

# Awareness and Willingness for Engagement of Youth on World Heritage Site: A Study on Lenggong Archaeological Site

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## Abstract

Lenggong Valley was recognised as a World Heritage Site in June 2012. The literature highlights the importance of community engagement in conservation programmes. Principally, the involvement of young people is necessary to facilitate heritage management programmes. The readiness of youth to engage can be measured from their awareness and willingness to participate. For this study, we administered questionnaire surveys to 175 respondents from three secondary schools in Lenggong. The results revealed a low level of awareness and a lack of willingness for participation. In addition, the findings suggest an uncertain correlation between awareness and willingness for participation among youth.

**Keywords:** awareness, community engagement, Lenggong valley, World Heritage Site (WHS), youth, willingness

## 1. Introduction

Heritage is frequently defined as our inheritance from the past, what endures into the present, and what continues into the future; allowing generations to gain knowledge, wonder at and benefit from (UNESCO, 1998, 2002). World Heritage Sites (WHS) might be forests, mountains, lakes, deserts, monuments, buildings, or cities and which are listed by UNESCO for their cultural or physical significance. UNESCO recognises four WHS's in Malaysia: Gunung Mulu National Park in Sarawak (2000), Kinabalu Park in Sabah (2000), George Town and Melaka (2008), and the Archaeological Heritage of the Lenggong Valley (2012) (Department of Museum Malaysia, 2012).

Lenggong Valley is a small town situated in the north of Perak, Malaysia. Lenggong Valley is recognised as an archaeological site with evidence of human settlement since the Paleolithic era. Lenggong was recognised as a WHS by UNESCO on 30 June 2012 due to its rich archaeological heritage. Other unique elements which contribute to Lenggong Valley being recognised by UNESCO as a WHS include the presence of an undisturbed Palaeolithic stone tool workshop, the discovery of the australomelanesoid 'Perak Man' in 1991, and a number of caves showing evidence of prehistoric burials.

For the purposes of this study, the community is defined as the residents dwelling within the WHS and who have a significant role to play in maintaining the WHS. Such communities must ensure that Lenggong Valley becomes and continues to be a well-known and popular heritage tourism destination. While the recognition of Lenggong as a WHS contributes significant worth to the local community, maintaining the UNESCO status is dependent aware the local community is of the WHS status and their willingness to engage with the WHS itself. Thus the value of community engagement has been enshrined within The Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas 1987 (Washington Charter) which states, "The participation and the involvement of the residents are essential for the success of the conservation program and should be encouraged. The conservation of historic towns and urban areas concerns their residents first of all" (ICOMOS 1987, Article 3). This point is further reinforced by The Burra Charter, which stresses that heritage conservation is sustained by community engagement (ICOMOS, 1999, Article 12).

Community engagement in heritage management can settle conflicts between the needs and interests of residents for a better quality of life, economic development and the conservation of the WHS (Siririsak, 2009).

Community involvement contributes to increased standards of living, with the community benefiting from tourism development secondary to the UNESCO recognition of the WHS. However, such community engagement would be impossible in the absence of the local communities' awareness concerning the values of the Lenggong WHS. Thus the younger generation is seen as playing a crucial role in heritage conservation as they will be the main beneficiaries of any successful conservation management programmes, enabling them to enter the local economic sector and engage in local industry.

UNESCO defines youth "as persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years old" (UNESCO, 2013). According to Edwards, Johnson, and McGillicuddy (2003), the quality of young people's engagement of is a function of their awareness, knowledge and skills. Therefore, to facilitate the effective participation of young people, some consideration should be given to increasing their level of awareness and knowledge and capacity-building (Otis, 2006; Suleiman, Soleimanpour, & London, 2006). In order to engage young people in a WHS community with the site, young people require an awareness of the value of the WHS. Increasing youth awareness of the value of the WHS enables them to evaluate the value of its, and conversely there, heritage and actions needed to manage the WHS. WHS awareness facilitates the gaining of knowledge, familiarising youth with WHS conservation and encouraging them to participate in the WHS conservation process (UNESCO, 1998, 2002). Therefore, engendering awareness of young people is a prerequisite of effective participation and engagement in conservation of WHS.

