



PLANNING MALAYSIA:

Journal of the Malaysian Institute of Planners

VOLUME 22 ISSUE 6 (2024), Page 418 – 434

HERITAGE AWARENESS STRATEGY ON THE UNESCO-LISTED KEDAH HERITAGE ASSETS AMONG SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KEDAH, MALAYSIA

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Abstract

As Malaysia's oldest state, Kedah has a long and illustrious history. Its innumerable heritage assets deserve to be protected as part of a conservation effort for the sake of the country's history and future generations. Lack of heritage-awareness among the community may result in the utter loss of heritage evidence, impeding the identity and pride in local communities as well as economic opportunity in the tourism industry. The aim of this paper is to develop a holistic 'awareness strategy framework' on UNESCO-listed Kedah heritage assets (KHAs) among school students in Kedah. Two (2) objectives have been established, namely: 1) to discover the principles of the provision of heritage-awareness strategy for heritage assets with global status, and 2) to ascertain the state of heritage-awareness level among school students on KHAs. A mixed-method analysis was employed involving a literature review and a state-wide survey with 676 school students to assess their awareness on KHAs and related matters. The data revealed alarming results, denoting low awareness on KHAs among the respondents. The findings further offer several recommendations on the appropriate strategy and action plans to enhance heritage-awareness. It is deemed that the implementation must begin with the establishment of a dedicated management body empowered under the state's statutory act, which will be responsible for heritage-awareness creation via its public education system.

Keywords: Heritage-assets, Heritage-awareness, Heritage-education, Heritage-interpretation, Heritage-values

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INTRODUCTION

Located on the western coast of Malaysia's northern peninsula, Kedah can be considered to represent the country's whole history, (Figures 1 and 2). Kedah was where the beginning of human civilization in Southeast Asia took place, as evidenced by the existence of the Sungai Batu civilization in Bujang Valley, Merbok. The area was also used as the Ancient Kedah Kingdom's iron smelting industry since 788 B.C. (Saidin, 2019; Hasfarisham *et al.*, 2021).



Figure 1: Map of South East Asia showing the location of Malaysia
Source: Google Image (2020)



Figure 2: Map of Malaysia showing the location of Kedah State.
Source: Google Image (2020)

The Langkawi Archipelago of Kedah is rich in intrinsic geological resources and is the only location that still preserves evidence of the earliest episodes that evolved over Malaysia's nature history circa 600 million years ago

(Komoo & Ali, 2003). The Langkawi's rock formation relates to the story of the beginning of Peninsular Malaysia.

Conservation is important for protecting historical values and highlighting evidence of civilization progress. As Kedah offers abundant historical cultural and natural heritage assets to be explored and researched, conservation and preservation efforts are important in the interest of the country's history and future generations. Thus, it is crucial to have good management and maintenance practices to ensure the long-term care of Kedah heritage assets (KHAs). Strategic management and effective legislation will lead to sustainable heritage assets, that will ultimately foster social and economic benefits for generations to come.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Heritage

Heritage means any asset or group of assets, natural or cultural (tangible or intangible), that a community recognizes for its value as a witness to history and memory while emphasising the need to safeguard, protect, adopt, promote, and disseminate such heritage. ICOMOS (1982) defines heritage as "the combined creations and products of nature and man, in their entirety, that make up the environment in which we live in space and time. Heritage is a reality, a possession of the community, and a rich inheritance that may be passed on, which invites our recognition and our participation."

Simply put, heritage refers to whatever we want to sustain for the next generations. UNESCO helps in the management of assets with outstanding universal values (OUV) by giving recognition inscription of global status. Whether tangible or intangible cultural heritage, or natural heritage elements, heritage stakeholders must capitalise these assets for sustainability, the people's identity, alongside economic reasons.

