

# Heritage Revitalisation Strategy: The Saviour of Petaling Street

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## ABSTRACT

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In revitalising heritage cities, Ross (2024) criticised the dominance of urban preservation and management in cities that focus more on tangible than intangible heritage. The urban law highlighted that 'image and identity' are essential to represent a morphology and tangible and intangible heritage of specific urban avenues. Xiang & Mohamad (2023) unveiled that the front and back of heritage shophouses at Petaling Streets are adaptive usage. Heritage Revitalisation Strategy (HRS) is not new to Canadian, European, Middle Eastern, Chinese and Russian cities, which the tangible and intangible heritage treasures are valued equally in a strategic approach. This study evaluates the existing Heritage Revitalisation Strategy (RS) dedicated for the local authority of Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL) and the Think City in valorising the heritage street of Petaling. Even though various methods were implemented in most heritage streets in Kuala Lumpur which were not successful, therefore a remarkable approach of HRS shall be tested to Petaling Street to groom the public place's ambience. This research aims to identify the best approach applicable to urban heritage streets globally that is applicable urban heritage streets in Kuala Lumpur. Researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with the heritage manager of Kuala Lumpur City Hall and Think City's personnel, visual observations, digital photo analysis, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with shop owners were applied to establish a balanced strategy between the existing HRS and the Petaling Street's version. Valorising the intangible and tangible built heritage as daily practices of the local street community as part of the street culture. Still, a proper Heritage

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Revitalisation Strategy (HRS) is urgently required specifically for our urban heritage street. Understanding this rare strategy for transforming into the street is critical in valorising its value. A proper RS by the DBKL management to further elevate its function as a tourist boosting factor is a catalyst for other avenues.

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## INTRODUCTION

Zhang et al. (2024) and Ross (2024) highlighted that urban citizens, culture, and context are the essential ingredients of an intelligent heritage city. The initiatives include enhancing visitor experiences, investing in infrastructure improvements, and collaborating with community stakeholders to prioritise, preserve, and promote heritage value for future generations. Swensen & Granberg (2024, 2015) suggest a holistic approach towards robust and resilient built heritage. The City of Vancouver's strategies include the Heritage Revitalisation Agreement (HRA) between the city authority and the heritage property owners in developing the urban heritage area. Vancouver's strategy is part of the City Plan 2020 - 2050. The implementation of HRA is using the Heritage Revitalisation Strategy (HRS). Due to urban heritage streets being endangered by development pressure, it is necessary to save this invaluable treasure. The aim is to identify the Heritage Revitalisation Strategy (HRS) to revive the approach to managing the past heritage as recommended by Tunbridge & Ashworth (1996) intangible and tangible heritage values, creating an identity towards sustainability, Chapin & Knapp (2015).

This study explores the revitalisation strategy suggested by local people and managers of Petaling Street, a heritage street in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Three methods were employed: semi-structured interviews with the regional authority, focus group discussions with the shop owners, and visual observation conducted by the researchers. The findings provide DBKL and Think City with a Heritage Revitalisation Strategy (HRS) to turn a street into a particular thriving environment – a public place.

## BACKGROUND

The existing World Heritage Sites of Malaysia, specifically Melaka and George Town in Pulau Pinang, were established in 2008. In 2024, Kuala Lumpur is implementing its approach to managing the heritage city towards KL2030. Hasibuan et al. (2024) highlighted how Rapid Transit Development (RTD) influences urban development in Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta. However, the life and sustainability of the Petaling Street sites accurately represent Kuala Lumpur's diverse culture, as evidenced by their architecture and trading practices with the inclusion of RTD. The blend of cultural elements from Malaysian Chinese, Malay, and Malaysian-Indian is fascinating and has an outstanding universal value (OUV). It's impressive to see how sub-cultures have influenced these sites. The fundamental requirement for this OUV is that the heritage street must be sustainable in terms of robustness or resilience, facing all post-millennium challenges and future generation needs. Moreover, Tucker & Carnegie (2014) argue that World Heritage encompasses various viewpoints and must accommodate multiple meanings and perceptions about the place. There are three main Outstanding Universal Values (OUV):

- (i) Outstanding Universal Value: The multi-trading town is forged from exchanges of cultures
- (ii) Second Outstanding Universal Value: A Living Testimony of Tangible and Intangible Heritage
- (iii) Third Outstanding Universal Value: The Melting Pot of Multicultural Architecture and Township

## The Significance of an Image and Identity of Heritage Shophouses

Shop houses have existed up to now at an age between eighty years to a hundred years old (from the Pre-Independent Age – and earlier in the 1920s). The strong image of built heritage become the identity of

Kuala Lumpur, especially among tourists. For example, the place's attachment to tourists and local citizens can attract them to revisit it. Some tourists treat Petaling Street as their second home, especially regarding authenticity, friendly shop owners, affordable and attractive product sales, unique cuisines and other sensory stimulation that any street shopping vibes and ambience could offer. Locke (2023) ignites the "Sense of Place and Identity" that relates closely between a sense of place and identity in promoting wellness and happiness, especially with community participation, as engaged by Li et al. (2020).

