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Between Tourism and Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Abstract

Malaysia sees a tremendous rise in tourist arrivals in Malacca with the listing of Melaka on UNESCO's world heritage list in 2008. Its cultural tradition is one of the outstanding universal values that contribute it to gain its placed on the list. Nevertheless, there are studies that have suggested this positive outlook may have its downside. The aim of this paper is to present past studies on tourism in relationship to intangible cultural heritage and examines their positive and negative views on the importance of tourism and cultural heritage. It is hope that the outcome of this paper will guide an on-going study that not only looks at tourism and intangible cultural heritage in Malacca, but also develops a cultural map in an early efforts towards safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

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1. Introduction

We begin this paper by questioning: How can intangible cultural heritage sustained with the effects of tourism development? What are the effects of tourism development? It is believed that tourism is the largest industry in the world based on its contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP). It has since reported an increase of international tourist arrivals from 939 million in 2010 to a total of 990 million in 2011 by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). In fact, UNWTO is expecting further increased in tourist arrivals by the end of 2012. Asia (South-Asia and South-East Asia) is expected to lead the growth ahead of Europe and America. Instead of being a part of the economic contributors, Goeldner, Brent Ritchie & McIntosh (2000) also agree that tourism is able to improve the quality of life

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and enhance physical development and infrastructures. Although tourism has a positive outlook, it also has its downsides. Engelhardt (2007) for example, reported there are some issues emerged between cultural tourism and intangible cultural heritage such as the ‘dumbing-down’ of heritage interpretation, de-contextualization of the heritage and disconnection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Most of the previous studies which looked at the impacts of tourism have shown that tourism activities can bring both positive and negative impacts towards the economic, physical, social, cultural and the environment. If it does bring impacts, what is the extent of the positive impacts compared to the negative impacts of intangible cultural heritage? This paper attempts to discuss on the positive and negative aspects between cultural tourism and intangible cultural heritage. In doing so, a very clear understanding of the general term of cultural tourism and intangible cultural heritage is needed as a preamble to the discussion.

2. Methodology

Building on the current concern and awareness of sustaining local cultural heritage, this research is trying to adapt a new method on conserving intangible cultural heritage introduced by UNESCO as cultural mapping. By exploring the potential of tourism development, in terms of authenticity of intangible cultural heritage and the pattern of tourist and host behaviours, relevant Authorities can use it to construct future framework for cultural heritage and tourism management. Although the existing law and enactment on conserving heritage is useful, yet it is still insufficient to conserve both tangible and intangible heritage. For this matter, cultural mapping is an alternative to make the culture more visible, hence it can be utilised in new way for further development of cultural planning. This study uses multi – disciplinary approach to integrate theories and concept relevant to the research goal. Combining literature study from existing theories and current articles with on-site study, and professional interviews, will lead to a production of intangible cultural heritage map. This also provides strategies for sustaining cultural heritage as well as tourism development. This paper is part of a preliminary study of the above research. The next section is divided into two parts: 1) definition and 2) previous research on tourism development and cultural heritage.

3. Analysis and findings

3.1. Definition of cultural tourism and intangible cultural heritage

Bob Mckercher and Hillary du Cros (2002) stated that cultural tourism involves four elements which are: tourism, use of cultural heritage assets, consumption of experiences and products, and, tourist. To understand how all these four elements are related to cultural tourism and intangible cultural heritage, clear definition of the elements is needed.

3.1.1. Tourism

The World Tourism Organization official definition of tourism is: “Tourism comprises the activities of person travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than consecutive one year for leisure, business and other purpose”. Thomas lea Davidson (1994) looked at tourism from three perspectives. The first perspective, tourism is a social phenomenon, not a production activity. Second, the sum of expenditures of all travellers or visitors for all purposes not the receipt of a select group of similar establishment; and, third, the experience process, not a product, but an extremely varied experiences. Basically, tourism encompasses many forms such as seaside, mountain, sport, health, shopping, and heritage. Out of these, cultural tourism is the most familiar forms among tourists. The term

‘cultural tourism’ which is used interchangeably with ‘heritage tourism’ or ‘ethnic tourism’ usually offers tourists the attraction of cultural traditions, places and values such as religious practice, folklore traditions and social custom of certain communities or ethnic. Nevertheless, the document on *Creative Nation: Commonwealth Cultural Policy (1994)* by the Australian Federal Government described cultural tourism as “embracing the full range of experiences visitors can undertake to learn what makes a destination distinctive - its lifestyle, its heritage, its arts, its people - and the business of providing and interpreting that culture to visitors.”

