

## **Building Lenggong World Heritage Site Brand Identity: Assessing Core Values Of Local Community**

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*This paper looks into the preliminary but yet critical step in developing a strong brand for the Lenggong Valley World Heritage site, that is the development of the site's brand identity. The Lenggong Valley has recently been listed as UNESCO's world heritage site. At this nascent stage, it is critical that the brand identity of the site is identified to ensure consistency and effectiveness of future promotion and marketing efforts. Brand identity in this study refers to the brand elements considered important by the stakeholders to be projected to the target audience. It represents the stakeholders' promise to the audience. As established in the literature, in developing tourism destination brand identity, it is important that the aspirations and cultural values of the brand owner (e.g. local residents, state and central Governments) is established at an early stage so that the development of tourism destinations will be pegged to their aspirations and values rather than external and alien values. The agreement of the stakeholders on the brand identity is very important not only to ensure a consistent and integrated brand identity will be projected to tourists, but also to assure that they will support and work together for the sustainability of the Lenggong Valley WHS. This research assesses the core values and aspirations of one of the key stakeholders of the Lenggong Valley World Heritage Site that is the local community. Twenty local community representatives, including the head of village and the head of an indigenous tribe, and local residents were interviewed to gain insights on what they consider to be key values to be encapsulated as the identity of the Lenggong Valley World Heritage Site. The findings revealed that the local community's values do not coincide with the values that were promoted in getting the valley enlisted as the World Heritage Site. The heritage that is highly valued by the local community encompasses non-archaeological heritage.*

**Key word:** archaeological heritage, archaeological tourism, branding, brand identity, destination brand

### **Introduction**

The Lenggong Valley was declared UNESCO's World Heritage Site in July 2012. The valley was selected based on its rich paleontological findings that span close to

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two million years, one of the longest records of early man in a single locality, and the oldest outside the African continent.

Consequent to the declaration, a pertinent question is how to develop the Lenggong Valley World Heritage Site (LVWHS) as a strong destination brand. The argument for developing the site as a brand is that strong resonance will be developed between the stakeholders and the destination that will encourage stewardship for the protection and preservation of the site. A strong brand will also contribute towards developing sustainable tourism at the site, characterized as a tourism that is ecologically sustainable, economically viable as well as ethically and socially equitable. The research presented here is part of a wider study on developing a strong brand for the LVWHS conducted under the Strategic Tourism Research Cluster, Universiti Sains Malaysia. The branding process often starts with identifying and developing the internal dimension of the brand, the brand identity. This paper explores the essence of the brand identity from the perspective of the local community to inform the development of the brand identity for the LVWHS.

Brand identity refers to the inclusion of brand associations considered important by the brand owner (or stakeholders) to be featured on the target audience and is a representation of the brand promise to the audience (Aaker, 2010). In this paper, the brand identity of destination is approached from the value-based perspective (Saraniemi 2009; Wheeler *et. al* 2011). The value-based perspective emphasises the values of internal stakeholders (e.g. local residents, state and central Governments) as opposed to external stakeholders (e.g. tourists) in developing the brand identity.

It is critical that the aspirations and cultural values of the internal stakeholders, particularly the local community, be established at an early stage so that the development of tourism destinations will be pegged to the values of local culture and not driven by the external values driven by commercialisation (Konecnik and Go, 2008). A brand identity that encapsulates the values of the local community will allow them to relate to the brand and encourage them to 'live' the brand and assume stewardship in the promotional, protection and preservation activities. Since the Lenggong Valley has been declared a world heritage site, we focus our research on the meaning of heritage as the essence to the LVWHS brand identity. Specifically, the questions that we seek to answer are (1) what does the term heritage mean to the local community and whether the community's perspectives on heritage are parallel to what have been declared by UNESCO (i.e. archaeological heritage) (2) what does the term world heritage mean to the local community (3) what are the key brand identity elements from the local community perspectives that could be identified for the LVWHS?