### **Heritage Revitalisation Strategy (HRS)**

A strategic approach is urgently needed to secure the future of urban heritage buildings from further deterioration. The existing "monument" of shop houses built in the pre-independent period requires special attention to ensure her existence. The lifespan and time that the buildings on Petaling Street have undergone various stages of living were appreciated when it came to decision-making for current and future functions. Bieda & Maniak (2024) enhanced the value of residential premises within the city and recognised the existence of mixed functions of the row shophouses as lively premises in Petaling Street. The heritage street showed the resilience and relevance of characteristics that play an essential role as a tangible heritage to capacity building. However, without heritage awareness among shop owners and users, the visual richness of the detailing of the façade treatment will disappear. With new business growing development, especially by new generations to come, new growth will erase away these kinds of buildings, and contemporary skyscrapers will replace the high land value of this area.

### **Significance of Heritage Streets**

The outdoor shopping between rows of shophouses fronting each other composed intimacy and a sense of semi-private space within the public space. Visual analysis of the built heritage form and freedom from an architectural viewing point resulted in a balance between solid and void. In terms of massing, it has offered an excellent massing that relates to the human scale. Samadi & Yunus (2018) highlighted the sense of belonging; a comfortable residential scale with an active shop front can gather pedestrians for shopping activities. Wang et al. (2024) reciprocally rebranding the world heritage sites via social media offers high visibility in tourism marketing. The opportunity of high accessibility, bringing local people and tourists to and from the shopping area fronting Petaling Street from KL-Klang bus station and LRT Station, has further populated street shopping along the stretch of the street.

### **Sense of Place and Place Attachment**

The "sense of place" plays a vital role in defining a community's heritage, and the study by McGlinchey (2016) highlights that the purpose of business in multicultural societies is individual, personal, and complex. How does ownership affect a sense of place? What are the interactive processes of place attachment? The direct relationship between pedestrian movements and on-street daily activity stimulated a joyous aura within a heritage outdoor space may be fully not understood, but further studies on heritage street therapeutic attributes with pedestrians prove that indulging in creative activities such as outdoor street shopping often decreases solemnity and increases livability. Nedučín et al. (2019) also suggested that a proper program needs to be at least more frequent than an annual event for the unique site to remain active and remembered by the end users. Haktanir & Gullu (2024) promoted a customer perspective study in North Cyprus, indicating that daily routine visits stimulated the attachment to places in coffee shops!

### **Public Place**

The main concern of all urban designers is the quality of public places. The place belonging to the public must possess a standard of lifestyle that suits the local way of life as a fulfilment standard on universal design. Amir et al. (2020) suggested various activities make it lively. The space between buildings typically remains public because there is no man's land or local streets without direct personal belongings.

It is managed by the city authority to protect urban public funding and regional interests. Garau et al. (2024) determined a walkability assessment tool coupling multi-criteria analysis and space syntax: the Iglesias, Italy case study to prove the human territorial path. The life and death of any street or path depends on the number of pedestrians passing by, i.e., the frequency of visitors coming and going off the street and activities such as street shopping culture or parades. In Petaling Street's case, many pedestrians have encouraged street shopping daily; hence, public places are co-created.

### **Actor-Network Theory**

Humans or end-users are merely the “actors” playing roles of various characters in physical settings created by urban designers. On the developer’s side were town and regional planners, landscape architects, engineers, and all consultants acting as “the producer” players in the urban ‘battlefield’. The urban manager is the authority that serves as the controller by providing guidelines for an ideal urban development. Alshallaqi (2024) unveiled that the guidelines at the paper level have more digitisation complexities than street-level discretion. On the socio-materiality battlefield, the acting heroes and superheroes in the urban brownfield negotiate through design proposals and guideline compliance with the authority. The “opportunist” aims for a monopoly, manipulates the urban economic space, and becomes the conquest in the building industry gamification supported by Swensen et al. (2013). The winner on the battlefield will be the developer. No matter how great the urban product of any particular urban space is, the indicator is how densely the space between buildings is populated. Then, the indicator of any livability of heritage space depends closely on the number of end users who occupy the space between buildings and continue with their lifestyle, which is considered intangible heritage, Harrison & Rose (2010). Kim (2019) reflected on an overarching theoretical framework, Actor-Network Theory, which was applied to identify the different ways of generating multiple user activities in a single built environment to support the abundance of users within the urban site.

