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

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Faculty of Built Environment, UiTM Perak Branch, Seri Iskandar Campus



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

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Restoration Through Heritage: Perceived Restorative Qualities of Concubine Lane, Ipoh as a Vacation Destination

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Abstract

The increasing popularity of heritage tourism highlights the importance of understanding the restorative qualities of historic urban spaces as potential vacation destinations. However, lack of study focuses on the heritage street on restorative quality. Thus, this study aims to assess the visitors experience of heritage street attribute and perceived restorative qualities of heritage street as a vacation destination. A questionnaire survey was employed as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire is designed to evaluate perceived restorative qualities, spatial comfort, and cultural ambiance through Likert-scale responses from visitors. This study reveals from a pilot study involving 44 visitors at Concubine Lane, Ipoh, Perak. Descriptive analysis was applied to identify spatial comfort, cultural ambiance, relationships between heritage street attributes and restorative experiences. The findings indicated that Concubine Lane possesses restoration qualities, and the restorative capacity of a place is directly related to the perceived authenticity and cultural richness of its built environment. The findings expected to provide empirical insights that contribute to the discourse on sustainable heritage tourism development by emphasizing the integration of wellness and restorative experiences within heritage streets. Ultimately, this research seeks to reinforce the significance of heritage environments such as Concubine Lane as multifunctional destinations that balance cultural preservation, tourism, and holistic.

Keywords: Heritage street, vacation destination, wellness tourism, restorative quality

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary fast-paced environment, the incorporation of vacations into our routines has become increasingly important for mental health and psychological well-being. As individuals navigate the challenges of daily life, work-related pressures, and personal obligations, restorative experiences such as vacations have been recognized as essential. Research suggests that vacations are not solely leisure pursuits but essential opportunities for psychological rejuvenation. The influence of vacations on mental health is linked to the alleviation of tension, the improvement of life satisfaction, and social advantages. Studies show that the duration and frequency of holidays have a considerable impact on psychological well-being, stressing the restorative effect of periodic disconnections from everyday pressures (Nurja, 2025 ; Bloom et al., 2012)

The notion of psychological restoration emphasizes the recovery from fatigue and stress, highlighting the significant role that environments, especially natural settings, play in facilitating this restorative process (Amicone et al., 2018). These findings corroborate Attention Restoration Theory, indicating that restorative

environments can replenish depleted cognitive resources and alleviate mental fatigue (Lehto, 2013). Furthermore, research indicates that not all vacations produce equally advantageous results when their restorative benefits may display complex, nonlinear patterns affected by travel duration and the quality of experiences involved (Cui, 2023)

Furthermore, vacations promote interpersonal relationships and community cohesion, cultivating collective psychological advantages that surpass individual experiences. By providing opportunities for shared activities in tranquil environments, vacations can facilitate a decrease in psychological distress across the population (Hartig et al., 2013). This interconnectedness presents aspects of social psychology that merit further investigation, especially considering the emerging global health challenges and their effects on mental well-being.

The rising trend of wellness-oriented travel has increasingly directed attention toward heritage streets as destinations that provide not only cultural value but also restorative experiences for visitors. Concubine Lane, located in Ipoh's Old Town, stands as one of the most iconic heritage streets in Malaysia, embodying the city's rich cultural and historical legacy. Originating in the late 19th century during the tin mining boom, the lane once thrived as a residential and commercial hub for wealthy Chinese miners and their families, featuring architectural forms influenced by both Chinese and colonial designs. However, following the decline of the mining industry, the lane experienced a long period of neglect before being revitalized through heritage conservation and tourism initiatives. Today, Concubine Lane has transformed into a vibrant heritage tourism destination with traditional shophouses, boutique cafés, souvenir outlets, and cultural attractions.

Several studies have argued that heritage environments not only preserve cultural identity but also contribute to psychological restoration by evoking nostalgia, enhancing place attachment, and offering an escape from urban stressors (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Hartig et al., 2014). Despite its growing popularity, there remains limited research exploring the restorative qualities of heritage streets within the context of wellness tourism in Malaysia. The objective of this paper is (i) to identify the heritage street attributes of Concubine Lane as experienced by visitors, (ii) to assess the restorative qualities of nature, cultural and street attribute at Concubine Lane as experienced by visitors, and (iii) to recommend heritage street design for restorative qualities at Concubine Lane. The outcome of this study will provide insights into how heritage streets design can serve as multifunctional assets for cultural sustainability, tourism, and human wellbeing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Restorative Environments and Tourism

Restorative environments are settings that help individuals recover from stress, mental fatigue, and urban pressures by offering qualities that promote relaxation, fascination, and positive affect (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Ulrich et al., 1991). Research has traditionally emphasized natural settings such as forests, gardens, and parks, showing that such environments can reduce stress, restore attention, and improve mood. More recent studies, however, have expanded the restorative paradigm to include cultural and built environments, especially those that provide meaningful experiences, coherence in design, and compatibility with visitor expectations (Hartig et al., 2014). Within tourism, these restorative qualities play a significant role in

influencing destination choice, tourist satisfaction, and repeat visitation. A heritage environment that successfully balances cultural richness with restorative potential can thus function as both a cultural asset and a wellness tourism destination.

