

Heritage Tourism in Malaysia: Potential and Challenges

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Abstract: Tourism is one of the industries which is developing rapidly, not only in Malaysia but all around the world. According to the annual research report of The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), together with its strategic partner, Oxford Economics, Travel and Tourism's in 2013, it was revealed that the tourism industry accounted for 9.5% of total world GDP (USD 7 trillion). One of the potential tourism sector in Malaysia is heritage-based tourism. This field is not something new but the promotion for this aspect of heritage tourism is still lacking. This heritage based tourism can involve cultural heritage (tangible and intangible) and natural heritage. The number of tourists who visited Malaysia in 2013 amounted to 25.7 million people and a total of 28 million tourists was targeted in 2014 in conjunction with visit Malaysia Year 2014. In attracting Foreign tourists to see the cultural diversity and natural beauty of the country hence, several products based on heritage that are of potential are certainly sites which have been recognized by UNESCO as world heritage sites. Among these sites are the Mulu National Park and Kinabalu National Park as world heritage sites of the natural category while George town and Melaka as well as the archaeological site of Lenggong Valley as world heritage site of the cultural category. According to statistics, most foreign tourists visited the city of George town and Melaka, especially tourists from Southeast Asia while Lenggong archaeological site was found to be less visited by foreign tourists. In the category of nature, the Kinabalu National Park is the preferred destination of tourists compared to the Mulu National Park or the National Park in the Peninsula itself. The potential of each of these areas or sites can be enhanced by having more vigorous promotions and solid cooperation between the government agencies, travel agencies and non-governmental agencies involved.

Key words: Tourism, heritage, Mulu National Park, Kinabalu National Park, Lenggong Valley

INTRODUCTION

Now a days, the tourism industry is seen as one of the most important industry in generating income of a country. According to the annual research report of The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) together with its strategic partner, namely Oxford Economics, Travel and Tourism's in 2013, it was revealed that the tourism industry accounted for 9.5% of total world GDP (USD 7 trillion). This amount is expected to increase from year to year and this development enables as many as 4.7 million new jobs to be created as a result of developments in the field of tourism. World Tourism Organisation defines tourism as an activity of individuals who travel and stay in places outside of their own usual environment for not >1 consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes. Meanwhile, Hunziker and Krapf (1942) define tourism as "the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, insofar as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity".

Malaysia as a unique country with diversity of races and cultures have traditionally exploited the advantages of having cultural diversity and the beauty of its natural heritage. The continuous promotion of its cultural, historical heritage and tourism that is based on the concept of ecotourism and agro-tourism has managed to popularize destinations such as Melaka, Penang, the East coast of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak.

Besides, Malaysia has emphasized on a number of tourism products that seem to have the potential to be developed, amongst which are ecotourism, agro-tourism and homestay programmes cultural and heritage tourism, themed events, meetings, incentive, conventions and exhibitions market, sports and recreation tourism, education tourism and health tourism and Malaysia my second home programme. In order to see that this programme is successful, several strategies have been undertaken by the government and among these are to ensure sustainable tourism development, enhancing the development of innovative tourism products and services, encouraging and facilitating domestic tourism, intensifying marketing and promotional activities,

improving the development of human resources and ensuring comfort, safety and welfare of tourists (9th Malaysia Plan).

In attracting foreign tourists to see the cultural diversity and natural beauty of the country, thus several heritage-based products that have the potential to be promoted are certainly sites that have been recognized by UNESCO as a world heritage site. Among these sites are the Mulu National Park and Kinabalu National Park as world heritage site of the natural while George town and Melaka as well as the archaeological site of Lenggong Valley as world heritage site of the culture category. There are 37 sites that have been recognised by UNESCO in South East Asia and among these are Angkor and the Temple of Preah Vihear in Cambodia, Ban Chiang archaeological site, Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex, Historic Town of Sukhothai and associated historic towns, Thungyai-Huai Kha Khaeng and the historic town of Ayutthaya in Thailand; Cultural Landscape of Bali: the Subak System as a manifestation of the Tri Hita Karana philosophy, Candi Borobudur, Komodo National Park, Lorentz National Park, Candi Prambanan, Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatera and Ujung Kulon National Park in Indonesia; Pyu Ancient Cities in Myanmar; Town of Luang Prabang, Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape in Laos; Baroque Churches in the Philippines, Historic Town of Vigan, Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary, Puerto-Princesa Subterranean River National Park, Rice Terraces of the Philippines Cordilleras and Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park in the Philippines; Central Sector of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long-Hanoi, Citadel of the H? Dynasty, Complex of Hue Monument, Ha Long Bay, Ancient Town of Hoi An, My Son Sanctuary, Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park and Trang An Landscape Complex in Vietnam. It is not an easy task for a site to be nominated, accepted and awarded as a World Heritage site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Accordingly, the process of conservation in maintaining the status must be taken as well as maintaining its competitiveness, particularly in the context of heritage-based tourism.