### **The Selected Site Study - Petaling Street**

Petaling Street was once a bustling trading street that attracted immigrants and traders from China, Madras, India, and Padang, Indonesia. Melaka and George Town in Pulau Pinang were also established on the UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) Listing due to their Universal Outstanding Value (UOV). These criteria focused on the multicultural trading town, heritage, and tradition of Asia and European colonial influences and activation of the front and back of the street, Chua & Ahmad (2021). The mixture of these influences has created a unique architecture, culture, and townscape that stands out from elsewhere in East and South Asia, as recognised by UNESCO in 2008, also one of the justifications for the case study, Xiang & Mohamad (2023).

As for Kuala Lumpur City Hall, locally known as Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL), the city supported the establishment of the World Heritage Site. Therefore, a continuous effort towards the outstanding values of Petaling Street shall be included as one of the highly recommended streets for the nomination. This street undoubtedly has an exceptional value similar to the universal value established in UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 2008 in Melaka and George Town, Pulau Pinang and Melaka. The matching image and identity between Kuala Lumpur shop houses, Pulau Pinang and Melaka shop houses are due to the identical social influences of the heritage cities of the Straits of Malacca with spice up with architecture from the British Colonial, European, Asian and multi-ethnic powers. The mixed cultural background is reflected in the art and craft detailing of the façade treatment of the heritage shophouses.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY - MIXED METHODS**

A combination of Methods is supported by the visual observations of daily life on the street during our research. The employed Mixed Methods in this paper combined both quantitative and qualitative research

and analysis within the same study. This MM aims to understand a clear picture of revitalisation strategies from both approaches because of the life and death of the selected street of this tangible and intangible heritage. The mixture is better for its unique identity and the recurring events and practices for evaluating its sense of place. The heritage street's outstanding value must be assessed because its embedded values require materialising qualitative and quantitative measures.

The qualitative measures involved community participation in which shop owners were involved in the FGD, and their opinions were evaluated to obtain the revitalisation strategy. Their argument from forty shop owners is significant since they are street citizens who must continue their way of life and protect their culture from development pressures. Their lifestyle as a street business began more than eighty years ago, inherited from their grandparents. The majority continue with similar activities in the duplicate shop lots, with some adjustments to adding street vendors to enhance and raise their economic activity. The upper-level conditions were upgraded according to current needs, such as air-conditioning the upper-floor living space.

The quantitative measure and analysis for the street was conducted by applying research equipment, namely the Revitalisation Assessment Toolkit (RAT). The RAT is a three-dimensional assessment developed by the researcher Samadi et al. (2022), applied in the selected streets of the World Heritage Sites of Malaysia from 2012 until 2022. The ten-year-old toolkit was improved in detailing attributes for each horizontal, vertical, and ceiling component. Combining the three-dimensional elements creates an outdoor urban space where end users may feel the vibes and experience. The reflection of the area's quality is an experiential space in which end users can personalise and auto-stimulate their senses. Auto-stimulated purposes usually provide action by the end user to interact psychologically according to the physical setting of the space. These are what we consider physical props to promote the spiritual aura or ambience of the room.

Three (3) primary activities in the research were conducted between December 2022 and December 2023: Visual Observation (VO), semi-structured interviews (SSI), and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). One method employed in architectural research was visual observation (V.O.), where the researchers used on-street analysis to experience the place's vibes as a pedestrian viewing point. Table 1. It is a research methodology that is employed.

Table 1. Employed Research Methodology

Employed Research	3 Types of Research Method	On-Site or Expert Office Data	Number of Researchers or Respondents
<b>Mixed Method</b>	i) On-Street Visual Observation Analysis	i) Researchers' Visual Analysis	i) 6 Researchers
	ii) CCTV Data Analysis	ii) Police Headquarter Data	ii) CCTV Video
	iii) Focus Group Discussion	Shop Owners and Vendor Owners	40 Shop Owners or Vendors

Source: Authors (2024)

## Research Method 1

### *Visual Observation by Researchers*

The first activity of the first method is Visual Observations (VO) of daily life on the street during our study. This is the most applicable qualitative method used by researchers from architectural backgrounds. The selected research equipment or tool is the digital photos for data gathering and analysis. The advantage of this VO is to record the activity between buildings to understand better the unique identity of the user's

intangible heritage that shaped the sense of place based on the researcher's site visit. The researchers captured videos and digitised the vibrancy of the street during our observations to aid our analysis. The research on-site study took three cycles of visits at different daily times within a year. The first cycle was in the morning between seven and nine, the second was during lunchtime between 12 noon and two in the evening, and the final cycle was after office hours between eight and ten. The three cycles were repeated monthly for one year for the analysis to ensure the consistency of results.

### ***Closed-circuit television – CCTV***

The first method of conducting the second activity in the research was the employment of the recorded data in the closed-circuit television (CCTV). Besides the physical visit for the visual observation, the observation also viewed the CCTV acting as a hidden camera next to the lamp post around six meters from the street level. The data collected is in the form of video motion and non-motion detection. From time to time, all gathered video camera input data located within Petaling Street was kept confidential for record purposes in case of any crime and accident scene in the area. The positioning of the CCTV is for urban safety surveillance measures for the Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur. The data was collected from the Police Headquarters that observed the outdoor activities, and it is confidential data that recorded the visual observations of daily life on the street during our research.