## **Literature Review**

### ***Destinations as a Brand***

Brands are products that have been augmented in some ways to make it different from other similar products (Aaker 2010; Keller 2012). For example, archaeological heritage destinations, such as the Olduvai Gorge and the Lenggong Valley World Heritage Site, may be perceived as similar by the uninitiated. On the other hand, heritage destinations that have been differentiated through the values endowed on the brand name will help stakeholders generate a unique meaning to the destination brand.

Destination branding, however, are more complex than product branding because a destination brand (1) is more multidimensional than product brands, (2) has heterogenous stakeholders, is politically more complex, (3) requires a bottom-up approach that encapsulates community consensus, (4) is hard to measure in terms of its brand loyalty and (5) often faces problems in funding in both scale and consistency (Pike 2005). The third point on community consensus is particularly pertinent to the the development of brand identity of an archaeological heritage destination. The community consensus on the identity of the destination will ensure that they will feel ‘in sync’ with the brand, that is to have brand resonance (Keller 2012), such that they will be willing to assume stewardship in promoting, protecting and preserving the destination heritage. Brand resonance can be categorized into four categories: behavioural loyalty (e.g. consistently promoting the destination brand), attitudinal attachment (e.g. viewing the archaeological heritage as special), sense of community (e.g. feeling of community ownership over the destination) and active engagement (e.g. actively participating in conservation efforts or promoting the archaeological sites).

In building a strong brand, Keller (2001) suggested four steps 1) establishing the proper brand identity to create brand awareness, 2) creating the appropriate brand meaning through strong, favourable and unique brand associations, 3) eliciting positive, accessible brand responses, and 4) forging brand relationships with customers that are characterized by intense, active loyalty. This research focuses on the first and crucial step, that is developing the brand identity for the LVWHS.

### ***Destination Brand Identity***

At the core of a brand is its identity. Brand identity refers to the set of unique associations that represents what the brand stands for and encapsulates the brand owners’ promise of value or benefit to the customers (Aaker 2010; Kapferer 1999; Keller 2012). While a brand may have numerous elements associated to it, only the most salient among these associations form a brand’s identity (Keller 2012). These salient elements acts as the identifying factor and differentiate the brand from the rest of the competitors (Keller 2012, Aaker 2010). It is important to note that the concept of brand identity differs from the concept of brand image in that brand identity refers to the quality and values perceived by the brand owner whereas brand image refers to the values quality and values perceived by the consumers. The images that are formed by the consumers are not necessarily the ones that originate from or aspired by the brand owner.

The key to successful branding is to identify the brand identity clearly and communicate it effectively to the target consumers (Aaker 2010) because the brand identity helps consumers in their meaning making process. An identity that is distinctive and relevant provides added value to the consumers and helps the brand to generate market preference and command a price premium (Schmitt and Simonson 1997). Moreover, a consistent identity generates trust among consumers and encourages brand loyalty (Godeswar 2008).

Drawing from the brand marketing literature, the concept of brand identity has also been adapted to tourism destination context. In general, the principles are similar to product or service brand identity in that destination brand identity refers to essence of the destination or the destination’s sense of place. Like product or service brands, the identity is derived from the set of associations such as the geographical and

physical attractions, cultural elements and personality that are linked to the destination.

Unlike product and service brand identity development, the concept of brand identity are more complex in the destination context due to the multidimensional nature of brand destinations that involves multidisciplinary roots, numerous stakeholders and landscapes that lead to multiple identities that may or may not happily co-exist (Wheeler *et. al* 2011). For example, while the identity of products and services are defined based on the brand owner's perspective, the identity of destinations needs to refer to the various 'brand owners' or stakeholders that may lay claim to the destination. In the case of archaeological destinations, these stakeholders may include the state and federal government representatives, the archaeologists working on the site, the local tourist operators and the local community that may have contradicting perspectives on which elements should forms the core identity.

