



ISSN: 0975-833X

Available online at <http://www.journalcra.com>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF CURRENT RESEARCH

International Journal of Current Research
Vol. 11, Issue, 03, pp.2693-2698, March, 2019

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24941/ijcr.34922.03.2019>

RESEARCH ARTICLE

LOCAL COMMUNITY PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE PLACE IDENTITY OF THE ROYAL MAUSOLEUM OF SULTAN MAHMUD SHAH, KOTA TINGGI, MALAYSIA

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 24th December, 2018

Received in revised form

20th January, 2019

Accepted 27th February, 2019

Published online 31st March, 2019

Key Words:

Royal Mausoleum, Place Identity, Local Community, Sultan Mahmud Shah

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ABSTRACT

The Royal Mausoleum of Sultan Mahmud Shah is a small and mundane heritage landmark in the Historical Tourism District in Johor. The Royal Mausoleum represents the history of Sultan Mahmud Shah II, which his decease remarked the end of the glorious dynasty of Melaka Sultanate in Johor ruling system. It is realized through the inheritance of history of the deceased Sultan Mahmud Shah and the symbolic of the Royal Mausoleum as a heritage asset in Kota Tinggi creates an identity among the local community towards the place. This research aimed to identify the identity and value of cultural heritage among community in relation to the existence of Royal Mausoleum at Kota Tinggi, Johor using an adopted model by Breakwell's Theory on Identity which emphasized on continuity, distinctiveness, and self-esteem. Quantitative method is used based on questionnaire survey conducted to 300 respondents in order to measure the dependency of the place and local identity of the community. Analysed using t-test and ANOVA analysis, the results showed that there was an emotion bonding and memory attachment to the Royal Mausoleum among the local community in the village. The Royal Mausoleum seems to bring back the nostalgia in terms of old memories especially among the veteran group of local community. The results confirmed that the socio-demographic background such as education, occupation, and age group mostly influenced the significance of items for place identity, which were 'distinctiveness' and 'self-esteem'. This research contributed in identifying the place identity of the Royal Mausoleum. Hence, it helped in strengthen the criteria of the Royal Mausoleum to be more presentable as tourist attraction.

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Citation: Nur Shahida Nasha Mohd Nashir and Mohd Hafizal Ismail, 2019. "Local community perception towards the place identity of the royal mausoleum of sultan Mahmud Shah, Kota Tinggi, Malaysia", *International Journal of Current Research*, 11, (03), 2693-2698.

INTRODUCTION

Heritage building that not been listed under the global interest, and does not preserved by the government authorities as protected building usually tend to be neglected from the attention of the public despite the glorious of the history lied within the building (Bakri, 2014; Yahaya and Sayuti, 2011). In many cases like this, local community lived in the area should act as a pillar for these infamous heritage building to ensure the heritage and history beneath the building stay valuable and emerged as an identity for the place (Roslan *et al.*, 2017; Walker, 2010). For instance, Mohamed and Salim (2018) has identified small and mundane heritage place that contains 'identity' and meaning to the local community has become derelict and loss sense of place. It is suggested identity of the place may be deteriorated and forgotten if awareness on place identity not was being emphasized among the local community. Del Pozo (2012); Mydland and Grahn (2012) revealed a strong heritage value and identity for the place are resulted from the perception of the local community throughout the years.

This paper deals with the assessment on the local community awareness and the feeling of attachment towards heritage building as it prior in shaping the identity for the place, especially the less-attention heritage building to make it more presentable and outstanding as tourist attraction and conservation purpose. As Hawke (2010) and Grimwade and Carter (2012) suggested that, a small scale of heritage site that directly represented personal lives of local community should contribute a significant value of the heritage and create a potential benefit for local community as well. Ashworth (2007) stated that there is an identity in heritage place that is generated by the history where the identity becomes the heritage tourism attraction. The Royal Mausoleum of Sultan Mahmud Shah is one example of small and non-famous heritage building. Despite of that, it is also a historical landmark in Kota Tinggi. However the local community seems to 'oversight' the building probably due to its 'randomness' and being seen every day in their daily basis. The Royal Mausoleum of Sultan Mahmud Shah is significance for the inheritance of history from the glorious reign of Melaka Sultanate. The death of Sultan Mahmud Shah II, has remarked the end of Melaka Sultanate in Johor heirs background

