

MANAGING HERITAGE: A CASE STUDY AT DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL HERITAGE

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ABSTRACT

Heritage management is one of the principal issue in preserving cultural heritage belongs to Malaysia. It aims to provide protection to the importance and usability for future generations. One of the heritage management strategy aims to provide protection to the importance of the heritage resources. However, based on previous studies, a systematic approach in managing and protecting this valuable and non-replaceable asset is still relatively new. Therefore, the objective of this study is to identify challenges and problems faced by the Department of National Heritage in preserving cultural heritage in Malaysia. Through the literature review and a pilot study, a number of issues and problems have been identified involving financial, spare parts, technical problems, human behaviour and attitudes, management and administration and education and training. A total of 30 respondents from the staff of Department of National Heritage have been involved in completing the questionnaires. The findings conclude that the identified issues and problems affecting the implementation and effectiveness of the managing heritage resources.

Keywords: *Heritage management, issues and problems*

Introduction

Cultural heritage is about far more than ‘stones and bones’ from the past. It is all the aspect of a community’s past and present that it considers valuable and desires to pass on to future generation. The term incorporates places, objects and practices of cultural significance. It thus includes ‘tangible heritage’ such as buildings, industrial structures and technology, landscapes and artefacts and non-visible cultural heritage features such as buried archeological sites and ‘intangible heritage’ such as language, visual arts, music, performance, religion, beliefs and customary practices like hunting and gathering. It also includes annual festivals celebrated by a country. Cultural heritage is not just about old things. New or newly altered objects, places and practices are just as much as a part of cultural heritage where they hold cultural value for today’s generation (Melanie, 2009)

For Malaysia, in its National Heritage Act 2005 (NHA 2005), the development of culture was promoted to enhance national identity while strengthening national unity, harmony and integration. Besides, various aspects of culture were developed to offer a myriad of products and services that supported the growth of the tourism industry (Nurulhuda, 2013). Greater emphasis was given to the development of culture, arts and heritage when the Ministry of Information, Communications and Culture was set up in 2004. The Ministry has a role to consolidate policy and programmes that further promote Malaysia’s culture, arts and heritage as well as to formulate new strategies to make the arts more accessible to the masses. Cultural heritage have been promoted as a source of economic growth. In the Ninth Malaysian Plan, the National Heritage Act 2005 (hereinafter referred to as the NHA 2005) was enacted to give protection and preserve various tangible and intangible cultural heritage and has been promoted for the tourism industry (Zuraidah, 2009). RM442.2 million was allocated for culture, arts and heritage programmes, where 63 percent was used for the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage. The Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture Malaysia is entrusted to create a cultured Malaysian citizen, imbued with high moral values and virtues. Its functions includes to:

- undertake research and documentation of cultural products towards the establishment of Resource Centre and Data Bank for the development of national culture;
- identify items of cultural heritage to be restored and revived;
- plan, coordinate and monitor cultural activities and projects at federal and state levels to be consistent with the National Cultural Policy;
- plan cultural infrastructure and facilities for the artists and performing groups to perform for local audiences as well as tourists; and
- Strengthen cultural understanding and bilateral cooperation with foreign countries.

However, profound, insightful and perceptive understanding on how to achieve effective and efficient management of the heritage resources is very principal. It is because, cultural heritage management involves the action taken to identify, assess, decide and enact decision regarding cultural heritage. It is undertaken to actively

protect culturally significant places, objects, beliefs and practices in relation to the threats they face from a wide range of cultural and natural causes. It may result in documentation, conservation, alteration, or even loss of cultural heritage. It can also include working with communities to protect and enhance their cultures and practices. Shahrin Bazlin (2004) states that failure to implement an efficient management skills have been influenced by a number of significant issues and problems. According to Funso Falade (2006), these issues and problems has become a global phenomenon face by most developing countries including Malaysia. This phenomenon if uncontrolled can cause potential losses to the heritage industry. Besides that, as stated by Zuraidah (2008), there is in existence a comprehensive policy for cultural heritage information and management in Malaysia, but this policy is not comprehensive enough to serve as a guidelines by cultural institution; in this case The Department of National Heritage. It does not include the standard and protocol to be used by the institution when managing cultural resources.

Thus, for a start, this study aims to identify the problems and challenges faced by the Department of National Heritage in terms managing cultural heritage in Malaysia.

