

# Understanding Place and People through Cultural Mapping Approach: Case study at Bachok, Kelantan

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**Abstract.** Cultural mapping is a vital approach for understanding place and community. This approach also involves systematically identifying the tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets. However, lack of awareness and engagement between local people and related parties causing this heritage to be increasingly forgotten. Younger generations are increasingly moving to urban areas in search of better opportunities, leading to a loss of traditional knowledge and skills in rural communities. Bachok district is rich in cultural heritage, historical landmarks, traditional crafts, local folklore and communal rituals. The preservation of both tangible and intangible heritage in Bachok requires concerted efforts involving the community, government, and NGOs. Initiatives to document, promote, and integrate these cultural elements into education and tourism can help sustain Kelantan's unique cultural identity amidst modern challenges. Developing cultural mapping through qualitative approaches provides a comprehensive understanding of cultural heritage and community dynamics. This might involve ethnographic methods such as interviews and participant observation. These qualitative data provide a nuanced understanding of the intangible cultural heritage, such as beliefs, customs, and artistic expressions, enriching the cultural map with context and meaning. As the result, a cultural mapping map are produce as a guide to the public and tourist. through this cultural mapping can can improve the economy of the local community and preserve their cultural and heritage.

## 1 Introduction

Kelantan is a vibrant mosaic of cultural, historical, and natural attractions that offer a deep understanding of its unique heritage. The capital city, Kota Bharu, serves as the cultural epicenter of the state. In recent years, Kelantan has seen development in infrastructure, education, and healthcare. However, it remains one of the less urbanized and industrialized

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states in Malaysia, maintaining much of its traditional charm and cultural heritage [1]. The ardent traditional traditions, strong sense of community, and rich cultural legacy of the Kelantanese people make them an essential component of Malaysia's complex cultural fabric [2]. The people of Kelantan, known as Kelantanese Malays, are renowned for their deep-rooted cultural heritage and strong sense of community. In addition, their primary language is the Kelantanese dialect of Malay, which differs from mainstream Malay in vocabulary and accent

In addition, Kelantan's cultural uniqueness lies in its ability to preserve and celebrate these traditional arts, crafts, and practices, making it a vibrant and culturally rich state in Malaysia [3]. This motif reflects the daily life of the people of Kelantan who always use plants for food and medicine. While the songket, a luxurious hand-woven fabric interwoven with gold or silver thread, symbolizes the bond of cultural heritage and is traditionally worn during important ceremonies and celebrations. Usually, batik and songket will be worn at official events. In addition, Kelantan kites such as Wan Bulan and Wau Puyuh display the spirit of creativity that exists among the local community in the state and are celebrated every year at the Kelantan International Kite Festival, attracting fans from all over the world.

## **2 Literature reviews**

### **2.1 People and place making**

In Kelantan, all races can communicate in Malay, practice their culture honorably, and worship freely. People and place-making are closely related processes that shape and define communities, creating environments that reflect cultural, community, environmental, social and historical identities [4]. This is because this relationship is very clear when the people of Kelantan actively participate in commemorating and preserving cultural history and hereditary heritage that is rich in its own style. In addition, Kelantan is the only state in Malaysia that practices the policy of "Building Together with Islam", a difference that makes it unique and different from other states. Furthermore, local communities often make significant contributions to places that are strongly embedded in their cultural and historical identity through their daily behavior, way of life, traditional arts and communal activities. In addition, communal activities and events further demonstrate the dynamic relationship between people and place-making in Kelantan. The practice of gotong-royong, open house activities, where community members gather to perform tasks together, improves the social fabric and physical environment of their villages and towns. Good practices such as always helping each other, doing work together and various activities are always done to strengthen human relationships. Festivals such as the Kelantan International Kite Festival and the makyong dance bring people together in a shared space, creating an energetic and meaningful experience that defines the character of the place [3]. Therefore, this initiative supports social unity and cultural continuity in addition to improving the aesthetics and function of the community as well as guaranteeing the identity of the Kelantan community is preserved and preserved for future generations. The role of the people of Kelantan in making shows is highlighted by their earnestness in maintaining traditional crafts and performing arts. Moreover, making wau, craft, songket, and batik is not just a commercial endeavor but also a culture that strengthens the sense of place. In addition, local artisans and painters apply cultural symbols and meanings into the physical environment to produce unique Kelantan goods.. Similarly, performances of Wayang Kulit, Mak Yong, and Dikir Barat are cultural expressions that enliven public spaces and foster a communal atmosphere. These best practices transform everyday locations into cultural landmarks and enriching the community's sense of identity and belonging.

