

PROMOTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ATTRACTIONS IN MALAYSIA: E-BROCHURE PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Cultural heritage resources are among the primary tourist attractions commonly included in promotional materials. Various categories of heritage attraction, such as nature, culture and built environment, play an important role in attracting international as well as domestic tourists and are a major source of foreign exchange for many countries, including Malaysia. Cultural heritage resources are especially important to Malaysia in the development of tourism, as an agent of national integration and representing a key theme in the country's promotional campaign. Although several works have examined various aspects of Malaysian cultural heritage, few studies have explored this topic from the perspective of tourism promotion. Thus, this paper analyses how cultural heritage attractions are projected in current Malaysian tourism promotion. Content analysis was adopted in the assessment of cultural heritage attractions represented in the e-brochures published by Tourism Malaysia. The findings reveal that cultural traditions, buildings and natural heritage are all promoted. The key theme reflected through the descriptions and images of intangible and built heritage is the portrayal of Malaysia as a multi-ethnic destination, which is consistent with the current promotional tagline, 'Malaysia Truly Asia'. Attributes including traditional costume, rural lifestyles, music and dance, cuisine, games and pastimes, buildings, architecture, places of worship and handicrafts have been employed extensively in the e-brochures. Natural heritage resources and activities are also widely represented in various brochures either as specialised attractions, background or integrated with other types of attraction. Finally, the findings of this study add to the understanding of destination marketing by showing which aspects of cultural heritage have been selected and commoditised in tourism promotion.

Keywords: cultural heritage; tourism promotion; e-brochures

Introduction

South East Asian nations are rich in heritage resources such as nature, culture, arts and history, and the cultural attractions are diverse and distinctive (Gaffar, Wetprasit and Setiyorini, 2011). Cultural heritage assets are widely employed as they have the power to attract tourists (Huibin, Marzuki and Razak, 2012). Besides their appeal, these resources have been utilised to differentiate destinations and enhance competitiveness (Gaffar et al., 2011). In Malaysia, heritage tourism has been selected as one of the niche products and has been expanded for tourism development over the past ten years (Mohamed, 2005). Interest in developing heritage tourism was shown by the Malaysian government in the Eighth and Ninth Malaysian Plans. In the Eighth Plan, aspects of heritage, culture and arts were developed to promote awareness among Malaysians and to strengthen identity and unity in the country, not only supporting the country's national agenda, but also enriching the tourism industry by promoting products and services available to visitors, and protecting cultural heritage resources (9MP, 2006). The development of culture and heritage received further attention in the Ninth Plan, which emphasised human capital with positive cultural values, and promoted culture, arts and heritage-based activities to generate economic revenue (9MP, 2006). The importance of cultural heritage attractions is also being strengthened through the country's current promotional theme, 'Malaysia Truly Asia', whose focus is to project Malaysia as a miniature of the whole of Asia through the numerous attributes of multi-ethnic groups. Given the importance of cultural heritage attractions in positioning Malaysia as a major tourist destination, it is important to explore how these resources have been projected in the current tourism promotion.

Literature review

Malaysia and heritage development

Tourism in Malaysia has gone through various phases of development over recent years. Leisure travel began to develop during the period of British imperial expansion and colonialism (Information Malaysia, 1995; Hitchcock et al., 1993). The majority of foreign visitors holidaying in Malaya at this time tended to be British ex-patriates on weekend breaks, rather than visitors travelling from other countries. Natural heritage sites such as hill resorts were among the first tourist attractions, specifically developed for tourists to take advantage of

their cooler surroundings. Following the appearance of these early destinations, tourism experienced rapid growth, with the number of visitors increasing from year to year. Today tourism is considered to be the backbone of Malaysia's economy, and the use of heritage resources has become one of the significant factors in the development of national tourism. Not only natural but cultural-based heritage attractions are strongly promoted by the related authorities. Cultural heritage tourism is also perceived as an activity that is in harmony with the everyday life of a community (Ivanovic, 2008; Sharpley, 2004; Sohaimi, 2004). In line with this, Malaysia is a plural and heterogeneous country, with three major ethnic groups; Malay, Chinese and Indian. The uniqueness of Malaysian society, that can be seen in everyday social, religious and economic life, is the basis for the development of cultural heritage tourism.

