

DEVELOPING AN INTERPRETIVE PLAN FOR COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM AT GUGUSAN KEPULAUAN TUMPAT, KELANTAN, MALAYSIA

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Abstract: The Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat in Kelantan, Malaysia has potential to be an area for Community-Based Tourism (CBT) due to its diverse resources, which includes the local culture, its natural environment as well as its traditional cuisine, and crafts. However, this area currently lacks an interpretation medium to promote and enhance visitor experiences. Interpretation helps translate complex technical or scientific information into more straightforward language and expressions of ideas that non-experts can readily understand. Therefore, this research paper aims to identify the existing CBT resources, to determine potential interpretation themes, and to develop an interpretive plan for Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat, Kelantan. This research paper conducted structured observations using an inventory form for data collection. This has helped identify existing CBT resources which include cultural heritage and traditions, local community knowledge, and natural resources available to the communities in the area under review. Based on the CBT resources, interpretation themes and sub-themes identified, eight checkpoints were established with which to develop an interpretive plan for CBT in Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat. The proposed interpretive development plan was formulated after considering the distinctiveness of the local community's culture and natural surroundings. The plan aims to enhance visitors' CBT experience and provide an overview that the local community and related agencies could use to make decisions when planning for tourism activities.

Keywords: Interpretation, interpretive plan, Community-Based Tourism (CBT).

Introduction

Community-Based Tourism commonly known as CBT has the potential to contribute significantly and sustainably to the local economy (Dodds *et al.*, 2018). CBT can create job opportunities, provide additional income, encourage community empowerment and assist with conservation efforts on a micro level (Kibicho, 2008) and reduce poverty on a macro level (Harrison & Schipani, 2007). CBT refers to a mode of tourism where the neighbourhood supplies goods and services that draws attention to the area's uniqueness. It is strongly linked to community participation and shared culture (Mayaka *et al.*, 2018). In Malaysia, the government strongly supports the tourism industry because it is one of the significant contributors to the national economy. This unstinting and continuous support also

benefits the CBT industry, which is growing in popularity both with domestic and international visitors.

Progress in the CBT sphere was temporarily halted when the COVID-19 an interruption that lasted until 2021. At present, the CBT industry has started on the road to recovery following the transition to the endemic phase, with various programmes and marketing projects starting to be undertaken. Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat is the smallest district in Kelantan, Malaysia, covering an area of only 169.5 km² with a total population approximately 2,400 people what makes it one of the most unique locales in Malaysia as it has plains and hundreds of river islands (Figure 1). Such environmental features are suitable for and have the potential to be an international tourist draw due to its proximity to

the Thai land coastal waters. Further, it is one area with the potential for CBT to be developed. Before the pandemic, Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat was one of the main tourist destinations in Malaysia. However, many CBT initiatives have not yet been fully implemented to date. Therefore, after entering the endemic phase, the local community, with the support of the Tumpat District and Land Office and the cooperation of the Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) unit in Kelantan has started planning to develop the areas CBT potential.

The Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat community is interested in and committed to developing CBT initiatives to improve the local economy, which does not rely solely on natural resources. However, an interpretation plan must be developed and implemented to identify areas that might provide exciting tourism experiences to ensure that the CBT offerings can be appropriately designed. The interpretation conducted at Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat aims to encourage the proper use of the cultural and natural heritage resources available and to simultaneously provide good recreational experiences for visitors to the area. In addition, the interpretation programme applied in this area is expected to improve the awareness and understanding from an environmental, social and cultural standpoint, as well as encourage positive individual attitudes in the daily lives of the local community.

This study focuses on improving heritage interpretation in Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat, Kelantan, with the goal of meeting specific community needs through an integrated strategy that incorporates Community-Based Tourism (CBT), interpretative planning, and interpretation methodologies. By analysing these concepts and their interrelationships, this research hopes to highlight their collective significance and importance to the community. The community of Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat faces various practical issues relating to tourism and heritage preservation, including economic viability.

Tourism is the primary source of income for many locals. There is a need for sustainable tourism methods that provide long-term economic advantages while protecting natural and cultural resources. Then comes the heritage conservation. The local community strives to maintain its distinctive natural and cultural history while making it accessible and educational to visitors. Finally, effective interpretation is critical to increase visitor comprehension and appreciation of the area’s ecological and cultural significance, thereby encouraging responsible tourism behaviour. Hence this research aims to identify existing CBT resources, determine the potential interpretation themes and develop an interpretive plan for Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat.

