



Mapping the Overall Individual Visitor's Experiences at Sarawak  
Cultural Village as a Living Museum Site

Cassandra Anak Henry Ahguk

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development  
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak  
2020

Mapping the Overall Individual Visitors' Experiences at Sarawak Cultural  
Village as a Living Museum Site

Cassandra Anak Henry Ahguk

A thesis submitted

In fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

(Cognitive Science)

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK  
2020

## DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Except where due acknowledgements have been made, the work is that of the author alone. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

.....

Signature

Name: Cassandra Anak Henry Ahguk

Matric No.: 15020131

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Date :

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost I would like to send my deepest appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Mohd Kamal Bin Othman for his diligent guidance in helping me complete this dissertation. Without his guidance and persistent help, and willingness to keep on following up on my research thesis to make my journey completed in success, this thesis would not have been possible. Not to forget to my co-supervisor, Madam Shaziti Binti Aman, thank you very much for your help as well.

Apart from that, I would like to thank my respondents for their cooperation throughout the interview session that was carried out. The response given is the essence of this research and without their utmost cooperation, this paperwork would not be workable.

Last but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family for their constant support throughout the period of the project. I would like to also thank my coursemate, Ms. Jaccika for sharing their ideas and knowledge in regards to the project paper being written. My sincere gratitude to the Centre for Graduate Studies, for the advice and support given during my period of study in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak.

Thank you.

## ABSTRACT

A living museums or non-living museums were an integral tourist destination as it was important to understand visitors' experiences during the visitation. This study aimed to explore the overall visitor experiences at Sarawak Cultural Village (SCV) at an individual level. The visitors' experience was seen vital as it will also help in improving SCV in the future. The qualitative research method was used for this study using interview and photovoice. The findings from interview sessions and the photo voices taken during the visits were analysed using thematic analysis to produce the visitors' experience. A total of 20 respondents participated in this study and were randomly selected during the two-weeks of data collection. The result of the study showed that SCV was a unique and authentic place to visit when comes to a heritage and cultural site. An initial result suggested that there are 18 sub-themed emerged from this study such as memory, learning, emotion, engagement, knowledge discovery, interaction, natural environment, aesthetic, fun and entertainment, involvement, uniqueness of culture, rare object, creativity, originality, culture exposure, antique artefacts, unique architecture, and costume. A further analysis showed that these 18 sub-themes can be categorised into 6 main themes such as: memory experience, learning experience, emotional experience, aesthetic experience, interactive experience and cultural experience. Further study should be done to explore the use of social media and other methods of data collection such as journey map.

**Keywords:** Visitors' experiences, living museum, heritage & cultural, interview, photovoice, thematic analysis.

***Pemetaan Keseluruhan Pengalaman bagi Pengunjung Individu di Kampung Budaya Sarawak sebagai Tapak Muzium Hidup***

**ABSTRAK**

*Muzium hidup dan muzium bukan hidup adalah destinasi pelancongan yang memainkan peranan penting dalam memahami pengalaman pengunjung semasa lawatan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menerokai pengalaman keseluruhan pengunjung di Kampung Budaya, Sarawak pada peringkat individu. Pengalaman pengunjung adalah penting kerana ia akan membantu meningkatkan prestasi Kampung Budaya pada masa hadapan. Kaedah penyelidikan kualitatif telah digunakan dalam kajian ini iaitu, kaedah temuduga dan foto-suara. Data daripada sesi temuduga dan foto-suara yang direkod semasa lawatan tersebut telah dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik untuk menghasilkan pengalaman pengunjung. Seramai 20 orang responden terlibat dalam kajian ini yang dipilih secara rawak semasa dua minggu pengumpulan data. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa Kampung Budaya adalah tempat yang unik dan sesuai untuk dikunjungi bagi kategori tapak warisan dan kebudayaan. Hasil awal kajian menunjukkan bahawa terdapat 18 sub-tema seperti memori, pembelajaran, emosi, penyatuan, penemuan pengetahuan, interaksi, alam semula jadi, estetik, keseronokan dan hiburan, penglibatan, keunikan budaya, objek yang jarang berlaku, kreativiti, keaslian, pendedahan budaya, artifak antik, seni bina yang unik, dan pakaian. Analisis lanjutan menunjukkan bahawa 18 sub-tema boleh dikategorikan kepada 6 tema utama seperti: pengalaman memori, pengalaman pembelajaran, pengalaman emosi, pengalaman estetik, pengalaman interaktif dan pengalaman budaya. Kajian masa hadapan dicadangkan untuk fokus kepada penggunaan media sosial dan lain-lain kaedah pengumpulan data seperti peta perjalanan.*