Heritage-Awareness, Heritage-Interpretation, Heritage-Education, and Their Interrelationship

ICOMOS (2008) delineates that to create heritage-awareness, heritage-interpretation and presentation should be an integral part of the conservation process for enhancing the public's awareness of specific conservation problems encountered at the site and explaining the efforts being taken to protect the site's physical integrity and authenticity. Tilden (1977) outlined the six (6) principles known as 'Principles of Interpretation'. His definitions of heritage-interpretation are inclined towards the use of 'communication process' and 'planned activities' as tools for interpretation. Therefore, the presentation of heritage assets to visitors is crucial for them to know and understand such heritage assets being experienced. People differ in the way they perceive, process, and recall information, and these individual cognitive differences influence their

experience, performance, and knowledge acquisition when performing cultural-heritage activities. The human-cognition factor should be considered as an important personalisation factor within cultural-heritage contexts (Raptis & Avouris, 2019). Heritage-interpretation and presentation must ensure that visitors of various backgrounds are able to ‘embrace’ the values of heritage assets being presented. ‘Value’ has always been the reason underlying heritage conservation (Torre, 2002). Heritage-value is often the source of heritage-interpretation that keeps the people’s spirit to appreciate, love, and feel obliged to maintain and sustain such heritage assets. Thus, having good storytelling for heritage interpretation and presentation would become an effective tool to enhance understanding of heritage assets and provide access to collective heritage awareness, (WanShamsuddin *et al.*, 2022).

Awareness is a crucial component in the safeguarding of heritage assets (Karadeniz, 2020). It refers to the quality or state of being aware and concerns the knowledge and understanding that something is happening or exists. Furthermore, awareness is about having knowledge about the situation, condition, or values of an asset and skills or the ability to care and act to prolong the asset’s existence. Skills are often acquired through experience or education. In this regard, having awareness alone is insufficient to ensure heritage assets sustainability; rather, it requires adequate knowledge and relevant skills on how to sustain the assets. Heritage-awareness with knowledge encompasses the ‘ability’ and ‘motivation’ factors to ensure the local community’s willingness to be involved in conservation efforts and sustain heritage assets (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2016).

There are four (4) interdependent phases that complete the asset’s whole life-cycle process, namely ‘identification of heritage-asset’, ‘purposeful heritage-interpretation’, ‘nurturing of heritage-education’, and ‘heritage-awareness creation’. This research looks into the aspect of sustainable heritage conservation in the form of ‘caused and effect’ for heritage-awareness creation, i.e.:

- 1) Heritage-awareness is a result of heritage-education;
- 2) Heritage-education centres around purposeful heritage-interpretation, heritage-value and meaningful presentation, as well as effective management knowledge and skills; and
- 3) Heritage-awareness leads to a sustainable heritage asset.

Heritage and Conservation Management (HCM) – UNESCO’s Insight

UNESCO was established to promote peace via education, science, and culture. As the only United Nations (UN) agency mandated to promote culture, UNESCO’s programs recognise ‘culture’ as a driver for sustainable development. It also contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs) defined in Agenda 2030, which were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015 (UNESCO, 2023).

As of January 2024, the performance of Kedah in UNESCO concerning the world shared heritage assets is as follows:

- 1) The Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark (hereinafter known as LUGGp), which was inscribed in 2007;
- 2) The UNESCO's Memory of the World Register - Correspondences of the Late Sultan of Kedah (1882-1943) or Sultan Abdul Hamid Correspondences Collection (hereinafter known as MoW-SAHCC), which was accorded on 4 September 200; and
- 3) The UNESCO's ICH (USL), i.e. the UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, '*Mek Mulung*', a traditional Malay Theatre of Kedah, Malaysia, which was inscribed on 5 December 2023 (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture or MOTAC, 2023).

UNESCO's (2008) operational guidelines for the management plan of world heritage sites posit that good management of heritage-awareness should include the following criteria:

- i. The representation of purposeful 'heritage-interpretation' in place via effective means of communication;
- ii. The statement of 'heritage-value' in terms of assets function/position is well expressed to the community, enhancing reasons for it to be in existence;
- iii. The presence of collaboration/shared responsibility among stakeholders for the protection and conservation of heritage assets; and
- iv. The availability of awareness programs involving students/young people.

Furthermore, a study by UNESCO showed that 'lack of governance', 'lack of legal framework', as well as 'inappropriate management activities' impose negative impacts on World Heritage properties, thus highlighting a priority need to address these factors (Ishizawa & Jo, 2023).

