

Secret Corners and Painted Stories: Evaluating the Quality of Street Art Towards Tourists' Satisfaction in Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur

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ABSTRACT

Creative expressions, such as street art, are increasingly influencing urban tourism. However, researchers have been slow to explore the role street art plays in tourist satisfaction, particularly in Malaysian contexts like Petaling Street in Kuala Lumpur. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the satisfaction levels of urban tourists based on the quality of street art installations. The focus of the research is on visitors' perceptions regarding accessibility, experiential value, conveyed meaning or message, and appreciation for artists who contribute to the street art scene. A mixed-methods approach was employed, involving qualitative observational data collection from site visits in a street art environment. Additionally, a structured bilingual questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data from 158 domestic and international urban tourists. Quantitative data analysis was carried out using SPSS v31.0 to apply descriptive statistics, while thematic analysis was used for the qualitative data to uncover key findings. The results reveal that tourists generally perceive the street art in Petaling Street as approachable, culturally engaging and socially relevant (mean=4.08). In particular, street art elements that connect the historical context of the area with meaningful messages received the highest satisfaction ratings from visitors (mean=4.02). The study highlights a notable appreciation for local artists and a strong desire among tourists to learn more about the artists' histories and motivations. The findings provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, local authorities, and tourism planners, encouraging a more inclusive and artistic approach in urban heritage areas that caters to a diverse range of visitors.

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INTRODUCTION

Murals, sculptures, memorials, integrated architectural or landscape architectural works, community art, digital new media, performances, and festivals are all examples of public art. According to Gao and Misni (2025b), and Misni and Suran (2018), paintings and murals are prominent forms of public art. Public art enhances Malaysian communities by improving public spaces, promoting sustainability, and creating aesthetically pleasing monuments (Jenyen et al., 2024). It can increase safety, reduce vandalism, and foster community pride. Misni and Suran (2018) identify various types of public art, including interactive public art, sculptures and monuments, landscape design art, architecture, murals, and wall paintings (commonly referred to as street art). Among these, interactive public art is the most popular, followed by sculptures and monuments, planting design art, architecture, and murals.

In the past decade, “street art” has gained significant cultural and artistic recognition worldwide (Smith, 2013). A street art mural is defined as any artwork painted directly onto a wall, ceiling, or other permanent surfaces (Kamaruddin & Ishak, 2022). Urban tourism, such as that found in Petaling Street, plays a crucial role in enhancing visitor experiences; however, the quality and impact of this street art on tourist satisfaction remain unclear (Xiang & Mohamad, 2023). The term “street art” was coined by Schwartzman in 1985, referring to a form of creative expression that evolved primarily from graffiti culture, using urban settings as its canvas (Abdurahiman et al., 2022). Some artworks specifically depict the context of the mural, while others provide value to the community (Mendelson-Shwartz & Mualam, 2022). These artistic initiatives frequently produce outcomes that capture public interest and elevate the profile of the surrounding area (Gao & Misni, 2025a; Kamaruddin & Ishak, 2022). This increased visibility is crucial for shaping the site’s image and helping it become a recognised tourist destination.

Currently, there is a lack of research addressing public satisfaction with street art or public art in Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur. However, studies conducted in nearby areas, such as Central Market, provide insight into local residents’ perceptions of urban public spaces (Amir, 2020). Amir (2020) also examined how people in Petaling Street utilised public spaces for social interaction. The findings indicated that factors such as accessibility and cleanliness significantly influenced how often people visited and how long they stayed. The study emphasised that enhancing urban areas with diverse shops, cleanliness, safety, and engaging environments could make public spaces livelier and encourage more frequent visits (Amir, 2020; Lu & Misni, 2023).

The absence of focused studies on the public art and street environment of Petaling Street highlights a gap in the literature, indicating a need for dedicated research to further understand public perceptions and satisfaction levels in this specific locale. This gap underscores the importance of investigating how public art in Petaling Street contributes to cultural preservation, community engagement, and urban identity. Such research could help preserve and celebrate the creative legacy of Petaling Street, influencing the development of cities and cultures in the future. This study aims to investigate the significance of street art installations in Jalan Petaling and some nearby hidden gems on tourist satisfaction and the overall atmosphere of the city.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Street art has emerged as a dynamic form of urban expression, playing a crucial role in enhancing cultural identity and the aesthetics of public spaces (Shanbhag, 2024). In tourist-heavy areas like Petaling Street in Kuala Lumpur, the quality of street art significantly influences visitors’ perceptions and satisfaction. Prior studies have shown that the accessibility of street art—its visibility, location, and ease of engagement—

affects how tourists interact with these visual narratives (Olishevskaya & Kupach, 2022). Additionally, a holistic experience, which includes emotional resonance, environmental integration, and interactivity, contributes to a deeper connection between the viewer and the artwork (Yang, 2024; Wang & Ismail, 2024; Brinck, 2018). Beyond aesthetics, street art often conveys important messages that reflect social, cultural, or political themes, making it a meaningful medium of communication (Bogerts, 2022). Furthermore, tourists' appreciation for artists—their recognition of creative effort and talent—plays a vital role in validating street art as a form of cultural heritage. Understanding these factors is essential for evaluating how street art contributes to tourist satisfaction in the evolving urban landscape of Petaling Street.

Accessibility

The Accessible Tourism Destination (ATD) initiative, launched by The United Nations World Tourism Organisation or UN Tourism (UNWTO) and ONCE Foundation in 2019, aims to enhance the accessibility of tourism sites worldwide. Its goal is to ensure that these sites are inclusive, uphold human rights, and provide economic benefits through increased visitor engagement and spending. Accessibility in tourism goes beyond just physical access; it includes the quality of infrastructure, public transit options, ease of movement, and the overall visitor experience (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2003). In the context of street art tourism, such as in Petaling Street, accessibility plays a vital role in shaping how visitors interact with and appreciate urban art. Factors such as the ease of moving between murals, the visual appeal of the designs, and the simplicity of navigation all directly influence visitor satisfaction and engagement.

