

THE INTERGENERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER IN SAFEGUARDING THE CUSTOMARY LAW OF ADAT PERPATIH IN NEGERI SEMBILAN, MALAYSIA

A TRANSFERÊNCIA DE CONHECIMENTO ENTRE GERAÇÕES NA PROTEÇÃO DA LEI COSTUMERIA DE ADAT PERPATIH EM NEGERI SEMBILAN, MALÁSIA

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Abstract: The customary law of adat perpatih (AP) is integral to the Malay identities in Negeri Sembilan that represents their culture and heritage. Various notions of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH) have been discussed in several ways, albeit not specific to the centralized inventory system of ICH in Malaysia. Hence, this paper identified the relevant mechanisms in safeguarding and sustaining AP's customary law in Negeri Sembilan, which was from the bottom level of society amongst its practitioners and the local community. In this study, twelve research participants were involved, and data were collected through an in-depth interview and participant observations in Negeri Sembilan. Notably, this study successfully identified the relevant mechanisms in sustaining the AP amongst the Malays of Negeri Sembilan, which was the intergenerational knowledge transferred through the process of 'look, listen, and learn' and oral transmission from the elders. Moreover, these transmission processes were important to pass down AP practices from one generation to the next generation and part of safeguarding and inventory mechanisms in the future.

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Resumo: A lei consuetudinária de adat perpatih (AP) é parte integrante das identidades malaias em Negeri Sembilan, que representa sua cultura e herança. Várias noções de proteção do patrimônio cultural imaterial (ICH) foram discutidas de várias maneiras, embora não sejam específicas do sistema de inventário centralizado do ICH na Malásia. Portanto, este artigo identificou os mecanismos relevantes para salvaguardar e sustentar o direito consuetudinário da AP em Negeri Sembilan, que era do nível mais baixo da sociedade entre seus praticantes e a comunidade local. Neste estudo, doze participantes da pesquisa foram envolvidos e os dados foram coletados por meio de uma entrevista em profundidade e observações participantes em Negeri Sembilan. Notavelmente, este estudo identificou com sucesso os mecanismos relevantes na sustentação do PA entre os malaios de Negeri Sembilan, que era o conhecimento intergeracional transferido por meio do processo de 'olhar, ouvir e aprender' e transmissão oral dos mais velhos. Além disso, esses processos de transmissão foram importantes para passar as práticas de AP de uma geração para a próxima geração e parte dos mecanismos de salvaguarda e inventário no futuro.

Palavras-chave: Adat perpatih. Direito consuetudinário. Herança cultural intangível. Transferência de conhecimento intergeracional. Transmissão oral.

1. Introduction

Malaysia has given considerable attention to cultural heritage matters at multiple levels of societies, ranging from the government to non-governmental agencies. These agencies comprised international and national levels such as: the United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Council of Museums (ICOM); universities and schools; practitioners; and local communities (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2010; Wahab, 2005). In 2005, the Malaysian government introduced the National Heritage Act as a legal framework for preserving any form of Malaysian heritage, which gained *adat perpatih's* (AP) recognition. AP was also recognized as part of the Malaysian national heritage by the Department of National Heritage in Malaysia in 2012 under the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) category (Bernama, 2012). Hence, through this recognition and acknowledgment, AP can be safeguarded and sustained by the Malay community of Negeri Sembilan.

The customary laws of AP are considered as part of the Malays' identities that represent Negeri Sembilan's culture and heritage brought by the immigrants of Minangkabau from West Sumatra since the 19th century (Collins, 2002). These laws favored the 'matrilineal' system in its political structure and inheritance, which reflected the Minangkabau descent (Peletz, 1996). However, as a result of the conflated versions between the existing culture and that of the immigrants of Minangkabau, its continuous presence in Negeri Sembilan has been disputed (Peletz, 1988).