Cultural heritage tourism has many roles. It is not only a means to distinguish one destination from another, but it may also function as a rediscovery of identity (Chhabra et al., 2003). Other roles include (Poria, 2003; Alzua et al., 1998; Ashworth et al., 1994):

- Community continuity, renewal, and development;
- Creating and maintaining individual and community identity;
- Providing for recreation opportunities.

In other words, the promotion of cultural heritage tourism may revitalise a community's collective memory of its own culture. For example, Besculides et al. (2004) demonstrated that the promotion of local gastronomy has revived local traditional cuisine in many parts of the world. Lees (2011) indicated that cultural heritage attractions also enable communities to continue to practise traditions like hand-weaving and other handicraft activities.

In Malaysia, cultural heritage is perceived as fulfilling dual roles: economic and social. The first role is to create opportunities for Malaysia's financial improvement and development, mainly through its contribution to the country's economic growth. It is envisaged that cultural heritage tourism will increase foreign exchange earnings, particularly through spending by foreign tourists. In addition to the earnings generated from international and domestic tourism, it is anticipated that the tourism industry will create employment opportunities. The second role, on the other hand, aims at utilising cultural heritage resources for social development. By promoting cultural heritage as one of its most important assets, not only could Malaysia utilise its tourism resources efficiently, but cultural heritage tourism could also serve its social obligations by promoting unity in the country. The promotion of cultural heritage tourism is intended to inculcate a sense of national loyalty through local awareness of cultural matters, national identity and heritage. It is anticipated that understanding and appreciating other cultures through domestic tourism will promote national integration amongst Malaysians, and consequently enhance national pride and commitment (King, 1995; SMP, 1986:89).

Cultural heritage tourism

The International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) (<http://www.icomos.org>) defined heritage by dividing it into natural and cultural environments. The term "natural heritage" is used to describe gardens, landscapes, national parks, wilderness, mountains, rivers, islands, and flora and fauna. On the other hand, "cultural heritage" is defined as consisting of traditions or living expressions that are inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants. In general, cultural heritage tourism encompasses a wide range of tangible and intangible elements (Swarbrooke, 1994). Tangible elements include landscapes, historical sites and places, and the built environment, while intangible elements consist of collections, past and continued cultural practices, knowledge, and living experiences. Zeppel and Hall claimed that it is the tangible remains of the past, such as buildings, sites and artefacts, which form the principal resources for cultural heritage tourism (1991:35). In contrast, other scholars beginning to address and see intangible nature of CH as equal in importance to, or in some cases greater than, tangible nature of CH (Vecco, 2011; Ma and Wang, 2008; Kenji, 2004; Munjeri, 2004). This is because 'intangible' represents the abstracts and non-measurable and the notion of oral tradition that acts as the main vehicle of the intangible (Vijayah, 2011:36). In other words, the concept of intangible CH includes living expressions and the traditions that countless groups and communities worldwide have inherited from their ancestors and transmitted to their descendants, in most cases orally. Such aspects include; oral traditions and expression, including language, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events.

Nuryanti (1996: 250) suggested that 'cultural heritage tourism offers opportunities to portray the past in the present'. Similarly, Zeppel and Hall (1991: 54) concluded that cultural heritage tourism is an:

... experiential tourism, in the sense of seeking an encounter with nature and culture, or feeling part of the history of a place.

