Analysis of sense of places effect on tourist’s length of stay in the Khota Baru cultural heritage zone

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Abstract
Heritage and cultural tourism are part of the tourism industry that must be maintained sustainability. Therefore heritage tourism destinations must be able to carry a “sense of place” as its focus. A sense of place is essential in attracting tourists to visit heritage sites for a long time. This article aims to assess the relationship between the Sense of Place between tourists, domestic and international, and the length of stay in the Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone. A total of 445 tourists participated as respondents by filling out a questionnaire survey. At the same time, data analysis was carried out using One way ANOVA. The results showed that the Sense of Place in the Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Area affects tourists' length of stay with eight correlated scales. Those eight scales are authenticity, historical value, distinctiveness, harmony, maintainability, and cleanliness. This study also finds several important implications for local governments and tourism practitioners in maintaining a tourism destination’s economic and social attributes. This study is expected to serve as the basis for future studies related to the design of urban areas and other heritage tourism sites.

Keywords: the sense of place, heritage site, tourist length of stay
Introduction

The contemporary pattern has seen tourism as one of the main contributors to one nation’s development in economy, society, and environment. Tourism has many types, including heritage tourism. In ensuring heritage tourism, the countries with rich culture and physical heritage, including tangible and intangible values, concern the sense of place. A sense of place as a broad concept is vital in ensuring tourists visit the heritage site, thus ensuring heritage tourism in a particular place. The vibrant heritage tourism in terms of social, economy, and environment will lead to sustainable tourism, leading to sustainable development.

A sense of place is a personal emotion of the place derived from our past experienced in the relation of the social, economic, and culture (Hauge, 2007). A sense of place, which comprises place identity, place attachment, and place dependent often linked with the attitude, experience, and perception of people towards a particular place (McCunn & Gifford, 2014). It is also defined by Tan et al. (2018) that a sense of place is a bonding that connects individuals and their meaningful places. Bonding and emotion associated with individual perceptions of their identity regarding the physical environment become the central concept of sense of place (McCunn & Gifford, 2014; Pretty et al., 2003). In contrast, the heritage is far from relics and ancient practice from the past. It is all about the community’s past and present that considers valuable, which intends to pass it to future generations (Idrus et al., 2010). Heritage also something that cannot be recreated. Heritage site comprises of unique culture or significant physical structure. The relation between sense of place and heritage site happened when the people have a close personal feeling for the heritage site. They will come again, thus ensuring vibrant and sustainable tourism in that place.

Length of stay signifies the amount of time that the tourist spent at a given destination and one of the essential tourism demand variables (Santos et al., 2014). Researchers agree that length of stay had become the critical element to generate tourism revenue and expenditure due to its crucial importance variable for any tourism destination (Alén et al., 2014; Barros & Machado, 2010; Kazuzuru, 2014; Thrane & Farstad, 2012). Length of stay is essential to sustainable tourism research since it is useful in tourist forecasting, demand, and local resource consumption. Those use highlighted as an essential issue in the context of carrying capacity analysis (de Menezes et al., 2008). Length of stay is critical to the marketing policies design, associated with higher occupancy rates and revenue streams, to understand the impact of tourists’ demand on the travel and hospitality industries. Furthermore, studies using the duration or length of stay as tourism variables are rare (Barros & Machado, 2010). To attract tourists in prolonging their stay in the historical site, that particular site must preserve its unique and authentic identity as well as its sense of place.

Since the sense of place related to tourists’ length of stay, the research on Kelantan’s heritage site associated with a sense of place and tourist’s length of stay has been conducted. The number of tourists visits to Kelantan was around 5 million people in 2017, which recorded the lowest percentage among other states in Malaysia (Kelantan Tourism Information Centre, 2017). Few claim that this result due to the lack of sense of place and
authenticity with the Kelantan cultural heritage site. Until recently, a limited study has been conducted to assess and validate a sense of place. Relationship with tourism area, mainly historical-cultural places in Kelantan, whether the tourist intends to prolong their stay is significant with the authenticity of historical places in Kelantan. Therefore, this paper aims to analyze the relationship between sense of place among tourists’ intention to prolong their stay in Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone.