3.1.2. Cultural heritage assets

In defining this second element, we first looked at the term ‘heritage’. Davison (2008) defined heritage as “property (“heirlooms”) which parents handed on to the children”. By referring to “property”, Davison seems to relate to something precious that need extra care for the next generation. Davison also cited Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) who suggested a way of distinguishing heritage is to define: 1) the past as “what has happened”, 2) the history as “selective attempts to describe this and how things came to be as they are,” and, 3) the heritage as “a contemporary product shaped from history”. According to the Malaysian National Heritage Department (Jabatan Warisan Negara), heritage can be categorised into two: 1) cultural heritage, and, 2) nature heritage. The Malaysian National Heritage Department clearly states that cultural heritage is sub-divided into two “unfixed heritage” and “fixed heritage” (Figure 1). Tangible and intangible heritage are two types of “fixed heritage”. Although they belong to the same category, they differ in nature. ‘Tangible Heritage’ refers to something that is permanently being seen and touchable. It can categorised as:

- Static - refers to historical site, monument, building or anything that is permanently there. Historical sites example Lembah Bujang, Malacca Old Town Centre; monument or building example Palace, Fortress, Tomb or Minarets and Nature example forest, mountain, cave, river, flora and fauna
- Movable - refers to cultural artifacts that are able to move such as manuscript and textile.

Intangible Cultural Heritage as defined in The National Heritage Act 2005 is referred as “...a phrase, language, pronunciation of the tongue, saying the song is produced by the music, notes, audible lyrics, songs, folk songs, oral traditions, music, dance as generated by the performing arts, theatre, musical compositions and sound, martial arts that has existed or exists in relation to the heritage of Malaysia or any part of Malaysia or the Malaysian community in relation to heritage”.

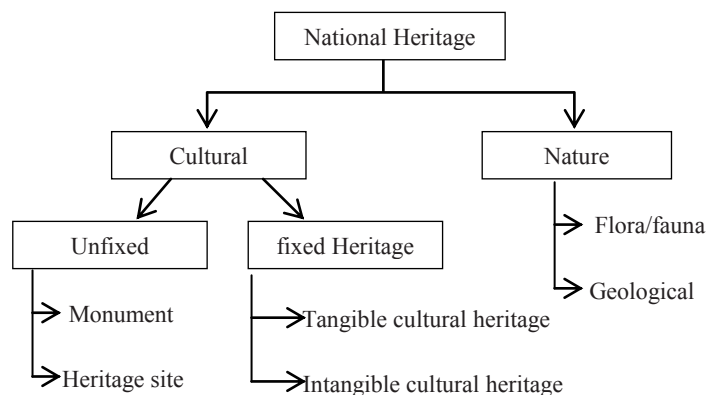


Fig. 1. Categories of Malaysia National Heritage
 Source: Adapted from National Heritage Department (2010)

Nevertheless, Intangible Cultural Heritage has been described slightly different by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003 as “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage”. Article 2 of the 2003 Convention states that ‘intangible cultural heritage’ are evident in the following five domains:

- Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the Intangible cultural heritage;
- Performing arts;
- Social practices, rituals and festive events;
- Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- Traditional craftsmanship.

Looking at both definitions on ‘intangible cultural heritage’, the latter is used as an operational definition in our research considering our study area is listed on the UNESCO’s world heritage site.

3.1.3. *Consumption of experiences and product*

Urray (1990) and Richard (1999c) (as cited in Mckercher and du Cros, 2002) stated that all tourism involves the consumption of experiences and product, so do with cultural tourism. Although, it is suggested that cultural heritage assets usually need to be reconstructed into cultural tourism product in order to facilitate tourist consumption, we are concerned of its safeguarding.

