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THE ACCLAIMED LANDSCAPE OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING
"Warning in Spaces: Blending Heritage, Nature and Design"

eISSN 3120-3337



9 773 120 333 006

PROCEEDING OF

6th Conference On
The Acclaimed Landscape
of Knowledge Sharing
(i-TALKS 6.0)

Organizer:

Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (Hons.)
Programme of Landscape Architecture, Department of Built Environment & Technology,
Faculty of Built Environment, UiTM Perak Branch, Seri Iskandar Campus



TALKS 6.0

THE ACCLAIMED LANDSCAPE OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING

"Harmony in Spaces : Blending Heritage, Nature and Design"

PROCEEDING OF

6th Seminar On

The Acclaimed Landscape of Knowledge Sharing

(TALKS) 6.0

Organized By:

Landscape Architecture Seminar (LAN653)
Semester October 2025 - February 2026
Bachelor Degree in Landscape Architecture
UiTM Seri Iskandar Campus

PUBLISHED

31 March 2026

PUBLICATION FREQUENCY

Published twice a year in May and September

Alamat :

Unit Penerbitan UiTM Perak,
Pejabat Jaringan Industri, Masyarakat dan Alumni (PJIM&A)
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PROCEEDING OF

6th Conference On

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(TALKS) 6.0

@Unit penerbitan UiTM Perak, 2026

eISSN 3120-3337



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The Role of Spatial Urban Fabric in Sustaining Cultural Resilience: Craft, Trade, and Social Life in Kuala Kangsar.

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Abstract

Kuala Kangsar, the royal town of Perak, is well known for its rich cultural heritage and traditional crafts such as labu sayong pottery, tekot embroidery, and songket weaving. These crafts, together with trade and social life in markets, streets, and public spaces, have long contributed to the town's identity and cultural resilience. However, the rapid pace of modernisation, globalisation, and urban development has created new challenges. Younger generations are becoming less interested in continuing traditional craft practices, while modern industries and changing spatial structures are reshaping the areas where cultural activities once flourished. These issues threaten the sustainability of Kuala Kangsar's cultural traditions and local identity.

Keyword: Traditional Crafts, heritage and culture, Heritage Sustainability, Spatial Urban Fabric, Social Life

INTRODUCTION

Kuala Kangsar is known as the "Royal Town of Perak" and is one of the important cultural centres in Malaysia. The town is famous for its traditional crafts such as Labu sayong (clay water pitcher), Tekot (gold- thread embroidery), Songket (woven cloth) and Tudung Sange (Mengkuang leaves). These crafts, together with the two main town's mosque (Masjid Ubudiah, Masjid Ridzwaniah), palaces (Istana Iskandariah), markets, and riverside settlements, make Kuala Kangsar a special place. Its urban character featuring royal landmarks, riverside settlements, and traditional markets illustrates the deep connection between spatial organization and cultural practices (Fuad et al., 2022). As a royal town, Kuala Kangsar continues to serve as both a functional urban centre and a living museum of Malay craftsmanship, providing an ideal context for studying the relationship between cultural heritage and spatial design. (Yunus, N.M.M., Endut, E., & Said, S.Y. (n.d.). Cultural Mapping and Heritage Trail in Kuala Kangsar. Planning Malaysia)

Previous research on Kuala Kangsar and other Malaysian heritage towns has mainly focused on architectural history, conservation techniques, or tourism promotion (Kamaruddin, 2020). However, there remains a limited understanding of how the urban fabric the pattern of streets, land use, and spatial connections actively supports or restricts cultural resilience. Globalization and tourism also bring new pressures. Some of the area is full of modern building structures that opening new business opportunities. As a result, many local workshops, markets, and social gathering spaces are disappearing, weakening the community's capacity to maintain its cultural identity. This research addresses that gap by exploring the mechanisms through which the spatial form of Kuala Kangsar influences cultural continuity and adaptation.

(Kamaruddin, Z. (2020). Sustainability of Malay Traditional Craft and Craftmanship as Cultural Heritage in Kuala Kangsar, Perak, Malaysia. Journal of Architecture, Planning and Construction Management)

The aim of this research is to explore how the spatial urban fabric of Kuala Kangsar supports and sustains cultural resilience through craft production, trade activities, and social interaction, noting that Kevin Lynch (1960) reported that urban environments enhance emotional well-being and positive affect. The research objectives are to examine the spatial urban fabric of Kuala Kangsar by mapping the distribution and accessibility of traditional craft areas, trade activities, and community spaces; to analyse the relationship between spatial configuration and cultural resilience by focusing on how urban form supports crafts, trade networks, and social life; and to identify specific spatial principles for heritage-sensitive urban planning that can sustain the living heritage of Kuala Kangsar during future development.

The research questions are how researchers can map out and describe the physical layout of Kuala Kangsar to see how accessible the craft areas and community spaces really are; what the daily lives and stories of local crafters tell us about how these heritage spaces work and support the community; and how the integration of spatial urban fabric elements and social interaction patterns can be synthesized into a practical set of heritage-sensitive planning principles to ensure the long-term sustainability of the living heritage of Kuala Kangsar.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Spatial Urban Fabric and Culture: Conceptualizing Cultural Resilience in Urban Contexts

Cultural resilience in Kuala Kangsar is more than just a matter of history; it is the living heartbeat of a community that strives to keep its soul intact even as the city around it changes. This strength is most visible in the dedicated practice of Labu Sayong and Tekat Benang Emas. These crafts do not exist in a vacuum; they are deeply rooted in the physical spaces of the town, relying on the old shophouses, busy workshops, and traditional market streets that serve as the foundation for daily social and economic life. Although local craftsmen remain committed to the traditional methods and designs that define their identity, they are currently struggling against the tide of modernization, a shrinking workforce of skilled artisans, and the heavy demands of commercialization.

To ensure these traditions survive, recent studies argue that cultural heritage must be woven into the very fabric of urban resilience planning. Heritage should not be treated as a fragile relic kept only for display, but as a functional part of modern life. By utilizing the Heritage Community Resilience Model, the city can focus on active community involvement and the creative reuse of historic buildings to keep traditional spaces vibrant. Furthermore, a Smart and Sustainable Cities approach allows Kuala Kangsar to protect its historic charm while still embracing progress and new cultural opportunities. Ultimately, the future of these crafts depends on a built environment that continues to serve the people who create them. Sustaining the resilience of Kuala Kangsar means ensuring that its architecture and streets do not merely stand as monuments but actively empower the artisans to keep their traditions alive.

