

Analysis of Local Tourists' Level of Knowledge on Archaeotourism Sector in Kinta Valley, Perak (Malaysia)

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In the past, Kinta Valley was very famous in the Malay Peninsula for being extremely rich in tin ore. It is no longer a producer of that mineral, but now it is known for its own attractiveness, especially among local and foreign tourists. The objective of this article is to identify the level of knowledge of local tourists on the archaeotourism sector in Kinta Valley, Perak. This study involved 375 local tourists, selected through simple random sampling. A questionnaire instrument was used to obtain feedback, which included respondents' background, tourist travel analysis, and tourists' level of knowledge of the development of archaeotourism in Kinta Valley. The results of the study showed that local tourists often visit Kinta Valley during public holidays, with the highest visiting frequency being 2 to 3 times. Local tourists' knowledge of historic buildings was at a moderate level ($M = 2.62$, $SP = .552$); general knowledge on the Kinta Valley was at a low level ($M = 2.06$, $SP = .661$); and other categories scored as follows: archaeological site knowledge ($M=1.94$, $SP=.647$); natural environmental knowledge ($M = 2.29$, $SP = .567$); and food knowledge ($M = 2.16$, $SP = .557$). The study concluded that local tourists' knowledge on archaeotourism in Kinta Valley was not encouraging, despite a high frequency of visits. This indicates that tourists like visiting this tourist attraction, but fail to appreciate the archaeotourism element. Therefore, educational aspects of cultural heritage and natural heritage tourism needs to be improved and highlighted to attract more tourists to come and see the beauty and uniqueness of Kinta Valley.

Key words: *Knowledge, local tourist, Kinta Valley, heritage, Archaeotourism.*

Introduction

In Peninsular Malaysia, apart from the archaeological sites of Bujang Valley and Sungai Batu, which are located in the state of Kedah, the state of Perak also offers some special locations for tourists to visit. These include the archaeological sites of Lenggong, Bandar Taiping, Kuala Kangsar, Pasir Salak, Sayong, and Tanjong Malim. These locations are often associated with heritage tourism, whether it is an archaeological site, a historical location or site, a traditional village, a historic building, or a natural attraction. One of the locations that is also a tourist destination is Ipoh City, which is located in Kinta Valley. There is a wide variety of interesting places to visit around Ipoh City, with its many heritage remains, such as archaeological sites, historic buildings, natural phenomena, and cultural heritage.

Apart from its reputation as a tin mining heritage city, Kinta Valley also has a unique diverse natural landscape. The geography of Kinta Valley is rich in geological heritage such as karst topography, limestone hills, caves with unique cave deposition and underground drainage, granite rocks, hot springs, waterfalls, cascades, and similar natural beauty. The historical and cultural heritage of Kinta Valley are manifested through archaeological remains and the history of human settlements, British occupation, Japanese occupation, and communist activities. Indirectly, these developments have left a legacy, especially in the form of mining history, historic buildings, traditional villages, crafts industries, etc. Recently, the emergence of attractions like *The Lost World of Tambun*, *Movie Animation Park Studio (MAPS)*, *Art of Old Town* and *Fantasy House Trick Art* has had a high impact on attracting local tourists to Kinta Valley. In short, the combination of the diversity in geological heritage, archaeology, and the cultural and traditional values of local communities has great potential to be developed as an archaeotourism centre in Kinta Valley.

Background

In general, the landform of Kinta Valley is influenced by the existence of the Titiwangsa Range, which is the backbone of the Peninsular Malaysia. The Kinta Valley area is situated on an earth platform enriched with the phenomena of hills, mountains, limestone caves, karst topography, highlands, rivers, waterfalls, cascades, rapids, and lowlands. This area has apparently attracted people since prehistoric times, based on the discovery of the Hobinhian human skeleton at Mount Cheroh. Artifacts and ecofacts were also found in several other limestone caves, such as Tambun Cave, Mat Surat Cave, Gol Bait Cave, Tempurung Cave, Lanno II Cave, Angin Cave and Naga Emas Cave (Wray, 1897, 1905; Evans, 1922; Callenfels & Evans, 1928; Collings, 1940; Matthews, 1959, 1960; Jusoh, 2011). In addition, ancient paintings were found in Tambun Cave (Ahmad, 2005) and Kelawar Cave (Taha & Jaafar, 1990), which are associated with the existence of the kingdom of Gangga Negara, as told in *Sejarah Melayu*. The discovery of some artifacts of the Buddha statue has resulted in