### **Research Method 2**

#### ***Semi-structured interview (SSI) with a Representative of the DBKL and a Representative of the Think City***

The interview was conducted in the DBKL office using a semi-structured interview. In the two-hour interview session, the interviewees were asked about their ideas and strategies for the DBKL managing Petaling Street. The purpose is to maintain her current attractiveness and their vision of the future of the street. The interview was conducted in the Think City office and on-street visit. Think City offered the shop owners incentives to maintain and conserve the shop lot. Still, the response by the shop owners needed to be considered low because the majority were no longer staying on the premises.

### **Research Method 3**

The third method employs the quantitative method. Samadi et al. (2022) discuss how establishing a heritage revitalisation toolkit for quality heritage streets supports an excellent heritage street. Heritage Revitalisation refers to any effort to revive a heritage property, especially within an urban area. Urban heritage revivalists applied the theoretical research on Heritage Revitalisation input through the Revitalisation Assessment Toolkit (R.A.T) at the research level, as employed earlier in the previous study by Samadi and Yunus (2018).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The research methodology combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. When one thinks of Petaling Street, its tangible and intangible heritage can evoke a flood of emotions. The concept of "sense of place" is complex, unique, and personal to each individual. This sense of place can be described on this street. Each of these factors helps to create a sense of connection to the area, making Petaling Street an extraordinary place. The following sub-topic unveils the findings to explore Petaling Street's strategic heritage revitalisation.

## Result 1: Visual Observation (VO) Result by Researcher

### *Street Shopping Activity*

Research has revealed that seven primary factors contribute to an individual developing an emotional connection to a particular location. These factors include street shopping sensory experiences, narrative connections, historical connections, ideological connections, commodification, and material dependence. Many interviewed street shoppers had multiple references to "Street Shopping Heaven". Most street shoppers consider their sensory experience part of their urban recreational activity. The location of Petaling Street is a link between transportation hubs (Klang Bus Station) and Light Rapid Transit (Central Market Terminal), where the pedestrian is the primary path to and from their workplace. During payday, the street is even more busy, and bargaining is frequent for active shopping activities.

### *Visual Richness*

Visual richness is also related to those with historical treasures of the architectural heritage shop lot as protected by authority over tangible heritage assets. The red colour cloth, golden art and crafts, and red colour hanging structure of "tang lung" lights are part of the decorative elements at Petaling Street to celebrate Chinese Year. The ritual is performed for cultural purposes, such as the lion dance during Chinese New Year, which only happens during the New Year celebration along Petaling Street. The yearly festive event by shop owners in giving fortune has attracted more tourists in response to tourism and enhanced the aesthetic value of the street. The day and night during Chinese New Year are more energetic and dynamic, with lion dancing performances and decorative lanterns along the roads. This uniqueness of high revitalisation with a peaceful street yet maintains its vibrancy makes the urban experience a beautiful street.

### *Street Shopping's Visual Ambiance*

When creating a sense of attachment to Petaling Street, specific sensory experiences have a more significant impact than others. Multiple individuals mentioned the sights, sounds, and smells contributing to this feeling. Specifically, some participants highlighted visual elements like the stands selling 'buah berangan' or hot 'corn' and the aroma of the authenticity of food such as 'fried kuey teow' or 'grilled duck'. The original local cuisine is especially memorable and helps to reinforce further the personal attachment towards a special memory or a sense of connection to this area.

Table 2. Revitalisation Strategy 1 – Visual Ambiance

Revitalisation Strategy 3 [Visual Ambiance]	Street View	Maintain Harmonious Balance Offer Local Cuisine Five Senses Stimulation Head Turning Effects Sufficient Parking
	Pedestrian View	Visual Richness Safety and Surveillance Urban Guiding Movement Resilience Amenity High Accessibility and Legibility
	Aerial View	Festive and Cultural Decorative Celebrative Mode

Source: Authors (2024)

### ***Unique Characteristics of CCTV***

With astute observation of the daily activities and interactions on the local streets, a profound understanding of the area's unique identity and character was identified. Through meticulous analysis of recurring behaviours and practices, the researcher employed cutting-edge digital photography and street footage with exceptional accuracy and scrutiny. The findings have provided a comprehensive insight into the area's distinct personality. The general public and tourists accept Petaling Street as one of the most vibrant streets with a minor crime area. Therefore, this juxtaposition has elevated this street with added value as a unique identity: a 'vibrant but secure street'. The strong connection between the authority, local tourist crew or enforcement (Polis Bantuan Pelancong) and police officers is well-connected. Any security information and data related to safety are directly linked to the nearest Police Station. The fusion of cultures and history in Petaling Street has resulted in a one-of-a-kind architecture, culture, and streetscape that is genuinely remarkable.