Heritage and Conservation Management (HCM) - Scenario in Malaysia

In Malaysia, the HCM of heritage assets is controlled by relevant constitutional acts. The NHA 2005 (Act 645) (hereinafter known as NHA) of Malaysia was gazetted on 31 December 2005 and came into effect on 1 March 2006. Act 645 provides the definitions of heritage categories, namely cultural tangible, intangible, and underwater, as well as natural and living person. Managing diverse issues for heritage conservation projects is crucial for ensuring the long-term protection of heritage assets. Most significant risk factors can be mitigated

prudently by adhering to Sections 40 (1) - (6) of the National Heritage Act 2005 (Act 645) (Baharuddin *et al.*, 2022). Meanwhile, the Town and Country Planning Act 1976 [Act 172] (TCPA) concerns the proper control and regulation of town and country planning in Peninsular Malaysia. Heritage and conservation-related planning clauses (the protection, preservation, and enhancement of ancient monuments and lands alongside buildings of historic or architectural interest) can be observed in TCPA.

To date, aside from NHA, Johor, Melaka, Sarawak, Sabah, and Penang are the only five (5) states out of thirteen (13) states in Malaysia that have statutory provisions concerning heritage. Similar to other states with the absence of state heritage enactment, Kedah refers to NHA for all heritage-related matters.

The management of LUGGp lies within the established Langkawi Geopark Management Plan, Action Plans 2012-2030 (PPLG) (Halimaton Saadiah Hashim *et al.*, 2012). Up till 2023, the PPLG document becomes a vital source of reference, which offers the opportunity to see how ‘heritage-awareness’ strategy is treated in the policies and development plan of Langkawi. Furthermore, Langkawi Development Authority is the organisation behind the successful development of LUGGp. The UNESCO Global Geopark Council Chairman, Guy Martini (2022), further stressed the need for a management structure to be in place to support the successful development of a geopark.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was done through literature review, interview session, personal communication, and students’ heritage-awareness-assessment. The mixed-method analysis was employed since awareness concerns what one knows, how well one knows it (quality), and how many others know about it (statistic) (Said, 2011). The primary data was gathered through a survey known as students’ heritage-awareness-assessment, which was administered during the fieldwork stage.

The participants of this study were selected from twenty-four (24) schools located across the twelve (12) districts of Kedah. Each district was represented by two (2) schools—i.e., a primary school and a secondary school. These schools were randomly selected based on 50% for each school type, namely twelve (12) rural schools and twelve (12) urban schools. This study only examined the perception of heritage-awareness from 600 students in total, targeting 25 students aged 11 to 12 years old and 16 to 17 years old from each school.

The questions were measured using various student-friendly methods, including short-answer responses, check boxes, and multiple choices. Table 1 outlines the narrative rating and scale coding for the short-answer responses.

Table 1: Awareness Level – Narrative Rating and Scale Coding

	Scale coding	Baseline level	Definition
Acceptable Awareness Level	5 points (pass)	Very high knowledge	Describe with major details; meet all essential attributes
	4 points (pass)	High knowledge	Show high knowledge in the description; meet the major attributes
	3 points (pass)	Moderate knowledge	Able to describe the basics; meet several of the major attributes
Poor Awareness Level	2 points (fail)	Little knowledge	Describe too briefly; meet half or less of the criteria
	1 point (fail)	Very little knowledge	Inappropriate answer
	0 point (fail)	No knowledge	Unable to describe

Source: Authors (2024)

Since the heritage-awareness-assessment involved young school students, due consideration was given to the ethical aspects. An application for consent to conduct the research was made to the Ministry of Education Malaysia via the Educational Research Application System Version 2.0. The same set of heritage-awareness-assessment survey was employed for both primary and secondary school students, which was conducted from October 2021 to March 2022. During this period, the ‘*Mek Mulung*’ status was still in the ongoing evaluation process for nomination into the list of intangible cultural heritage in need of urgent safeguarding elements, which was reflected in the questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Section A – Demographic Profile

A total of 676 school students from the twelve (12) districts of Kedah participated in this survey. The respondents were aged between 11-12 and 16-17 years old, representing the two (2) separate groups of primary and secondary school students, respectively. The targeted respondents were 50 students per district.