several assumptions that the Ganges National government once ruled in Pengkalan (Ipoh), Kinta Valley, Tanjung Rambutan, Bidor, and Sungai Siput, which once could be reached from Sungai Perak. Kinta Valley is also associated with the early settlement of the Malays, based on the existence of several traditional Malay villages. Among the traditional villages are Kampung Paloh (Palou), Kampung Kuchai, Kampung Kepayang, Kampung Epu (Ipoh), Kampung Pisang, Kampung Pengkalan Pegu, among others. Around the 19th century, after the arrival of the British, Kinta Valley became the focus of Chinese and Indian tin mining activities. This indicates that Kinta Valley is not only rich in natural resources, but is also beautiful because of its unique natural phenomena.

The focus of this article stresses the archaeotourism sector in Kinta Valley, Perak. Geographically, Kinta Valley is located between two mountainous areas, the Titiwangsa Range (on the east) and Mount Keledang Range (on the west). It is located between 4° 15' 00' and 4° 45' 00' longitude (North) and 101° 00' 00' and 101° 15' 00' latitude (East), and has an area of about 627 to 700 square kilometers. Kinta Valley is located in an area where the ground rocks are composed of limestone that is protected by alluvium. While alluvial deposits are found throughout the world, Kinta Valley's alluvial tin deposit, formed during the quaternary period, is especially abundant. The alluvium in this area consists of old alluvium, young alluvium, organic mud, and rocks. According to Gobbet and Hutchison (1973), young alluvium originates from the Holocene period (with deposits to date), while old alluvium is from the early Pleistocene period. Geological studies have found that the Kinta Valley area was covered by the sedimentary sequence of Silurian-Permian granitoid rocks, associated with a small penetration of the later phase, possibly between the Jurassic and the Triassic periods. In terms of age, the limestone found in the Kinta Valley area is dated from the Devonian period to the Permian period (Suntharalingam, 1968). Within a 13km radius from the centre of Ipoh there are more than 30 hills or limestone caves of different varieties, with an altitude of 121.91 meters (400 ft) and 524.25 meters (1720 ft).

In addition to these rock and mineral deposits, Kinta Valley is a region rich with natural resources, especially tin ore (Nasution & Lubis, 2005). In the 19th century, Kinta Valley became the focus of immigrants, especially from China, who worked in the tin mining industry. The rapid growth of the mining industry resulted in the emergence of several cities and towns related to the production of tin ore, including Ipoh, Kampar, Gopeng, Batu Gajah, Pusing, Pasir Putih, Papan, Lahat, Menglembu, Jelapang, Tasek, Bercham, Mount Rapat, and others (Zuliskandar et al., 2015; Gencer & Öztürk, 2018). Even though the significance of Kinta Valley began to fade after the 14th century A.D., archaeological remains have the potential to offer high economic returns, especially in terms of tourism. This is because many of the archaeological findings discovered at several sites in Kinta Valley have the potential to be utilized in archaeotourism, such as Tempurung Cave and Tambun Cave. Research findings by researchers studying the colonial age, as well as local researchers at the archaeological



site, have discovered artefacts such as earthenware, ceramics, bones, and cave paintings, indicating that the location was once used as a temporary shelter or a stopover by prehistoric communities.

Kinta Valley also has some distinctive natural phenomena of its own, such as Tempurung Cave, Tasik Cermin Cave, Pencil Rock at Datok Cave, Kek Lok Tong, Perak Tong, Ulu Kinta Forest Reserve, Lata Ulu Chepor, Mata Air Panas, Mount Lang Recreational Park, and several other locations. This indicates that Lembah Kinta has a complete package of tourism activities, with attractive natural phenomena, such as limestone caves, lakes, rivers, and waterfalls, as well as archaeological sites and historic buildings.

