Heritage education as an effective approach to enhance community engagement: a model for classifying the level of engagement

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Abstract

Seeking consensuses from the public is difficult, this also applies to the heritage sector, particularly in heritage preservation. 'What, why and how to preserve?' are the core of debates in the field and the differences between points of views are basically due to the difference in valuation. In order to know everyone's needs, views and expectations better and for sustainability, involving the community for preservation becomes fundamental. Education, an experience which does not only provide opportunities for enlightenments and widening horizons, but also introduce various concepts in terms of moral, ethical and social through systematic instructions. Having such great impact to community, promoting heritage education can be an effective approach awakening public consciousness on heritage preservation, and thus, enhancing people's responsibility towards heritage, for both tangible and intangible, and developing a sustainable future for heritage through public engagement. However, it is necessary to understand the structure or the level of engagement prior setting the goal for heritage education. A model for classifying the level of engagement from performance is proposed for clarification and appraisal. This model is part of the research project of Community Engagement with Heritage in Macau which has an intention to examine its level of community engagement and give suggestions. This essay will first discuss community engagement, then classify the levels of engagement with models and lastly argue heritage education can elevate the level of community engagement which ultimately achieves the aim of heritage preservation.

Keywords: *heritage education; community engagement; heritage preservation; promotion.*

1. Introduction

Since 1992, when the World Heritage Centre (WHC) was established, the idea of community engagement with heritage has been promoted in one of its mission statements, which is to "encourage participation of the local population in the preservation of their cultural and natural heritage" (UNESCO, 2008, p.3). With the support from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the concept of enhancing community engagement was introduced to the public, and one of the key approaches is heritage education. As early as in 1994, the WHC and the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) proposed a UNESCO Young People's World Heritage Education Project in order to develop innovative educational approaches in support of world heritage conservation and to encourage the young to participate in conservation activities at large (Khawajkie et al., 2002). This new concept of introducing heritage education in and out of the classroom became an essential step forward in popularising heritage and bringing heritage into people's lives. It provided a new way of building commitment and strengthening actions in favour of preserving heritage by and for the public, especially for the young generations to consolidate their knowledge about heritage from a young age.

It has been said that heritage education is one of the most fundamental and sustainable ways to conserve, preserve and promote heritage, be it cultural or natural, tangible or intangible, from local heritage to world heritage (Matsuura,

2002). However, before considering how heritage education can benefit the community and the heritage sector, it is necessary to understand community engagement. A model which classifies different levels of engagement will be proposed for the specific use for the sector.

2. Engaging the Public with Archaeology

For the past twenty years, archaeologists have started to rethink their relationships with communities. Serious attentions have been paid to public involvement, heritage management and collaboration with communities in recent years (Atalay, 2012). As early as in 1970, Fritz and Plog concerned the interconnections between archaeology and society, "We suspect that unless archaeologists find ways to make their research increasingly relevant to the modern world, the modern world will find itself increasingly capable of getting along without archaeologists" (1970, p. 412). This sentence not only seeks suggestions for sustainable development, but also highlights the importance of considering public interests as an element of archaeological research. Even though public interests are difficult to presume and understand, it is essential that they are given due consideration in archaeological interpretations because motivating and attracting the public into archaeology is important for the sustainable development of the subject. Atalay mentions that archaeological research is a luxury to non-archaeologists (2012). This is mainly due to public disengagement, where the public are not able to connect with archaeology and are unable to make use of the results of archaeological research. The lack of consideration of public interest, therefore, leads to the public failing to recognise the impact of archaeological research on people's daily lives economically, socially, religiously, politically and culturally. A better understanding of the public interest is the key to a greater level of public engagement, and bringing public awareness and interests closer to the subject is an imperative concern for archaeologists. Archaeology has so much to offer to humanity that allowing it to be lost in rapidly developing societies would be a mistake.

2.1. What is Community Engagement?

The term 'community engagement' refers to the intention of communicating with the community, as well as facilitating actions and events to enhance people's interests (Johnston, 2008). It is believed that engaging the community in programmes for specific aims and objectives could result in a better social and organisational outcomes (Adams & Hess, 2001). Johnston suggests community engagement is a communication strategy which provides opportunities to members of the community to show their interests and express their views (2008), offering ethical, socially responsive and reflexive approaches for organisations to enhance their rela-tionship with the community. Barkan argues "engagement is described as a set of attitudes that predispose an individual to action" (1998, p.64). It is an important motivator for ac-tion and emotional involvements relying on interests, knowledge and a sense of civic pride (ZimmerGembeck et. al, 2006). A "good community engagement will mean that both groups can understand and act on the needs or issues of community experiences, helping to achieve positive change" (Scottish Community Devel-opment Centre, 2019, What We Do panel). Therefore, usually the aim of community engagement is to understand the needs, views and expectations of the community.