Moreover, heritage sites often face the challenge of preserving their original character while adhering to accessibility guidelines, which makes the integration of universal design principles crucial (Richards, 2024). By combining accessibility with thoughtful design, street art districts can provide meaningful, culturally rich experiences that cater to diverse audiences, enhance visitor understanding, and reinforce the importance of street art in urban cultural identity. Ultimately, accessibility is a fundamental aspect of successful street art tourism, ensuring that it remains inclusive, engaging, and culturally significant.

Holistic Experience

The concept of a 'holistic experience' in street art tourism involves engaging tourists on all levels—visually, emotionally, cognitively, and physically. Crespi-Vallbona and Mascarilla-Miró (2021) argue that a truly immersive street art experience includes involvement, enjoyment, local identity, learning, sensory engagement (such as taste), and nostalgia. These elements work together to create experiences that are both meaningful and memorable for various types of visitors. Street art in Barcelona is not only visually appealing; it also tells stories. Murals and graffiti make walking through the streets more exciting by allowing individuals to connect with the city's culture, history, and people on a deeper level. This perspective aligns with the shift from commercial tourism to immersive travel experiences, emphasising the significance of authenticity and cultural understanding in trip planning. Additionally, a study examining the potential of street art to enhance creativity among residents in Toronto's districts suggests that the allure of art can increase the attractiveness of cities for both residents and visitors. Street art enriches the visitor experience by fostering a sense of place and community.

Valuable Messages

Street art serves as an important medium for conveying significant ideas to the public. Graffiti art in the Klang River suburb of Kuala Lumpur has received positive responses from the community, promoting pedestrian activity and improving safety in the area. Although these street art pieces may not provide cultural or historical narratives, they demonstrate how street art can communicate messages that enhance

urban living conditions. The study suggests that incorporating cultural and historical elements into graffiti could increase its value and significance for the community (Jenyon et al., 2024).

Appreciation for Artists

Recognising and valuing street artists is crucial for creating an environment that encourages creativity and cultural expression. Many people view graffiti as an important art form because it relates to cultural identity and urban aesthetics. Research has highlighted the importance of acknowledging the artistic contributions of street artists. This recognition elevates the status of street art within the broader art community and fosters the sustainable development of urban art, benefiting both the artists and their communities (Visconti et al., 2010; Seok et al., 2020; Dyomin & Ivashko, 2020).

Table 1. Summarises Key Articles Related and Gap to Street Art and Tourist Satisfaction

No.	Author(s)	The quality of street art	Country	Art study finding and related to tourism	Gap - street art and tourism
1.	Dyomin & Ivashko (2020)	Graffiti and murals of the Revolution of Dignity	New York and Europe	Street art transforms from spontaneous urban expression into a transmedia form when showcased in festivals or galleries, integrating dance, performance, and music.	Street art in modern urban environment
2.	Misni & Suran (2018)	Public art types	Putrajaya, Malaysia	Public art encompasses various forms such as interactive installations, sculptures, monuments, landscape design, architecture, and murals or street art.	Interactive art for people
3.	Smith (2013)	Cultural and artistic recognition of street art	Worldwide	In the last decade, “street art” has gained global cultural and artistic recognition. It is becoming the next major trend in the art world and market.	Street art recognition
4.	Kamaruddin & Ishak (2022)	Street art murals as communication medium	Malaysia	Street art murals are artworks that are painted on permanent surfaces. They attract public attention and can transform a location into a tourist destination.	A street art mural and public attention
5.	Abdurahiman et al. (2022)	Origin of “street art” phrase	Malaysia	In 1985, Schwartzman introduced the term “street art” to refer to creative expressions derived from graffiti culture, utilising urban environments as canvases.	The phrase of “street art” origin in 1985
6.	Amir (2022)	Urban public spaces and social interaction	Kuala Lumpur	In Petaling Street, accessibility and cleanliness influence public space usage, emphasising the need for safe and engaging environments.	Public spaces for communication and access
7.	Crespi-Vallbona & Mascarilla-Miró (2021)	Holistic experience in street art tourism	Barcelona, Spain	Immersive street art combines engagement, enjoyment, identity, learning, sensory experiences, and nostalgia.	Immersive street art experience
8.	Jenyon et al. (2024)	Public perception towards Graffiti art	Klang River, Malaysia	Graffiti art enhances pedestrian activity and safety, while its cultural and historical elements add to its significance.	Graffiti function and value
9.	Seok et al. (2020)	Valuing street artists and their role	Barcelona, Spain	Acknowledging street painters enhances the visibility of street art and fosters the growth of urban art.	Artistic contributions

10.	Visconti et al. (2010)	Street Art is the “Public” in Public Place	Worldwide	Public space can transition between private ownership and community use, with a sense of belonging and dialogue making it meaningful.	Public space as private and commercialised
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Source: Authors (2025)