This study will attempt to look at the existing competitiveness of cultural heritage and natural heritage based tourism products that have been recognized by UNESCO in Malaysia. The sites are the Mulu National Park and Kinabalu National Park as world heritage sites of the natural category while George town and Melaka as well as the archaeological site of Lenggong Valley as world heritage sites of the cultural category. Hassan (2009) mentioned that “transforming the place

development pattern so that it is ‘liveable’ to the people, ‘investable’ to the investors and ‘visitable’ to tourists are among the critical essence and dominant direction in the effort to increase the competitive ability of a place”.

Place competitiveness is also meant as the way in which a place is exploited so that the place would have its own distinct advantage compared to other places and indirectly generate high economic growth. In enhancing place competitiveness, advantages in terms of the quality of the place should be taken into consideration since at the same time place productivity is seen to have become more challenging and dynamic (Harvey, 1989). The place must also have its own distinctiveness and branding so that it is more prominent and easily recognizable because it has its own identity and uniqueness (Griffiths, 1998; Kotler *et al.*, 2002). In addition, integrating the elements or components of tourism holistically or comprehensively is also needed in incorporating the importance of cultural factors in the region’s economic development. Apart from cultural factors, differences that exist in an area or place is also influenced by the factors of the physical condition of the terrain, the natural habitat, the people’s socio-economic condition and the current political leadership (Hassan *et al.*, 2013).

The term ‘place’ also carries a variety of meaning and significance where Knox and Pinch (2014) described place as a geographical space occupied by certain people or entities. The concept of place has been interpreted based on three elements, namely the location or the whereabouts of the place; the second is the local identity or characteristic that is unique and becomes a symbolic of its space and the third is the emotion or feeling towards the place (Gregory *et al.*, 2011). However, this concept has been developed further with the interpretation that place can also be an element of a product or commodity (Kotler *et al.*, 2002). By combining the perspective of geography, marketing and heritage, hence, place can be exploited for use as a tourist spot where it can be packaged, utilised, enjoyed and visited with certain costs that must be paid for anyone who desires or wants it.

In the context of developing a tourism product, a destination or a place should be able to highlight its strength, superiority and uniqueness, whether it is tangible or intangible so that it is easily recognised, remembered and becomes well known or a household name for those who have already visited the destination. Therefore, the strength, superiority and uniqueness of heritage-based products in Malaysia are more of the recognition of UNESCO towards several world heritage sites in Malaysia, namely Mulu National Park and Kinabalu National Park as world heritage sites of the natural category while George town and melaka as well as

the archaeological site of Lenggong Valley as world heritage sites of the cultural category. Each of these world heritage sites has its own unique features and becomes a challenge to Malaysia to maintain the status of these world heritage sites in the future.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN PRESERVING NATURAL HERITAGE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Referring to the World Heritage Committee (WHC), the term 'heritage' is stated as the legacy of the past that is still practised today and handed down from one generation to the next. On the other hand, the Department of National Heritage defines heritage as national treasures inherited from previous generations, whether currently owned or were once owned by a group of people in the society in which their conservation and preservation is a shared responsibility. Our heritage is the knowledge and expertise passed down to us through the ways of life and beliefs that are embodied through cultural objects. It describes the memory of the entire society's life as well as symbolises the civilisation of a society. Natural and cultural heritage have indeed always been a source and inspiration of life that are irreplaceable. In fact, this heritage is the benchmark, the base of reference and identity of a society. Basically, heritage is something that is in tangible and intangible form which is owned by a society hereditarily and the heritage is highly valued and important in the context of social and cultural evolution of the society.

Malaysia requires a complete act to preserve and conserve its heritage and culture to overcome the problems of loss and development of heritage and culture in the future. The Treasure Trove Act 1957 (Act 542) and the Antiquities Act 1976 (Act 168) are seen as still having weaknesses because they do not encompass all sections or rules that can protect, conserve, preserve and maintain the heritage and culture. Weaknesses such as these in the long run will be detrimental to the country and thus the gazettelement of the National Heritage Act in 2005 has given new lease of life and impetus in upholding and elevating the heritage and culture of this country.

Two types of heritage enshrined in the National Heritage Act (2005) are cultural heritage and natural heritage. Cultural heritage is a tangible form of cultural structures or artefacts and can include things, objects, items, artefacts, structural development that is pertinent to the historical or contemporary way of life of the people in Malaysia above or in the ground or underwater cultural heritage for tangible forms but not including natural heritage. Examples of cultural heritage are such as

historical monuments, heritage sites, archaeological reserves, heritage objects and including components of intangible heritage such as performing arts, customs and culture, language and literature and the fine arts. On the other hand, natural heritage refers to areas of natural features that comprise of physical or biological formation of land or groups of such formation, geological or physiographical features, mountains, rivers, streams, rock formation, sea coasts or any natural site that has outstanding value from the perspective of nature, science historical conservation or natural beauty including flora and fauna of Malaysia. Examples are such as seismically active, fossiliferous, geothermic manifestations (amongst which hot springs), limestone areas, waterfalls, hot springs, corridors of interesting landscape and salt licks.