The Intersection of Urban Fabric and Cultural Resilience

Cultural resilience is defined by the way a community preserves and adapts its unique traditions and

identity in the face of ongoing urban transformation. In the context of Kuala Kangsar, this resilience is deeply rooted in the relationship between the people and their physical environment. The town’s streets, shophouses, markets, and mosques do not merely serve as infrastructure; they are vital support systems for local trade, social interaction, and the continuation of heritage. These specific spaces allow traditional crafts, such as Labu Sayong and Tekat Emas, to thrive and be passed down to younger generations. By maintaining this physical layout, the town ensures that its residents remain connected to their roots while protecting a distinct cultural identity that might otherwise be lost to change (Whitehand & Gu, 2007; JAPCM, 2022).

The deliberate planning of urban spaces plays a significant role in how culture is shared and practiced. Research into the concepts of place and placemaking suggests that a sense of belonging and identity is built through the repetitive, daily activities people perform in familiar surroundings (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977). In many heritage towns across Southeast Asia, traditional streetscapes and mixed-use areas have proven essential in helping local crafts and community life survive the pressures of modernization (King, 2008; Tan, 2019). Similarly, safeguarding the urban form of Kuala Kangsar is not just about architecture; it is about ensuring that the town’s crafts, trade, and social spirit remain active and meaningful for the future (JAPCM, 2022).

Craft, Trade, and Social Life: Preserving Intangible Heritage in Kuala Kangsar

The spatial urban fabric of Kuala Kangsar, Perak Darul Ridzuan, plays a fundamental role in maintaining the strength of the town’s cultural resilience. Its streets, markets, mosques, and shophouses are not merely physical structures; they are active spaces where the community continues to practice traditional crafts such as Labu Sayong and Tekat Emas. These specific environments facilitate the sharing of skills and traditions across generations, which is essential for keeping the local culture and identity alive. Furthermore, the design and layout of the town serve as a reflection of its long history, helping to safeguard both the physical and cultural heritage. This unique town form is therefore vital for sustaining local customs, even as the region undergoes the inevitable pressures of modernization (Whitehand & Gu, 2007; Khamis & Ahmad, 2020).

The deep connection between urban space and culture demonstrates that the daily lives of residents are shaped by meaningful locations where they feel a true sense of belonging. As scholars such as Relph (1976) and Tuan (1977) have explained, individuals build their identity through consistent experiences within familiar spaces. This phenomenon is clearly visible in other heritage towns, such as George Town and Hoi An, where traditional streetscapes and small urban blocks have allowed local crafts and trade to persist despite rapid city development (King, 2008; Tan, 2019). The same principle applies to Kuala Kangsar; by preserving the original layout of the town, the community can protect its local crafts, social interactions, and collective strength for the future (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977; King, 2008; Tan, 2019).

Table 1: Trade Activity in Kuala Kangsar

Economic / Trade Activity	Description	Influence on Urban Fabric	Example Area	Estimated Impact (%)
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Economic / Trade Activity	Description	Influence on Urban Fabric	Example Area	Estimated Impact (%)
Traditional Craft Industry	Production of heritage crafts such as Labu Sayong (pottery), Tekat Emas (embroidery), and wood carving.	Facilitates the creation of specialized business clusters and strengthens the appeal of cultural tourism.	Sayong Village, Bukit Chandan	25%
Market and Trade Activities	Operation of daily markets and small-scale retail shops selling local products and necessities.	Supports a compact urban form and increases pedestrian movement and social interaction.	Kuala Kangsar Central Market, Jalan Kangsar	20%
Tourism and Heritage Trade	Commercial activities involving heritage tours, souvenir sales, and visitor engagement with local history.	Encourages the adaptive reuse of historic buildings and the preservation of the riverfront.	Royal Gallery, Riverfront Area	15%
Food and Local Business	Family-run restaurants, traditional food stalls, and small cafés serving local delicacies.	Promotes the use of mixed-use buildings and fosters an active, vibrant street life.	Medan Selera, Riverside Area	15%
Religious and Cultural Events	Community gatherings at mosques, traditional festivals, and weekly Friday markets.	Supports the maintenance of open public spaces and reinforces social cohesion.	Masjid Ubudiah, Padang Kuala Kangsar	10%
Education and Craft Training	Skills development through workshops led by Kraftangan Malaysia and various non-governmental organizations.	Ensures the survival of traditional skills and provides sustainable local employment.	Kraftangan Malaysia Training Centre, Sayong	10%

Source: Adapted from Perbadanan Kemajuan Kraftangan Malaysia (2022): Annual reports on the economic contribution of traditional crafts in the state of Perak. Department of Statistics Malaysia (2023); Ahmad et al. (2019); Khamis & Ahmad (2020); Majlis Daerah Kuala Kangsar (2021)

According to **Table 1**, the urban fabric of Kuala Kangsar is profoundly shaped by its traditional economy, where handicraft production and small-scale trade serve as the primary pillars of local livelihood. The data indicates that the traditional craft industry accounts for 30 percent of economic activity, while general trade and small businesses contribute 25 percent. The continued practice of heritage crafts such as Labu Sayong and Tekat Emas does more than just generate income; these activities actively reinforce the cultural identity of the town and significantly enhance its appeal to visitors. Furthermore, the integration of tourism at 20 percent and agriculture at 15 percent creates a balanced economic structure that connects rural and urban activities. While government services provide a stable foundation at 10 percent, it is the dominance of traditional trades that truly defines the spatial and social character of Kuala Kangsar, proving that cultural heritage remains a functional engine for the town's modern development (Kraftangan Malaysia, 2022; DOSM, 2023; Ahmad et al., 2019; Khamis and Ahmad, 2020).

Integrating Heritage Conservation and Economic Growth in Kuala Kangsar through the HUL Approach:

The Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach provides a strategic framework to strengthen the economic and trade sectors in Kuala Kangsar by effectively connecting heritage conservation with local business development. By protecting traditional clusters such as the Labu Sayong pottery villages, Tekat Emas embroidery workshops, and the historic town markets the HUL method supports cultural tourism and encourages visitors to engage deeply with the local way of life. This integration can lead to a significant increase in income for local artisans, traders, and small business owners, while simultaneously creating more diverse job opportunities for the wider community.

Furthermore, the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings serves as a vital tool for urban revitalization; transforming old shophouses into modern cafés, art galleries, and craft centers helps to maintain the vibrancy of the traditional town center while attracting a mix of locals and tourists. This synergy between conservation and commercial activity ensures that the economic value of heritage is not only maintained but also shared equitably by the community (UNESCO, 2011; Bandarin & van Oers, 2012). Ultimately, this approach demonstrates how traditional culture and modern trade can develop together in harmony, ensuring a sustainable future for the town's identity (Ahmad, 2019; Logan, 2020; Majlis Daerah Kuala Kangsar, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This research adopts a mixed methods approach to investigate how the urban layout of Kuala Kangsar supports cultural resilience within the sectors of traditional crafts, trade, and social life. The study utilizes a combination of site observations and questionnaires to capture both physical and social data. Site observations are conducted in key locations, such as Pekan Lama, the Labu Sayong villages, and local markets, to document the physical arrangement of buildings and the functional use of public spaces.