**Methods**

A questionnaire survey approach was chosen for this study conducted in the area of Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone. The questionnaire survey consists of closed-ended questions with ordered choices that require the respondent to examine each possible response independent of the other choices. The choices form a continuum of responses, such as those provided by Likert scales and numerical ranges. The range is from strongly Disagree to Agree strongly. After the survey process, it was followed by the statistical analysis method of One-Way Anova.

The study area is in Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone or 'Zon Warisan Budaya' that is situated in Kota Bharu district along the Kelantan River. In 1991, The Kota Bharu Municipal Council-Islamic City (MPKB-BRI) inaugurated it as a cultural heritage zone. The consideration is that the zone has various kinds of museums and former iconic and unique royal buildings inherited from centuries ago. The heritage zone covers an area of 12 hectares. The zone itself is based on the original location of the royal palace and government buildings of Kota Bharu in the year 1844. According to Kota Bharu Local Plan 2020, the zone itself is under a particular area plan of cultural heritage.

Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage’s buildings can be categorized into the royal palace, museum, monument, square, mosque, hotel, restaurant, shophouses, shopping, and facility. The zone gazette as a cultural heritage zone, it has been a prime tourism destination in Kota Bharu. The respondents are among domestic and international tourists who visited the zone during the data collection period.

The sample size was taken based on Yamane’s formula. It can be used to determine the minimal sample size for a given population size and, therefore, be considered suitable for determining an appropriate sample size (Botes, 2009; Mora & Kloet, 2010). In this study, 5,321,957 tourists were visiting Kelantan in 2017. Thus, by using the total number of tourists visiting Kelantan as the population size (N=5,321,957) with a 95% confidence level (P=0.5), the estimated sample size reached 400. This number is the lowest acceptable number of responses to maintain a 95% confidence level. Therefore, the study prepared 500 units of a questionnaire survey to be distributed. The sampling method used for this study is a simple random sampling that every sampling unit has an equal chance of being chosen (Alvi, 2016; Shalab, 2019). This method avoids choosing a case of element more than once. The randomly selected sample is then called representative for the entire population (Ahmed, 2009; Frerichs, 2008; Mora & Kloet, 2010).

The tourist’s sense of place is measured based on Bott’s (2000) set of psychometric scales. This study involves ten scales, including the built environment, inherent socio-cultural, transactional socio-cultural, significance, memory, aesthetic, purposive, informational, well-being, and character scale. This set of psychometric scale has
been used by Raadik-Cottrell (2010) and Counted (2019).

The sample population for this research was composed of tourists who visited the Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone in September 2019. The survey was conducted over three months, from 1 September to 31 December 2019, at seven different most visited places in the zone. The survey period’s determination takes into account the conditions in September 2019, which have four days off in a week in three consecutive weeks. It continued with the end of year school holiday started from 22 November to 31 December.

Those conditions will cause a peak of tourists to visit the zone, as mentioned by Kelantan’s museum official. Respondents were approached and informed about the survey’s purpose in advance before they were given the questionnaire. Data were collected at seven different places, including four museums, which are Istana Jahar, Istana Batu, War Museum, and Islamic museum. Two squares, which are Kota Sultan Ismail and Muhammadi square, and Nasi Ulam Cikgu restaurant.

Result and Discussion

The initial sample consisted of 500 questionnaires, with 55 of them did not complete the surveys. Therefore, the data from 445 respondents were analyzed in this study.

Respondents socio-demographic profile

The respondents’ age was dominated by the age group 21-30 years (41.8%), and the age group of 61 years and over was the smallest group of respondents (0.4%). Most of the respondent’s marital status was single (66.1%). It was followed by married (30.1%), divorced (2.2%), and widowed (1.6%) and regarding occupational professions, dominated by students (44.7%), government servants (31%), and private employees (20%). Most of the respondents, with 90.8%, reported that they were Malaysian, whereas 9.2% of the respondents were international travelers. In terms of education level, 78.2% of the respondents had a university education level; 42.7% of the respondents had a diploma education, 27.2% had bachelor’s degree education, and 8.3% had post-graduate education. 16.8% of the respondents had a secondary school education. No respondent in the research study was at the primary level or below. The result shows the relatively high educational attainment of the respondents (see appendix 1).