2.2. Level of Engagement

Researchers have used different terms to describe their approaches to community engagement. These including outreach, collaborative research, participatory arts, lifelong learning, community engagement, and engagement with partners (NCCPE, 2018). Although all these strategies are geared towards better community engagement, their purposes and processes vary because their targeted levels of engagement are different (Scottish Community Development Centre, 2019).

Three different spectra of participation have been chosen to illustrate the idea of the level of engagement. They are all similar, but different from each

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other in some way due to their differences in purpose. The spectrum of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), which was first proposed and widely adapted by partitioners since early 2000s, gives a sample of the classification of the level of community engagement in general. This Fifth Level Engagement framework is initiated to define the role of the public in any public participation process. The model has been criticized on only considering positive public engagement by Saatchi in 2012 (Fig. 1). By omitting the level of disengagement, it defines levels from Inform to Empower (Fig. 2; IAP2, 2018).
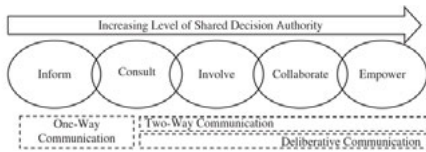

Fig. 1. The Spectrum of Participation (Source: Nabatchi, 2012).

Fig. 2. The Spectrum of Participation (latest version) (IAP2, 2018).
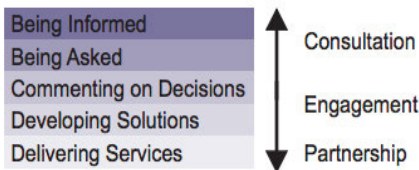

Fig. 3. The Spectrum of Participation (Source: Sunderland City Council, 2008).

The Sunderland City Council presents in the same way without explanations in their community development plan (SCDP, 2008, p. 7, Fig.3).

The National Trust has similar ideas in presenting levels of community engagement, but it includes two more levels with divisions. The spectrum is divided into three main sections, from Non participation to Substantial participation (2019, Fig. 4).

However, after reviewing the features of these three spectra, it seems that these existing spectra of participation do not fit so effectively to fulfil the aim of reflecting the progression of improv-ing the level of community engagement, partic-ularly for heritage education. As a result, a simple model for determination is needed. The following model was then developed (Fig. 5) based on the inspiration from the spectrum of SCDP (Fig. 3), in which, alongside the classification of levels, it labels the status of the levels as consultation, engagement and partnership, where engagement is the mid-range status, and selected details taken from other two spectra as well.
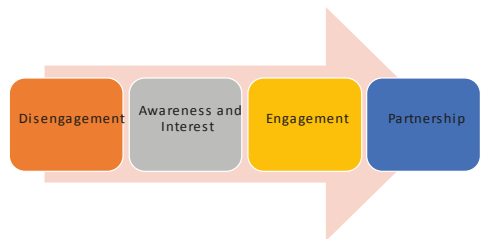

Fig. 5. Model for classifying the level of engagement from performance.

Table 1. Equivalent classification of level of engagement.

Terminology is being considered. According to O'Connor, "community engagement is achieved through activities that develop knowledge, skills, values and motivation" (2006, as cited in Johnston, 2008, p.2). It is particularly achieved via the creation of awareness and interests (Johnston, 2008). The term 'consultation' is perfectly fine in usage from the organisational perspective.

The spectrum of participation

Fig. 4. The Spectrum of Participation (National Trust, 2019).

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Yet, in terms of representing the responses of the community, the term 'awareness and interests' would be more suitable. Therefore, this paper will consider the level of engagement based on this new model with the four key stages.

In terms of the difference between engagement and awareness, the Cambridge Dictionary defines 'awareness' as "the knowledge that something exists or understanding of a situation subject at the present time based on information or experience" (2019, 'awareness'). The Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls (ENDVAWNOW) suggests the meaning of 'awareness' is the public's level of understanding about the importance and implications of a topic (2010), allowing people to make their own decisions after explaining the issue or disseminating knowledge to them.