Table 3. Revitalisation Strategy 2 – Active and Celebration

Revitalisation Strategy 1	At Street Level	High Surveillance
[Visual Observation Findings from CCTV]		Pedestrian-dominant Street
		Universal Design

Source: Authors (2024)

### **Result 2: Semi-Structured Interview (SSI) Result**

#### ***Street Contemporary Social Value-Added Networking from DBKL***

A street location is unique for shop owners, residents, vendor owners, renters and end users from multicultural backgrounds. Based on DBKL data, personal connections are made through place names, stories passed down through generations and family history. However, few individuals outside the shrinking Muslim community know the significance of Madras Street at Petaling Street as a gathering spot for the Muslim community. For many years, Southeast Asian vendors would come together at this location, which was considered a central meeting point and a transitional space for the Muslim community from India and Bangladesh in Kuala Lumpur before they were forced to relocate due to urban development pressure.

Table 4. Revitalisation Strategy 3 – Owner’s Networking

Revitalisation Strategy 4 [Owner’s Networking with customer]	Street or Horizontal Components	Magnetic Pedestrian Network Safety and Connectivity Customer Friendly Service and Amenity Green and Practical Streetscape 24 Hours Operation and Surveillance
	Walling Components	Practical Shopfront Design and Display Transparency of product and service High accessibility Legible façade and advertisement
	Aerial @ Roofing Components	Protected Built Heritage Decorative Elements Shading Device Natural Ventilation – Active Corridor Climatic Proof Indoor Outdoor Space Tropical Approach

Source: Authors (2024)

### ***Multi-Cultural Heritage Image and Identity from the SSI with the Think City***

The result is from the semi-structured interview with two personnel (n=2) from Think City. The Malaysian Chinese currently dominate Petaling Street. Besides that, other shop traders are vendors, and shop helpers are the shop owners' family members and Bangladeshi assistants. The Chinese residents in this area practice their Buddhist religion, practice Chinese culture and continue with Chinese-style cultural activities. Of the current residents of Petaling Street, fifty per cent of shop owners rent their shop houses to their legal Bangladeshi staff.

The result from the visual observation by the researcher was that Bangladeshi staff from the shop houses and kiosks connected themselves with the Islamic activities of the Indian Muslim community and joined Masjid Jamek’s activities. Their presence is significant in preserving the Muslim identity, history, and tradition. Another way to view living on Petaling Street is as a place where people share common values. People of all ethnicities currently use the street as pedestrians and street shoppers. They are street shoppers from Malays, Chinese, Indian, and international tourists. Maintaining ethical values and respecting diverse cultures, where people from various backgrounds, ethnicities, and cultures live together, is essential. Therefore, the general image and identity of the streets are multi-racial for all Malaysians.

Table 5. Revitalisation Strategy 4 – Heritage Image and Identity

Revitalisation Strategy 5 [Socio-Cultural Heritage Identity Findings]	Heritage Street Shop Owners or Club	Shop Owners' Network Close Connectivity with Manager and Thinker Sustainability with Inheritance Generation Updated Information and Connection from DBKL Façade Conservation Incentives Affordable + Practical Conservation Cost Green and Practical Streetscape Maintenance Cost /Fees Minimum Vendor and Shops Quit Rent 24 Hours Operation and Surveillance Lesser Enforcement or Levi for Workers
	Street Controller @ Manager	Practical Shopfront Design and Transparency Promote Peaceful Street Shops High accessibility and Legibility Permeable Info-graphic Advert and Signage Avoid Closure without notification Hygiene Shops and Surroundings
	Heritage Street Thinker @ End users	Protected Built Heritage Decorative Elements Enhance heritage image and identity Promote Streets Culture to Tourists Customer-Friendly Economic Activity Promotion

Source: Authors (2024)

### ***Heritage Street Ownership from SSI-Think City***

Based on the SSI with the representative from the Think City. On 'Petaling Street,' ownership is deeply rooted, but there are distinct forces at work among different ethnic groups. Indian Muslims, as a minority community in Malaysia, must make their presence and contributions known. The local community also shows ownership of the site through self-investment and accountability. When a new bookstore opened, a heritage advocate planted a coconut tree to remind people of the street's history related to the coconut planting event. Locals referred to the area as the 'place with coconut trees,' and he saw his efforts as contributing to the street's identity. Personalising a public space through self-investment is also a form of ownership. Ownership encompasses administrative, social, political, and economic issues. While establishing physical rights is straightforward, discussing ownership of tangible elements can be challenging. The Think City has created an inventory of heritage ownership because most inheritances are no longer traceable. However, the list may change over time due to cost-regeneration issues, heritage manipulation, or the passing of traditional bearers.