Various versions on the AP's origins were extensively argued by renowned scholars on Negeri Sembilan's culture and heritage, yet presented no definite proof on such claims. Nevertheless, other notions of AP has created new interests for scholars to explore and study. For example, some scholars examined the customary laws of AP from the legal perspectives (Parr & Mackray, 1910; Winstedt & Josselin de Jong, 1954), while others analyzed the conflict between *adat* (custom) and Islam along with the myth on the formation of Negeri Sembilan (Josselin de Jong, 1960, 1975). Furthermore, scholars also evaluated the influence of *adat* towards the Islamic law along with the constitution (Hooker, 1974; Nagata, 1974), social change (Ibrahim, 1977), and socio-political

organization (Gullick, 1981; Ibrahim, 1988). Lastly, the interest in AP's study included the inheritance of the customary land in Negeri Sembilan (Abdul Manaf et al., 2013).

It is imperative to note that every society has developed its own mechanisms in safeguarding its ICH, and thus, it is crucial for both government and non-governmental bodies to protect the ICH (Wahab, 2005). In UNESCO's 2003 Convention of Safeguarding ICH, it was proposed that communities play a critical role in safeguarding its own heritage (Arantes, 2007), which indicated that they were the deciding factor for the heritage's long-term sustainability. However, there is no specific centralized inventory system of ICH despite the various notions of AP that is outlined in Malaysia. Additionally, there are inadequate resources that can be found on the Malaysian ICH. Currently, most versions were in a directory and documentation form in specific issues on performing arts, craft making techniques, folk customs, rituals rites, language, and literature (Abdul Manaf et al., 2013; Gullick, 2000; Manaf, 2009).

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the relevant mechanisms in safeguarding and sustaining the customary law practices of AP using the bottom-up approach, specifically from the Malays' perspectives of the AP community in Negeri Sembilan. Accordingly, this study found that AP's knowledge was safeguarded and sustained successfully based on the intergenerational knowledge transfer, specifically through the processes of 'look, listen and learn' as well as oral transmission from the elders.

2 Literature Review

In this section, an overview of *adat perpatih* (AP) of Negeri Sembilan will be discussed, followed by the safeguarding efforts made by others using a bottom-up approach to the ICH. Lastly, this section enlightens readers on knowledge transfer, which plays significant contributions in transferring knowledge on the intangible cultural heritage practices from generation to generation.

2.1 *Adat perpatih* as part of the *adat* laws

The Malay customary law was mentioned in law manuscripts thousands of years ago (Harun, 2008), which consisted of AP that was verbally passed down from one generation to the next. Although AP's customary laws existed a long time ago, its strong presence and practices were seen until today (Collins 2002). For example, in the state

capital of Negeri Sembilan (Seremban), the Minangkabau architecture was seen in the form of buffalo horns arch that welcomes visitors to the customary land. Additionally, the buffalo horns roofs were observed almost everywhere in the state, especially in traditional houses and government buildings (Collins, 2002).

The Malays of Negeri Sembilan are influenced by AP in various ways, consisting of four categories as mentioned by Nagata (1974, 94). Firstly, *adat* is generally described as beliefs and practices, ranging from dress styles, etiquettes, daily activities, rites of passage, and ritual practices for specific occasions and ceremonies. Secondly, it is viewed as an expression of identity that differentiates one ethnic group to another, for instance, Malays' identification via practicing their customs in both time and space. Thirdly, it is related to social obligation and expectations of others where the society needs to follow and obligate to existing norms, rules and regulations. Lastly, *adat* is related to religion which is interwoven with the ceremonial marking rites of passage.

Given the AP's prominent roles in the Malays' lifestyle, it must be safeguarded and sustained in the community so that its practices are not diminished by globalization and modernity. Following the above-stated UNESCO's 2003 convention, the community is encouraged to pay attention to safeguard their ICH. Specifically, the essential roles of communities and particular groups in society were highlighted convention, which stated that 'communities, in particular indigenous communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and recreation of the ICH, thus helping to enrich cultural diversity and human creativity (UNESCO 2003, 1). Thus, to ensure the survival prospects of AP, it is crucial for the community or local stakeholders to be involved in preserving their own heritage (Cominelli & Greffe 2012; Mupira 2009; UNESCO 2003).