Kinta Valley as an Archaeotourism Site

The word 'archaeotourism' is the combination of two words; archaeology and tourism (archaeo-tourism). It denotes to a tourist destination that is based on archaeological and historical heritage sites (Boto, 2016). It also implies that preservation and conservation efforts of potential archaeological and historical heritage sites have been developed to serve a site and ensure it is an attractive tourist destination. Archaeological tourism also relates to heritage tourism. In this regard, Swarbrooke (1994) defines heritage tourism as tourism based on heritage, where the heritage itself becomes the backbone of the product offered, and heritage becomes the main motivating (catalyzing) factor for visitors or tourists to visit a place. Razak (2006) describes heritage tourism as tourism focused on experiencing the history, culture, art, nature, artifacts, and other aspects of previous generations.

Archaeotourism then describes a tourist destination that is an archaeological heritage site for which preservation and conservation efforts are made for the purpose of developing an attractive tourist destination. In reality, archaeotourism is closely related to all the integrated efforts in attracting tourists to visit the heritage site. Visitors to heritage sites gain information about the site and also experience intellectual satisfaction in the form of nostalgia and appreciation of the displayed heritage. Archaeotourism is similar to 'ekopelancongan', or 'ecotourism' in English. Ecotourism is aimed at promoting small-scale, low-impact tourism in natural areas like national parks, state parks, and tropical forests (Toshiki Sato et al., 2013; Georgantopoulos, Poutos & Eriotis, 2018). The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as a 'responsible visit to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people' (TIES, 2006). It means 'the travel and visits made to natural areas to enjoy and appreciate the natural beauty (including the present and past cultural properties), which promote environmental conservation, have low impact and enable the involvement of local communities in positive socioeconomic activities' (World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Malaysia, 1996).

The concept of ecotourism involves bringing tourists closer to nature through active participation that is entertaining and fun and provides education and discovery of something new that is based on nature. Ecotourism usually includes programs and activities involving the lifestyle of rural communities, cultures, and local community heritage (Lee & Siti Suriani, 2010). According to Clifton (2004), ecotourism educates tourists as part of the tourism concept, while at the same time providing funds for ecological preservation and economic development for local communities. Ecotourism includes the natural environment (Sadry, 2009) and focuses on social responsibility, personal improvement, and ultimately, environmental sustainability. In short, ecotourism bears the responsibility of sustaining the environment, by sponsoring programs that minimize the negative aspects of conventional tourism towards the environment and improve local cultures.

Hence, it is evident that archaeotourism is interrelated with ecotourism, which refers to a tourist destination based on an archaeological heritage site. Malaysia's landform has a diverse range of terrain, which includes highlands, lowlands, basins, and sea fronts, making Malaysia a country rich with archaeotourism sites that offer the potential to generate national income.

Tourism potential in Kinta Valley

Kinta Valley is unique with respect to local and international tourists. It is safe to say that tourist arrivals are continuous; in fact, they are constantly increasing, especially during school holidays in Perak. The potential of tourist arrivals in Perak and Kinta Valley can be seen through the projection of tourist arrivals (Table 1). The projection was generated by taking into account the average increase of annual tourist arrivals for the period of 2011 to 2015 (4% per year or 20% for a period of 5 years). Table 1 shows that the projected total of tourist arrivals in 2040 is 20,476,868, of which 94% are local tourists and 6% are international tourists.