3.1.4. *The tourist*

Tourist, a fourth element of cultural tourism, is a backbone in the tourism sector. In the previous conceptualization of tourism, all travelers engaging in tourism are described as a visitor (Goeldner, Brent Ritchie & McIntosh, 2000). Goeldner et. al defined visitors as persons who travel to a country other than the one in which they generally reside for a period not exceeding 12 months, whose main purpose is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. There are two categories of visitors: same-day visitors (day-trippers) and tourist. In addition, Mckercher and Du Cros (2002) identified five (5) types of cultural tourist:

- The purposeful cultural tourist – cultural tourism is primary motive for visiting a destination, and the individual has a deep cultural experience.
- The sightseeing cultural tourist – cultural tourism is primary motive for visiting a destination, but the experience is shallower.
- The serendipitous cultural tourist – a tourist who does not travel for cultural tourism reasons, but who, after participating, ends up having a deep cultural tourism experiences.
- The casual cultural tourist – cultural tourism is weak motive for visiting a destination, and the result experience is shallow
- The incidental cultural tourist – this tourist does not travel for cultural reason but nonetheless participates in some activities and has shallow experiences.

All five types of tourist, are basically influenced by the destination to visit, and at this point, host community and other parties related are required to play a role in enhancing their identity of places according to their natural uniqueness.

3.2. The effects of tourism development

Having understood the terms relating to cultural tourism, in this section we reviewed studies that suggest how tourism development affects the culture of the community.

3.2.1. Impacts from local residents' perception

The first study is that conducted by Azizan Marzuki (2011). He identified local residents' perception towards impacts from tourism development in Langkawi Island, Malaysia from the costs and benefits aspects brought by the growth of the tourism industry. He conducted a household survey to explore the impacts of tourism development to local resident from the perspectives of economic, social and environmental. Although, a sample size of 383 respondents was obtained based on a total population of 73,091 people in Langkawi, 784 respondents were approached, which exceeded the sample size. Out of this, 392 questionnaires (50%) were completed. He used principal component analysis to explore 24 items, but only 21 items were usable after having assessed them through the reliability analysis. Although, Azizan's findings showed local residents generally benefit from tourism development, either socio-economically or economically, there are negative impacts on physical developments as well as cultural deterioration. Azizan found that a mean of only 3.78 responses indicate that tourism causes changes in traditional cultures, following responses (mean of 3.95) that suggest tourism development has changed the island landscape (Table 1). Table 1 also showed, a very low mean of 3.29 that tourism has decreased employment in traditional sectors. Although these costs of tourism development are relatively low, their benefits are higher. Table 2, presents the mean values of the benefits of the tourism sector. Out of six (6) items listed, only one (1) is related directly to cultural heritage, which apparently is tangible rather than intangible heritage. This item, 'tourism has encouraged local government to restore historical buildings,' has a mean value of 3.98. On another observation, Azizan found a relatively high mean values of 4.27 and 4.13 respectively, for items on how 'tourism has improved the quality of life of local residents', and 'interaction with foreign tourists is a positive experience for local residents'. Although, they appear related to locals' way of life, it is not certain if they are related to intangible heritage. The socio-economic benefits (Table 3) seem to outweigh the previous effects of tourism development in Langkawi. The mean values for socio-economic benefits on tourism development are generally greater than 4.10.

Table 1. Costs of tourism development

	Items Description	Mean	Std. Deviation
Factor 1: Costs of Tourism Development	Tourism results in an increase in social problems	3.55	1.125
	Tourism has caused traffic congestion, noise and pollution in the islands	3.57	1.175
	Tourism development in natural areas has a negative impact on flora and fauna	3.72	1.089
	Tourism development has decreased employment in other traditional sectors	3.29	1.177
	Tourism infrastructure development has destroyed the natural environment in the islands	3.55	1.121
	Tourism has restricted the privacy of local resident	3.39	1.123
	Tourism causes changes in traditional cultures	3.78	1.056
	Foreign companies have become a threat to local businesses	3.56	1.145
	Tourism development has changed the islands landscape	3.95	1.019

Source: Azizan Marzuki (2010)

Table 2. Benefits of tourism development

Factor 2 Benefits from tourism development	Items Description	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Tourism development has increased environmental awareness	3.97	0.993
	Tourism development has resulted in increased environmental protection	3.89	1.001
	Tourism has encouraged local government to restore historical buildings	3.98	0.932
	Tourism has improved the quality of life of local residents	4.27	0.774
	Local residents are happy to share public facilities with tourists	3.66	0.980
	Interaction with foreign tourists is a positive experience for local residents	4.13	0.844

Source: Azizan Marzuki (2010)

