



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This thesis addresses key aspects of involving the local community towards Cultural Heritage Management (CHM) in Malaysia. There is agreement in the literature that the involvement of the local community is an important component in developing CHM frameworks and to ensure the sustainability of planning and management of heritage assets and heritage tourism.

The broad background to the study area and its significance is discussed, followed by an explanation of the research objectives and research questions. A brief outline of the thesis structure is provided at the end of this chapter.

1.1 Background of Study Area

A nomination of a heritage site as UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) is not only to visualise the commitment of local authority towards heritage conservation and preservation work, but it has to show the commitment to mobilising the heritage resources towards the improvement of political, economic, social, and educational needs at the local or national levels. For instance, a nomination can show political stability in terms of a well established administrative system by, for example, developing a new government agency that focuses on heritage conservation and the improvement of legislative acts in order to protect the nominated cultural heritage asset(s).

Meanwhile, with respect to educational implication, it provides opportunities for researchers to conduct a scientific investigation especially in the fields of anthropology (Hodges and Watson, 2000; Stukas and Dunlap, 2002; Shackel and Chambers, 2004; Kwan, 2010), and tourism research (McManamon and Hatton, 2000; McKercher, Ho and du Cros, 2004; Poria, Biran and Reichel, 2007). Researchers will propose several solutions, developing comprehensive policies, or marketing strategies, in order to manage the cultural heritage assets. In addition, the nomination as WHS also stimulates the local economy through increased local income and improvements in the quality of life of the local community, especially from the tourism industry (Lee, du Cros, DiStefano and Logan, 2007; Mannarini and Fedi, 2009).

In order to gain the status of World Heritage Site, the candidates of WHS should meet the main 'criteria for selection' by highlighting the significance of the local heritage assets in terms of *Outstanding Universal Values* as outlined by the UNESCO heritage committee (UNESCO, 2008). Next, it requires the nominator (i.e. the government) to develop a framework to perform the planning and management of the heritage assets in a sustainable manner. Often, a Cultural Heritage Management (CHM) Plan emerges as a 'standard' prerequisite for the heritage sites

to fulfil this requirement for submission for consideration as a WHS. However, it should be noted that the requirement to produce a CHM is not only restricted to WHS candidates, but it is a global requirement to be put in place in order to protect and preserve heritage resources.

The Cultural Heritage Management (CHM) is “the systematic care taken to maintain the cultural values of cultural heritage assets for the enjoyment of present and future generation(s)” (McKercher and du Cros, 2002, pp. 43). To provide some historical perspective, the notion of what a CHM framework is has undergone different transitional processes over the decades. Hence, the applications for CHM nomination often have led to changes over time through the diversity of understanding of heritage value in different societies. For instance, in the 19th century, the development of CHM referred to values that were associated with scientific discovery, classification and preservation of heritage (Lee, 2001; Landorf, 2009). Then, in the 20th century, the focus of CHM shifted towards social movement where the public and professional accountability prescribed what was the best strategy for systematic planning and management (Lee, Scott and Moore, 2002; Aas, Ladkin and Fletcher, 2005). Today, in the 21st century, the CHM has overrided all previous notions by putting together the most successful CHM practices from various heritage settings. Indeed, managing cultural heritage resources is very challenging as its complexity derives from external elements or aspects, such as partnerships in the tourism sector that now need to be included in order to produce an effective and successful management system.

Embedded in the CHM framework, there is a theoretical and principal agreement that the local community should be included or engaged to ensure the success of Cultural Heritage Management in practice (Keitumetse, 2009). In addition, Prangnell, Ross and Coghill, (2010) suggested regarding the local community who lived within the heritage setting as a ‘living

heritage'. The 'living heritage' concept emphasises the links between heritage places and characteristics of local people through practicing their day-to-day cultural activities in their cultural and social landscape, such as languages, dances, and foods. Hence, the connection between daily rituals and ancestral cultures can be experienced and practiced through collective memory and community activities, as well direct engagement with visitors.

Despite the desirable goal of CHM to protect and preserve the 'tangible heritage values' such as buildings, ruins, monuments, and artefacts, the preservation and management of 'intangible heritage values' (e.g. living heritage) should also be integrated into the CHM framework. This is essential in order to sustain the interaction between local people and the cultural heritage resources at both social and resource management levels (UNESCO, 2003; Tunprawat, 2009).

However, many researchers have agreed that the authority has not attained an adequate understanding of the importance of the local community participation in order to draw critical connection with CHM framework (Pradhananga and Landorf, 2008; Prangnell, Ross and Coghill, 2010). A report from Tosun and Timothy (2003) suggests that this situation is often to be experienced in many developing countries where the local government has widely implemented a top-down administration. Grounds for this certainty, the success of CHM is always associated with the cooperation and understanding between local community and local government especially in making a joint decision. The government's initiative in planning and managing the heritage site is often motivated by economic interest but there is a lack of interest in sharing the economic benefit with the local community as a holistic whole (Manzo and Perkins, 2006). For instance, governments have often mobilised the cultural heritage planning and management framework to fit with tourism development. Baram and Rowan (2004) stated

that emphasising the heritage values for touristic consumption can limit the social values of a local community.