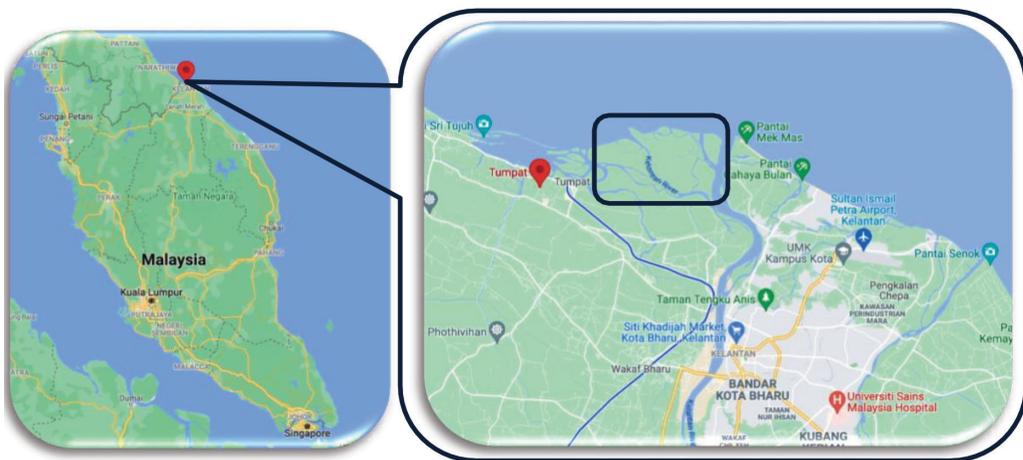


Figure 1: Key plan and location plan for Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat

Relationship between Interpretation and Community-Based Tourism

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) involves local communities in planning and managing tourism activities to ensure that benefits are fairly distributed between residents. Implementing CBT in Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat can empower residents by involving them directly in tourism operations such as guiding tourists, managing attractions, and providing hospitality services. This leads to job creation and local economic development. Furthermore, CBT allows individual visitors to easily reach their destination on their own, understand local customs, have thrilling experiences, and get a complete picture of the attractions so that vital tourism-related activities in the community can be supported. By enabling visitors to comprehend the attractions and the community they are located in fully, the interpretation of attractions is also seen as essential to strengthening the community and raising the value of the destination (Chairerk, 2020).

An interpretive plan outlines strategies for effectively communicating the significance of a site to visitors through various methods, including signage, guided tours, and interactive exhibits (Veverka, 2018a). It is relevant to Community-Based Tourism (CBT) because a well-designed interpretive plan that incorporates local knowledge and narratives ensures that the interpretation is authentic and resonates with both the community and visitors. This enhances the overall visitor experience and fosters a deeper connection with the site. Interpretation is the process of conveying the importance and value of a site to visitors (Rabotic, 2010). The interpretation at Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat includes both face-to-face methods such as guided tours and non-face-to-face methods, like informational panels and digital media. Effective interpretation helps visitors understand and appreciate the region's unique geological features and cultural heritage. This not only enriches the visitor's experience but also promotes conservation and responsible tourism practices.

The relationship between Community-Based Tourism (CBT), interpretative plans, and interpretation methodology is critical for effectively promoting and sustaining tourism in the communities of Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat. CBT focuses on involving local communities in the tourism process, ensuring that they benefit economically, socially and culturally from tourism activities. However, without strategic interpretative plans and effective interpretation, the full potential of CBT cannot be realised. Interpretative plans provide a structured approach to presenting and communicating the unique cultural, historical, and natural resources of a community to visitors. These plans are essential for highlighting the distinctive features of Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat, ensuring that visitors not only enjoy their experience but also gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the local heritage.

Interpretation, as part of these plans, plays a key role in translating the community's resources into meaningful narratives that resonate with tourists. It involves the use of storytelling, guided tours, informative signage, and other tools to engage visitors, making their experience more enriching and memorable. This process not only enhances the visitor experience but also fosters a sense of pride and ownership among local residents, encouraging them to take an active role in preserving and promoting their cultural and natural heritage (Moscardo, 1996; Hall & McArthur, 1996; Tilden, 2007; Beck & Cable, 2011; Ham, 2016).

In the context of Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat, the integration of interpretative plans and interpretation within the CBT framework is particularly important. These tools help bridge the gap between the community's resources and the tourism market, ensuring that the CBT initiatives are effectively marketed, well-coordinated, and widely recognised both within and outside the local community. Based on observations and Focus Group Discussions (FGD), this research has found that several

villages in Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat have valuable Community-Based Tourism (CBT) resources that are not being fully utilised. By using interpretative strategies, these communities can improve the promotion of their unique offerings. This can lead to greater awareness, more visitors, and ultimately support sustainable local development.

