MODEL DEVELOPMENT FOR SOCIAL COHESION AMONG MULTI ETHNIC VISITORS AT MELAKA UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

**Mohd Hasrul Yushairi Johari[1*], Rozman Yusuf[2], Nik Rozilaini Wan Mohamed[1], Mashita Abd Jabar[1],
Sharifah Adlina Tuan Sayed Amran[2]**
Faculty Hotel & Tourism Management, UiTM Kampus Bandaraya Melaka[1]
Faculty of Business Management, UiTM Alor Gajah Melaka[2]
*For correspondence; Tel. + (60) 0129653899, E-mail:hasrul436@bdrmelaka.uitm.edu.my

ABSTRACT*: It is observed that after 61 years of independence, racial tensions still exist. Prime Minister NajibRazak clearly states that if there is no racial harmony, then nation's security will be at risk. In the past studies, it was declared that nearly 75% of Malay, Chinese and Indian argues that racial harmony exist in the country. Lack of interaction between ethnic communities in Malaysia remains a contentious issue. The opportunity to better understand about other ethnic at historical religious sites becomes increasingly difficult when there is complexity on national discourse about ethnic rights. This study aims to investigate what are the elements that could enhance unity among multi ethnic visitors and propose a unity model where multi ethnic visitors can appreciate each other culture through information gained at historical religious sites. The study interviewed 20 participants to gain as much information as possible from their visit. It was found that several guidelines at historical religious sites deemed to be emphasized for promoting unity such as connecting through community, experience & knowledge gained and promoting understanding among different cultures. These could develop sympathetic understanding, emotional closeness and nature of welcoming among multi ethnic visitors. This study has contributed to more evidences to 1Malaysia concept for the implementation of spirit of unity among Malaysians at historical sites.*

Keywords:*social cohesion, unity, multi ethnic, visitors, unity model, qualitative, religious sites, UNESCO*

1. INTRODUCTION

Background of study
As a multicultural country, Malaysia gives freedom to each ethnic group to practice its own ethnic culture. In order to nurture the social cohesion and strengthen the bond among multi-ethnic visitors, each of the ethnic must interact with each other to learn about each other culture. When an individual has contacted with the Other, it can reduce the misunderstanding, bad perception or prejudice behavior.

This study was based on various research and writings which stress on the important role of respecting someone's culture. Social cohesion among ethnics is critical to ensure people live in harmony, but [1] declared that nowadays Malaysians sometimes feel uncomfortable mixing with other ethnic. This attitude leads to lack of strong ties between ethnic, hence spirit of unity among them are less. In the case of Melaka, the city is famous of its rich diversity of ethnic who has become the residents, thus being visited by many visitors of different ethnic to seek for their identity and learn some cultures of the other. As been said by [26] heritage sites in Melaka is not only a product for a tourist market but it is also act as a central icon in the construction of a highly contested contemporary Malaysian identity and that what makes Melaka as an interesting place for a research. It makes Melaka unique on its own where at the heritage sites the tourist can see several ethnic in one place such as Malays, Chinese and Indian.

Problem statement
National unity is the most important thing in achieving peace, stability and prosperity of the country. Building unity in a multiracial society is the greatest challenge of our country. [2] observed that after 61 years of independence, racial tensions still exist. In this case, what is needed by Malaysia at the moment is to strengthen ethnic ties in order to neutralize the politics of hate, race polarization and the growing of racism. Prime Minister Najib Razak clearly states that if there is no racial harmony, then nation's security will be at risk [3]. According to [13], despite the process of assimilation and integration of the ethnic in Malaysia, ethnocentrism made it hard to promote unity. In Malaysia, each ethnic group defends their culture and customs, prioritize them and claimed they are the best. This has triggered differenceand conflicts of values, culture and interests. It wasinterrogated whether different faiths have the will to work together for a common good. [15] declared that nearly 75% of Malay, Chinese and Indian argues that racial harmony