Table 6. Revitalisation Strategy 5 – Heritage Ownership and Inheritance

Revitalisation Strategy 8 [Heritage Ownership Findings]	Heritage Street 's Ownership	Individual Ownership Ownership Evidence Club membership for Everyday Activities Sustainable Ownership and Inheritance
	Heritage Inheritance	Set Building Maintenance Past Current Future Expertise Shared Interest and Documentation Sustainability

Source: Authors (2024)

### ***Petaling Street Shophouses Robustness + Resilience from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD)***

Forty shop owners and their helpers (n=40) were involved in the Focused Group Discussion. They were asked to discuss how they established a business and the necessary strategy they use to maintain their shop house activity. When asked why he opted for 'Petaling Street', a bookshop proprietor elucidated that it is a significant Kuala Lumpur's history and is conveniently located as a street food and marketplace. People's material and social needs and desires are reflected in Petaling Street. A cultural interpreter shared that her past office was on this street, and her current office is near the "Street Shopping Heaven." However, material dependence may change due to limitations, personal choices, and available resources. The study shows that the participant's attachment to the place is more towards the intangible than the tangible heritage. This aligns with research that suggests that non-material gifts connect people with a place. Robustness is defined as the re-adaptive function of buildings, which was costly but has proven to be a resilient urban monument. In terms of maintenance, most shop owners had financial issues with inheritance, and only older people were left to rent out their shop lot.

Table 7. Revitalisation Strategy 6 – Robustness And Resilience

Revitalisation Strategy 2 [Findings from FGD with shop owners]	At Street Level	Safety and High Security Permeable Way Finding Accessible Movement
	At Façade Level	Active Shopfront Legible Signage Conserve and Legible Façade Robust and Adaptive Façade
	At Aerial View	Festive and Cultural Decorative Celebrative Façade

Source: Authors (2024)

### ***Sense of Personalisation***

The regular customers of street shoppers shall be identified, and the sense of personalisation among themselves is considered very high and must be valued in many ways. Shop owners highly appreciate the purpose of belonging and sense of attachment among street shoppers because they are regular customers and returning customers to specific products and services. They even visit and pass by the street twice daily for leisure and pleasure as an ‘after work’ relief space. McCarthy (2005) agreed with the significance of a strong image and identity as part of the great street qualities.

Individuals who regularly or actively engage in place-related activities express a greater sense of belonging to their surroundings. A cultural interpreter described her involvement in heritage conservation projects and cultural activities on 'Petaling Street,' including direct interaction with practitioners and information sharing, fostering a sense of belonging. People may also have a sense of belonging through social activities outside work and enjoy dinner before proceeding to the nearby Light Rapid Transit (LRT) station to go home after office hours. An owner of a traditional trade shop explained that his sense of belonging grew as he and his father celebrated National Day at Dataran Merdeka, located around three hundred meters from Petaling Street.

Table 8. Revitalisation Strategy 7 – Personalisation

Revitalisation Strategy 7	Street or Horizontal Components	User, Customer or Sellers Friendly
		Local Networking
		Safety and Connectivity
		Amenity and Conveniency
		Green and Practical Streetscape
		Working, Living and Playing
		Ergonomic and Universal Design
	Walling Components	Legible Shopfront
		Design
		24 Hours Surveillance
Aerial/Roofing Components	Sense of Place	
	Zero Maintenance	
	Built Heritage and Cultural Decorative Elements	
	Natural Lighting and Ventilating	
		Conducive Shopping and protection

Source: Authors (2024)

The sense of belonging also relates to the experience of being a newcomer, especially visitors who prefer to stay in the nearest hotels on Petaling Street. Individuals' sense of belonging also extends to their ethnic groups' spirit of place'; Rifaioğlu & Şahin Guchan (2013) will further enhance tourism activity, Qiu et al. (2022). It is found that a place's sense of belonging evolves through time.

### **Result 3: The R.A.T**

The third method employs the quantitative method, which provides the research with quantitative findings. A heritage Revitalisation Attribute Toolkit (R.A.T) is based on the formulation application from the earlier researcher Samadi, Z. et al. (2018) for quality heritage streets support an excellent heritage street. Heritage Revitalisation refers to any effort to revive a heritage property, especially within an urban area.

The study reveals the intricate connection between tangible and intangible heritage and how it influences people's "sense of place." In the case of the selected street of Petaling. This is the result of R.A.T for Petaling Street, showing each component has a percentage of values. During the visual observation session, all questions were answered to quantify the physical and spiritual attributes in the following tables: Table 3 and Table 4. Each question is provided with a Five-Point Likert Scale, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Evaluation of Physical Attributor and Assessment Criteria (PAe).