Poria et al. (2003), on the other hand, argued that cultural heritage tourism should be defined by motivation, rather than by site-specific attributes. They defined heritage sites based upon the motivations of tourists, tourists' perceptions of a site, and whether or not tourists perceive it to be part of their own heritage. Poria's definition (2001), however, is countered by Garrod and Fyall (2001) and Ho and Mckercher (2004), who argued that such a definition completely ignores the role of the suppliers of the heritage product, and is more inclined towards tourists' demands. They further argued that for people to be motivated to engage in cultural heritage tourism, the attraction they wish to visit must possess certain heritage traits. Thus, emphasis should also be given to the role of the suppliers who market and promote the attractions.

Perhaps the most comprehensive discussion regarding heritage tourism may be derived from Swarbrooke (1994:223), who confirmed that the growth of heritage tourism resulted from interest shown on both demand and supply sides. From the demand side, Swarbrooke suggested that factors like increased leisure time, more disposable income, desire to learn something new while on holiday, as well as higher levels of education, may have resulted in the development of cultural heritage tourism. On the supply side is the development of heritage tourism into package holidays, and encouragement by government through development and marketing. Millar (1989) noted that the unique selling point of a heritage attraction is the individuality and uniqueness of the attraction itself. Its traits, furthermore, may become added values to the site. However, if attempts to create uniqueness are not performed carefully, they may lead to detrimental results. This is because, unlike other kinds of attraction that can be upgraded once the attractions are worn out or out of date, it is not possible to do so for heritage attractions. In many instances, cultural heritage resources are irreplaceable (Bortolotto, 2007). In many instances, heritage attractions have been accused of sacrificing historically accurate presentations for the sake of tourist entertainment (Viyayah, 2011). This is because, in the pursuit of uniqueness, attractions are also trying to become appealing, entertaining, and at the same time competitive as a result of their highly market-oriented positions. This, consequently, will have worrying implications for the ways in which heritage attractions are perceived in future years. Butler (1999) noted the difference between regarding heritage attractions as utilities to be exploited, and seeing them as resources to be managed in a sustainable manner. In order for cultural heritage resources to be woven into tourism, the approach to heritage marketing is crucial so that people will better understand and appreciate heritage. Therefore, as reflected in the literature section, cultural heritage attractions are important sources in sustainable tourism development and promotional efforts. Therefore, this paper analyses how cultural heritage attractions are portrayed in current Malaysian tourism promotion. The following section will explain the method selected in the analysis of this paper.

Method

In the examination of the portrayal of cultural heritage attractions in the e-brochures published by Tourism Malaysia, the content analysis method was used. Content analysis is a method which is frequently selected to analyse the content of textual materials (Neumann, 2003). In fact, Kassirjian and Kassirjian (1988) stated that this method is usually adopted to analyse cultural portrayals in tourism marketing (cited in Mohd Hairi Jalis, Che and Markwell, 2014). Thus far, numerous materials such as such as booklets, newspapers, magazines, advertisements, films, official documents, video tapes, and web pages including travel brochures have been examined using the content analysis technique (Jenkins, 1999). In the context of this paper, the material analysed is brochures which are available on the current Tourism Malaysia website. Tourism brochures were examined because it is argued that, from the earliest tourism development to the present day, brochures remain one of the key information sources and means of promotion adopted by tourism destinations across the world (Wicks and Schuett, 1991; Wong and Wall, 2005; Bendito and Ramirez, 2011). However, the authors of this paper chose to examine the depiction of cultural heritage only in the online brochures (or e-brochures), as promotional materials which are available on the Internet can play an important role in attracting tourists in the modern day. This view is supported by Lai and Vinh (2013) who claimed that the Internet is now widely recognised as one of the key promotional means to market tourism destinations effectively. Although the e-brochures evaluated are also available in the print version, online brochures were chosen as they are more complete, easily accessible and can be updated constantly. In fact, in order to enable potential tourists to access information easily, many countries and regions have created national and regional tourism websites (Horng and Tsai, 2010). Out of 59 brochures available on the Malaysian website, only 45 were examined here; some of them were not published in the English language, or focused on different types of attraction and general information.