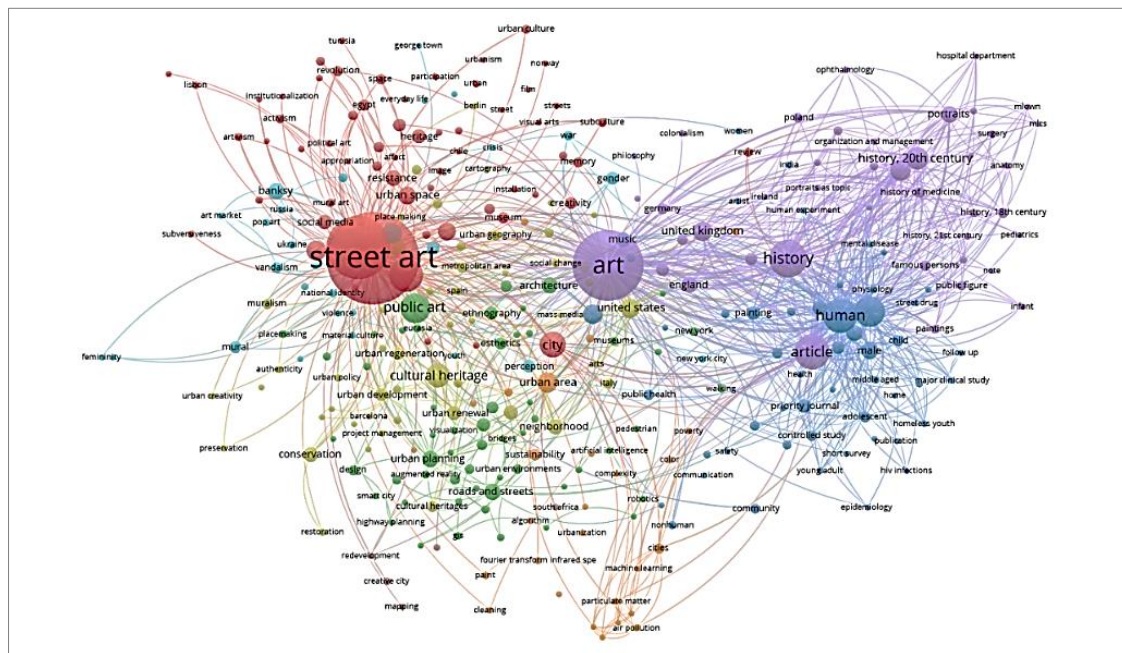


Fig. 1. The interconnected research landscape surrounding street art, art, history and human

Source: Authors (2025)

The VOSviewer map (Figure 1) visually depicts the research landscape of street art by showing keyword co-occurrences in academic literature. Larger nodes, such as ‘Street art’ and ‘art,’ indicate frequent or prominent topics. Colour-coded clusters represent thematic areas: the blue cluster links ‘Street art’ and ‘graffiti,’ while the red cluster highlights ‘art’ and ‘public space.’ Other clusters cover topics like ‘performance,’ ‘history,’ and figures such as ‘Banksy.’ Lines between nodes show co-occurrence strength, with thicker lines indicating stronger connections. For the study “Secret Corners and Painted Stories: Evaluating the Quality of Street Art towards Tourist Satisfaction in Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur,” this map provides a clear overview of academic discourse on street art, its urban and cultural contexts, and forms a framework for examining its quality and impact on tourist satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

The research employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Primary data is collected through site observations and a questionnaire survey, while secondary data is gathered through a desk study that includes literature and documentary reviews. The study is conducted within the administrative boundaries of Kuala Lumpur, specifically focusing on the Petaling Street area.

Site Study

The fieldwork observation took place within the administrative boundary of Kuala Lumpur, and particularly in the area of Petaling Street. The street murals were observed along main pedestrian and public transit routes, for example, the street art around Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock, Lorong Pasar Besar, Lorong Panggung and Jalan Balai Polis, while murals in community and cultural spaces were observed in adjacent alleys, walkways, and heritage lanes surrounding Petaling Street.

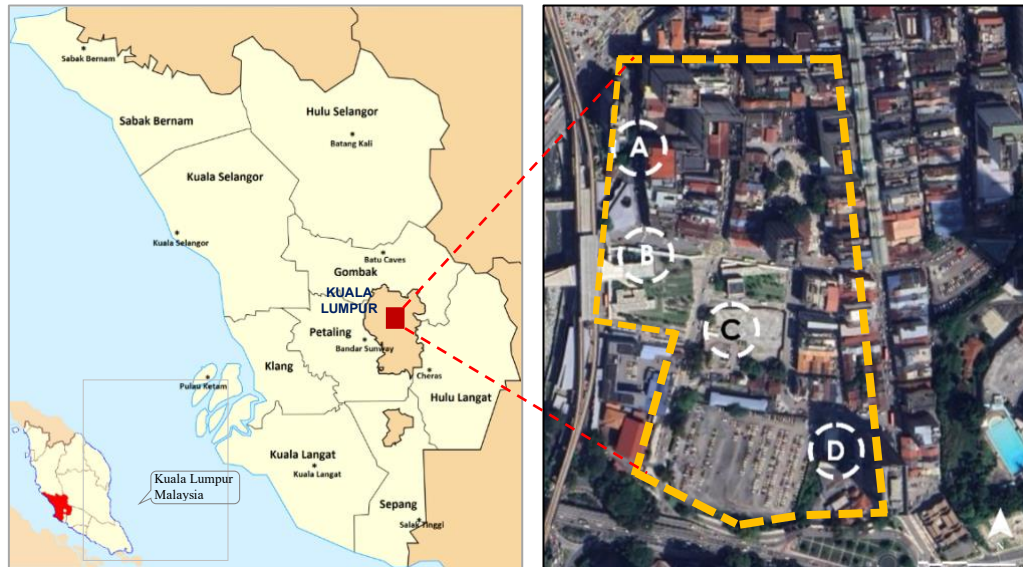


Fig. 2. Key Plan (left) and Location Plan of Study Areas, Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur (right) (Latitude: 3°08'38"N, Longitude: 101°41'51" E; Average Elevation of Approximately 32 metres)

Source: Modified from Google Maps (2025)

Data Collection

This study employed a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative observations with quantitative questionnaire surveys. The integration of these methods enabled a comprehensive understanding of visitor experiences, site characteristics, and local community perspectives within the study area.

Site Observation

Site observations were conducted to obtain first-hand familiarity with the physical and social characteristics of the research location (Lofland et al., 2022). During these visits, murals within the designated area were systematically photographed and documented to capture their visual attributes and spatial context. Several spontaneous interactions with local residents occurred during fieldwork, providing supplementary contextual insights that enhanced the interpretation of the observational data.