exist in the country. The manner in which individuals and communitiesmanage encounters with cultural others is under scrutiny, taking into consideration of the existing plurality of languages, religions, histories and identities [20]. In general, we have heard news that there are wrestles in Central African Republic between Muslims and Christians; Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims who fought in violence in Myanmar; religious conflict in Northern Ireland and the never ending Palestinian-Israeli conflict which was seen as having religious tension. This global scenario portrays that religion has been set as the conflicts around the world. Problem solving related to unity and racial harmony in Malaysia has been much discussed in the aspects of economy, education, politics, national service, open house, integration programs in higher education and the role of non-governmental organizations in the context of race relations. However, very limited studies examine and explore the dynamics of interreligious interactions and understanding of people on the different religions especially during visits to historical religious sites. The contribution that different faith of religion can make to peacemaking as opposed to religious conflict is only beginning to be explored. [14] approved that interreligious understanding can alleviate conflict of different parties. New development model should be developed to guide practitioners and scholars in addressing interreligious interactions especially at Melaka religious sites at Jalan Harmoni which were gazette under Malaysia national heritage. Challenges in terms of the importance of unity will create bigger problems if the notion of ethnocentrism is the belief in the community. In this regard, the prevailing unity between the races in this country should be strengthened. By the same token,

awareness of the ability of heritage and cultural tourism to contribute toward social cohesion has been lacking [21].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethnic relations in Malaysia still survive until today because of the political stability in the country that curb the tendency of the extremisms and ethnic violence that could damage the harmonious ethnic relations in Malaysia. According to [13] though Malaysia is considered as a country of peace, stability and harmony, but some scholars have described the situation as 'alarming situation and fragile' while others express it as 'tense but stable' [17]. The tourist can explore and experience the lifestyle of the ethnic during their site visit. This statement is supported with informants' answers in term of cross-cultural understanding and has high access on culture diversity awareness.

Culture and heritage are the important components in the national identity and development because it can help to tie the multi-ethnic so they can share their history together [7].

Few informants' have answered that tolerance between different cultures is important. When the ethnic learnt more about each other culture at heritage sites, it will enhance their relationships and strengthen the unity between them. In maintaining the sustainable social development as well as preserving the variations in identifying cultural groups and enriching the interaction between them, it is crucial to conserve the cultural significance of heritage sites as it acts as the guardians of social unity, place identity and national pride [9].

It can be argued why unity through heritage sites, it is because the concept of heritage refers to tangible and concrete elements of the past (buildings, monuments, artifacts, sites and constructed landscapes), as well as those aspects of culture expressed in behavior, action and performance where it is usually referred to as 'intangible cultural heritage' [10].

There is a way on how to strengthen and consolidate unity between ethnics at the heritage sites. [9] outlines six rules in appreciating a place based on the study in Cairo which were the properness of place (the physical condition of building or streets, the safety level or the existence of sufficient service), representativeness of place (clearly representing specific areas, technologies, religions/believes), being narrative (have stories that are told through its entity or materialistic existence), recalling memories (the influence the place puts on the visitor to recall memories), engagement (the social dimension and the emotional communication between people and place like spiritual engagement through worshiping in mosques or churches) and uniqueness of place (provide a unique experience such as being the oldest, the biggest, the only remaining or the first of its kind) [9]. Hence, all the six elements can be applied in Melaka heritage sites especially the worship heritage sites as it can unite the ethnics in this country when they understand about each other by the guidance from the six concepts above which have been successfully implemented in the case study at Cairo heritage sites.

2.1 SOCIAL COHESION THEORY

Inspired by prior literature on social cohesion and the relation with the spatial characteristics of places, this study focused on three key concepts, namely social cohesion, emotional solidarity and interaction with places. It is generally claimed that both social interaction and emotional solidarity can contribute to social cohesion [12]. Although some argue that interactions in public spaces are vague to stimulate social cohesion, others state that contacts between people of different ethnic might positively influence social cohesion [19].Social cohesion theory also suggests that organized communities are ones where residents have solidarity and share common goals and values for the community and where there are strong bonds and regular social interaction between residents [11].The perception of strong social cohesion within a community has been found to have both direct and indirect effects on neighborhood satisfaction. Theories of social cohesion emphasize mutual trust and solidarity among local residents that can lead to increased sociability.