Findings

The findings of the study reveal that a plethora of Malaysian cultural heritage attractions have been included in the different categories of e-brochures published by Tourism Malaysia, in both textual and visual media. Various categories of heritage attraction including natural, cultural and built heritage are included in the e-

brochures. In the context of cultural heritage, numerous attractions associated with traditional lifestyles such as local dress, music, dance, cuisine, religious rituals, games, crafts and arts are evident in many of the brochures. One of the primary cultural themes clearly evident in the majority of the e-brochures is the portrayal of Malaysia as a 'Truly Asia' destination which focuses on multi-culturalism. Various attributes associated with this theme are presented in the form of text and images. For example, one of headings included in the brochure 'Malaysia Travel Guide' (2015) is "Malaysia...The Heart of Southeast Asia" and it is stated in this brochure that one of the reasons tourists should come to Malaysia is because this country is "a myriad of Asian cultures – and more – all in one place". This brochure also states that culture and heritage is one of the special interest offered in Malaysia.

Malaysia is made up of a rich tapestry of different cultures and well-preserved heritage. The country's population is an amalgamation of varying ethnic backgrounds, bringing together an enchanting medley of cuisine, crafts, traditions and architecture. Malaysia's diverse cultural heritage is evident in their costumes, social practices, recreational pursuits, handicrafts, food, music and other forms of entertainment. Remnants of the past in the forms of heritage buildings, historical sites as well as ancient relics can still be seen all over Malaysia to this day – a reminder of the country's illustrious and colourful history (Malaysia Travel Guide, 2015).

Attractions related to this multi-ethnic destination are also widely projected in two of the e-brochures: 'Heritage and Crafts' and 'Malaysia Homestay Experience'. Various phrases such as "come and experience the heritage of all Asia", "in Malaysia, all of Asia's main ethnic group and all the world's major religions are represented", "a dazzling tapestry of Asian traditions" and "a taste of all the flavours of Asia", are included in these two brochures. The brochure 'Heritage and Craft', has numerous images projecting multi-culturalism associated both with the main ethnic groups, Malay, Chinese and Indian, and several indigenous groups from Sabah and Sarawak wearing their traditional costumes. Among key aspects of multi-ethnic attributes included are projection of people and their customs, traditional music and dance, games and pastimes, traditional cuisine, architectural heritage and handicrafts. Meanwhile, the primary attractions represented in the brochure 'Malaysia Homestay Experience', revolve around foreign tourists experiencing Malaysian cultural traditions in the context of rural and natural settings, particularly in traditional villages. Images included are foreign tourists wearing local costume and posing with traditional Malay houses as their background, interacting with local hosts, participating in traditional dances and music, visiting agricultural sites, enjoying outdoor activities in a natural environment, and cooking and enjoying local cuisine.

One of the interesting cultural attractions showcased in the e-brochures is images of foreign tourists participating in mock traditional weddings. Malay wedding rituals such as dyeing the hands with henna (called *berinai*) and trimming the bride's eyebrows are detailed in the brochure 'Malaysia Homestay Experience'. The highlight of the wedding ceremony is the ritual called *bersanding*, detailed in the brochure. Another brochure entitled 'A Lovers Paradise' promotes the wedding ceremonies of various ethnic groups in Malaysia as tourism products offered to visitors. For example, this brochure states:

Malaysia's rich tapestry of living colour offers couples an amazing array of traditional styled wedding to choose from. You can opt for the elaborate Malay *akad nikah* and *bersanding* ceremonies, the luxurious Nyonya dowry presentation or the intricate Chinese tea ceremony. The latter ceremony involves the bride and groom serving little cups of tea to their family members and receiving ang pow or red packets containing money in return.