Questionnaire Survey

A structured questionnaire survey was administered to collect quantitative data on visitors' perceptions, levels of satisfaction, and experiences at the site (Chen, 2023). The questionnaire was delivered in person to participants, allowing for direct engagement during the data collection process with a randomly selected sample of 158 respondents from Petaling Street. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and participated voluntarily. It was handed out at selected street art locations around Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock, Lorong Pasar Besar, Lorong Panggung, and Jalan Balai Polis. Convenience sampling was utilised, targeting both domestic and international visitors present in the area during the data collection period. Respondents were informed about the voluntary nature of participation and the confidentiality of their responses, in accordance with the ethical guidelines governing social research. The bilingual questionnaire (in English and Malay) addressed the linguistic diversity of respondents and facilitated clearer communication.

The structured questionnaire comprised six sections. Section A collected demographic data to understand visitor backgrounds, enabling the analysis of perceptual patterns. Section B focused on accessibility, assessing how easily visitors could access and explore the street art locations along Petaling Street. Section C, concerning the holistic experience, evaluated the overall sensory and emotional engagement of visitors with the artworks and surrounding environment. Section D examined the perceived significance conveyed by the street art, including its cultural, historical, and emotional dimensions. Section E assessed the level of respect for street artists and their contributions, including recognition, validity, and interest in the artists themselves. Finally, Section F included open-ended questions for respondents to share suggestions and feedback on improving the preservation and quality of street art.

The questions employed a five-point Likert scale to ensure consistency and facilitate quantitative analysis. This scale ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with 3 indicating Neutral. Mean scores were interpreted based on the following scale: 1.00 as Strongly Disagree, 2.00 as Disagree, 3.00 as Neutral, 4.00 as Agree, and 5.00 as Strongly Agree. All data were generated using SPSS statistical software. The results were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means. Means were calculated to summarise the key findings as follows:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n x_i \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

Where:

$\bar{x}$ = the sample mean

x_i = each individual value in the data set

n = the total number of values

Σ = summation symbol (sum of all values)

In descriptive statistics, standard deviation measures the degree of scatter or dispersion of data points in relation to their mean (Wheeler & Chambers, 1992). For a dataset that is approximately normal, about 95% of the values fall within one standard deviation of the mean (within ± 2 standard deviations). In this study, standard deviation is used to evaluate how closely the measurements align with the true values. Statisticians agree that values within plus or minus 2 standard deviations are considered significantly more accurate than those that fall outside this range. The formula for calculating standard deviation is as follows:

$$s = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2} \dots\dots\dots(2)$$

Where:

s = sample standard deviation

n = number of values in the sample

x_i = each individual value

$\bar{x}$ = the sample mean

Σ = summation symbol (sum of all values)

Visual aids, such as a map and images of the street art in the study area, were included to provide context and support informed responses.

Data Analysis

All data collected from the survey was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 31.0. The raw data were categorised based on their variables and attributes and then converted into simpler visual formats such as charts and tables. This analysis was crucial for identifying trends, interpreting visitor perceptions, and evaluating the key elements of street art quality in relation to tourist satisfaction. The results were also confirmed through a correlation analysis using Pearson's correlation and P-values. Additionally, comparisons and references to relevant secondary data were used to support the findings and ensure that the interpretations aligned with the broader context of integrating street art into the urban tourist experience of Petaling Street.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

This study analysed site observations using a descriptive overview in Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur. At the same time, the collected 158 questionnaires were processed using statistical approaches to evaluate how the quality of street art influences visitor satisfaction. The findings reveal significant correlations between artwork characteristics such as cultural relevance, visual appeal, and accessibility, and the overall experience of tourists.

Street Art

Petaling Street's street art can be seen as an evolving ethnographic text, with each mural or piece of graffiti serving as a palimpsest of urban narratives (Figures 3 - 7 and Table 2). The statement "Rage Against the Machine" at Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock clearly acts as a visual polemic, featuring distressed typography that illustrates the tension between individual agency and urban conformity. The nearby food vendors may be interpreted as unwitting participants in this argument. The photorealistic mural titled "Goldsmith," located at the adjacent Lorong Pasar Besar, serves as a form of cultural preservation. The use of patinated gold leaf and trompe l'oeil techniques fosters an intergenerational dialogue between new viewers and the fading tradespeople it seeks to memorialise. Another mural at Kwai Chai Hong, in Lorong Panggung, engages in place-making through a process of nostalgic remaking. It employs visual elements from the 1960s to create what urban theorists call a "prosthetic memory" for younger generations. Finally, the mural "Funkdamental," also known as "Backflip," located at Jalan Balai Polis, reflects the nature of liminal urban spaces. Its hybrid stylistic attributes and ongoing reinterpretation symbolise the cultural negotiation taking place between the heritage district and the formal athletic complex. Collectively, these works embody a

“right to the city” manifesto, as critical geographers might describe it, where wall surfaces become contested spaces for expressing collective identity amidst rapid urban change.

