



Research

Adaptive reuse and authenticity: promoting urban conservation in Melaka's historic townAngela Wee Kah Man^{1,*} ¹ National University Singapore; 4 Architecture Drive, Singapore 117566* Correspondence: angelawee0309@gmail.com

Received Date: May 12, 2023

Revised Date: July 31, 2023

Accepted Date: July 31, 2023

Cite This Article:

Man, A. W. K. (2023). Adaptive reuse and authenticity: promoting urban conservation in Melaka's historic town. *Journal of City: Branding and Authenticity*, 1(1), 24-41. <https://doi.org/10.61511/jcbau.v1i1.2023.73>



Copyright: © 2023 by the authors.

Submitted for possible open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of adaptive reuse on the sense of place and urban conservation in Melaka's historic town, where heritage shophouses have been repurposed as F&B establishments. Questionnaire surveys were used to collect data from stakeholders, including local communities, to assess their perceptions of adaptive reuse works. The study found that adaptive reuse works had a positive impact on the sense of place and urban conservation in Melaka's historic town. However, the preservation and adaptation of these buildings must be done with proper community engagement to avoid alienating locals from their built environment. Discussions with stakeholders revealed that a holistic approach that considers both heritage preservation and community needs is crucial in promoting sustainable and inclusive urban conservation practices.

The study concludes that adaptive reuse works on heritage shophouses as F&B establishments can contribute to sustainable urban conservation and promote an authentic city brand. Community engagement is crucial in preserving the character of these buildings and ensuring the inclusion of locals in their built environment. By incorporating community input, adaptive reuse works can promote a sense of place and belonging that contributes to the overall urban conservation and sustainability of the city. The adaptive reuse of heritage shophouses as F&B establishments is becoming increasingly popular, contributing to the area's status as a UNESCO World Heritage City. However, the preservation and adaptation of these buildings must be done in a way that reflects the local community's values and needs to avoid alienating them from their built environment. By prioritizing community engagement and consultation, adaptive reuse works can promote sustainable urban conservation practices, enhance the city's authenticity, and contribute to a sense of place and belonging for both locals and visitors.

Keywords: adaptive; authenticity; reuse; urban conservation**1. Introduction**

The historic town of Melaka, designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage site, is a popular tourist attraction in Malaysia. Within the designated Core Zone, many heritage shophouses have been adapted for new uses, particularly in the area known as Jonker Street. While these adaptations have contributed to the area's economy and appeal to tourists, they have also raised concerns about the preservation of the town's authenticity and the inclusion of local communities.

This study aims to assess the impact of adaptive reuse on the sense of place and urban conservation in Melaka's historic town, focusing on the shophouses adapted for F&B establishments in the Core Zone. The study will gather data from stakeholders, including local communities, to assess their perceptions of adaptive reuse works and identify the correct concept of adaptive reuse that the local community wants in the future.

This research will focus on a selected portion of the Core Area of Melaka's World Heritage Site, specifically several streets including Jalan Hang Katsuri, Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock, Jalan Hang Jebat, Lorong Hang Jebat, Jalan Hang Lekiu/Kekir, Jalan Tokong, Jalan Masjid, Jalan Kampung Kuli, Jalan Kampung Hulu/Kampung Pantai, and Jalan Tukang Besi. To simplify the survey process, the term "Jonker Street" will be used to refer to these streets. Jonker Street in Malacca is known for its vibrant and bustling atmosphere that attracts locals and tourists alike. The street is famous for its unique blend of cultures, showcasing the rich history and heritage of the city. Visitors can find a mix of old and new buildings, with many traditional shophouses that have been converted into trendy cafes, bars, and shops selling souvenirs, antiques, and local handicrafts. The street is also known for its delicious local food, with many restaurants and food stalls serving up Malaccan specialties such as chicken rice balls, cendol, and nyonya laksa. Additionally, Jonker Street is home to various cultural landmarks, including Chinese temples, mosques, and museums, offering visitors a glimpse into the diverse cultural influences that have shaped the city over the centuries. Overall, Jonker Street is a unique and vibrant destination that captures the essence of Malacca's rich history, culture, and cuisine.

Through this study, we hope to promote a holistic approach that considers both heritage preservation and community needs in promoting sustainable and inclusive urban conservation practices. By prioritizing community engagement and consultation, adaptive reuse works can promote a sense of place and belonging for both locals and visitors, enhancing the city's authenticity, and promoting sustainable urban conservation practices. The findings of this study can inform future policies and practices related to adaptive reuse and urban conservation in Melaka's historic town and other heritage sites around the world. This study focuses on the conservation area known as the 'Core Zone' in Melaka, designated as a World Heritage site by UNESCO and by the Malacca City Council (MBMB). The Core Zone encompasses a portion of the settlement quarters, commercial area, and civic zone, as shown in Figure 1.1

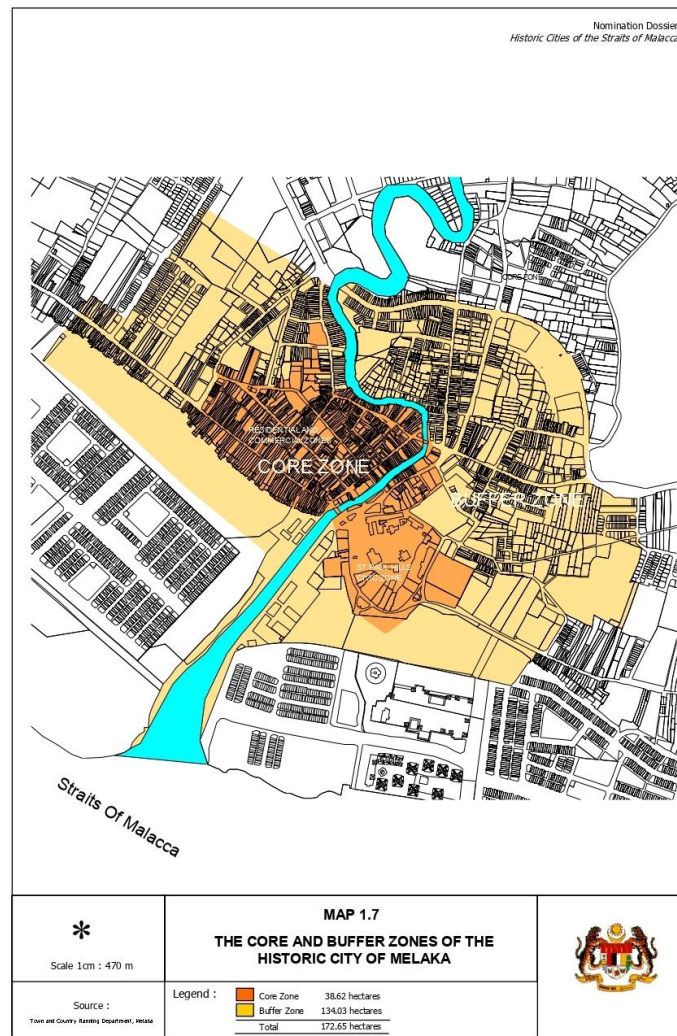


Figure 1. The Core and Buffer Zones of the Historic City of Melaka
 Source: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/101085>

The specialness of Jonker Street in Melaka lies in its historical and cultural significance, as well as its popularity among tourists. The street is a well-preserved example of a traditional shophouse-lined street in Southeast Asia, with many of the buildings dating back to the 19th century. The area is also known for its rich cultural heritage, reflected in the architecture, food, and traditions of the local community.