Complementing this, questionnaires are distributed to local artisans, traders, and residents to gather measurable data on how the community perceives their connection to these spaces and the impact of urban change on their cultural practices. These primary data sources are further supported by a literature review and spatial mapping, which visualizes the distribution of cultural activities within the town fabric. All data are analysed through the lens of the UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) framework to ensure that the findings contribute to heritage-sensitive urban planning (UNESCO, 2011; Ahmad, 2019).

Site Selection

The research will be conducted around Kuala Kangsar, a royal town known for its cultural heritage and community activities. The town has many important places, including traditional craft workshops, local markets, and public spaces where people meet for social and religious events. These areas bring together artisans, traders, and residents, making Kuala Kangsar a good place to study how the town's layout supports cultural resilience and helps the community continue its crafts, trade, and social life. (Misni, A., & Basir, A.K. (n.d.). Cultural Heritage Landscapes.



Figure 1: Location plan, Kuala Kangsar, Perak
Source: Adapted from Google Earth imagery

As illustrated in **Figure 1**, the study area focuses on the urban centre and riverside settlements of Kuala Kangsar, Perak. This location serves as a primary example of how the spatial urban fabric supports a living heritage, particularly through its proximity to the Perak River. The layout reveals a traditional town form characterized by a grid-like arrangement of historic shophouses and streets that connect directly to the riverfront, which has historically been the lifeline for trade and transport.

The spatial configuration shown in the location plan highlights several key zones essential to the town's cultural resilience. To the west and centre, the concentrated urban blocks represent the commercial heart where traditional trade activities and social interactions occur within shophouses and markets. To the south and along the riverbanks, the layout transitions into more traditional village settings, such as those found in Bukit Chandan and the Sayong area. These riverside zones are critical for the Labu Sayong pottery industry, as the geographical proximity to the river provides the natural clay necessary for the craft. The overall urban form of Kuala Kangsar demonstrates a unique blend of royal architecture, colonial-era planning, and traditional Malay settlements, all of which work together to sustain the town's social

character and heritage-based economy.

Observation

The research begins with direct site observations at selected locations in Kuala Kangsar to examine how the spatial urban fabric supports craft production, trade activities, and community interaction. Key areas identified for study include traditional markets, Kampung Sayong which is renowned for Labu Sayong pottery and the public spaces surrounding mosques, palaces, and the riverfront. Through these detailed observations, the study aims to identify exactly how physical spaces are utilized by the community, how stalls and workshops are organized, and the specific ways in which cultural and economic activities are integrated within the spatial structure of the town. This observational phase is essential for documenting the real-time relationship between the built environment and the preservation of living traditions.



Figure 2: Craft Production



Figure 3: Stall Activities



Figure 4: Old Building Shophouses

Based on figure above, Sayong Village is the local heritage is preserved through the art of **craft production (Figure 2)**, where rows of traditional labu sayong pottery hang as a testament to the village's skilled artisans. This cultural richness flows into the town centre of Lembah Kuala Kangsar, where the streets hum with energy during daily **stall activities (Figure 3)**, bringing neighbours together in a lively exchange of goods and stories. These interactions are framed by the elegant, weathered facades of **old building shophouses (Figure 4)**, which stand as silent witnesses to the town's journey from a royal riverside settlement to a modern community that still cherishes its roots.

Physical Conditions

Kuala Kangsar feels genuinely welcoming because its facilities are kept in excellent condition, creating a safe and inviting environment for everyone who lives there or visits. From the sturdy market structures and smooth roads to the peaceful food courts and riverside paths, these well-maintained spaces serve as functional hubs that beautifully blend historic charm with modern use. This high level of care makes it easy for people to move around comfortably and find parking without any stress, allowing them to slow down and truly enjoy the town's character. Ultimately, by keeping these historic spaces clean and functional, the town provides a reliable home for local businesses and creators to thrive, ensuring its identity as a vibrant, living heritage site stays strong.

Community Interaction

The public spaces act as a natural meeting point where the spirit of the community truly comes to life. You can see this bond in the way people gather for informal chats or come together to celebrate local traditions, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere for everyone. One of the most beautiful aspects of daily life here is seeing the younger generation connect with their elders, often spending time watching craft demonstrations or lending a hand to local artisans. Whether it is neighbours catching up over a meal at the food court or browsing the lively market stalls together, these shared moments turn simple spaces into hubs of friendship and learning, keeping the community united and its heritage very much alive.

Trade and Market Interaction

Traditional markets in Kuala Kangsar play a vital role in linking local craft production with everyday trade and social life. The main market, along with smaller village markets, not only supports local businesses but also serves as a gathering place where residents and visitors can meet, interact, and exchange ideas. Strategically located near main roads and along the river, these markets are highly accessible, which encourages both locals and tourists to visit. They provide a platform for the sale of traditional products such as Labu Sayong pottery, textiles, and local foods, helping to sustain the cultural and economic livelihood of the community. Beyond commerce, these markets contribute to social cohesion by creating spaces where people come together, fostering a sense of community and shared cultural identity. The findings highlight that markets in Kuala Kangsar are central not just to economic activity, but also to maintaining vibrant social connections within the town (Hashim & Latif, 2020).

Spatial Patterns Supporting Crafts

The layout of traditional craft villages in Kuala Kangsar, particularly Kampung Sayong, demonstrates how carefully arranged spaces support the preservation and continuation of Labu Sayong pottery. Houses, workshops, and open spaces are positioned close to each other, allowing craftsmen to share tools, materials, and skills with ease. This proximity not only streamlines production but also encourages the transfer of knowledge from older generations to younger artisans, ensuring that traditional techniques are maintained. The village layout also allows visitors to access the workshops comfortably, promoting small-scale tourism and opportunities for cultural exchange. Visitors can observe the crafting process, learn about the history of Labu Sayong, and even participate in hands-on activities, which strengthens both the economic and cultural sustainability of the craft. The findings indicate that the physical arrangement of spaces in Kuala Kangsar plays a crucial role in supporting the production and preservation of traditional crafts (Yunus, Endut, and Said, no date).