(Chronicles of the State of Johor, 1996). The tragedy happened to Sultan Mahmud Shah II being him entitled as '*King Mahmud that died on the Royal Litter*' for his deceased (Chronicles of the State of Johor, 1996). Thus, it was important for this research to identify the identity as there is little confirmation about the issue of determined value towards place identity among local community in Malaysia, particularly on the Royal Mausoleum of Sultan Mahmud Shah, Kota Tinggi Johor.

Local community in heritage place: Local community refers to a group of people living together in one place or having religion, race, profession or other characteristics in common (Hung *et al.*, 2011; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Pearsall, 1998, p.137). Many agreed local community are the catalyst for successful heritage places in the world (Mydland and Grahn, 2012; Walker, Grimwad and Carter, 2010; Chhabra, Healy and Sills, 2003; Wandu, 1996). The context of local community in their reliability of presenting the place identity of heritage building may become a hesitation, since they are not from professional background. However, community refer as one that possesses certain qualities on a sense of shared purpose, and their personal perception on heritage building are accounted as valuable resource for identifying a heritage building (Ismail, 2012). In this paper we would like to use the personal perceptions among local community living in the heritage area and the aim is to capture their awareness and perceptions on the history and heritage activities happened at the Royal Mausoleum. The local communities living in the village were presumably to indicate certain expression and perceptions to the heritage building in their boundaries (Camp, 2014). Relevant to Wilmot's (1989), Dixon & Durrheim (2000) and Bash (2015) found that communities lived in a common residential area at least shared some of their opinion or identity to the same symbolic place. It may be challenging to develop understanding of the true meaning of 'heritage' or 'self-attachment' among the local community; however with this opportunity to ask them by providing suitable presentation and interpretation, the aims can be achieved.

Place identity: Place identity is related with past memory, attachment and the local community (Ujang, 2012; Hawke and Walker, 2010). These three aspects always present in heritage and shaping the identity for heritage place (Del pozo and Gonzalez, 2012). Place identity also claimed to be related with place attachment in many publications, where attachment is benefited from 'identity' represent in many ways from both the local community and heritage place (Ujang, 2012; Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 2000; Twigger- Ross and Uzell, 1996; Proshansky *et al.*'s (1983). Herman and Fatima (2012) suggested that the identity belongs to certain areas is mainly different and it depends on the relationship between the users and physical environment of the place. This practically supported Ujang (2012) who mentioned in her research that the relationship between heritage and identity happens when local community living in particular heritage area could feel the sense of attachment to the history and surrounding environment of the area. They were stimulating as being 'brought' into the nostalgic moments probably- war, colonization, memories such as being raised up in the residential boundaries, struggle of life, death, etc. (Ismail, 2014). In this paper we are using the Break well's model theory of identity (1986, 1992, 1993): distinctiveness, continuity and self-esteem in order to determine the place identity for Royal Mausoleum of Sultan Mahmud Shah.

The distinctiveness in Break well's model explained how a place could be different from another place, and how does it remarked in people's mind. The continuity of the place identity usually refers to the historical stories and past events; or the physical structure belong to the heritage place which never show any signs of changes through time circumstances. Although the stories and structures presented are remains the same; they are distinctive (unique) from another existed histories, it is something to remember (Jacobson- Widding, 1983). Whereas self-esteem, explains how a place can boost a positive environment to him/her. *'living in here makes me feel so good'*. It is also a kind of positive evaluation to oneself that creating the sense of pride living in such area.