However, it seems that local communities within the Lenggong Valley are generally unaware of the fact that their home has been recognised as a WHS. Preliminary observations indicate that local inhabitants are unaware of the WHS concept and have no idea how they might benefit from the WHS. Despite the historical background of Lenggong Valley and its wealth of archaeological findings, this lack of knowledge among the local community presents a barrier for disseminating information and for engaging residents and youth in conservation programmes.

Thus the aim of this study is to:

- 1) Evaluate the awareness of young people regarding the Lenggong WHS;
- 2) Assess young people's willingness to engage in future heritage conservation activities; and
- 3) Identify the correlation between young people's awareness and willingness to engage.

This study has been conducted using students drawn from several secondary schools in Lenggong Valley, and various descriptive analyses and correlation techniques have been employed to analyse the data which has been collected. The final results will be an important measure in gauging the awareness and willingness of local youth to participate in new developments taking place in the Lenggong Valley.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Lenggong Valley as a World Heritage Site*

Lenggong Valley is rich with many unique elements that enable it to be recognised as a WHS. Lenggong Valley, which covers 9,773 hectares, has its own unique physical attributes, socio-culture, daily activities, and many other unique elements. Understanding world heritage makes people more aware of their roots, their cultural and social identity, their beliefs, and the values of peoples and civilisations (UNESCO, 1998, 2002).

Lenggong Valley has many historical heritage elements that can be used to increase its destination competitiveness. These treasures represent the grandeur of the Lenggong civilisation which had developed in the past (Manaf, Bakar, Yakoob, & Hassan, 2009). Historical remains can be classified as a cultural heritage of many types including written history, buildings, monuments, sites, artifacts, places, and human culture. As valuable properties representative of a race and a culture, historical heritage should be shared, preserved and maintained and should not be affected by modern development and human greed, disasters or the uncertainty of natural phenomena (Hassan, Manaf, Bakar, & Yakoob, 2010). Lenggong Valley shows signs of having hosted one of the oldest civilisation areas since the Palaeolithic era, some 1.83 million years ago. Archaeological evidence indicates that there was a decline in the initial population due to both a meteorite impact and the super volcanic eruption of Toba 74,000 years ago.

In addition, Lenggong Valley hosts a rich diversity of flora and fauna which forms part of its rain forest equatorial ecosystem. It has rivers and waterfalls, like the Perak River, which is 420 km long, making it the second longest river in Peninsular Malaysia. A large section of the river in Lenggong continues to support rural living, far and away from modern development. Also, Raban Lake, located 16km to the north of Lenggong, is considered a major fishing spot in Perak due to its assortment of freshwater fish.

Lenggong Valley is also abundant with limestone caves. There are approximately 75 caves in Lenggong Valley. Among them, 16 caves have been explored, 7 of which were formed approximately 330 million years ago. Some caves have been identified as the early settlements of prehistoric peoples and were included as part of the UNESCO world heritage submission. Among the more famous caves are Gunung Runtuh Cave, Teluk Kelawar Cave, Harimau Cave, Badak Cave and Kajang Cave. There are also suevite rock deposit sites which formed in the Bukit Bunuh in the meteorite impact crater. Desposits of the gathered dust caused by the Toba super volcanic eruption in Sumatera, Indonesia 74,000 years ago can also be found in Lenggong. These unique features make Lenggong an attractive location and contribute significantly to its destination competitiveness.

## *2.2 Community Engagement and Awareness*

According to the Global Strategy, launched by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, in declaring a site as a WHS it not only recognises the value of the site, but also stroves to protect the site (UNESCO, 1994). To this end, communities interacting with the site should strive to live in harmony with the site's assets and this requires both knowledge and a sense of belonging to the site. Communities should be knowledgeable with respects to the site's historical background and this, in turn, enhances their appreciation of the site itself. However, community engagement is vital in this process of instilling a sense of pride regarding the site and its associated community. Community participation in heritage projects positively influences the sense of belonging among residents, assists people in developing social networks with others both within and outside their community, and instils an appreciation of the heritage assets of the local area (Yung & Chan, 2013).

Community engagement can be defined as a collaborative relationship between communities in which they strive to achieve a specific objective while simultaneously making their community a better place in which to live (McCloskey et al., 2011). As such, community engagement emphasises the connections and interactions between community memebers. Community participation can create a sense of ownership, trust and credibility among community members (Rasoolimanesh, Badarulzaman, & Jaafar, 2013).