Legislation that touches on conservation and preservation of natural heritage has been enacted, whether at the federal or the state government level. Underpinning these are the Federal Constitution as well as other acts that have been drafted, among them are the National Heritage Act (2005), the National Land Code 1965, the National Forestry Act 1984, the Local Government Act 1976, the Wildlife Conservation Act, 2010 and other acts related to natural heritage. In preserving the cultural heritage and natural heritage in Malaysia, matters pertaining to legislation are found to have mutually complemented each other between the legislation adopted by the federal government to the legislation adopted by the state governments; however, what remains a question is whether there is coordination between the Federal government and the state governments. This coordination is essential so that no problems would arise when a protected area is encroached by certain parties in which each party will blame the others like what happened when a proto-historic site in the Bujang Valley was destroyed to enable housing projects to be carried out. If these events occurred, in terms of history and heritage the country will indirectly suffer losses.

Apart from legislation, the Department of Town and Country Planning of Peninsular Malaysia has issued Planning Guidelines for Conservation and Development of Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) specifically for the conservation and development of natural heritage and antiquities. The guidelines are read in conjunction with the law, Federal and State policies, as well as GP Development Planning for Hill and Upland Areas, which was approved by the Cabinet on 12 August 2009 and 62nd MNKT (National Council for Local Government) on 17 September 2009, as well as other requirements of various relevant technical agencies.

WORLD HERITAGE SITE OF THE CULTURAL CATEGORY IN MALAYSIA

According to UNESCO, UNESCO’s World Heritage Site is a site that has outstanding universal value that should be shared with all countries in the world. It is not an easy task for a country to gain recognition for a site, area, building or a monument to be appointed as a world heritage. Careful consideration is carried out by UNESCO based on the characteristics of outstanding universal value that exists for a site before declaring it as a World Heritage. Listing of a site or area as a UNESCO World Heritage Site means that the site or area should be shared together with the rest of the world regardless of race and country.

In Malaysia, a total of three sites have been recognized by UNESCO as a world heritage site of the cultural category, namely Melaka, George Town and the archaeological site of Lenggong Valley in Perak. Melaka and George TOWN (Penang) have been recognized jointly as a World Heritage site by the World Heritage Committee in the 32nd convention in Quebec City, Canada in 2008. The listing of Melaka and George town as a world heritage

site is based on the criteria outlined in Paragraph 77 of the “Operational Guideline for Implementation” by the World Heritage Convention where the nomination of Melaka and George town as the ‘Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca: Melaka and George town’ is in accordance to the universal outstanding value. Contrastingly, the archaeological site of Lenggong Valley was recognized as a world heritage site on June 30, 2012 and this listing poses a challenge to Malaysia to be competitive with other heritage-based tourism products that exist in Southeast Asia shown in Fig. 1.

George town is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site based on the statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) which represent three criteria:

- OUV 2: To represent exceptional examples of multi-racial trading towns in East and Southeast Asia-exchanges of Malay, Chines, Indian and European cultures
- OUV 3: Living testimony to the multi-cultural heritage and tradition of Asia the coexistence of both the tangible and intangible in particular the different religious buildings