Heritage Places as Restorative Vacation Settings

The importance of heritage sites as restorative destinations for leisure has gained recognition in debates concerning mental well-being and environmental psychology. Heritage sites, embodying cultural history and representing architectural and environmental aesthetics, provide distinctive opportunities for psychological restoration. This aspect becomes especially important as individuals progressively seek relief from daily stressors and pursue restorative experiences that promote overall well-being. The restorative capacity of these sites corresponds with theories of psychological rejuvenation, indicating that engagement with culturally enriched environments can offer mental respite and enhance resilience to stress-related health conditions (Liu et al., 2025).

Research suggests that interaction with heritage sites enhances not only historical knowledge but also confers considerable psychological advantages. For example, the restorative properties of these environments can promote cognitive recuperation and psychological well-being. According to Liu et al., (2025), tourists' emotional reactions and psychological resilience are greatly influenced by the environmental features of wellness-focused locations, which frequently incorporate historical landmarks. The integration of culture heritage and nature inherent in these environments can mitigate mental fatigue and foster a sense of tranquility, thereby supporting psychological recovery (Li et al., 2025).

Furthermore, empirical research indicates that individuals frequently encounter increased well-being when visiting heritage locations, owing to their distinctive aesthetic and cultural qualities, which promote emotional connection and nostalgia (Xie et al., 2023). This is especially pertinent in the context of staycations, where individuals pursue local heritage experiences to refresh themselves without the need for extensive travel. It is observed that even localized experiences can produce substantial restorative effects comparable to those of traditional vacations involving travel to remote destinations (Lin et al., 2021).

Cultural and Environmental Interactions

The interaction between culture and environment at heritage sites leads to their restorative properties. According to Li et al. (2025), the presence of urban and cultural landscape assets has a good impact on mental health, reinforcing the link between environmental appreciation and psychological healing. Heritage places allow visitors to engage with their cultural narratives, producing a strong feeling of place and community, which is critical for mental health recovery (Mak et al., 2023).

Furthermore, studies on urban landscapes highlight the significance of natural and cultural assets in restoring psychological well-being. These landscapes frequently function as communal centers, encouraging social interaction and strengthening the overall sense of community, hence improving psychological states (Mak et al., 2023). Individuals connect with these places and engage in meaningful leisure activities that are crucial for cognitive restoration, underscoring their importance as restorative holiday destinations (Li et al., 2023; Xie et al., 2023).

Also, empirical studies on heritage tourism reveal that authentic, well-preserved sites with rich sensory and

cultural details can provide strong restorative experiences (Wu et al., 2019; Yi et al., 2025). Features such as walkability, cultural storytelling, and immersive design elements encourage reflection, fascination, and psychological escape. Studies in heritage and cultural districts further demonstrate that pedestrian-oriented design strategies—including traffic calming, reduced vehicle access, and improved walkability enhance perceived safety and comfort, which in turn supports longer visit durations and greater social interaction (Ewing & Handy, 2009; Maniei et al., 2024). Together, these findings suggest that well-designed micro-scale interventions combining shade, greenery, seating, and traffic control can significantly enhance comfort, reduce stress, and promote sustained engagement in heritage street environments.

Heritage streets, such as Concubine Lane in Ipoh, exemplify destinations that combine tangible and intangible heritage qualities into a unique restorative experience. The physical environment of traditional shophouses and façades provides aesthetic fascination, while cultural meanings rooted in history and nostalgia foster deeper emotional connections for visitors. Moreover, activities such as markets, street performances, and guided tours offer opportunities for social restoration and cultural engagement. However, several issues may undermine the restorative potential of heritage streets, including crowding, noise, and commercialization that reduce tranquillity and authenticity (Wan Hashimah et al., 2005; Masullo et al., 2021; Hu et al., 2024). Understanding the dual nature of heritage tourism where preservation of cultural authenticity intersects with modern tourism pressures is crucial for examining the restorative qualities of Concubine Lane.

Theories Foundation in Restorative Vacation

Several theories provide the foundation for analysing the restorative qualities of heritage tourism environments. The Attention Restoration Theory (ART) (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989) emphasizes four key qualities fascination, being away, extent, and compatibility that allow environments to restore depleted attention resources. Similarly, the Stress Reduction Theory by (SRT) (Ulrich, 1983) posits that safe, soothing environments elicit positive emotional responses and reduce physiological stress. Beyond cognitive and affective restoration, Place Attachment and Place Identity theories (Lewicka, 2011) highlight the emotional bonds and sense of belonging that heritage spaces foster, contributing to visitors' overall well-being. At the same time, debates on Authenticity and Commodification (MacCannell, 1973; Cohen, 1988) suggest that while authentic heritage experiences enhance satisfaction and restorative value, over-commercialization and loss of originality may diminish these qualities. Together, these frameworks offer a multidimensional perspective for evaluating Concubine Lane as a restorative heritage street.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was a pilot study and adopts a quantitative research design to assess the visitors experience of heritage street attribute and perceived restorative qualities of heritage street as a vacation destination. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire among domestic and international visitors to Concubine Lane. A simple random sampling method is employed to select participants, ensuring that every visitor has an equal chance of being included in the study and allowing for generalizable statistical analysis of the findings. For this study, the survey was conducted during weekend between 18th November 2025 until 28th December 2026.

