Personality Figure as Potential Tourism Product: A Case Study in a Public University in Malaysia

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The purpose of this research is to explore the potential tourism product in community leadership of professionalism figures as an element of tourist attraction. In this research, data was collected via observation and interviews at one of the public universities in Malaysia focusing on community resources, cultural resources, site analysis, and tourism services and facilities. The study showed that the public university has professional figures which could be promoted as tourist attractions. However, a little enhancement to several aspects is required in order to be attractive as a potential tourism destination and attraction that could be offered to local and foreign tourists. Specifically the target audience could be the academic community whose context includes research and analysis of personality figures from different fields which currently only exists at the university that is the subject of this case study.

**Key words:** Community, figures, academic, leadership, personality, new tourism product.

**Introduction**

The Malaysian government has placed importance on public universities to perform and contribute towards economic growth through quality education (10th Malaysian Plan, 2011). In ensuring this goal, academic excellence at all the public universities is guided by five tenets or star areas which comprise: teaching and learning, R&D, community services, internationalization and, harnessing the full potential of the university (MoHE, 2011). In Malaysia, the Ministry of Higher Education has divided public universities into two categories: teaching or research. Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) one of the public universities in Malaysia is a teaching university because it also offers diploma courses however, UiTM aspires to be a research-intensive university (RIU).
UiTM was established in 1957 with the main objective to produce bumiputera professionals. Currently, UiTM Main Campus in Shah Alam has about 90,000 student and 20,000 staff, the highest compared to any other university in Malaysia. The University has 15 branches all over Malaysia with the total number of students and staff close to 120,000. The previous Vice Chancellor of UiTM, Dato’ Prof Ir. Dr. Sahol Hamid has the vision that UiTM will be the biggest university in the world and strategic targets are to increase student intake yearly. In Shah Alam campus alone, the student population comes to about 42,000 (Strategic Planning Center, UiTM, 2002). One of UiTM’s objectives is to educate bumiputera to become professionals of high calibre who are independent, knowledgeable and morally upright in the conduct of doing business, trade, science and technology.

UiTM Shah Alam is located in Selangor on the west coast of Peninsula Malaysia. Selangor is one of the famous center points in Malaysia because of its strategic location. Selangor is the fastest developing state in the region, with the highest population of 4.7 million people comprising of 41% Malays, 37% Chinese, 19% Indians and 3% others. Selangor is also the richest and most industrialized state in Malaysia and has the largest port and airport. It houses many Malaysian higher learning institutions. Further, there are many things to do in Selangor and it requires a significant amount time to explore the wonders and numerous beautiful places. Of note are its’ fascinating places of interest and efficient public transportation systems, majority of the academic centers are located at the heart of major towns and cities in the state, which explains many students and parents have chosen Selangor as the state for pursuing academic excellence (Kobylnski & Prasad 2018).

Shah Alam, the capital of Selangor is hailed as one of the most well-planned cities. Shah Alam has many beautiful places to visit for both local and foreign tourists such as a world-class stadium and sports complex and an international standard racing track. However, a racing circuit near the city center which was used for Grand Prix motorcycle racing and was named the ‘Shah Alam Motor Paradise was demolished in 2003. Previously, Shah Alam was named Sungai Renggam and known for its oil palm estates. In 1978, Shah Alam has replaced Kuala Lumpur as the capital city of the state of Selangor due to Kuala Lumpur's incorporation into a Federal Territory. Today, Shah Alam is most famous for its impressive mosque.

The Purpose of Study

The main purpose of the study is to explore UiTM area as a tourism attraction by identifying its potential resources, people characteristics and personalities in the context of:

- its potential as a tourism product in the study of UiTM Personality figures and
education regarding the importance of tourism development for the area.