Table 1: Projected tourist arrivals in Perak Year 2015-2040

Tourist	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Local	7,963,400	9,282,531	11,139,037	13,366,844	16,040,213	19,248,256
International	265,794	592,502	711,002	853,203	1,023,843	1,228,612
Total	8,229,194	9,875,033	11,850,039	14,220,047	17,064,057	20,476,868

Sources: Tourism Perak Management Berhad, 2016 dan Kajian RSN Perak 2040 (Kajian Semula), 2016



Despite the yearly increase in the number of tourists coming to Perak and Kinta Valley, have archaeotourism elements had an impact on these numbers and provided an appreciation of the area's heritage, especially with respect to local tourists? This article will discuss tourists' level of knowledge of the heritage elements, especially relating to the archaeological sites in Kinta Valley. At a minimum, the findings of this study may be helpful to the authorities working on making improvements, and complement the feedback provided by the tourists.

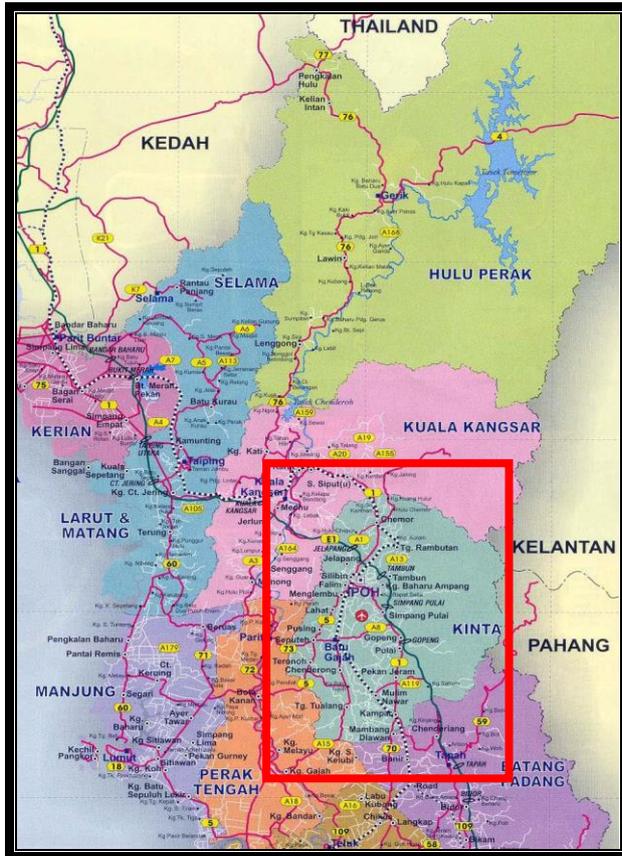
Study Method

The method of this study was quantitative, using a questionnaire instrument to obtain local tourists' knowledge data in the archaeotourism sector in Kinta Valley, Perak. A total of 375 questionnaires were distributed to local tourists who had visited the heritage sites around Kinta Valley, Perak. The data obtained from the questionnaires was analyzed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Study Location

This study was conducted in Kinta Valley, Perak, which is a valley rich in tin ore and the location of cities built around the tin ore-based industry, such as Ipoh, Kampar, Gopeng, Batu Gajah, Pusing, Pasir Putih, Papan, Lahat, Menglembu, Jelapang, Tasek, Bercham, and Mount Rapat. Lembah Kinta is drained by Sungai Kinta (Kinta River). The upper section of the river is located at Mount Korbu, and travels through Ulu Kinta to Tanjung Rambutan to Kampung Gajah in the south, where Sungai Kinta meets the Sungai Perak near Pulau Inderasakti (Map 1).

Map 1. Kinta Valley



The development of Sungai Kinta, proposed in 2000, and the Kinta Valley Geopark declared in 2014, indirectly introduced the cultural heritage and natural heritage of that area to a wider audience. The development plan of the geopark is one of the plans designed to exploit the local and natural products available in the Kinta Valley, known as Gross Domestic Product (GDP). A total of 24 geo-sites were identified and included Ipoh, Kampar, and Batu Gajah. Based on a study by Zuliskandar et al. (2015) conducted around Kinta Valley, various attractions were identified as tourism products of Kinta Valley, especially those involving limestone caves, man-made lakes, waterfalls, beautiful rivers, tin mines with the remains of dredges, as well as the community cultures, especially the Orang Asli community of the Temiar tribe. Preliminary studies have found that most residents around the Kinta district, especially those in Lata Ulu Chepor and Air Terjun Batu Berangkai, agreed with the state government's efforts to develop Kinta Valley as one of the geoparks in Malaysia, along with the geopark in Langkawi. In general, all tourism attractions, whether cultural or natural heritage, should be integrated and highlighted in order to attract tourists to come and see the beauty and uniqueness of Kinta Valley.