The introduction of the 'Jonker Walk' program in 2000 further boosted the area's popularity and led to a significant increase in tourism. As a result, many businesses, entrepreneurs, and investors have invested in the area, buying, or renting shophouses and adapting them for new purposes. Most of these adaptations aim to attract tourists and boost the local economy, such as boutique hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops.

In recent years, there has been a rise in the popularity of cafes culture, leading to the adaptation of many shophouses into cafes. While some physical adaptations were carried out with care to preserve the buildings' architectural features, others were done carelessly, leading to concerns about the impact on the area's authenticity and heritage. This highlights the importance of balancing the economic benefits of adaptive reuse with the need for proper conservation and preservation to ensure the continued authenticity and character of the area.

The modernization and development of Melaka have brought challenges to its heritage sites, threatening their cultural value (Aziz, 2017). The adaptation of buildings without considering the local community and their sense of place can be insensitive and damaging, especially if the sole purpose is for tourism. This has led to some areas losing their local identity and spirit, as noted (Othman, 2017). Although tourism-led adaptive reuse can bring benefits to the historic area or community, such as boosting the local economy and improving infrastructure, it can also have negative impacts on the environment and residents. Adaptive reuse may lead to the destruction of unique architectural features, the displacement of original residents, and the loss of privacy for locals. Samadi (2010) suggests that if development is not regulated, we may lose our local heritage and be left with a homogenous and universal imprint (Samadi, 2010).

The rapid development of Malaysian cities today is putting increased pressure on the building industry to conform to modern styles that are becoming the norm for global growth and progress (Said et al., 2013). In this context, conservation is seen as a means of shielding heritage from both environmental and human threats, while also recognizing the inevitability of modernization (Toore, 1999). By preserving the built heritage of the local area, the impact of development can be minimized. However, it is crucial not only to consider how changes in the appearance, structure, and function of buildings may affect their heritage values, but also to understand how such changes impact their significance. Equally important is understanding how residents perceive the effects of repurposing buildings.

In today's unpredictable world, conservation has gained increased attention as a fundamental support system (Townshend & Pendlebury, 1999). Social marginalization and low social mobility are more prevalent in certain groups, including the elderly, less educated, and poor (Lim, 2000). For these individuals, familiar places and reminders of memories can offer solace. Conservation plays a crucial role in connecting people to historic buildings, evoking emotions associated with them.

Conservation of places with significant historical value can enhance the identity of a location, making it distinct. The built environment can serve as a repository of meaning for local communities, creating a sense of identity and collective memory. Conservation serves the purpose of providing a sense of peace and security to the community that resides in a particular place. Conservation efforts also foster a sense of self-identity and belonging among inhabitants, while enhancing the security and stability of their communities (Lim, 2000).

The concept of place attachment has gained increasing attention in recent years, with individuals forming strong bonds and connections with places they consider meaningful (Low & Altman, 1992). This attachment implies a continuing affection for a particular place and the meaning it conveys, as described by Morgan (Morgan, 2010). Place attachment encompasses the psychological interactions between individuals and their environment, including their relationships with places (Morgan, 2010). The components of sense of place, as described by Jorgensen include affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2011). Figure 2 illustrates how attachments between people and places give rise to psychological traits such as sense of place. Functional attachments develop from one's interactions with a particular place, while emotional attachments arise from feelings of attachment towards that place.

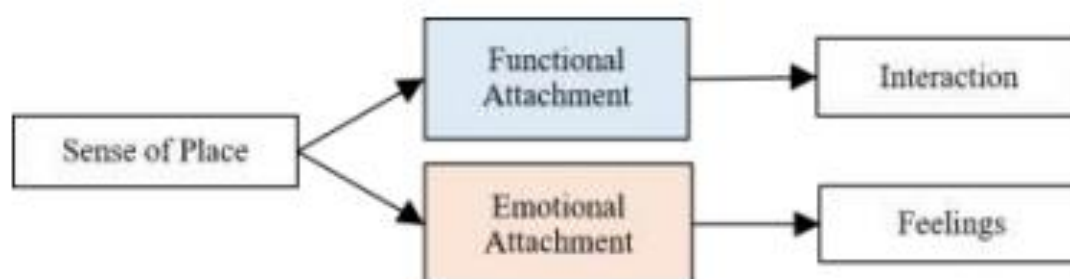


Figure 2 Types of attachment involves in the occurrence of a 'sense of place' (Source: PLANNING MALAYSIA: Journal of the Malaysian Institute of Planners VOLUME 18 ISSUE 4 (2020), Page 33– 46)

These findings suggest that sense of place is a comprehensive concept that encompasses how people feel about a particular place, from emotional perspectives (Brown et al., 2003).

1.1. Adaptive Ruse

The passage discusses the concept of place attachment and how it is created through the cognitive process of forming a sense of belonging. This attachment is manifested in three ways: spatial practices, representations of space, and representational spaces (Lefebvre et al., 2013). The physical reality represents an interface between routine and networking in society, while the conceived space refers to what is imagined, designed, and conceptualized by professionals as a mode of spatial production. The third kind of space, representational spaces, is associated with collective memory and lived through experiences that impose a symbolic meaning on material places (Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

The generalizability of much-published research on the sense of places is not solely based on past progress. Contemporary spaces are also considered as the products of the present as they are lived out in their prevailing meanings. The attachment to places is formed most effectively in real-time, through the direct experience of material objects and spaces. Images of traditions that are transmitted through various media and not experienced first-hand often remain detached phantasmagorias.

