

Heritage Reclamation: Focusing on Negeri Sembilan's Minangkabau Cultural Landscape

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ABSTRACT--*The focus of this paper is to examine the importance of cultural landscape reclamation, as well as historical values with which historical occurrences and incidences are associated. The study strives to gain insights from traditional cultural values and the importance of their reclamation in society. Indeed, most of the historical occurrences emerge as human legacies because different generations interact with the perceived heritage traditions and values. As such, cultural landscape reclamation refer to a practice of regaining human legacy's valuable heritage, with the latter reflecting the original culture and identity of a given community or place – but destroyed at some point. Therefore, the objective of the current study is to examine the reclamation of a cultural landscape in Negeri Sembilan's Minangkabau, as well as establish some of the feasible strategies that could be implemented to ensure that the traditions are protected; besides shielding the identity and local practices from being eroded. Indeed, the study adopts qualitative research, with a survey technique used to collect data via the administration of questionnaires. From the results, it is evident that the decision to define a community's identity is critical because it preserves its traditions. Also, identity is seen to aid in the characterization and distinguishing of a given community from the rest of society. The eventuality is that the preservation of a group's traditions needs to be preceded by addressing local identity, a trend achieved through landscape reclamation.*

Keywords: *traditions, heritage, the Minangkaba, cultural landscape, reclamation*

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of cultural landscape paves the way for an in-depth analysis and understanding of the uniqueness of different regions, especially due to cultural meanings attached to the given landscape. Indeed, not all regions belong to the category of cultural landscapes, even in situations where human activities might have caused notable impacts on community operations and wellbeing. Examples of human activities that could leave a mark in a region but fail to qualify as a cultural landscape include global warming and pollution. In the study by Loures [1], it was asserted that cultural landscapes offer opportunities for individuals to experience a sense of identity. Also, a cultural

landscape was documented to define how humans related and interact with the land. In another study, Sirisrisak and Akagawa [2] reported that cultural landscapes reflect geographical zones such as natural and cultural resource. The study highlighted further that cultural landscapes exhibit features such as historical activities, people, or events, especially after sharing a common meaning and identity. From the affirmation by the World Heritage Convention [4] and the UNESCO-ICOMOS Documentation Center [3], cultural landscapes rise from community minds and they are expected to bind the people's beliefs, customs, and traditions via spiritual correlations between nature and the people. Through a strong correlation between man and nature, it becomes inferable that cultural landscapes encourage individuals to preserve their culture, eventually upholding history and extending the values to future generations that follow.

Therefore, the motivation of this study is to examine the aspect of cultural landscape reclamation in the context of Minangkabau. Renowned for traditions, this research setting has been selected because of its uniqueness compared to the rest of the communities and geographical zones in Malaysia. In the scholarly investigations by Shariff [6] and Muhamed [5], it was concurred that Minangkabau faces a threat of losing its identity. In particular, people in Minangkabau are predicted to lose their cultural identity, especially due to changes in values that different generations hold [7]. In response to this worrying trend, this study seeks to understand the aspect of cultural landscape reclamation, eventually giving insight into how the identity, local practices, and traditions of people in Minangkabau might be restored and preserved. In so doing, the study might predict some of the strategies that are worth embracing to ensure that these attributes, which defined the target setting's state of cultural landscape, might be reclaimed and preserved. The study's specific objectives are stated as follows:

- a) To determine the current forms of cultural landscape relevant to and defining Minangkabau practices and traditions
- b) To find out the impact of the cultural landscape on the local identity of the people in Minangkabau

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II. RECLAIMING THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF THE MINANGKABAU

Various scholarly investigations have focused on the subject of cultural landscape and the importance of reclaiming and preserving it, especially due to the need to enrich the identity of the concerned communities. Most of the investigations avow that cultural identity aids in developing a sense of belonging and that it promotes the preservation of a region's original culture [1, 8-11]. In the investigation by Rapoport [12] and Wu [11], it was observed that when humans interact with the environment or nature, an evaluation of road viewpoints needs to incorporate issues such as historical and cross-cultural events. From these affirmations, the behaviors, values, and ideas of a given culture are seen to shape the degree to which the cultural heritage of a given community might be protected. In a similar investigation, Garibaldi and Straker [13] advocated for the need to understand the concept of cultural landscape and its preservation, upon which values and social operations of a community could be defined.