Literature Review

Interpretation

Interpretation is an educational activity that focuses on conveying meaning and creating connections through personal experiences and visual media. Instead of just presenting facts, it aims to ensure that visitors have valuable experiences (Tilden, 1976; Dumbraveanu *et al.*, 2016). It involves a communication process that displays the significance and relationship with cultural and natural heritage to visitors through direct experiences with an area's objects, artifacts, landforms, or unique features.

Environmental interpretation programmes, commonly found in national and state parks, zoos, museums, and environmental education centres are an effective method of informal education. Introducing a resource-sensitive tourism destination can help manage visitors and encourage them to adopt more appropriate behaviour, thereby supporting sustainable tourism development (Kuo, 2002). Nature and green spaces are often used as tourism areas and suitable locations for environmental learning due to the beauty of the nearby living resources.

Interpretation can be communicated to the audience or visitors using face-to-face or non-face-to-face methods. This communication approach involves the transmission of a message from a sender to a receiver via a medium (or channel). Feedback is an essential component that alerts the sender about whether the intended message has been received (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007; Loggerenberg, 2015). All these communication components must function successfully for effective interpretation (Kuo, 2002). At the most basic level, planning for

interpretation involves the theme (the message), the medium, and the audience (the receiver). Paying particular attention to the message and the communication channel helps in understanding the interpretation better. According to Veverka (2018), the interpretive communication process is based on Tilden's six interpretive principles:

- (i) Any interpretation that does not somehow *relate* what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
- (ii) Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is *revelation* based on the information. They are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
- (iii) Interpretation is *an art* which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is, to some degree, teachable.
- (iv) The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction but *provocation*.
- (v) Interpretation should aim to *present a whole* rather than a part and address itself to the whole person rather than any phase.
- (vi) Interpretation *addressed to children* should not dilute the adult presentation but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best, it will require a separate programme.

Tilden's principles serve as the foundation for implementing interpretation to reach the interpretation objectives of learning, behaviour, and emotion. The interpretation delivery was later improved using the Theme, Organised, Relevant and Enjoyable (TORE) communication paradigm, developed by Professor Sam Ham in 1992. According to this paradigm, based on several cognitive research studies, any communication must be *enjoyable* for the audience, *relevant* to what they already know and care about, and *organised* for simple processing to be effective. It must make a compelling point: Communicate a relevant *theme* (Ham, 2007).

Interpretive Plan

An interpretive plan aims to ensure that interpretive techniques and principles are used throughout the total site interpretive presentation such as on trails, outdoor displays, live programmes, visitor centre exhibits, and other related media (Veverka, 1994a). The “interpretive planning” method examines the need for services, resources, and media to inform park visitors. This process establishes goals, examines numerous options and alternatives, and considers a plan’s financial and possibly environmental repercussions. It helps management devote the necessary resources and make well-informed decisions long before interpreting programmes or facilities are created (Spencer, 2005). This interpretive plan provides a general overview of a park’s interpretive themes and offers a general course for interpretive activities.

To develop an interpretive plan, interpretive planners use a formal planning model for success based on interpretative principles. When developing an interpretive plan, several aspects need to be considered such as (1) the message to be interpreted, (2) the specific objectives (learn, feel, and do) that the interpretive messages are being designed to accomplish, (3) the target markets, interests, demographics, visitation, or use patterns of the heritage tourism setting, (4) the requirement for the story presentation to relate to these specific audiences, (5) the types of interpretive programmes and services that will be needed (for example, live historical interpreters, guides, self-guiding leaflets, audio and visitor centre exhibits), (6) the costs of implementation and operation, and (7) evaluation. These aspects should be identified during planning to ensure a more enriching visitor experience.

Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

In the 21st century, visitor trends have progressed to the point where it allows for many other forms of tourism. This could be attributed to the increase in access to knowledge from previously unexplored tourist destinations and the search for destinations that place more

emphasis on the local culture (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2011). CBT involves the active participation of local communities in running the programmes and tourism activities at the site. This is why it is critical to create community events that may favour this type of tourism while also assisting in developing relationships between the local community and visitors. To facilitate these developments, various public administrations, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), private institutions and the local community should be involved (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2011). This study involved the local authority, the Tumpat District and Land Office, and UiTM Kelantan. The study noted that CBT can be implemented with the help of the two government agencies and the active participation of the local community.

