

BRANDING MALAYSIA AND RE-POSITIONING CULTURAL HERITAGE IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

In the regional and global competitive tourism sector, branding Malaysia as Truly Asia has maximally helped the country. The branding efforts have facilitated Malaysia to present itself as a true sign of pluralism, a mixture of harmonious cultures and the true soul of Asia. The intangible cultural heritage especially food heritage and traditional performing arts have also significantly contributed to branding 'Malaysia Truly Asia'. The multiple traditional and cultural performances represent multicultural Malaysia. In these performances, all ethnic groups, i.e. Indian, Chinese, Malay, Indigenous and others are represented adequately. Malaysian traditional cuisine also represents the pluralism of Malaysian society. Authentic and hybrid foods and the traditional performing arts have made the country a mini Asia or the soul of Asia. Understanding the position and contribution of both traditional food and performing arts to promote Malaysian tourism under the slogan of 'Malaysia Truly Asia' is extremely important in developing the Malaysian tourism sector. Under the concepts of identity and culture as a segment of branding approaches, this article will analyse how cultural heritage has helped to brand Malaysia as Truly Asia for the development of the tourism sector of Malaysia.

Keywords: branding, intangible cultural heritage, 'Malaysia Truly Asia', tourism, Malaysia