Along with indigenous traditional weddings, Hindu temple weddings and Christian church celebrations are offered to visitors. Images of brides and grooms wearing traditional weddings attire of Malays, Chinese and Indians, and objects associated with traditional weddings, are presented widely in this brochure. However, the promotion and commercialisation of traditional weddings raises a number of issues. First, it can affect the authenticity of tourists experiencing Malaysian culture. One of the main reasons for foreign tourists to enjoy a homestay is to experience authentic rural and cultural lifestyles, unlike the promotion of mock Malay wedding ceremonies. Another issue relating to traditional weddings as tourism products is that some of these ceremonies are actually religious rites which are still strongly practised by various ethnic groups in Malaysia. The commoditisation of these rites and ceremonies for tourism purposes may be unacceptable because it involves foreigners participating in religious ceremonies which still have strong meanings to local people.

Despite the strong presence of nature, the portrayal of unique cultural heritage is also evident in the brochures promoting Sabah and Sarawak. Images and descriptions of cultural heritage attractions from these two states revolve around attributes associated with indigenous groups. For example, in the state of Sabah, exotic attractions relating to headhunting traditions are promoted, such as the cultural village which was built in memory of the fierce Kadazan warrior Monsopiad; the brochure 'East Malaysia' has. The Monsopiad Cultural Village is also incorporated into a brochure with a more modern theme entitled 'Fun and Fantasy'; although this promotes theme and water parks throughout Malaysia, it also includes images of Kadazan warriors, indigenous

people wearing their tribal black costumes, tribal arts and statues, traditional dances and traditional houses made from local materials. The description of the Monsopiad Cultural Village also explains the importance of rice cultivation and the traditional method of paddy production are mentioned:

The Kadazan cultivate rice, and it is impressive to see the rhythmic pounding of rice in a wooden mortar by two young girls, as the long, carved wooden stick is heavy! You can have a go at pounding rice, if you like. The rice is then stored in a big *tangkob* or rice bin. Kadazan villagers also brew rice wine and make sago from the sago palm (Brochure Fun and Fantasy, 2014).

Cultural heritage attractions in the brochures on Sarawak include descriptions and images of the Sarawak Cultural Village, longhouses and indigenous peoples. A number of well-known longhouses such as the Batang Ai and Annah Rais in Sarawak are promoted in the brochures

Longhouses are the traditional dwellings of the natives. These are communal dwellings and many families live in the same longhouses and share their tasks together. A stay at the longhouse offers a chance to experience this interesting way of life (Brochure East Malaysia, 2014).

The description of the Iban Longhouse in Batang Ai includes the following:

Be awed by a blowpipe demonstration, see how rice is cooked in bamboo and watch a traditional native dance (Brochure East Malaysia, 2014).

Images of human skulls are clearly evident in the photographs of the longhouses in Malaysia, symbolising the traditions and strength for of indigenous groups, particularly the Iban and Kadazan.

The analysis of the e-brochures reveals that iconic and heritage buildings are commonly presented. One iconic heritage building featured widely in tourism brochures is the Sultan Abdul Samad Building. Images and descriptions of this building appear in various categories of brochure, including those promoting national, regional and city attractions. One brochure claims that

One of the most prominent and distinguished landmarks of KL, the Sultan Abdul Samad Building, is an enduring attraction amidst the rapidly changing city skyline. Built in 1897, the building was named after the reigning monarchy at that time. The stately edifice served as the government administrative building during the British era. Constructed entirely of brick, it boasts a Mahometan or Neo-Saracenic style with an imposing porch, graceful arches, shiny copper domes and a 41.2m high clock tower (Brochure Central Region, 2014).