Respondents trip profile

In the category of the first-time visit to Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone, 60.2% of respondents have visited the zone in the past. In comparison, 39.8% of the respondents did not have previous experience with the area. Furthermore, respondents’ length of stay showed that 53.7% of the respondents had stayed 2 to 4 days. It was followed by respondents who stayed five to seven days (25.2%), respondents who stayed eight days or more (11.0%), and respondents who stayed one day only (10.1%) (see appendix 2).

Tourist perception of the sense of place

The Built Environment Scale indicates two items that significantly different in the length of stay in Kota Bharu, ‘Building color scale’ (f (3,441) =2.886, p<0.05) and ‘materials which fit the setting’ (f (3,441) =6.348, p<0.05) (see table 1). The other item shows no significant differences to the length of stay of respondents in Kota Bharu and scheduled to visit Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone, ‘has attractive buildings’ (f (3,441) =0.248, p>0.05). The sense of place referring to the Built Environment in Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone influences the tourist’s decision to stay longer in the zone.
Table 1. One-way ANOVA test on the length of stay

| Components | df | F - value | P-value | Significant |
|------------|----|-----------|---------|-------------|
| **Built Environment Scale** |    |           |         |             |
| Building color | 3, 441 | 2.886 | 0.035 | yes |
| Materials which fit the setting | 3, 441 | 6.348 | 0.000 | yes |
| Has attractive buildings | 3, 441 | 1.381 | 0.248 | no |
| **Character Scale** |    |           |         |             |
| Clean | 3, 441 | 2.111 | 0.098 | no |
| Alive | 3, 441 | 1.308 | 0.271 | no |
| Peaceful | 3, 441 | 6.797 | 0.000 | yes |
| Distinctive | 3, 441 | 2.345 | 0.072 | no |
| Harmonious | 3, 441 | 4.133 | 0.007 | yes |
| Balanced | 3, 441 | 6.027 | 0.000 | yes |
| Well-maintained | 3, 441 | 2.512 | 0.058 | no |
| Simple | 3, 441 | 3.240 | 0.022 | yes |
| Spacious | 3, 441 | 3.947 | 0.008 | yes |
| Open | 3, 441 | 5.161 | 0.002 | yes |
| **Inherent Socio-Cultural Scale** |    |           |         |             |
| Historic | 3, 441 | 4.239 | 0.006 | yes |
| Authentic | 3, 441 | 2.831 | 0.038 | yes |
| Has the spirit of people | 3, 441 | 3.050 | 0.028 | yes |
| Fits within the broader context Kota Bharu | 3, 441 | 3.160 | 0.025 | yes |
| Support the function of Kota Bharu | 3, 441 | 3.201 | 0.023 | yes |
| Feel the sense of history | 3, 441 | 3.378 | 0.018 | yes |
| **Transactional Sociocultural Scale** |    |           |         |             |
| Offers a sense of belonging | 3, 441 | 4.180 | 0.006 | yes |
| Provide opportunities for interaction with others | 3, 441 | 4.009 | 0.008 | yes |
| Civility | 3, 441 | 4.115 | 0.007 | yes |
| Generates respects for the individual | 2, 442 | 5.116 | 0.006 | yes |
| Has a distinct energy | 3, 441 | 3.714 | 0.012 | yes |
| Feel a part of the community | 3, 441 | 5.316 | 0.001 | yes |
| **Significance Scale** |    |           |         |             |
| Meaningful | 3, 441 | 4.567 | 0.005 | yes |
| Significant | 3, 441 | 4.549 | 0.004 | yes |
| Interesting | 3, 441 | 3.446 | 0.017 | yes |
| Valuable | 3, 441 | 3.394 | 0.018 | yes |
| **Memory Scale** |    |           |         |             |
| Familiar | 3, 441 | 3.079 | 0.027 | yes |
| Well-known | 3, 441 | 1.894 | 0.130 | no |
| Memorable | 3, 441 | 1.433 | 0.232 | no |
| Feel a sense of connection | 3, 441 | 3.188 | 0.024 | yes |
| Feel I know it well | 3, 441 | 2.460 | 0.062 | no |
| Feel a sense of nostalgia | 3, 441 | 3.066 | 0.028 | yes |
| **Aesthetic Scale** |    |           |         |             |
| Beautiful | 3, 441 | 4.113 | 0.007 | yes |
| Aesthetically pleasing | 3, 441 | 4.287 | 0.005 | yes |
| Pleasing to look at | 3, 441 | 2.011 | 0.112 | no |
| Generates a positive sensory experience | 3, 441 | 4.723 | 0.003 | yes |
| Feel a sense of awe | 3, 441 | 2.665 | 0.047 | yes |
| Feel a sense of appreciation | 3, 441 | 4.585 | 0.004 | yes |
| **Purposive Scale** |    |           |         |             |
| Meets my expectations historical site | 3, 441 | 2.227 | 0.084 | no |
| Support the role at a historical site | 3, 441 | 3.163 | 0.024 | yes |
| **Informational Scale** |    |           |         |             |
| Understandable | 3, 441 | 3.422 | 0.017 | yes |
| Provides a sense of direction | 3, 441 | 3.362 | 0.019 | yes |
| Has a distinct landmark | 3, 441 | 3.395 | 0.018 | yes |
| Is easy to find the way around in | 3, 441 | 4.932 | 0.002 | yes |
| Makes way-finding seem intuitive | 3, 441 | 4.548 | 0.004 | yes |
| Provides info | 3, 441 | 3.560 | 0.014 | yes |
| **Well-being Scale** |    |           |         |             |
| Safe | 3, 441 | 2.863 | 0.036 | yes |
| Comfortable | 3, 441 | 2.977 | 0.031 | yes |
| Warm | 3, 441 | 4.881 | 0.002 | yes |
| Serene | 3, 441 | 3.495 | 0.016 | yes |
| Reassuring | 3, 441 | 2.886 | 0.022 | yes |
| Revitalizing | 3, 441 | 3.365 | 0.019 | yes |
| Feel in control | 3, 441 | 5.154 | 0.002 | yes |