Significance of the Study

The main aim of this study was to investigate tourism as product delivered by University Technology Mara new attraction. This study was based on natural resources analysis, cultural resources analysis, community analysis, site analysis, tourism services and facilities and environment assessment analysis to:

- explore the potential tourism product in community leadership of professionalism figures as an element of tourist attraction at University Technology Mara
- protect the natural environment at University Technology Mara

Research Framework

The research process is segmented into two phases namely: (1) Situational Analysis and (2) Academic product development. Situational Analysis comprises the analysis of six types of resources: natural resources, cultural resource, community resources, site analysis, tourism facilities and services and environment analysis. The second phase involved identification of the potential of the academic product from the primary and secondary data gathered. Figure 1 below shows the research framework of this study.

Figure 1. Research Framework

![Research Framework Diagram]
Literature Review

**Personality Concept**

There are various definitions for personality available (Coceloglu, 2003). Allport (1937) has compiled personality definition in over fifty languages and argued that this word comes from the concept “persona” which means person in Latin and it is connected with Roman theatre (Ulucinar Turkel, 1992, p.27). Allport (1961) proposes that “Personality is a dynamic organisation, inside the person, of psychophysical systems that create the person’s characteristic patterns of behaviour, thoughts and feelings.”

Based on the general definition of personality, the term can be defined as a relationship form in which the individual establishes a connection with his internal and external environment, distinguished from other individuals, consistent and formalized to him/her (Cuceloglu, 2003; Ozbag, 2016). Personality is a name given to all tendencies and characters determining all of the differences and similarities in people’s psychological behaviours in opinions, emotions and actions (Fairholm, 2015; Sharma and Jain, 2013. Personality also can be defined as “lifestyle of individual” (Dubrin, 2005).

**Leadership Concept**

Leadership is one the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth (Burns, 1978, p.2). In institution of higher education, the development of leaders has received little attention (Astin & Astin, 2000; Aziz, Awang, & Afthanorhan, 2016; Köge & Aslandag 2018). There are many theoretical definitions of leadership in the literature. Leadership refers to the capacity to release and engage human potential in the pursuit of a common cause. Leadership can be observed in academic settings, businesses, volunteer organizations, family, community, and in the world of public affairs. Academic leaders exercise their leadership within settings that have
clearly different institutional purposes, cultures and expectations than the organizations in which business leaders typically exercise their leadership.

A tremendous amount of research has been conducted in exploring which skills, traits, characteristics and competences lead to successful and effective leadership. Bass’s *Handbook of Leadership* (1990) comprises a metanalysis of studies performed to discover possible dimensions or characteristics of leadership. Intelligence, scholarship, knowledge, dominance, and even elements of physical appearance have all been investigated concerning their relation to leadership. Leadership has been conceived as many things, such as the exercise of influence, an effect of interaction, the focus of group processes or a power relationship (Bass, 1990). Eagly and Carli (2007) proposed that a leader is someone who “exercises authority over other people. Leadership entails being in charge of other people in multiple ways. It consists of influencing, motivating, organizing, and coordinating the work of others.

**Academic leadership**

Based on Burns’ transactional and transformational leadership and other attempts at defining leadership (e.g. Rost, 1991; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumba, 2005; Greenleaf, 1977), this study poses the definition of academic leadership as the act of building a community of scholars to set direction and achieve common purposes through the empowerment of faculty and staff. This definition presupposes three conditions deans must meet if they are to effectively lead their colleges.

For decades, scholars have been proposing classifications of leadership styles (Bass, 1990; van Engen & Willemsen, 2004). Many efforts have been made to extrapolate conclusions from one special type of leadership compared to another leadership style (Bass, 1990). By leadership styles, we mean “the alternative ways that leaders pattern their interactive behaviour to fulfil their roles as leaders” (Bass, 1990).

**Research Methodology**

**Research Design**

The research method in this study uses both exploratory designs because the extent of the findings are relatively unknown and descriptive designs since the material represents a description of the various resources to be examined. Primary data was collected from the site and secondary data information is extracted from reliable published articles for the whole duration of this research covering a period of seven (7) weeks. An analysis on all the information gathered from both the primary and secondary means was conducted.