Youth participation in WHS conservation bears similar benefits to adult participation (or public participation in general). In Lenggong Valley, the benefit of youth participation may be more significant as youth have more opportunities to be involved in sustaining future developments. Young people welcome the opportunity to have a voice in public arena and be more linked to their community (Frank, 2006). Across diverse fields such as health programmes, environmental protection, educational affairs, urban planning, and social services; youth participation has shown itself to be a powerful tool enhancing young people's sense of self-esteem, skill development, and connection to the community (Suleiman et al., 2006).

Checkoway & Gutierrez (2006) define youth involvement as the process of engaging young people in activities which impact their lives (e.g. environmental issues, educational reform, justice equity). The youth participation literature indicates that the quality of participation of young people is depending on their awareness, knowledge and skills (Edward et al., 2003). Therefore, to facilitate the effective participation of young people, their awareness, knowledge and capacity should be improved (Otis, 2006, Suleiman et al., 2006).

Youth participation in WHS conservation programmes has some additional needs, such as developing an awareness of the value of the WHS, as well as developing the skills, competence, and confidence necessary for such participation to be effective. Awareness of the WHS empowers youth to reflect upon and argue the value of their heritage, the methods required to manage the WHS, and the opportunities and threats to tourism presented by the WHS. WHS awareness facilitates gaining knowledge, familiarising youth with WHS conservation and encouraging them to participate in the WHS conservation process (UNESCO, 1998, 2002). Therefore, developing an awareness of WHS heritage among young people is a prerequisite of effective participation in WHS conservation. Awareness activities which encourage young people to participate in WHS management programmes should incorporate youth friendly techniques and activities such as drawing, mapping, video recording, and the performance arts (Frank, 2006).

## **3. Research Methodology**

For the purpose of this study, we aim to assess the level of awareness of young people regarding the Lenggong WHS, as well as their willingness to engage with heritage management programmes. In addition, we intend to investigate the correlation between awareness and willingness for engagement. Our sample population comprised of students drawn from all secondary schools, there being only three, in Lenggong Valley. A developed questionnaire was administered to respondents in order to collect data. This questionnaire contains of three main sections; the first section identifies the demographic characteristics of the respondent, the second section ascertains the level of awareness of respondents about the Lenggong WHS, while the third section explores the willingness of the young person to participate in WHS conservation and management programmes.

Questions in the second and third sections of the questionnaire were presented as simple Yes=1 and No=2 answers. A total of 175 questionnaires were administered to and returned by the respondents. And the resultant data analysed in SPSS using various descriptive and correlation techniques. The next section presents the results and findings of the data analysis in detail.

Table 1. Profile of respondents

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1) Gender		
Male	63	36.0
Female	112	64.0
2) Ethnicity		
Malay	159	90.9
Chinese	14	8.0
Indian	2	1.1
3) Age		
16	120	68.0
17	55	32.0
4) Secondary Schools		
Tan Sri Abdul Aziz	51	29.1
Sultan Azlan Shah	99	56.6
Dato Ahmad	25	14.3

#### 4. Analysis and Findings

This study has been conducted with 175 respondents from three secondary schools in Lenggong WHS. Table 1 shows the profile of respondents. In terms of the gender of respondents, 63 of the respondents were male (i.e. 36%) and 112 female (i.e. 64%). Respondents represent three different races, indicative of the racial diversity of Malaysia, 90.9% being Malay, 8.0% Chinese and 1.1% Indian. In terms of the age of respondents, 120 respondents aged 16 years and 55 students aged 17 years at the time of the study. Of the three secondary schools in Lenggong, 29.1% of respondents came from Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Secondary School, 56.6% from Sultan Azlan Shah Secondary School, and 14.3% from Dato Ahmad Secondary School.