2.2 Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage from the bottom-up approach

Based on the community-based approach stated in the convention, Cominelli and Greefe (2012) questioned how ICH could be safeguarded, given that the convention itself provided an indiscernible outline on the mechanisms to protect the ICH. In response to that predicament, the authors illustrated several suggestions to address this issue. Firstly, to successfully safeguard an ICH, it was vital to identify its practices in societies and their holders or practitioners. Therefore, a broader policy was needed to ensure that the selected practitioners possess the right knowledge and skills for their heritage to be safeguarded.

Secondly, the safeguarding measures should strengthen the link between ICH and creativity and innovation (Cominelli & Greffe, 2012). Thus, the ICH practitioners' participation in local projects should be encouraged for the heritage's creation and reproduction in conjunction with fostering innovation within a particular sector. Finally, in ensuring successful ICH preservation, knowledge dissemination needed to occur, particularly the skills and practices that were exclusively handed down to the next generation.

Following UNESCO's 2003 convention, Malaysia has enforced the National Heritage Act 2005 to preserve both tangible and ICH, which distinctly surfaces under the government's aegis. However, given the dissimilarity in the top-down and bottom-up approaches, the heritage's sustainability could not be guaranteed by relying merely on implementing the law (Mupira, 2009). For example, from the top-down approach, heritage professionals and government focused more on conservation and heritage management's technical practices. Meanwhile, the bottom-up approach comprised community and heritage practitioners centered on the nature of heritage. Specifically, they highlighted the importance and the significance of certain objects, places and practices, followed by the reason and the method of future conservations of these components (Harrison, 2010, 15). In the context of ICH's emergence, a form of past inventory was conducted through oral tradition and folklore by verbally transmitting the standards and values of society. Overall, the tradition of the past was created by the cultural community, which reflected their social and cultural identity in the forms of language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture, among others (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004, 65)

2.3. Transferring knowledge of the local practices

There are no specific ways on how to safeguard and sustain ICH within the local community. However, one of the possible mechanisms in guaranteeing ICH's continuity is the transfer of knowledge vis-à-vis history, practices, and tradition. Knowledge transfer is 'a process where a unit (individual, group, department, division) is affected by another's experience' (Argote et al., 2000, 3). Notably, ICH comprises in-depth knowledge elements that are complex and varied in multiple ways, usually acquired by individuals, groups, organizations, and communities. Additionally, the knowledge is transmitted from one generation to another within a specific time frame. Hence, communication is vital to ensure that knowledge can be transferred from a source or sender to a recipient agent (García-Almeida, 2019, 411).

Correspondingly, several mechanisms in knowledge transfer were identified by Argote and others within an organization. These mechanisms include personnel movement, training, communication, observing experts' performance, technology transfer, reverse engineering products, and replicating routines. Furthermore, the technique in transferring knowledge was extended to patents, scientific publications, presentations, which also included interactions with suppliers, customers, alliances. Knowledge could also be transmitted via blueprints, documents and descriptions about the organization (Argote, 2012, 149). However, within the context of ICH, knowledge transfer within the community was varied in several ways, according to its differing regions, contexts, generations, and practices.

For example, in Lithuania and Cyprus's case, the narrative knowledge transfer was used in managing heritage buildings (Seduikyte et al., 2018). In the narrative knowledge transfer, storytelling was one way of communication in transmitting knowledge among the community. Furthermore, short stories on the preservation and management of heritage buildings were utilized for generations within the Lithuanian and Cypriot communities, in which most of the knowledge transfer was in the form of mentorship, simulation, guided experimentation, paired work, practices, and others (Seduikyte et al. 2018). Similarly, Fernández-Llamazares and Cabeza (2018) agreed that oral storytelling was a form of knowledge transfer to ensure the ICH's sustainability in the local community. Additionally, the authors emphasised that indigenous storytelling was vital amongst the indigenous community, especially in a biocultural knowledge to preserve their nature and surrounding. Hence, through storytelling, the indigenous community could 'establish narratives of ecosystem change and strengthen networks of cultural transmission' (Fernández-Llamazares and Cabeza 2018, 5).