Data Collection

Data is collected through a structured questionnaire administered to visitors of Concubine Lane. Respondents rate their level of agreement with statements on a Likert scale, allowing for statistical analysis of the visitor's experience of heritage street attribute and restorative qualities of the site. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part obtained the respondent's profile data such as gender, age and social-economic status. For the second part, this study measures the restorative qualities of the site by using the adapted questionnaires from Perceived Destination Restorative Quality (PDRQ) developed by Letho, (2013). The question covered six dimensions: compatibility, extent, mentally away, physically away, discord, and fascination. Next, third part measure the visitors experience of heritage street attribute. Elements from Samadi & Yunus, (2018) Urban Heritage Street Revitalisation were applied. The question includes cultural ambiance, sense of place and identity, social interaction, and aesthetic environment.

Data Analysis

All quantitative data collected from the structured questionnaires are analysed using statistical methods with the assistance of SPSS (version 28). Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions, are used to summarize visitors' perceptions of restorative qualities and heritage attributes. The analysis aims to identify patterns, trends, and significant factors that influence visitors' psychological restoration, emotional connection, and cultural appreciation within Concubine Lane. This quantitative approach provides measurable insights into how heritage environments contribute to visitor well-being and supports evidence-based recommendations for enhancing heritage tourism management.

Site selection

Concubine Lane in Ipoh is a historic urban heritage street located in the heart of Ipoh Old Town, known for its rich cultural legacy and distinctive pre-war shophouses that reflect the city's architectural past. Originally part of the tin-mining boom era, the lane including its narrow façades and traditional buildings has been restored and revitalised into a vibrant cultural and tourism destination featuring cafés, souvenir shops, and street art, while retaining elements of its historical character and charm. Today, the heritage street offers visitors an immersive experience that blends nostalgia, cultural ambiance, and contemporary creative expression, making it both a popular tourist attraction and an example of urban heritage preservation in Malaysia. Concubine Lane in Ipoh was selected as the study site because it represents a well-preserved urban heritage street that has undergone significant revitalization, attracting both domestic and international visitors, and thus provides an ideal setting to examine the perceived restorative qualities of heritage spaces as vacation destinations (Department of Tourism Malaysia, 2020).



Figure 1: Map of Concubine Lane, Ipoh, Perak
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/dPJrN4KQisdcsYFA>

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a brief discussion of the preliminary findings from the questionnaire survey conducted to assess the perceived restorative qualities of Concubine Lane, Ipoh as a vacation destination. The demographic profile of respondents provides an important context for understanding visitors' perceptions of psychological restoration and well-being within an urban heritage environment as shown in Table 1.

A total of 44 respondents participated in the study, with a relatively balanced gender distribution (56.8% male and 43.2% female). Most respondents fall within the 18–25 age group (36.4%), indicating that Concubine Lane is particularly attractive to young visitors seeking leisure, relaxation, and cultural experiences. In terms of race, most respondents are Malay (79.5%), followed by Indian (11.4%) and Chinese (9.1%), reflecting the local demographic composition and the lane's role as a domestic heritage tourism destination. Most respondents possess secondary school or bachelor's degree qualifications, suggesting a reasonable level of awareness and appreciation of heritage and environmental qualities. Occupationally, students form the largest group (45.5%), followed by those from the private sector and self-employed categories, reinforcing the role of Concubine Lane as an accessible urban escape for stress relief and social interaction. Overall, the demographic findings indicate that Concubine Lane attracts a predominantly young and local visitor group, supporting its significance as a restorative urban heritage environment. This profile provides a strong basis for further quantitative analysis of how cultural ambiance, spatial comfort, and aesthetic environment contribute to perceived psychological restoration and visitor well-being, in line with the study's objectives.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis Data

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	25	56.8
	Female	19	43.2
Age	18-25	16	36.4

	25-30	9	20.5
	31-35	5	11.4
	36-40	7	15.9
	41-45	4	9.1
	46-50	1	2.3
	56-60	1	2.3
	61-65	1	2.3
Race	Malay	35	79.5
	Chinese	4	9.1
	Indian	5	11.4
Education Level	Secondary school	18	40.9
	Certificate	2	4.5
	Diploma	8	18.2
	Bachelor's degree	16	36.4
Occupation	Government sector	5	11.4
	Private sector	8	18.2
	Self-employed	7	15.9
	Student	20	45.5
	Retiree	3	6.8
	Unemployed	1	2.3

