural product at Jonker Street, Malacca. The dependent variable of this study is perception of stakeholders while the independent variables are products provided at Jonker Street and characteristic and profile of tourist. This study will use authenticity as a measure to view stakeholders’ perception on Jonker Street. This will show whether Jonker Street is perceived as a cultural attraction or

vice versa. The unavailability of secondary data of tourist arrivals at Jonker Street and time restraint has also caused limitations to this study.

Definition of terms

The following definitions of terms are used for this study:

Authenticity

Authenticity comes from the word “ authentic”. In general, “ authentic” means genuine, realness and purity. Authenticity in the leisure context means the real or genuine experience a tourist gets during their travel to places with cultures different than their own (Hillman, n. d.). Objective authenticity is an experience whereby tourists are able to understand the culture of other society at a tourist destination (Hillman, n. d.).

Cultural tourism

Culture includes a broad spectrum of beliefs, a set of practices that acts as a general guiding principle. According to Bonink and Richards (1992), cultural tourism is defined as travelling to specific cultural destinations such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural attractions, arts and drama at places outside of their usual environment (as cited in (Ding, 2009))

Cultural Products

Cultural products reflect a culture’s characteristic. As said by Ivanovic (2008), the cultural attraction itself is known as the cultural tourism product. The author has noted that when intrinsic cultural value is found at a cultural attraction, it gives the place potential to be developed as a cultural tourism

product. Furthermore, the development of accommodation, infrastructure, services and facilities at that cultural attraction, will be an added value to the product. Hence, the intrinsic value of culture along with added value has formed the destination's cultural resources into cultural tourism products. For example, when a tourist visits a destination, they are actually using the total cultural product, which are, accommodation, food, weather, transportation, hospitality and attitude of hosts (Ivanovic, 2008). Cultural products could be categorized into two groups which are tangible and intangible. Tangible products are things that are presented in a material form while intangible products are that societies believe it exists but could not be seen. Examples of tangible products are toys, musical instruments, dresses, types of residence, food, sports equipment, literature and artwork; while intangible products are such as dance, music, language and literary styles (Lawrence, 1999).

Methodology

Research Objective

Literature Review

Culture

The concept of Cultural tourism

The concept of Authenticity

Pilot study

Data Collection

Structured Interview

Data Analysis

Data gathering & key in

Data Selection & Formulation

Content Analysis

Summary of findings

Final Report

Background Study

Malacca, voice from the street (Lim & Fernando, 2006)

The making of Jonker Walk (Ong & Ong, 2004)

Research Problem

Scope of Research

Jonker Street, Malacca

Product mix

Characteristic and profile of tourist

Preparation of Interview

The research approach for this study will be based on observation, literature review and interview. Selection of respondents will be chosen through

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purposive sampling. The survey will be conducted at Jonker Street, Malacca on weekends to collect data from domestic and international tourists and entrepreneurs as well as to conduct structured interview on weekdays with other stakeholders such as government and Jonker Walk Committee. Data collected through this survey will be analysed through content analysis. The purpose of the data analysis is to discover the interest for tourist to visit Jonker Street, the products provided at Jonker Street regarding to culture tourism and to understand the perception of stakeholders towards authenticity of cultural products at Jonker Street.

1. 11 Research Organisation

Chapter 1 - Chapter 1 is an introduction to the background of research, research problem, research objective, research question, scope and limitations of study, definition of terms, research procedure and research organization

Chapter 2 - Chapter 2 will discuss about theoretical framework to explain regarding culture tourism, culture products, authenticity, and relations of cultural products to authenticity. This will explain about the effects of authenticity of cultural products to tourists.

Chapter 3 - Chapter 3 highlights the methodology of research which will be used in this study. The perspective of stakeholders towards authenticity of cultural products at Jonker Street will be collected through structured interview.

Chapter 4 - Chapter 4 explains on the authenticity of cultural products from the perspective from stakeholders of Jonker Street, Malacca.

Chapter 5 - Chapter 5 gives conclusion on the study by analyzing findings on the perspectives of stakeholders chosen and make suggestions to the relevant authorities of Malacca.

Chapter 6 - Chapter 6 states the limitations of study, conclusion and presents information on possible extensions on future research.