Furthermore, in the case of understanding the Australian Aboriginal heritage trails, the experiential model of knowledge transfer was found to transfer heritage knowledge (Muecke & Eadie, 2020). In this model, most of the information regarding the heritage trails were transferred by describing to visitors about the trails. This method was conducted through storytelling by tourists guides that acted as a valve in controlling the type of information that was suitable to be imparted. Hence, by being physically present during the exploration of these heritage trails, visitors could absorb their surroundings, which subsequently enabled them to learn how the events were connected. Moreover, Paskaleva and Cooper (2017) which examined ICH's roles in regenerating a small-scale urban project

in Velenje, Slovenia. In this study, the intergenerational transmission (also known as intergenerational knowledge transfer) was used by the older generation, where knowledge and narratives about the Velenje's history were passed down to the younger generations. Thus, through this intergenerational transmission, both generations were able to form shared urban identities by recognizing their pride, which was in relation to their sense of belonging and place.

This intergenerational transmission was analogous to the Slovakian's young and older generations. In ethnographic research conducted by (Murin, 2016), it was found that the local community's traditional knowledge on wedding ceremonies witnessed the meeting of several generations with contrasting roles and ways of communication. For instance, in preparing the wedding ceremony and rituals, local knowledge was used in preparing the menu, which naturally required the perspective from the older generation. Additionally, the younger generation took initiatives in transmitting the knowledge acquired by sharing the events via social networks. Given these points, the local tradition was preserved by the participation of both generations in the wedding ceremony.

Other intergenerational knowledge transfer methods were materialized in the safeguarding of *sega*, which was an Indian Ocean genre of music and dance. The music genre was featured among the Chagossian community in three regional areas: Mauritius, Seychelles, and the United Kingdom (Jeffery & Rotter, 2019). This genre was safeguarded through a series of heritage transmission workshop organized by the United Kingdom's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)'s project. Furthermore, in this project, a workshop was held that comprised a series on '*sega* music and dance, cuisine, coconut preparation, coconut handicrafts, and medicinal plants', subsequently turned into films (Jeffery and Rotter 2019, 1025). Moreover, the project welcomed the Chagossian community's participation in educating and learning about their families' culture and heritage. The project allowed the community to discover new people and introduced them to new friends while learning specific skills (Jeffery and Rotter 2019, 1027) from the elders. The elders were also eager to share their way of life with the younger generations by encouraging them to learn about their culture.

However, the knowledge transfer process has affected the authenticity in recognizing the 'ideas of originality and genuineness' of ICH's products (García-Almeida, 2019, 412). In the context of heritage tourism, García-Almeida (2019) conducted a study on the knowledge transfer process's implications on the ICH's authenticity. In this study, it

was found that the knowledge transfer occurred in several ways, for instance, through the relationship between the tourist's guide and the visitors or audience. Moreover, the knowledge on ICH was developed through multiple generations due to intergenerational knowledge transfer, which safeguarded the continuity of the community's ICH. Hence, despite the questionable authenticity of the information on the knowledge's transformation acquired by the tourists, the knowledge transfer process could be justified as a way to safeguard the ICH's long-term existence.

3. Methodology

A qualitative approach was utilized in this study, which allowed the researcher to ask a set of questions to the respondents and observed them in the field (Silverman, 2013). By leveraging the ethnographic principle and social constructivism or social interpretivist approach, this study sought to understand the perception and the Malays' AP community's experiences. This idea was specific to their daily activities, events, and practices and transmitting the knowledge of AP to others. The approach was in accordance with Fetterman (2010, 1)'s study, which reported that ethnography permits the audience or the reader to give attention to credible, rigorous and authentic stories. Therefore, the people were provided with the opportunity to voice their own local understandings, which left the researcher to rely on verbatim quotations and 'thick' descriptions of events.

In the framework of the study conducted by Creswell (2013) and Mason (2002), it was found that individuals developed their own subjective meanings derived from their experiences in perceiving objects or things. Hence, by utilizing the social constructivist approach, it was imperative that the researcher analyzed the 'process' of interaction among individuals in the community and examined the people's lives and work to understand the participants' historical and cultural settings. Furthermore, as a data source for the study, the researcher usually preferred the 'insider view' more than the 'outsider' view (Mason 2002). This study was concerned with the 'insider view', emic perspective of the local people on how AP's knowledge was transferred between individuals.