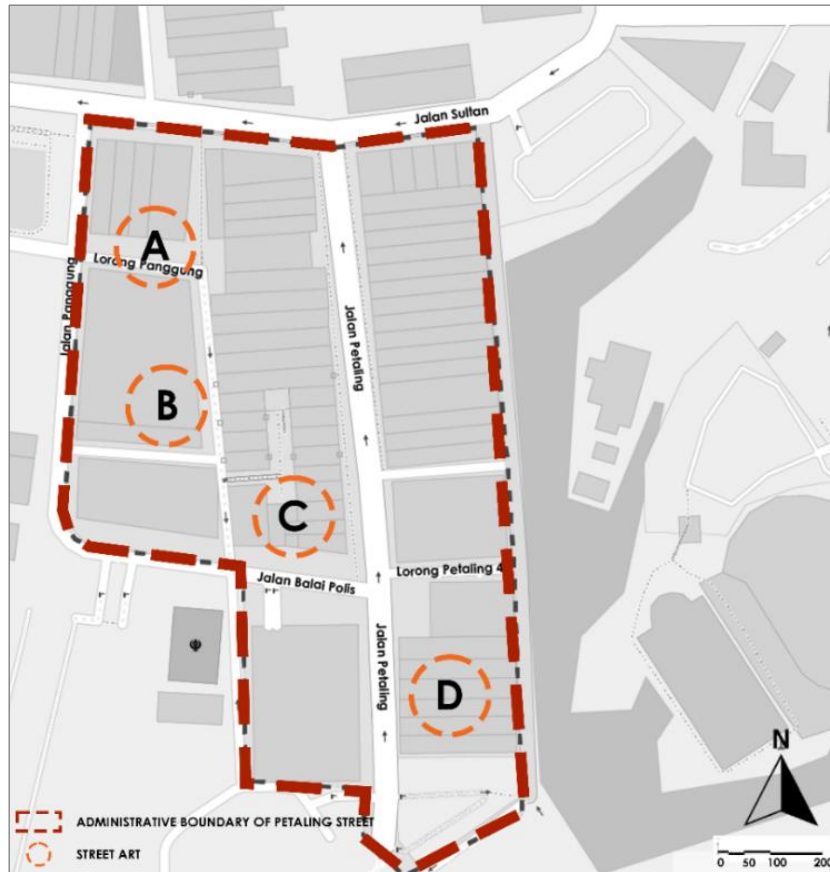


Fig. 3. The location and study areas of the street art in Petaling Street area

Source: Authors (2025)

Table 2. Information About Street Art in the Petaling Street Area

Street Art Title	Artist	Location Description	Thematic Message
a) Rage Against the Machine	Ernest Zacharevic, a Lithuanian artist	Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock (Northwest corner)	Expression of rebellion, social commentary
b) Goldsmiths	Julia Volchkova, Russian artist	Lorong Pasar Besar (Central area near Artisan shops)	Tribute to traditional trades and craftsmanship
a) Kwai Chai Hong	Multiple Artists	Lorong Panggung (Central-East, near Heritage alleyway)	Reviving Chinese heritage and historical nostalgia
d) Funkdanmental	Malaysian illustrator and graffiti artist Katun	Jalan Balai Polis (Southeast edge, near Chin Woo Stadium)	Modern cultural fusion and urban identity

Source: Authors (2025)



Fig. 4. (a) 'Rage Against the Machine' at Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock

Source: Authors (2025)



Fig. 5. (b) 'Goldsmith' at Lorong Pasar Besar

Source: Authors (2025)



Fig. 6. (c) The 'Kwai Chai Hong' mural at Lorong Panggung

Source: Authors (2025)



Fig. 7. (d) 'Funkdamental' at Jalan Balai Polis

Source: Authors (2025)

Evaluating the Quality of Street Art towards Tourists' Satisfaction in Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur

This study employed a quantitative approach to analyse respondents' perceptions, preferences, and overall experiences related to street art in the area. Using SPSS, the researcher conducted a systematic statistical analysis to identify emerging trends and explore potential relationships between different aspects of street art and tourist satisfaction. This process provided valuable insights into how street art enhances visitors' engagement with the cultural, social, and historical environment of Petaling Street.

Demographic Profile

This research aims to understand tourists' satisfaction with street art in Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur. A total of 158 respondents, comprising both local and international visitors, were selected for this study. The sampling specifically targeted tourists—individuals visiting Petaling Street for leisure or cultural exploration, rather than for daily routines or residency. Respondents were approached both on-site and

through online distribution, ensuring that their recent or direct experience with the area made them suitable participants for evaluating the visual and experiential quality of the murals. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires to capture a range of perceptions and experiences related to street art in this culturally vibrant urban environment.

Table 3. Demographic Profile

No.	Item	Background Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1.	Gender	Male	68	43
		Female	90	57
2.	Age	18-20	28	17.7
		21-25	70	44.3
		26-30	21	13.3
		31-35	16	10.1
		36-40	15	9.5
		40 and above	8	5.1
3.	Employee Status	Student	50	31.6
		Housewife	17	10.8
		Private Employee	58	36.7
		Public Sector	32	20.3
		Self Employed	1	0.6
4.	Income Level	< RM3,000	60	33.6
		RM3,001 – RM7,000	98	66.4
5.	Residence	Kuala Lumpur	63	39.9
		Outside of Kuala Lumpur	95	60.1
6.	Purpose for visiting Petaling Street	Arts	22	13.9
		Culture	29	18.4
		Tourism	20	12.7
		Shopping	24	15.2
		Photography	31	19.6
		Working	21	13.3
		Eating	10	6.3
		Sightseeing	1	0.6

Source: Authors (2025)

A total of 158 respondents participated in the study, showing a fairly balanced gender distribution ($M = 1.57$, $SD = 0.497$), which suggests a slight female majority. The age group skewed younger ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.406$), indicating that most participants were likely in their younger to middle adulthood, consistent with the demographics typically attracted to urban street art and cultural tourism. Employment status ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.171$) and income levels ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 0.487$) revealed that the majority were working individuals, likely from middle-income brackets. This reflects a socioeconomically active cohort capable of discretionary spending on leisure and cultural activities. The residence variable ($M = 1.62$, $SD = 0.491$) indicates that a significant portion of respondents may be domestic tourists or residents of Kuala Lumpur, while a minority were international visitors. Notably, the primary purpose of visiting Petaling Street ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.865$) varied across responses, but the high mean score implies that motivations extended beyond mere sightseeing, possibly encompassing cultural exploration, social engagement, and appreciation.

for artistic expression. These demographic trends suggest that the street art on Petaling Street resonates with a diverse yet engaged audience, highlighting its relevance in contemporary urban tourism.