The heritage street attributes experience by visitor

To identify the heritage street experience by visitor. A frequency analysis has conducted table 2. The highest level of strong agreement among respondents pertains to the psychological escape provided by the site's atmosphere, with 45.5% of visitors strongly agreeing that the street's ambiance allows them to escape from daily stress. This is followed by the impact of aesthetic and cultural elements, where 43.2% of respondents strongly agree that the lighting and decorations contribute effectively to the cultural mood. Additionally, a significant 36.4% of visitors strongly agree that visiting Concubine Lane helps them feel relaxed and refreshed, while 34.1% strongly agree that the combination of sounds and smells enhances the overall heritage feel of the destination

Table 2: Scale, Frequency and Percentage Heritage Attributes Street

Variable	Scale	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
The architectural design along Concubine Lane reflects historical and cultural values.	Strongly Disagree	1	2.3
	Disagree	1	2.3
	Neutral	3	6.8
	Agree	20	45.5
	Strongly Agree	19	43.2
The shophouses in Concubine Lane enhance the heritage atmosphere.	Disagree	1	2.3
	Neutral	3	6.8
	Agree	21	47.7
	Strongly Agree	19	43.2
The building facades in Concubine Lane highlight the heritage character.	Disagree	2	4.5
	Neutral	6	13.6
	Agree	24	54.5
	Strongly Agree	12	27.3
The signage, murals, and decorations represent local identity and traditions.	Strongly Disagree	1	2.3
	Neutral	6	13.6
	Agree	23	52.3
	Strongly Agree	14	31.8

The pedestrian pathway is well-maintained and suitable for walking.	Strongly Disagree	1	2.3
	Disagree	2	4.5
	Neutral	10	22.7
	Agree	8	18.2
	Strongly Agree	23	52.3
The street layout provides a unique and memorable visitor experience.	Strongly Disagree	2	4.5
	Neutral	13	29.5
	Agree	18	40.9
	Strongly Agree	11	25.0
The mix of traditional and modern elements creates a harmonious environment.	Strongly Disagree	1	2.3
	Neutral	5	11.4
	Agree	20	45.5
	Strongly Agree	18	40.9

These findings indicate that Concubine Lane functions as a potent restorative environment by leveraging its unique sensory and cultural attributes. The high percentage of visitors who strongly agree that the ambiance facilitates an escape from daily stress aligns perfectly with the "Being Away" component of Attention Restoration Theory (ART). According to Kaplan (1995), a restorative environment must provide a sense of being physically or conceptually distant from one's daily routine and pressures to allow the mind to recover from directed attention fatigue. The strong agreement regarding cultural lighting and decorations further suggests that the "Fascination" element where the environment captures attention effortlessly through interesting and aesthetically pleasing stimuli is a core driver of the experience at this heritage site.

The synergy between sensory enrichment and heritage preservation at Concubine Lane highlights its role as a "therapeutic landscape." The data showing strong agreement on the refreshing nature of the visit and the enhancement of the heritage feel through multi-sensory inputs like sounds and smells supports the arguments of Bond and Falk, (2013) who state that cultural immersion in tourism destinations is key to achieving psychological well-being. By maintaining a harmonious mix of sensory stimuli and historical authenticity, Concubine Lane creates a sense of "Extent," where the visitor feels immersed in a coherent, self-contained world that promotes peace and wellbeing.

The restorative qualities of natural, culture and heritage street attributes

From table 3 the questionnaire, the respondent chooses the restorative quality of Concubine Lane. The highest level of strong agreement among respondents pertains to the emotional and cognitive escape provided by the site's environment. Specifically, 45.5% of visitors strongly agree that the street's ambiance allows them to escape from daily stress. This is closely followed by the impact of visual and atmospheric elements, with 43.2% strongly agreeing that the lighting and decorations contribute effectively to the cultural mood. Additionally, a significant 36.4% of respondents strongly agree that visiting Concubine Lane helps them feel relaxed and refreshed, while 34.1% strongly agree that the combination of sounds and smells enhances the overall heritage feel of the destination.

Table 3: Scale, Frequency and Percentage Natural Setting

Variable	Scale	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Visiting Concubine Lane helps me feel relaxed and refreshed.	Disagree	1	2.3
	Neutral	7	15.9
	Agree	20	45.5
	Strongly Agree	16	36.4