Figure 1: Research Location: Royal Capital of Seri Menanti

This study was carried out in a small town called Seri Menanti, situated in a district of Kuala Pilah, approximately 30 KM from the state capital of Negeri Sembilan, Seremban. It is worth noting that Seri Menanti is known as the royal capital (*Bandar di-raja*) of Negeri Sembilan (Figure 1). In this study, a purposive sampling technique was used in approaching the research participants. Lastly, specific target and purposes were set beforehand, thus making the interview and observation significantly convenient during the field study.

Table 1: Total Research Participants

Research participants (RP)	Gender (F/M)	Age Group
RP1	F	50-59
RP2	M	60-69
RP3	F	60-69
RP4	F	30-39
RP5	M	30-39
RP6	F	30-39
RP7	F	30-39
RP8	F	30-39
RP9	M	30-39
RP10	F	70-79
RP11	F	30-39
RP12	F	20-29

Twelve research participants were interviewed as seen in Table 1, which covered a broad range of age groups to obtain a full understanding of the study. All twelve interviewees comprised locals, and one officer from the Malaysian Department of Heritage. Based on the above table, three research participants aged between 60 and 79 years were

considered ‘veterans’ in their community. Additionally, one research participant was in the late 50s, followed by seven participants that were aged between 30 and 40 years. The participants were selected from different types of occupations, which ranged from professionals to non-professionals. Professional workers were referred to individuals in the professional sector, namely, teachers, government officers, etc. (Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia, 2010), while the non-professionals were self-employed and retired.

In-depth interviews and open-ended questions were utilized in this study, which allowed the research participants to feel comfortable during the interview sessions. This interview style also encouraged the research participants to talk freely on the related topic with less interference from the researcher (Hammersley, 2012; Seidman, 2006). Furthermore, participant observation was included, where the researcher records a phenomenon or surrounding in the field. The researcher often used the five senses, namely sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste to observe the physical setting, participants, activities, interactions, conversations, behaviours, relationships, events, as well as spatial, locational, and temporal dimensions (Creswell, 2013; Mason, 2002, 84). For this study, the researcher observed how AP knowledge intergenerational transfers, especially during the interview sessions.