Data analysis revealed that young people's overall level of awareness of the Lenggong WHS was poor (See Table 2). While most (i.e. 89.7%) respondents were aware of the Lenggong WHS, many did not know what a WHS was. The mean value of being able to accurately identify the meaning of WHS (Q: 5.1a-5.1d) ranged between 1.61 to 1.94. Sub-questions to question 6 (i.e. 6.1a-6.1d and 6.2a-6.2d) assess respondents awareness of the Lenggong WHS and its potential benefit to local residents. Most of respondents (mean = 1.43) knew about the discovery of "Perak Man" and believed it to be the main reason for UNESCO having recognised Lenggong as a WHS. Responses to other questions in section 6.1 demonstrated that the young residents have a low level of awareness with the mean values were ranged from 1.79 to 1.93. Most respondents were aware that Lenggong's recognition as a WHS brought with it a number of benefits. Most foresee Lenggong WHS becoming a major tourist attraction and the potential sources of income inherent in living in a tourist attraction. However, on average (mean values ranges from 1.77 to 1.94), respondents were unaware other benefits which might be derived from the WHS. Asked about various archaeological and non-archaeological attractions in Lenggong, the mean level of awareness ranged between 1.53 and 1.98. Respondents were somewhat familiar with the Lenggong Archaeological Museum and Lata Kekabu waterfall; but they knew very little about Lenggong's other attractions. Aside from the archaeology museum, Bukit Bunuh and Kota Tampan host a number of archaeological artefacts and respondents seemed to be unaware of this. This lack of knowledge also extended to various non-archaeological sites in Lenggong WHS. Therefore, based on the results of this section of the questionnaire, it has been demonstrated that respondents have a low level of awareness with respects to the Lenggong WHS.

Respondents were also asked several questions about their role in Lenggong Valley after it has been recognised as WHS, the responses to which have been summarised in Table 3. This question explores the willingness of young residents to engage with activities intended to promote and preserve Lenggong as a WHS. The data

suggests that respondents are unwilling to play any significant role in the Lenggong WHS. The mean values for the answers to these questions (Questions 8.1a-8.1f) ranged from 1.62 to 1.97. Therefore, the results summarised in table 2 and table 3 demonstrate that young people in Lenggong have both a low level of awareness and low level of willingness for engagement with the Lenggong WHS.

Table 2. The results of analysis of awareness

Questions	Mean Value	St. Dev.
5) Have you heard of World Heritage Site?	1.10	0.305
5.1) If yes, what is World Heritage Site?		
a) It is an unique and important physical culture	1.61	0.870
b) Being listed by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Organization (UNESCO)	1.94	0.233
c) A place which has given name by World Heritage for its universal value to human and it need to be protected in order to admire by future generations.	1.74	0.438
d) Others	1.88	0.326
6) Do you know Lenggong Valley has been recognized as World Heritage Site?	1.17	0.378
6.1) If yes, what do you know?		
a) It has been recognized on 30 June 2012	1.91	0.281
b) It has been recognized because its historical value	1.79	0.409
c) It has been recognized because Perak Man was found.	1.43	0.496
d) Others	1.93	0.253
6.2) If yes, what is the benefit of Lenggong Valley after the recognition?		
a) It brings development to Lenggong Valley	1.77	0.421
b) It brings more job opportunities to villagers	1.94	0.243
c) It is able to attract tourists and brings more income to villagers	1.50	0.501
d) Others	1.92	0.272
7) In your opinion, what are the places of attractions in Lenggong Valley?		
a) Gunung Runtuh Cave	1.81	0.388
b) Bukit Bunuh	1.91	0.289
c) Kota Tampan	1.82	0.388
d) Lata Kekabu waterfall	1.66	0.474
e) Belum waterfall	1.96	0.182
f) Harimau Cave	1.92	0.272
g) Taman Negeri Royal Belum	1.96	0.197
h) Tasik Raban	1.86	0.345
i) Nur Lembah Lenggong	1.91	0.281
j) Puteri Cave	1.87	0.339
k) Galeri Arkeologi Lenggong/museum archaeology	1.53	0.500
l) Kajang Cave	1.93	0.253
m) Gua Tok Giring	1.98	0.182

Scale: Yes=1, No=2

A Spearman correlation test analysis was conducted due to the nature of the data collected. This test sought to determine the significance of the relationship between the responses given to questions 5.1 (i.e. awareness about the meaning of WHS), 6.1 (i.e. awareness of the reasons Lenggong was recognised as a WHS), and 6.2 (i.e. awareness of the benefits of Lenggong's WHS recognition for residents) with the responses given to question 8.1 (i.e. willingness of residents for participation). The result of the correlation analysis between awareness and willingness to participate showed a significant relationship between some items; but not others. And of those relationships which were significant, some correlations were negative while others were positive (See Table 4).