Source: analysis result (2019)
Character Scale’s result indicates six items shown significant differences in relation to length of stay of respondents in Kota Bharu and scheduled to visit Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone, ‘peaceful’ \((f(3,441)=6.797, p<0.05)\), ‘harmonious’ \((f(3,441)=4.133, p<0.05)\), ‘balanced’ \((f(3,441)=6.027, p<0.05)\), ‘simple’ \((f(3,441)=3.240, p<0.05)\), ‘spacious’ \((f(3,441)=3.947, p<0.05)\) and ‘open’ \((f(3,441)=5.161, p<0.05)\). The other four items shown no significant differences in relation to length of stay of respondents in Kota Bharu and scheduled to visit Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone, ‘clean’ \((f(3,441)=2.111, p>0.05)\), ‘alive’ \((f(3,441)=1.308, p>0.05)\), ‘distinctive’ \((f(3,441)=2.345, p>0.05)\) and ‘well-maintained’ \((f(3,441)=2.512, p>0.05)\). The sense of place referring to the Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone character does influence the tourist to stay longer in the zone.

Inherent Socio-cultural Scale’s result indicates all six items of the scale items shown significant differences in the length of stay of respondents. ‘authentic’ \((f(3,441)=2.831, p<0.05)\), ‘has the spirit of people’ \((f(3,441)=3.050, p<0.05)\), ‘feel a sense of history’ \((f(3,441)=3.378, p<0.05)\), ‘historical’ \((f(3,441)=4.239, p<0.05)\), ‘fits within the larger context of Kota Bharu’ \((f(3,441)=2.160, p<0.05)\) and ‘support the function of Kota Bharu’ \((f(3,441)=3.201, p<0.05)\). The sense of place referring to inherent socio-cultural in Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone influences the tourist’s decision to stay longer in the zone.