Other built heritage attractions presented in the brochures are the national palace (Istana Negara), Merdeka Square, National Museum, central market (Pasar Seni), and Kuala Lumpur railway station. Besides the capital city, Kuala Lumpur, the states of Melaka and Penang feature several colonial heritage buildings, and these two states have received Unesco World Heritage status. Old colonial buildings are prominent among Malaysia's heritage attractions, such as Porta De Santiago and the Stadthuys in the state of Melaka. Part of Malaysia's colonial legacy,

The Stadthuys is the most imposing relic of the Dutch rule in Melaka. It features salmon red walls, heavy wooden doors and wrought-iron hinges. Once the official residence of the Dutch governors and their officers, it now houses the Museum of History and Ethnography (Brochure Southern Region, 2014).

One of the main built heritage sites projected in tourism brochures Penang is Fort Cornwallis.

Fort Cornwallis was named after the 18th century Governor-General of Bengal, Charles Marquis Cornwallis ... t was built on the site of Sir Francis Light historic landing. Relics at the fort include a chapel, gunpowder magazine and cell rooms. The famous Dutch cannon or *meriam seri rambai* is prominently displayed facing seawards (Brochure Northern Region, 2014).

Built heritage including buildings, monuments and statues have been used in the promotion of various states in Malaysia are also prominently featured in the brochure 'Places of Worship'. Images and descriptions of places of worship associated with various religious practices in Malaysia are represented: mosques, churches and temples associated with Chinese, Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh, together with pagodas, statues of deities and Buddha, and images of Jesus Christ.

Based on the descriptions and images of heritage buildings in Malaysia, it is clear that the focus of this type of attraction in tourism brochures is their unique architecture and history. The historical background of these attractions is incorporated in their descriptions, to show tourists the significant value of the buildings to the

country and its people. The architecture of the built heritage is unique and diverse, as Malaysia was colonised by the Portuguese, Dutch, English and Japanese, and received various influences particularly from China, India, the Middle East, Pakistan, Java and Aceh. For example, the brochures illustrate how the architecture of several mosques in Melaka and Penang had been influenced by Chinese and Indian features. The majority of built heritage resources in Malaysia are advertised as part of the promotion of the capital city, Kuala Lumpur, and other large cities such as Melaka, Penang, Putrajaya, Kuching and Alor Setar. Some of these cities feature ancient and spectacular heritage buildings as they were the centre of colonial and local administrations for a long time. This finding is similar to the claim made by Timothy and Boyd (2003) that urban areas, particularly in Europe, mostly contain historic buildings, monuments, museums and built heritage. As part of the descriptions of built heritage, our study reveals that the multi-ethnic and multi-religious people in Malaysia live in harmony. This aspect is reflected in the explanation that foreigners and visitors from other religious beliefs are welcome to visit various places of worship in Malaysia, as well as religious festivals such as open house celebrations.

One of the main cultural heritage attractions in Malaysia depicted in the brochures is the local cuisine. Text and images of food associated with the Malay, Chinese, Indian, Baba and Nyonya indigenous groups, and the Portuguese are advertised. Several signature dishes such as *satay*, and the authentic and speciality cuisines of each state are represented. The food selected as part of the promotion of each state in Malaysia is traditional, and exotic for foreigners and people from other states. For example:

Adventurous visitors can enjoy Pahang's local delights that appeal with tantalising aroma and taste. A number of dishes are said to have royal origins as they were specially created by royal chefs of yesteryear" (Brochure East Coast Region, 2014).

In the promotion of Kelantan, some of the authentic and unique local dishes named are *ayam percik*, *nasi kerabu*, *nasi dagang* and *budu*; and for the state of Penang, *asam laksa*, *nasi kandar*, *Char Koay Teow* and *pasembor*. Aspects of cultural heritage are also reflected in the origins, traditions and symbolic meanings of local cuisine. Some of the dishes are accompanied with explanations of the occasions, festivals and religious celebrations at which they are served. For example, for Chinese food:

The dishes that are normally prepared for the reunion dinner each present a symbolic meaning. Dumplings are served to imply wealth as they look like ancient nuggets while whole fish or chicken represent prosperity and completeness. Noodles suggest longevity and *yee sang* is the symbol of prosperity. Even oranges and tangerines convey meaning of long-lasting relationships, happiness and a good future (Brochure Culinary Delights, 2014).