This is to say that there is a tension between the local community and the government especially in decision making towards heritage planning or management. Obviously the professionals are not fully engaged with the local values that give an intrinsic meaning to a place (Johnson, 1992; Jones, 2004; Walker, 2010). In contrast, if the community is engaged in the management and planning process of the heritage, the outcome products (i.e. tourism development) will be more aligned with the community's values. In consequence, the process gives a chance to make them proud of their cultural and heritage identity and encourages the local people to share their identity and knowledge with the tourists via touristic activities. In fact, the local community is the knowledge bank of a heritage site which should be exploited by the authorities in order to develop a responsible tourism industry (den Camp and du Cross, 2006).

Debates from a diverse range of research disciplines are examined in order to find the best strategies to incorporate and achieve active participation from a local community into the CHM framework. However, there is little research that addresses the question as to whether the local community is actually willing to become involved because of their awareness or due to their personal interests in the development of a WHS. For example: does the individual engage in a government plan because of his/her personal interest, such as to receive a better economic income, or over the concern to protect their culture and heritage? And how do we evaluate the main principle of community participation towards sustainability of heritage management? Does CHM, or the development of a heritage trail led to other issues or conflicts within the society? Hence, this study intends to extend the investigation of this topic from the perspective of socio-

psychology, by determining and understanding the sense of local people's attachment to heritage assets.

Also, while many studies investigate the general involvement of the local community in CHM in particular settings, only few have looked into community involvement on specific developments that practice CHM (Simpson, 2000; Michael, 2009). It is therefore argued that the current knowledge of community participation in CHM may exist more strongly in theory than in practice. Besides, only a few studies have particularly looked into community participation in planning and management via tourism development (Grimwade and Carter, 2000; Aas *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, due to the current knowledge gap concerning the implementation of CHM principles, the concept of heritage trail 'development' could be a suitable vehicle to meet demands of both tourism and conservation. Again, previous research has made little attempt to explore whether heritage trail development provides best management practice and, more importantly, engages with community participation. Hence, investigating the local community attitudes and perceptions towards the development of heritage trails, is to perhaps gain an insight into the current practice of CHM, especially in the context of Malaysian heritage sites. Furthermore, to examine the local government administration's approach towards the engagement of participation via heritage trail development enables an evaluation of whether the current government practice helps the local people to recognise their heritage values and encourages the community to adopt their heritage in coordination with the Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

1.2 Significance of the Research

Community participation towards Cultural Heritage Management has received a great deal of attention from researchers, aiming to incorporate sustainability of conservation and tourism at World Heritage Sites. However, there has been little discussion or exploration of the actual needs of local people, or the development of the existing participation process into a CHM framework in Malaysia settings. Local people are generally interested in aspects of social, economic, educational, and cultural development within their community.

In the context of this study, the needs of the local community can be assessed through the attitudes of people's emotional and functional attachment to heritage resources. The concept of place attachment is strongly related to community participation (Ming and Wall, 2010). However, since gaining the status of a WHS in Melaka, Malaysia has seen economic development growth in relation to tourism, and hence people's attitudes might be derived from external influences and tourist agendas. To deal with this concern, a heritage trail development will be used to explore the relationship between place attachment and community participation. The heritage trail is often regarded as providing dual functions that meet the needs of both conservation and tourism (Cheung, 1999; Hayes and MacLeod, 2007; Al-Hagla, 2010).

Furthermore, the concept of the heritage trail has been viewed as one of the government's initiatives to engage with tourist experience via designing a route that encompasses both tangible and intangible heritage within a heritage site. However, in the case of the Melaka World Heritage Site in Malaysia, since the development of its heritage trail, controversy between local government and local residents has developed at sites along the trail over time (Johari, 2010), for example, conflict between the property owner and trail provider in terms of the uniformity of information signage to the tourists. Moreover, there is also speculation that the

heritage trail development has failed to enhance local cultural awareness, or interest, and does not encourage the local community to recognise specific heritage values, or to adopt their heritage into tourism opportunities. For example, in December 2002, an incident in the Melaka Historic City (known as Melaka WHS since 2008) hit national headlines due to the demolition of heritage buildings within the conservation area (as well as along the heritage trail) by the property owner without legal permission from the local government (Wan Hashimah and Shuhana, 2005). The issue of demolition of heritage buildings in Melaka is not a new phenomenon. It first occurred in the late 1980s, where a building of beautiful Victorian architecture was demolished by their owners who never dreamt that their properties would one day be of value (Selvarani, 1989).