In Malaysia, CBT started with homestay programmes organised by the Tourism Ministry in collaboration with local communities. This programme allows tourists to stay with a specific family, interact with and experience daily life with the homestay family, and learn about the culture and lifestyle of Malaysia’s rural communities. A homestay programme is not a lodging facility. It emphasises lifestyle and experience, as well as cultural and economic activities. Using the CBT approach, this homestay programme has expanded into almost all rural areas, including those in Sabah and Sarawak, making the homestay concept a success.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to gather comprehensive information on community needs, interpretive opportunities, and visitor expectations, particularly in the context of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) within Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat. The methodology included a combination of structured observations, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and expert consultations to ensure a thorough and multi-faceted approach (Goodson & Phillimore,

2004; Yin, 2017; Silverman, 2013; Patton, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017).

Site Evaluation and Structured Observation

Systematic site evaluations were conducted through structured observations. These evaluations involved visiting significant natural and cultural features on each island to assess their interpretive potential, accessibility, and preservation status. Data on natural and cultural elements, existing interpretive materials, and tourist flow patterns were collected during these visits, providing essential insights for developing the interpretive plan.

Inventory Assessment:

- A detailed inventory form was designed to catalogue the environmental, cultural, and historical aspects that could be harnessed for CBT. This inventory served as a foundational step for mapping out these resources.

Mapping Resources Using GIS:

- Geographic Information System (GIS) technology was employed to map the identified resources. This spatial analysis enabled the visualisation of resource distribution across the islands, highlighting areas with high potential for CBT development. The GIS mapping also facilitated the identification of key locations that could serve as interpretive checkpoints, enhancing the overall visitor experience.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with Local Community

Participants:

- FGDs were held with a diverse group of 26 representatives from the 13 villages, ensuring that a broad spectrum of the community was represented. Participants included local authorities from Majlis Daerah Tumpat, village leaders, and community members from inhabited islands such as Pulau Seratus, Pulau Teluk

Renjuna, Pulau Beluru, Pulau Gorek, Pulau Besar, Pulau Gagak, Pulau Tongkang Belakang, Pulau Haji Nik Mat, Pulau Pak Ali, Pulau Cendor, Pantai Kuda, Pulau Suri, and Pulau Tengah. In addition, business owners such as boat producers, floating market proprietors, and tour operators were included to gain insights into the challenges and opportunities related to CBT.

Discussion Topics:

- The FGDs covered key topics such as the significance of local heritage, desired visitor behaviours, and suggested interpretative methods to enhance the value of the local heritage. These discussions were crucial in ensuring that the interpretative strategies developed were not only culturally relevant but also aligned with community expectations.

Community Involvement:

- Community involvement was prioritised at every stage of research. Early surveys and FGDs ensured that local viewpoints were incorporated from the outset. Community feedback was gathered at key points throughout the process to validate findings and refine the interpretative strategy. This iterative process of engagement ensured that the final interpretative plan was both responsive to community needs and sustainable.

Expert Consultations

Expert Involvement:

- Consultations were conducted with experts affiliated with Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam and Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kelantan. These experts provided valuable insights into best practices and innovative approaches to interpretation, particularly within the context of CBT, natural heritage interpretation, and sustainable tourism.

Integration of Expert Feedback:

- The feedback from these experts was instrumental in refining the interpretative plan, ensuring that it met international standards while remaining grounded in the local context. Expert insights helped shape the strategies for presenting the community's cultural and natural heritage in a way that resonates with both local residents and visitors.

Synthesis of Observations and FGD Data

The analysis consisting of structured observations, focus group discussions, and expert consultations unveiled that while community-based resources within Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat are dispersed, they harbour substantial potential for Community-Based Tourism (CBT). Through the establishment of a comprehensive interpretative plan, these resources can be methodically structured and presented as an integral component of a cohesive and captivating visitor experience. The interpretative plan delineates potential checkpoints - pivotal locations or themes that can function as focal points in the tourism experience, offering visitors profound narratives about the local culture, history, and natural environment.

Results and Discussion

This research was conducted in Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat, which is in Malaysia's Tumpat District. The primary method used for the research was structured observation, with data collected based on the researcher's visibility. Additional information was shared by village leaders, representatives from the Tumpat District and Land Office, and researchers from UiTM Kelantan. The research started at Jetty Kok Majid as the trailhead and continued to various points based on selected natural heritage resources and cultural resources. Data was collected using an inventory form, in which expert judgement was sought before collecting onsite information. The inventory form covered environmental, cultural,

and historical aspects, requiring the researcher to briefly explain the conditions at each point and provide significant photos as support. Structured observation is a widely used method in cultural and environmental heritage studies, allowing for systematic data collection that is both thorough and contextually relevant (Tilden, 1976; S. H. Ham, 2016).