Table 3. Socio economic effects of tourism development

Factor 3 Socio-economic effects of tourism	Items Description	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Tourism has increased the property prices	4.16	0.946
	Tourism brings investment to Langkawi Islands	4.25	0.788
	Tourism has increased the prices of goods and services	4.15	0.920
	Tourism development has improved the quality of tourism attractions	4.21	0.831
	Tourism development has improved the quality of infrastructure in Langkawi Islands	4.24	0.867
	Tourism development has increased migration from the mainland to Langkawi Islands	3.98	0.943

Source: Azizan Marzuki (2010)

3.2.2. Commodification of intangible cultural heritage

In another study, George (2010) raised different issues relating to tourism and intangible cultural heritage. Eventhough it is not an empirical study, but she expressed some provocations and discourses about issues surrounding ownership and copyrights relating to intangible cultural heritage. She claimed that culture should provide advantages and uniqueness to the community. However, increasing commodification of intangible cultural heritage (as a major product to satisfy tourists) in most of the communities, are being distracted by new concerns and issues outside their local domain. By “commodification, it means culture for tourism occurs when a community’s culture, developed over past years, perhaps centuries, and created through ordinary spontaneous evolution under principles of use value, that is, an essential elements in the social fabric and essence of everyday life in a community, becomes converted into objects of exchange value for tourist consumption. Subsequently, culture gets transformed and reconstructed into a completely different entity, and a consumer value system supersedes a longstanding community value system” (George, 2004)(in George, 2010 p.318). Thus, it is understood that cultural assets which transformed into tourism commodity are necessary in order to fulfill tourist needs. However, this process also tends to exploit the culture authenticity when it needs to be reconstructed into something that is more economic and of commercial value. Figure 2 shows how commodification occurs over time. But, between 1750 to 2000 culture such as customs, artifacts, language, architecture, and music belong to community for their social construction purpose only. Nevertheless as indicated in the diagram (Figure 2), beginning the year 2000, this culture needs to be

transformed and reconstructed as tourism product. It seems to suggest that this process has to continue according to demands of tourists. If this process of commercializing and commodification of the culture persists for a long time, it is possible that the authenticity of culture could be eroded and most possibility extinct.