**Types of Data**
Two types of data are used in this study namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was collected via observation and interviews with UiTM community, community leaders, passersby and local authorities. Secondary data was extracted from published articles, books, journals, internet and resources from UiTM and research project reports.

Data Collection Method

The methodology used to collect data for this study was mainly using a combination of the observation and interview tools. Data on cultural resources, site resources and tourism service and facilities resources and site analysis resources was collected by using the observation method. Data for community analysis were collected using the interview method (i.e. by interviewing selected group of UiTM community, community leader, local authority and visitor to UiTM, both Malaysian and foreigner). The secondary data was extracted from books, articles and journals, magazine, newspaper, internet, and brochures by various authors and publishers.

Instruments Development

There were six types of instruments for collecting the primary information:

Instrument 1: Natural Resources Analysis Checklist covers the relevant items that were assessed on the overall condition of the resources, the area size, the types of activities carried out at the site, the types of tourist who visited the area (if any) and the economic or business activities carried out.

Instrument 2: Cultural Resources Analysis Checklist consists of evaluation of the relevant items through the two dimensions of analysis: (1) Historical building, (2) Historical Sites


Instrument 4: Site Analysis Checklist comprises nine (9) dimensions that were analyzed: 1) Area economics – types of business activities, transport availability from outside the area, within site transport availability, special features or attraction, ad distance to tourism
attractions; (2) Physical characteristic – drainage system and solid waste disposal system; (3) Area shape – area size; (4) Availability of utilities – water and electricity; (5) Accessibility to the area, (6) Positional characteristics (Traffic flow, People traffic information, visibility of the area) – Distance and time, estimation n number/type of transportation, and area map/contour/landscape; (7) Pollution – Types: Noise, air, water, environment and level; (8) Local labor – Labor supply, ethic group, and types of skills and (9) Other services – Police, fire, health services.

Instrument 5: Tourism Services and Facilities Checklist comprises three (3) dimensions that were analyzed : (1) Accommodations – types and quality of facilities and surroundings ; (2) Foodservice, and (3) Recreation Facilities – types, overall quality.

Instrument 6: Environment Assessment involves the evaluation on the following five (5) dimensions with their related features : (1) Potential for ecological damage of – Soil, Plant life, Animal life, coral reefs, water/sea, coastal areas, and water supply; (2) Pollution, coastal areas and others – assessment on the level of pollution; (3) Conservation needs of marine life, and (4) Impact of increased number of visitors/tourists on community, infrastructure, utilities, traffic, and scenery changes.

Research Findings
Culture Resources Analysis

In the cultural resource analysis, only two (2) dimensions were used with respect to findings regarding UiTM, namely the historical buildings and historical context. For historical buildings there were three areas of attraction: (1) the mace of UiTM; (2) Menara Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah (SAAS); and (3) Dewan Sri Budiman. The mace of UiTM building was in the form of the Malay keris (dagger) known as the Keris Agung accompanied by a pair of long lances known as the Tombok Agung. Both items symbolized UiTM as an institution of higher learning for bumiputeras which symbols a character that is unique, strong and pure.

Menara Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah (SAAS) was built in 1972 and was designed by Yg. Bhg Dato Zahani Tan Sri Ahmad, who sat as the board of director then. The style of building looked “Brutalized” based on British expression in 1960. The actual size of the Menara Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah (SAAS) is 83.31mX21.64mX66.45m. This building was built as the landmark and center point of UiTM. It was the focus area in which the main administrative office, the big hall, library and lecture hall are located. The Dewan Sir Budiman is also one of historical buildings in UiTM, a place where a convention was held for UiTM students. This hall has been used during the opening ceremony of an orientation week for the academic session 1976/77. Besides that, this hall was also used for lectures and talks by various department heads. Furthermore, Annexe DSB, the additional building was built on 8 September 2003 to
accommodate the shortage of seats during the Convention Ceremony. This building also was equipped with various facilities such as a prayer room, store, toilets and additional parking.