***Kata kunci:*** *Pengalaman pengunjung, muzium hidup, warisan & kebudayaan, temuduga, foto-suara, analisis tematik.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b><i>ABSTRAK</i></b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of study	1
1.2 Sarawak and Introduction to Sarawak Cultural Village (SCV)	6
1.3 Problem Statement	10
1.4 Objective	11
1.4.1 General Objective	11
1.4.2 Specific Objective	12
1.5 Research Question	12
1.6 Significance of the study	12
1.7 Limitations of the study	13



1.8	Scope of the research	13
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>		<b>15</b>
2.1	Sarawak Cultural Village as a Living Museum	15
2.2	Theoretical Model of Visitor's Perceptions on Cultural Heritage Sites	19
2.3	Visitors' Experiences in Sarawak Cultural Village as a Living Museum	23
<b>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY</b>		<b>39</b>
3.1	Research Design	39
3.2	Location	40
3.3	Selection of Participants	41
3.4	Method of Data Collection	42
<u>3.4.1</u>	Photovoice	42
<u>3.4.2</u>	Interview	43
3.5	The Procedure of Data Collection	45
3.6	Thematic Analysis	47
3.6.1	Interview Analysis: Thematic Analysis Procedure	48
Step 1:	Familiar with data	48
Step 2:	Generating initial codes	49
Step 3:	Search themes	49
Step 4:	Review themes	50

Step 5: Define themes	51
Step 6: Produce Report	51
3.6.2 Photovoice Analysis: Thematic Analysis Procedure	51
Step 1: Familiar with data	51
Step 2: Generating initial codes	53
Step 3: Search themes	53
Step 4: Review themes	54
Step 5: Define themes	55
Step 6: Produce report	55
3.7 Ethic and Consideration	55
3.8 Conclusions	56
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESULTS</b>	<b>58</b>
4.1 Participants Descriptions	58
4.2 Interview Analysis	60
4.3 Photovoice Analysis	63
4.4 Final Theme	67
<b>CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION</b>	<b>72</b>
5.1 Initial Subtheme Discussion	73
5.2 What does individual experience mean?	80

5.3 Overall Visitors' Experiences (VX)	82
<u>5.3.1</u> Memory Experience	83
<u>5.3.2</u> Emotional Experience	84
<u>5.3.3</u> Learning Experience	85
<u>5.3.4</u> Aesthetic Experience	88
<u>5.3.5</u> Interactive Experience	91
<u>5.3.6</u> Cultural Experience	94
<b>CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	97
6.1 Research Questions	98
6.1.1 Research Question 1	98
6.1.2 Research Question 2	100
6.2 Recommendations	105
<b>REFERENCES</b>	106
<b>APPENDICES</b>	123

## LIST OF TABLES

		<b>Page</b>
Table 2.1	The experiences of visitors in the museum by Pekarik et al. (1999, pg. 155-156).	25
Table 2.2	Description of Visitors' Experiences by Pekarik, Doering & Karns (1999).	36
Table 3.1	Similarity of basic themes occurred in the given statements at Step 2.	50
Table 3.2	Similarity of basic themes occurred in the given statements at Step 2 for P30 & P64.	52
Table 4.1	Participants' demographic.	59
Table 4.2	The Sub-theme emerged from the interview analysis	61
Table 4.3	The Sub-theme emerged from the photovoice analysis	63
Table 4.4	List of interviews and photovoice sub-themes	67
Table 4.5	Final sub-theme and classification of visitors experience in SCV	70
Table 6.1	Example of visitors' experiences that contributed to the final components at SCV	101