The street's ambiance allows me to escape from daily stress.	Disagree	3	6.8
	Neutral	8	18.2
	Agree	13	29.5
	Strongly Agree	20	45.5
The sounds, sights, and smells contribute to a calming experience.	Strongly Disagree	1	2.3
	Disagree	2	4.5
	Neutral	11	25.0
	Agree	21	47.7
	Strongly Agree	9	20.5
I feel mentally restored after spending time in this area.	Disagree	2	4.5
	Neutral	15	34.1
	Agree	13	29.5
	Strongly Agree	14	31.8
The street environment encourages me to reflect and enjoy the moment.	Strongly Disagree	1	2.3
	Disagree	2	4.5
	Neutral	19	43.2
	Agree	11	25.0
	Strongly Agree	11	25.0
The overall atmosphere promotes a sense of peace and wellbeing.	Strongly Disagree	2	4.5
	Disagree	4	9.1
	Neutral	8	18.2
	Agree	16	36.4
	Strongly Agree	14	31.8
The combination of sounds and smells here enhances the heritage feel.	Disagree	2	4.5
	Neutral	9	20.5
	Agree	18	40.9
	Strongly Agree	15	34.1
The lighting and decorations contribute to the cultural mood.	Strongly Disagree	1	2.3
	Disagree	2	4.5
	Neutral	10	22.7
	Agree	12	27.3
	Strongly Agree	19	43.2
The textures and colours around the street enrich my sensory experience.	Disagree	1	2.3
	Neutral	8	18.2
	Agree	28	63.6
	Strongly Agree	7	15.9
I feel immersed in the atmosphere created by this street's environment.	Disagree	2	4.5
	Neutral	11	25.0
	Agree	20	45.5
	Strongly Agree	11	25.0

These findings indicate that Concubine Lane serves as a potent restorative environment by leveraging its unique sensory and cultural attributes. The high percentage of visitors who strongly agree that the ambiance facilitates an escape from daily stress aligns perfectly with the "Being Away" component of Attention Restoration Theory (ART). According to Kaplan (1995), a restorative environment must provide a sense of being physically or conceptually distant from one's daily routine and pressures to allow the mind to recover from directed attention fatigue. The strong agreement regarding cultural lighting and decorations further suggests that the "Fascination" element where the environment captures attention effortlessly through interesting and aesthetically pleasing stimuli is a core driver of the experience at this heritage site.

The synergy between sensory enrichment and heritage preservation at Concubine Lane highlights its role as a "therapeutic landscape." The data showing strong agreement on the refreshing nature of the visit and the

enhancement of the heritage feel through sounds and smells supports the arguments of Bond and Falk (2013), who state that identity-related motivations and cultural immersion in tourism destinations are key to achieving psychological well-being. By maintaining a harmonious mix of sensory inputs and historical authenticity, Concubine Lane creates a sense of "Extent," where the visitor feels immersed in a coherent, self-contained world that promotes peace and wellbeing. This confirms that heritage street attributes are not merely visual markers but functional tools for emotional and mental restoration.

From table 4, The highest level of strong agreement among respondents is found in the variable concerning the impact of community vibrancy on the street's character, with 47.7% strongly agreeing that local people's activities make the street feel alive and culturally rich. This is followed closely by the appreciation of traditional life, where 45.5% of visitors strongly agree that they enjoy observing daily life that reflects local traditions. Additionally, 43.2% of respondents strongly agree that experiencing the cultural ambiance makes them feel mentally refreshed, highlighting the direct link between the cultural environment and psychological well-being. Other significant cultural attributes include the increase in restorative potential due to heritage value (40.9% strongly agree) and the feeling of a strong connection to the atmosphere of the place (40.9% strongly agree).

Table 4: Scale, Frequency and Percentage Cultural

Variable	Scale	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
The historical character of the street contributes to my relaxation.	Neutral	18	40.9
	Agree	17	38.6
	Strongly Agree	9	20.5
	Disagree	0	0.0
The preservation of old buildings enhances my emotional connection to the place.	Neutral	8	18.2
	Agree	21	47.7
	Strongly Agree	15	34.1
	Disagree	0	0.0
Experiencing the cultural ambiance makes me feel mentally refreshed.	Disagree	1	2.3
	Neutral	7	15.9
	Agree	17	38.6
	Strongly Agree	19	43.2
The heritage street design encourages positive feelings and comfort.	Disagree	1	2.3
	Neutral	7	15.9
	Agree	19	43.2
	Strongly Agree	17	38.6
I believe that the heritage value of Concubine Lane increases its restorative potential.	Neutral	11	25.0
	Agree	15	34.1
	Strongly Agree	18	40.9
	Disagree	0	0.0
The ambiance of this street reminds me of its cultural past.	Neutral	11	25.0
	Agree	26	59.1
	Strongly Agree	7	15.9
	Disagree	0	0.0
I can easily imagine what life was like here in earlier times.	Disagree	1	2.3
	Neutral	5	11.4
	Agree	29	65.9
	Strongly Agree	9	20.5
The street's environment reflects its historical significance.	Neutral	13	29.5
	Agree	21	47.7
	Strongly Agree	10	22.7