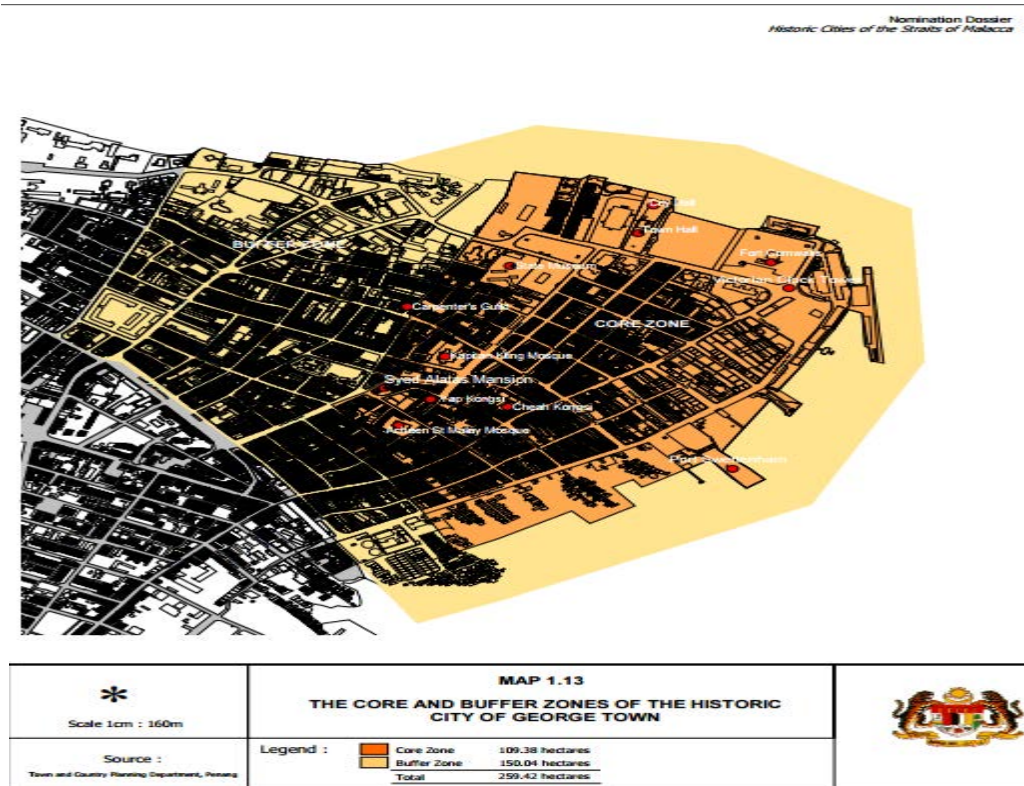


Fig. 1: Core zone and buffer zone in George town, Penang

Table 1: Categories and sites in the UNESCO world heritage site of penang

Categories	No. of buildings and sites	Notes
Category 1	93	Monuments of exceptional interests Buildings and monuments declared as ancient and formerly gazetted under the Antiquities Act 1976 (the National Heritage Act, 2005) Buildings registered under the National Heritage Act (2005) as a National Heritage
Category 2	4048	Buildings and sites located in the Core Zone (69 of the 93 buildings and sites) Buildings of special importance that warrant every effort of preserving them The most prominent category which make up the majority of buildings in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of George Town. Fair distribution is only in the core zone and buffer zone
“Infill development”	585	Existing vacant land or temporary structures which are compatible with redevelopment is permitted ‘Infill’ sites which have been identified that correspond to 14.49 ha of land area, mainly sited by the sea side between Lebu Pantai and Pengkalan Weld
“Replacement”	713	Existing buildings without any significant values where sensitive redevelopment is permitted
Total	5439	

Shamsuddin *et al.* (2012)

- OUV 4: Reflects a mixture of influences from the Malay Archipelago, India, China and Europe-creating unique architecture, culture and townscape without parallel anywhere in the East and Southeast Asia

There are >4,000 old buildings, including shops and terraced houses, bungalows, villas, government offices, commercial buildings, churches, mosques, Chinese and Hindu temples, warehouses and offices, water villages, residential blocks and monuments. These buildings that have heritage have been protected under the main federal law. Shamsuddin *et al.* (2012) states that buildings are very prominent in the physical environment and important to the identity of the towns. Table 1 shows the categories of buildings and sites in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of George Town.

Melaka is selected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site based on the statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) which represents three criteria:

- OUV2: Melaka has the characteristics of universal heritage value as a port town in the east and in Southeast Asia, created through trade as well as cultural exchanges between Malays, Chinese, Indians and colonization of the Portuguese, Dutch and English. This situation has influenced the architecture, townscape and the technology available in Melaka, UNESCO’s World Heritage cities
- OUV3: Melaka is an example of a city that has rich Asian cultural heritage and tradition as well as having European influences. These cultural heritage and tradition can be seen through the settlements of various races, various types of house of worship, the diversity of languages, religious celebrations and diversity of types of clothing, food and way of life of the local community

- OUV4: Melaka still reflects an amalgam of various influences that create unique architecture and townscape based on the diversity of culture and this uniqueness is not the same as any other city in the Eastern or Southern area of Asia

The number of buildings in the core zone is 1,075 and in the Buffer Zone there are 1,975 buildings. The total number of buildings in the World Heritage Site of Melaka is 3,050 units shown in Fig. 2. The Lenggong Valley Archaeological Site which was listed in 2012 has been selected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The listing is based on the statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) which represents two criteria:

- OUV3: The existence of silt stone caves and open site near Perak River in the Lenggong Valley proves the existence of early human settlements especially during the Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age since 1.83 million years until 1700 year ago
- OUV4: Palaeolithic stone tool making workshop of an in-situ and undisturbed condition, located near an ancient lake (paleolake) and ancient river of rocky pebbles and having a very long chronological sequence, indirectly demonstrates exceptional achievement in stone tool technology

Listing of Lenggong Valley Archaeological Site shows that the potential of archaeotourism in Malaysia is bright and can be developed even though Malaysia does not have a lot of archaeological sites when compared to other neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia. However, the listing of Gunung Mulu as World Heritage of the Natural Category also enables potential archaeological sites that store thousands of treasures of prehistoric society in the form of artefacts and prehistoric burial sites to be exploited as one of the archaeotourism products.

