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usbet.fspuperak@gmail.com

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FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE ABANDONMENT OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS IN MALAYSIA

Nurul Aisyah Binti Roslan[1], Mohd Azian Zaidi[1*],

Department of Built Environment Studies and Technology, College of Built Environment, Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, Seri Iskandar Campus, 32610, Seri Iskandar Perak, Malaysia

nrlaisyahrsln@gmail.com, *mohda763@uitm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

The findings of this research look at the causes of heritage building neglection. It provides a contributing cause to the lack of adoption of this technique in the Malaysian building sector. To discover the factor, a mixed method approach was utilized, literature review and a survey questionnaire (quantitative). In the phases of the literature review, several case studies were chosen to offer a thorough grasp of the issues involved in abandoned heritage buildings. For the questionnaire, nine (9) factors were identified through literature review tested with a survey questionnaire. The aspect identified in this research as a less appealing area, being remote from the city, depopulation, ineffective in scheduling, planning, and monitoring in maintenance work, documentation is being held in different places, heritage skills shortage, insufficient funds, high restoration cost as well as too costly to maintain was built from the construction of conceptual framework. The results from those eight (8) factors had mean values greater than 3.50, which only one factor resulting a value below 3.50.

Keywords: *abandonment, heritage buildings, research, survey questionnaire*

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INTRODUCTION

The nature of abandonment and heritage is not a new thing especially in Malaysia. For instance, according to the Municipal Council of Penang Island (MPPP), Guidelines for Conservation Areas & Heritage Buildings says despite the fact that Malaysia has created conservation principles and rules, there are still up to 73 dilapidated heritage buildings. Although most of the districts have been carefully conserved and have become huge tourist attractions, there are still a lot of structures that are empty, neglected, and have not gotten the same attention. Heritage buildings are important for the communities they serve because of their historical, architectural, and cultural value. The disrepair of these structures threatens the possibility of total devastation. It is critical in educating individuals about the importance of preserving our heritage and to investigate restoration and repurposing possibilities to ensure their long-term existence and cultural value. (Tern Chern, 2020) The aim of this research is to provide possible factors for certain parties in the abandonment of heritage building in Malaysia. To successfully analyse these aims, three main objectives have been set out which are to identify the factors contributing to the abandonment of heritage buildings, to investigate the issues faced by the heritage organization regarding abandonment of heritage buildings and to propose suitable framework to prevent the abandonment of heritage buildings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Background

In describing the hierarchy of heritage, there will be two statuses which are **heritage** and **national heritage**. The concept of heritage buildings differed greatly amongst groups since each characterized them according to their respective personal point of view in addition to other considerations such as age, environment, and architectural aspects. In Malaysia context, National Heritage Act 2005, defined heritage as any heritage site, heritage object, underwater cultural heritage or any living person declared as National Heritage (under section 67) while the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stated that heritage is the cultural heritage that we inherit from our ancestors, remain in the present, and pass down to upcoming generations. Cultural heritage is not restricted to monuments and material collections. It also includes buildings and areas. It includes tangible heritage (movable, immobile, and underwater) as well as intangible cultural heritage embedded into cultural, and natural heritage artefacts, areas, or monuments. It is also related to other cultural domains such as festivals, celebration etc. It covers industrial heritage and cave paintings. Cultural heritage, in contrast, has become commercially

essential for the travel and tourism sector in many countries. This also poses new conservation difficulties.

Act and Standard

The National Heritage Act (NHA) 2005, enacted in 2006, provides a new legislative infrastructure for the conservation, preservation, and protection of Malaysia's multi-cultural heritage. The Act, as a broad legislative act, seeks to conserve and protect a broad range of heritage items, including tangible and intangible cultural property, natural heritage, underwater cultural heritage, and living people. It offers professionals with tools for managing heritage sites such as documenting, registration, conservation, enforcement, financing, promotion, and acknowledgment. The Act is designed to ensure that all states (13 states and three federal territories) in Malaysia adopt the same legislation and regulations governing all types, statuses, classifications, and kinds of heritage. Any heritage object in any classification of Heritage (excluding Living Person) will be proclaimed and listed in the Heritage list before any object in any classification is designated (with remarkable importance) and designated as National Heritage by the Minister. Nevertheless, any chosen Living Person would be proclaimed National Heritage only by the Minister.