The contemporary urban experience is seen as a spectacle that constructs an artificial standpoint towards cultural identity. Individuals become 'actors' for whom their being is part of a performance that seems detached from genuine reality. It is important to understand this perspective to appreciate the role of the individual's experience in shaping the sense of place attachment. The relationship between architecture and memory is explored, with a central concept being the locus of a city. According to Rossi, memory serves as the "guiding thread" that links the present to the past and connects a city's fabric. The concept of history is defined by our reflections on a shared past and our sense of identity. While contemporary society often experiences nostalgic sentiments, these are reflective of the present social condition (Rossi, 1982). The continuity of social memory can be activated through a city's unique architecture, which is shaped by collective and individual recollections of time and place. This interweaving relationship between memory and architecture is crucial to understand the essence of a city and how it is perceived by its inhabitant (Wahab et al., 2018).

Studies have shown that adaptive reuse is a cost-effective alternative to constructing new buildings. In fact, approximately one-third of heritage shophouses in Melaka and George Town were repurposed through adaptive reuse initiatives. Officials often encourage such conversions as a catalyst for urban renewal, revitalization, and renaissance in post-industrial cities, sometimes offering financial incentives to support these efforts (Jefferson, 2005).

These initiatives align with sustainable development agendas by preserving the identity of districts and buildings and preventing their demolition, thereby alleviating the problem of underutilization of resources. This perspective is supported by previous research findings that highlight the importance of regulatory regimes for adaptive reuse and conservation. Moreover, hotel conversions, which are a popular form of adaptive reuse, can prevent buildings from degrading. Architectural heritage can serve as a catalyst for sustainable development, contributing to the achievement of related economic, socio-cultural, and environmental goals (Henderson et al., 2013).

Despite the benefits of adaptive reuse, there are social consequences that must be considered. Some adaptive reuse initiatives have focused only on preserving individual buildings without considering the surrounding environment or the entire system (Orbasli & Barch, 2009). Furthermore, there is a concern that the proliferation of cafes and restaurants with historic facades may contribute to the formation of an architectural theme park where leisure services are commodified, and the interests of tourists are prioritized over those of residents, as noted by Parham. There are arguments for and against the adaptively reusing historically significant buildings. Wilkinson and Reed summarize these arguments across various dimensions, including social, economic, environmental, and technological factors (Wilkinson et al., 2009), as shown in Figure 3.

	For	Against
Social	Existing buildings represent social and cultural capital Wider appreciation and more enlightened attitude towards heritage value Enables revitalisation of neighbourhoods and controls urban sprawl Prevents crime and vandalism Lends character to a place For future generations to enjoy	Old buildings cannot achieve the standard of new buildings Some building stock is simply too ugly Some projects failed to provide affordable housing/social mix (failed in their social objectives)
Environmental	Lower material usage Lower overall embodied energy	None at the moment
Economic	Cheaper than demolition and rebuilding	Adaptive reuse could be more expensive Many existing buildings are of poor construction quality, thus raising costs for remediation Hidden costs, e.g. loss of tenants' goodwill, loss of amenity
Technological	Technological changes mean that buildings can become obsolete in a short space of time	

Source: (Wilkinson & Reed (2008).)

Figure 3. Summarized Arguments for and Against Adaptive Reuse. Source: Wilkinson & Reed (2009).

1.2. Authenticity

The concept of authenticity within the context of heritage conservation has been defined at the international level through the Venice Charter and the World Heritage Convention. The

World Heritage Convention defines genuine authenticity as the manifestation of a cultural heritage's values through the attributes that carry them, and integrity as the expression of those values by the cultural heritage system that holds or contains them (ICOMOS, 2006). While recognizing that different cultures may have varying interpretations of authenticity, the World Heritage Program has held discussions on this issue. The Nara Conference on Authenticity in 1994 resulted in the creation of The Nara Document on Authenticity, which outlines how authenticity should be defined. The document emphasizes the importance of respecting the diversity of cultural heritage and belief systems.

Despite these efforts, concerns remain regarding the authenticity of living heritage sites in Melaka. Authenticity has always presented a challenge in heritage conservation. Handler and Saxton describe authenticity as the perfect simulation of the relationship between a living history activity and the piece of history it portrays (Stovel, 2004). The concept of authenticity is essential in heritage conservation, and its interpretation can vary depending on culture and context. The World Heritage Program has attempted to address these ambiguities through discussions and the creation of The Nara Document on Authenticity. However, concerns about authenticity persist, and ongoing efforts are needed to ensure that cultural heritage is preserved in a manner that respects its values and significance (Wilkinson et al., 2009). Authentically conserving heritage buildings requires consideration of the "sense of place," which is a defining characteristic of human spatial experience. Without a sense of place, spatial concepts cannot convey the meaning and significance of a location, leaving individuals feeling disconnected from their surroundings and society. It is essential to consider the "sense of place" when conserving heritage buildings to ensure that their cultural and historical significance is preserved in a manner that respects the values and experiences of the community. This approach not only supports the authenticity of the site but also promotes a sense of belonging among individuals, reinforcing their connection to their cultural heritage and community.

Authenticity has been a subject of extensive discussion in literature, encompassing various perspectives. Chhabra, Healy, and Sills (2003) associate authenticity with traditional culture, origin, and a reverence for the "original" concept. Selwyn (1996) emphasizes the intrinsic link between authentic experiences and the consumer. Furthermore, authenticity can be influenced by architectural aspects, trades and services, activities, and the overall character and spirit of a place.

In the context of adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, the concept of authenticity becomes relevant. The notion of staged authenticity, particularly in ethnic tourism, where hosts may package and sell their culture to create an appealing experience for tourists (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). This idea by introducing the term "emergent authenticity," suggesting that authenticity can evolve and be negotiable over time. What may appear inauthentic at one point could become authentic as perceptions and values shift (Cohen, 1988)

Authenticity as a quality that resides in social values rather than being an objective evaluation. Authenticity, in this sense, is a social construct with moral implications, and its determination is subjective, driven by an individual's interpretation and internally generated criteria (Grazian, 2018). Considering these perspectives, the perception of authenticity in adaptive reuse of heritage buildings becomes crucial. The absence of perception-based studies evaluating the authenticity of conservation buildings in the core of Melaka highlights the importance of exploring these aspects to understand the authenticity of the place in question.

The adaptive reuse of heritage buildings in Melaka has raised concerns, despite the extensive literature discussing the value of conservation. However, there is a lack of quantitative analysis specifically focused on conservation shophouses. It is crucial to strike a balance between redevelopment and conservation to preserve the sense of belonging and

the city's identity. Uncontrolled redevelopments may pose a threat to Melaka's unique multicultural heritage.