## **2.2 Significance of preserving cultural heritage at Kelantan state**

Cultural heritage among the people of Kelantan has a positive impact on the people's values, beliefs and sense of belonging, and it plays an important role in the lifestyle of the community. The preservation and conservation of cultural heritage and customs are very important, especially for people like the people of Kelantan, where it is the basic link to their way of life, history, celebration, identity and customs. Heritage includes tangible assets such as historical buildings, monuments and artifacts, as well as intangible elements such as language, customs, festivals and traditional knowledge. For the people of Kelantan, maintaining a unique dialect, traditional arts and religious practices does not only maintain the relationship with their ancestors but also instills a sense of pride and belonging in the community. It ensures that the experience and wisdom of the past generation continue to influence and enrich the lives of young people to come. In addition, preserving cultural heritage is important to foster social cohesion and community resilience. In Kelantan, social activities such as *gotong-royong* (working together) [5]. To ensure the continuity of cultural information, these cultural practices provide a forum for intergenerational exchange where elders pass on customs, stories and values to younger generations. Folk games such as *congkak*, *batu seremban* were very popular in ancient times. Additionally, the people of Kelantan actively defend their collective identity and unity by actively participating in these cultural traditions and celebrations, which is very important given the challenges of modernization and globalization. Knowledge related to heritage will be passed down to the younger generation so it can be shown to the new generation. Kelantan's cultural heritage continues to be preserved through a combination of official support and community initiatives. Government bodies, local authorities, tourism agencies and other agencies are always helpful in promoting the cultural heritage of local people. At the forefront of this initiative are entertainers, artists and local cultural practitioners who are constantly learning and teaching their traditional dance, music and craft skills. Institutions such as museums, cultural centers, and educational programs play an important role in documenting and promoting Kelantan's heritage. Various programs involving the local community, the school have been introduced by relevant parties. Moreover, these preservation efforts are further strengthened by government funding, policies and support for cultural events, protection of cultural sites, and the inclusion of cultural education in the school curriculum. The people of Kelantan enrich the nation's heritage for future generations by preserving their cultural heritage, which also helps to maintain their distinct identity within the wider Malaysian cultural landscape.

## **2.3 Promoting Kelantan cultural heritage**

Culture plays an important role in diplomacy and serves as a bridge that fosters understanding and relations between countries. The performing arts in Kelantan add another layer of depth to its cultural heritage, showcasing the state's rich tradition of storytelling and musical performances. *Wayang Kulit*, a traditional *wayang kulit* theater, is known for its elaborate puppetry and elaborate storytelling that brings ancient epics to life. *Mak Yong*, UNESCO-recognized dance drama, combines music, dance and theater to tell myths and legends, preserving a unique performance art form which has been passed down through generations. *Barat Dikir*, a traditional choral performance involving rhythmic and harmonious group singing, engages the audience in a dynamic cultural experience that reflects the community's vibrant artistic expression. Religious and racial practices are closely related to Kelantan's cultural heritage, reflecting the strong influence of Islam in the state [6]. Kelantan's conservative and pious Islamic customs are well-known, and they are reflected in daily life and cultural events. Modest clothing that covers the *aurat* is encouraged for people living in

the State of Kelantan. Islamic holidays, such as Hari Raya Haji and Aidilfitri, are celebrated with traditional meals such as Nasi dagang and Ketupat, prayers, and community gatherings that strengthen human relationships and maintain cultural traditions. Elements such as high social culture and noble values are always emphasized with the practice of mutual cooperation, meetings with villagers and community activities where members of the community gather to do group work. Furthermore, the preservation and promotion of Kelantan's cultural heritage is important to maintain its unique identity in a rapidly changing world. Efforts to highlight traditional crafts, support local artists and celebrate cultural festivals contribute to the state's vibrant cultural landscape. Educational initiatives and digital media such as Instagram and Facebook play an important role in raising awareness and fostering appreciation for Kelantan traditions, ensuring that these rich cultural practices are maintained and passed down to future generations. By practicing both tradition and innovation, Kelantan can continue to celebrate and share its cultural heritage with a global audience.