Factors Regarding the Abandonment of Heritage Buildings

These are literature and primary research referring to several important factors in investigating and identifying the factors neglecting the heritage buildings such as:

- Environmental Issues

  The place or heritage site is not one of the main tourists' attractions. Because the surrounding neighbourhood was less appealing than others, several owners preferred to abandon their historical buildings. It was stated that only streets with well-known tourist attractions were genuinely suitable places to invest in establishing a business. The only opportunity for owners to benefit from the area in which their properties are built was to provide temporary parking to deal with traffic problems and limited capacity in the location. (Abd Rahim et al., 2022)

- Maintenance Management Difficulties

  For instance, many heritage mosques have been found in Negeri Sembilan where one of the mosques, Masjid Lama Parit Istana, Mukim Terachi, has been left abandoned and dilapidated. A few have been neglected and replaced by a larger masjid. This results in numerous growths of defects much faster than conventional buildings due to the sensitive structure of those buildings. It had been left in disuse, leading to termite infestation, rotted timber etc. However, many of the heritage masjid seem to have been neglected for a long time, with little effort taken to address the situation. (Abd Rahim et al., 2022)

- Financial Issues

Syed Al-Attas Mansion or known as the Penang Islamic Museum at that time, had been abandoned for about three years during their research. The explanations highlighted the lack of funding because Penang Islamic Foundation were unable to raise enough funds to rehabilitate the structure. Several renovations have been made whenever its ownership changed in history. It is now owned by Penang Island City Council (MBPP), restoring had been done with the collaboration of George Town Conservation and Development Corporation (GTCDC) costing RM1.5mil. The restorations took a couple of years to complete. (Trisha, 2022)

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Research methodology will be carried out differently based on objectives and qualitative and quantitative methods will be used for this research proposal. Distribution of questionnaires to relevant parties and local community. This method is identifying factors contributing to building abandonment and proposing frameworks to prevent heritage building abandonment.

Stages of Research

Several procedures in the research methodology will be required to achieve the research's purposes and objectives. Research stages include:

- Stage 1: Literature Review

  Study related to the research title which is the abandonment of heritage buildings. This is also to ensure proper comprehension and knowledge of subject matter.

- Stage 2: Data Collection (Questionnaire – Google Form)

  To successfully analyse three objectives that have been set out: An online questionnaire survey will be distributed. The rating scale for the questionnaire survey would be a Likert's Scale that ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), and the respondents would be expected to give their ratings depending on the questions that were asked.

- Stage 3: Data Analysis

  The compilation of all the gathered data and the carrying out of the analysis.

- Stage 4: Conclusion and Recommendations

  It would consist of the presenting of the studied data as well as the creation of a report that would include findings and recommendations for the relevant parties.

Data Collection Method

In this study, this quantitative data gathering approach employs the use of a survey questionnaire form, which will be distributed to the appropriate parties as respondents. All the questions in the questionnaire form are aimed to meet the two objectives of this research, which is to identify and investigate factors contributing to abandonment of heritage buildings, and to propose suitable framework. This survey questionnaire form is split into two sections which the section A is demographic information on respondents and section B would be the questioned-on topics regarding the factor that contributes to the neglection of heritage buildings. The poll will cover three important components of the present study's logic, which is based on primary data and considerable literature research, as well as a significant number of issues raised by several researchers. As can be observed, the components of this argument are separated into three broad categories: Factors 1, 2, and 3 as shown in Table 1 below. Each of the additional sub characteristics discovered in practice will serve as sub factors for these questionnaire questions, and each will be listed under its own main factor when developing the questions in the questionnaires.

Table 1: Designation of Questionnaire Survey Form

SECTION B	
Section B1	
FACTOR 1	SUB FACTOR B1a
	SUB FACTOR B1b
	SUB FACTOR B1c
Section B2	
FACTOR 2	SUB FACTOR B2a
	SUB FACTOR B2b
	SUB FACTOR B2c
Section B3	
FACTOR 3	SUB FACTOR B3a
	SUB FACTOR B3b
	SUB FACTOR B3c

Respondents' evaluations on the subfactor based on each statement will be prepared for agreement using a Likert Scale Technique. It will be based on five points in this

Likert Scale Technique, as follows: 1= Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree 3= Neither Agree nor Disagree 4= Agree 5= Strongly Agree. The poll will cover three important components of the present study's logic, which is based on primary data and considerable literature research, as well as a significant number of issues raised by several researchers.

Data Analysis Method

Once all data gathering methods from the surveys are completed, the procedures of statistical analysis of data will be carried out over as the next stage to examine all the gathered data. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to provide a summary of the information gathered. Cronbach's alpha was used in this study to confirm the data's trustworthiness.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Development of Conceptual Framework

In accordance with the data obtained from the literature review and questionnaire used in this study, three major groups of components were developed to investigate the link between specific characteristics and the critical factors influencing the abandonment of heritage buildings in Malaysia. The purpose of this study is to put to the test the conceptual framework that was built based on the literature reviews. This framework demonstrates the understanding of environmental issues, as well as the maintenance management difficulties and financial issues, are the primary aspects that contributed to the neglection of heritage buildings. From this perspective, this study creates a research hypothesis. Figure 1 depicts the framework's conceptual diagram, which was created for the purpose of hypothesis testing.