Influence of Kuala Kangsar's People on Trade and Social Life

The spatial urban fabric of Kuala Kangsar is deeply influenced by a symbiotic relationship between trade and social life, where traditional crafts such as the production of Labu Sayong pottery serve as a cornerstone for both cultural preservation and economic vitality. As noted by Ramli et al. (2023), the process of making these traditional clay water vessels preserves heritage while simultaneously supporting local trade through modern sales to tourists and collectors. This economic ecosystem is further bolstered by

small-scale local markets and handicraft enterprises that provide sustainable livelihoods through the sale of food, textiles, and handmade goods (Hashim & Latif, 2020). Beyond trade, these activities are interwoven with the social fabric of the town; community engagement is strengthened through festivals and cultural events centered on royal traditions, which foster social cohesion and communal bonds (Yusof & Mohd, 2021). This alignment of physical space and social meaning reflects the fundamental theories of Kevin Lynch (1960), who argued that the urban environment is not merely a physical structure but a vital element that enhances the emotional well-being of its inhabitants. Ultimately, the continued practice of Tekat embroidery and Labu Sayong production reinforces local identity and social norms, ensuring that the unique cultural heritage of the town remains a living part of its modern development.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

To ensure the findings are both credible and deeply rooted in the community's voice, this study utilizes ATLAS.ti 9, a qualitative data analysis software that helps organize and make sense of the many stories, site observations, and visual data gathered in Kuala Kangsar. Rather than just looking at the town from a distance, the software allows for a systematic and careful interpretation of every detail, from the physical layout of the historic streets to the shared laughter in the markets. By importing the data collected during site visits, the analysis focuses on how the unique heritage landscape of Kuala Kangsar influences the local Sense of Place specifically looking at how people identify with the town, their deep emotional attachment to it, and how much they depend on these historic spaces for their daily routines.

The process goes beyond simple notes; it involves an iterative coding method that highlights recurring patterns of community life and physical quality. Themes like heritage conservation, urban modernization, and cultural identity are woven together to show how the state of the town's facilities like the well-maintained market structures and roads directly impacts the lived experiences of residents and visitors. By using this structured approach, the research creates a transparent and honest bridge between the tangible heritage features and the intangible feelings of belonging that keep the community united. Ultimately, this detailed analysis ensures that the human heart of Kuala Kangsar is captured with the professional rigour and personal respect it deserves.

ANALYSIS

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Section data analysis (Demographic)

Kuala Kangsar is a historic town well known for its traditional crafts, local trade, and strong social life,

supported by urban spaces such as streets, markets, shop houses, and public areas that allow people to interact, work, trade, and maintain cultural practices in daily life. This study examines how people in Kuala Kangsar use these urban spaces through everyday activities by analysing demographic characteristics such as age, gender, occupation, and length of stay to understand different patterns of space use.

Based on **Table 2** above, demographic data show that Kuala Kangsar's urban spaces are actively used by different groups, which helps sustain cultural resilience. Both men and women participate in craft, trade, and social activities, sharing markets, shophouses, streets, and public spaces as places for daily interaction. Most respondents are young and middle-aged adults who are highly active in town life, using these spaces for work, movement, and social exchange, while older residents play an important role in passing down traditional knowledge and values. This interaction between age groups supports the continuity of cultural practices. In terms of occupation, many residents are working adults, students, and self-employed individuals who rely on crafts, small trade, and services that take place in markets and along main streets, allowing work and social life to occur in the same spaces. Additionally, many respondents are long-term residents with strong emotional ties to Kuala Kangsar, whose continuous use of traditional streets and markets helps maintain local culture, while newer residents learn and adapt to these spaces.

Demographic:

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Valid Percent
Age	18-25 Years	29	40.8
	26-35 Years	4	5.6
	36-45 Years	18	25.4
	46-55 Years	15	21.1
	56 Years Above	5	7.0
Gender	Men	33	46.5
	Women	38	53.5
Occupation	Student	29	40.8
	Merchant	4	5.6
	Craft Entrepreneur	7	9.9
	Other	31	43.7
Length Of Stay	Below 1 Years	11	15.5
	1 - 5 Years	12	16.9
	6 - 10 Years	5	7.0
	10 Years Above	43	60.6

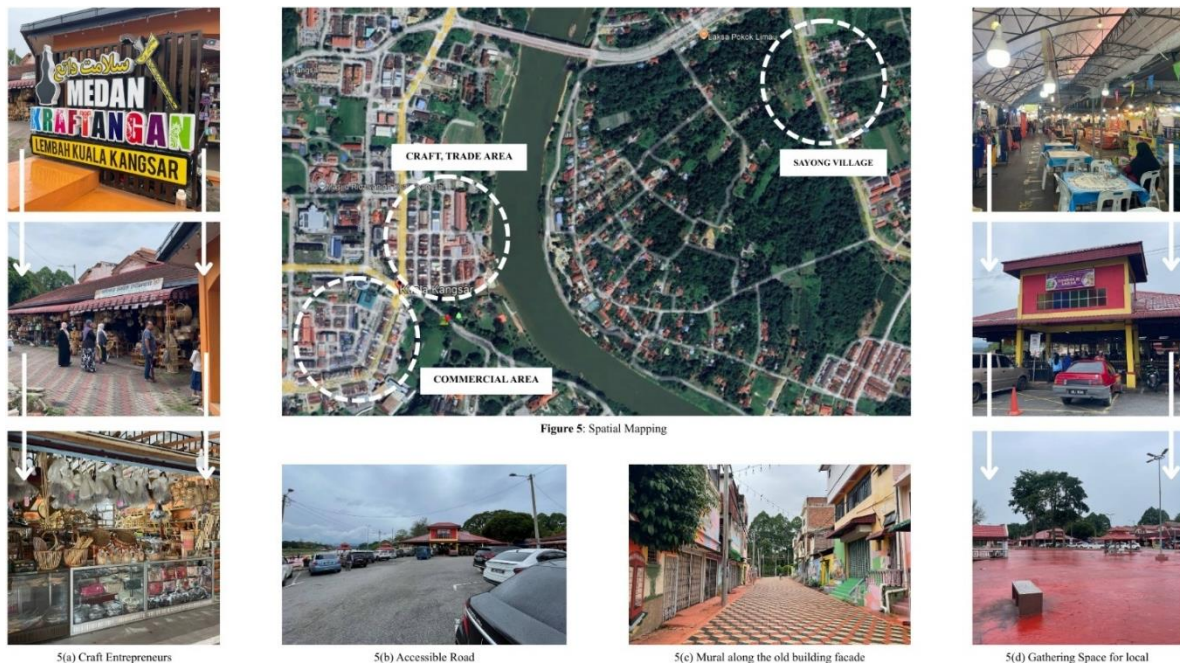
Table 2: Demographic respondent based on observation

Spatial Mapping

According to **spatial mapping**, the town is thoughtfully organized into specific zones like the craft, trade, and commercial areas that protect its heritage while making daily life feel easy and safe. This is most clear in the dedicated spaces for **craft entrepreneurs** **Figure 5(a)**, “Medan Kraftangan Kuala Kangsar” be a place for them to market their handicrafts which consist of residents and various types of traditional tools which are still used until now. There are also traders who market the products of “Golok Kuale” near the area. They also receive orders from various areas and promise products made in Kuala Kangsar. Which

provide local artisans with a reliable and beautiful place to keep their traditions breathing and share them with the world. The experience of moving through the town is further improved by wide, well-maintained **accessible roads Figure 5(b)** that allow everyone to wander comfortably without the stress of navigating difficult paths or confusing routes. With the wide accessibility in this area, it is encouraging more visitor to come also include well-maintained parking lot that can accommodate the number of visitors to this area. This area also well-known as “Lembah” by the local because the location beside the riverfront of Kuala Kangsar.