## **2.4 Cultural mapping and sustainable communities**

In order to ensure that this cultural heritage is always remembered and not lost, this heritage needs to be recorded. One of the techniques for recording heritage is through cultural mapping. This cultural mapping technique is the latest method aimed at showing how stories, practices, relationships, memories and local rituals become places as meaningful locations [7]. Cultural mapping is a database system related to art, culture and heritage of the state of Kelantan. In general, this mapping is divided into four, namely asset mapping, concept mapping, system mapping, resource mapping. The mapping includes the categories of performing arts, traditional clothing, traditional food, historical buildings, information about figures and artists. Performing Arts includes performances staged in the categories of Dance Arts, Theater Arts and Music Arts that also involve Voice or Singing. Performing arts such as Kelantan dance, Makyong, Wayang kulit and Menora are performed as a form of traditional art that has been passed down from previous generations. Traditional food such as Nasi dangang, Nasi lemak, Nasi kerabu and cendol is a traditional dish consisting of various types of food and desserts as well as drinks that have been practiced by previous generations consisting of various races that have been handed down to the current generation through recipes left behind. By mapping tangible and intangible cultural resources, the community will gain a clearer knowledge of their unique heritage. In addition, this process helps to preserve the cultural landmarks and practices of the local community, ensuring that they remain important to the community's identity in changing circumstances. Cultural mapping contributes to sustainable communities by supporting cultural tourism and economic development in ways that benefit local people. Various agencies such as the ministry of culture and tourism, local authorities and representatives of voluntary bodies always help in documenting the existing cultural heritage. By highlighting and promoting cultural assets, communities can attract tourists interested in indigenous cultural experiences, which can provide economic opportunities without compromising the integrity of cultural practices and can boost the local economy. Sustainable tourism initiatives that respect and celebrate local heritage can generate income while strengthening cultural preservation. For example, promoting Kelantan's traditional arts and festivals can attract visitors and provide a platform for local artists to showcase their work, thus supporting cultural preservation and economic vitality. Through cultural mapping, communities can achieve a balance between preserving their heritage and pursuing sustainable development goals. Therefore, this cultural mapping technique is very important to preserve the culture and heritage found in Kelantan.

### 3 Research methodology

#### 3.1 Selected Case study

Selecting a case study in Bachok, Kelantan, involves identifying a specific aspect of the area that can provide insights into its cultural, social, or economic dynamics. Bachok is a district known for its coastal charm, traditional practices, and local industries. Six village was selected namely Perupok, Tanjung Pauk, Melawi, Mahligai, Tawang and Gunong Village. The selection of this area based on the richness and uniqueness of the cultural and heritage that was found in the area.



**Fig. 1.** Map of Bachok District (source: [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_of\\_Bachok\\_District](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Bachok_District))

#### 3.2 Semi structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a flexible and effective method for gathering detailed and nuanced information about cultural heritage in Bachok. This approach combines predetermined questions with the freedom to explore information in more depth during the conversation. Identify and reach out to a diverse group of interviewees, including four boat builders, one community leaders, sixty local community, ten cultural practitioners, and two tourism operators, to gain a broad perspective on Bachok's cultural heritage. The selection of the respondents are randomly selected, have experience and can describe a place in the study area. The qualitative data was analysed using ATLAST Ti. Version 7 software via coding and transcripts the data.

## 4 Results and discussions

### 4.1 Interviews

Conducting interviews to gather information about the cultural and heritage of Bachok involves engaging key informants such as local community leaders, cultural practitioners, and tourism operators to gain insights into the region's traditions, practices, and their impact on the community. Through structured and open-ended questions, the interviews find the significance of traditional crafts, festivals, and local customs, as well as the challenges and opportunities related to cultural preservation and tourism. This approach helps capture detailed, authentic perspectives that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of Bachok's cultural identity and heritage. Boat builders and batik makers, shared detailed insights into their crafts, emphasizing the importance of traditional techniques that have been passed down through generations. These crafts are not only vital to the local economy but also serve as symbols of cultural identity, reflecting Bachok's historical maritime and artistic heritage. The artisans highlighted the challenges they face, including the loss of traditional skills among younger generations and the pressures of modernization, which threaten the continuity of these practices.