Section A1 - Location or District

Table 2 shows the respondents’ demographic profiles. The majority of them came from the Langkawi (n=89), Yan (n=75), and Kuala Muda (n=68) districts.

Table 2: Overall Sampling Population by District

No.	District in Kedah	n (%)
1.	Baling	57 (8.4)
2.	Bandar Baharu	42 (6.2)
3.	Kota Setar	44 (6.5)
4.	Kuala Muda	68 (10.1)
5.	Kubang Pasu	40 (5.9)
6.	Kulim	47 (7.0)
7.	Langkawi	89 (13.2)

No.	District in Kedah	n (%)
8.	Padang Terap	55 (8.1)
9.	Pendang	59 (8.7)
10.	Pokok Sena	52 (7.7)
11.	Sik	48 (7.1)
12.	Yan	75 (11.1)
	Total	676 (100)

Source: Authors (2024)

Overall, 676 primary and secondary school students participated in the survey and represented the school student community in the state of Kedah.

Section A2 - Age of Respondents

Table 3 shows the age composition of the respondents where 52.4% of them (n=354) were between 11 to 12 years old while 47.6% (n=322) were between 16 to 17 years old.

Table 3: Students' Age Composition

No.	Age	n (%)
1.	11 – 12 years old	354 (52.4)
2.	16 – 17 years old	322 (47.6)

Source: Authors (2024)

Section A3 - Nationality of Respondents

Table 4 shows the respondents' nationality where all of them (100%, n=676) were Malaysian students located in the state of Kedah.

Table 4: Nationality of Respondents

No.	Nationality	n (%)
1.	Malaysian	676 (100)
2.	Non-Malaysian	0 (0)

Source: Authors (2024)

Section B – Knowledge on the UNESCO-listed KHAs

Section B contained questions regarding knowledge of the two (2) UNESCO-listed KHAs, namely LUGGp and MoW-SAHCC. The respondents were required to answer the questions using short-answer responses, which were then evaluated using the narrative rating scale.

Section B1 – Knowledge on LUGGp

For the question “What do you understand about geopark?”, 15.5% (n=105) of the respondents provided no answer, 22% (n=149) gave inappropriate answers, while 47.0% (n=318) had little knowledge about the question. Whereas, 7.3% (n=49), 5.8% (n=39), and 2.4% (n=16) of the respondents had moderate, good,

and high knowledge regarding the question, respectively. It was also observed that most respondents had very little knowledge of LUGGp with a mean value of 1.73 and a standard deviation of 1.134.

Concerning the question “Where is Langkawi Geopark located?”, the results showed that 0.7% (n=5) of the respondents had high knowledge, followed by 0.6% (n=4), 67.8% (n=458), 16.3% (n=110), and 2.8% (n=19) of respondents with good, moderate, little, and very little knowledge of the question, respectively. On the other hand, 11.8% (n=80) of the respondents did not answer the question. The result further indicated that the respondents had little knowledge about this question, with a mean value of 2.45 and a standard deviation of 1.035 (Table 5).

Table 5: Knowledge on LUGGp

No.	Statements	n (%)						Mean (SD)
		0	1	2	3	4	5	
1.	What do you understand about geopark?	105 (15.5)	149 (22.0)	318 (47.0)	49 (7.3)	39 (5.8)	16 (2.4)	1.73 (1.134)
		(84.5)			(15.5)			
		Poor awareness level			Acceptable awareness level			
2.	Where is Langkawi Geopark located?	80 (11.8)	19 (2.8)	110 (16.3)	458 (67.8)	4 (0.6)	5 (0.7)	2.45 (1.035)
		(30.9)			(69.1)			
		Poor awareness level			Acceptable awareness level			

Source: Authors (2024)

When asked about the concept of ‘global geopark’, it was observed that only 15.5% of the respondents demonstrated an acceptable awareness level while 84.5% of them had poor knowledge regarding this question. Meanwhile, the respondents’ responses about the location of Langkawi Geopark revealed that many of them (69.1%) had an acceptable awareness level and only 30.9% had a poor awareness level.