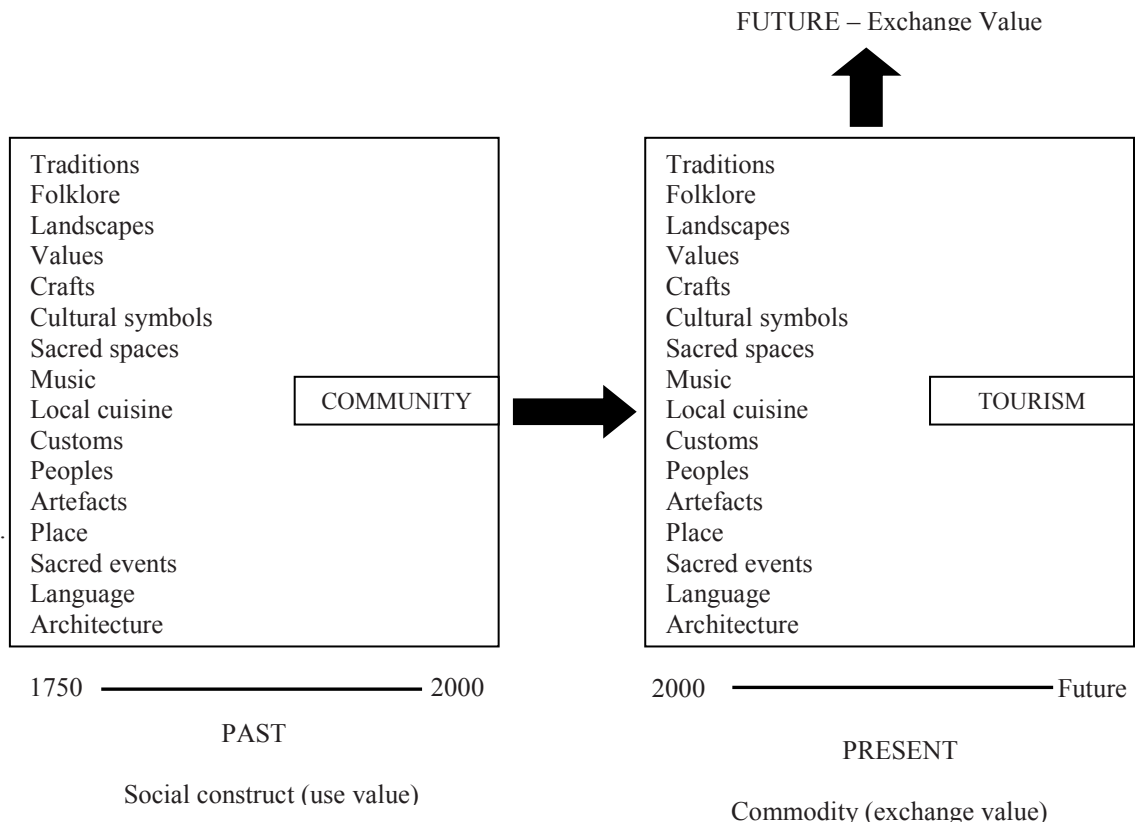


Fig. 2. Commodification of cultural heritage for tourism
Source: George (2010)

3.2.3. Appropriation

George (2010) also raised another issue which she refers to as “cultural appropriation”. According to Ziff and Rao (1997) (in George, 2010) cultural appropriation is defined as “the taking – from a culture that is not one’s own – of intellectual property, cultural expressions or artifacts, history and ways of knowledge” (p.380). Ziff and Rao stated that these concerns gave rise to several claims:

- Cultural appropriation can harm the appropriated community; it can negatively impact the integrity and identities of cultural groups
- Cultural appropriation can impact the cultural object itself; it can either damage or transform a given cultural good or practice.
- Cultural appropriation wrongly allows some to benefit to the material detriment of others (deprivation of material advantage).
- Current law fails to reflect alternative conceptions of what should be treated as property or ownership in cultural goods

George (2010) showed how hundreds of tourists arrive in Nova Scotia each year, in which they have to pay a fee for a complete tour package that takes them to sight-seeing of local scenery, observation, photo-taking and video recording of local people, local and unique architectural construction and old historic homes as well as other cultural heritage attractions. The tour companies benefit financially from this tour package. However, there is little or no financial compensation from tour operator given to the host community. Besides, tour companies are also seen to benefit from multiple images used in their promotional materials and commercial. George believes that this is clearly a case of how the host community is being deprived of financial benefits. The studies have shown how tourism can influence and affect cultural heritage in general and intangible cultural heritage specifically.

3.3. Studies on intangible cultural heritage in relationship to the world heritage sites

So far, we have presented studies that examine the effects of tourism development in general. In this section we now look at a study that examined the effects of tourism on intangible heritage in a world heritage sites in China and Malacca. We begin by asking: What is the relationship between intangible cultural heritage and world heritage sites?

3.3.1. China: comparison between tourist spots

Chin-Hai Yang, Hui- Lin Lin and Chin- Chun Han (2010) in a study analysed determinants of international tourist arrivals in China. In this study, they considered three types of tourist spots, which are: 1) historical and cultural spots, 2) natural landscape spots, and 3) modern tourist spots. The study adopted the commodity version of the gravity model. This model assumes tourist arrival is one of the traded goods. Statistical data of international tourist arrival originating from various countries from year's 2000 to 2005 are selected for evaluation. The major finding of this study is that cultural world heritage sites exhibit stronger impact on tourist arrivals than natural heritage sites. They explained how this is contributed to the uniqueness of historical sites, cultural traditions and colourful folk customs. Moreover, world heritage sites are reported to be higher in elasticity (as major forces in promoting the tourist arrival) rather than 3A and 4A-class spots in their evaluation. 3A and 4A-class spots refer to the highest class, representing the spot within a province that is most worth visiting. However, Chin et al. conclude that both tourism spots (world heritage sites and 3A/4A-class spots) have a significant positive impact on international tourist arrivals.