Descriptive Findings on Street Art Quality and Tourist Satisfaction

Table 4. Accessibility

No.	Accessibility Aspects of Street Art Experience	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	It is easy to find the street art locations around Petaling Street.	15.2	1.9	12	46.2	24.7	3.63	1.298
2.	The walking routes and walkways around Petaling Street are pedestrian friendly.	15.2	1.3	15.2	46.8	21.5	3.58	1.273
3.	Directional signage or maps are available to guide tourists to street art spots.	15.8	3.2	12.7	27.8	40.5	3.74	1.424
4.	The area is accessible for people with disabilities.	1.3	16.5	17.1	7	58.2	4.04	1.238
5.	Public transportation options make it convenient to reach Petaling Street.	0	15.2	12	64.6	8.2	3.66	0.835

Note: 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

Source: Authors (2025)

Table 4 presents a descriptive analysis of accessibility, which reveals that respondents generally have a positive perception of the ease of accessing street art locations around Petaling Street. The highest mean score ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.238$) indicates favourable perceptions of accessibility for people with disabilities. Public transportation options received a slightly lower score ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.835$), suggesting moderate satisfaction regarding connectivity. These results may indicate recent urban improvements in Kuala Lumpur aimed at enhancing inclusivity and walkability. However, it is also essential to identify gaps in public transit integration, as these can impact tourists' first impressions, their ability to access key attractions, navigate the area comfortably, and fully engage with the site's offerings. The relatively high variance in responses related to directional signage (Variance = 2.028). These findings suggest that experiences vary; they can differ based on an individual's language proficiency or their prior knowledge of the area, which may affect how they navigate, interpret, and engage with the environment.

Table 5. Holistic Experience

No.	Holistic Experience Assessment Items	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	Visiting the street art in Petaling Street helps me connect with the local identity and cultural character of the area.	0	15.2	12	46.2	26.6	3.84	0.987
2.	The street art adds a unique and memorable element to my social experience during the visit.	15.2	0	11.4	46.2	27.2	3.70	1.294
3.	The street art environment is vibrant and immersive, reflecting the cultural character of the area.	15.2	0	11.4	29.1	44.3	3.87	1.386

4.	Exploring the street art allows me to better understand the historical background of the local area.	15.2	0	12.7	29.1	43	3.85	1.383
5.	The street art pedestrian route is well-integrated with other attractions in Petaling Street, enhancing the social, cultural, and historical experience.	0	15.8	10.8	29.1	44.3	4.02	1.091

Note: 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

Source: Authors (2025)

In terms of the overall experience, the findings presented in Table 5 indicate that visitors mainly associate street art with meaningful and memorable experiences, especially regarding cultural identity and historical context. The statement “The street art pedestrian route is well-integrated with other attractions” received a high mean score ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.091$), highlighting effective spatial planning and a cohesive tourist experience. Additionally, respondents felt that exploring the street art enhanced their understanding of the local historical background ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.383$). The relatively low variance values suggest consistent responses among various demographics. These results reinforce the idea that immersive, culturally rich experiences are crucial factors in driving tourist satisfaction in heritage-rich urban areas, such as Petaling Street.

Table 6. Valuable Messages

No.	Valuable Message Indicators	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	The street art in Petaling Street conveys meaningful social messages or stories.	15.2	0.6	11.4	48.1	24.7	3.66	1.285
2.	I can understand the cultural context behind the artworks.	0	15.8	10.8	29.7	43.7	4.01	1.088
3.	The social messages in the artwork are thought-provoking and relevant.	0	15.8	12	47.5	24.7	3.81	0.985
4.	The street art raises awareness on important historical issues.	0	15.8	13.9	26.6	43.7	3.98	1.103
5.	I feel emotionally connected to some of the cultural messages expressed in the art.	15.2	0.6	12.7	28.5	43	3.84	1.391

Note: 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

Source: Authors (2025)

Based on Table 6, respondents generally agreed that the street art in Petaling Street conveys socially and historically significant messages. The statement that received the highest score was “The street art raises awareness of important historical issues,” with a mean (M) of 3.98 and a standard deviation (SD) of 1.103. In contrast, the statement “The street art conveys meaningful social messages or stories” received the lowest rating, with a mean of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 1.285. This discrepancy may indicate that some visitors struggle to interpret or connect emotionally with these messages. Overall, tourists tended to appreciate the contextual and educational aspects of the artworks. The standard deviation values suggest a moderate level of consistency in perceptions, which may vary based on individuals’ cultural literacy or prior exposure to the themes depicted. These findings highlight the potential of public art as a tool for informal learning and cultural dialogue.

Table 7. Appreciation for Artists

No.	Artist Appreciation	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	I appreciate the creativity and skill involved in the street art at Petaling Street as a form of cultural expression.	0	15.2	8.9	44.9	31	3.92	1.003
2.	Street artists deserve more recognition for their work in representing social themes.	15.2	0	10.1	27.2	47.5	3.92	1.396
3.	I am interested to know more about the artists behind the artworks and their historical inspirations.	15.2	0	12	26.6	46.2	3.89	1.396
4.	Street art should be acknowledged as a legitimate form of cultural artistic expression.	0	15.8	10.1	24.7	49.4	4.08	1.109
5.	There should be more support and space provided for local street artists to address social issues through their work.	15.2	0	11.4	24.7	48.7	3.92	1.405

Note: 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

Source: Authors (2025)

According to Table 7, the responses in this section indicate a strong appreciation for the artists and their contributions, particularly in terms of recognising street art as a legitimate cultural expression. The statement “Street art should be acknowledged as a legitimate form of cultural artistic expression” received the highest score ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.109$), reflecting broader global trends that increasingly value urban art in public discourse. Respondents also showed an interest in understanding the artists and their messages, with a mean score of 3.89 ($SD = 1.396$). The slightly higher variance suggests that curiosity about the artists varies among different visitor types. This presents an opportunity for stakeholders to collaborate in developing interpretive tools and platforms that share the artists’ stories, thereby enhancing both cultural appreciation and tourist engagement.

DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study provide important insights into how tourists perceive the quality of street art in Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur, and how these perceptions influence their overall satisfaction. The following discussion critically examines each of the major findings, offers plausible explanations, and explores the broader processes that may account for these results.