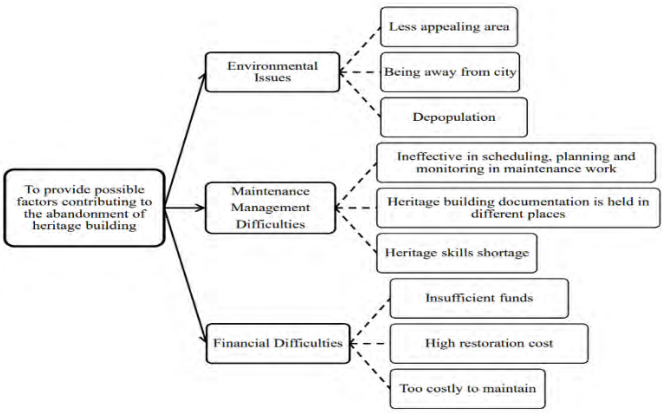

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Further review and evaluation for the average mean score index for each element is reviewed and discussed in this part to meet the study's objectives, which are to determine the best feasible factor for the abandonment of heritage buildings in Malaysia. To accomplish this goal, the information gathered from the results and discoveries in Section 4.3 are tabulated in the table of the main elements average mean score index. It was provided with three aspects of primary factors, each with their own significant factor that had been found. The factors that are assessed as somewhat successful in terms of results and conclusions are not deemed critical. The moderately effective variables with an average mean score less than 3.50 are marked in green and are not deemed important. However, factors marked with extremely effective that received an average mean score of 3.50 or higher are highlighted in red and are deemed significant factors.

Table 2: Identification of Effectiveness of Factors

Important Factor		Mean
Environmental Issues	Less appealing area	3.87
	Being remote from city	3.68
	Depopulation	4.21
Maintenance Management Difficulties	Ineffective in scheduling, planning, and monitoring in maintenance work	3.56
	Documentation of buildings being held in different places	3.46
	Heritage skills shortage	4.22
Financial Issues	Insufficient funds	4.01
	High restoration cost	4.18
	Too costly to maintain	3.84

Through the literature review that had been conducted to achieve objective, there are nine (9) numbers of variables that was found in readiness factor as an important factor contributing to the neglection of heritage buildings in Malaysia which are,: (1) Less Appealing Area, (2) Being Remote from City, (3) Depopulation, (4) Ineffective Scheduling, Planning, and Monitoring in Maintenance Work , (5) Documentation is held in different places., (6) Heritage Skills Shortage, (7) Insufficient Funds, (8) High Restoration Cost and (9) Too Costly to Maintain. The conceptual framework was created based on the results of these nine (9) numbers of components or variables discovered in practice. During the hypothesis phase in this research, all of the

variables demonstrate a positive association between the critical criteria for heritage buildings. The next data collecting approach uses survey questionnaire forms to perform validation on every single factor that had a positive relationship in the hypothesis process. Respondents examined all nine (9) variables to find the most significant component when utilizing an identification of average mean score index.

From all of nine (9) variables, it realizes that there are eight (8) elements reach the average mean index above 3.50 which are (1) Less Appealing Area, (2) Being Away from City, (3) Depopulation, (4) Ineffective Scheduling, Planning, and Monitoring in Maintenance Work , (6)Heritage Skills Shortage, (7) Insufficient Funds, (8) High Restoration Cost and (9) Too Costly to Maintain. These eight variables are considered as the critical factor in this study. All these eight factors then had been proposed as a best possible factor contributing to the abandonment of heritage buildings in Malaysia.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter's review of the study will sum up all of the data obtained in this research. The upcoming sequence will describe everything in this investigation. The primary study is completed prior to doing this research by completing an extensive literature review. This extensive literature research is a primary study based on secondary data in which part of the material for this study on heritage buildings in Malaysia was gathered. The findings of this extensive literature review. All the characteristics indicated as awareness and preparedness factors from data collection become variables in the questionnaire forms under their own primary factor in the distribution of survey questionnaire forms. All factors have been assessed after 82 responses were collected. Reducing abandonment of heritage buildings in Malaysia requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach that involves various stakeholders, including the government, local communities, heritage organizations, and private sector entities. To strengthen heritage preservation in Malaysia, several strategies should be implemented. These include strengthening existing laws, promoting public awareness and education, involving local communities in the preservation process, promoting adaptive reuse, offering financial incentives for private investors and developers, establishing dedicated heritage conservation funds, integrating heritage impact assessments into development approval processes, fostering public-private partnerships, and implementing regular maintenance and monitoring systems. Additionally, strengthening the capacity of heritage authorities to enforce preservation laws, review development proposals, and take necessary action against building neglect is essential. By implementing these strategies, Malaysia can create a more sustainable and culturally responsible future for its cultural heritage. Malaysia can reduce heritage abandonment and safeguard its rich cultural legacy by combining approaches and fostering collective commitment to preservation.

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