The value-based approach has been proposed as one of the solutions in addressing the complexity in developing brand identity (e.g. Wheeler *et. al* 2011; Saraniemi 2009). The value-based approach emphasises the 'buy-in' of the internal stakeholders so that they will 'live' the brand and assume stewardship in developing, maintaining and promoting the brand's core essence. In this approach, destination brands are designed to create a unique and appealing identity conveying values that are consciously or intuitively linked to the destination's sense of place (Williams *et. al* 2004). As brand identity by definition is inherently related to the internal stakeholders (i.e. those other than the customers or tourists), the value-based approach in developing brand identity focuses on engaging the values and identity of the internal stakeholders (Wheeler *et. al* 2011). These internal stakeholders are considered as the 'brand owners' as they are directly (e.g. tour guides) or indirectly involved (local community) in delivering the brand experience by facilitating the brand experience and the formation of the sense of place for the visitor.

The value-based approach in branding views brand identity not as something that a destination has (e.g. monuments and local food) but something that emerges from the interaction between the visitors and internal stakeholders (Cornelissen and Harris 2001). The interaction between the visitors and the internal stakeholders facilitate the visitors in conveying not only the objective meaning of the their various encounters with the destination attractions (e.g. monuments and food) but also their subjective, emotional values, thus providing a deeper level of meaning to their experience at the destination (Saraniemi 2010; Wheeler *et. al* 2011). As the brand promise is ultimately delivered through the interaction between the visitors and the internal stakeholders it is imperative that brand identity identified for the destination reflect first and foremost the value of the internal stakeholders as opposed to value of the visitors (Wheeler *et. al* 2011). Thus, the value-based approach emphasises both the functional benefits that visitors derive from the tangible offerings (e.g. monuments and food) but also the symbolic benefits derived from intangible offerings (e.g. the emotional connection to the monument and food).

It is imperative, however, that the destination brand identity that has been identified is agreed upon by all the key internal stakeholders. The buy-in of these stakeholders are important so that the core values of the brand will be communicated consistently through a set of shared meaning (Morgan *et. al* 2003). Conflicting views among the stakeholders and will result in the failure of the destination to deliver its promise. It is acknowledged, however, that identifying the values that all internal stakeholders will agree upon is not an easy task as these stakeholders "consumed" the

destination brand for different purposes including investment (e.g. tourist operators), academic pursuits (archaeologists) and employment (Wheeler et. al 2011). In this study, the values of the local community will be explored as a first step towards developing the brand identity for the LVWHS.

### **Background Of The Lenggong Valley World Heritage Site**

The Lenggong Valley is a small district that lies in Hulu Perak, about 100 km away from Ipoh, the capital of Perak. The valley is surrounded by lush forests and hills featuring a number of rivers, waterfalls, caves and lakes. The valley was declared as UNESCO World Heritage Site in July 2012.

The LVWHS features four archaeological sites in two clusters which span from 1.83 million to 1,700 years ago, one of the longest records of early man in a single locality, and the oldest outside the African continent. The number of sites found in the relatively contained area suggests the presence of a fairly large, semi-sedentary population with cultural remains from the Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Metal ages.

The archaeological heritage are found in open-air and cave sites with Palaeolithic tool workshops that provide evidence of early technology. Workshop sites containing multiple tool types dating to 70,000 b.p were found at Kota Tampan, 200,000-100,000 b.p at Bukit Jawa, 40,000 b.p at Bukit Bunuh and 1000 b.p at Gua Harimau. Undisturbed *in situ* Palaeolithic stone tool workshops were also found on the shores of a paleolake and ancient river gravel beds and dated in a long chronological sequence. Hand axes found at Bukit Bunuh were among the oldest discovered outside of Africa, dating to 1.83 million ago thus suggesting an extremely early date for hominid presence in South-East Asia.