## LIST OF FIGURES

		<b>Page</b>
Figure 1.1	Map of Sarawak Cultural Village (SCV) located in Kuching.	7
Figure 1.2	Seven Types of Traditional Houses in SCV	8
Figure 2.1	A conceptual scheme of key factors associated with the visitor experience (Packer & Ballantyne, 2016)	19
Figure 2.2	Illustration of Chitwan National Park map by Kafle (2014)	31
Figure 3.1	Traditional Penan Hut	52
Figure 3.2	Baby carrier inside Chinese house	53
Figure 4.1	The sub-theme that intersecting in two types of data collection method	69
Figure 5.1	Appraisal of firewood kitchen at the middle of Bidayuh house (P9)	90
Figure 5.2	The object of aesthetic fascination and aesthetic appraisal (P19)	91
Figure 5.3	Bidayuh traditional costume made from the tree bark	95

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of study

Museum was an integral tourist destination across the world. It had exposed all visitors to a real-life experience. A living museum was built to preserve the cultures and heritage and to promote the culture and tourism of everyone all around the world. Hence, understanding the visitors' experience was crucial as it will help museum to enhance their performance in the future and subsequently increase the visitors' satisfaction. The visitors' satisfaction will boost the number of visitors to museum and help to sustain the museum itself. Visitors are at the centre of the museum's life in the twenty-first century (Falk, 2016).

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) notes that tourism is now one of the biggest industrial sectors in the world and museum plays a significant role in tourism. In Southeast Asia, the growth of the tourism industry was known to be extremely competitive between Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia. People nowadays were spending a lot of time engaging in entertainment, traveling and recreation during their leisure time. For example, Page and Connell (2009) highlighted the transformation of this social phenomenon is because people have increased their leisure time. In addition, Virginija (2016) also suggested that human being was embraced with their feeling, interaction, tasting, discovering, travelling, meeting, participating and finding out things. Museum was one of the leisure environments that contributed to these elements to the community by providing more information, improve their facilities that can help to enhance visitors'

interaction and engagement. Medic, Pivac, Ivkov-Džigurski, Kosic & Pavlovic (2015) study had discovered the factors that had influenced visitations to museum; more leisure time, exhibit that interest me, more information on events in museums, better services, and to have someone to go with.

Furthermore, museum was also considered as a teaching aid for informal education outside the school by providing activities to support children development in term of cognitive, physical, effective and social (Dogan, 2010), lifelong learning experiences (Akyol, 2007), provided effective method to teach (Atagok, 1999). Dogan (2010) stated that museum had provided an excellent environment which able to lure a student learning process while living and experiencing it. A study conducted at Bursa City Museum and Archeology Museum, Turkey and the primary students were involved in the study. The study aims to contribute to the student's mental, physical, affective, cognitive, and social development.

Museums was also listed as one of the major attractions in travel and tourism industry (Bierderman, Lai, Laitamaki, Messerli, Nyheim, & Plog, 2008; Mudzanani, 2015). To demonstrate the value of museums, scientists begin to look for a wide range of other beneficial results for visitors beyond their undeniable educational value. This shift was partly due to changes to the focus museums put on various aspects of their roles, from the concentration on the collection, conservation and exhibition of objects and public education, to understanding and meeting the many needs of visitors.

Visitor experience was mainly about the way visitor satisfy, feels, interact or react with directly or indirectly. According to Pekarik, Doering and Karn (1999), there were four criteria that can be used on the understanding of the satisfaction and visitor's

experience that everyone wanted to understand, identify their point of view, the experiences they value in museums and somehow the goal was to find satisfying in their visitation. Falk (2016) highlighted that to understand visitors' satisfaction is not about precision, but necessity. Hence, there was a need to concentrate on study of visitors' experiences particularly living museum which has different settings from another museum.

Visiting a living museum was part of a tourist activity and this cultural institution includes heritage site (Kafle, 2014) with the culture and livelihood of different ethnic groups. Sarawak Cultural Village (SCV) was known for its nature as a living museum that represent the traditional culture of Sarawak tribes. Visiting SCV promised visitors an exotic experience with their tribes cultural and lifestyle exhibitions. Thus, this study focused on obtaining the overall individual experiences that occurred during the visitation at SCV.