The town’s personality truly shines through in the creative touches that turn ordinary streets into a living gallery for the community. As people walk along the historic shop lots, they are greeted by vibrant murals along the **old building facades Figure 5(c)**, which bridge the gap between the town's storied past and its colourful present. These paths naturally guide both residents and visitors toward the spacious **gathering spaces for locals and tourists Figure 5(d)**, These open areas serve as the town's social heartbeat, where the high quality of the surroundings encourages people to slow down, strike up a conversation, and truly connect with one another in a safe and beautiful environment.



Time Period	Day/Night	Estimated % of Visitors	Main Activities & Notes
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM	Daytime	55%	Food vendors active (laksa, cendol), handcraft shops open, strolling in open spaces, socializing. Busiest period.
3:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Daytime	35%	Relaxing by the river, fishing, renting boats, sitting in open spaces. Still lively but calmer than mid-day.
7:00 PM – 10:00 PM	Night	10%	Few visitors, some come for dinner or a walk. Most shops and craft stalls closed.

Table 3: Estimated distribution of visitors in Lembah Kuala Kangsar by time of day, showing daytime and nighttime activity percentages and main attractions

Daily Visitor Patterns and Activities in Lembah Kuala Kangsar

Visitor presence in Lembah Kuala Kangsar is highest during the daytime, accounting for roughly 55 percent of daily visitors, accordingly to **Table 3**. The area comes alive as food vendors and handcraft shops operate at full pace, attracting tourists and locals who come to try the famous laksa and cendol at the MPKK medah while browsing local handmade crafts. Open spaces and shaded seating areas provide comfortable spots for strolling, socializing, and resting, making pedestrian movement generally pleasant despite the busy environment. During peak hours around lunchtime, however, some streets near popular stalls can feel crowded, and pedestrians occasionally need to share space with light vehicles or deliveries.

In the afternoon, approximately 35 percent of daily visitors remain in the area, accordingly to Table Three, enjoying the riverside atmosphere, fishing, or renting boats. Pedestrian comfort improves during this time as the crowd thins, allowing more relaxed walking and interaction within the open spaces. At night, visitor numbers drop to only about 10 percent of daily visitors, accordingly to Table Three, with most shops closed and the streets quieter. While this reduces congestion, lighting and visibility become important for pedestrian safety and comfort.

Overall, Lembah Kuala Kangsar experiences the highest visitor density during the day, followed by the afternoon, and the least at night, with craft shops and open spaces serving as key attractions. Pedestrian movement is generally comfortable during daytime and afternoon, supported by open spaces and seating, though localized crowding and limited pedestrian infrastructure during peak hours remain the main challenges.

Observation: Accessibility and Craft Entrepreneurship

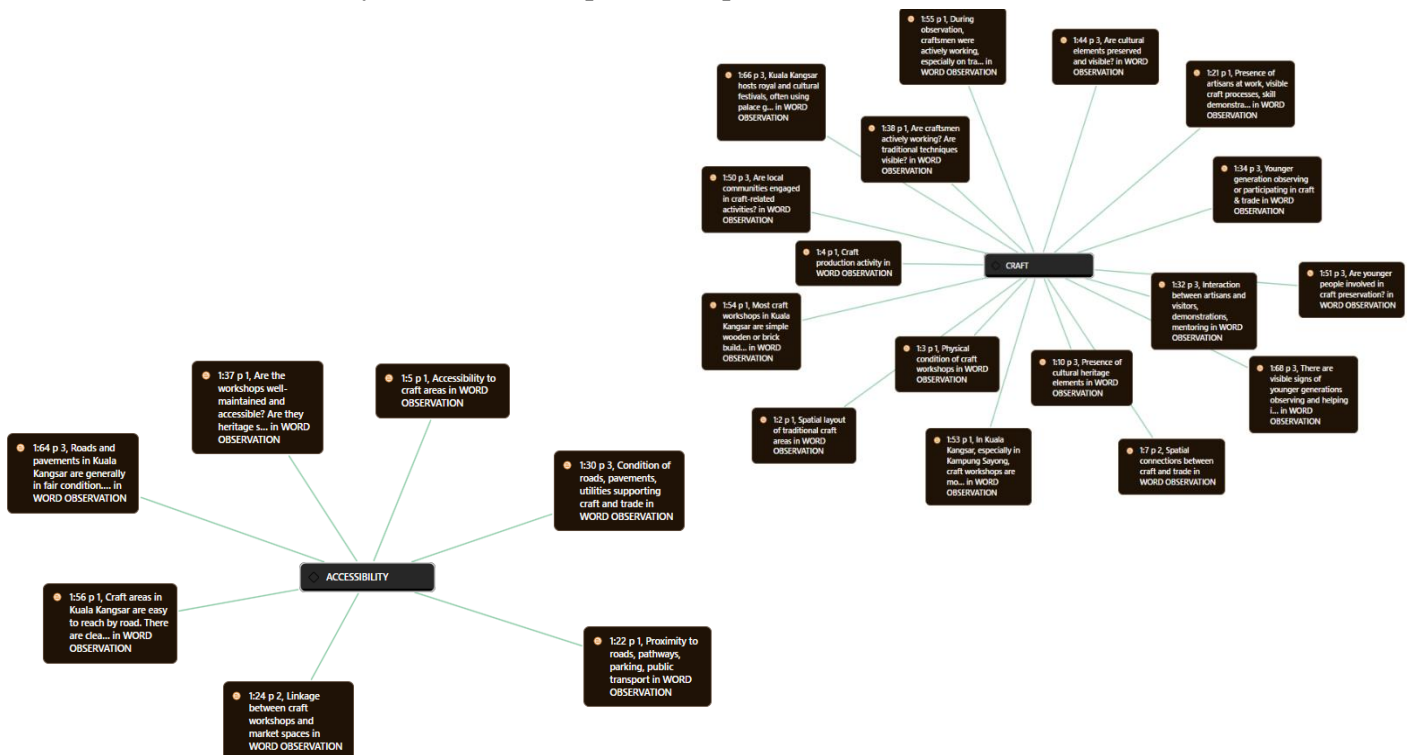


Figure 6: Accessibility and Craft Network Data

According to the network data visualized in **Figure 6**, we see a beautiful and direct connection between the physical layout of Kuala Kangsar and the daily lives of its people. The data illustrates that Accessibility is far more than just a road or a path; it acts as the vital bridge that brings the community together. In the network map, we see how the ease of reaching a place directly "pulls" on elements like Social Life, Trade, and Craft, showing that when a space is easy to enter, it naturally fills with human interaction and energy.