Accessibility

The highest-rated accessibility measure “the site is wheelchair/disabled accessible” ($M = 4.04$) reflects recent urban planning efforts aimed at enhancing accessibility and inclusivity, particularly in areas experiencing high tourist traffic, such as Petaling Street. Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL) has made visible improvements, including the installation of ramps, tactile paving, and barrier-free walkways, likely contributing to positive perceptions of Petaling Street’s accessibility among visitors. In contrast, the ratings for “pedestrian walkways” ($M = 3.58$) and “direction signage” ($M = 3.74$) were relatively lower. This difference may be due to issues with infrastructure maintenance, as half of the installed tactile pavers

appeared damaged. Additionally, visitors may struggle with wayfinding due to inadequate directional signage, as navigating the area can feel intuitive but still confusing, especially for those unfamiliar with it. Petaling Street is characterised by tight alleyways and non-linear routes, which can be disorienting for first-time visitors, particularly those lacking local knowledge or awareness of the art trail. Furthermore, the presence of street art in lesser known “secret corners” also complicates the challenges of wayfinding, underscoring the need for clearer city signage to help guide visitors more effectively.

Holistic Experience

The findings indicate that visitors were highly engaged with the street art as part of a comprehensive cultural and social experience. For example, participants reported that “the street art experience evokes a strong sense of place and is immersive” ($M = 3.87$) and that “visitors experience a well-integrated pedestrian route that connects all the public spaces of street art” ($M = 4.02$). This engagement may be due to the spatial planning surrounding the murals in Petaling Street, which are situated close to other culturally significant experiences, such as food hawkers, heritage buildings, and pedestrian shopping streets. The arrangement of these murals allows for a multi-layered sensory experience, where visual art can be enjoyed alongside complementary soundscapes, smells, and interactions from the streets. All of these elements contribute to creating a strong sense of place. Some of these immersive qualities align with Crespi-Vallbona and Mascarilla-Miró’s (2021) concept of culturally meaningful tourism experiences.

Understanding the historical background of the art received a comparatively high average score ($M = 3.85$), indicating that visitors demonstrated a “fair” to “good” level of understanding. This suggests that they were not merely passive consumers of the art; rather, they actively constructed their own interpretations of the situations represented by the artworks. The visual motifs connected to Chinese heritage, traditional trades, or rebellious social narratives likely enhanced this connection. However, the small variation in scores may reflect visitors’ first exposure to the people, places, cultures, and history of Malaysia over time (temporal literacy) or differing levels of cultural literacy among the respondents.

Valuable Messages

The effectiveness of street art as a tool for conveying meaningful messages is supported by high average scores for “raises awareness on historical issues” ($M = 3.98$) and “relevance of social messages” ($M = 3.81$). These scores suggest that visitors engage with the artwork not merely as decoration but as cultural texts that encourage thoughtful reflection. However, the lower score for “stories convey meaningfully” ($M = 3.66$) may indicate a barrier to interpretation. Many murals lack accompanying descriptions or contextual information, which can hinder comprehension, especially for nonlocal or younger audience members. Providing explanatory information and tools could enhance the clarity of the artist’s intended narrative and enrich the educational and emotional experience of the mural. Emotional connection also scored relatively high ($M = 3.84$), but it wasn’t the highest. This may be due to differences in visitors’ backgrounds, which affect their ability to relate to local themes. For instance, an international visitor in Malaysia may find it difficult to connect with a mural depicting local trades unless the significance is clearly communicated through a sign or digital tool.

Appreciation for Artists

Respondents most strongly agreed with the statement, “Street art should be recognised as a legitimate form of cultural artistic expression” ($M = 4.08$), indicating a clear affirmation of street artists’ contributions to mapping urban identity. These findings suggest a growing public recognition of street art as a legitimate and respected genre, supported by well-known figures like Banksy (internationally recognized) and Ernest

Zacharevic (locally recognized). The integration of fine art techniques, which were previously categorised as “vandalism,” with elements of social commentary, as seen in works by artists such as ‘Goldsmith’ and ‘Funkdamental,’ likely contributes to the increasing regard for street art as a valuable form of expression.

Respondents also demonstrated a keen interest in learning about the “background of the artists” ($M = 3.89$), reflecting a growing trend in experiential tourism where visitors appreciate and value cultural exploration through authentic, personalised narratives. The relatively higher variation in this area may be attributed to the anonymity of some artists or a lack of available information at mural sites, which hindered deeper engagement with the works. Respondents appeared to recognise that greater familiarity with the artists could enhance their understanding, despite the variation in the original intentions of the artworks. This interest in knowing the artist signifies a shift from passive viewer engagement to active cultural involvement, with tourists increasingly seeing themselves as co-interpreters alongside the artist.

Examine The Connection Between the Quality of Street Art and the Satisfaction of Tourists with That Art

The researcher analysed the relationships among various factors to better understand how they affect tourists’ satisfaction with street art (see Table 8).

Table 8. Correlation Analysis of Satisfaction towards Street Art Variables

The variables	Accessibility	Holistic Experience	Valuable Messages	Appreciation for Artist
Pearson Correlation	1.000**	0.719**	0.669**	0.688**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total	158	158	158	158

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**0.70 to 1.00: *r* Value Range (Very Strong) (Schober et al. 2018)

Source: Authors (2025)

The Pearson correlation coefficient revealed a statistically significant and very strong positive relationship between accessibility and holistic experience ($r = 0.719$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that greater accessibility is associated with a more comprehensive experience for visitors. Additionally, the study identified a strong positive correlation between accessibility and valuable messages ($r = 0.669$, $p < 0.01$), as well as between accessibility and appreciation for the artist ($r = 0.688$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that as street art becomes more accessible to the public, visitors are increasingly likely to discover meaningful messages and develop a greater appreciation for the artists. All variables were significant at the 0.01 level, confirming strong relationships across the board. According to the interpretation of Pearson’s r , values above 0.70 signify very strong correlations, which reinforces the conclusion that accessibility plays a crucial role in enhancing satisfaction through meaningful engagement with street art.