The traditional house at SCV was constructed with an exact replica of the real traditional house of different ethnics of Sarawak. Furthermore, it also exhibits various ethnics' artefacts, culture performance, foods, costumes and handcraft. It was also one of the popular cultural and heritage tourism sites in Sarawak. As a living museum, SCV was built for real and live visual senses of Sarawak cultures and heritages. The SCV settings could be of benefits for visitors, regardless of their prior visits to the place. Experience occurs in various ways such as through seeing, touching, feeling, socialising, communicating and learning. Few studies have been conducted to explore the visitors' experience (i.e. Falk, 2009; Ahmad, Abbas, Yusof & Taib, 2015; Vergopoulos, 2016). Similarly, a study was conducted by Muzaini (2016) at SCV that focus on the cultural heritage sites.



The numbers of cultural heritage sites in Malaysia had increased significantly in the last two decades (Hoffstaedter, 2008). For example, places that showcasing the history of the places and the ethnic heterogeneity of those living within them, such as the *Taman Mini Malaysia in Malacca* (dedicated to display the diverse architectures and cultures of different states within the country) and the *Mari Mari Cultural Village in Sabah* (depicting the traditional homes of the state's ethnic communities).

Tourist perception was a construct influenced by factors that happen in any leisure sites such as the historical and cultural attributes, destination, affordability, travel environment, natural attractions, entertainment and infrastructure (Rajesh, 2013). However, this study will only focus on the features that influenced tourists' perception that offered in the SCV consists of the design building, artefacts and the labels, activities, foods and performances, the people, souvenir shop, and, entrance and wayfinding. This study examined the experiences of visitors at SCV based on Pekarik, Doering and Karns (1999), which focus on four main categories or visitors' experience: object experiences, cognitive experiences, introspective experiences, and social experience, which helped to recognize the experience of visitors at SCV and. The framework of this research is based on work by Pekarik, Doering and Karns (1999).

Every individual that went to any museums should have a goal to utilize the time for being in the museum. Litwak (1992) mentioned that people come for visiting any leisure site like museum to spend time with families and friends or to see what was happening and to gain knowledge through learning a new thing, and they are the best companion to go to visit museum (Medic et al., 2015). Visiting a museum was definitely brought a good information that can help them to get a satisfying visiting experience.

Every visitor that came with different perceptions and expectations to the museum and sometimes it does not correspond with the visitor's expectations. Besides, to reach the purpose of their visits, a visitor can utilize every element that museum has to offer and also helps to enhance or attain their personal knowledge. Their perceptions, experiences and all their evaluations were important to review future visitations and understanding preferences of tourists as well. Packer and Ballantyne (2002) mentioned in their study that learning and discovery, passive enjoyment, restoration, social interaction and self- fulfilment were the reasons for visiting a leisure environment, such as museum. At that point, with all these visiting reasons, it can help SCV itself to enhance the quality of its settings to enable visitors to achieve their expectations on what the museum can offer.

In this study, tourists' perceptions were explored based on what have been offered to the visitors at SCV. A photovoice data collection method was used to identify the participant's experience at SCV. Photovoice methods required participants to take a photo and were analysed using thematic analysis to understand their visitors' experience and were then mapped to the Pekarik, Doering and Karns (1999) study on visitors' experiences. For the in-depth interview, the researcher asked questions based on the photos taken and subsequently identified the perception of visitors based on the list of attributes offered at SCV.