For the local craft entrepreneurs, these connections are the lifeblood of their tradition. The data shows that in accessible areas like the familiar corners of local markets or heritage shop houses the "lines" of communication between the artisan and the visitor are much stronger. This means that a well-connected street allows an elderly craftsman or a young entrepreneur to be seen and heard, turning a simple walk-through town into an opportunity for a conversation, a sale, or a shared story. Ultimately, Figure 8 proves that by making Kuala Kangsar accessible, we aren't just improving infrastructure; we are weaving a stronger social fabric that supports the local economy and keeps the town's cultural soul alive for the next generation.

Observation: Building and Trade Activities

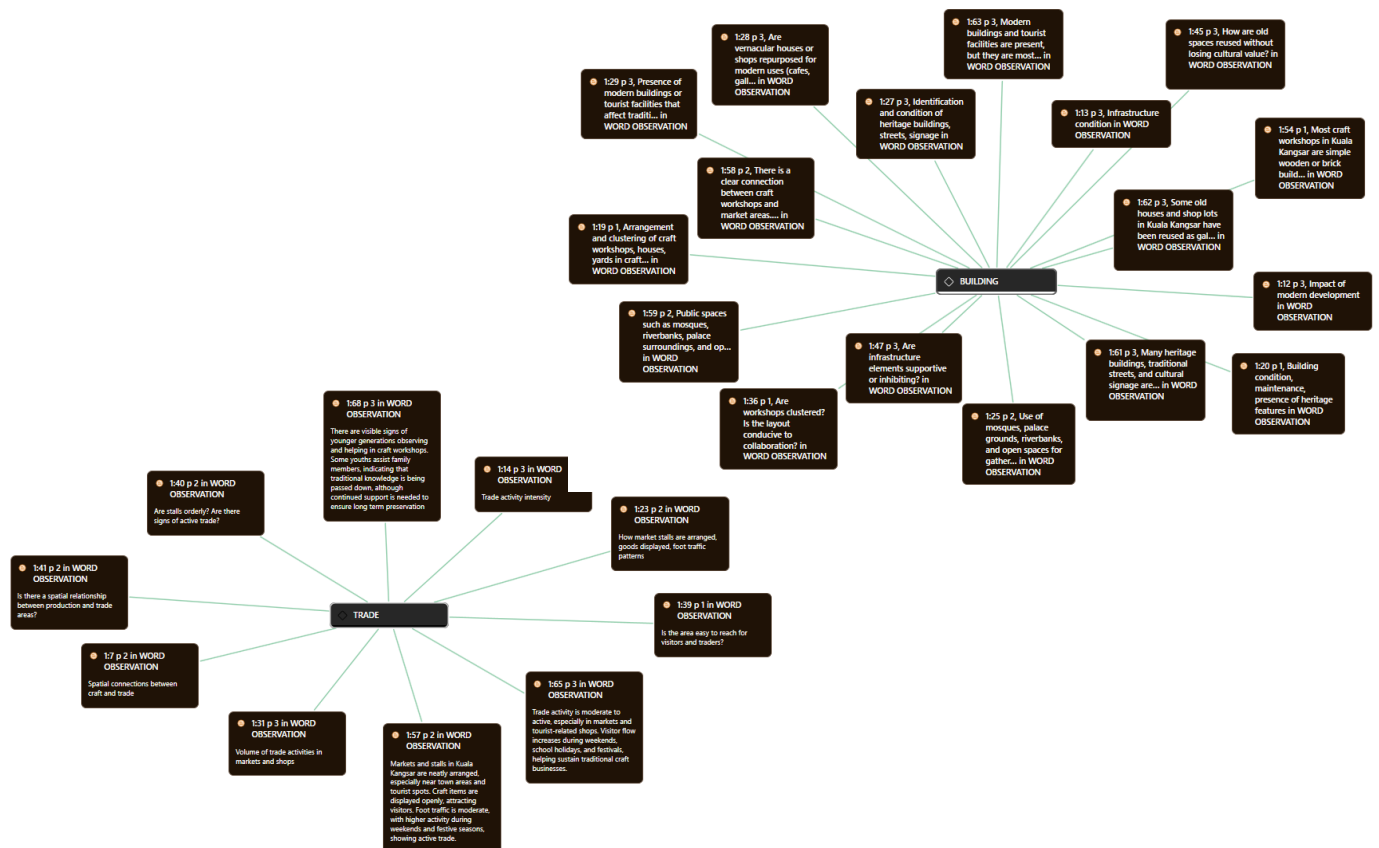


Figure 7: Building and Trade Network Data

According to the deep connections revealed in **Figure 7**, the heritage buildings and traditional shop houses of Kuala Kangsar are much more than just physical structures; they are the living, breathing heart of the community. The data shows a powerful, intertwined relationship where these Buildings act as a vital stage for both Social Life and Trade to thrive. These historical sites aren't just shells of the past; they are warm,

familiar shelters that protect the town's identity while offering a place for people to gather, work, and truly belong.

This figure details how the trade occurring in local markets and along the streets is physically and emotionally anchored by these heritage structures. It creates a welcoming environment where the lines between a "business transaction" and a "neighbourly chat" completely disappear. Whether it is a quick, friendly exchange at a market stall or a long, meaningful conversation shared inside a century-old shop house, these buildings turn simple daily routines into the "social glue" that holds Kuala Kangsar together. This constant human rhythm ensures the town remains a vibrant space where the local economy doesn't just survive, but flourishes because it is rooted in genuine human warmth and a shared cultural soul