Population and Sample

This study used a simple random sampling method, based on the 8,229,194 local tourists who had visited Perak, (Tourism Perak, 2016), as shown in Table 1. Of the total number of local

tourists, the recommended minimum number of samples was 375, based on the Kreijie and Morgan table (1971). Thus, this study set the number of respondents as 375 persons who were randomly selected in order to ensure that each subject in a population would have the same opportunity to be selected as a survey respondent (Chua, 2006).

Study Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a three-part questionnaire. Section A gathered tourists' background, Section B captured tourists' travel profile, and Section C recorded tourists' level of knowledge on archaeotourism elements in Kinta Valley. Section A queried tourists' sex, race, age, marital status, and income. Section B queried tourists' travel profile analysis, which recorded visiting time, visiting frequency, and duration of visit to Kinta Valley. Section C relates to tourists' level of knowledge on archaeotourism elements in Kinta Valley, which includes general knowledge, archaeological site knowledge, historic building knowledge, nature knowledge, and food knowledge. The information on the questionnaire is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Questionnaire information

Part	Aspect	Variables	Number of Item	Source
Part A	Background of Tourist	Gender	1	Built by researcher according to study needs
		Race	1	
		Age	1	
		Marital Status	1	
		Income	1	
Part B	Tourist Trip Profile Analysis	Visit Time to Kinta Valley	4	Built by researcher according to study needs
		Travel Frequency to Kinta Valley	5	
		Visit Length to Kinta Valley	1	
Part C	Tourist Knowledge of Archaeological Elements in the Kinta Valley	General Knowledge	7	Built by researcher according to study needs
		Knowledge of Archaeological Site	10	
		Historical Building Knowledge	8	
		Knowledge of Nature	9	
		Knowledge of Food	8	

Findings and Discussion

Respondents' Background

Table 3 shows the backgrounds of 375 individuals who visited Kinta Valley. The findings show that the number of female respondents (193, or 51.5%) who visited Kinta Valley was almost equal to the number of male respondents (182, or 48.5%). The majority of the respondents involved in this study were Malays, with 258 people (68.8%), followed by 66 Chinese visitors (17.6%), 45 Indians (12.0%), and six people (1.6%) of other ethnicities. Findings regarding the respondents' age showed that the majority were between 21 and 30 years old, which was 46.7% of the total respondents, followed by those aged between 31 and 40 years old (25.6%). Respondents younger than 20 years of age represented 13.1% of visitors, as did those aged between 41 and 50 years. Respondents aged above 51 years represented 1.6% of visitors. Respondents' background regarding marital status was divided into three categories: married, single, and single parent. The majority of the respondents were single, with a total of 207 persons (55.2%), followed by the number of respondents who were married, with a total of 162 persons (43.2%), and six persons (1.6%) who were single mothers/fathers. The majority of the respondents' had income less than RM500 (28.8%), followed by 98 persons with income ranging from RM2001 to RM3000 (26.1%), 73 persons with income of RM3001 to RM4000 (19.5%), 48 persons with income of RM1001 to RM2000 (12.8%), 28 persons with income of RM501 up to RM1000 (7.5%), 11 persons with income of RM4000 up to RM5000 (2.9%), and finally, nine persons with income above RM5001 (2.4%).