In addition, community leaders and cultural practitioners provide a deeper understanding of the role played during festivals and traditional events in preserving cultural heritage in the Bachok area. There are interesting activities such as seasonal festivals such as makyong and wayang kulit, fostering a spirit of unity and cultural continuity. These events are not just social gatherings but are rooted in local customs and religious practices, reflecting the values and traditions of the community. In the current season, most places no longer play this activity due to lack of response. Today's society is more about choosing indoor activities compared to outdoor activities. The leaders stated that while these festivals are important to preserve cultural practices, there is a need for greater support and resources to ensure their sustainability in the face of growing tourism and modernization. Many inter-state competitions and various interesting activities can be found elsewhere. Tour operators share insights on how tourism impacts Bachok's cultural heritage, highlighting both opportunities and challenges. While tourism has brought economic benefits and raised awareness of Bachok's cultural assets, it also poses the risk of cultural dilution and environmental degradation. Operators emphasize the importance of implementing sustainable tourism practices that respect and preserve local traditions while promoting responsible visitor behavior. Therefore, extensive promotion of the uniqueness of this activity is necessary to introduce this activity to the world community. Strategies such as community involvement, students, young people and volunteer associations in tourism planning and promoting cultural education for tourists can help balance the economic benefits of tourism with the need to protect and celebrate Bachok's unique cultural heritage.

**Table 1.** The results of interviews with selective respondents

Questions	Respondent	Answer
How many days does a singora roofing processes need to be done	Noraini Jusoh (Owner of Singora Roof)	...."the process takes 25 days to complete the Singora roof which is 15 days for the firing process and 10 days for the Singora roof cooling process"
How many types of sales have been sold	Kak Na (Owner of Ikan Masin Viral Kg. Perupok)	...."various types of salted fish and dried fish that have been sold"

How long has been running this charcoal business	Azizah (Owner of Charcoal Factory)	...”has been in business for over 20 years and is a charcoal factory especially in bachok”
What is the name of the charcoal burner	Azizah (Owner of Charcoal Factory)	...”the name of the place to burn and cool charcoal is gok arang”
How long is the process of burning and cooling this charcoal	Azizah (Owner of Charcoal Factory)	...”the process for 2 weeks and cooling for 1 week”
What kind of wood is used to make charcoal	Azizah (Owner of Charcoal Factory)	...”using various types of forest trees”
Can you please explain what is Wayang Kulit?	Pudin (Guard of Wayang Kulit)	...”Wayang kulit is a game that tells a tale or fairy tale that related to previous era.”
How long does it take to produce a Wayang Kulit statue process?	Pudin (Guard of Wayang Kulit)	...”the process takes 14 days to complete the statue which is 7 days for dry the skin of cow or buffalo and 7 days more is for carve and colouring the statue.”
How long the Puteri ritual and when it are held?	Pudin (Owner of Puteri Ritual)	...”it depends on the patient, took 1 or 2 days for the ritual and each ritual need to pay in RM1500.00 and the ritual are held on night on 9p.m to 1 a.m. and can be doing according to the comfort of the patient.”
The process takes 14 days to complete the statue which is 7 days for dry the skin of cow or buffalo and 7 days more is for carve and colouring the statue.	Pudin (Guard of Wayang Kulit)	...”Wayang kulit is held when are called to make a performed and the time is must after the 9p.m – 12 p.m”
What is the main Traditional food of Kelantan?	Pak Man (Student of Silat games)	...”Cerana is the one of the main Traditional foods in Kelantan which is as welcoming the guests.”
What is Silat and how long the Silat learning are taken to finish it?	Pak Man (Student of Silat games)	...”Silat is a games which at the same time it serve as a martial art and it took 3 month to complete learning Silat and every games it comes in group or pairs which is 12 people for 6 group”
Can you explain what is Puteri ?	Pak Man (Owner of Puteri Ritual)	...”Puteri or Teri is a traditional ritual for disease the illness that associated with mental which cannot be treated by a doctor”
Is it all the accessory was ready made?	(Son of the owner of accessories at beach D’Aur)	.....”nope, all the accessory was handmade by my father.”
Where did he have all the experience?	(Son of the owner of accessories at beach D’Aur)	...”all his experience was gain by working at Pulau Perhentian with the respondent grandfather”
Can you talk about his journey?	(Son of the owner of accessories at beach D’Aur)	...”he is working when he was young and hardworking person.”
How about his salary there?	(Son of the owner of accessories at beach D’Aur)	...”at that time, he did not gain much salary.”