The Perak Man, South-East Asia's oldest most complete human skeleton, was discovered within Gua Gunung Runtuh cave. Perak Man is. It is radiocarbon dated to 10,120 b.p. The Perak Man was identified as Australomelanesoid, a hominid type occupying the western part of the Indonesia archipelago and continental South-East Asia at the end of the Pleistocene and early Holocene.

### **Methodology**

The findings are based on in-depth interviews with 20 purposely composed samples of the Lenggong Valley local community. They are chosen to provide the layman perspectives of the local community of various social, cultural and functional backgrounds. They are not expected to provide expert views on archaeological heritage.

One respondent was the head of the Lenggong village that consists of several smaller villages. His work as the village head allowed him to gain in-depth insights on the social, cultural and economic aspects of the local community. He is also a historian by interest and has in-depth knowledge on the history of the valley.

Four of the respondents were members of the Lanoh indigenous group, or *orang asli Lanoh* – one of them is the head of the village, and the other three are individuals from different age groups (teenager, mid-thirties and elderly). The *orang asli Lanoh* represent the oldest members of the Lenggong Valley community and are expected to have in-depth knowledge on the heritage of the Lenggong Valley.

Two respondents were selected because their occupation allowed them to work close to the archaeological sites – one was the security guard at the archaeological field research centre and the other was the janitor at the caves

archaeological sites. The two, although not experts in the field of archaeology or heritage, have some awareness on the significance of the archaeological heritage.

Thirteen other respondents were individuals from six villages (the Ring, Beng, Geluk, Luat, Dinding and Geluk villages) that are located close to the archaeological sites. The Ring and Beng villages attract many tourists as they are located on an island abreast a river. The respondents from all six villages varied in their age, gender and occupation. The interviews ranged from half an hour to two hours. The objective of the interview was to gain rich and meaningful data. Interpretive thematic analysis was used to identify themes that help to answer the research questions.

## **Findings**

### ***The Meaning of Heritage***

In exploring the essence of the LVWHS identity, the local community was inquired on what the term heritage meant to them. The respondents indicated that in general the term referred to the elements from the past that have been passed down from one generation to another. The elements may include both the tangibles such as artifacts, the natural environment and the intangibles such as ancestral line, myths, folklores and cultural manifestations including food, language, traditional dances, everyday norms and rituals. It is important to note, however, that the responses from the indigenous group, or *orang asli*, were markedly different from the other local community. The *orang asli* grappled with the concept of heritage, struggling with the dichotomy of the past and present, and the concept of the ordinary and special. In the discussion below, attempts have been made to differentiate the responses between the *orang asli* and the local community.

Top of mind to the local community when asked about the meaning of heritage was the natural environment including the caves, rivers, waterfalls, lakes and hills around the Lenggong Valley. Of these natural environment, the caves (or *gua* in the Malay language) were most highly appreciated because they have to an extent become one of the key identifying elements of Lenggong. The respondents indicated that the caves have drawn foreign and local visitors of different types, from the ordinary tourists to reknown professors, thus putting the remote small town of Lenggong on the world map. The respondents were aware that the caves attract visitors not only due to its physical attractiveness but also the archaeological richness that are hidden inside, particularly the with the findings of the Perak Man at the Gua Gunung Runtuh, and artefacts of such as pots and tools, and cave paintings in the other local caves. The respondents were aware that the caves have been gazzeted as national heritage under the purview of the National Heritage Department. It is important to note here that it is the cave on its own that are top of mind to the respondents rather than the archaeological findings. To the respondents, the archaeological findings were secondary in its importance as the caves in itself is special to them.