Section B2 – Knowledge on MoW-SAHCC

For the question “What do you understand about the memory of the world register?”, 32.4% (n=219) of the respondents had very little knowledge regarding the topic, followed by 28.6% (n=193), 3.6% (n=24), and 0.7% (n=5) of respondents with little, moderate, and good level of knowledge, respectively. Only 0.1% (n=1) of the respondents demonstrated high knowledge level while the remaining 34.6% (n= 234) did not answer the question. The results also suggested that most respondents lack the knowledge on world documentary heritage, with a mean value of 1.04 and a standard deviation of 0.929.

Meanwhile, the question “Where are the Letters of the Late Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah, Kedah located or kept?” received no response from 21.1% (n=136) of the respondents. This was followed by 54.9% (n=371) of respondents who had very little knowledge about this question, 13.8% (n=93) with little knowledge, 4.3% (n=29) with moderate knowledge, 3.8% (n=28) with good knowledge, and only 3.1% (n=21) with high knowledge. It was also found that the majority of respondents had very little knowledge about this question, with a mean value of 1.26 and a standard deviation of 1.134 (Table 6).

Table 6: Knowledge on SAHCC

No.	Overall Statements	n (%)						Mean (SD)
		0	1	2	3	4	5	
1.	What do you understand about the Memory of the World Register?	234 (34.6)	219 (32.4)	193 (28.6)	24 (3.6)	5 (.7)	1 (.1)	1.04 (.929)
		(95.6%)			(4.4%)			
		Poor awareness level			Acceptable awareness level			
2.	Where are the Letters of the Late Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah, Kedah located or kept?	136 (21.1)	371 (54.9)	93 (13.8)	29 (4.3)	26 (3.8)	21 (3.1)	1.26 (1.134)
		(89.8%)			(11.2%)			
		Poor awareness level			Acceptable awareness level			

Source: Authors (2024)

Such result is highly alarming as less than 5% of students are knowledgeable about MoW. The majority of the respondents (89.8%) demonstrated poor awareness level towards the question “Where are the Letters of the Late Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah, Kedah located or kept?” with only 11.2% of them had an acceptable awareness level about the topic. The result reflects the insufficient promotion of such topic to the public.

Section C – Students’ Perceived Knowledge (General) About *Mek Mulung*

Section C analysed the respondents’ short-answer responses to determine their knowledge regarding *Mek Mulung*, which is a National Heritage nominated for UNESCO’s ICH (USL).

The results found that 38.0% (n=257) of the respondents had zero knowledge about the question “What do you understand about *Mek Mulung*?”, followed by 27.1% (n=183), 23.1% (n=156), 1.2% (n=8), and 10.7% (n=72) of respondents with little, moderate, good, and high knowledge about this statement. The mean value of 1.88 and the standard deviation of 1.595 further showed that the respondents had inadequate knowledge about *Mek Mulung* (Table 7).

Table 7: Knowledge on the National Heritage of *Mek Mulung* in Kedah

No.	Statements	n (%)						Mean (SD)
		0	1	2	3	4	5	
1.	What do you understand about <i>Mek Mulung</i> ?	211 (31.2)	46 (6.8)	183 (27.1)	156 (23.1)	8 (1.2)	72 (10.7)	1.88 (1.595)
		(65.1)			(35)			
		Poor awareness level			Acceptable awareness level			

Source: Authors (2024)

Overall, more than half of the respondents (65.1%, n=440) had poor awareness level and only 35% (n=236) of them had acceptable awareness level. The mean value of 1.88 reflected that most students have inadequate knowledge about *Mek Mulung*. The results indicated that more efforts must be done to improve the situation. To realise the objective of preserving *Mek Mulung*, JWN has specified several action plans in the submission of nomination form to UNESCO. Among the key activities include: 1) Conducting Research and Documentation, 2) Improving Legal Protection, 3) Promoting and Dissemination, 4) Recognition, and 5) Raising Awareness (ICH UNESCO website, 2023).