Table 3: Respondents' background

Background of Tourist		N	%
Gender	Man	182	48.5
	Female	193	51.5
	Total	375	100.0
Races	Malay	258	68.8
	Chinese	66	17.6
	India	45	12.0
	Other	6	1.6
	Total	375	100.0
Age	Less than 20 years old	49	13.1
	21– 30 years old	175	46.7
	31– 40 years old	96	25.6
	41– 50 years old	49	13.1
	More than 51 years old	6	1.6
	Total	375	100.0
Marital Status	Married	162	43.2

	Single	207	55.2
	Widow/ Widower	6	1.6
	Total	375	100.0
Income	Less than RM500	108	28.8
	RM501-RM1000	28	7.5
	RM1001-RM2000	48	12.8
	RM2001-RM3000	98	26.1
	RM3001-RM4000	73	19.5
	RM4001-RM5000	11	2.9
	More than RM5001	9	2.4
	Total	375	100.0

Tourist Travel Profile Analysis

Tourist travel profile analysis was divided into seven sections: the time of visit to Kinta Valley; frequency of visit to Kinta Valley; respondents' duration of visit to Kinta Valley; objective of visiting Kinta Valley; way to reach Kinta Valley; joint visit to Kinta Valley; and frequency of Kinta Valley's location announcement. Based on Figure 1, the majority of respondents frequently visited Kinta Valley on public holidays (163 persons, or 43.5%), followed by school holidays (79 persons, or 21.1%). The percentage of respondents visiting Kinta Valley on weekends and weekdays are almost the same, with merely a 0.3% percent difference; weekends recorded 67 persons (17.9%) and 66 persons (17.6%) during weekdays.

Figure 1. Visiting time to Kinta Valley

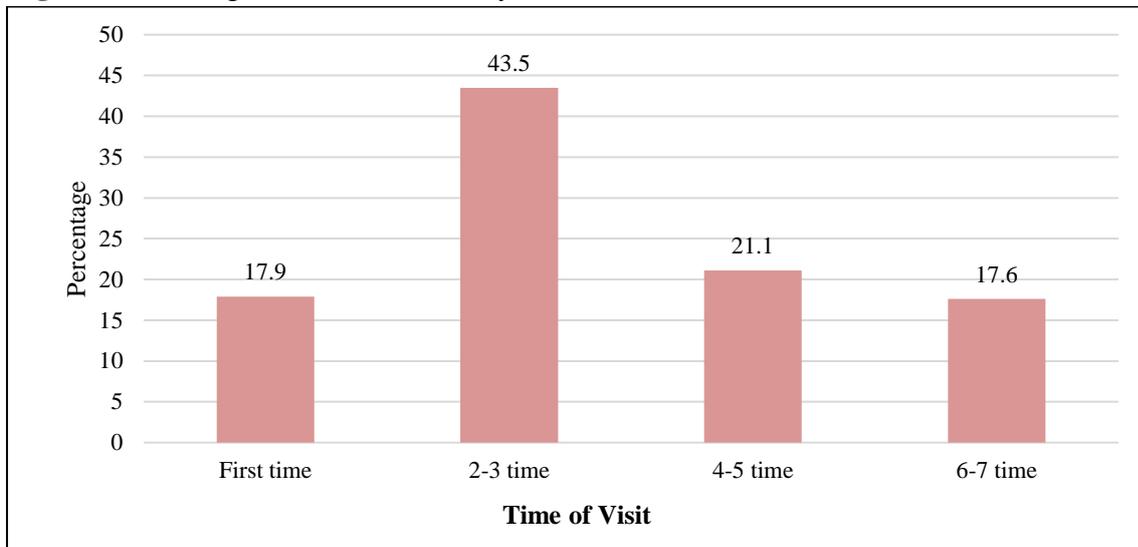


Figure 2 shows the frequency of respondents' visits to Kinta Valley, divided into five categories: once; 2 to 3 times; 4 to 5 times; 6 to 7 times; and more than 7 times. The majority of respondents (178 persons, or 47.5%) visited Kinta Valley between 2 and 3 times, followed by one-time visits (114 persons, or 30.4%), 4 to 5 times (63 persons, or 16.8%), 6 to 7 times (12 persons, or 3.2%), and more than 7 times (8 persons, or 2.1%).