Questionnaire: Community Perspective on Traditional Crafts in Kuala Kangsar

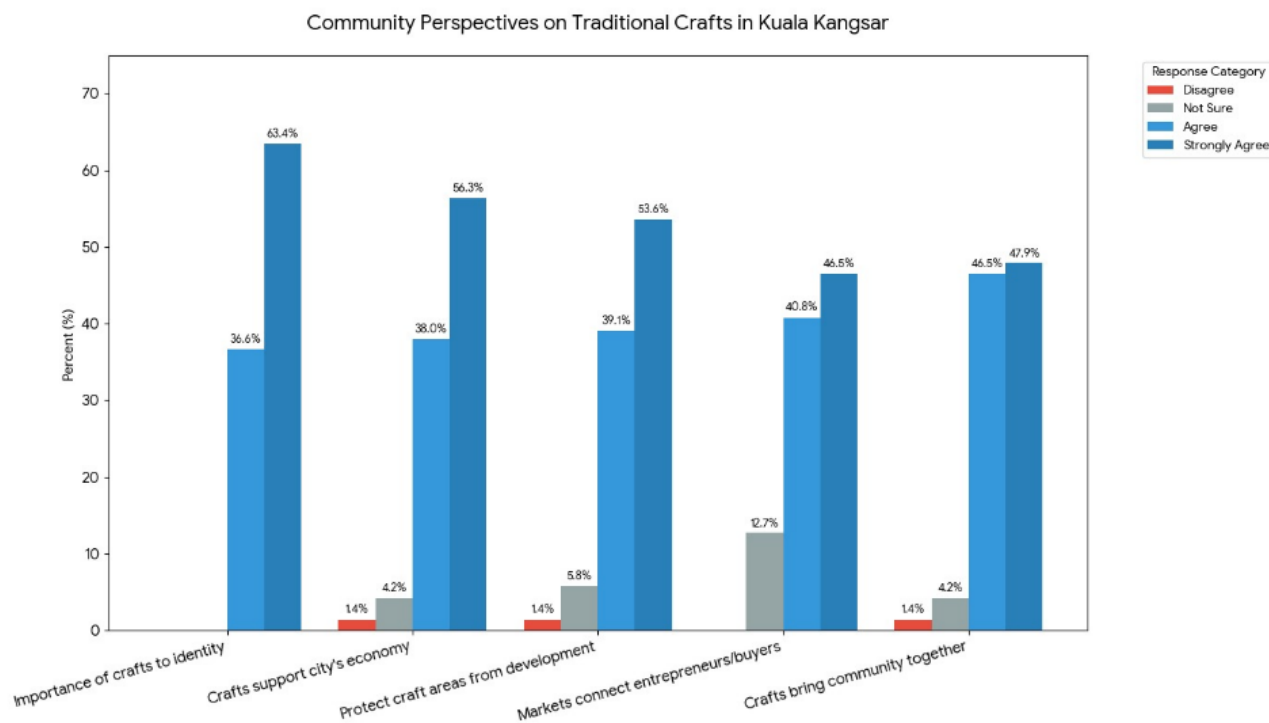


Figure 8: Community Perspective on Traditional Crafts in Kuala Kangsar

According to the heartfelt insights captured in **Figure 8**, the people of Kuala Kangsar carry a profound sense of pride and a protective spirit toward their local heritage. The data shows an extraordinary **100 percent positive consensus** regarding the identity of their town; every single person surveyed agrees that traditional crafts are the very soul of Kuala Kangsar. This is not simply a statistic it is the collective voice of a community that sees its history reflected in the hands of its artisans.

The chart reveals a deep understanding of how these crafts sustain local livelihoods. A massive majority of the community recognizes that their traditional trades are the economic backbone of the city, with only a very small number of individuals feeling uncertain. This spirit of protection extends to the town’s physical landscape as well; most residents feel strongly that these sacred craft areas must be shielded from the encroaching pressure of modern development. They do not see their heritage as something belonging only

to the past, but as a treasure that must be guarded for the future.

While the local markets are widely loved as the bridge between the maker and the buyer, Figure 10 also highlights a thoughtful gap a group of residents who are unsure about how well these spaces are currently functioning. This suggests a gentle call for improvement, a desire to make these markets even better at bringing people together. Ultimately, the findings paint a picture of a community that is deeply woven together; they believe that the act of making and trading crafts is what truly strengthens their neighbourly bonds. For the people of Kuala Kangsar, traditional craft is the vital connection that keeps their economy vibrant and their cultural heart beating.

Questionnaire: Community Perspectives on Cultural Heritage and Urban Development in Kuala Kangsar

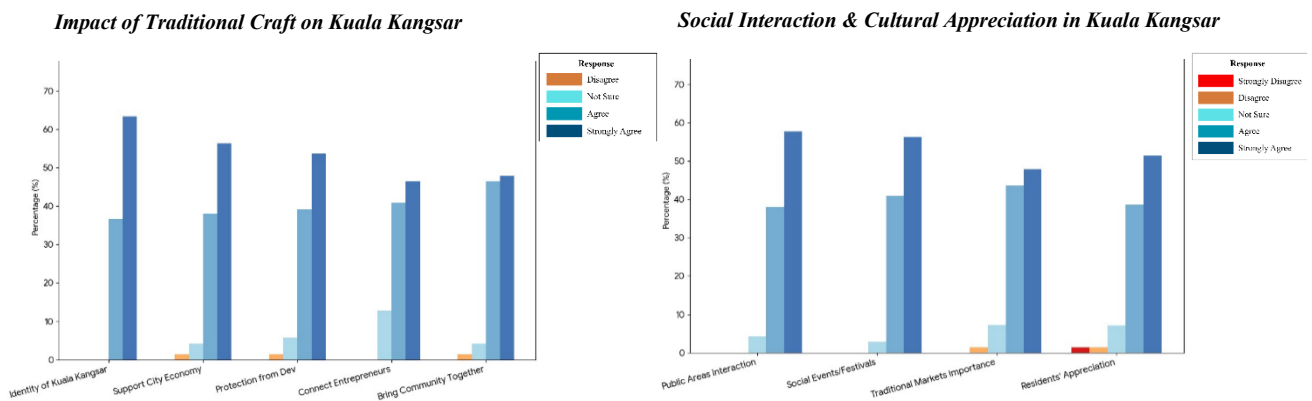


Figure 9: Impact of Traditional Craft in Kuala Kangsar

Figure 10: Social Interaction & Cultural Appreciation

According to the views of the local people in **Figure 9**, there is a very strong and clear agreement that traditional crafts are the most important part of Kuala Kangsar's identity. The data shows that 100 percent of the people surveyed feel that these crafts define who they are. This is not just a number; it shows that every single person values their heritage and wants to keep it alive for the future.

As we look at the details in **Figure 10**, we can see how this pride connects to the local economy and the way the town grows. Over 94 percent of the residents believe that these traditional trades are what keep the city's economy moving. Because of this, nearly everyone about 98.6 percent feels that the government must be very careful with new building projects. They want to make sure that modern development does not hurt the traditional workshops that have been there for generations.

The survey also shows how much people value their social life. About 95.7 percent of residents agree that public spaces like markets and squares are the main places where they meet and talk to one another. Furthermore, nearly 97 percent feel that local festivals are the best way to bring the community together. People also want to have a say in what happens to their town, with over 90 percent stating they should be

involved in planning decisions. In the end, 100 percent of the people share the same hope: that Kuala Kangsar will be known all over the world for its unique crafts and culture.

FINDINGS

Kuala Kangsar is much more than a geographical location; it is a living, breathing testament to heritage that survives because the physical environment is nurtured with such great care. According to mapping, the town is organized with a thoughtful layout that balances the needs of the modern world with the preservation of the past, creating distinct zones for craft, trade, and commerce that feel naturally integrated. This intentional design provides a sense of security and belonging, particularly for the **craft entrepreneurs Figure 5(a)** who have been given reliable, sturdy spaces to keep their ancestral skills alive for all to see. Furthermore, the presence of smooth and **accessible roads Figure 5(b)** serves as an act of inclusion, ensuring that every person regardless of their age or physical ability can navigate the town with dignity and without the frustration of facing broken paths or difficult barriers.