There were three major elements of social cohesion, which is social relation, connectedness and the focus on common good [16].Connectedness defined as a feeling of belonging to or having affinity with a particular person or group. This domain promotes cohesion through positive identification with the country, a high level of confidence in its institutions and a perception that social conditions are fair [16].Meanwhile, social relation defines as any relationship between two or more individuals. Social relation builds by a network of horizontal relationships between individuals and societal groups of all kinds, which is characterized by trust and allows for diversity [16]. Social relations derived from individual agency form the basis of social structure and the basic object for analysis by social scientists. The last characteristic of social cohesion is focus on the common good. This promotes cohesion through actions and attitudes that help the ethnic keeping up with society's rules and allow for a collaborative approach to the organization of society [16, 27].

In order to have the feeling of unity between multi ethnic visitors who have the same interest and goals, it is important for this study to further discuss emotional solidarity. The emotional solidarity scale focuses on three elements, which are welcoming nature, emotional closeness, and sympathetic understanding factors. [23] conducted a qualitative research. It is to develop the constructs of the theory of emotional solidarity based on the work of [4] and then he investigates the relationship between destination residents and tourists' and emotional solidarity. According to [4], it was stated that the residents' degree of shared beliefs, shared behaviour, and the level of interaction with tourists strongly predicts emotional solidarity. [6] defined emotional solidarity as the effective bonds between each other, characterized by perceived emotional closeness and the degree of contact. Besides, [8] pointed out that emotional solidarity is a feeling of solidarity that binds a group together, fostering a sense of "we together" as opposed to a "me versus you" sentiment.

According to [24, 25] welcoming nature implies local residents' personal interests in tourists and tourism. It was justified that a welcoming nature towards tourists significantly predicts the residents' level of support for tourism development [22 & 24] stated that those residents who possess a welcoming nature toward tourists have bestowed personal interest in tourism development and duly benefited from it. Next, emotional closeness with tourists does not directly predict the residents' level of support for tourism development [25] but it strongly predicts the contributions of tourism industry to community [25]. In addition,

according to [25] residents who developed and shaped emotional closeness among tourists have forged friendships with them, and are better equipped to recognise the contributions of tourism development to the community. Subsequently, [25] stated that sympathetic understanding towards tourists significantly predicted the residents' level of support for tourism development. It can be assumed that if residents have higher levels of sympathetic understanding towards tourists, they would have a more positive and supportive attitude towards tourism development [25]. It has been justified in a way that sympathetic understanding had a strong influence on attitude [25].

Social cohesion can be nurtured by engaging people in community by using theory of relational cohesion. It means that people are engaged in joint tasks, they attribute positive or negative feelings from those tasks to their local groups (teams, departments) and/or to larger organizations (companies, communities). The ways that individuals develop person- to-group ties is by structural interdependencies, repeated exchanges and sense of shared responsibility [18]. In addition, social cohesion also can be nurtured by education institution. It means that willing to contribute to heritage project which leads to positive relationship [5]. Furthermore, create institutional cohesion also help in nurturing social cohesion in community.

3. METHODOLOGY
a. Scope of study
Melaka Town was selected as the research site since it has the potential to provide historical setting deemed suitable for the study. The logic for the selection of this city was that it possesses a clear informed heritage sites that takes a visitor on a journey that goes back 507 years (since 1511) of glorious and colorful past including its old narrow streets, historical buildings, museums, rows of shops and houses or mansions built centuries ago. There are few heritage buildings listed under UNESCO World Heritage where the visit experience to certain part of the sites may provide better appreciation to the historic quarter. Since there is a need to understand the heritage phenomenon at a deeper level, it would be sufficient to get detailed data from a number of insightful informants, like those really interested and deeply involved into visiting historical sites. Perhaps, most appropriate field techniques would be observing, listening and asking questions. In this study, it identified through a purposive sampling technique. The study used qualitative method to gain as much information as possible from the encounters with various stakeholders during fieldwork. Having realized that there were be potential informants who were unwilling to provide substantial information during in-depth interviews, a structured interview questions was designed as to accommodate the preferences of informant stakeholders especially those visitors with their limited time during site visit.

b. Fieldwork survey
The surveys took place within historical vicinity in Melaka Town specifically Masjid Kg Kling, Sri PoyyathaVinayagarMoorthi temple and Cheng HoonTeng Temple. In the study, the researchers approached local tourist from various states in Malaysia along with the open ended questionnaire. Should the tourist available and could devote his/her valuable time, the researcher asked them to go through the questionnaire straightforwardly. Upon agree-

ment for their permission to tape record and explanation on the process of interview, the researcher read out aloud each of the question and meticulously pay attention and identify their keywords. On the contrary, should the interviewee was busy and could not spend much of his/her time; the researcher may briefly explain the core direction of the research as to ease them answering the question without many difficulties, thus saving their time.