In this study, the Minangkabau are local residents of Negeri Sembilan. The region remains unique in terms of its literature, cuisine, crafts, performing arts, oral traditions, language architecture, traditions, and culture. As documented by Khadijah Muhamed [5], this region and its people form one of the world's matrilineal societies. Also, the selected state is keen to preserve a matrilineal societal arrangement, with additional scholarly insights by Shariff [6] suggesting that Negeri Sembilan forms Malaysia's unique state regarding the implementation of *Adat Papatih*. Despite the promising nature of the matrilineal practice, it remains notable that Minangkabau seems to be losing its sense of identity; a trend attributed to interactions with and erosion by other ethnic groups in Malaysia. Whereas Negeri Sembilan has seven districts, recent statistics suggest that only four of the districts continue to preserve Minangkabau practices and traditions. These districts include Jelebu, Seri Meenanti, Pampin, and Kuala Pilah [7]. The eventuality is that as the Minangkabau people interact with other ethnic groups, the resultant assimilation seems erode their identity, local practices, and traditions.

In the rest of the world, a loss of cultural landscapes, traditions, and identities has been reported in many ethnic communities. Some of the countries in which this loss has been documented include Thailand, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Indonesia, India, Hawaii, and Afghanistan [2, 14]. Whereas the loss is rapid, most of the reclamation efforts embraced in these regions remains low. In response to the worrying trends of cultural landscape loss in Minangkabau, this study seeks to recommend potential feasible solutions; especially regarding issues such as the sensitization of and increasing the people's understanding regarding the importance of cultural landscape preservation, as well as the awareness of adverse effects that accrue from reclamation failure [13].

III. METHODS

An exploratory research approach is adopted in this study. Indeed, the research technique is employed due to the need to gain insight into and offer solutions to real-world

problems, rather than only gain knowledge into a given subject [15]. In this investigation, the research approach is deemed appropriate because it might aid in establishing feasible solutions to any challenges that might be facing Minangkabau people's quest to reclaim their cultural landscape. To collect primary data, the survey-based research will be conducted in such a way that questionnaires will be administered to the research participant, upon which they will be requested to fill in and return for analysis. In turn, the SPSS software is applied to analyze the results. Also, secondary data is incorporated into the primary data outcomes to determine the degree of correlation between the primary information obtained and insights that have been documented in the literature.

Questionnaire

The role of survey research practices is to offer solutions to and achieve the intended aim and objectives. The approach leads to the discovery of some of the factors shaping a given phenomenon, Minangkabau's cultural landscape in this case. Hence, survey questionnaires are poised to pave the way for the realization or discovery of some of the values that have been eroded in Minangkabau. It is also important to note that Cronbach's Alpha will aid in discerning the reliability of the questions or items in the questionnaire, hence internal consistency [16, 17]. This step will be embraced because internal consistency determines outcome validity and reliability [17]. Indeed, it is expected that the outcomes that are worth considering as acceptable are those that exceed 0.7. In the study, 0.8 is the Cronbach's Alpha, implying that there is internal consistency.

IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The process of analyzing the results is divided into three major sections. These sections include the impact of Minangkabau identity, the Minangkabau tradition, and the nature of Minangkabau's cultural landscape and its associated degree of erosion.

a) The Tradition of the Cultural Landscape of the Minangkabau

In Minangkabau, one of the notable and renowned features entailed the matrilineal system. However, the rest of Seri Menanti holds that the most important and unique cultural landscape entails the roof design, which reflects local traditions. Generally, the role of the traditions is to depict what the people of Minangkabau uphold. To gain insight into the participants' lived experiences regarding their cultural landscape, this study employed descriptive statistics.

From the results, Minangkabau's cultural landscape upholds eleven meanings. In ascending order, the participants pointed out issues of importance as those involving language, roof design, and the matrilineal system (9.30%, 27.00% and 41.00% respectively). Others included the sense and nature of community (at 6.70%) and a sense of identity (at 8.70%). From Table 1 below, the most important



and dominant values characterizing the cultural landscape of the people of Minangkabau entail roof design and the matrilineal system. From the results, a comparative analysis reveals further that most of the respondents value their community's traditions.