Figure 2. Frequency of visit to Kinta Valley

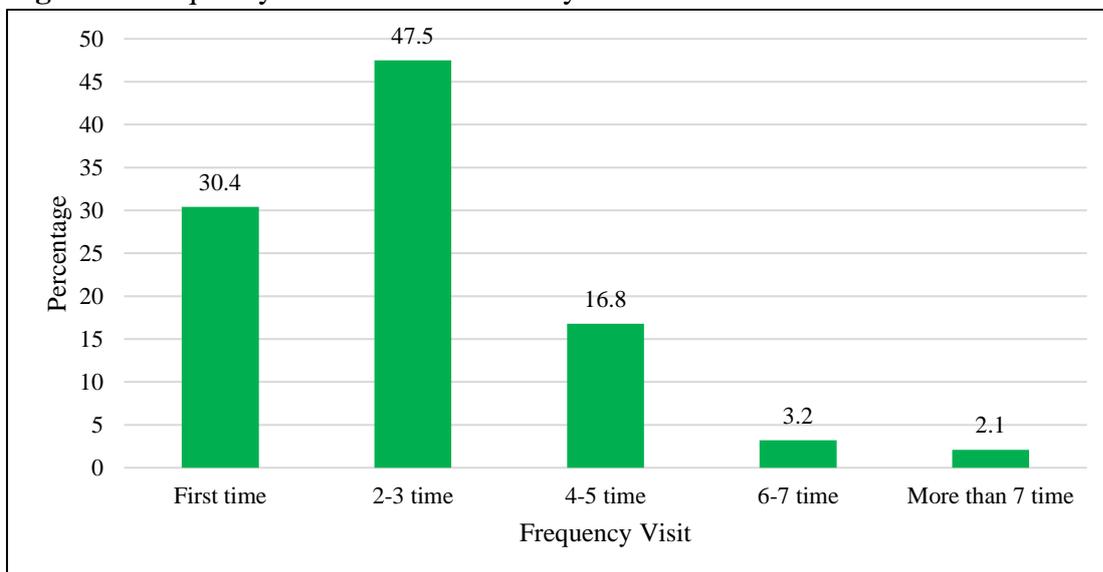
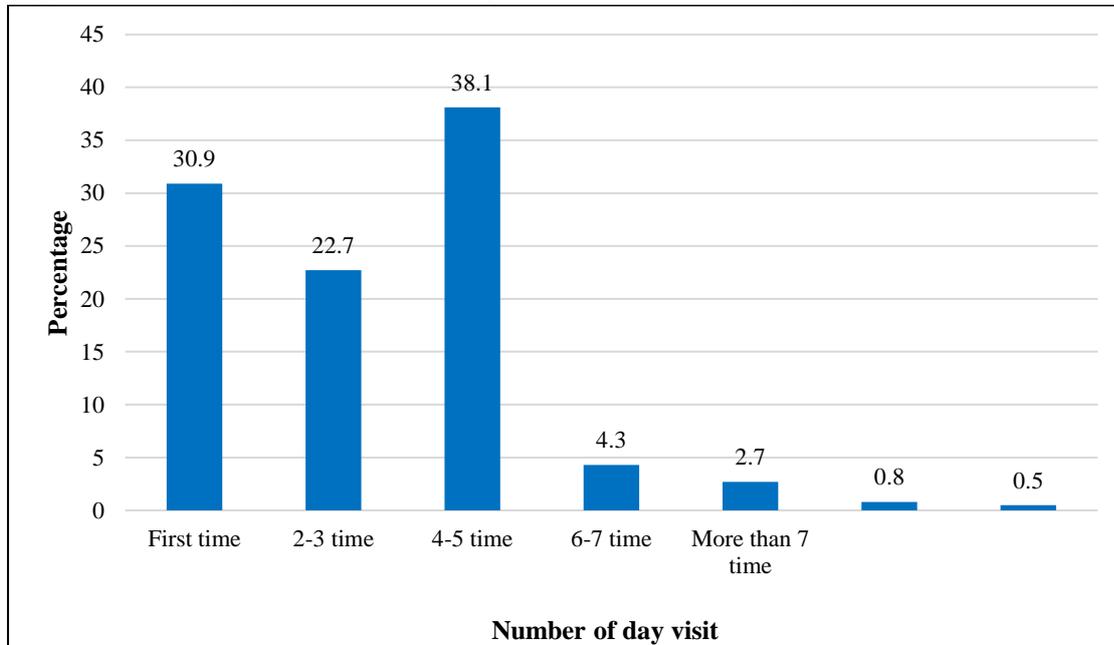