Time for collecting data through the interview was done at daytime as it is considered best to get in touch with the informant. Nevertheless, it was also relevant to note that the researcher was well acquainted with informants' in order to get into the most possible respond, thus reduce any form of restlessness that impede them to participate. This was important so that the researcher could gain access to honest and truthful information visitors on viewpoints on religious historical sites in Melaka. Participant observation in the study might include exploring all the streets and alleys along the heritage sites, particularly at Chinatown area. Pictorial landscape such as the monumental ruins, historical buildings and rows of shop houses with their significant architectural design provided rich information on representations of heritage features favored by visitors.

c. List of questions
1) What is the purpose of your visit to this place?
2) What were your first impressions when you first arrived here?
3) Why you choose historical site as your destination?
4) What do you want to know from here?
5) What do you think about a person visiting other religious place?
6) Do you think that by visiting other religious place can reduce racism? Why?
7) In your opinion, can social unity be improved if we understand about other culture during visit here?
8) In your opinion, what government should do to increase social unity among Malaysian?
9) What are the benefits to know about other religions other than that we embrace?
10) How do you think visiting religious place can unite multiethnic community?
11) As a tourist, does the content in the information boards at historical religious sites enable you to learn other culture? If not, why?

4. ANALYSIS
There were several themes signaled to social unity at religious sites. These themes such as respect towards someone else's religion and culture, desire to learn other religion, have sense of obligations in daily life and emphasizing unity education at school's level. Most of the tourists who visited the sacred place were keen to know more about the uniqueness and to understand more about a particular religion that also promoted cultureat those religious places. Some of the informants enjoyed uniqueness of the architecture of the building especially at Masjid Kg Kling and Cheng HoonTeng Templewhich amongthe oldest edifice that still maintain its original structure. Some informants identified their quality time visiting were affected merely because could not get the opportunity to enter Hindu temple Sri PoyyathaVinayagarMoorthi due to policy not accepting visitors except during sunset where Hindu devotees began to worship their idols late in the evening.

Around 65% of the informants wanted to understand the religion and culture during their visit. Majority of the informantcame to perform their prayer at these sacred places. On the whole, majority of the informants felt amazed and impressed with the aura of unity this place hasportrayed. They identified feeling of calmduring visit to those houses of worship. Desppite the feeling of annoyance because of crowds the informants agreed that this place has shown good example to demonstrate symbol of unity that deeply felt by anybody who visited the area. There were so many reasons why many informants' chose religious place as their destination to visit. 60% that they wanted to know more about the religion and the culture. They were eager to learn about the religion so that they can know something new. 25% of the informants'expressed their desire to see the uniqueness of the religion and culture.10% of the informants' chose identified calmed and peace during visit to the sacred place.The remaining 5% wanted to know the rules and obligation of the particular religion and culture. To sum up, it clearly showed that most of the informants' wanted to know more about other religion and culture which was the basic pat to form unity.

Besides knowing more about other traditions, the visitors also learnt how their friend of different ethnic performed their ritual activity. In the light of this, knowing other religions has built up sense of respects that could lead to unity.The entire informants positively said that it was good for someone with a different background of religion and culture to visit other religious place. This wasbecause, it could develop respect since they could understand the obligation for each religion.By visiting other religious place, it could develop a strong tie among different cultural ethnic, thus reduce racism and prejudice between ethnic. Based on informants' feedback, these two elementscould be alleviated should the government of Malaysia introduced a syllabus of social unity as early as secondary school. About 85% of the informants stresse0don the importance to educate teenagers about ethnic unity. There were someinformants suggested that the government should increase the amount of events that involve multi-ethnic participation to promote social inclusion. Since many of the informants agreed that unity sensation is felt at the religious places, therefore the atmosphere demanded a feeling of respect towards god hence, leave the visitors with no choice but to understand the nature of the holy place and sparked their deep concentration in knowing the Other. It was observed thatwere no problems arisen with the fact that everybodyrespects each other without thinking too much of the differences between religion and cultures. Information board was very important at every tourist destinations as it contains the information about the particular place. However,there were some informants thought that the interpretation board did not help the tourist. All the boards only delivered basic information about the place. It was not enough for a tourist who wanted to have deep connection with the sites. Some of the informants suggested that there should be an official officer to help the tourists in getting answers to their self raised questions while reading the interpretation board.