Transactional Socio-cultural Scale’s result indicates all six items shown significant differences to the length of stay in Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone. ‘feel part of the community’ \((f(3,441)=5.316, p<0.05)\), ‘offers a sense of belonging’ \((f(3,441)=4.180, p<0.05)\), provide opportunities for interaction with others’ \((f(3,441)=4.009, p<0.05)\), ‘civility’ \((f(3,441)=4.115, p<0.05)\), ‘generates respect for the individual’ \((f(2,442)=5.116, p<0.05)\) and ‘has a distinct energy’ \((f(3,441)=5.316, p<0.05)\). The sense of place referring to transactional socio-cultural in Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone influences the tourist’s decision to stay longer in the zone.

Significant scale’s result indicates all four items shown significant differences to the length of stay in Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone, ‘meaningful’ \((f(3,441)=4.567, p<0.05)\), ‘significant’ \((f(3,441)=4.549, p<0.05)\), ‘interesting’ \((f(3,441)=4.46, p<0.05)\) and ‘valuable’ \((f(3,441)=3.394, p<0.05)\). The sense of place referring to significance in the Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone influences the tourist’s decision to stay longer in the zone.

Memory Scale’s result indicates three items shown significant differences to the length of stay of respondents in Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone. ‘familiar’ \((f(3,441)=3.079, p<0.05)\), ‘feel a sense of connection’ \((f(3,441)=3.188, p<0.05)\), and ‘feel a sense of nostalgia’ \((f(3,441)=3.066, p<0.05)\). The other three items showed no significant differences to the length of stay of respondents, which is ‘well-known’ \((f(3,441)=1.894, p>0.05)\), ‘memorable’ \((f(3,441)=1.433, p>0.05)\), and ‘feel like I know it well’ \((f(3,441)=2.460, p>0.05)\). The sense of place referring to memory in the Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone does not influence the tourist’s decision to stay longer in the zone.

**Overall tourist perception on the sense of place**

Respondents were also asked about their overall level of sense of place regarding their length of stay in Kota Bharu and scheduled to visit Kota Bharu Cultural
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Heritage Zone. The results using One-Way ANOVA is illustrated in table 2.

Table 2. One-way ANOVA analysis on the overall sense of place

| Dependent Variables | df | F   | sig, value | Sig. |
|---------------------|----|-----|------------|------|
| Length of Stay      | 4  | 2.877 | 0.023      | yes  |

Source: analysis result (2019)

The result of ANOVA analysis, which to find respondent’s overall sense of place level significant differences to the length of stay of respondents in Kota Bharu and scheduled to visit Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone, shown significant differences, \( F(4, 440) = 2.877, p<0.05 \). The sense of place in the Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone influences the tourist’s decision to stay longer in the zone.

The results show that the sense of place of Kota Bharu Cultural Heritage Zone does influence tourists to stay longer in the zone. It is parallel with the previous research where the length of stay affects the high value of the sense of place, and length of stay relates to the attachment of tourism product as mentioned by Smaldone (2007). From 10 scales of the length of stay, eight scales influence the tourist decision to stay longer in the heritage zone with a great sense of place.

Conclusion

This study has identified and explored the gap in tourism research in terms of place relationship with tourist behaviors, particularly tourist length of stay in the heritage site. It helps the government and tourism players in planning attractions for tourists hence sustaining the area in terms of social and economic factors. The One-Way ANOVA analysis between the sense of place items with the respondent’s length of stay may help the tourism business operators identify a specific area for improving and enhancing. The study also reveals that heritage tourism is significantly connected with the sense of place. This because the authenticity, historical values, distinctive, harmonious, well-maintained, and clean are part of the sense of place scale. Therefore, to improve the tourism industry, a sense of place is one of the essential components that should not be neglected. Furthermore, this study contributes to the body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence for academic development needs in the future.

Authors statement

With this, the authors state that this study is free from conflicts of interest with any party.