The correlation analysis produced an uncertain result for the key measures of awareness and willingness to engage. For example, there was a negative relationship between the responses given to questions 5.1c and 6.1a with those given to question 8.1b. Responses to others questions indicated either a positive correlation with low  $p$  values or a non-significant correlation. Therefore, the analysis revealed an uncertain correlation between awareness and willingness for participation among young residents.

Table 3. The results of analysis of willingness for engagement

Questions	Mean Value	St. Dev.
8) In your opinion, do you think that you have to play a role in Lenggong Valley after it has been recognized as World Heritage Site?	1.26	0.554
8.1) If yes, what is the role you think you should play?		
a) To preserve the environment	1.62	0.486
b) To preserve the archaeological sites	1.84	0.362
c) To raise the awareness of the important of preserving the environment in Lenggong Valley among villagers	1.81	0.393
d) To promote the local products to people	1.78	0.417
e) To promote home stay and archaeological gallery Lenggong Valley to people	1.92	0.263
f) Others	1.97	0.167

Scale: Yes=1, No=2

Table 4. The results of Spearman correlation between awareness and willingness

	8.1a	8.1b	8.1c	8.1d	8.1e	8.1f
5.1a	-.135*	.128*	.190***			-.155**
5.1b						
5.1c		-.143*			.132*	.135*
5.1d		.134*				
6.1a		-.154**				
6.1b				.126*		
6.1c	.174**			.131*		
6.1d	-.211***					
6.2a					.158**	
6.2b				.144*		
6.2c						
6.2d			-.143*			

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , and \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, we aimed to evaluate young people's awareness of the Lenggong WHS, their willingness for engagement with the WHS, and the correlation between these two variables. The literature emphasises the importance of community engagement, especially the engagement of young people, in WHS conservation programmes (Frank, 2006; Yung & Chan, 2011). However, youth participation necessitates that the young person be equipped with some level of awareness concerning the value of the WHS. So armed, the young person can develop the skills, competence, and confidence necessary in order to translate their willingness to participate into an effective contribution to the various conservation programmes and activities. WHS awareness facilitates both the gaining of knowledge, familiarising youth with WHS conservation, and encourages them to participate in the WHS conservation process (UNESCO, 1998, 2002). The results of the present study indicate both a low level awareness among young people in Lenggong Valley and a low level of willingness for participate in future conservation programmes centred on the Lenggong WHS. We demonstrated that young people in Lenggong Valley have very little understanding of the WHS concept (Inc. what "world heritage site" means), foresee few

benefits to themselves or their communities in Lenggong's recognition as a WHS, and are unfamiliar with Lenggong's various attractions despite them actually living in Lenggong Valley. Consequently, most young people in Lenggong Valley are unwilling to engage in WHS conservation programmes or to play any effective role in preserving Lenggong's heritage.

Despite previous literature's assertion that awareness and willingness for participation are intrinsically linked (UNESCO, 1998, 2002; Frank, 2006), our correlation analysis demonstrated a very weak relationship between the two. Notwithstanding, the literature would also suggest that the quality of youth participation is a function of their awareness and knowledge (Edward et al., 2003). Therefore, to facilitate effective youth participation in the management of the Lenggong WHS, it is imperative that some effort be made to improve the capacity, knowledge and awareness of young people. Promoting the capacity and skills of young people will contribute to sustaining the conservation programmes of the Lenggong WHS (Otis, 2006; Suleiman et al., 2006).

The results of this study highlight the urgent need for local authorities to undertake action so as to raise the level of awareness of young people in Lenggong Valley with respects to the WHS and to encourage and prepare them for participation in sustainable conservation programmes. Awareness activities intended to encourage young people's involvement in WHS conservation programmes might involve interactive activities such as drawing, mapping, video recording, and the performance arts (Frank, 2006). These activities serve to strengthen young people and improve their capacity, skills, knowledge and awareness (Suleiman et al., 2006). However, it should be borne in mind that awareness and youth participation, as well as community engagement in the area of heritage conservation programmes, is still areas for which there is very little literature. Further research is needed to better understand these elements, various aspects of awareness, and requirements for community involvement in WHS conservation programmes. While this study was fairly limited in its scope, focusing solely on the Lenggong WHS, the findings of this study might serve a lesson for other rural WHS's, especially in developing countries.

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