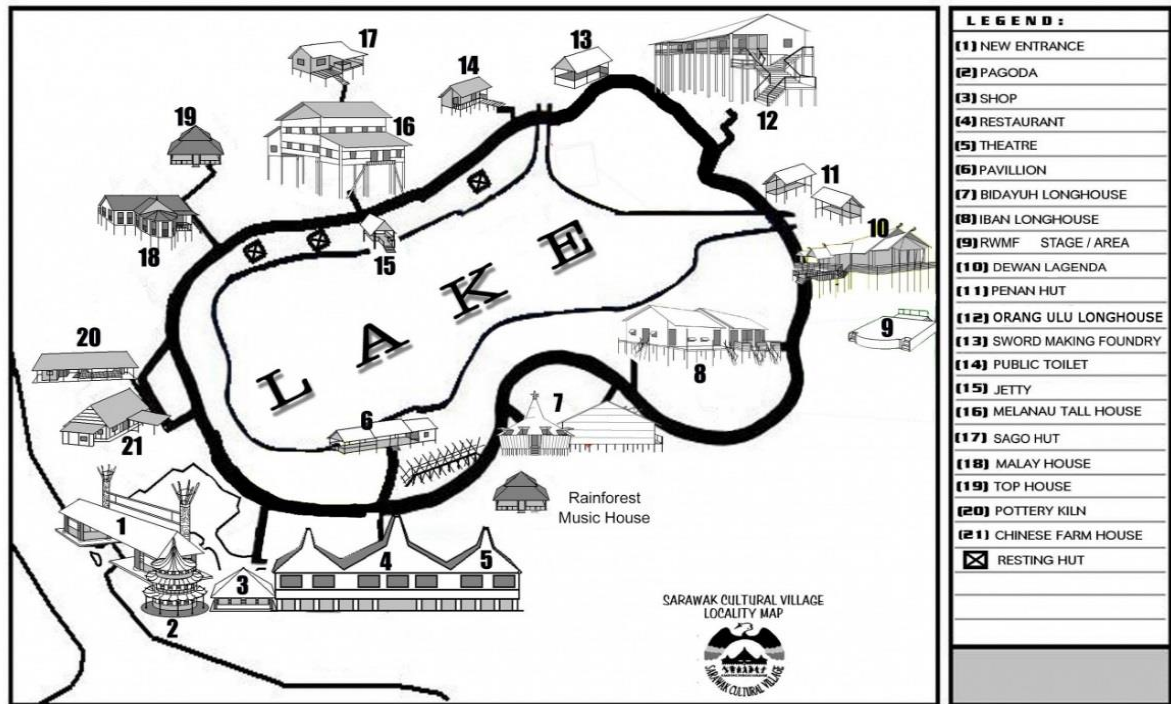
Visitors were the backbone for each museum as their presence ensures the existence of tourism business and improves the deficiency for future development (Okello & Yerian, 2009). This study was also important to improve the visitor' experiences to be more meaningful. Visitors mostly look for a long-lasting personal experience as an affective memory, sensation and symbolism of the experiences they had. Hence, tourism industry should acquire a deep understanding of the visitors' patterns and perceptions as

well as their motivations. The output of visitor experience that was obtained through their visitation could help gain further understanding and knowledge of their experiences better. It was directly produced a full picture to map visitors' experiences in SCV in depth.

## **1. 2 Sarawak and Introduction to Sarawak Cultural Village (SCV)**

According to the Department of Statistics of Malaysia 2016, the Sarawak population estimated at 2,74 million, which was composed of three main ethnic groups, namely Dayaks (40% with Iban and Bidayuh representing 29,1%), Chinese and Malay (25,9%) respectively (Land and Sea Dayak). Kedayan, Murut, Penan, Kelabit, Berawan, Penan, Kenyah and Kayan were other indigenous groups (Malaysia & Ali, 2007). It was a multicultural state that comprises more than 40 ethnic groups, each of which had its own language, culture and heritage that reflects the ethnic pluralism of the country. Thus, their traditional dance, authentic indigenous food, architecture, life styles and practices were reflected cultural pluralism. They have their own governance and leadership structures, they have from time to time fought tribal wars, including headhunting.

The uniqueness of Sarawak has become a main attraction for everyone especially foreigners and the different ethnic groups made Sarawak such an interesting place to visit. Nonetheless, it was impossible for the visitors who came over to Sarawak to explore every place in Sarawak within a day. However, Sarawak has built and offered a one short visits to Sarawak Cultural Village (SCV) which offered the experience for major ethnics in. The Village stands by the background of the Mount Santubong, within a limited area of 17.5 acres, the diverse cultures of Sarawak ethnic groups. The SCV opened in 1991 and became an important cultural attraction in the cultures and editions of Sarawak.



**Figure 1.1:** Map of Sarawak Cultural Village (SCV) located in Kuching.

Figure 1.1 shows the map of Sarawak Cultural Village which included the location for each house and other main attractions found in the living museum. SCV offered different tourist attraction such as a replica of ethnic houses, cultural and traditional activities, cultural performance and art. The residents of the SCV provide information about their different traditions and lifestyles. The replicas of Sarawak's major ethnic groups houses were made up of the museum buildings and it officially labelled as Rumah Iban, Rumah Bidayuh, Rumah Cina, Rumah Melayu, Rumah Melanau, Rumah Ulu dan Pondok Penan (Penan Hut).