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Authors Contribution
Nik Mohamad Aizat Nik Mohd Adib contributed to conceptualization, data collection, investigation, and original draft writing.
Syakir Amir Ab. Rahman contributed to methodology, formal analysis, validation, writing - review, and editing.
## Appendix 1. Respondents socio-demographic profile

| Variable         | Components | Domestic |   | International |   | Total |   |
|------------------|------------|----------|---|---------------|---|-------|---|
|                  |            | Unit     | % | Unit          | % | Unit  | % |
| Gender           | male       | 171      | 38.4 | 20 | 4.5 | 191 | 42.9 |
|                  | female     | 233      | 52.4 | 21 | 4.7 | 254 | 57.1 |
| Age              | 15-20      | 150      | 33.7 | 2  | 0.4 | 152 | 34.2 |
|                  | 21-30      | 160      | 36.0 | 26 | 5.8 | 186 | 41.8 |
|                  | 31-40      | 57       | 12.8 | 10 | 2.2 | 67  | 15.1 |
|                  | 41-50      | 25       | 5.6  | 3  | 0.7 | 28  | 6.3  |
|                  | 51-60      | 10       | 2.2  | 0  | 0.0 | 10  | 2.2  |
|                  | 61-70      | 2        | 0.4  | 0  | 0.0 | 2   | 0.4  |
| Marital status   | single     | 272      | 61.1 | 22 | 4.9 | 294 | 66.1 |
|                  | married    | 121      | 27.2 | 13 | 2.9 | 134 | 30.1 |
|                  | widowed    | 6        | 1.3  | 1  | 0.2 | 7   | 1.6  |
|                  | divorced   | 5        | 1.1  | 5  | 1.1 | 10  | 2.2  |
| Occupation       | student    | 189      | 42.5 | 10 | 2.2 | 199 | 44.7 |
|                  | government servant | 129  | 29.0 | 9  | 2.0 | 138 | 31.0 |
|                  | private    | 73       | 16.4 | 16 | 3.6 | 89  | 20.0 |
|                  | pensioner  | 4        | 0.9  | 0  | 0.0 | 4   | 0.9  |
|                  | others / unemployed | 9  | 2.0  | 6  | 1.3 | 15  | 3.4  |
| Education        | SPM/O-level | 61      | 13.7 | 1  | 0.2 | 62  | 13.9 |
|                  | STPM/matriculation/A-level | 13  | 2.9  | 0  | 0.0 | 13  | 2.9  |
|                  | certificate | 17      | 3.8  | 3  | 0.7 | 20  | 4.5  |
|                  | diploma    | 182      | 40.9 | 8  | 1.8 | 190 | 42.7 |
|                  | bachelor degree | 108  | 24.3 | 13 | 2.9 | 121 | 27.2 |
|                  | master degree | 14    | 3.1  | 9  | 2.0 | 23  | 5.2  |
|                  | PhD        | 8        | 1.8  | 6  | 1.3 | 14  | 3.1  |
|                  | others     | 1        | 0.2  | 1  | 0.2 | 2   | 0.4  |
| Origins          |            | 404      | 90.8 | 41 | 9.2 | 445 | 100  |

## Appendix 2. Respondents trip profile

| Variables      | Components | Domestic |   | International |   | Total |   |
|----------------|------------|----------|---|---------------|---|-------|---|
|                 |            | Unit     | % | Unit          | % | Unit  | % |
| First Visit     | yes        | 143      | 32.1 | 34 | 7.6 | 177 | 39.8 |
|                 | no         | 261      | 58.7 | 7  | 1.6 | 268 | 60.2 |
| Length of stay  | 1 day      | 45       | 10.1 | 0  | 0.0 | 45  | 10.1 |
|                 | 2-4 days   | 227      | 51.0 | 12 | 2.7 | 239 | 53.7 |
|                 | 5-7 days   | 97       | 21.8 | 15 | 3.4 | 112 | 25.2 |
|                 | 8 or more days | 35  | 7.9  | 14 | 3.1 | 49  | 11.0 |