4.1 Model Development
Therefore, from the above analysis, the study suggested a model that could shape unity at religious heritage site.
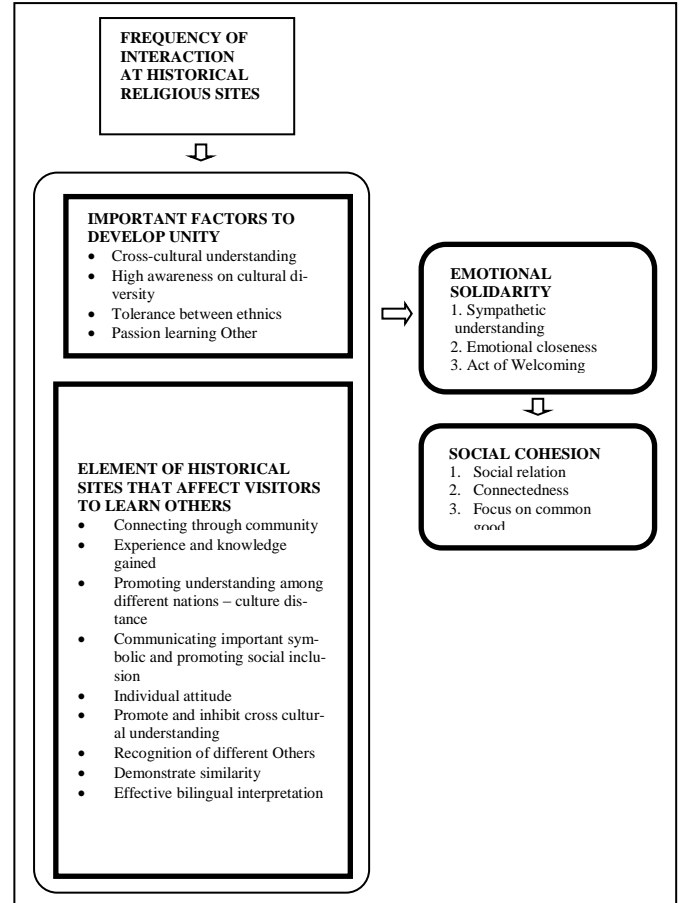
(Source: Fieldwork, 2017)

5. CONCLUSION
Based on the finding, social unity among multi ethnic visitors at Melaka can be created if elements of solidarity were employed. Good citizen can be explained in terms of learning and havingdeep interest to know about other culture and religion.Respects, tolerance, give and take, understanding, know other religion, show interest in someone's traditions and religiousobligationcould be a key to help and create a good unity. This study employed only few informants which focused on local tourist only. The future study could be conducted by utilizing quantitative approach with bigger size of respondents that couldmeasure the strength correlation of social unity among tourists and historical religious sites. Social unity is important not only for the local tourist in local setting but also important for foreign tourist with local people. By involving them in the scope of informants', we might revealmore about their interest in our local culture and religion. Social unity is a universal factor that connects people with different background of religions and races.Different perceptions toward otherethnic and religion has left some unnecessary prejudice. Perhaps, the word 'adab', or decency, i.e.behavior that conforms to customaryof morality or respectability could be further analyzed and elaborated which is the fundamental part of unity.

Refinement of a good manner dictates the acknowledgment of the degrees of respect and becoming sensitiveto protect harmony during visit to place of attraction. It is relevant to note that manner is also the spectacle of justice as it is reflected by wisdom. Therefore, by synthesizing the meaning of manner, it could discipline and force human being to act and show respect towards others.A good man

is a person who consistently aware of his responsibility to God, who understands and fulfills his duty to himself and the community, and who constantly strives to improve himself towards perfection. Thus, this situation makes him a person who is more sensitive to the feelings of others. The respect goes deeper because of the responsible nature that is in him to safeguard the unity of mankind.

6.   ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

7.   REFERENCES

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