Table 1: Participants' view about forms of traditions in Minangkabau cultural landscape

District	Rembau		Seri Menanti		General	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Matrilineal System	1.29.0	0.7170	2.01	0.901	1.650	0.8890
Roof Design	4.101	1.6590	1.89	1.210	3.000	1.8250
Language	2.27	1.7790	2.57	0.937	2.420	1.4270
Dancing Singing	5.42	1.606	5.50	1.674	5.46	1.638
Musical Performance	6.701	1.222.0	7.43.0	1.490.0	7.07.0	1.408.0
Traditional Self-defense	7.86	1.199	8.62	1.208	8.24	1.260
Oral Tradition	5.39	2.173	7.08	2.163	6.23	2.325
Traditional Event	5.51	1.835	6.17	1.958	5.84	1.923
Traditional Food	6.73	2.556	6.01	2.184	6.37	2.401
Traditional Cloth	9.84	0.569	7.70	2.104	8.77	1.875

To gain insight into the relationship between traditions and the lifestyle of the participants, a Chi-square test was implemented. The aim was to predict the situation in Rembau and how it could depict the relationship or interaction between the people's lifestyle and their traditions – comparing the results with the case of Seri Menanti. Whereas the independent variable involved the district(s) (Seri Menanti and Rembau), the dependent variable involved the status of the participants' and community's traditions. The results are summarized in the table below.

Chi-Square Tests	Value	Df	Cramer's V	Sig. (2-tailed)
Continuity Correction	17.240	1.0	0.250	0.0000

From the results, there was a statistically significant relationship between the district in which the participants resided and the nature of the traditions. Findings in which Yates Continuity Correction χ^2 (1, n=300), Cramer's V= 0.25, 17.24, p= 0.00, with df = 1, the Cramer's V= 0.25 depicted a small impact. Comparing Seri Menanti and Rembau, 65 percent and 86 percent of the respondents (respectively) stated that there is a positive and direct relationship between the traditions of the Minangkabau people and their lifestyle. As such, it was inferred that the district of residence and the lifestyle of the people, which

would be predicted by the people's traditions, exhibited a significant association.

b) The Practice of the Minangkabau Tradition

From the primary and secondary data outcomes, a significant and fast rate of erosion was noted in relation to the traditions of the people in Minangkabau [7]. This erosion suggests that most of the people no longer engage in cultural activities and practices. As such, various correlation and cross-tabulation tests were conducted. Parameters that were investigated included fraternization, tangible support, and youth interest with the rest of the Malay ethnic communities. The aim was to discern the correlation between local practices or the role of interaction with other ethnic communities and the perceived decline in the community's traditions.

i) Examining the relationship between youth interest and the decline

To discern this relationship, a cross-tabulation was implemented. From the results, 61.50% of the participants were in agreement that there is a decline in the Minangkabau people's traditions – due to the loss of interest among the youths or the community's younger generations. On the other hand, 25.10% of the respondents were in string agreement that this lack of interest accounts for the fast rate at which the community's cultural landscape is eroding. From the table below, p = 0.00 and there is a significant negative relationship between youth interest and cultural landscape erosion.

Table 3: Cross-tabulation indicating the relationship between youth interest and declining traditional values and practices

Correlation Tests	Value	N	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pearson Correlation	0.5674910	300.0	0.0000

To determine the role of the parameter of age in shaping the interest of the youths in engaging in traditional values and practices, a correlation test was implemented. From Table 4, P = 0.01. The results suggest that age plays an important role in determining the interest of the people of Minangkabau in engaging in cultural landscape activities. From the interview outcomes arising from an interview session that was held during the data collection process, it remains inferable that most of the members belonging to the younger generation are less likely to follow the Minangkabau community's traditions and practices that would initially shape their daily operations.

Table 4: Correlation test of how age affects the interest of the youths in engaging in Minangkabau's community traditions and practices

Correlation Tests	Value	N	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pearson Correlation	0.142564	300	0.013



Some of the factors seen to account for the majority of the youths' loss of interest in Minangkabau's traditions include: poor responsibility regarding cultural appreciation, lack of parental and community leader encouragement, and the influence of the modern lifestyle.

ii) Relationship between the decline of tradition and tangible support

The study proceeded to unearth the association between tangible support and the decline of tradition. Indeed, a cross-tabulation analysis was implemented. The aim was to discern the cause of the decline in the traditions of the Minangkabau people. Those who were in agreement and those who were in disagreement had a difference of 1.70 percent. Particularly, 44.70% of the respondents were in disagreement while 46.40% of the participants were in agreement. Those who were in strong disagreement were 1.20% while those who were in strong agreement were 7.70% - regarding the observation that the preservation of the tradition of the Minangkabau people did not have tangible support. At $P = 0.05$, the results demonstrate that the aspects of tangible support towards preserving the cultural landscape and the decline of tradition did not have a significant association.