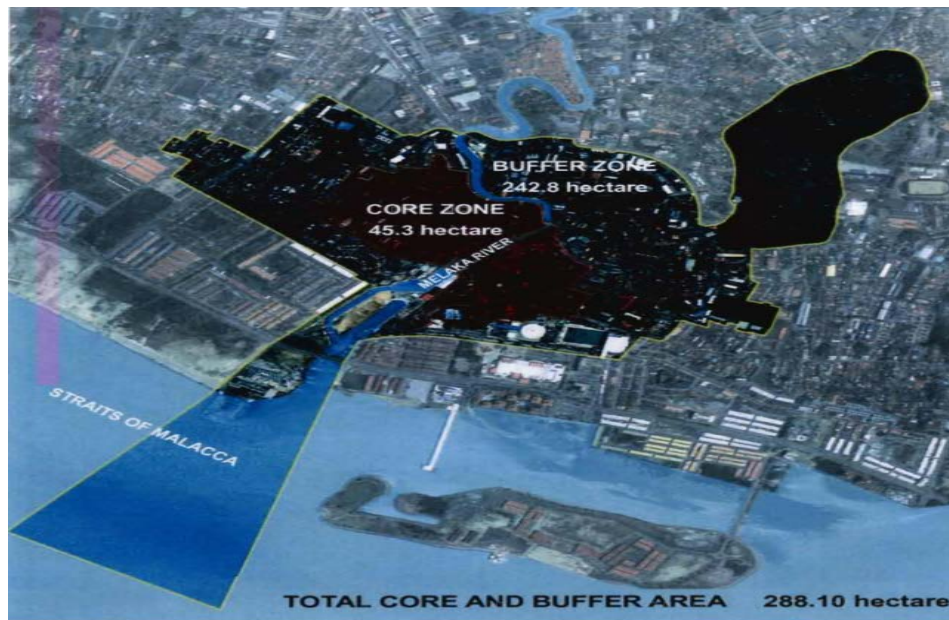


Fig. 2: Core zone and buffer zone in Melaka

WORLD HISTORICAL SITE OF THE NATURAL CATEGORY

Malaysia is a country that is truly rich in diversity of natural heritage. Natural heritage refers to an area or place that is of natural feature consisting of physical or biological formation of land or groups of such formations, geological or physiographical features, mountains, rivers, streams, rock formation, sea shore or any natural site of outstanding value from the view of nature, science, historical conservation or natural beauty including the flora and fauna of Malaysia.

Two sites have been recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Site of the natural category, namely Mulu National Park in Sarawak and Kinabalu National Park in Sabah. Both sites were recognized by UNESCO in December 2, 2000. Mulu National Park, Sarawak was selected as a world heritage site because of its importance in terms of biodiversity and karst topographic features. It is also an area of tropical karst most studied in the world. Karst formation is formed from carbonated rocks such as limestone, dolomite and sometimes gypsum. Mulu National Park is an area of 52,864 ha, containing seventeen vegetation zones and is covered by more than 3,500 species of vascular plants. Palm species are among the most abundant, with 109 species from 20 genera that have been studied. Gunung Mulu is 2,377 m above sea level and is the highest peak and formed from sandstone. An area of at least 295 km which contains silt stone caves has been explored and these caves are inhabited by

millions of swifts and bats. The Sarawak Chamber with an area of 250,000 m² and a height of 80 m is among the largest cave chamber in the world.

Kinabalu National Park, Sabah, was selected because the site is dominated by Mount Kinabalu (4,095 m) which is the highest mountain between the Himalayas and New Guinea. It is rich in diversity of types of habitats from the tropical lowland forest to the tropical hilly forest, tropical upper montane forest and mountain oak forests to mountain ericaceous forest. Kinabalu National Park has also been designated as 'Centre of Plant Diversity for Southeast Asia' which is rich in species of flora that are also found in the Himalayas, China, Australia, Malaysia, as well as pan-tropical flora. Basically, the criteria that fulfilled the conditions set by UNESCO to recognise Mulu National Park as a World Heritage Site of the natural category are as follows.

Criterion 7: Gunung Mulu National Park is an area of exceptional natural beauty with striking primary forest, karst terrain, mountains, waterfalls and the largest caves on earth. Sarawak Chamber, the largest cave chamber in the world, stretches 600 m in length by 415 m wide and 80 m high. With a volume of 12 mln. m³ and an unsupported roof span of 300 m this chamber dwarfs any other large chamber so far discovered. Deer Cave at 120-150 m in diameter is the largest cave passage in the world known at the present time and the Clearwater Cave System holds the world record as the longest cave in Asia at 110 km of mapped and explored passages. As some of

the largest caves in the world they contain fine examples of tropical river caves, flood incuts, vadose and phreatic caves, exhibiting fine examples of all types of speleothems (structures formed in a cave by the deposition of minerals from water).