Interestingly, while the archaeological findings in the caves were clearly the key attractions to the visitors and become a national pride, they do not seem to be the key reason that have held the fascination of the local community. Instead, the local community were more keen to talk about the myths and folklores that are linked to the caves. Many talked about the rock formations inside the caves, purported to be the petrified humans and animals that have been cursed by a mythical force. For example, in the Gua Puteri one could find the rock formation of a princess, draped in a wedding gown, who had been cursed during her wedding. According to the

respondents, the local community used to be able to go to the the caves and request for wedding paraphernalia such as pots and pans that would appear in the caves the next day. The *orang asli* on the other hand did not appear to have the caves top of mind despite the fact that they believe the archaeological findings, including the Perak Man, were of *orang asli* origins. The *orang asli* used to live in the Gua Puteri or known as Gua Kajang to them, and thus the caves were viewed as part of life practicalities (i.e. providing shelter or in some cases used as a cemetery).

Other than the caves, the scenic elements of the Lenggong Valley are considered to be a valuable heritage. The local community is proud that the area has many natural attractions such as rivers, waterfalls, hills and forests that are still untouched by modernisation. To them the natural environment offers peace and tranquility, and sets their life apart from the busy life of the city. They are happy to share the nature with visitors and believe that while the visitors' key intention of visiting Lenggong might be to visit the archaeological sites it is the natural environment that will make them want them to stay longer. It appears from their responses that the archaeological heritage are important in drawing the visitors in but it is the natural environment that local community would really like to share. Their work as farmers, rubber tappers and fishermen have brought them close to nature and have made them highly appreciative of it. The *orang asli* in particular rely heavily on the forests for their daily income, everyday sustenance and medicine. Thus the natural environment resonates with the life of the local community and the *orang asli* more than the archaeological findings. They are able to articulate what it means to visitors better than what they could with the archaeological findings which meanings are felt better left to the interpretation of the academics and relevant authorities.

Many respondents refer to their Pattani ancestral line as part of the important heritage of the Lenggong Valley. The Pattanis are of the Thai origin and have incidentally become Malaysians due to historical resolutions over land ownership between the old Thai government and the colonial British. The local Pattanis consider themselves different from the other local Perak residents mostly due to their dialect, which to some extent is a language of its own with unique words that are not shared elsewhere in the country. Within the Lenggong community, the dialect sets the Pattanis and non-Pattanis apart. A respondent have even compiled a list of Pattani words that he has been sharing with a university professor. In terms of personality, the Pattanis in the Lenggong Valley describe themselves as friendly people who are easy to get along and are hospitable to visitors. These personality traits appear to be the pride of the community and are mentioned by almost all respondents.

The respondents also referred to their way of life as an important heritage. The communal elements are particularly strong in the community. House visits, either to visit the sick or just for a friendly chat, are common among the local community and are done during free time. To them the house visits allow them to show that they care for their neighbours and also a way to get the latest news. The village head explained that houses used to be built with a common, open area that adjoins the front part of the house and the kitchen. Visitors would know to head straight to the common area, bearing gifts during visits. These type of houses, however, are no longer around. A revisit to the past by rebuilding the houses might help to keep the tradition alive and at the same time help develop a stronger sense of place to the community and visitor alike. Another indication of strong communal elements are the concept of *gotong-royong*, identified as the idea of running community tasks together such as holding a wedding reception or cleaning the environment. While *gotong-royong* is not uncommon in Malaysia, the Lenggong community believes that the concept is

actively kept alive in Lenggong through regular group activities such as cleaning the environment and repairing the community mosque. A unique tradition is the grating of coconut activity, or *kukur kelapa*, which is done manually during the preparation for a wedding reception. The youth in the village will get together and sing along during the activity.