The history of the Sultan Mahmud Shah Royal Mausoleum: The new complex of Sultan Mahmud Royal Mausoleum was built in 2010; however the tomb of Sultan Mahmud Shah II was there since 1699 in Kampung Makam (Tuhfat Al-Nafis, 1885). Aged over 100 years, Kampung Makam was located on the banks of the Johor River and among the oldest villages in Kota Tinggi (Sinar Harian, Mei 2015). Kota Tinggi was claimed as the district of historical tourism, as it famous for its history as a thriving port and the old capital of the Johor Sultanate.

Sultan Mahmud Shah II was famously known as "*Sultan Mahmud Mangkat Dijulang*". The name '*Mangkat Dijulang*' was given in recognition of the way he was killed. '*Mangkat*' referring to the term of Malay word of royal death, '*dijulang*' means he was being carried on the dais. In simple understanding, he was assassinated by his military chief, Laksamana Megat Sri Rama when he was on the dais. The famous legend of the murder of Sultan Mahmud II was the most remembered and recounted in 19th century of Malay chronicle, the Tuhfat al- Nafis. Sultan Mahmud was buried in a village near Kota Tinggi in Johor, which is now to be known as the village of the Tomb (*Kampung Makam*). According to a legend has it that before he died, he laid a curse on Kota Tinggi, restricting any children of Bentan to enter the city for seven generations (Hikayat Negeri Johor, 1996). The story of restriction to Bentan's generation is one of the famous legend histories in Kota Tinggi. As it is related to Sultan Mahmud Shah II history, the legend becomes more interesting especially in bringing up the researchers and history enthusiasts to deeply understand and dig more information either it is myths or fact behind the legend.

Purpose of Study: This study is focusing on the complex of Sultan Mahmud Royal Mausoleum at Kota Tinggi, Johor. It is the landmark of heritage and history for visitors to come and visit Kota Tinggi. The reason for choosing this site because the mausoleum has been listed as an asset of cultural heritage in Johor by the government however there is issue of mausoleum receiving less attention and appreciation among the local community (Baker, 2016; Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 2012). Although the age of the building (The Sultan Mahmud Shah Royal Mausoleum) may be younger compared with world standards (Grimwade and Carter, 2010), it should reflect the meaning based on the history development of the nation. In the case of the Royal Mausoleum, it reveals the history of Sultan Mahmud Shah II; the last ruler of Johor descended from the Sultanate of Malacca; one of the glorious empires back in the 14th century (DBP, 2007). However, does this heritage building represent an identity among the local community in Kampung Makam? How deep the attachment of

the local community towards this heritage building, as it represents one of the biggest history in the early era of Johor Sultanate?. Using Breakwell's Model theory of identity, this study triggered the unrevealed information and personal perception and attitudes from the local community regarding the Royal Mausoleum, which it has never been done in any studies in particular. This heritage place certainly faced with the challenge of sustaining its heritage due to rapid development happens in Kampung Makam. The rich cultural heritage should be preserved so that it can be enjoyed by the present and future generations (Bakri et.al, 2015). The place identity will subsequently help in empowerment of the local community, perhaps making the process of conservation in the future accessible. Contributions and personal perceptions from the local community is important as it will develop an identity to the heritage building thus making it 'alive' not only for visitor's purpose, but it all has started from the 'heart' of the local community.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study site: The area for this study is Kampung Makam which located in the district of Kota Tinggi also known as the 'District of Cultural Heritage' of Johor, in the south east part of peninsular Malaysia. Kota Tinggi has been highlighted as the 'District of Cultural Heritage' of Johor due to the richness evident of historical stories and cultural heritage gained from the glorious Malay Sultanates of Johor, that are influenced by the reign of Malay Melaka, Johor-Riau, Singapore and Linggi (Tuhfat Al- Nafis, 1885). As related to the history of the former Johor Sultanate family, many mausoleum of royal's family can be found in Kota Tinggi. However, this research only emphasized the Royal Mausoleum of Sultan Mahmud due to it significant as legendary cultural heritage in Kota Tinggi (Suradi, 2015).