Nature is another type of heritage attraction represented in the current e-brochures. Based on the analysis, natural resources are employed in various categories of brochure, and several brochures specialise in various categories of natural heritage attraction: 'Adventure with Nature', 'Visit Malaysia Year 2014 – Nature', 'Diving: Endless Under-Water Treasures', 'Islands and Beaches', 'Agrotourism in Malaysia', 'Birdwatching in Malaysia', 'Dive in Paradise' and 'National and Marine Parks'. Other brochures feature natural heritage resources either as one component of attractions or as background for other types of attraction. Abundant natural resources such as tropical rainforests, rivers, mountains, national parks, wildlife, caves, beaches, plants, flowers and marine species are projected to tourists. For example, it is claimed that Endau Rompin in Johor is a rare milieu of lowland and mountain forests which is home to the largest population of endangered animals in the country. The Sumatran rhinoceros, tigers and elephants are among the protected species in Endau Rompin (Adventure with Nature, 2014).

A variety of nature-based activities are promoted, including jungle trekking, mountain climbing, rock climbing, cave exploration, river cruising, white water rafting, mountain biking and bird watching. For example, as part of the description of the eco-adventure activities, it is claimed that

Endowed with a wealth of natural wonders, Malaysia's lush rainforests and rugged terrains make it one of the best places for eco-adventure. National parks are plenty, each endowed with an incredible diversity of flora and fauna as well as impressive natural landscapes, providing the perfect platform for a variety of eco-adventure pursuits (Malaysia Exciting Discoveries Made Easy – Special Interest Holidays, 2014).

Beside pictures of foreign and local visitors participating in nature-based activities, images and descriptions of native peoples form part of the promotion of Malaysia's natural heritage resources. For example in the brochure 'National and Marine Parks' published in 2014, there are images of foreign tourists with aboriginal people and their traditional houses. In the description of Kenong National Park, it is stated that

... the park is also home to the aborigines of the Batek tribe, who have long inhabited these remote, luxuriant rainforests. The Batek people still hunt with poison-tripped darts fired from

blowpipes, catch fish from the rivers and forests for wild fruits and tubers (Brochure National and Marine Parks, 2014).

This extract shows that within Malaysian national parks, there are native groups who still practise traditional ways of life they use forests to support their livelihood. This finding supports the statement by Timothy and Boyd (2003) that some national parks not only feature natural heritage resources but are also home to indigenous peoples.

Conclusion

In general, various cultural heritage resources have been utilised by Tourism Malaysia in the e-brochures to promote Malaysia as a tourist destination. As the promotional theme for Malaysian tourism is the portrayal of the country as a little Asia, attributes associated with the pluralistic society have become the core component of cultural heritage attractions. A plethora of cultural heritage resources have also been incorporated into different categories of brochure, ranging from general and regional brochures to specific brochures focusing on particular cultural heritage attractions. The representation of diverse of cultural heritage resources associated with multi-ethnic groups in tourism promotion can help to foster national integration in Malaysia. Portrayal of cultural heritage attractions is evident through homestay products, traditional weddings, indigenous tourism, multi-ethnic cuisine and religious festivals. Built heritage resources are mostly represented through iconic buildings, colonial buildings and places of worship. The architecture of these built heritage attractions is highlighted in the brochures. A variety of natural heritage resources have been promoted in specialised brochures promoting nature or nature-based activities. The study also found that nature and culture can coexist, particularly in the context of rural and indigenous tourism. Religious rituals and rites associated with multi-ethnic traditional weddings have also been commoditised to tourists. Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that cultural heritage assets are important sources of tourist attraction, and the promotion of these resources in e-brochures is consistent with the national marketing strategies adopted by Tourism Malaysia.

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