Section	[Physical Attributes] Assessment Criteria.	Category	[Mark].	[Result (%)].
1A.			[Highest Score: 125].	Percentage [100(%)].
1	Active Shop front.			
2	Aesthetic value, Colour, Façade Attractiveness.			
3	Signboards.			
4	Quality/selection of size, materials and finishes.	Visual Ambience	25	20
5	Decorative Elements: festive.			
6	Highly maintained and re-adaptive usage.			
7	Accessibility + connectivity.			
8	Traffic calming system + accessibility quality.			
9	Tropical approach covered walkway for pedestrian.			
10	Universal design.			
11	Self-maintenance, resilience and crime free design.	Owner's Networking	45	36
12	Street sustainability.			
13	Economically + safety + surveillance.			
14	Streetscapes.			
15	Outdoor living room: outdoor furniture resilience material.			
16	Positive human behaviour + Active Lifestyle.			
17	Hygiene and healthy.			
18	Creative kiosk design + low maintenance.	Heritage image and Identity	25	20
19	Complete public amenity.			
20	Post Office, ATM and Toilet.			
21	Active landscape: interactive floor, decorative trees, fountain.			
22	Programmed activity (commercial and constructive activity).			
23	Interactive Info and Signage.	Active Celebrative	25	20
24	Appropriate Density: (1-5 person standing/100 sq ft area).			
25	Wireless Network/ Internet/ Communication.			
TOTAL			120	96

Source: Authors (2024)

Table 11. Evaluation of Spiritual Attributor and Assessment Criteria (SAe).

Section [Spiritual Attributes]	Assessment Criteria.	Category	[Marks]. [Highest Score: 125].	[Result (%)]. Percentage [100(%)].
1B.				
1	Harmonious Balance and Visual Attractiveness.			
2	Celebrative Mood - Richness and Appropriateness.			
3	Legible way finding, information and advertisement.	Heritage Ownership and Inheritance	24	19.2
4	Legible Connectivity and Accessibility Network.			
5	High mobility, Safety and Linkages.			
6	Sense of Local Identity: Antique, Authentic, Unique.			
7	Pamper Services and Amenity.			
8	Lively and Active Environment.			
9	Personal Comfort.			
10	Ontological security.	Robustness and Resilience	42	33.6
11	Robustness and Flexibility.			
12	Home and user-friendly feeling and freedom.			
13	Local identity with cultural-vibrancy.			
14	Tropical and Asian Themed Environmental Identity.			
15	Positive and Healthy Aura.			
16	Spirit of joy and positive feeling.			
17	Sense of relief (mind and soul).			
18	Active Street Shop fronts and outlets.			
19	Acceptable affordability.			
20	Natural Air and Lighting Quality of Outdoor Lifestyle.	Personalisation	39	31.2
21	Economical activities -attractive magnetic anchor tenants.			
22	Guided heritage walk.			
23	Interactive Info and Signage.			
24	Value (personal, heritage, knowledge).			
25	Virtual Connectivity.			
TOTAL			105	84

Source: Authors (2024)

Table 12. Revitalisation Performance of Petaling Street

Item	Heritage Revitalisation Strategies	Values Percentage (200%)	Values Percentage (100%)	Physical and Spiritual
1.	Visual Ambience	20	10	Physical Attributes Value [ $\sum$ (PAe)%]
2.	Active and Celebrative	36	19	
3.	Owner's Networking	20	10	
4.	Heritage Image and Identity	20	10	96 (48%)
5.	Heritage Ownership and Inheritance	19.2	9.6	Physical Attributes Value [ $\sum$ (PAe)%]
6.	Robustness and Resilience	33.6	16.8	
7.	Personalisation [of Vibes]	31.2	15.6	84 (42%)
Total Value		180/200	90/100	180%
Revitalisation Performance: Average Value for Petaling Street (RP) <sub>av</sub> = 1/2 [ $\sum$ (PAe) + $\sum$ (SAe)]				90%

Source: Authors (2024)

## Final Result

The primary outcome of this research is to save Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur, where the identified Seven Revitalisation Strategies are considered unique Heritage Revitalisation Strategies (HRS) to save the future of Petaling Street. The mathematical formulation of the average Revitalisation Performance is shown below:

$$(RP)_{av} = 1/2 [\sum (PAe) + \sum (SAe)]$$

Both tables are the final (RA) Toolkit for physical and spiritual attributes. The same principle was applied to the evaluated Spiritual Attributes Assessment Criteria (SAe), which combined deductive elements from literature review analysis with the former research on architectural heritage revitalisation. The latter was tested and rated using on-site testing results.

Table 13. Revitalisation Performance of Petaling Street Rubric Table

[Revitalisation Performance].				
[1].	[2].	[3].	[4].	[5].
SCORE.	SCORE.	SCORE.	SCORE.	SCORE.
[1-20(%)].	[21-40(%)].	[41-60(%)].	[61-80(%)].	[81-100(%)].
Weakly Revitalised.	Partially Revitalised.	Fairly Revitalised.	Well Revitalised.	Highly Revitalised.
Revitalisation Performance: The Average Value for Petaling Street (RP) <sub>av</sub> = 1/2 [ $\sum$ (PAe) + $\sum$ (SAe)]			90%	Highly Revitalised.