The historical site, UiTM was Malaysia’s premier institution of higher learning and has experienced phenomenal growth since its inception in 1956 with the establishment of the Rural and Industrial Development Authority (RIDA) Training Centre. RIDA Training Centre started its operations in November 1956 under the administration of Syed Alwi Syed Sheikh Al-Hadi. It was officially declared open by Dr. Ismail b. Dato’ Abdul Rahman, Minister of Trade and Industry on 14th February 1957. In 1964, RIDA Training Centre held its first convention and 50 graduates received their certificates from Tun Abdul Razak, the Prime Minister of Malaysia at that time. After that, RIDA Training Centre changed its name to MARA College (Maktab MARA) in June 1965 and became an important unit of the MARA Training Division. In 1966, the British Institute of Management ceased holding its examinations, thus MARA College began running its own Diploma in Business Studies which was recognized by Eagling Technical College of London, its external examiner. Next, on 14th October 1967 MARA College was officially renamed MARA Institute of Technology (ITM) in response to an urgent identified need to train at semi-professional levels among bumiputeras.

ITM’s rapid development with the expansion of its education programmes was in tandem with the requirements of the emerging, demanding job market. With the expansion of its educational programmes, many courses were internationally affiliated and the Institute conducted advanced diploma curses which were equivalent to a bachelor’s degree. Lastly, on 26 August 1999, the then Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato’ Seri Dr. Mahathir ohamad announced the change of name of Institut Teknologi Mara (ITM) to University Technology Mara (UiTM). UiTM aspires to be a world-class university in all its endeavors and forges ahead in a direction that is in tandem with the latest global developments. UiTM is in excellent condition even though it was built in 1956.

**Community Analysis**

Community analysis resource utilized in this research, consisted of community size, perception on community development, condition of students, major types of student, cluster of students, community surrounding, community ethic background, major source of household income and major household transportation mode. There has been fast growth of community development in UiTM. The previous community of RIDA Training Centre only had 50 students and now there are almost 120,000 students in UiTM. The highest community size was in Shah Al Am campus. UiTM presently has three campuses, 15 branch campuses, 9 city campuses, 19 affiliated colleges and a smart campus.
Dato Prof Ir. Dr. Sahol Hamid, the previous Vice Chancellor was seconded to the Higher Education Ministry for the last three years, is the second UiTM vice-chancellor to have graduated from the varsity. The first was his predecessor, Prof Tan Sri Dr Ibrahim Abu Shah. He had been with UiTM for 40 years which included his time as a student at the Shah Alm campus. He was an engineering undergraduate and was later appointed as a lecturer. Dato’ Prof Ir. Dr. Sahol Hamid was also head of the civil engineering department, dean of the civil engineering faculty and director of the Penang UiTM campus. He was a deputy vice-chancellor (academic affairs) at the main campus in Shah Alam before being seconded to the Ministry. At the Ministry he served as the chief executive officer of the programme’s management office, which was in line with the ministry’s launch of the National Higher Education Strategic Plan and the National Higher Education Action Plan. The office was set up to drive the overall transformation process as well as spearhead the development of project management capability within the Ministry. During Dato’ Prod Dr Sahol Hamid time there, his visited and evaluated 20 public universities in Malaysia thus aware of their strengths and weaknesses.

Dato’ Prof Ir. Dr. Sahol Hamid states that UiTM is a great university which has matured. During his tenure in UiTM, he received almost 2,000 SMSs and phone calls. He has 12,385 friends on facebook friend list. Dato’ Prof Ir. Dr. Sahol Hamid, who has had an active role in the planning and construction of nine UiTM campuses in the country, has been involved with computer simulation and modeling in hydrology and hydraulics and the economic analysis of water resources and know-how pertaining to flood control.