Food is another heritage that is the pride of the community. A food festival was held recently to showcase 52 local food, mostly derived from fresh water fish and local vegetations. The local community believes that their food is special because it is produced from sources that are grown or harvested locally and organically. The food might be available outside of Lenggong but they feel that the method and the ingredients used make them different in quality and taste. An example is the *ikan pekasam* (salty, fermented fish) that the community feels is of better quality than those from other places, attested by the fact that it is now a global export. Some food are unique to the valley, such as the *Ikan Cicah Air Kerabu* (fish dipped in a special herbal sauce), *Bloh Tok* (herbal, fermented fish), *Kebebe* (salad of various pounded leaves and seeds), and *Gulai Kemahang* (curry made of the kemahang root). The *orang asli* on the other hand feel that their food is ordinary and would not be of interest to visitors as they are not used to it. When probed on what they mean by ordinary, they explained that they prefer to eat rice and fish mixed with herbs cooked inside bamboo sticks because that would lend to a unique taste. Not realising that visitors may consider their 'ordinary' food as something special, for visitors they will cook curry chicken or food which visitors are more familiar with and cooked in normal pots and pans. An apparent difference here is that in the interaction with visitors, the *orang asli* strive to be hospitable by catering to the norms of the visitors and are prepared to be flexible in their way to meet those norms. While they are proud of their heritage, they might feel that their ways are too alien to the visitors; or perhaps they might feel that their ways are privy to the them and are not comfortable to share them with the visitors. The local community on the other hand is more enthusiastic about sharing their food and culture with visitors.

Myths and folklores permeate the responses of many respondents when explaining the origin of the places in the Lenggong Valley. Many extraordinary features of the place are traced to the works of mythical creatures such as one that had cursed a princess into a stone and another that has thrown a big rock from Kelantan (far east to Lenggong) which led to the formation of small lake in the area. Many of the names of the places in the area are linked to folklores. For example, Bukit Bunuh, literally translated as the Murder Hill, are better known among the local community for the tales of a husband and wife murder mystery rather than the paleontological evidence of human evolution dating back to 1.83 million years ago, one of the oldest in the world. Another area, Kampung Geluk is said to owe its name to a gold vessel (geluk) that appeared in the nearby river. What is quite intriguing is that the respondents seem to be convinced that the myths and folklores are historical facts that should be included in the interpretation of the area as a heritage site. The myths and folklores hold a special meaning for the local community in that they have turned the ordinary into something unusual, thus contributing to the uniqueness of the Lenggong Valley.

Archaeological findings are only top of mind to a few respondents when asked about the meaning of heritage. Of all the archaeological findings that have been excavated in Lenggong, the Perak Man predominates the responses. The respondents are aware of its existence and are able to provide considerable details on its identifying features and the location that it was found. However, their explanation did



not include the significance of the findings in terms of human evolution or culture, or what the findings mean personally to them other than the fact that it has made Lenggong famous at the national and global level. Their descriptions, based on what they have read in available literature or what they have heard from authoritative sources, are cursory, impersonal and lack the passion that accompanied the descriptions of the other abovementioned heritage. Perak Man, as a heritage, therefore does not resonate well with the local community, and it appeared to belong more to the 'others' (e.g. archaeologists, heritage authorities and the academia) rather than them. There are also respondents who disputed the interpretation of the the archaeologists based on religious grounds and ancestral historical accounts that ran in contrast to the interpretations. Nevertheless, they do acknowledge that the Perak Man is a significant, world-class finding and ought to be featured in the promotion of LVWHS.

The more recent paleontological findings at Bukit Bunuh that has led to the eventual listing of Lenggong Valley as UNESCO's world heritage site are hardly mentioned by the respondents. Many of the respondents are aware that there have been recent significant excavation at the site but are not seemed to be aware of the specifics of the findings. The only respondent who is knowledgeable on the Bukit Bunuh findings is a man who has worked as a security guard at the archaeologists research centre since the 1980s. He has also been a helping hand for the archaeologists at the excavation sites. His interactions with the archaeologists have made him well versed with the various archaeological findings in the area and thus is able to articulate the archaeological methods used in the field, the geological formation of over time, the meteor impact on the site and the significance of each of the archaeological findings. The Bukit Bunuh findings, despite bearing a significant meaning to the world of archaeology and reputed to challenge the current Out-of-the Africa Theory on human evolution, remain elusive to the local community.