3.3.2. Malacca: tourists satisfaction on cultural heritage

Another study that relates to world heritage site is Ai-Lin Lee's (2010) who did a study on tourist satisfaction on cultural heritage site in Malacca. The study employed a on-site survey method. Tourists who visited Malacca State in May, 2010 were used as her respondents. Out of 150 questionnaires, she reported 115 were valid. One of her analysis was to identify relationships between 23 cultural heritage destination attributes and the level of overall satisfaction of tourist in a linear regression analysis. She found only three dimensions out of the 23 attributes were related to tourists' satisfaction. These were: 1)

general tour attraction, 2) culture and heritage attraction, and 3) differentiate and amenity attraction. Out of these three, tourists' overall satisfaction was reported highest for the 'cultural and heritage attraction', followed by the 'differentiate and amenity attraction', and the least, 'general tour attraction'. These two studies have to a certain extent briefly answered the question above. The first study by Chin-Hai Yang, Hui-Lin Lin and Chin-Chun Han (2010) has shown that cultural heritage is able to attract more tourists compared to other tourism spots. Similarly, Ai-Lin Lee (2010) findings also supported this findings when she showed that cultural and heritage attraction met the tourist expectation and satisfaction. However, in both studies "cultural heritage" was repeatedly mentioned but not of 'intangible cultural heritage'.

3.3.3. *China : conservation of intangible cultural heritage*

Chin-Hai Yang et al. (2010) has proven that cultural heritage site attracts tourist more compared to other tourist spots. It is clearly shown that cultural heritage site needs specific approach to conserve. This is because tourism and cultural heritage inevitably rely on each other to sustain. Wang Yuan (2008), emphasised on conserving intangible cultural heritage since intangible cultural method of conserving is known and practiced. According to Wang Yuan (2008) intangible cultural heritage consist of three important (3) aspects: 1) the pattern of whole area, 2) the life of inhabitants and 3) traditional handcrafts, folklore etc. Without all these aspects, the historic area would be like human with no soul (Wang Yuan, 2008). Further more, he asserted that certain principles of conservation for tangible heritage are also suitable for intangible heritage such as authenticity and integrality. However, some special principles should be applied consistent with the character of intangible cultural heritage. Wang Yuan suggested two (2) special principles of conserving intangible cultural heritage. These are 1) human – oriented principle and 2) dynamic conservation principle. These principles are implemented at Dongguan historic area of Yang Zhou in Jiangsu province which was once a place that used to be an economic center of Yang Zhou during the Tang Dynasty until the Qing Dynasty. There are two old famous brands still exist today at Dongguan historic area, Sanhe and Simei pickles factory and Xie Fuchun cosmetic powder factory. Xie Fuchun for example was conserved by designing a specific place to show the history of powder. He reported that this area also embodied traditional folk. He further reminded that the protection method should be dynamic if one character of intangible cultural heritage is living. Wang Yuan also believes that transferring is one alternative form of protection.

4. Conclusion

This paper has presented studies that looked at the various effects of tourism development. Azizan (2010) for example, has shown how the locals in Langkawi suggested tourism has brought both negative and positive effects to them. Although, they indicated tourism has changed their traditional cultures, the highest mean score reflected tourism has actually improve their quality of life. The socio-economic benefits, which outweigh the costs, appear to matter most to the locals. It seems to implicate that the intangible cultural heritage of the locals (not specifically mentioned) is of less significance to the locals. Similarly, George (2010) who stressed on the importance of ownership and copyrights, was concerned when local community does not notice what is actually happening to their culture. He cautioned how culture is endangered, and expressed his concern that it would someday erode if no action or protection is taken. He raised the issue of 'commodification' and 'cultural appropriation' of culture and cited a case in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, Canada, in which the ownership of culture uniqueness was taken for granted and how the locals were exploited for financial gains. World heritage sites example in China and in Malacca, Malaysia, have attracted tourists. In both studies by Chin-Hai Yang et al. (2010) and Ai-Lin Lee (2010), they found tourists are more attracted to cultural heritage sites compared to other tourist's spots, and cultural tourism is reported highest in influencing tourist satisfaction. Thus so far, it can be said that cultural heritage sites and cultural tourism have high potentials in attracting tourists, which in return has

shown to benefit the locals as reflected in Langkawi. Nonetheless, like George (2010), we are concerned that in the long run cultural tourism only benefits some parties. In future, George has anticipated cultural tourism, especially intangible heritage will be traded as a commodity, which eventually erode the native culture. Although, Wan Hashimah Wan Ismail (2012), who concluded in her study that historical buildings in Malacca are very well sustained, we question the sustainability of tangible cultural heritage if intangible heritage is not consciously and equally conserved. Indeed, Wang Yuan (2008) puts it fittingly when he said “The determinant character of a historic area can assert itself is its intangible value which is the spirit of it. Any tangible culture must be supported by intangible value and any intangible culture must rely on the tangible to be visualized” (p. 8).

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