The method

Questionnaire survey: Questionnaire survey forms were distributed among the local community of Kampung Makam, with total sample of 300 people (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). Using convenience sampling technique, questionnaires were distributed to the respondents who were available with the parameter. Meanwhile, the impromptu interviews with personal had made it possible to access the first-hand information and various experiences among the local community which enhanced the result from quantitative data. Basically the respondents were found at home and stalls near to the heritage place within radius 300-400 metres. The reason for setting up a radius parameter for data collection is because to get an accurate data of personal perceptions among the local community who had lived in the heritage place for longer time. Researchers were informed by the Head of Village *Kampung Makam* earlier that the residential area further than 400 metres from the Royal Mausoleum were habited by new-comers, who mostly rented house there and have not residential in for more than three years.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents: The result showed that profile respondents were 52% male and 48% female with ethnicity majority of them are Malay and followed by India. However Chinese and other ethnics were not found in the village.

This was because of the historical background of the place, where Kota Tinggi was formerly related to the beginning of Malay Johor Sultanate reign people (Tuhfat Ai- Nafis, p. 1885). All the respondents aged from 18 years to above 60 years and the biggest group of 27% were among the young adults (18-29 years old). Based on a cross tabulation analysis, 15% of the young adult's respondents were students. This has influenced their perceptions and their awareness towards the existence of the Royal Mausoleum through the knowledge they learned from the education syllabus in learning institutions. Another major group of the respondents were those above 60 years old. Thus, it resulted in 38% of unemployed residents; with majority of them were retirees. This situation clearly can be seen because Kampung Makam is locally known as a small village, where old people are living in the residential while their children move out to the town for job opportunities.

Level of Agreement towards heritage value and place identity: The results in Table 1 reflected the significance of the environment in Kampung Makam and historical context influencing the place identity remarked by the respondents. The scale of a mean score 1.25 implied on the statement 'This village is my favourite place to stay for longer time'. This also supported by other factors, such the respondents agreed they lived in a harmonious and peaceful community with a scale of 1.36 and the community her. These statements highlighted the comfort; harmony and feeling safe were assessed to measure the sense of belongingness among the local community towards the heritage area (Ujang, 2012; Hernandez and Hidalgo, 2008; Proshansky *et al.*, 1983).

In terms of architectural and historical context of the Royal Mausoleum, results indicated the respondents believed the uniqueness of the '*Sultan Mahmud Mangkat Dijulang*' history makes it a reliable source of heritage have actually created the sense of proud among them with recorded scale of 1.56. This proved the Breakwell's Theory on continuity of the history of the existence of the Royal Mausoleum. Historical story encourage a positive response towards the building and it is formed by unique and continuous character (Ginting, 2016).

Place identity between residents' age group and occupation: In order to determine any significant differences in mean scores for the dependent variable (place identity) and the independent variable (respondent's socio demographic), One-Way ANOVA test was performed. Fisher's Least Significant Different (LSD) tests were to explore any possible pair-wise comparisons. For the item 'Royal Mausoleum is a unique infrastructure' has a significant value of 0.01 and 'History of Royal Mausoleum represents the identity of the town' implied the value 0.01. The respondent's age range of 16-29 years old mostly indicated the highest level of agreement to both statements. Based on cross tabulation analysis between age group and occupation, evidently respondents in an age range of 16-29 years old were dominated by students. The young respondents indicate a high level of agreement to the items 'Royal Mausoleum is a unique infrastructure' and 'history of Royal Mausoleum represents the identity of the town', emphasized by the knowledge they received in their formal education. In understanding characteristics of a place, studies by previous scholars such as Mohamed and Salim (2018) revealed that the importance of attributes that create the sense of attachment towards the place is uniqueness. It is about creating a place to become 'different' and special to the eye of local community as well to the visitors.