Many guidelines for traditional shophouse redevelopments stem from the monocultural British system, which does not fully reflect the multicultural society of Malaysia. This highlights the need for a more comprehensive approach that considers the local community's perspectives and the "sense of place" when introducing new functions in heritage buildings.

Stakeholders involved in adaptive reuse should adopt a broader perspective of preservation. This includes considering the continuity of facades, maintaining harmony between old and new buildings, and evaluating the impacts on all stakeholders, particularly the local community. The focus should not solely be on commercialism and tourism, following construction trends, but on the preservation of heritage and the well-being of the community. While there is recognition of the importance of adaptive reuse in heritage buildings, there is a need for greater acknowledgment and consideration of the local community's thoughts and the broader aspects of preservation. It is essential to approach adaptive reuse in a manner that respects the sense of place, promotes harmony, and safeguards the cultural heritage of Melaka.

2. Methods

This research focuses on the appropriate research method for collecting primary data on the opinions of target users regarding the implications of adaptive reuse of old shophouses into high-end F&B establishments, particularly cafes, and its impact on the "Sense of Place and Belonging" in the core zone of the Historic City, Melaka. It also describes the data analysis method employed in this study.

2.1. Hypotheses and Research Arguments

This research develops two hypotheses and central arguments:

Hypothesis 1: Adaptive reuse has significantly contributed to a sense of place among individuals experiencing the vintage cafes in Melaka.

Hypothesis 2: Adaptive reuse, as exemplified by heritage cafes in Melaka, should align with the feelings and understanding of the local community regarding the place.

The research argues that the adaptive reuse of shophouses into high-end F&B establishments, particularly cafes, has the potential to alter the character of the conservation area. This transformation may degrade the historical and cultural significance of the place, resulting in a loss of the sense of place and belonging, particularly among the local communities.

By examining these hypotheses and research arguments, this study aims to explore the perceptions and experiences of individuals regarding the impact of adaptive reuse in Melaka's heritage cafes. The findings will shed light on the implications for the sense of place and belonging, contributing to a deeper understanding of the effects of these transformations on the local community and the preservation of cultural heritage.

This paper will conduct a perception-based approach study to gather public opinion on the topic of adaptive reuse of shophouses in Melaka's core zone. A site might have different meanings for different individuals, therefore understanding the perceptions of the diverse population is critical. The study, as outlined in Chapter 1, will investigate the significance of the core zone's sense of place and belonging from the perspective of the public, using the following research approach ([Den Hartog et al., 1999](#)).

The author adopts a two-fold research methodology, beginning with a qualitative approach in a semi-structured form, followed by a quantitative approach. This combination of methods is believed to effectively achieve the objectives of the study. The research process consists of several stages, including literature reviews, theoretical work, an inventory of the pilot study, and the distribution of questionnaires.

The pilot study inventory aims to identify the number of cafes in heritage buildings in Melaka that have undergone adaptive reuse. To gather responses and address the research problem, questionnaires were distributed to cafe owners or managers, as well as to local communities and tourists. The goal was to understand their perceptions of how adaptive reuse impacts their sense of place and belonging. Due to travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 situation, face-to-face interviews were limited. To overcome this challenge, an online survey questionnaire was created using Google Forms, allowing for easier data collection.

The responses received through the Google Form survey led to the adoption of a quantitative approach as the second research method. The quantitative results served as a supplement to the qualitative findings and were analyzed using statistical methods. The combined analysis of qualitative and quantitative data enabled a comprehensive understanding of people's perceptions regarding adaptive reuse, place and belonging, and authenticity.

This mixed-method research approach facilitated the examination of various perspectives, leading to valuable insights into the impact of adaptive reuse on the sense of place and belonging. The findings will contribute to the development of conservation schemes in the future, offering suggestions based on the analyzed data.

3. Results and Discussion

A total of 278 participants took part in the survey, with 156 completing the questionnaire online and 22 opting for a physical hardcopy. The demographic data of the participants is presented in the figure below.

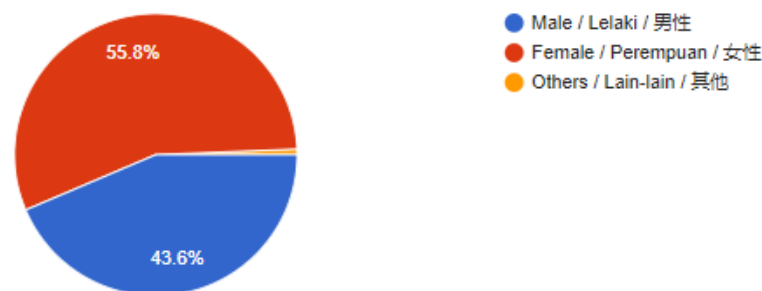


Figure 3.1 Respondents' profile according to Gender.

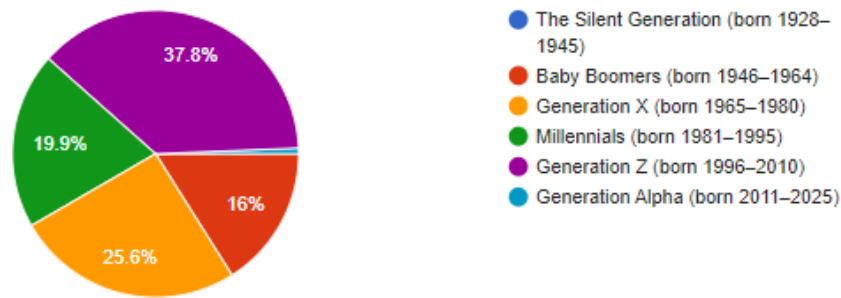


Figure 3.2 Respondents' profile according to Age Group.

Figure 3.1 shows that of the 278 respondents questioned, 55.8% were female and 43.6% were male. With 37.8%, Generation Z (born 1996-2010) comprised most respondents. As indicated in figure 3.2, this was followed by Generation X (born 1965-1980) with a percentage of 25.6%, Millennials (born 1981-1995) with a percentage of 19.9%, and Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) with a percentage of 16%.

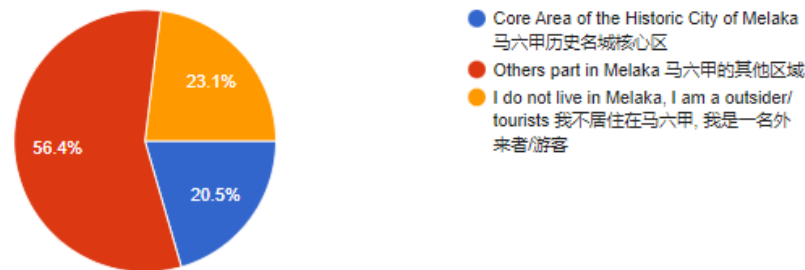


Figure 3.3 Respondents' profile on their residential status.