IMPLICATIONS OF RESULTS

The alarming results of heritage-awareness-assessment require urgent attention from all heritage stakeholders of the state. More efforts and goal-oriented strategies must be formulated to advocate such issue.

Focus Areas for the Heritage Management of KHAs

By adopting UNESCO's approach to the conservation management plan (CMP) for WHS, the following aspects of heritage-awareness can be incorporated as the focus areas for the heritage management of KHAs (Table 8):

Table 8: Possible Focus Areas for the HCM of KHAs

UNESCO's approach for CMP	Possible focus areas for the HCM of KHAs derived from UNESCO's approach
1) Raising public knowledge, understanding, and recognition on the necessity of safeguarding cultural and natural resources.	Raising stakeholders' awareness, appreciation, and shared responsibility towards safeguarding cultural and natural heritage-assets.
2) Strengthening the role of heritage-assets in community life.	Provision of purposeful interpretation and presentation about the HV of KHAs and capacity building in the heritage-education of relevant stakeholders who are responsible for HCM.
3) Increased participation of local communities in heritage protection and presentation.	Active reaching out activities and observe 'bottom-up approach' involving local community and relevant stakeholders.
4) Emphasis on how excitement for heritage can be sparked to the wider public, particularly among young people.	Appreciation of shared common values for the HCM of KHAs with easy access to heritage-education among school students in Kedah.

Source: Authors (2023), adopting from UNESCO's approach for CMP

The identified possible focus areas for the HCM of KHAs are elaborated further in the Public Education Strategy Framework (Table 9).

The Awareness Creation Enabler

The authors also seek necessary attributive factors that lead to 'awareness creation'. Eight (8) components were identified from the data that form the life-cycle process, namely:

- 1) Establishment of management structure (dedicated team)
- 2) Importance of purposeful interpretation
- 3) Sharing of heritage-education among the public
- 4) Collaborative effort among stakeholders
- 5) Reaching out activity
- 6) Ties to academics and universities for research and publication
- 7) Heritage-education infrastructure or memory institute
- 8) Aspects of financial tool (fund sourcing)

The key components of awareness creation listed above are interconnected that should form the job functions for the management body in order to complete the life-cycle process of a heritage asset.

Much Needed Common Shared Values

An integrated governance system implies that there is a need to find shared values as a binding agent of social relations at the organisational, institutional, and individual levels. Developing common values is a process that must be

strengthened by building a more effective approach, strategy, and public education action (Saidin *et al.*, 2015). Kedah has been long known as ‘the rice bowl of Malaysia’. Paddy (or ‘*padi*’ in Malay) is Kedah’s agricultural heritage that becomes the state’s icon and economic identity. The status of Kedah as the nation’s rice producer stands as a symbol of its uniqueness than other states in Malaysia (Gin, 2012).

Inquisitive semantics is an approach to study the meaning of proverbs that involves data, theory, cognition, philosophy, and reasoning to attain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of their meaning (Subet & Nasir, 2019). Through this approach, the authors used the relationship of ‘Kedah people – ‘*padi*’ farming – heritage’ to create the ‘P-A-D-I concept’. Such abbreviation illustrates the shared values among the people of Kedah, namely the spirit of ‘Preservation, Administration (Management), and Defence (Protection) of Inheritance (heritage-asset), or The Spirit of P-A-D-I.

A Proposed Framework for the Management of KHAs

For this purpose, the established Langkawi Geopark Management Plan, or PPLG (2012), is used as a reference. Even though it is meant for the HCM of the Langkawi district, the strategy is indeed suitable for all categories of heritage and can fit the whole HCM agenda for the state. The proposed organisation chart for management body shall include a board of trustees overseeing five (5) main committees, each annotated with respective job functions identified previously. These main committees are the ‘Overall Coordination Committee’, ‘Public Education Committee (PEC)’, ‘Community Involvement Committee’, ‘Asset Development and Promotion Committee’, and ‘Heritage Conservation Works and Scientific Committee’.