Criterion 8: The park is an outstanding example of major changes in the Earth's history. Three major rock formations are evident; the Mulu Formation of Palaeocene and Eocene shale's and sandstone, rising to 2,376 m at the summit of Gunung Mulu; the 1.5 km thick Melinau Limestone formation of Upper Eocene, Oligocene and Lower Miocene, rising to 1,682 m at Gunung Api and the Miocene Setap Shale formation outcropping as a gentle line of hills to the West. Major uplift that occurred during the late Pliocene to Pleistocene is well represented in the 295 km of explored caves as a series of major cave levels. The surface and underground geomorphology and hydrology reveal significant information on the tectonic and climatic evolution of Borneo. The sequence of terrestrial alluvial deposits provides an important record of glacial interglacial cycles with the series of uplifted caves ranging from 28 m to over 300 m above sea level are at least 2-3 million years old, indicating uplift rates of about 19 cm per 1,000 year.

Criterion 9: The property provides significant scientific opportunities to study theories on the origins of cave fauna with over 200 species recorded, including many troglobitic species and it displays outstanding examples of ongoing ecological and biological processes. Seventeen vegetation zones have been identified along with their diverse associated fauna. Some 3,500 species of plants, 1,700 mosses and liverworts and over 4,000 species of fungi have been recorded within the property. There are 20,000 species of invertebrates, 81 species of mammals, 270 species of birds, 55 species of reptiles, 76 species of amphibians and 48 species of fish.

Criterion 10: The property supports one of the richest assemblages of flora to be found in any area of comparable size in the world. It is botanically-rich in species and high in endemism, including one of the richest sites in the world for palm species and contains outstanding natural habitats for *in-situ* conservation for a large number of species; Deer Cave alone has one of the largest colonies in the world of free tailed bats, *Chaerephon plicata* at over 3 million. This one cave also has the largest number of different species of bats to be found in a single cave. Several million cave swiftlets (*Aerodramus* sp.) have been recorded from one cave system, constituting the largest colony in the world.

Many species of fauna are endemic and 41 species are included on the endangered species list. Whereas the criteria that supported Kinabalu National Park to be recognized by UNESCO as a World Natural Heritage Site are as follows.

Criterion 9: Kinabalu Park has an exceptional array of naturally functioning ecosystems. A number of processes actively provide ideal conditions for the diverse biota, high endemism and rapid evolutionary rates. Several factors combine to influence these processes; the great altitudinal and climatic gradient from tropical forest to alpine conditions; steeply dissected topography causing effective geographical isolation over short distances; the diverse geology with many localised edaphic conditions, particularly the ultramafic substrates; the frequent climate oscillations influenced by El Nino events and geological history of the Malay archipelago and proximity to the much older crocker range.

Criterion 10: Floristically species-rich and identified as a globally important Centre of Plant Endemism, Kinabalu Park contains an estimated 5,000-6,000 vascular plant species including representatives from more than half the families of all flowering plants. The presence of 1,000 orchid species, 78 species of Ficus and 60 species of ferns is indicative of the botanical richness of the property. The variety of Kinabalu's habitats includes six vegetation zones, ranging from lowland rainforest to alpine scrub at 4,095 m. Faunal diversity is also high and the property is an important centre for endemism. The majority of Borneo's mammals, birds, amphibians and invertebrates (many threatened and vulnerable) are known to occur in the park including; 90 species of lowland mammal, 22 mammal species in the montane zone and 326 bird species.

POTENTIAL AND CHALLENGES OF HERITAGE BASED TOURISM

Tourism is one of the sectors that contributes greatly to the national economy and that grows rapidly from year to year. The tourism sector in 2013 accounted for 12% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and was expected to grow to 12.5% in 2014 in which the expenses that involved tourists were expected to increase to 125 billion ringgit (Tourism to contribute 12.5% to Malaysia's GDP next year, 2013). Meanwhile according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the contribution of the country's tourism sector in 2013 stood at 16.1% of gross domestic product, involving a total expenditure of 158.2 billion ringgit (Travel and Tourism in Malaysia to grow by 6.8% during 2014).

Based on the increasing trend in the number of tourists coming to Malaysia, hence the potential for these heritage based sites to be visited is extremely high. An example is the state of Melaka which had recorded an increase in the number of tourists by 5.03% in 2014. According to Datuk Seri Idris Haron who is also the Chief Minister of Melaka, the number of tourist arrival to Melaka is huge, totalling 15.4 million people in 2014 of which 26% were tourists from abroad (Total Tourism to Melaka Increased by 5.03%, 2015). This in turn could indirectly increase the potential of the existing heritage-based tourism in Malacca to be visited and for its uniqueness to be experienced whether by local or Foreign tourists. Er (2013) in a study involving the development of sustainable tourism in Melaka revealed that many tourists who came to Melaka brought their families with them and indirectly this indicates Melaka as a destination of family tourism. The interest to travel to Melaka is because there are many heritage based tourist destinations and interesting historical sites. Heritage buildings such as the A-Famosa, Stadhuys and traditional shop houses in the town are still preserved by maintaining its aesthetic values. Hassan (2009) mentioned that socio-cultural heritage of the people, daily economic activities, ancillary activities through hobbies and management style as well as leadership credence in a place also have the capacity to contribute to the process of marketing the place product as an attraction and simultaneously enhance place competitiveness.