Table 5. Correlation test between decline of tradition and tangible support

Correlation Tests	Value	N	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pearson Correlation	-0.112182	300	0.052

iii) Relationship between the decline of tradition with fraternization with other 'Malay' traditions

A further cross-tabulation was implemented to predict the association between interaction with other Malay ethnic communities and decline in tradition. From the literature, these aspects exhibit a strong relationship and account for the decline in the cultural landscape of the Minangkabau people.

Table 6. Correlation test of between decline of tradition and fraternization with other Malay traditions

Correlation Tests	Value	N	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pearson Correlation	0.374960	300	0.000

From Table 6, fraternization with the rest of the ethnic communities in Malaysia is seen to account for the decline in the traditions of the Minangkabau people. From the results from cross-tabulations, aspects of fraternization and lack of interest among youths play a leading role in accounting for the ethnic community's decline in the cultural landscape. Whereas 63.40% percent of the participants are seen to cite the factor of fraternization, 61.50% are seen to cite the factor of lack of youth interest in community traditions, values, and practices. The eventuality is that youth interest and fraternization constitute factors that are worth considering, especially due to their leading role in accounting for the decline of the cultural landscape of the Minangkabau people.

Also, correlation Chi-square tests were applied with the aim of predicting the correlation between a sense of the pride among the people and the decline in traditions – in the respective districts. Also, a correlation test was conducted to establish if the participants were likely to prefer the cultural landscape reclamation approach. From the table below, there is a growing demand for the reclamation of the Minangkabau people's cultural landscape.

Table 7. Correlation test between decline of tradition and reclamation importance

Correlation Tests	Value	N	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pearson Correlation	0.158484	300	0.006

From the results, most of the participants advocated for the implementation of cultural landscape reclamation effort, through which traditions in Minangkabau could be restored and preserved. The predictive role of the sense of pride in shaping the responses was also analyzed. The results are summarized as follows:

Table 8. Chi-square test between the local people sense of pride and their culture and their practice

Chi-Square Tests	Value	Df	Cramer's V	Sig. (2-tailed)
Continuity Correction	36.11	1	0.36	0.000

The determination of the relationship between the people's sense of pride and their opinions regarding the reclamation of the cultural landscape was analyzed using a chi-square test of independence. Whereas some participants were found to be proud but not practicing the Minangkabau traditions (6.0%), others were found to be proud and practicing the traditions (61.0%). As such, it was concluded that the level of practicing the traditions (and supporting their reclamation) and the local people's sense of pride exhibit a string correlation.

c) *The Influence of the Minangkabau Identity*

Also, the correlation between the role of a sense of identity and the probable support for cultural landscape reclamation efforts was examined. The results are shown in the table below.



Table 9 Correlation test based on score

		Identity Score	Practice Score	Heritage Score	Sense of Attachment Score	Culture Score	Cultural Landscape Score
Identity Score	Pearson Correlation	1.000	0.111	.726**	.303**	.377**	.300**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.056	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Practice Score	Pearson Correlation	0.111	1.000	0.024	0.070	0.157**	0.143*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.056		0.679	0.225	0.006	0.013
Heritage Score	Pearson Correlation	0.726**	0.024	1.000	0.511**	0.481**	0.280**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.679		0.000	0.000	0.000
Sense of Attachment Score	Pearson Correlation	0.303**	0.070	0.511**	1.000	0.414**	-0.018
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.225	0.000		0.000	0.759
Culture Score	Pearson Correlation	0.377**	0.157**	0.481**	0.414**	1.000	0.344**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.000		0.000
Cultural Landscape Score	Pearson Correlation	0.300**	0.143*	0.280**	-0.018	0.344**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.013	0.000	0.759	0.000	