Table 9 presents the mean scores assigned according to the Likert scale for each variable, along with a comparison of significance levels from the correlation analysis (p -value < 0.01). The findings indicate that respondents generally agreed with all the variables, as reflected in the score range of 3.73 to 4.86. Among these variables, “Valuable Messages” received the highest mean score ($M = 4.86$), demonstrating strong agreement that street art conveys meaningful messages. This is followed by “Appreciation for Artists” ($M = 3.95$), “Holistic Experience” ($M = 3.86$), and “Accessibility” ($M = 3.73$). All variables showed highly significant correlation values ($p = 0.00$), indicating a strong and consistent statistical association among the

measured elements. With p-values all below 0.01, it was found that these variables significantly interrelate and impact tourists' perceptions and satisfaction with street art, further reinforcing the robustness and consistency of the overall findings.

Table 9. Likert Scale Distribution (Score Class) and Correlation Analysis Significant Score

The Variables	Likert Scale Distribution (Score Class, M)	Correlation Analysis of Significant Score (p-Value < 0.01)
Accessibility	3.73	**0.00
Holistic Experience	3.86	**0.00
Valuable Messages	4.86	**0.00
Appreciation for Artists	3.95	**0.00

*** for $p < 0.01$ (highly significant)*

Source: Authors (2025)

Overall trends and Interconnections

The analysis of the street art in Petaling Street reveals that it is strategically positioned to engage tourists, thanks to its integration within a vibrant urban cultural environment. The artwork serves not only as visually striking landmarks but also as catalysts for emotional connections, cultural understanding, and social commentary. However, there is a notable issue regarding the balance between visual impact and the ease of interpretation. Specifically, when there is a lack of supporting infrastructure or contextual information—like an artist's signature or intuitive signage—the artworks' interpretive potential significantly decreases. Although the challenges identified in this study may seem minor in a broader context, they underscore important areas of intervention for urban planners and cultural organisations. Possible improvements could include implementing guided tours, providing QR-coded artist profiles, creating multi-lingual information panels, and ensuring spatial continuity through events, mural trails, and street art maps.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that the street art in Petaling Street not only enhances the aesthetic experience but also has a significant socio-cultural impact on tourist satisfaction. The installations serve as focal points for urban narratives, reinforce local identity, and encourage participatory tourism. Their success as meaningful objects is partly due to how they are presented, accessed, and contextualised in relation to the tourists' experiences.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study emphasise the intricate ways street art enhances Petaling Street by contributing to tourist satisfaction, fostering local identity, and facilitating cultural engagement. The quantitative results reveal significant perceptions related to accessibility, experience, social relevance, and appreciation of local artists. This street art not only enriches the visitor experience but also serves as a method for preserving culture, educating the public, and transforming the city into a canvas for expression. A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) indicates that these four factors are closely interconnected in their influence on overall tourist satisfaction. Qualitative responses in the suggestions and feedback section further highlight the importance of maintaining and promoting street art to both visitors and residents. Participants articulated that street art preserves the cultural memory of the area, acts as a visual chronicle of social change, and strengthens intergenerational relationships and community pride. Suggestions for enhancing the quality of

street art included more inclusive storytelling, the integration of heritage education, and the incorporation of interactive or sensory experiences to make the artworks more engaging. Respondents also proposed improvements such as involving the broader community in mural planning and utilising local legends, food culture, and bilingual narratives.

In summary, the data indicates that the success of street art in Petaling Street lies in its ability to blend aesthetic value with cultural significance. To sustain this success moving forward, future street art projects should focus on inclusive curation, artist support, and improved infrastructure for interpretation. By following this approach, street art can continue to evolve as a medium for storytelling and identity, contributing to urban regeneration and reaffirming Kuala Lumpur's character as a city where heritage and creativity can coexist meaningfully.

RECOMMENDATION

This study's findings support the idea that street art in Petaling Street offers an accessible, immersive, and meaningful experience, ultimately leading to satisfaction for tourists. The extremely high eigenvalue produced by the PCA suggests that the items measured a common construct—tourist satisfaction which reinforces the validity of the instrument's design.

In terms of accessibility, tourists appreciated the inclusive features for individuals with disabilities; this indicates a more universal approach to accessibility in Kuala Lumpur. However, low scores for directional signage and pedestrian walkways suggest that the directional infrastructure may be underdeveloped or that the signage is not clear enough. Additionally, some tourists might have been first-time visitors to the area.

The analysis of experience among the respondents showed a high level of engagement. Respondents noted that street art conveys cultural experiences and tells historical stories. By being present in the space, and connecting street art to nearby attractions, they felt that the narrative engagement during urban walking was enhanced. Indeed, urban walking can be experienced as a form of storytelling that adds layers of understanding.

Regarding the themes communicated through the artwork, findings indicate that street art addresses social issues and encourages reflection. This aligns with existing literature on how public art can engage the public, foster civic-mindedness and promote communication among individuals (Sharp, Pollock, and Paddison, 2020). However, slightly lower ratings on items related to emotional connection suggest that the curation and interpretative methods may need further consideration to help visitors connect with the artwork more deeply.

Lastly, there was strong support for the artists, as tourists recognised the value of quality local cultural labour. The desire to learn more about the artists aligns with the trend in experiential tourism, which seeks authentic narratives and personal connections. This provides an opportunity for stakeholders to consider adding artist profiles, QR-linked interviews, and guided public art tours to deepen visitors' connections and promote local arts.

Overall, the results affirm that street art in Petaling Street is more than just a visual attraction; it serves as an opportunity for education, cultural preservation, and emotional connection. By addressing physical gaps in the area and providing additional interpretative tools, local authorities and tourism bodies can optimise the street art experience for diverse audiences.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Nur Husnina Mohamed Isa carried out the research and was responsible for drafting and revising the manuscript. Alamah Misni conceived the central research idea, supervised the research process, led the review and revision stages, and approved the final submission of the article. Meanwhile, Nurhayati Abdul Malek, Mohd Zahid Mohd Salleh, and Raja Alya Dalili Raja Jaafar contributed by reviewing the manuscript to ensure that the study and its findings are aligned with current practices in the landscape industry.

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