Figure 3 shows the duration of visit to Kinta Valley. The majority of the respondents (143 persons, or 38.15%) visited Kinta Valley for three days, followed by a one-day visit (116 persons, or 30.0%), two-day visit (85 persons, or 22.7%), four-day visit (16 persons, or

4.3%), five-day visit (10 persons, or 2.7%), seven-day visit (3 persons, or 0.8%), and lastly, nine days (2 persons, or 0.5%).

Figure 3. Visiting duration of the respondents to Kinta Valley



Tourists' Level of Knowledge on the Heritage Tourism Element in Kinta Valley

The tourists' level of knowledge on the heritage tourism elements (archaeological site, historic building, nature, food) in Kinta Valley was classified based on the level of mean score benchmark by Landell (1997), as shown in Table 4, where the mean score level (1.00–2.33) is a low-level classification; mean score level (2.34–3.66) is a moderate-level classification; and mean score level (3.67–5.00) is a high-level classification.

Table 4: Cut off point of tourists' knowledge on archaeotourism elements

Scale	Level
Score 1.00 – 2.33	Low
Score 2.34-3.66	Medium
Score 3.67-5.00	High

Source: Landell (1997)

Table 5 shows tourists' level of knowledge on the heritage tourism elements in Kinta Valley, which is divided into five categories: general knowledge; archaeological site knowledge; historic building knowledge; nature knowledge; and food knowledge. The findings show that the level of the average mean score of historic building knowledge ($M=2.62$, $SP=.552$) is at a moderate level. The other variables scores were low levels: general knowledge ($M=2.06$,

SP=.661); archaeological site knowledge (M=1.94, SP=.647); nature knowledge (M=2.29, SP=.567); and historic food knowledge (M=2.16, SP=.557).

Table 5: Tourists' level of knowledge on archaeotourism elements

Variable	Low Level		Medium Level		High Level		Mean	SD	Level of Mean
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
General Knowledge	71	18.9	210	56.0	94	25.1	2.06	.661	Low
Knowledge of Archaeological Site	89	23.7	217	57.9	69	18.4	1.94	.647	Low
Knowledge of Historical Building	13	3.5	115	30.7	247	65.9	2.62	.552	Medium
Knowledge of Nature	21	5.6	221	58.9	133	35.5	2.29	.567	Low
Knowledge of Food	32	8.5	248	66.1	95	25.3	2.16	.557	Low

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings show that local tourists often visited Kinta Valley on public holidays, with the highest visiting frequency being 2 to 3 times. This shows that tourists often come to Kinta Valley, for both leisure and nature experience activities. However, the local tourists' level of knowledge on archaeotourism in Kinta Valley showed that historic building knowledge was at a moderate level (M=2.62, SP=.552), while general knowledge (M=2.06, SP=.661), archaeological site knowledge (M=1.94, SP=.647), nature knowledge (M=2.29, SP=.567), and food knowledge (M=2.16, SP=.557) were at low levels. These scores indicate that the local tourists' knowledge on archaeotourism in Kinta Valley is at an unsatisfactory level, despite the high frequency of visits as shown in the projection data. This suggests that tourists like to go to the tourist spots, but do not really appreciate the archaeotourism elements. Hence, knowledge of cultural heritage or natural heritage tourism needs to be improved and highlighted more frequently, and in a more attractive form of delivery, to further enhance tourists' knowledge about archaeotourism.

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