Existing sources of CBT were identified, including the traditional cultural heritage of the local community, especially those which emphasised Kelantanese cultural aspects. In this traditional heritage, the elements that are highlighted are cultural arts, traditional food, and the crafts of the local community. Additionally, the local community knowledge, particularly with regards to the art of boat making has been recognised as a significant CBT resource. This aligns with the findings of Zapata *et al.* (2011), who emphasised the importance of local knowledge and traditional crafts in sustaining CBT initiatives.

Natural heritage resources in Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat area such as the unique river ecosystem of the Kelantan River Delta has also been identified as part of CBT resources. This includes the berembang and nipah trees and the presence of fireflies, which are essential indicators of sustainability of nature. Such natural resources are crucial for developing CBT in small islands, as highlighted in previous studies on sustainable tourism and the conservation of natural heritage in island contexts (Baldacchino, 2006; Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008). Based on these CBT resources, one main theme and three sub-themes were determined. These themes will be further developed in the interpretive plan, following the principles outlined by Ham, 1993; 2013), who emphasised the importance of crafting clear and engaging interpretive themes that encapsulated the essence of a place.

After conducting a structured observation using an inventory form for data collection over five days, it was discovered that there are approximately 30 islands surrounding Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat. However, only 13 of these islands are inhabited. Most of the area's

residents are fishermen or small business owners, who produce chips, Kapit cakes, and coconut-based items. There are two village leaders representing the approximately 2,400 residents of these inhabited islands from Teluk Renjuna and Pulau Seratus.

The inhabited islands discovered by the survey are Pulau Teluk Renjuna, Pulau Beluru, Pulau Gorek, Pulau Besar, Pulau Seratus, Pulau Gagak, Pulau Tongkang Belakang, Pulau Haji Nik Mat, Pulau Pak Ali, Pulau Cendor, Pantai Kuda, Pulau Suri, and Pulau Tengah. At Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat, boats are the primary mode of transport that are used to navigate the local riverways. Locals and tourists alike use boats to get around town, go to the “Pasar Sehari” on Jetty Kok Majid, or visit the Floating Market in Pulau Suri, which is only open on Saturdays. Majority of residents and tourists travel between islands by boat. Boats are a common mode of transport to the nearest island communities, as noted by King (1997), who discusses the critical role of traditional transport systems on island tourism.

Based on the data collected, this study identified eight checkpoints on various inhabited islands that could serve as an interpretation trail as part of CBT. This process mirrors the approach taken in other small island contexts, where the identification of key interpretive sites is critical for creating cohesive visitor experiences (Liu, 2006; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). Table 1 lists the interpretation checkpoints along with their latitude and longitude readings while Figure 2

shows the location of the eight checkpoints and Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat.

This location was selected because of its natural and cultural resources. Jetty Kok Majid is the suggested starting point for the journey, given its accessibility and recognition among locals. The selection of the trailhead is crucial for visitor engagement, as Veverka (1994b) noted in his guidelines on interpretation planning. The parking area at this jetty makes it convenient for individuals using boat services to stop at the islands’ jetties to pick up or drop off passengers. Kampung Kok Majid is well-known by locals, who want to interact with people from other islands in the Kelantan River Delta. The selection of the trailhead is crucial to make it easier for visitors to gather and obtain information about the location to be visited. It is essential to place the trail where visitors have easy access (Veverka, 1994b).

Based on these interpretation checkpoints, the main theme was formed: “Menyelusuri keindahan dan keunikan warisan budaya, tradisi dan alam semula jadi di Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat”, which means “exploring the beauty and uniqueness of the cultural heritage, tradition, and nature at Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat”. The theme is the main point or message an interpretation conveys about a topic (Ham, 1993). The theme’s most important characteristic is capturing a whole idea (Ham, 2016). To strengthen the proposed interpretation theme, three sub-themes were selected. These

Table 1: List of interpretation checkpoints along with their latitude and longitude readings

No.	Checkpoint	GPS Reading
1	Jeti Kok Majid	6.18812333, 102.22871500
2	Pulau Tengah	6.21557500, 102.22391333
3	Pulau Suri	6.2168000, 102.22331333
4	Pulau Che Soh	6.20546333, 102.20281167
5	Pulau Chendor	6.20631167, 102.19534167
6	Pulau Tongkang	6.20358500, 102.19863833
7	Kelip-kelip	6.21140500, 102.20943833
8	Pulau Pantai Baru	6.21852667, 102.19536333



Figure 2: Interpretive master plan for Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat

three packages emphasize the uniqueness of the proposed cultural resources, traditional heritage, natural environmental features, and the division of the interpretation checkpoints into specific routes. The routes for the three packages are:

- (a) Route A – With the concept of the “*Heritage of the Cultural Traditions of Local Communities*” and the sub-theme “Persembohe Klate Kito” covering Pulau Teluk Renjuna (First Checkpoint), Pulau Tengah (Second Checkpoint), and Pulau Suri (Third Checkpoint).
- (b) Route B – With the concept of the “*Traditional Heritage of Local Community Knowledge*” and the sub-theme “Derat Pulok Sek Kito Puah Dok Sajo” covering Pulau Teluk Renjuna (First Checkpoint), Pulau Che Soh (Fourth Checkpoint), Pulau Chendor (Fifth Checkpoint), and Pulau Tongkang Belakang (Sixth Checkpoint).
- (c) Route C – With the concept “*Natural Heritage*” and the sub-theme “Comeynyo Tempat Demo”, consisting of Pulau Teluk Renjuna (First Checkpoint), Laluan Berembang (Seventh Checkpoint), and Pulau Pantai Baharu (Eighth Checkpoint).

These routes are designed to provide visitors with a comprehensive experience of the area’s natural and cultural heritage, aligning with the interpretive strategies discussed by Beck and Cable (2011).

To ensure that visitors have an experience based on the main theme, the proposed sub-theme involves translating the cultural imagery of the local community using the dialect of the state of Kelantan. This can be observed in the sub-theme named in Figure 3. As depicted in the figure, the visitors commence their journey at Pulau Renjuna for every route. This island was selected as the first checkpoint because it is the closest island to Jetty Kok Majid and most basic facilities are available here.

The proposed sub-themes and routes showcase the rich cultural and natural heritage of Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat, with community participation central to the interpretation process. This approach reflects the findings of Butler (2001) and Scheyvens (2002), who emphasised the role of community-driven initiatives in sustainable tourism development. Figure 4 and Table 2 provide detailed explanations of the proposed sub-theme and Route A. The sub-theme “Persembohe Klate Kito” was chosen to



Figure 3: Suggested packages and routes for the interpretation development plan in the Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat

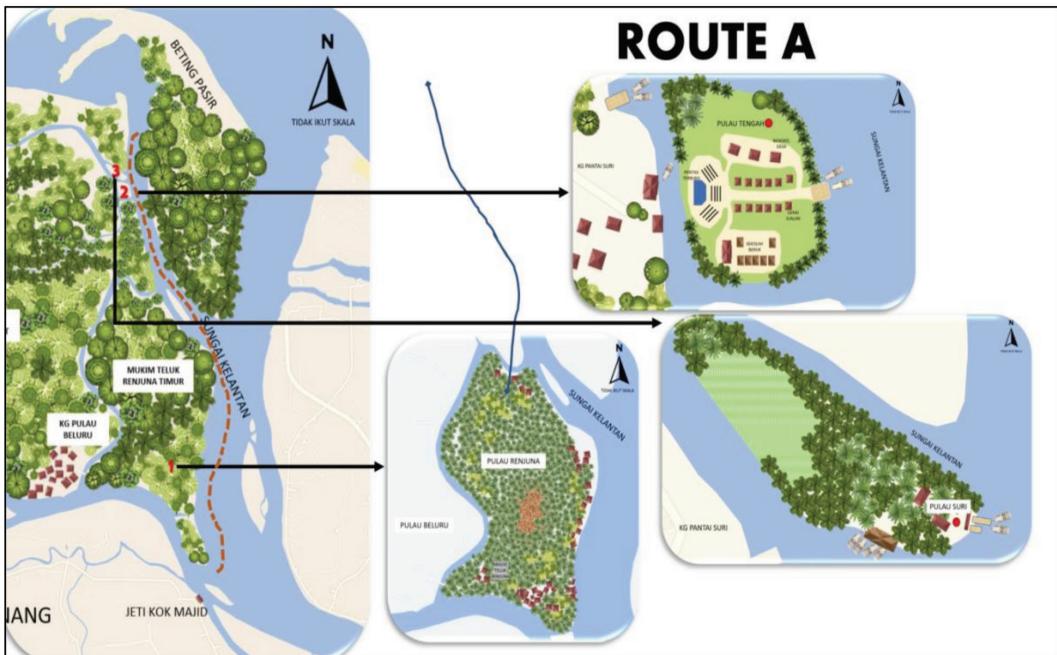


Figure 4: The interpretation routes for the first package consist of checkpoints 1, 2, and 3

showcase the “Heritage of the Cultural Traditions of the Local Communities”.