Table 1. Degree of place identity of the Royal Mausoleum

Components	Items	Mean value
Distinctiveness	I considered the Royal Mausoleum as a unique infrastructure.	1.91
	The Royal Mausoleum represents the identity for this town.	1.58
	I feel this place is distinct from any other place.	1.91
	The uniqueness of the history of this place makes it a reliable source of heritage.	1.56
	I know the history of the Royal Mausoleum	2.16
Continuity	I have memories associated with the Royal Mausoleum.	2.23
	The history and background of the Royal Mausoleum mirror the identity of me.	2.17
	I think the complex of Royal Mausoleum need to undergo maintenance and conservation works	2.11
	I am proud living in heritage area	1.55
Self-esteem	I feel comfortable living in this community	1.36
	The community here live in peacefully and harmoniously.	1.55
	I will tell the outsiders about the Royal Mausoleum	1.72
	This village is my favourite place to stay for longer time	1.25

Note: 1=Strongly Agree2=Agree3= Neutral 4= Disagree5= Strongly Disagree

Table 2. Place identity and resident's age

Items	AGE					p-value
	16-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	>60	
Royal Mausoleum is a unique infrastructure	1.70 ^a	1.89 ^{ab}	1.83 ^{ab}	2.12 ^b	2.05 ^b	0.01
The Royal Mausoleum represents the identity for this town.	1.50 ^{ab}	1.55 ^{ab}	1.27 ^b	1.96 ^a	1.69 ^{ab}	0.01
This place is distinct from any other place.	2.12 ^b	1.84 ^{ab}	1.77 ^b	1.90 ^b	1.82 ^{ab}	0.17
The uniqueness of the history of this place makes it a reliable source of heritage.	1.62 ^a	1.57 ^a	1.33 ^b	1.69 ^a	1.53 ^{ab}	0.34
I know the history of the Royal Mausoleum	2.22 ^a	2.21 ^a	2.13 ^a	2.09 ^a	2.10 ^a	0.78
I have memories associated with the Royal Mausoleum.	2.51 ^a	2.23 ^a	2.19 ^{ab}	2.30 ^a	1.82 ^b	0.01
The history and background of the Royal Mausoleum mirror the identity of me.	2.18 ^a	2.15 ^a	2.38 ^a	2.18 ^a	1.94 ^a	0.19
I think the complex of Royal Mausoleum need to undergo maintenance and conservation work	2.38 ^a	2.15 ^{ab}	2.05 ^{ab}	1.78 ^b	2.00 ^b	0.03
I am proud living in heritage area	1.61 ^a	1.57 ^a	1.41 ^a	1.60 ^a	1.51 ^a	0.59
I feel comfortable living in this community	1.42 ^a	1.39 ^a	1.27 ^a	1.39 ^a	1.28 ^a	0.63
The community here lives in peacefully and harmoniously.	1.62 ^a	1.81 ^a	1.61 ^a	1.69 ^a	1.87 ^a	0.56
I will tell the outsiders about the Royal Mausoleum	1.64 ^a	1.50 ^a	1.38 ^a	1.57 ^a	1.61 ^a	0.47
This is my favorite place to stay for longer time	1.33 ^a	1.34 ^a	1.11 ^a	1.24 ^a	1.20 ^a	0.43

Table 3. Place identity and resident's occupation

Items	AGE						p-value
	Government	Non Government	Self-employed	Student	Housewife	Retired	
Royal Mausoleum is a unique infrastructure	1.85	1.88	1.85	1.53	1.87	2.43	0.01
The Royal Mausoleum represents the identity for this town.	1.44	1.68	1.44	1.35	1.58	1.93	0.03
The history and background of the Royal Mausoleum mirror the identity of me.	2.07	2.20	2.49	1.82	2.03	2.07	0.02
The community here lives in peacefully and harmoniously.	1.48	1.34	1.51	1.70	1.61	1.89	0.03