There are two broad levels of awareness. High awareness suggests that a significant proportion of a society agree that the topic has great importance and a close connection to them, whereas a low degree of awareness shows an ignorance or lack of care about the topic. Raising awareness is similar to increasing engagement, where activities are designed to have a sufficient effect on knowledge, attitudes and behaviours (ENDVAWNOW, 2010). Fouts claims the difference between engagement and awareness is the depth of personal connection with the topic. He explains community engagement is people's experience with the topic which is customised or personalised for the specific needs of the participants; in contrast, awareness is more likely to be people's perception of the topic (2013). Therefore, increasing awareness could be seen as the first step in enhancing engagement.

2.3. Community Engagement with Heritage through Tourism and Education

Compared to other outlets for archaeology such as museums and field projects, community engagement in the heritage sector seems weaker in presentation. This is because the concept of heritage is too complicated to be explained clearly to the public with a unified definition (Smith, 2006; Harvey, 2001). Smith suggests that heritage could be promoted and presented to the public via multi-layered performances such as visiting and consulting (2006). Recently, the most popular way to engage with a heritage site is through heritage tourism. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States, heritage tourism means "traveling to experience the places, artefacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past. It includes visitation to cultural, historic and natural resources" (Gibson, 2015, definition section). Those resources referred to by Gibson are mainly referring to World Heritage Sites (WHS) which are deemed to have Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) to humanity. Each designated WHS of UNESCO has its unique OUV which could determine the significance of the site formally and with unity (UNESCO, 2008). However, heritage tourism is a derivative focus from the main aims of inscribing a WHS on the list, which is to ensure "identification, protection, conservation, preservation and transmission to future generations of cultural and natural heritage of OUV" (UNESCO, 2005a, About World Heritage). Heritage tourism itself could be primarily recognised as an economic strategy and for economic purposes of which some scholars refer to 'Disneyfication' or 'the heritage industry' (Hewison, 1987; Waitt and McGuirk, 1996; Waitt, 2000). However, it is arguable that tourism also brings awareness to heritage sites or even enhances public engagement.

Heritage tourism has a great impact on promoting heritage and attracts serious attention from the public, but the level of engagement is relatively shallow, and its lasting effect is short. McKercher and du Cros have identified five categories of heritage tourists, all of whom have different levels of experience and engagement with heritage sites, depending on their prior knowledge of the place they visit (2002, see Table 2). Referring to the classification of the level of engagement given in Figure 5 above, most tourist types, apart

from the 'purposeful cultural tourist' and 'serendipitous cultural tourist', fall into the Disengagement or the Awareness and Interests categories, depending on their experiences (see Table 1). Hence, in order to provide a stronger sense of motivation and a deeper level of experience, an extra approach should be added on to enhance better community engagement. Education would be a suitable approach for bringing people's awareness and interest to the subject. Matsuura (2002, p .4) states that "Education is the key to personal fulfilment, development, conservation, peace and well- being" while involving with the past via education can improve the quality of life (Schofield, 2010). Yet Molyneaux claims that "formal education is particularly vulnerable to dispute about the interpretation of the past because of its importance as an ideological tool in society" (1994, p. 3). However, this is unavoidable since history is selective and constructed "based on reselection, reconstruction and reinterpretation of past events in order to validate former, present, as well as the actions of actors" (Semian and Novacek, 2017, p. 307).

1. Purposeful cultural tourist
• Primary motive for visiting and individual has a deep cultural experience
2. Sightseeing cultural tourist
• Primary or major reason for visiting, but the experience is more shallow
3. Serendipitous cultural tourist
• Does not travel for cultural (heritage) tourism reasons, after participation ends up having a deep cultural tourism experience
4. Casual cultural tourist
• Weakly motived for visiting and the resultant experience is shallow
5. Incidental cultural tourist
• Does not travel for cultural (heritage) tourism reasons, nonetheless, participates in some activities and has shallow experiences

Table 2. Five major categories of cultural tourists (McKercher & du Cros, 2002).

The character of heritage in education is to enable acknowledgements and interpretations of different values that are ascribed to heritage sites for various reasons. The process of learning itself is "a process of active engagement with experience" (Campaign for Learning, nd, Our approach panel). Hence, heritage education provides direct interactions with the resources of social experience and the reflection of changes within the community, developing and encouraging students to build a capacity to evaluate what people see and hear critically (Molyneaux & Stone,

1994). In addition, many scholars argue that heritage sites impact on the broader community in areas such as the economy, art performance, personal development and health care (Matarasso, 1997; Gilmore et al., 2003; Seymour, 2003; Clark, 2010). The advantages of promoting heritage education would be more than just having cultural or social influences to the community. Because the roles that heritage education plays in society are more significant than people think. The Group of Education in Museums (GEM, 2018) explains how heritage education:

- • offers a different kind of learning

- • involves people at all stages of life and with a wide variety of needs

- • brings out the best in our children and deepens classroom learning

- • contributes to civic awareness and our sense of place

- • and provides a sense of wellbeing.