The programme and activities aim to highlight Kelantanese culture. Based on the inventory data, Pulau Tengah was selected as the second checkpoint and cultural performance

will take place on this island, as shown in Table 2. What makes this unique is that the programme and activities are organised by the community surrounding Pulau Tengah, representing the implementation of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) at Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat. To

Table 2: Suggested activity and programme for Package 1 on Route A

Route A	
Package objective	Exposing visitors to the experience of enjoying cultural performances, seeing and tasting the preparation of traditional food, seeing the making of handicrafts, and experiencing the atmosphere of the floating market
Visitor capacity	12 people (10 visitors, one tour guide, and one boatman)
Proposed time	Mak Yong – Every 2 nd Saturday in the month (9.00pm – 10.00 pm) Dikir Barat – Every Sunday (9.30 am – 10.00 am), (2.30 pm – 3.00 pm), and (9.00 pm – 9.30 pm) Wayang Kulit – Every Friday 1 st week (9.00 pm – 10.00 pm) and every 3 rd Saturday in a month (9.00 pm – 9.30 pm)
Proposed activity	Mak Yong Dikir Barat Wayang Kulit Traditional food-making demo Handicraft-making demo

prepare the community, training and hands-on practices will be conducted to train the existing *Tok Dalang* for the *Wayang Kulit* performance, as well as the *Awak-awak Dikir Barat* and *Mak Yong* dancers to professionally entertain potential tourists.

The island of Pulau Suri is home to around 50 families who engage in a variety of economic activities, including ecotourism. It is renowned as a homestay destination and is also the location of Malaysia’s first floating market, established in 2016. This floating market offers a wide range of unique and tasty dishes at affordable prices such as *nasi kerabu*, *etok bakar*, *kerabu nipah*, and *laksa*. The market primarily caters to visitors from Kelantan and the local community, with between 1,000 and 2,000 visitors arriving or staying the island at any given time.

In Figure 5 and Table 3, it is shown that Route B highlights the sub-theme “Derat Pulok Sek Kito PuaH Dok Sajo” and the concept of “Traditional Heritage of Local Community Knowledge”. This route includes Pulau Che Soh (Fourth Checkpoint), Pulau Chendor (Fifth Checkpoint), and Pulau Tongkang Belakang (Sixth Checkpoint). It aims to introduce visitors to the local knowledge and heritage related to the construction of water transport, specifically

focusing on traditional boat-making, which is the primary mode of transport used by the local community. Pulau Che Soh is well known for its traditional handcrafted fibreglass boats, which are essential to meet the transportation needs of the local community. Pulau Chendor specialises in the manufacturing of ancient wooden boats, with the local community possessing knowledge crucial to the production of these high-quality boats. Additionally, Pulau Tongkang Belakang is famous for perahu kolek manufacturing, known for its Malay art inspired designs and colourful patterns. Based on the local knowledge of these three islands, it is suggested to create an exhibit space on one of the islands to showcase boat-making equipment and replicas of each type of boat.

Implementing the CBT approach at Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat allows at least part of the tourist income to benefit not only one family but the entire community by giving them a real insight into local life so that the experiences are real. Even though the experiences may vary depending on the places that the tourists visit and the needs of the community, still, each of the experiences are different and unique. What these experiences have in common, however, is that they are fully owned and managed by the local