Their understanding of the history of Sultan Mahmud was mostly influenced by the generous knowledge on particular field (History, Arts, and Architectural Drawing) which may eventually affect the state of mind, and bring out the specific feelings and emotional towards the anticipating subject (Tripp and Muzzin, 2005). In the process of creating a mundane and small heritage place to look unique, it involved knowledge and understand especially among the knowledge generations filler. In contrast, item 'I have memories associated with the Royal Mausoleum' has a significant value of 0.01 and the highest level of agreement showed by residents' age group of 60 years old and above. The result indicated that the veteran residents encompassed various memories and experience related to the Royal Mausoleum. 'Memories' are related with continuity concept for heritage value as has been mentioned by Twigger Ross and Uzell (1996), someone with memories associated to living place, they feel attached for some personal reasons, yet leaves a remarkable event in their lives.

The veteran residents have gone through many events happened in the village, including the upgrading work of the new complex of Royal Mausoleum back in 1999. It was found that most of veteran residents delighted to share their memories associated with the Royal Mausoleum that exactly showed the people nostalgic about the old ways of life, and they were always excited to share the memory and nostalgia to other people (Chabra, Healy and Seals, 2003). Mazumdar and Mazumdar (1993) also have explored old people's attachment to place and how such attachment is 'intimately linked to preservation of a sense of personal identity'. Although the young residents have lesser level of agreement on memories, they strongly believed that the history and the background of the Royal Mausoleum mirrored the identity of themselves. A significance value of 0.02 for the statement 'The history and background of the Royal Mausoleum mirror the identity of me' indicated that there was a gap between the students (M=1.82) and the self-employed group (M=2.49).

Again, this probably related to the education they received in classroom. The value they learned from the civilization and history made them proud telling the identity of heritage places mirroring their background. According to Mohamed, Sulaiman and Othman, (2011) the young generations in schools and universities actually were motivated via the legend of some historical heroes where they believed the warriors were the reasons for Independence Day. Heroes and famous warrior with outstanding history have been widely exposed to the young generation since in their primary education. The impact and effect from the history made them realized the value they should stand for now. Thus, this proven the young residents in Kampung Makam proudly claimed the background of the village and Royal Mausoleum mirroring their identity. It was also supported by Mohamed and Salim (2018) and Wang (1999) that knowledge on the place, people and history may change one behaviour and way of thinking, act, and response towards heritage places around them. (Insert Table 2 and Table 3 here)

Conclusion

In this research, a small and mundane heritage site but contain glorious historical context was assumed to represent a place identity and emerged as valuable heritage building among the local community in Kampung Makam. Most literature indicated that the perceptions from the communities and their feeling of attachment led to appreciation in the state of awareness and emotion bonding to the particular area. It became necessary to reach an understanding about the viewpoint from the local community opinion towards the Royal Mausoleum. This research has proven that the complex of Royal Mausoleum holds its value and identity of the in Kampung Makam as a symbolic landmark to Kota Tinggi history. The result from this research illustrated that the famous history of Sultan Mahmud Mangkat Dijulang influenced the understanding and appreciation among the local community towards the Royal Mausoleum as an object and site of inheritance. Other than that, the place identity of the Royal Mausoleum was proven by the concept of distinctiveness, continuity and self-esteem showed by the local community. The local community agreed on the history the Royal Mausoleum making it a place with its own identity and the environment created in the village harmoniously and peacefully intend them to stay longer in the village. It has answered the objectives for this research. Range of local community's socio-demographic also influenced their perception towards the heritage building, especially on education level and age group. The Royal Mausoleum was identified as an 'identity' among the local community due to two main factors, i) education and ii) experience. In education context, mostly the young adult residents showing their concern on the Royal Mausoleum history and heritage. While the emotion towards the Royal Mausoleum shown by the veteran residents through their experiences, memories, and past events that related and created bonding to them.

Acknowledgement

The authors sincerely acknowledge Research Management Center of Universiti Putra Malaysia and Government of Malaysia for the funding of this research through research grant no. 951400.

Conflict of Interest and Funding: There is no conflict of interest declared and this research funded by Research Management Centre of Universiti Putra Malaysia through research grant no. 951400.

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