Along with the questionnaire, respondents were asked about their residential status after describing the differences between the core and buffer zone portions of the World Heritage Sites. Figure 3.3 depicts the various response statuses. Malacca had the most respondents (278), accounting for almost 80% of the total data. However, many of them (56.4%) do not dwell in the Historic City of Melaka's core region, with only 20.5% still residing there now. Only the minority (23.1% of outsiders) comes after that.

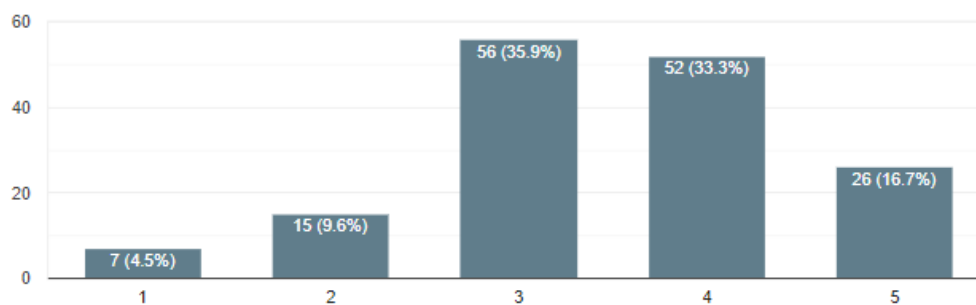


Figure 3.4 Respondents' profile on how well they understand/know the Core Area of the Historic City of Melaka 'Jonker Street'.

*1 being bad, 5 being good.

According to figure 3.4, most respondents are hesitant to state they know Melaka very well, with 35.6% voting for 3 and 33.3% voting for 4. Nonetheless, just 16.7% of those with an educational background or who live in the core zone of the Historical Cities are claimed to be well-versed in the area. Outsiders, visitors, and people from generations Z are unfamiliar

with the core region of Melaka's Historical City. As a result, to learn more about their comprehension and impression of the location, extra questions were devised to investigate how frequently people travel, why, and what they think of the shophouses, particularly F&B businesses in the main region of Melaka's Historical City.

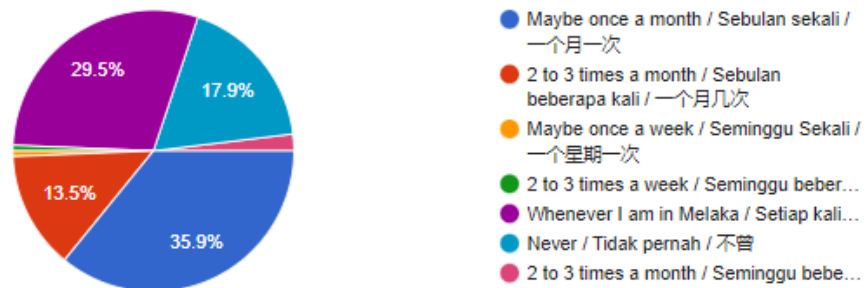


Figure 3.5 Respondents' profiles on how often they will go to have a meal in those hipster cafes on 'Jonker Street'.

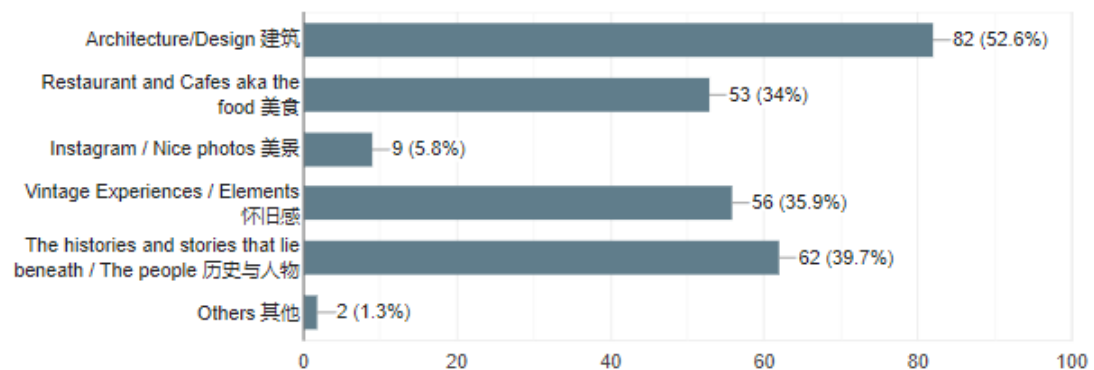


Figure 3.6 Respondents' profile on what they think are the most attractive character 'Jonker Street' has.

Figure 3.5 shows that the majority of respondents (35.9%) will visit a hipster cafe once a week for a meal. According to statistics, tourists, and outsiders (29.5%) will visit anytime they are in Melaka. In these circumstances, cafes continue to play an important role in terms of economic impact. There is also a startling statistic indicating that 17.9% of those who responded stated that they had never gone to this trendy and contemporary eatery. Although, before to receiving the survey findings, the author thinks that eating will be the primary reason why people visit Jonker Street. Figure 3.6, on the other hand, shows that the majority of respondents (52.6%) believe the most appealing element of 'Jonker Street' is the building and design, followed by the history and stories (39.7%) and the so-called vintage experiences (35.9%). Surprisingly, restaurants and food are only ranked fourth (34%). As a result of the data, the majority believe that the design theme and experiences (63.5%), followed by the architecture and design of the building (50%), contribute the most to the character of giving them the best dine-in experience and reasons to want to dine in these cafes. Food and beverage come in third place with a percentage of (47.4%).

To gather more comprehensive information and insights, the questionnaire also included questions aimed at capturing the respondents' perceptions of the adaptive reuse of shophouses into F&B establishments in the core zone of the Historic City in Melaka. Figure 3.7 shows that the majority of respondents believe that some shophouses in the core area of Historic Melaka have been correctly adapted, while others have not.