**Figure 1.2:** Seven Types of Traditional Houses in SCV

An example of the main attraction can be found in these ethnics' houses (Figure 1.2) such as their traditional costumes, handmade accessories, food, traditional dance, traditional rituals and other activities that involved culture. The place can be more relevant to gain the experience from the staffs who act as a storyteller in every house. In this living museum, the legacy of the major racial groups in Sarawak was shown and the lifestyles of these groups can be easily portrayed in 14 acres area. In average, there were more than 70,000 visitors visits SCV in a year. Based on the feedback of tour experience from visitors visited SCV in Trip Advisor (2018), SCV was well-known to every foreigner as illustrated in the excerpt of few comments and feedbacks found below.

- *Tourism with good value and interesting*

*Typical house where the employees of this group show examples of crafts, cuisine. Overall, you would always be aware of a certain inevitable artificiality, but I'd be quite happy to go again, and would recommend it to any visitor.*

- *Very interesting and informative place*

*Our visit here was great. This is a great way to find out about Sarawak's various ethnic groups. We have liked to visit every house where we have the chance to try freshly made local sweets and biscuits. We also considered the cultural show to be good, but it was well done for tourists, with authentic tools and dance. Roth timing your visit to make sure you see it. We bought a back picture, and there is the opportunity to but some other local crafts too. The iced watermelon juice in the cafe was very welcome on such a hot day.*

- *The way to understand the principal Sarawak tribes is to visit Sarawak Cultural Village. You can experience and participate in the cultural show of the main tribes*

*in Sarawak. To get a real sense of culture and place you should spend at least 4 hours.*

Commenting in post-visitations was one way to give ideas to a new visitor and the aforementioned responses are from previous visitors' experiences at SCV. Despite its giving benefits, any visitors know little about the perspective on commenting the situations, the settings, and the ethnic groups living in SCV. For example, a study by Macdonald (2006) mentioned that commenting on any museum visits helping to understand the visiting experience, evaluate the exhibitions display and museums' efforts as places for informal learning.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The understanding of tourism inheritance was argued to be based on the connection between the individual and space, namely tourist perceptions of an area in relation to its own heritage (Poria, Butler & Airey, 2006). Based on a study focusing on visits to places where historical artefacts are shown, tourist's perception was suggested as essential for understanding the patterns of visits to obtain the visitor' experience.

Traditionally, visitors' experiences at cultural heritage sites were gathered and analysed using several methods such as interview and questionnaire (Pekarik, Doering & Karns, 1999; Kelly, 2007; Eckert, Pekarik & Pheasant, 2013). On the other hand, this study aimed to explore and identify visitor experiences at SCV using different method such as photovoices and interviews. According to Pekarik, Doering and Karns (1999), the visitors' experience was divided into four categories: *object experience*, *cognitive experience*, *introspective experience* and *social experience*. This study aimed to develop a new

framework of visitors; experience at SCV based on the Pekarik, Doering and Karns (1999). In addition, this study also aimed to identify what experiences were related to tourist perception instead of what satisfies the tourist while visiting SCV. Previously, several studies museum research (i.e. Packer & Ballantyne, 2002; Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Chan & Yeoh, 2010; Kafle, 2014) only focused and investigated the visitors' experience, but none of them did not focused on the connection of tourist experiences based on tourist perceptions in the living museum. As a result, tourist can map their experiences that required them to connect with their social experience, emotional interaction, historical reminiscence and the learning experience for instance.

Lack of studies that focused tourist or visitor perception in any cultural space or living museum caused a difficulty for the tourism management to overcome or improve any issues in future. For example, a study by Deng & Bender (2007); Sheng & Chen, (2012); and Muzaini (2016). As Doering (1999) had suggested, it was important to understand the significance and value of a museum visit from the perspective of visitors and to consider their multiple needs. This study aimed to explore tourist perceptions in order to understand about SCV from the tourist perception. In addition, this could help the SCV management to maintain and improve their services and product too. In addition, this would help the SCV's market to expand widely around the world.

## **1.4 Objective**

### **1.4.1 General Objective**

This research aimed to obtain the overall visitors' experiences at Sarawak Cultural Village.