Issues and problems influencing the maintenance implementation

Based on the literature review and findings of the pilot test, 24 problems were identified. These problems have been categorized into six major classes of technical problems, management and administration, financial problems human-related problems, spare parts problems and lack of institutional and training facilities. Further information on these categories and their related problem are described below:

Category		Category description	Detailed Problems	
2.1	Technical problems	Problem associated with the technical aspects of conservation from the beginning to the end of the building life.	a	Not considering a maintainability analysis
			b	Not using Life Cycle Cost (LCC) technique
			c	Usage of new material instead of original material
			d	Usage of sub-standard materials
			e	Poor quality control
			f	Unavailability or poorly written operation and maintenance manual
			g	As built documents not reflecting actual status of building works
			h	Data feedback about maintenance
2.2	Management and administration problems	Problems associated with management, planning, organization, performance and execution of maintenance task	a	Poor management
			b	Method of classification of maintenance contractors
			c	Lack of uniform specifications and codes
			d	Lack of uniform maintenance contract
			e	Shortage of maintenance contract period
			f	Lack of coordination between management groups and technical groups
			g	Non use of facilities after completion
2.3	Financial problems	Problem associated with the budgeting control that aims to plan and control the use of resources to achieve the desired objectives		
2.4	Human	Problems related to weaknesses and human error as the experience of the	a	Unavailability of experienced and skilled manpower
			b	Lack of number of specialized experienced maintenance contractors

behaviour and attitudes	workforce and their attitudes to understand the maintenance work		
		c	Importance of maintenance work not understood by public
		d	Misuse of facilities after completion

Research survey

Taking into account the problems discussed above, a survey involving 30 staffs in the field of heritage management, which includes of Directors (Nos = 5), and Heritage Officers (Nos=25) have been conducted to measure the evaluation of the relative importance of each of the above problems. A pilot study was initially carried out to verify the validity of the developed questionnaire on representatives of the Directors (Nos= 5) and Heritage Management (Nos= 25). The value obtained from Alpha Cronbach Reliability Test is 0.8739 which demonstrate significantly high

Results of survey

Based on the response of the questionnaire, an importance index has been calculated to reflect the level of importance of these factors. The index was calculated as follows;

Importance index (I) =

$$\frac{\sum_{i=0}^4 a_i x_i}{4 \sum x_i} \times 100\%$$

where;

a_i = constant specifies the weight assigned to i

x_i = variables that specify the frequency of i,

The responses for importance index (I) are categorized as;

0% to 20% were categorized as “**not important**”

20% to 40% were categorized as “**less important**”

40% to 60 % were categorized as “**moderately importance**”

60% to 80% were categorized as “**important**”

80% to 100% were categorized as “**very important**”

Based on the importance index (I) calculation, the factors listed were arranged in order according to the importance rank. The importance index of each category is a result of average of all its related problems. The results are shown in Table 2 for the categories for detailed problems.

Table 2: The importance index of each category

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	IMPORTANCE INDEX	RANK	
		AVERAGE (%)		
2.3	FINANCIAL PROBLEMS	93.61	1	VE IMPOR TANT
2.4	HUMAN BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES	78.38	2	
2.6	LACK OF INSTITUTIONAL AND TRAINING FACILITIES	75.15	3	

2.5	SPARE PARTS PROBLEMS	74.38	4	
2.1	TECHNICAL PROBLEMS	73.38	5	
2.2	MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION PROBLEMS	59.79	6	<i>MODERATE</i>

Results discussion

The analysis as presented in Table 2 for the categories problems showed the following conclusions;

- a. This research has identified a total of 24 issues and problems affecting the implementation of maintenance work of Malaysians' heritage buildings. The issues and problems then have been classified into 6 main categories of technical problems, management and administrative problems, financial problems, human behaviour and attitude problems, spare parts problems and lack of institutional and training facilities.
- b. Of the six main categories, the financial problems were ranked as very important, while management and administrative problems ranked as moderately important. The rest of the categories are ranked as important.
- c. These problems are the matter to be considered in order to improve management of heritage resources.

Conclusions

This study has identified the issues and problems affecting heritage management at the Department of National Heritage. Financial problems are all factors that significantly influence than other problems. These problems need to be addressed in improving the practical management of Malaysia's heritage.

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