Indeed, six scores are recorded. Out of these, four scores demonstrate that aspects of cultural landscape, a sense of attachment, heritage, and identity exhibit a significant association. Pearson correlation value, $r = 0.726$ and $r^2 = 0.527$, it shows that 53% or identity score points to the score for local identity while the sense of attachment is represented by the Pearson correlation value, $r = 0.511$ and $r^2 = 0.261$. With the heritage score found to be 26.0%, it remains inferable that the appreciation of the heritage of the Minangkabau people accrues from factors such as a sense of attachment and the factor of identity. It is also evident that when people of Minangkabau exhibit a higher sense of attachment to their cultural landscape, they are more likely to understand it, hence support reclamation efforts. The eventuality is that the decision to reclaim the region's cultural landscape requires the protection of the traditions in a manner that demonstrates the appreciation and acknowledgment of the people's sense of attachment and local identity with the landscape. Indeed, a paired t-test was implemented to determine possible differences between the mean of the cultural landscape and the heritage score. From Table 9, $P = 0.00$. Specific outcomes suggest a lower cultural landscape mean compared to the mean for the parameter of heritage score. As such, the study infers most of the participants exhibited a relatively higher understanding or awareness of the cultural landscape with which they interacted.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Notably, the decision to claim the cultural landscape of the Minangkabau people is an informed idea. The need for this intervention accrues from the relatively fast pace at which the traditions are being eroded. In this study, it is evident that most of the community members are proud of

their identity, culture, and heritage. However, it was only in Rembau that the study discovered traditions being dominant while about 50 percent of individuals in Seri Menanti put little emphasis on their culture. The findings point to a declining state of Minangkabau's cultural landscape, especially because the two districts had formerly been observed as hubs for the cherishing and celebration of traditional practices.

Form the data that was collected and analyzed, this study concludes that the definition of local identity is key to the realization of success in cultural landscape reclamation efforts. Also, identity is seen to aid in the characterization and differentiation of different ethnic groups and that the processes determine the extent to which tradition are practiced and preserved without erosion. There is also a direct and positive relationship between the people's feeling of a sense of identity and their support towards the restoration, reclamation, and preservation of the cultural landscape. As such, there is a need to emphasize the community's identity with its traditions before sensitizing younger generations about the value of preserving and supporting the cultural landscape in Minangkabau. This study's results demonstrate further that for better heritage appreciation to be realized, aspects of sense of attachment and identity are worth considering and analyzing. In situations, where individuals exhibit a higher sense of attachment, this study reveals that Minangkabau's people are more likely to understand the nature and importance of their cultural landscape. The eventuality is that the reclamation of the people's cultural landscape needs to be preceded by the protection of tradition, especially through

the conservation of traditions, as well as the recognition of the people's sense of attachment and local identity with their cultural place or landscape.

Also, it is predicted that the community in Minangkabau might support reclamation efforts if several parameters and their moderating roles are considered. These parameters or forces include the people's appreciation of the value of the Minangkabau culture, the people's responsibility towards their culture, and the people's level of understanding of the Minangkabau culture. Additional issues that are worth considering in relation to cultural landscape reclamation in Minangkabau include the development of a sense of attachment among community members, the consideration of specific local practices, the definition and clarity of what local identity entails, and the understanding of the attribute of tradition in Minangkabau. With most of the youth failing to appreciate the role of culture in Minangkabau, especially intangible features, the need to portray these features visually cannot be overemphasized. Examples of cultural features that are worth emphasizing include perfuming arts, singing, and dancing; besides monthly events that seek to increase the number of participants, hence youth sensitization.

It is also recommended that in Minangkabau, the cultural landscape is depicted as a crucial source of knowledge and that it is out to benefit the community in the entirety. A specific aspect that should be highlighted is that the knowledge gained from traditions tends to be passed from generation to generation and that it is only through knowledge continuity that the cultural landscape of the people of Minangkabau might survive. To achieve this objective, a crucial role needs to be played by community members, as well as parents and other elders.

Overall, the reclamation of the cultural landscape of the people in Minangkabau might be realized through increased public awareness, especially by advocating for community participation – through monthly events and the demonstration of intangible values through mediums such as audio-visual materials. By achieving this goal, it is predicted that Minangkabau will remain a hub of cultural heritage, hence its people's sense of attachment, pride, and identity.

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