GEM values heritage education as the best practice to advocate social welfare and individual benefits. In Europe, heritage education is widely accepted. In some countries, it has been run for more than twenty years. From an evaluation of the attitudes and opinions of European citizens regarding cultural heritage, 88% of the respondents agree that cultural heritage should be taught at school (European Commission, 2017d). Such responses from European citizens, together with academic research, strongly suggest that heritage education achieves better community engagement, cultural continuity and sustainable development in cultural and social affairs with the support of heritage sites.

In 1994, UNESCO initiated the World Heritage Education Programme to involve younger generations in the protection of heritage sites as well as encourage them to preserve our cultural and natural heritage for the future (UNESCO, 2018). Both the World Heritage Youth Forum and the World Heritage Young Professional Forum provide a platform for students, teachers and

professionals all over the world to foster intercultural learning and exchange, debate global common concerns and establish a network for future development of world heritage education. One of the materials – the World Heritage in Young Hands Kit has been translated into 43 national languages for global promotion (Fig.6) while a short film – Patrimonito's (Small Heritage Guardian) World Heritage Adventures has been produced and made widely available (UNESCO, 2018; Khawajkie, Pavlic and Titchen, 2002). Many different types of events are being launched and it seems that the promotion of heritage education is on its way to succeeding.
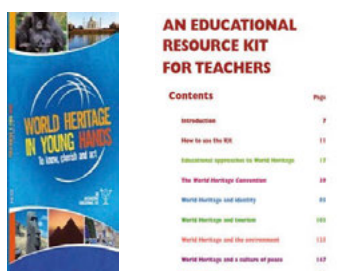

Fig. 6. World Heritage in Young Hands: an education resource kit for teachers (WHC, 2002).

There is no one way to introduce heritage education. Molyneaux suggests that "there is no simple prescription for the study of the past" (1994, p.7). Heritage is perceived as a form of the past and Heritage Studies is as complicated as history itself. It is culturally, socially, regionally and nationally subjective. However, in order to maintain a sense of identity within the society at large, particular for education in archaeology, 'the prescription of mass education' is encouraged by international organisations and professionals. It is argued by some scholars that desirable knowledge should become globalised rather than localised (Benavot, Cha, Kamens, Meyer and Wong, 1991). The development of mass education will be heavily influenced by international organisations such as the World Bank and UNESCO on a worldwide basis where institutionalised ideals are formed (Benavot, Cha, Kamens, Meyer & Wong, 1991). The threat of losing national identity through learning standardised ideology could be avoided by publishing regional or national materials which are referenced to the guidelines provided by the advisory bodies. Finding the most appropriate way for local history and heritage to be taught must consider the needs of locals while following the global trend; this seems to be favourable for the development of heritage education at both community and national levels, and also for the sustainable enhancement of public engagement.

3. Conclusions

Overall, several different approaches have been offered by archaeologists and international advisory bodies such as UNESCO aimed to raise public awareness through making archaeology more relevant to people's lives. Increasing public engagement in archaeology, especially in the heritage sector, is crucial for the sustainable development of the field. As education is recognized as an effective tool to promote knowledge generally, heritage education becomes one of the most possible and sustainable ways to achieve a higher quality of public engagement with heritage. Formal and informal learning, onsite teaching and outreach are the various forms of heritage education. They are the bridges upon which archaeologists and those outside the discipline can interact. Enabling the public to understand the nature of heritage and why it is important to preserve and learn about the site. Having such foreseen influences, heritage education is considerably reasonable to set its goal as elevating the level of engagement from the Disengagement or the Awareness and Interests categories, which heritage tourism often achieves, to the Engagement category (see Fig. 5 and Table 1).

The framework for heritage education has been set up by authorities for various levels of usage. Its approaches should not be limited with a certain type of materials, rather, it should be adjustable regarding to different circumstances, with up-to-date information and current crises within the sector. Continual efforts are needed to test, to review, to evaluate the results and then to revise the process of heritage education in order, ultimately, to achieve better community engagement around heritage assets.

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