Local people's activities make this street feel alive and culturally rich.	Agree		
	Disagree	2	4.5
	Neutral	3	6.8
	Agree	18	40.9
	Strongly	21	47.7
The presence of street vendors and artisans enhances the street's atmosphere.	Agree		
	Neutral	5	11.4
	Agree	22	50.0
	Strongly	17	38.6
	Agree		
The mix of people and interactions gives the street an energetic ambiance	Neutral	17	38.6
	Agree	16	36.4
	Strongly	11	25.0
	Agree		
	Disagree	1	2.3
I enjoy observing daily life that reflects local traditions.	Neutral	5	11.4
	Agree	18	40.9
	Strongly	20	45.5
	Agree		
	Strongly	1	2.3
This heritage street has a distinctive character that reflects local identity.	Disagree		
	Neutral	12	27.3
	Agree	18	40.9
	Strongly	13	29.5
	Agree		
I feel a strong connection to the atmosphere of this place.	Strongly	1	2.3
	Disagree		
	Neutral	10	22.7
	Agree	15	34.1
	Strongly	18	40.9
This street embodies the spirit of the local culture.	Agree		
	Strongly	1	2.3
	Disagree		
	Neutral	7	15.9
	Agree	26	59.1
I can recognize the unique personality of this street compared to others.	Strongly	10	22.7
	Agree		
	Disagree	2	4.5
	Neutral	17	38.6
	Agree	13	29.5
	Strongly	12	27.3
	Agree		

These findings suggest that the "living heritage" the combination of physical preservation and active local culture is the primary driver of restoration at Concubine Lane. The high level of agreement that local activities make the street feel alive aligns with the research of Ujang (2012), who posits that the presence of social activities and cultural expressions is essential for creating place attachment and a sense of continuity in urban heritage sites. Furthermore, the fact that nearly half of the visitors feel mentally refreshed by the cultural ambiance supports the application of Attention Restoration Theory in cultural contexts, suggesting that "Fascination" can be derived as much from human activity and tradition as it is from natural landscapes.

The synergy between observed traditions and the perceived restorative potential of the lane reinforces the concept of cultural heritage as a functional therapeutic resource. According to Bond and Falk (2013), tourism destinations that offer authentic cultural experiences allow visitors to satisfy identity-related

motivations, which is a key component of the "Compatibility" dimension in restorative environments. As visitors observe daily life and connect with the atmosphere, they experience a profound sense of "Being Away" from their modern routines, facilitating a deep cognitive recovery. This concludes that the cultural vibrancy of Concubine Lane is not just an aesthetic feature but a vital mechanism for the mental and emotional restoration of its visitors.

The restorative quality of street attributes form Table 5 highlight the highest level of strong agreement among respondents pertains to the cultural authenticity of the commercial offerings, with 59.1% of visitors strongly agreeing that the shops and activities reflect local culture authentically. This is followed closely by the visitors' personal alignment with the site, where 56.8% strongly agree that the destination visited was consistent with who they are. Furthermore, 54.5% of respondents strongly agree that the street's visual appearance is harmonious and culturally distinctive, while 52.3% strongly agree that the architectural style of the buildings adds significantly to the street's cultural ambiance.

Table 5: Scale, Frequency and Percentage heritage street attributes

Variable	Scale	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
The destination I visited was consistent with who I am.	Neutral	7	15.9
	Agree	12	27.3
	Strongly Agree	25	56.8
Everything I saw at the destination goes well together.	Neutral	7	15.9
	Agree	29	65.9
	Strongly Agree	8	18.2
Being there suits my personality.	Neutral	21	47.7
	Agree	17	38.6
	Strongly Agree	6	13.6
I have a sense of oneness with the destination I visited.	Disagree	1	2.3
	Neutral	21	47.7
	Agree	11	25.0
	Strongly Agree	11	25.0
Everything I saw at the destination belongs there.	Disagree	1	2.3
	Neutral	7	15.9
	Agree	29	65.9
	Strongly Agree	7	15.9
The street's architecture and layout feel authentic and true to tradition.	Neutral	6	13.6
	Agree	23	52.3
	Strongly Agree	15	34.1
	Disagree	2	4.5
The shops and activities here reflect local culture authentically.	Agree	16	36.4
	Strongly Agree	26	59.1
	Disagree	1	2.3
The overall setting feels original rather than staged for tourists.	Neutral	16	36.4
	Agree	16	36.4
	Strongly Agree	11	25.0
	Disagree	1	2.3
I believe this heritage street preserves its genuine cultural character.	Neutral	5	11.4
	Agree	31	70.5

The architectural style of the buildings adds to the street's cultural ambiance.	Strongly Agree	8	18.2
	Disagree	1	2.3
	Neutral	5	11.4
	Agree	15	34.1
The preservation of traditional design enhances the beauty of this street.	Strongly Agree	23	52.3
	Strongly Disagree	1	2.3
	Disagree	1	2.3
	Neutral	3	6.8
The street's visual appearance is harmonious and culturally distinctive.	Agree	29	65.9
	Strongly Agree	10	22.7
	Disagree	1	2.3
	Neutral	4	9.1
The architectural details reflect artistic craftsmanship and heritage value.	Agree	15	34.1
	Strongly Agree	24	54.5
	Agree	16	36.4
	Strongly Agree	13	29.5

These findings highlight that the perceived authenticity of the built environment is a primary driver of the visitor experience at Concubine Lane. The high rating for authentic shops and architectural ambiance aligns with the arguments of Wang, (1999) who posits that “existential authenticity” in tourism where visitors feel a sense of true self-activity is often triggered by an environment that feels culturally and historically genuine. This sense of authenticity is critical for the “Fascination” component of Attention Restoration Theory (ART), as it provides a rich, interesting environment that holds attention effortlessly. By maintaining a visually harmonious and culturally distinctive appearance, the lane successfully creates a coherent world that facilitates mental recovery from the fatigue of modern urban life.