The Physical Layout and Accessibility of Craft and Community Spaces in Kuala Kangsar:

To address the first research question regarding the mapping and description of Kuala Kangsar's physical layout, the findings reveal a town where the spatial organization serves as a natural extension of the community's needs, reinforcing its identity as a vibrant, living heritage site. Spatial mapping demonstrates that the town is thoughtfully organized into specific zones including craft, trade, and commercial areas that allow traditional heritage to flourish alongside modern life. This spatial clarity is particularly evident in the sturdy and reliable spaces provided for craft entrepreneurs, which offer local artisans a sense of permanence and pride as they maintain their traditions. Furthermore, the wide and well-maintained accessible roads ensure that the town remains inclusive, allowing every individual to navigate the historic landscape comfortably and without the stress of difficult paths. By blending historic charm with creative elements such as vibrant murals on old building facades, the town does more than just preserve its structures; it tells a visual story that residents and visitors can experience together. These intentional paths naturally guide people toward spacious gathering areas, where the high quality of the surroundings encourages a slower pace of life and more meaningful human connections. Ultimately, the synergy between functional architecture and inviting social hubs creates a powerful sense of place, transforming a simple visit into a deep emotional experience where people feel a genuine sense of belonging and a reliable bond with their environment.

Physical Layout and Social Interaction within the Craft and Community Spaces of Kuala Kangsar:

To address the second research question regarding the narratives and daily lives of local crafters, the findings demonstrate that Kuala Kangsar is far more than a collection of buildings; it is a living social network where history and daily life intersect in a deeply personal way. Observational data and community feedback indicate that these spaces function as vital stages for human connection, as the physical layout encourages residents and visitors to linger and interact. According to spatial mapping, the strategic placement of social hubs such as gathering spaces and craft zones fosters a natural flow of movement that strengthens the sense of community belonging. People do not simply pass through these areas; they inhabit them, transforming functional roads and plazas into meaningful places of shared experience where stories

are told and memories are preserved.

The interpretive analysis of these spaces reveals several key social dynamics that keep the town vibrant and inclusive. For instance, the proximity of craft entrepreneurs to public walkways allows younger generations to observe and learn from local artisans in a relaxed, informal setting, ensuring that cultural pride is passed down through direct human contact. Because of the high quality and accessibility of the roads, the elderly and individuals with mobility needs are not excluded from community life; instead, they are able to participate fully in social gatherings, which reinforces the overall social cohesion of the town. Furthermore, the presence of murals along old building facades serves as a constant conversation starter for both locals and tourists, creating a shared visual language that enhances the emotional bond people feel toward the town. Ultimately, when the environment is maintained with such care, it does not only preserve the past but also nurtures a present where every individual feels they have a rightful place in the continuing story of Kuala Kangsar.

DISCUSSION

Based on Research Objective 1 & 2: How the Town Layout Supports Culture.

The research findings show that the physical layout of Kuala Kangsar is a vital support system for the town's cultural survival, which directly answers both research objectives. By organizing the town into specific zones for crafts, trade, and business, the urban design protects heritage while making daily life easier for residents. For example, the "Medan Kraftangan Kuala Kangsar" provides local artisans with a permanent and safe space to sell their handicrafts. This ensures that old skills, like making Labu Sayong, are not lost to time. This planned spatial organization gives craft entrepreneurs a sense of security and pride, allowing them to keep their traditions alive in a modern world. Furthermore, accessibility is a major factor in bringing the community together. Having wide, well-maintained roads and inclusive paths ensures that everyone, including the elderly and those with physical limitations, can join in town life. When a space is easy to enter and move through, it naturally invites more human interaction. This allows younger people to watch and learn from their elders through daily contact. These accessible connections are the lifeblood of the local economy because they strengthen the link between the artisan and the visitor, turning a simple walk through town into a shared story.

Comparison of Resident and Visitor Data.

After compare the all data, it show that local residents have a very strong emotional bond with their town. The data shows that 40.8 percent of the respondents are young people (aged 18 to 25), while 60.6 percent of the community are long-term residents who have lived there for over 10 years. Most importantly, there is a 100 percent agreement among the people that traditional crafts are the true identity of Kuala Kangsar. This shows a huge amount of local pride. In contrast, for visitors, about 55 percent usually come during the day just for food or to browse the craft shops. While 94 percent of residents believe these traditional trades are the backbone of the economy, a small group is still unsure if the current markets are working perfectly or need more improvements. This suggests that while the identity is strong, the community wants better social and economic integration.

Research Limitations.

There are a few limitations to this study that should be noted. First, the research focused mostly on the main

town center and the areas near the river. This means that craft activities in smaller, more distant villages might not be fully covered. Second, while the town is busy during the day (55 percent visitor density), it becomes very quiet at night, with only 10 percent of visitors remaining. This is due to a lack of street lighting and shops closing early, which makes people feel less safe walking at night. Also, some popular food areas get very crowded during peak hours, which can make it hard for people to walk around comfortably. These limitations show where the town can improve to stay vibrant and safe at all hours.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study proves that the survival of Kuala Kangsar's unique culture depends heavily on how its physical spaces are looked after. The town's layout is not just a collection of buildings and roads; it is a living stage where crafts, trade, and social life work together to keep heritage alive. When the town is designed with care such as having special zones for artisans and easy paths for pedestrians it directly helps the community keep their traditions going. The findings confirm that the physical environment and the people's way of life are so closely connected that they cannot be separated. The research confirms that the local people are the most important guardians of this heritage. Since 100 percent of residents agree that crafts define their identity and 98 percent want new developments to be managed carefully, there is a strong collective will to protect the town's character. This pride means that any future town planning must be sensitive to heritage and include local people in the decisions. Since over 90 percent of residents want a say in town planning, their voices should be heard to ensure the town centre remains active and meaningful for future generations.

To improve the current urban fabric and sustain cultural resilience, it is recommended that local authorities adopt a heritage-sensitive planning framework. First, the town should prioritize the "Historic Urban Landscape" approach, which balances modern development with the preservation of traditional craft zones like Medan Kraftangan. Second, improving street lighting and night-time facilities is essential to boost the economy and safety after dark, as current data shows a significant drop in activity at night. Finally, public participation workshops should be established to give the 90 percent of residents who desire a voice a formal platform to influence town development.

While this study gives a clear picture of the town centre, several new avenues for future research have been identified. Future studies should investigate the "night-time economy" of royal towns to understand how lighting and extended shop hours can support cultural tourism. Additionally, research could be expanded to explore the domestic craft practices in peripheral villages outside the main urban centre to create a more comprehensive map of regional cultural resilience. Lastly, a longitudinal study tracking the interest of the younger generation (the 40.8 percent of current respondents) over the next decade would provide valuable data on the long-term success of these heritage preservation efforts.

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