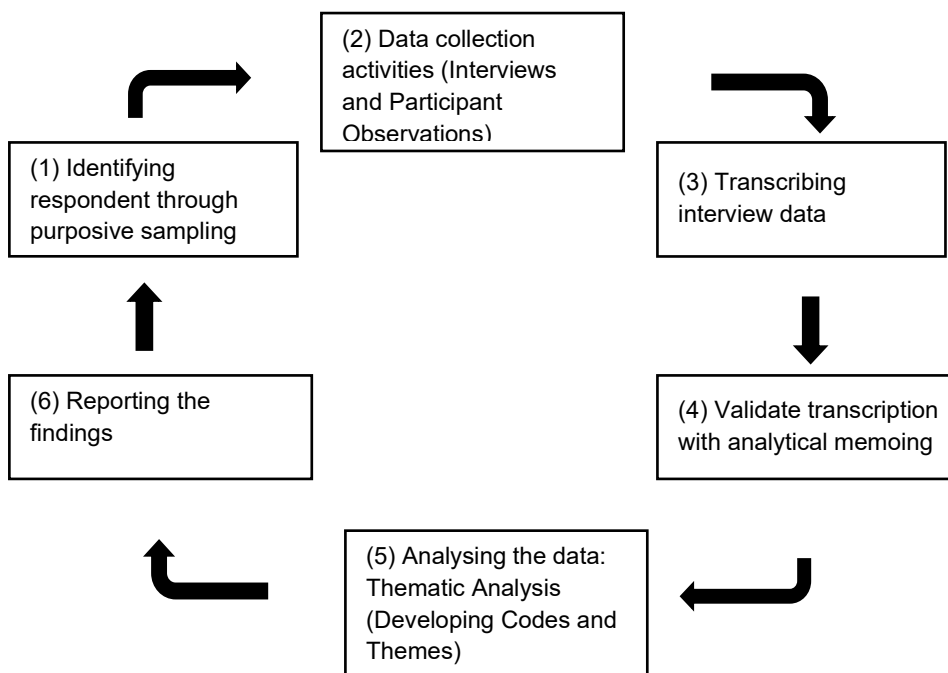


Figure 2: Data collection process

The research flow in approaching research participants and data collection process of this study can be seen in Figure 2, where a thematic analysis was used to process the

fieldwork data, particularly the interviews transcripts and field notes. The data were analyzed manually and the compilation of raw data from the fieldwork was transcribed and analyzed using analytical memoing as recommended by Saldana et al. (2011) The analytical memoing is an extended version of narrative style reporting, which required the data to be synthesized into a higher-level of analytical meanings (Miles et al., 2014, 96).

4. Results and Discussions

The customary laws of AP must be sustained for the benefit of the future society. Given the mechanisms mentioned above in safeguarding and sustaining AP, the two key themes were identified from the thematic analysis, namely: (i) the process of look listen and learn and (ii) oral transmission from the elders. All these themes are predicated on the bottom level of society, critically contributes to the society, which is derivative of the practitioners of AP's perspective and practices.

4.1. The process of look, listen and learn

The process of 'look, listen, and learn' occurred during the transformation of knowledge from the older generation to the younger generation, also known as intergenerational knowledge transfer. The process encourages an individual to observe and take heed on what has been explained on the practices in AP by the elders and their parents. Lastly, in the context of the learning process, this step takes place in the form of practice.

The generational transmission of knowledge and practices of AP through the process 'look, listen, and learn' is also mentioned in the study by Gibson et al. (2020, 196), which explored the Aboriginal elders' cultural obligations. According to the Aboriginal people, culture can be identified through this process, and thus, this transferring process is considered as, '[this] means to be still; observe environments, including cultural connection; listen to people, country, ancestors, and spirituality; and finally reflect on what one can see and hear and then learn' (Gibson et al. 2020, 196). Notably, Gibson et al. (2020, 196)'s research outcome expressed similar ideas to this study. For instance, one of the AP community research participants mentioned that the practices of AP must be practiced continuously in society for the benefit of the subsequent generations. Thus, it is necessary for the younger generations to be educated on the customary laws of AP by their elders.

RP1, for instance, has strongly emphasized the importance to sustain the AP as stated below:

‘The AP is relevant because my relatives still follow and practices AP today. The *adat* needs to be practiced continuously ... in order for us to pass this tradition to our younger generation [sic]’ (Interview, RP1).

Furthermore, during the customary wedding ceremony, the process of ‘look, listen and learn’ was applied in the preparation of welcoming the AP’s leaders. Moreover, it is crucial to take the Negeri Sembilan’s AP’s leaders into consideration, because as leaders of the society, they are entitled to be respected by its members. Hence, for the duration of the leaders’ visit to the host family, they are obliged to beautify their houses by installing the canopy (*lelangit*) and the wall curtain (*tabir*). Additionally, they are required to prepare food, which is presented on specific trays. Next, to celebrate the AP’s arrival, the present leaders must sit on the red cushion (*tilam pandak*). It is worth noting that in preparing for celebrating the arrival of the leaders, the elders necessitate their children for assistance. Indirectly, the elders taught their children how to install the canopy and wall curtain; they also explain the importance of the process. In that sense, RP6 stated as follows:

‘If it was my mother, she does not want to install it but since my grandfather and elders were there, they asked her to put it on, and it is the *adat* that we need to follow [sic]’ (Interview, RP6).

This process is further clarified by RP4, which reported that the installation of the canopy and wall curtain at their house, specifically when welcoming the leaders, symbolized respect and honor. Hence, RP4 stated as follows: ‘...the main reason why we installed *tabir* and *lelangit* is that, to show some respect and acknowledged them as a leader and they are the one that we choose [sic]’ (Interview, RP4).