Furthermore, the strong agreement regarding the destination’s consistency with the visitors’ own identities directly supports the “Compatibility” dimension of restorative environments. According to Bond and Falk (2013), the degree to which an environment supports a visitor’s purposes and inclinations their “identity related motivations” is fundamental to its restorative potential. The fact that more than half of the respondents feel a strong personal connection to the site suggests that the built environment of Concubine Lane does not merely serve as a historical museum, but as a space that resonates with contemporary visitors’ values and lifestyles. This synergy between physical authenticity and personal relevance reinforces the role of heritage streets as vital urban assets for psychological well-being and emotional renewal.

Recommend Heritage Street Design for Restorative Quality

The data indicates that the Restorative Quality of heritage streets like Concubine Lane is a complex synergy between physical preservation and psychological perception. At the foundational level, Heritage Street Attributes such as well-maintained shophouse facades and harmonious architectural designs provide the “visual fascination” necessary to capture a visitor’s interest without causing mental fatigue. This physical environment acts as a gateway to Natural Restorative Qualities, where the sensory experience of traditional smells and sounds allows for an emotional “escape” from daily stressors. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that Cultural Restorative Qualities play a pivotal role; the presence of local artisans and the

ability to engage in “historical imagination” transform the street from a mere thoroughfare into a meaningful “place.” Ultimately, the table suggests that restoration is most effective when the authenticity of the heritage site is preserved, as it fosters a deep emotional connection and a sense of cultural belonging that refreshes the visitor’s mental state.

The restorative potential of heritage streets is rooted in a symbiotic relationship between tangible physical attributes and intangible psychological responses. As illustrated in the Figure 2, the Physical-Mental Link demonstrates that “Architectural Design” and aesthetic beauty are not merely decorative but serve as direct drivers for “Relaxation,” providing the visual fascination necessary for psychological relief. This experience is deepened by the Role of Human Presence, where the active participation of local vendors and artisans injects a sense of “living heritage” that feels organic, distinguishing the street from the artificial atmosphere of modern commercial spaces. Ultimately, these elements converge to facilitate the Concept of ‘Being Away’, leveraging “Historical Imagination” to transport visitors into a different era. This mental escapism allows for a profound sense of detachment from daily stressors, proving that the most effective restoration occurs when the authenticity of the past is harmoniously integrated with the sensory life of the present.