Heritage buildings of religious identity such as the Kampung Kling Mosque, Chen Boon Temple and St. Paul church can also become tourist attractions and these buildings are still preserved well. The Kampung Kling Mosque which has architecture influenced by the Portuguese, Javanese, Indians and Chinese was gazetted under the Enactment of the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage 1988. Cheng Boon Temple has been recognized by UNESCO as a historical heritage of Melaka together with the building of St. Paul's Church. According to the National Heritage Register, Kampung Kling Mosque and St. Paul's Church also have been recognized as a National Heritage and therefore the conservation and preservation work on these sites should be monitored by the National Heritage Department. Apart from the potential of heritage based tourism in terms of architecture and historical sites that are available in Melaka, the potential of the cultural heritage of Kampung Morten's community is also a choice among tourists, especially foreign tourists who are interested in traditional dance and music.

According to Ghafar Ahmad most of the heritage buildings in George town have not been conserved well

and most of them are in poor condition due to the factor of the buildings being badly damaged. What is even more unfortunate is that some of these heritage buildings are being threatened with destruction because they are abandoned by the original owners and are being torn down because of the demands of development as well as lack of concern of the community in the efforts of preserving heritage buildings. However, with the recognition and listing of the City of Melaka and George Town as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO which is also known as "The Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca" under the category of Cultural Heritage Site on 7th July 2008 (Jabatan Wawasan Negara, 2008), it has somewhat generated awareness among the general public in Malaysia on the importance of conservation and appreciating the heritage found in this country especially heritage buildings. Preservation of buildings through conservation work requires huge fund and when the fund is not enough hence, the conservation work of the building is limited and restricted.

The tourism industry in Hulu Perak which situates Lenggong Valley Archaeological Site has increased as a result of the recognition of Lenggong Valley as a World Heritage Site. According to the Chief Minister of Perak, Datuk Seri Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir, the average monthly tourist arrivals increased from 2000 tourists to 5000. This indirectly has a positive impact on rural communities, especially in Lenggong who feel the impact of economic development and infrastructure that is developed in this area. Lenggong Valley Archaeological Site provides tourism product that brings tourists to experience the prehistoric environment of the people who once inhabited the rock silt caves and the open sites of the ancient lakeside of Lenggong. The archaeological site in Lenggong Valley is the oldest archaeological site in Malaysia where the site of Bukit Bunuh is dated to about 200,000 year ago (Saidin, 2011). Lenggong Valley at 1.83 million years ago had also felt the impact of a meteorite which changed the structure of the rocks in this area. Nevertheless, the potential of Lenggong Valley Archaeological Site should be supported by other tourism products from nearby location.

Hassan *et al.* (2013) in their study suggested that Lenggong Valley which is rich in archaeological sites and archaeo-geology that it achieved the status of world archaeological heritage site should integrate these resources with other resources that can be exploited. Local non-archaeological resources such as hills, lakes and rivers, flora and fauna as well as economic and cultural activities of the local people should be integrated together to improve the competitiveness of Lenggong Valley. This competitive advantage is able to help speed

up efforts to promote Lenggong as a leading tourist destination in the future. Various elements and attributes that are available in a place with the right strategies and methods, managed prudently, effectively and efficiently would be able to become marketable products and become an attraction to tourists whether local or international (Hassan *et al.* 2013). Generation of attractive place attributes are able to bolster the sentiment of “sense of place” for the local community and thereby help increase additional income and achieve the government’s desire to produce more local entrepreneurs. Local communities, local government and state government who are already proud with the status awarded by UNESCO should try to enhance competitiveness and to realize the development of their resources as well as possible so that the place is well known worldwide. This is in line with the government’s desire to generate and strengthen industry based on local edge in order to face global competition which is becoming more intense and varied.

Mulu National Park and Kinabalu National Park are the two natural heritage sites recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites of natural heritage category. Indirectly, UNESCO’s recognition has managed to increase tourist arrivals to Sabah and Sarawak from year to year. The statement by Oswald Braken Tisen who is also the Senior Manager of the Protected Areas and Biodiversity Department of Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) in 2010 revealed that the status of world heritage of Gunung Mulu National Park has continued to attract increasing numbers of tourists, especially from abroad. Statistics showed that Mulu only attracted a total of 11,552 tourists in 1999 but the number of tourists had leapt to 13,862 in 2001 and 23,971 in 2005. The highest number of tourist arrivals was recorded in 2006, amounting to a total of 24,612 tourists, while in 2009 the number of tourist arrivals registered a total of 22,220 tourists. The impact of UNESCO’s recognition has enabled Gunung Mulu to be included in the world map in the context of heritage tourism and this can be seen from the statistics that showed the number of foreign tourists who visited Gunung Mulu increased from 7819 in 1999-8438 in 2001 and this number continued to increase to 12,567 people in 2005. The world heritage status has given an edge to Mulu compared to other tourism products in Sarawak. The increasing number of tourists indirectly provides a source of income for the locals, particularly the Penan people who sell all kinds of handicrafts and products from the forest.