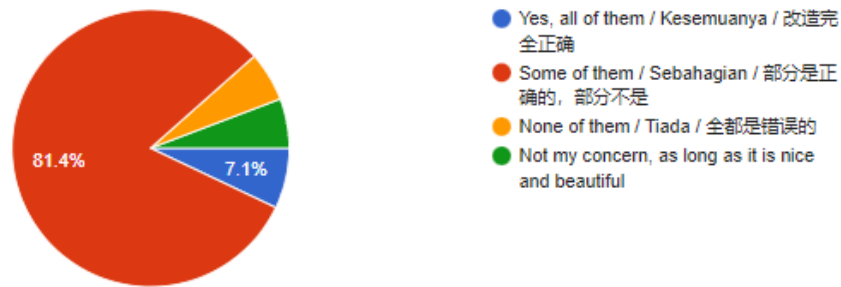


Figure 3.7 Respondents’ profile on, do they think that adaptive reuse of the majority of shophouses into Hipster Cafes in ‘Jonker Street’ today is being correctly done.

To further explore the respondents' opinions on the best dining experiences, a question was designed specifically for this purpose. Figure 3.8 illustrates the analysis of the data, indicating that most respondents (51.9%) chose The Daily Fix as the cafe that provides the best dining experience. Conversely, The Stolen Cup was considered to have the least desirable dining experience, with only 24.4% of respondents selecting it.

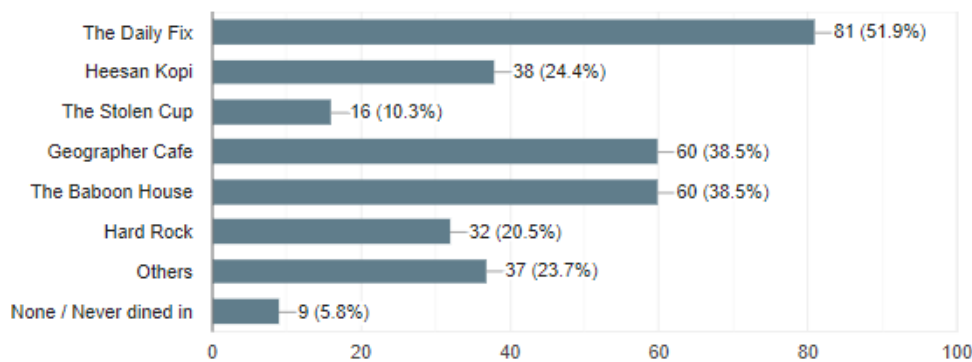


Figure 3.8 Respondents’ profile on which Cafes located in ‘Jonker Street’ have the best dine in experience.

By examining the respondents' perceptions of adaptive reuse and their preferences for specific cafes, this research gains valuable insights into the success and reception of different establishments in the historic core of Melaka. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between adaptive reuse, dining experiences, and the overall perception of the historic city.

As a part-timer and a Malaccan, herself, the author shares the opinion that The Daily Fix Cafe is indeed the best dining establishment among those listed in Figure 3.8. From an architectural standpoint, the cafe's facade showcases minimal intervention and reconstruction. The raw concrete finish of the walls exemplifies the preservation of fall-apart plasters, without covering them with additional layers of paint. This approach allows the walls to "breathe" and prevents excessive moisture accumulation.



Figure 3.9 Interiors of The Daily Fix Cafes in Melaka

Sources: <https://www.eatdrinkkl.com/posts/snapshot/the-daily-fix-cafe-jonker-street-malacca>

The ambiance of The Daily Fix Cafe exudes a vintage vibe, achieved using antique furniture items and decorations. The cafe curates music playlists from the 60s to 80s, further enhancing the vintage and retro theme. Additionally, the cafe incorporates local ingredients such as Gula Melaka (palm sugar) and local cuisine, specifically Baba Nyonya Kuih, into their food and drink menu. These local elements are not only included in the offerings but also actively promoted and suggested to patrons.

The combination of architectural preservation, vintage ambiance, and the inclusion of local ingredients and cuisine contributes to The Daily Fix Cafe's reputation as a top dining establishment. The cafe's commitment to preserving heritage while infusing local cultural elements adds to its appeal and enhances the overall dining experience.



Figure 3.10 Interiors and exterior of The Stolen Cup Cafe in Melaka

Sources: <https://lavie-chicve.blogspot.com/2019/05/TheStolenCup.html>
<https://ottencoffee.co.id/majalah/stolen-cup-melaka>

In contrast, The Stolen Cup Cafe adopts a rustic industrial design that deviates from the authentic appearance of a traditional shophouse. From the provided images, it is evident that the exterior facade has been repainted with black paint, giving it a more modernized look. The interior of the cafe features furniture and decor that align with a contemporary and industrial aesthetic. Research findings indicate that the food served in the cafe leans more towards a Westernized style.

Although The Stolen Cup also aims to create a retro and vintage ambiance, it takes a different approach compared to The Daily Fix Cafe, which incorporates more local characteristics and elements. Consequently, respondents ranked The Stolen Cup as having the least desirable dining experience. This perception arises from the cafe's divergence from the expected characteristics that respondents associate with adaptive reuse of shophouses into cafes. These characteristics include architectural preservation, design coherence, thematic alignment, and overall experiential factors that contribute to a sense of place and belonging.

The differences between The Stolen Cup and The Daily Fix Cafe, particularly in terms of architecture, design, theme, and experience, contribute to the varying perceptions of their dining experiences. The Stolen Cup falls short of meeting the expected criteria identified by the respondents, resulting in its ranking as having the least desirable dining experience among the surveyed cafes.

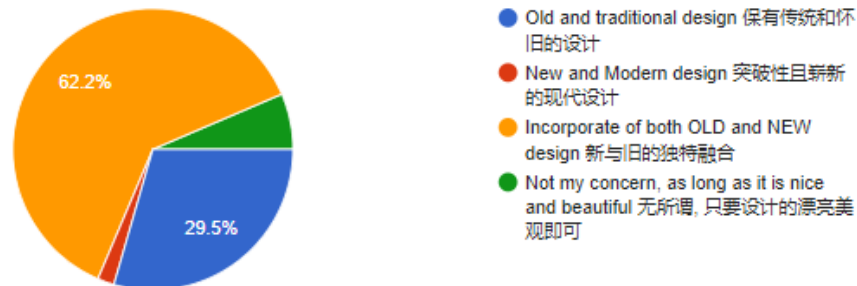


Figure 3.11 Respondents' profile on what they think are those [Architecture / Design] qualities a 'good' cafe in 'Jonker Street' should have.