In addition, he was also a professor at the University of Stuttgart in Germany. His door is always wide open to all UiTM staffs and students, and he takes appointments as early as 7am. Dato’ Prof Ir. Dr. Sahol Hamid is the kind of man who accepted challenges and problems calmly because it is important to have a clear head when making decisions. Dato’Prof Dr. Ir Sahol Hamid received a Malay Educator Award presented by Y.bhg Tun Haji Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, former prime minister of Malaysia on July 12, 2010 at the Penang golf resort in conjunction with the conference of representatives Kepala Batas Umno division.

The majority of students in UiTM were Bumiputera’s students. The cluster of student residents and staff residents are located more closely than on other universities. The community surroundings are well maintained. The community ethic background is 100% Bumiputera. The main public transportation is Rapid KL, light transit (LRT) and monorail.

**Site Analysis**

Site analysis consisted of economics, physical characteristic, availability of utilities, Street Patterns, Personal Characteristic, Traffic information, People traffic information, Visibility of the area, Pollution, Local labor and other services. The area was strategic because lots of
students were staying at hostels or colleges. In terms of the notable physical characteristics, UitM consists of mostly old buildings except Twin Tower located at Faculty Engineering. Personal characteristic, distance and driving time is 9.5km from Shah Alam town which was about 17 minutes from UiTM and 19.2km to Subang airport (Koç & Dündar 2018).

In term of the availability of utilities, UiTM also has reserve officer training unit (Royal Malaysian Navy) and reserve officer training unit (ROTU). Other utilities for students include a nursery, grand hall, printing unit office, kindergarten, training centre, and so on. Looking at the availability of utilities, the entire college in UiTM is supplied with electricity, water and telephone line. Street patterns were designed for convenience and are strategic. UiTM’s personal characteristic is friendly. There was a traffic jam when student started their classes in long semester (January and July) as the majority of residents in UiTM has their own transportation such as car and motorcycle. The surrounding areas are kept cleaned and beautiful.

Tourism Facilities and Services

Tourism Services and Facilities dimensions that were analyzed were Stalls and Recreation Facilities. In UiTM most areas had their own cafeterias inside the buildings and faculties. Usually, staffs and students of UiTM took their breakfast, lunch, and hi-tea at the cafeteria as the price of food and beverage is cheap and standardized. UiTM has attractive places such as a Deer Viewing Site which is located near the Chancellery Building, wall climbing, UiTM sports Complex, futsal and tennis courts, hockey, football, rugby and basketball field, and swimming pool.

Recommendations

UiTM, Shah Alam has the potential to be developed as a tourism attraction, but some improvements in aspects of road signs are required due to lack of signage for direction around the campus. Further, the number of parking spaces has to be increased and accessibility to UiTM also needs improvement in terms of frequency of public transportation in this area. The number of buses has to be increased in order to cater to the anticipated increased number of visitors to the area.

There are two (2) packages that are proposed to local visitors. These tourism development packages focus on students from primary school, secondary school, universities and colleges as well the academic community. The first package is Apex package which cover tours at the Chancellery Building, Menara Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah (SAAS), Gallery Tun Abdul Razak, Dewan Sri Buidiman, Arkib Building and Faculty of engineering, that covers the uniqueness of historical buildings of UiTM.
The second package is Youth package which includes a tour to the Chancellery Building, Deer viewing site, Menara Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah (SAAS), Gallery Tun Abdul Razak, Library Tun Abdul Razak and UiTM Hotel where visitors are able to observe the daily life’s of UiTM community. The main objective of this package is for students from primary and secondary schools to be able to gain inspiration and aspiration after graduation to continue their study into higher education. This tour is a seven hour package that runs from 9 a.m until 6 p.m. This package includes a tour guide map, mineral water and note book and pen to take notes and info during the motivation session with the Vice Chancellor of UiTM. These packages also target other local and foreign tourists.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the future success of the national tourism industry depends on the exploration of new areas and new attractions to both local and foreign tourists. UiTM, Shah Alam has the potential to be promoted as one of the tourist destinations in Selangor because it meets the criteria of attraction and uniqueness of professional figures and historical buildings.

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