

Heritage Tourism: The Effect of Heritage Brand on Tourist Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of heritage brands on tourist satisfaction within heritage tourism. By analysing the role of these iconic brands, the research aims to uncover how they enhance the visitor experience. Through a comprehensive analysis of numerical data, statistical findings and relevant case studies, the study identifies specific factors that increase tourist satisfaction, emphasising the importance of heritage brands in fostering cultural, and historical connections for tourists. Data collection is conducted using a quantitative cross-sectional approach via Google Forms. For data analysis, the Pearson Correlation Analysis is employed to explore both the direction and strength of the relationship between two continuous variables. Results show that heritage brand awareness, heritage brand image, heritage brand quality, and heritage brand value have a notable impact on the satisfaction of tourists visiting the Malacca heritage site. The findings offer practical insights for destination management and businesses on leveraging heritage brands to maximise visitor satisfaction in heritage tourism.

Keywords: Heritage brand awareness, heritage brand image, heritage brand quality, heritage tourism, tourist satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

Malacca is a popular tourist destination, offering visitors the opportunity to engage with local culture alongside its historical value. The city's heritage brand sets the foundation for a pleasant vacation experience, shaping visitors' expectations. Tourists are attracted to Malacca's heritage brand because it promises authentic

experiences, such as exploring vibrant night markets, savouring diverse local cuisine, and participating in traditional festivities. Despite its abundant cultural heritage and recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage site, Melaka encounters several obstacles that can impact its brand image and, in turn, tourist satisfaction. These obstacles include rivalry from other heritage destinations, inconsistent visitor experiences, and the necessity for improved digital engagement (Johari & Anuar, 2020). Therefore, understanding the relationship between the effectiveness of Malacca's heritage brand and visitor satisfaction is vital for those looking to maximise the tourism potential of this unique destination.

This study aims to determine whether heritage brands influence the level of satisfaction among tourists. It will examine elements of heritage brands, including heritage brand awareness, heritage brand image, heritage brand value, and heritage brand quality, to assess their impact on visitor satisfaction in Malacca.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Mohammed et al. (2022) underscored the critical role of heritage brand equity in creating awareness and conveying a positive image, perceived quality, and value that ultimately contribute to tourist satisfaction. As heritage destinations grow increasingly competitive over time, destination managers must strive to offer distinctive features that set them apart, adding value that tourists perceive in a heritage destination. This, in turn, significantly influences tourists' satisfaction with the destination (Johari & Anuar, 2020; Kumail et al., 2022; Shi et al., 2022).

In the context of Melaka, which is considered a heritage destination, several issues have arisen, including the challenge of clogged drains, instances of people partying inappropriately along the Melaka riverside, and unfortunate incidents like a tourist from Langkawi accidentally falling into the Melaka River while taking a 'selfie.' These issues have had an adverse impact on the heritage destination's image (Johari & Anuar, 2020). Moreover, trishaws, which are recognised as an integral part of Melaka's heritage and a valuable resource to the state, are currently facing challenges and issues in maintaining their status as a tourism attraction for visitors (Aziz et al., 2022). Research has indicated that trishaws in Melaka have lost their identity and failed to uphold the state's unique character. This loss of identity has contributed to a decline in the visitors' interest. Additionally, there is a growing concern regarding the safety of all parties involved, including trishaw riders and tourists.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between heritage brand awareness towards tourist's satisfaction?
2. What is the relationship between heritage brand image towards tourist's satisfaction?

- 3. What is the relationship between heritage brand quality towards tourist’s satisfaction?
- 4. What is the relationship between heritage brand value towards tourist’s satisfaction?

FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study, adapted from Mohammed at al., 2022.

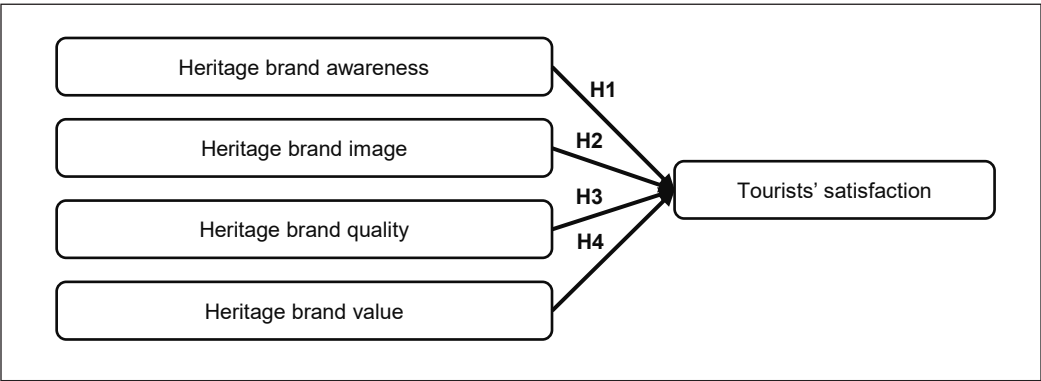


Figure 1. Conceptual framework adapted from Mohammed et al. (2022)

HYPOTHESIS

Hypotheses of the study are:

- H1:** There is a relationship between heritage brand awareness and satisfaction of tourists towards visiting Malacca heritage sites.
- H2:** There is a relationship between heritage brand image and satisfaction of tourists towards visiting Malacca heritage sites.
- H3:** There is a relationship between heritage brand quality and satisfaction of tourists towards visiting Malacca heritage sites.
- H4:** There is a relationship between heritage brand value and satisfaction of tourists towards visiting Malacca heritage sites.

A questionnaire has been distributed via online towards tourist’s satisfaction on Malacca’s heritage sites which consist of domestic tourist that have visited heritage tourism destinations in the state of Malacca, Malaysia. The questionnaire was developed into Google Forms and published through social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. After one month of distribution, there were 303 respondents who answered the survey questionnaire.

Table 1 below presents the results of the hypothesis testing and findings related to the relationships between heritage brand dimensions—namely brand awareness, brand image, and brand quality—and tourist satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Upon conducting and concluding this study, it can be affirmed that the heritage brand significantly influences the satisfaction of tourists visiting the Malacca heritage site. In summary, the research aims to explore the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. The fulfilment of the study's objectives in relation to the thesis is vital in establishing the interconnection between independent and dependent variables. The acceptance of all hypotheses in this research paper contributes valuable insights for future studies, providing a foundation for further development of this topic. The findings suggest that heritage brand awareness, heritage brand image, heritage brand quality, and heritage brand value have a notable impact on the satisfaction of tourists visiting the Malacca heritage site.

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