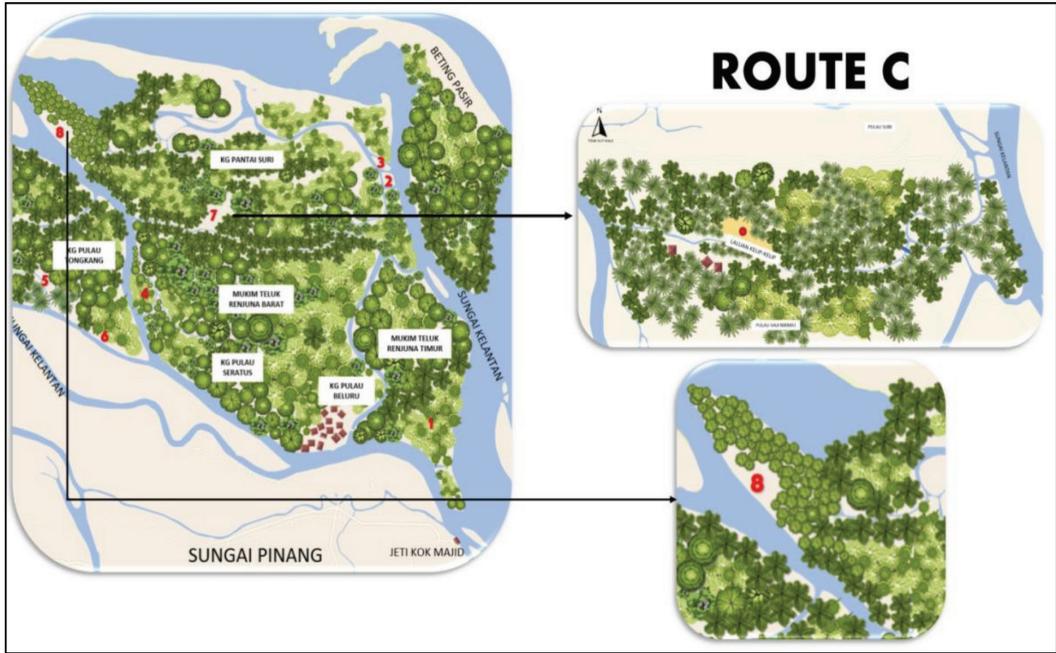


Figure 6: The interpretation route for the third package consists of checkpoints 1, 7, and 8

Table 4: Suggested activity and programme for Package 3 and Route C

Route C	
Package objective	Exposing visitors to the unique river ecosystem of the Kelantan River Delta, including information about the Berembang and Nipah trees, as well as the importance of the presence of fireflies as one of the essential indicators of the sustainability of nature
Visitor capacity	8 people (6 visitors, one tour guide, and one boatman)
Proposed time	Every Tuesday to Sunday (07.30 am – 8.30 am), (10.00 am – 11.00 am), (05.00 pm – 06.00 pm)
Proposed activity	Boat tour

Haji Nikmat. The Berembang tree is a pioneer species found in river areas near muddy banks and areas constantly flooded by the tide. Laluan Berembang is a nocturnal habitat for fireflies, which suck nectar from the flowers of the Berembang tree, transforming it into a firefly breeding ground. During the day, visitors can enjoy the beauty of the trees along the river, while at night, they can enjoy the habitat of the fireflies.

The concept of Natural Heritage means, natural features, geological and physiographic formations, and separated areas characterised

by endangered flora and fauna habitats at certain natural sites with scientific, conservation, and natural value, as stated in the definition given by UNESCO (2009). Based on the collected data, the enrichment of biodiversity at Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat generally and respectively at Laluan Berembang and Pulau Pantai Baru possibly provides a new perspective to visitors and can enhance their appreciation of nature in a sustainable manner. The community will always play an important role in conserving the environment while carrying on with their daily lives.

Pulau Pantai Baru is one of the uninhabited islands of Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat. This area also contains mangrove forests, one of Malaysia's most important forest types and one of the world's most productive ecosystems. The uniqueness of the Kelantan Delta ecosystem lies in the formation of this area due to clay loam deposition and the subsequent formation of clay loam plains, which created islands such as Pantai Baru Island. Waterfowl and shorebird species are the most interesting animals in the mangrove area and nearby mud flats. Plankton, aquatic plants, worms, crustaceans, molluscs, and fish are among the foods consumed by these birds. These nature resources become a complete ecosystem for Pulau Pantai Baru that can offer visitors the chance to experience nature.

Based on the existing cultural and natural resources at Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat, this proposed development of an interpretation plan is intended to strengthen the CBT industry and enable the planned activities and programmes to be better implemented. The proposed programme and activities involve community participation, with support from the Tumpat District and Land Office and UiTM Kelantan. Through the CBT activities, implementing this interpretation plan can help improve the local community's economy and provide valuable experience for visitors.

Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat is an interesting destination because of its rich unique local culture, traditional heritage, and natural treasures, which include its flora and fauna. Attention should be paid to all aspects of development so that the Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat environment remains and becomes an attraction for local and foreign visitors. The primary function of the initiative in this area is to provide economic returns to the local community by offering various appropriate packages to attract the interest of multiple groups.

In addition, both the local community and the visitors are aware of the need to preserve the area's biological diversity which must be maintained to keep this treasure. Implementing the CBT approach at Gugusan Kepulauan

Tumpat allows the local community to benefit economically while preserving their cultural and natural resources. The interpretation plan developed through this study aims to enhance visitor experiences while ensuring that tourism development remains sustainable and community focused. This approach aligns with the principles outlined by Hall and Page (2014) and the case studies presented by Zapata *et al.* (2011), where community involvement is key to successful tourism development in rural and small island contexts.

Conclusions

Interpretation is a communication process that is utilised to reveal the meaning and relationship between cultural heritage and natural diversity to visitors through their experiences in specific areas. The application of interpretation as a means of communication that informs visitors about the connection and significance launch of the cultural heritage and the diversity of nature when visiting Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat. This is an essential step to providing a high-quality experience for all future visitors to the location. Gugusan Kepulauan Tumpat is an intriguing place to visit and has the potential to fulfil the Community-Based Tourism needs of future visitors through the development of this interpretation plan.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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