The responses above revealed that to the local community the word heritage are linked more to historical elements with personal relevance such as the natural environment and cultural effects rather than archaeological findings that are excavated and found by 'others'. The heritage that they highlighted seems to have been assimilated as part and parcel of their life as a Lenggong residence, and hence it could be argued that the heritage have become part of their extended identity. The same, however, could not be said about the archaeological heritage. There was a sense of a distance when the respondents talked about the archaeological findings. As a heritage, the archaeological findings have yet neither to gain personal relevance with the local residents nor ownership. The sense of place of Lenggong therefore emanate more from the non-archaeological heritage.

### ***The Meaning of World Heritage***

The respondents were also asked on what the term world heritage means to them. Only the security guard working at the archaeological research centre could relate it to the UNESCO WHS listing and was able to identify Bukit Bunuh as the key site for the the paleontological findings that led to the eventual listing of the Lenggong Valley on the UNESCO's WHS listing. The other respondents appeared perplexed by the term but tried to provide an answer. Although some have heard of the term and that Lenggong Valley would be made a world heritage site they were not able to explain what the term actually means. Many felt that the term world heritage should relate to things from a considerable past as opposed to things from the immediate past. They also felt that a world heritage should be unique, referring to things that do not exist

anywhere else. According to some respondents, a world heritage should also be something that people from all around the world could appreciate. They felt that there are heritage that are of value to the local community but not to the people around the world, particularly those that have to do with the lifestyle and culture of the local community that are only relevant to them and thus are not of world-standard.

When asked for an example of a world heritage from the Lenggong Valley, the Perak Man appears as the clear favourite. The responses indicate that the choice could be attributed to the fact that the Perak Man has received wide recognition because it has been greatly researched by local and international researchers, has been officially recognised as a national heritage by the National Heritage Department and is also mentioned in history textbooks in schools. The respondents are unaware of the significance of the paleontological findings at Bukit Bunuh. This particular findings indicate that more work needs to be done in raising the awareness of the local community on the significance of the findings at Bukit Bunuh and how in combination of the other findings at the Lenggong Valley has led to its world heritage listing.

While raising awareness on the listing of the Lenggong Valley as a world heritage site is clearly in order, the more important task is to raise the level of stewardship among the local residents. At the moment, the local community do not seem to be able to relate to the archaeological heritage at the personal level. The archaeological heritage does not contribute to the local community's sense of belonging nor to their own identity as a Lenggong resident. As true stewardship could only occur if the archaeological heritage could lend a special meaning to the local community, the task for the brand manager is to develop a strategy in creating brand resonance that is linked to the archaeological findings.

### ***Brand Identity Elements***

When asked about the key identitying elements of the Lenggong Valley, they felt that the elements that are most synonym to the Lenggong Valley are the the *Perak Man* and the *Ikan Pekasam*. The Perak Man was rather an obvious choice considering that it has been widely acclaimed at the national and international level. The local community knew that the Lenggong Valley has made it on the world map because of the Perak Man. In another perspective it is an interesting choice because based on the findings presented above the Perak Man does not appear to bear significant personal relevance to the respondents. Yet, it has been chosen as the element to identify the Lenggong Valley. It could be implied that the the choice therefore was based on the outsider perspective, driven by the qualities and values that the local community think would be relevant to the visitors (the brand image) as opposed to qualities and values that are relevant to the community itself (the true brand identity). It has been warned that the use of such brand identity would lead to destination brands that fail to evoke a sense of place (Roberts and Hall 2001; *Wheeler et. al* 2011). It would be hard for the visitors to a form a meaningful engagement with the local community and tap on their knowledge when the community could only participate superficially in the interaction. The challenge in featuring the Perak Man as the key identity element of the Lenggong Valley WHS therefore is to develop an interpretation of the Perak Man that would be of value to the local residents.