Neither the government or the local community have yet reached a state of maturity in terms of clear understanding towards participation approach. Therefore, this research is expected to expand the existing body of knowledge via an understanding of community participation from the spectrum of evaluating and understanding social-psychological imperatives. Moreover, the outcome of this study will provide the local community, heritage managers, tourism planners and the policy makers at various levels with an understanding of the importance of place attachment indicators in regard to the involvement of the local community in cultural heritage management, particularly in Malaysian settings.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

In the light of the research needs in this context, this study attempts to explore the local community involvement in Cultural Heritage Management in Malaysia by using the Melaka Heritage Trail as a case study. This research is developed by addressing the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of attachment amongst the local community towards heritage?
2. How to encourage local community to recognise their heritage values and adopt their heritage?
3. What local community opportunities exist and what can be enhanced to encourage community involvement in decision making in the management of heritage and tourism in Malaysia?
4. What are local community contributions for long-term heritage management in Malaysia?
5. To what extent can 'bottom-up' approaches for heritage management be implemented within the 'top-down' management system found in Malaysia?

Therefore, in order to achieve the overall aim of this research and to answer the research questions, the specific objectives of this research are:

1. To determine existing levels of attachment amongst the local community towards heritage.
2. To identify the potential benefits of involving local communities in heritage asset management.
3. To evaluate the current institutional arrangement governing heritage asset management in Malaysia.
4. To assess to what extent the local community is part of the institutional arrangement.

5. To explore the current involvement of the local community and opportunities available in decision making in the management of heritage and tourism in Malaysia.
6. To examine the constitutional framework governing local community rights in decision making.
7. To identify the threats that exists to the successful development of local community involvement in heritage assets management.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The organisation of the chapters is as follows:

Chapter One provides a general overview of the study with regards to the background, significance of the study and research objectives. A brief outline of the research is also presented.

Chapter Two explains the chosen methods to obtain the primary data in order to achieve the objectives of research. There are two sections in this chapter. The first section briefly describes the conceptual research design. The second section discusses the methods chosen in this research. The second section outlines the seven main objectives of the research, and the five hypotheses to achieve the predetermined objectives. The third section focuses on issues related to methods of data collection and questionnaire development. The final section explained the sampling procedures and techniques to obtain the primary data from the respondents.

Chapter Three presents the background of Malaysia as a country and the profile of the Melaka World Heritage Site as one of the states in Malaysia, and also as a case study area. In general, this chapter starts with the location and historical background of Malaysia. The chapter encompasses an historical overview of the colonisation eras to highlight the post-colonial heritages that become tourist attractions in Malaysia in general, and Melaka in particular. The next sections in this chapter discuss the social and cultural characteristics of the local

communities in Malaysia and specifically focus on the local community in Melaka. Then, the chapter expands on the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the local community in Melaka. Finally, the current issues that relate to heritage conservation and management in Malaysia and Melaka are discussed which reference to local community participation.

Chapter Four

is designed to discuss the issues and phenomena relating to local community involvement in cultural heritage management. It begins by conceptualising the definition of community and community involvement. Secondly, the movement of community participation is discussed in general and narrowed towards this specific research case study. Thirdly, the advantage of community involvement is discussed beyond the context of economic impact. In particular, social and political aspects are discussed to link each point made with regard to community involvement. Fourthly, community participation is broken down into categories in order to establish typologies drawn from previous studies. Fifthly, the relationship between a community's place attachment and involvement is examined to observe whether these two aspects interrelated with each other. Finally, the dilemma associated with collective community involvement approaches is debated from a broad perspective and suggestions are made towards comprehensive solutions in order to cope with several community 'dilemmas' identified through this research.

Chapter Five explores and discusses the understanding of heritage as a term. The context of understanding incorporates the notion of authenticity towards heritage resources and its management. Certainly, the authenticity of heritage resources is one of the main characteristics and a qualifying condition for inscription of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The authenticity is critically important for managing and improving conservation activities involving cultural heritage resources. With regard to finding a strategy suitable to implementing cultural heritage management, whilst retaining and highlighting the authenticity of heritage resources, the concept of the heritage trail has been viewed as an appropriate management tool to conform with and implement both conservation and tourism requirements. With respect to local community involvement in cultural heritage management, the Melaka heritage trail will be used as a case study to examine the current constitutional framework of the Malaysian government, in order to understand how the local community is engaged.

Chapter Six presents results of the data sample collected from April to May 2011 to investigate the respondents' (residents, government and visitors) attitudinal characteristics as factors for the local community involvement in heritage management in the Melaka World Heritage Site. Two types of measurement techniques were implemented in the

process of data collection to ensure each group of respondents provided sufficient data according to the research questions and objectives.

Chapter Seven interprets and explains the findings in order to discuss and analyse data that directly answers contradicts or enlarges on the research questions and hypotheses as outlined in Chapter One. The concluding argument is viewed in context and supported by secondary data such as journal articles, government reports, conference papers, etc.

Chapter Eight summarises the research findings and recommends possible approaches to overcome the limitations and problems that have emerged from the study. The contribution of this research to the existing body of knowledge, its limitations, and suggestions for further research are discussed at the end of the chapter.

The following chapter discusses the methodological approaches and strategies that are relevant to this study and further chapters examine and discuss the relationship between local community involvement and sustainable cultural heritage management by highlighting several aspects (i.e. political, social, educational, and economic) via the concept of heritage trail development in designated World Heritage Sites. This is intended to produce a long term strategy for creating benefits for stakeholders in the Melaka WHS, whilst ensuring the sustainability of cultural heritage management in Malaysia.