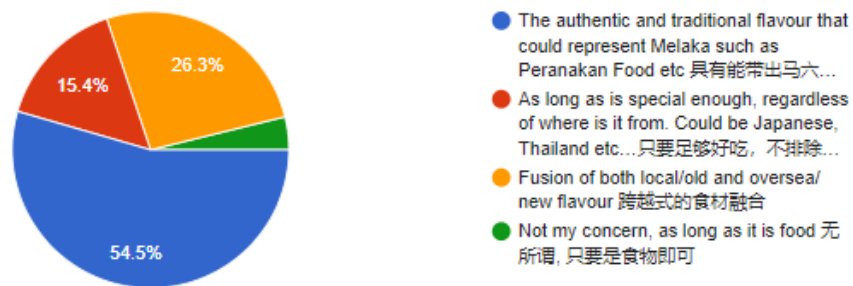


Figure 3.12 Respondents' profile on what are those [Food and Beverage] qualities a 'good' cafe in 'Jonker Street' should have.

Figure 3.11 and Figure 3.12 showcase the desired qualities that respondents expect from the architecture, design, and food aspects when it comes to the adaptive reuse of shophouses into cafes, providing further support to the previous survey findings. The results indicate that an ideal example of adaptive reuse should successfully incorporate both new and old elements in its design.

The Daily Fix Cafe is highlighted as an exemplar in achieving these qualities. It effectively incorporates both new and old design elements, as well as food offerings, while also preserving the authenticity and identity of the place. This ability to strike a balance between the two aspects contributes to its positive perception among respondents.

Conversely, The Stolen Cup appears to fall short in incorporating both new and old elements in its adaptive reuse. The cafe seems to introduce an abundance of new elements, potentially detracting from the desired balance. This deviation from the expected balance might explain why The Stolen Cup received lower ratings in terms of meeting respondents' expectations. The findings suggest that respondents value the preservation of authenticity and the integration of old elements in the adaptive reuse of shophouses into cafes. The Daily Fix Cafe's success in achieving these qualities reinforces its positive perception, while The Stolen Cup's divergence from this balance accounts for its lower ranking in meeting respondents' expectations.

During the 1990s, there was a growing recognition of the value of urban and vernacular heritage, leading to the transformation of shophouses into valuable economic assets through their rejuvenation and repurposing. However, this process has not been without

controversy. The repeal of rent control, despite facing opposition, has paved the way for drastic changes such as demolition, displacement of residents, adaptive reuse of domestic spaces, and the disappearance of local trades.

The restoration and renovation of shophouses have been driven by factors like gentrification and tourism. While these efforts have brought positive outcomes, there is also a recognized concern regarding the "increasing threat of uncontrolled development" associated with gentrification. This threat can have significant negative effects, including the displacement and marginalization of local communities, as well as challenges for businesses in the tourism sector.

Although gentrification was initially perceived as a phenomenon mainly observed in Western countries, it has now become a global phenomenon. The impacts of gentrification can be seen worldwide, as urban areas across different regions experience similar processes of urban renewal, influx of affluent residents, and the transformation of previously neglected buildings into trendy and sought-after spaces (Atkinson & Bridge, 2005).

It is important to acknowledge the dual nature of gentrification, with its potential to bring economic revitalization and positive urban transformations, but also the potential to displace and marginalize local communities. Striking a balance between economic development, preservation of cultural heritage, and the well-being of existing communities is crucial in managing the effects of gentrification and ensuring sustainable urban development (Krase & Desena, 2020).

Revaluations of shophouses in the historical center of Melaka are reminiscent of the 'tourist gentrification' concept developed by Kevin Gotham. In his opinion, gentrification, and tourism, coupled with the desire of large corporations to make the neighborhood a place of entertainment, resulting in greater property values (Gotham, 2005). This was rather distinct at the end of the 1990s, as the city's potential World Heritage bid, and considerable tourism promotion prompted the revaluation of these shophouses from abandoned buildings to commercial assets. Back in those days when many younger generations would move out to developed bigger cities such as Kuala Lumpur or Singapore to earn a living, most of them had no desire to return to these homes, hence they either sell, demolish the decaying structures or renovate and convert them into tourism-related business. Meanwhile, many investors, particularly from Singapore, are willing to pay millions of ringgits for even run-down shophouses. They considered the renovation of old shophouses into economic businesses, such as F&B establishments, boutique hotels, and souvenir shops, as the only option to both preserve, most importantly profit from them.

These 'investors considered gentrification as "saving" the old city from the people who lived there.' The repeal, on the other hand, was a two-edged sword. The increased investment allowed the shophouses to be revitalized. The bulk of former renters and long-term inhabitants were displaced because of the exponential spike in rents and evictions. However, this in turn has eventually altered the sense of place which has not really been emphasized (Szanto, 2015).

An example obtained by Giosa in his study, Mr Chan, a long-time resident of the area in his eighties, recalled sharing space in the shophouses with a variety of residents and traders. He's told stories of how traditional trades, ranging from pharmacies to wholesalers, butchers to old coffee shops, have slowly faded away over the last two decades. Where he used to watch life on the streets from his window, implying that the diversity of the 'good old days' was fading (De Giosa, 2021).

While incorporating new and modern designs in shophouses, it is crucial to apply minimum intervention to preserve their architectural integrity. As expressed by one respondent, there is a sincere request to preserve the orthodox architectural and old-fashioned building designs in Jonker Street without making unnecessary changes to the historic buildings. This

can be achieved through sensible restrictions on renovations, like practices seen in many major cities worldwide. Another suggestion from a respondent emphasizes the importance of tasteful renovations that remain faithful to the historical and aesthetic values of the place and the era in which the shophouses were built.

While revitalization and the introduction of new uses can contribute to the economic growth of the historic city, it is essential to strike a balance between social and economic considerations, particularly in a living heritage site like Melaka. Concerns have been raised about the impact of over-commercialization on the local community. Some respondents feel that the unique identity of Melaka, particularly its Peranakan heritage, has been overshadowed by the influx of global franchises and hipster cafes. The high rents and exorbitant commercialization have made it difficult for locals to continue living in the historic city. This has resulted in a loss of traditional businesses and activities that contribute to the sense of place and community identity. The consequences of over-commercialization, such as traffic issues and lack of tolerance for residents, further highlight the need for a more balanced approach.

The transformation of shophouses into tourism-based establishments has had the unintended consequence of degrading traditional businesses and eroding the soul of the city. During the survey, respondents expressed a desire to revive traditional local arts and crafts instead of selling low-quality souvenirs. It is evident that adaptive reuse should not solely focus on economic purposes but also consider a mixed-use approach that encompasses both residential and commercial functions, as initially intended by the concept of "shophouses."