Source: Authors (2024)

Table 14. Seven Revitalisation Strategies (HRS) for Petaling Street

Heritage Revitalisation Strategies Status	Values Percentage (100%)
Visual Ambience	10.0
Active and Celebrative	19.0
Owner's Networking	10.0
Heritage Image and Identity	10.0
Heritage Ownership and Inheritance	09.6
Robustness and Resilience	16.8
Personalisation [of Vibes]	15.6
Total Score Value	90.0

Source: Authors (2024)

## LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study has a limited scope as it only focuses on the micro-level at the pedestrian level of Petaling Street in Kuala Lumpur. Additionally, there were some challenges in recruiting respondents for the semi-structured interviews due to busy settings and time constraints during their business hours. The other condition was that the pedestrian was the major end-user with rapid movement within the street, which is very dynamic and makes the interview fast and concise. The space is always crowded and noisy, contributing to the challenges in interviewing pedestrian end-users within the noise and vibrant movement.

## CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to investigate the Heritage Revitalisation Strategy (HRS) in supporting a sustainable urban environment. The valorisation of Petaling Street to become a “great heritage street” status shall be published. It must be appropriately planned and complied with by various parties involved in the remaking of the city. Pallasmaa (2024) enhanced the richness of the façade quality that promotes architecture and eye stimulation on the personalisation of human senses. The sustainability of economic, social and environmental aspects of living and shopping at Petaling Street is special and unique. It is part and parcel of the remaking of the street for revitalisation, Grodach & Ehrenfeucht (2015).

The stronger the sense of ownership and belonging to a place, the more shop owners participate in protecting and managing heritage property as a shopping street, Zukin (2012). However, as discussed heavily by Eaton et al. (2019), there was a sense of place in the working landscape experienced in Petaling Street. Viola (2022) recognises the importance of local citizens strategically revitalising the strategy of the three-dimensional components for intangible and tangible built heritage. It is a vital lesson for planners and policymakers managing and restoring heritage streets, especially low-rating streets, as Farelnik (2021) discussed. Future research must develop new approaches to city management that surpass material concerns and acknowledge the diverse meanings and expressions that constitute living heritage. Swensen & Granberg (2024) reminded all city managers to function adaptively towards robustness and evergreen urban settings. Mishra & Lourenço (2024) suggested that Artificial Intelligence (AI) should be a visual inspection tool for building and cultural heritage analysis. The authenticity of Petaling Street is maintained by the local communities and authorised groups who manage the relationships between objects, people, and places over time, Zhang et al. (2019). Unfortunately, the site has suffered displacement and population loss since 2019 due to COVID-19 but recently returned in 2021. However, Think City and DBKL, heritage advocates, believe sustainability is the key to preserving the street's values to avoid conflict of heritage commercialisation by Samadi & Yunus (2012).

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## PAPER CONTRIBUTION TO RELATED FIELD OF STUDY

Theoretically, this paper contributes to urban heritage tourism where, in the post-millennium age, visitors are looking for familiarity and a sense of place in a public place to explore the urban experience. Suppose the DBKL and the Think City can consider the three-dimensional quality of the Heritage Revitalisation Strategy (HRS) in the findings. In that case, the opportunity to boost the cheerful ambience of Kuala Lumpur is safe. The “sense of place” from the “immersive experience” along Petaling Street further celebrates the pre-independent and postcolonial setting of Kuala Lumpur as a future heritage city.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper. The authors have no financial or personal relationships with other people or organisations that could inappropriately influence (bias) their work. All authors have reviewed and approved the final manuscript and affirm that the statements made in this section accurately reflect their disclosures.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors confirm their contribution to the paper: study conception and design by Samadi, Z., as the research leader who plans the research timeline and arrangement of staffing of researcher, dealing with police headquarters for safety and assessment consent to assess CCTV at Petaling Street. She dedicated job coordination between researchers, shop owners, street managers, and the police department, which requires a reputation from the Balai Polis, Jalan Bandar, Kuala Lumpur.

Bakri, A.F. advisor and trainer for data collector or researcher. Her scope of work was conducted online, and face-to-face training and on-standby assistance were offered during the data collection. This required skills on any on-street experience from the previous study in George Town in Pulau Pinang and perseverance in managing site issues and conflicts.

Ramli, S.H., is the scheduler for data collection and sets appointments with officers, managers, administration, and technical staff from Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur and Think City. The scope of work in scheduling online and face-to-face meetings requires skills and perseverance, too. An on-street data collector interviewed the shop owners, vendors, and pedestrians. The interview required communication skills and a fast focus group discussion. It was challenging since they were in working mode or business operations as sellers, buyers, or active observers.

Shaari, M.F., for formatting, presentation of results and manuscript preparation to the journal management. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Haider, L. interpreted the results, commented on them, and conducted a literature review in the initial, middle, and final stages of the result discussion with Dr. Zalina Samadi. These are the unobtrusive measures she managed from her distant location in Yemen.

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