## 4.2 Proposed cultural mapping of Bachok district

Proposing a cultural mapping for Bachok District involves creating a comprehensive data and celebrate the area's rich cultural heritage. This mapping identify both tangible and intangible cultural assets, such as historical landmarks, traditional crafts, and local festivals. This mapping effort will categorize assets into historical sites, traditional crafts, and cultural events, providing a structured view of how these elements contribute to Bachok's cultural identity. The analysis will help identify patterns and relationships among these assets, assess the impact of tourism and modernization, and highlight challenges and opportunities for preserving local heritage. By engaging with local community leaders, and cultural practitioners through interviews, the detailed information about the significance and context of these cultural elements, ensuring that are accurately represented and preserved. To promote and sustain Bachok's cultural heritage, the cultural events aimed at raising awareness and appreciation among both locals and visitors. Sustainable tourism practices will be encouraged to ensure that tourism supports rather than undermines cultural preservation. Community feedback are integral to maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of the mapping, ensuring that it continues to support the preservation of Bachok's unique cultural landscape.

**Table 2.** Asset, resources, concept and system mapping at Bachok District

Assets mapping	Resource mapping	Concept mapping	System mapping
Istana bunian Wat Phothikyan Phuttam Wat Pathumyihara Wayang kulit Jeti Nelayan Kampung Kemasin D'Heritage Centre & Training Wayang kulit Pak Nik Mat Ludin Ombak Rindu Kemayang Sri Nipah Resort Sammak Song Viriyak Sangworn Kubu British Anak Rhu D' Aur Beach Resort Chalet Jeti Pengkalan Petah Pasar Besar Siti Aisyah Royal Kelantan Endurance Wayang kulit, rebana & cerana	Pantai Kemayang Pantai Kemasin Pantai Melawi Pantai Irama Sawah padi Ban Tembakau	Wat Phothikyan Phuttam (Buddha) Wat Pathumyihara (Buddha) Masjid (Islam)	Rempah Cap Jam Ikan Masin Viral Perupok Kraf Wau Kraf Atap Singgora Kilang Arang Hamid Koleh Kacang Khadijah Atap Nipah Tikar Mengkuang Akok Puan Nani Ukiran tembaga Perusahaan budu Perusahaan kuih tradisional Perusahaan ikan kering Taman kekal pengeluaran makanan Kimpalan besi Bududulis emas Laksa Beris Lemang Baker (Roti Kampung)

## 5 Conclusions

In conclusion, the cultural mapping approach technique applied in Bachok, Kelantan, has been proven to be an invaluable tool to connect local people and places. Mapping assets, resources, systems and concepts is very important for the reference of all levels of society. For asset mapping, sixteen items have been identified such as the Goblin Palace, Wat Phothikyan Phuttam, Wayang kulit. For resource mapping, six items have been identified such as Kemayang Beach, Kemasin Beach, Melawi Beach, Irama Beach, Rice Fields and Tobacco Ban. For concept mapping, four items have been identified which religious places are found in the Bachok area. For System mapping, as many as nineteen items have been confirmed. A systematic analysis of the district's cultural assets, from traditional handicrafts and historic landmarks to festivals and community practices, we have gained a comprehensive view of Bachok's rich cultural heritage while promoting Bachok worldwide. Through this mapping can also simultaneously improve the economy of the local population. This mapping process has highlighted the unique identity of local communities in terms of cultural uniqueness and heritage, rooted in maritime history, artisanal traditions, and vibrant local customs, which collectively contribute to a strong sense of place and belonging among local communities. In addition, issues such as the preservation of traditional skills, the impact of tourism, the economy of the local population and the need for sustainable development practices have been brought forward, providing a clear direction for future initiatives aimed at protecting and promoting the Bachok cultural identity. Various unique heritage and culture have been identified in the Bachok area. Furthermore, this cultural mapping underlines the importance of a participatory approach in documenting and preserving cultural heritage. It has shown how a comprehensive understanding of local cultural assets can inform sustainable development and tourism strategies that respect and enhance the cultural fabric of a community. By continuously engaging with local stakeholders and updating the cultural map, Bachok can ensure that its rich heritage is not only preserved but also celebrated and harnessed for the benefit of future generations. This case study becomes a model for other regions that want to balance cultural preservation with economic and social development.

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