In summary, while the adaptive reuse of shophouses can bring economic benefits, it is essential to strike a balance between economic development and the preservation of local heritage, community identity, and a sense of place. Minimum intervention, thoughtful renovations, and a mixed-use approach can help maintain the authentic character and social fabric of the historic city while ensuring sustainable development for the benefit of both residents and visitors.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, heritage is a valuable economic and cultural resource that should be preserved for long-term sustainability. However, it faces threats from commercial and general development pressures. While adaptive reuse is seen as a way to bridge the gap between development and conservation, it has limitations not only in the food and beverage industry but also in other commercial uses. Without specific actions and steps, adaptive reuse shophouses may lose their uniqueness and become indistinguishable from modern establishments.

The hypothesis of this study suggests that adaptive reuse should reflect the feelings and understanding of the local community for the place. By evaluating the historical, aesthetic, social, and economic values of architectural heritage through qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, this study has assessed the relationship between these values and the sense of place. The results demonstrate the significance of architectural history and its contribution to the defined values and qualities of 'Jonker Street', as evidenced by the functional and emotional attachment between the place and its community.

Conservation and adaptive reuse should extend beyond preserving the physical aspects of buildings. According to the guidelines for teaching and educating conservation, the purpose of conservation is to represent and maintain the values of cultural heritage. Therefore, the conservation of shophouses should not only serve commercial purposes but also act as a means of cultural preservation and education for the community.

In addition to historical preservation, architectural conservation plays a crucial role in preserving a sense of place within heritage sites. Architecture solidifies and objectifies the

notion of "place", and therefore, architectural conservation aims to preserve the deeper meanings of heritage spaces through modifications of structure, function, and context. Conservation based on a "sense of place" is essential for connecting architectural spaces with humanity and the modern world. By maintaining the integrity of historic sites, people develop a stronger sense of affiliation and responsibility for their preservation, ensuring the survival of these heritage spaces.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Graduate Program in Architectural Conservation in National University of Singapore. I am also extremely grateful to all those who have contributed to completing the survey questionnaire, both known and unknown individuals, particularly during these challenging times of the pandemic. I sincerely appreciate their time and efforts, which have provided me with valuable insights, knowledge, and ideas for the improvement of my research. Thank you, Melaka.

Conflicts of Interest:

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Atkinson, R., & Bridge, G. (2005). *The new urban colonialism: Gentrification in a global context*.
- Aziz, R. A. (2017). Heritage conservation: Authenticity and vulnerability of living heritage sites in Melaka state. *Kajian Malaysia*, 35, 39–58.
- Brown, B., Perkins, D. D., & Brown, G. (2003). Place attachment in a revitalizing neighborhood: Individual and block levels of analysis. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 23(3), 259–271.
- Cohen, E. (1988). Authenticity and commoditization in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15(3), 371–386.
- De Giosa, P. (2021). *World Heritage and Urban Politics in Melaka, Malaysia: A Cityscape Below the Winds*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Den Hartog, D. N., House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Ruiz-Quintanilla, S. A., Dorfman, P. W., Abdalla, I. A., Adetoun, B. S., Aditya, R. N., Agourram, H., & Akande, A. (1999). Culture specific and cross-culturally generalizable implicit leadership theories: Are attributes of charismatic/transformational leadership universally endorsed? *The Leadership Quarterly*, 10(2), 219–256.
- Gotham, K. F. (2005). Tourism gentrification: The case of new Orleans' vieux carre (French Quarter). *Urban Studies*, 42(7), 1099–1121.
- Grazian, D. (2018). Demystifying authenticity in the sociology of culture. In *Routledge handbook of cultural sociology* (pp. 168–176). Routledge.
- Henderson, J. C., Liew, G., Ong, J., & Quek, B. (2013). The use of urban built heritage for boutique hotels: Examples from Malaysia and Singapore. *Tourism Review International*, 17(2), 63–74.
- ICOMOS. (2006). *International council on monuments and sites*. ICOMOS.
- Jefferson, C. S. (2005). *Adaptive Reuse: Recent hotel conversions in downtown Philadelphia*.
- Jorgensen, B. S., & Stedman, R. C. (2011). Measuring the spatial component of sense of place: A methodology for research on the spatial dynamics of psychological experiences of places. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 38(5), 795–813.
- Krase, J., & Desena, N. J. (2020). *Gentrification around the World, Volume I*. Springer.
- Lefebvre, H., Nicholson-Smith, D., & Lefebvre, H. (2013). *The production of space* (33. print). Blackwell Publishing.
- Lim, W. S.-W. (2000). Memories and urban places. *City*, 4(2), 270–277.

- Low, S. M., & Altman, I. (1992). *Place attachment: A conceptual inquiry*. Springer.
- Morgan, P. (2010). Towards a developmental theory of place attachment. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 30*(1), 11–22.
- Orbasli, A., & Barch, D. (2009). Re-using existing buildings towards sustainable regeneration. *School of Architecture: Place and Culture Identity Group Working Paper*.
- Othman, R. N. R. (2017). The impact of gentrification on local urban heritage identity in old quarter, Melaka heritage city. *PLANNING MALAYSIA, 15*.
- Rossi, A. (1982). *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge. Mass.
- Said, S. Y., Aksah, H., & Ismail, E. D. (2013). Heritage conservation and regeneration of historic areas in Malaysia. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 105*, 418–428.
- Samadi, Z. B. (2010). *Integrating Architectural Heritage: An Approach for Urban Revitalization*.
- Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2010). Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 30*(1), 1–10.
- Stovel, H. (2004). Authenticity in conservation decision-making: The world heritage perspective. *Journal of Research in Architecture and Planning, 3*, 1–8.
- Szanto, E. (2015). Faedah M. Totah, Preserving the Old City of Damascus, Contemporary Issues in the Middle East (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014). Pp. 320. \$39.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780815633495. *International Journal of Middle East Studies, 47*(3), 632–634.
- Toore, M. (1999). Heritage Conservation and Values in Globalizing Societies. Retrieved from Getty Conservation Institute: [Http://Www. Chtalliance. Com/about. Htm](http://www.chtalliance.com/about.htm).
- Townshend, T., & Pendlebury, J. (1999). Public participation in the conservation of historic areas: Case-studies from north-east England. *Journal of Urban Design, 4*(3), 313–331.
- Wahab, L. A., Zain, N. M., Abidin, Z. Z., Saberi, M. H., & Bakar, N. A. (2018). Adaptive reuse of heritage buildings as hotels in Melaka and George Town-UNESCO World heritage cities. *The Journal of Social Sciences Research, 22–27*.
- Wilkinson, S., James, K., & Reed, R. (2009). Delivering sustainability through the adaptive reuse of commercial buildings: The Melbourne CBD challenge. *PRRES 2008: Proceedings of the Pacific Rim Real Estate Society 15th Annual Conference, 1–19*.