The choice of the *Ikan Pekasam* as a brand identity element, while not an obvious choice, is nevertheless could be viewed as driven more by the internal stakeholders' perspective as opposed to the outsiders' perspective. To the local

community the *ikan pekasam* is valued not only as part of the local menu but also as a source of income to the many residents. The fact that it is now a global export has turned it into a local pride. Like the *Perak Man*, the *ikan pekasam* has also gone under academic research that has led to the establishment of the *ikan pekasam* production centre. Unlike the *Perak Man*, however, the *ikan pekasam* resonate at a personal level. The local community has a sense of ownership of this culinary heritage and would be able to offer a more meaningful engagement and more authentic brand experience to the visitors such as through the detailed explanation of the processing of the *ikan pekasam* or by cooking the *ikan pekasam* for the visitors' consumption. The choice of *ikan pekasam* as the key identifying element of Lenggong, however, poses a problem in terms of building the Lenggong Valley WHS as a destination brand because it does not have much to do with the area being promoted as a world heritage site. While it might not be feasible from the tourism perspective to feature the *ikan pekasam* as the core identity element, the *ikan pekasam* could be incorporated as one of the extended identity elements.

### **Conclusion And Implications**

The findings of this research indicate that the meaning of heritage for the local community of Lenggong Valley does not coincide well with what has been listed in the UNESCO's world heritage listing. The UNESCO declaration commemorates the archaeological heritage of the Lenggong Valley because it bears significance to the current understanding of human evolution. The significance of the archaeological heritage, however, does not seem to strike much resonance with the local community. Instead, heritage to them, refers more to things that are personally relevant such as the natural environment, their ancestral line, their way of life, folklores and myths, and food. Although they do acknowledge the significance of the archaeological heritage they do not seem to be able to have an emotional or psychological attachment to it. The implication is that it will be a challenge to engage the local community to participate in the promotion, protection and preservation of the LVWHS if its brand identity is formulated based on the archaeological heritage alone. It is suggested that action is taken to encourage a higher level of emotional and psychological attachment to the archaeological heritage, perhaps through activities that will encourage the community to learn more about how the archaeological heritage are relevant to them now as well as the future. At the same time, the non-archaeological heritage that are highly valued by the community should also be incorporated as the extended identity of the LVWHS.

The findings also suggest that to the local community the key archaeological heritage that can be claimed to be world heritage is the *Perak Man*. Surprisingly, they do not seem to be aware of the more significant paleontological findings in Bukit Bunuh that has led to the valley being declared a world heritage site. The findings at Bukit Bunuh seem to be only appreciated by the 'others' such as the archaeologists, local and international researchers, local and foreign tourists. The mismatch in knowledge and awareness between the 'others' and the local community may prove detrimental to the sustainable development of LVWHS. Firstly, the local community might be communicating a brand story that does not relate to the paleontological heritage, thus failing to generate an authentic experience for visitors who are more interested in the paleontological heritage. Visitors might also be confused by the inconsistent stories that they experience through the media and their experience at the LVWHS. Secondly, it will be a challenge gaining stewardship from the local

community in terms of protecting and preserving the paleontological heritage would be harder than from the outside community. Protection and preservation effort may fall on deaf ears among the local community.

The non-archaeological heritage that were highlighted by the local community could be featured as the extended identity elements for the LVWHS. The LVWHS could be promoted as an area that are steeped in heritage, whereby the key heritage would be the key archaeological findings and the supporting elements would be the tangible and intangible heritage that bear more personal meaning to the local community. In doing this, a rich brand story could be developed for the brand. More importantly, the sense of place could be evoked to enrich the visitors' experience.

This research highlighted the key brand values from the local community perspectives. The alarming finding is that their values do not seem to coincide with the values that are promoted in getting the valley enlisted as the World Heritage Site. Although one might be inclined to dismiss such findings on the grounds that the local community has not been properly educated, the better response is to explore more on why there has been such a gap and how to bridge the gap. To this end, however, the research has only explored the values of one key stakeholders, namely the local community. More research is required on other internal stakeholders such as the tourist operators and local small and medium entrepreneurs to gain a better insight on the core values of the brand.

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