Mount Kinabalu which is the highest mountain in Southeast Asia is one of Malaysia’s top tourist attraction products. Kinabalu Park which is located in Sabah is one

of Malaysia’s national parks that is well known worldwide as a “mega-biodiversity” location (Chan, 2010). Kinabalu Park was gazetted in 1964 and was recognized as a world heritage site of natural category in 2000 and valued at the “outstanding universal value” and serves as one of the most important world’s websites in terms of biology. Tourists who come to the Kinabalu National Park can also be categorized into two groups, i.e., the group who comes to climb Mount Kinabalu and the other is the group of tourists who come to enjoy nature at the foot of the mountain. In addition to Sabah’s biodiversity, the uniqueness of the culture and traditions of the ethnic communities in Sabah is also one of the factors of tourist attractions in Sabah.

In 2011, Sabah recorded tourist arrivals of 2.8 million people in which this amount represented an increase of 12 percent compared to total tourist arrivals in 2010. The number of visitors to Kinabalu Park which covers the Kinabalu Park Headquarters Station in Kundasang, Poring Hot Spring Station in Ranau, Serinsim Sub Station in Kota Marudu, Mesilau Sub Station in Kundasang, Sayap Sub Station in Kota Belud, Monggis Sub Station in Ranau and Kg. Nalapak North Division Sub Station was a total of 611,624 people in 2010 and a total of 554,773 people in 2009. The number of visitors had increased by a total of 56,851 people or 10% in 2010 over the previous year. A total of 489,840 Malaysians visited Kinabalu Park in 2010 and a total of 446,211 Malaysians in 2009. The increase in the number of Malaysian visitors was 43,629 visitors or 10% compared with 2009. A total of 121,784 foreigners visited Kinabalu Park in 2010 while in 2009, it was 108,562 people. The increase in the number of foreign visitors was at 13,222 visitors or 12% in 2010 compared to 2009. The main destination of visitors at the Kinabalu Park is the Poring Hot Spring Station which accounted for 52% or a total of 318,284 visitors from the total number of visitors coming to the station in 2010.

Mulu National Park, Kinabalu National Park and Lenggong Valley are categorized as tourism products based on ecotourism. However, Lenggong Valley Archaeological Site is more focused on the aspect of the archaeological relics itself and the concept of archaeotourism has not been developed seriously. The success rate of ecotourism demonstrates its ability to attract tourists and the increase in the number of tourists may lead to negative effects on the environment such as the generation of solid waste, deforestation and others (Stem *et al.*, 2003). Without proper and systematic management of solid system, it can affect the number of tourist arrivals in the future (Hong, 2013). Dirty and unkempt tourist areas would convey negative perception to tourists and with advanced means of communication in

this age, these news or stories will quickly spread. The way in which the management of a National Park acts depends on the level of efficiency of these people who have been entrusted to take care of the area. To that end the involvement of local communities in the management of National Parks and heritage tourism areas is crucial in achieving sustainable ecotourism management (Hong, 2013). Some things have been overlooked in the aspect of World Heritage Site management in Malaysia, especially those involving natural heritage. Emphasis is not given in terms of nature conservation but only in terms of profits and services, especially when a National Park is managed by the private sector. In addition, there is a lack of tourist demand for environmental knowledge-based component in activities involving ecotourism and there is no feedback from the public and private sectors in addressing this issue. This indirectly implies that the objective of establishing National Parks in delivering environmental education has been overlooked by some of the National Parks' management. In this matter, the parties involved should be more proactive by working together with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and local universities that would be able to provide their expertise especially those involving issues of environmental education and education about heritage regardless of whether it involves cultural heritage or natural heritage.

CONCLUSION

Malaysia is very fortunate because several heritage sites whether cultural heritage sites or natural heritage sites have been recognized by UNESCO as world heritage site. This recognition has indirectly attracted more tourists to come to Malaysia in order to enjoy the natural beauty and diversity in terms of culture and customs practiced by Malaysians. The potential to enhance the heritage based tourism industry is tremendous based on the existing tourist products offered to tourists. With the establishment of the Department of National Heritage, the potential of these heritage based tourism products should be heightened and promoted nationally and internationally. Some of the challenges that need to be faced whether for the public or the private sector is how to provide educational services to the community or the tourists in terms of heritage education and also environmental education. Close cooperation between the various parties in creating a sustainable heritage based tourism development needs to be carried out, especially those involving Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and local universities.

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