To achieve the research aim, ‘awareness creation strategy among students’ will be a job-function of the ‘Public Education Working Committee’ (PEWC) that comes under PEC. PEWC’s task is to ensure that awareness creation strategy is incorporated into heritage-education at schools in Kedah.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OUTCOMES

‘Public Education’ Strategy Framework on KHAs

The author proposes establishing a management organization known as the Kedah Heritage Assets Trustee (KHAT) to oversee a state-wide heritage agenda. The implementation of programs for heritage-awareness creation among young children lies in the Public Education Strategy Framework. Based on the data gathered from the research activities, two (2) principles, five (5) main focuses, and six (6) strategies have been developed and detailed as awareness strategies (Table 9). By incorporating these strategies into their educational approach, schools can help students foster understanding and empathy towards their cultural and natural heritage.

Table 9: Public Education Strategy Framework on KHAs

Principles, Main Focuses, and Strategies for Heritage-Education in Kedah		
Principle	Principle 1: Nurturing and enculturation of the spirit of P-A-D-I (Preservation, Administration, and Defence of Inheritance) underlying all programs for heritage-education among the community in Kedah.	
	Principle 2: Heritage-education empowers the local community in the knowledge and skills aspects for the conservation, management, and development of sustainable heritage-assets of Kedah.	
Main Focus	Focus 1 – Appreciation of the spirit of ‘P-A-D-I’ that forms shared common values about KHAs across all stakeholders, including school students in Kedah.	2 strategies
	Focus 2 – Provision of purposeful interpretation, presentation, and information about the heritage-values of KHAs to all stakeholders, including school students in Kedah.	1 strategy
	Focus 3 – Raising stakeholders’ awareness, appreciation, and responsibility towards KHAs, including among school students.	1 strategy
	Focus 4 – Capacity building of relevant education stakeholders/government agencies (such as school teachers) who are responsible and have an interest in heritage-education.	1 strategy
	Focus 5 - Monitoring the effectiveness of school educational programs about KHAs.	1 strategy
Focus 1	Strategy 1 – Mainstreaming the education about KHAs and HCM in formal education across the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education.	<i>(List of recommended action plans is available but not included in this article)</i>
	Strategy 2 – Making the conservation of KHAs a priority in informal and non-formal education.	
Focus 2	Strategy 1 – Develop mechanisms and tools to strengthen information about KHAs.	
Focus 3	Strategy 1 – Diversify programs and activities related to the promotion of KHAs.	
Focus 4	Strategy 1 – Implement capacity-building programs for responsible agencies/stakeholders that involve the implementation of programs/activities/projects for knowledge, awareness, and management of heritage-assets.	
Focus 5	Strategy 1 – Implement a system for monitoring the implementation of public educational programs about KHAs.	

Source: Author (2023), adapted from PPLG (2012)

This paper offers significant contributions as it is the first in the research area to, 1) Conduct a state-wide students’ heritage-awareness-assessment in Kedah; and 2) Scrutinize the necessary attributes or mechanisms for heritage-awareness creation and recommended awareness strategy of KHAs among students.

CONCLUSION

As Kedah rapidly develops, it is critical for the state to protect its rich historical, cultural, and natural assets while promoting the practice of sustainable HCM. It is crucial for the heritage-awareness creation that lies in the state's heritage-education strategy to be based on the proposed Public Education Strategy Framework on KHAs. The recommended action plans must also be put into effect. However, the designing of a roadmap for HCM in Kedah should consider the two (2) proposed long-term plans:

- 1) Advocate the establishment of Kedah State Heritage Enactment to empower the HCM of KHAs.
- 2) Establish a dedicated management body (i.e., KHAT) to navigate the management of heritage and conservation of KHAs.

The Kedah state government must commit to assisting communities within each district in charting their own path towards heritage-awareness enhancement. Finally, the findings of this research offer a long-term resolution that answers the question of what it takes for Kedah to successfully protect its significant heritage-assets, today and in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to thank all respondents and the school management who contributed their valuable time, opinions, and insights for the successful completion of the students' heritage-awareness-assessment and this research. This paper is also dedicated to the late Dato' Wira (Dr.) Haji Wan Shamsudin bin Mohd Yusof, former chairman and advisor of the Malaysian Historical Society, Kedah Branch.

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Received: 21st June 2024. Accepted: 10th September 2024