Other practices within the notion of AP is *berkampung* which also mean gathering before certain events take place. In *berkampung*, neighbors, relatives, and all family members, including elders and young generations, will decide and divide their tasks in preparing the upcoming event. All of these AP members will discuss until they reach upon mutual agreement. It is also important to note that *berkampung* is vital to the Malays because *berkampung* symbolizes their collective relationship among community members. Through the practice of *berkampung*, young members get to learn from their elders on how to handle the event by listening to their discussion. RP4, for example, also emphasized the importance of *berkampung* as she said that this practice must be held and necessary in

AP. Indirectly, younger generations will be exposed and strengthen their knowledge on the AP.

Moreover, another reason on the importance of the process of 'look, listen and learn' was expressed by RP3, which follows as:

‘...even though there were lots of books [books about AP] out there, but there still a need for understanding and explanation because sometimes, it is hard to understand what have been written...[sic]’ (Interview, RP3)

Therefore, to learn about practices in AP, it is vital for the younger generation to ask from the elders. This idea was further supported by Selat (2014), which suggested that the in-depth meaning of AP itself needed to be understood from its roots so that people could comprehend the idea as a whole. Thus, to hand over AP to next-generation, oral and practical ways are considered excellent ways to preserve and sustain the AP. According to RP2, AP must be passed down to the next generation through its practice. As the elder in the society, RP2 said that:

‘Later, if we are not here anymore, our children need to continue the *adat* and the inheritance. Everything must be passed down to the children. If I remembered everything about *adat*, I would pass down and tell the people. Those who know about the *adat* need to continue the practice. So, young people should ask the elders about this history [sic]’ (Interview, RP2).

The above examples show that the process of look, listen, and learn take place among the AP’s members particularly within a family.

4.2. Oral transmission from the elders

The knowledge of *adat perpatih* was also transmitted through oral transmission from the elders of the community to their children. Most of the research participants have emphasized the importance of transmitting the knowledge on AP for its continuity in the future. One of the research participants of this study mentioned that ‘although the knowledge of *adat perpatih* can be found in a book, papers or any written forms, there is a room for further explanation on its practice’ (Interview, RP2). Another example can be seen when the children of research participants of this study also joined the interview session. In this case, when the researcher interviewed RP2 and his wife, their children also joined the conversation. She seemed to understand and knew about the topic discussed, and sometimes, she also joined our discussion. The researcher found that children also had some knowledge about the topic that we discussed, and sometimes she also learned about the new thing from her parents about the new thing that she had never heard before. From

this situation, as the AP is transmitted orally, the researcher found that by joining and sitting with the elders, children also got a piece of new knowledge and understood better about the AP.

Furthermore, within the context of cultural heritage, Halamy and Kibat (2017) suggested that oral tradition or oral transmission could be considered as a way to transfer knowledge. For example, in transmitting historical knowledge to others, oral history is 'able to provide such information derived from their personal involvement and experience of historical events, from their special relationship with a particular personality, or the bearing that a specific period in history may have had on their lives' (Halamy and Kibat 2017, 32). Hence, it is evident that community members' participation can be potentially applied in transferring knowledge, skill, and traditions.

5. Conclusions

Overall, the study on the mechanisms of safeguarding and sustaining AP from the bottom-up approach is best applied from the process of 'look, listen and learn' through intergenerational knowledge transfer and also oral transmission from the elders. By looking at AP from the bottom-up approach, those responsible for safeguarding and sustaining AP are the community themselves. However, identifying most of the official heritage heavily relies on the government and heritage professional. Nevertheless, the local community and heritage stakeholders possessed the strongest stand for whether an ICH should be protected and the best possible way to safeguard and sustain it in the community. Therefore, it is necessary for both parties (the top and the bottom) to work together to bring this cultural heritage alive in the future. Lastly, the result of this study may explain that the local Malays of the AP community has played their roles in ensuring that the AP's practices are sustained for the future. Notably, this study suggested potential ideas for future studies to explore the roles of other institutions, namely, museums, educational institutions, and others to sustain the practices of AP.

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