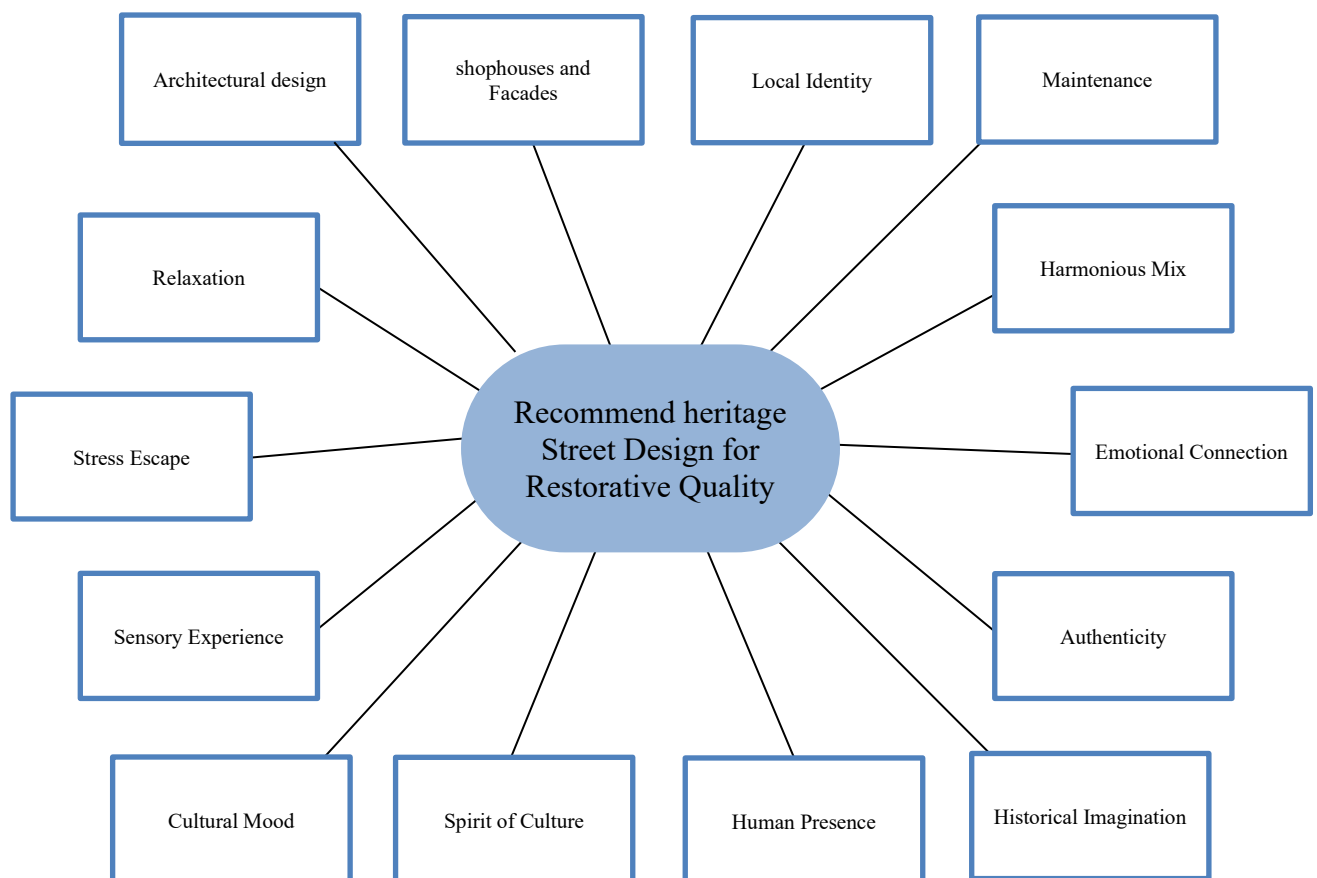


Figure 2: Recommend Heritage Street for Restorative Quality

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive analysis of Concubine Lane, Ipoh, as a specialized vacation destination unequivocally demonstrates that the strategic preservation of cultural heritage serves as a powerful catalyst for human psychological restoration. By addressing the research objectives, this study concludes that the heritage street attributes specifically the authentic shophouse architecture, the intricate building facades, and the vibrant local life are not merely aesthetic components but are the fundamental drivers of a restorative experience. These attributes collectively establish a high-quality built environment that provides visitors with a profound sense of "Being Away" and "Fascination," which are critical dimensions of Attention Restoration Theory. The overwhelming consensus among visitors regarding the authenticity of the shops and the harmonious visual appearance of the lane confirms that successful restoration must prioritize both the physical fabric and the living culture to remain relevant and impactful in a modern tourism context.

Furthermore, the evaluation of restorative qualities proves that Concubine Lane functions effectively as a "therapeutic landscape" within an urban setting. The data highlights that most visitors experience significant relief from mental fatigue and stress, reporting feelings of being relaxed and refreshed that are comparable to the benefits traditionally sought in natural environments. This suggests that for urban dwellers, a well-managed heritage site can provide a vital surrogate for nature, offering a sensory rich environment where the sights, sounds, and cultural narratives allow the mind to recover from the exhaustion of daily stressors. The strong perceived compatibility between the destination and the visitors' personal identities further enhances this restorative process, making the visit a deeply personal and meaningful journey of self-reflection and emotional renewal.

Ultimately, the relationship between heritage attributes and restorative outcomes validates the overarching theme of "Restoration Through Heritage." The study concludes that the restorative potential of a destination is directly proportional to the perceived authenticity and cultural richness of its built environment. As Concubine Lane successfully balances historical preservation with contemporary commercial vitality, it creates a coherent and immersive world that facilitates effortless engagement. This research provides a crucial framework for urban planners and heritage managers, suggesting that the preservation of historical sites should be viewed as a public health strategy as much as a cultural one. By maintaining the integrity of the built environment and fostering a living heritage, we can transform urban spaces into sanctuaries of well-being, ensuring that heritage remains a living, breathing, and healing force for future generations of travellers.

However, this study is limited to visitors of Concubine Lane, Ipoh, and therefore the findings may not be generalizable to other heritage streets or urban tourism destinations. The use of a self-administered questionnaire may also introduce response bias, as visitors' perceptions are influenced by individual moods, visit duration, and temporal factors such as crowd density and weather conditions. Additionally, the quantitative approach focuses on measurable perceptions and may not fully capture the depth of visitors' emotional or experiential narratives related to heritage restoration. Thus, future studies are recommended to incorporate qualitative methods such as interviews or observations to gain deeper insights into visitors' restorative experiences and emotional connections with heritage environments. Comparative studies across multiple heritage streets or cities could also enhance the generalizability of findings. Furthermore, future research may examine seasonal variations, time of day effects, or integrate physiological indicators of

restoration to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the restorative potential of urban heritage destinations.

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