

# PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES IN RELATION TO THE CITY LIVELINESS OF URBAN HERITAGE TRAIL

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## ABSTRACT

*Populaces are prominent indicators of livability in creating 'street life' for cities and public spaces. Evaluating people's experiences is significant in creating a city liveliness and urban heritage trail. The exploration of design strategies that could allow them to integrated and connected with other spaces in the context of city and heritage as well as creating a social life among them. The measuring variables are people's experience on the spaces; thus, create the pattern of behavior, which cause spaces liveliness, using Kuala Lumpur Heritage Trail as an example of pedestrian priority streets, city environment and heritage value. The aim of this research is to evaluate people's experiences and analyze their behavior towards the urban street design within cities environment and Malaysia heritage values. The analyzed review comprising on the livability of the street in the context of interrelation between behavioral patter of people and the preferences of urban heritage. Hence, this paper will give an understanding of how people experiences the presence of urban streets and heritage values, thus, bringing liveliness to the streets.*

**Keywords :** People's experiences, pattern of behavior, city liveliness, urban heritage trail.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The study discusses the significance of the people's experiences in relation to the city liveliness of urban streets in the context of heritage value. Concerns about people's experiences have led to a study in seeking solutions to key questions: what users want from the spaces they use for various activities; how efficient access routes into the area; and how the spaces can be enhanced to engage with people. People experience the place by interacting with their environment through creating bonds and link (Zaidin, 2010). Generally, spaces turn into places where people may interact physically and mentally within the people; social interaction also the environment. The variety and diversity of human behavior can be seen on the street such as walking, standing, talking, playing, lingering and observing, which generate urban life (Jacob, 1993). Motloch (1991) suggested that the environment has value only in its ability to serve; it exists to be exploited for people's use and benefit.

Populaces are prominent indicators of livability in creating 'street life' for cities and public spaces. The issue which our city face nowadays are high urbanization rates. By 2030, over 60 percent of the world's population (4.9 billion out of 8.1 billion people) will live in cities (Rosly,

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2010). It was highlighted that the increase in population has contributed to the decrease in the quality of the urban environment and the quality of life of the inhabitants, particularly in Kuala Lumpur (Norhafizah et al. 2014). Despite the congestion population growth within the city area, the demands for public spaces with healthy and interactive environment, as well as lifestyles are what people have been taken into account nowadays. Urbanization process which involves increasing population requires the government to develop and provide more communication facilities such as public utilities (phone, LRT, Monorail), highways, and so on. Therefore, ease of communication facilities are the factors that make people used the spaces which fulfill their needs that lead to a livable city and also the heritage values.

## **2.0 PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES**

People's experiences defined as experiences of people's reaction including happy, sad, angry, excited, etc. at certain places and at certain time. The research expand into related meanings which is the exploration on people's behavior. The observation of people's experiences and investigate their behavior on the spaces in order to understand more on the study, thus, creating an environment where people want to participate. The studies by Kaplan et al. (1998) has stated that knowing what people need and prefer is important, because they not only get more out of an experience in a place they prefer, yet also more likely to go there in the first place. This means people express their feelings based on the spaces they enjoy and use. Besides that, he also stated that some places feel uncomfortable and other places may feel familiar (Kaplan et al., 1998). For example, even if we have never been there before, a place may feel familiar by reminding us of another place that we know. Therefore, based on the studies above, the concept of people's experiences can be define as the perception and reaction gained from the physical setting of their surroundings. It is crucial as if influence the image of the city as well as the presence of the urban streets.

### **2.1 Behavioral Pattern of People**

This study is focusing on the behavioral pattern of people by classify the activities that held by them on the streets (Zaidin, 2010). According to Steg and Vlek (2008), behavior is habitual and guided by automated cognitive processes, rather than being precede by elaborate reasoning. Habits refer to the way behavioral choices are made, and not to be frequency of behavior. Generally, habits are reconsidered only when the context changes significantly. Moreover, Nawawi (2015) has stated that lifestyle is a bundle of behaviors that make sense to both others and oneself in a given time and place, including social relations, consumption, entertainment, and dress. This lifestyle reflects an individual's attitudes, values or worldview that forge a sense of self and to create cultural symbols that resonate with personal identity, self-centric (Nawawi, 2015). This is because every individual has different characteristics and lifestyle that influence their perception and interaction with the place.

According to Shamsuddin (2011), it is important to identify the activities occur in street in order to characterizing the qualities of the streets. People use the streets and spaces provided for different activities that serve their needs and preferences. As suggested by Gehl (1987), people utilize the street to circulate, move from one space to another and to interact in the context of shopping and meeting. However, nowadays in Malaysian culture, the street's function has expanded into the opportunities of access, leisure activities, and socialize. As shown in Figure 1 below, the spaces can be enliven with the variety of activities, attraction and entertainment.



Figure 1: The activities and events occur on street such as walking, busking, shopping, do business and watch the parade

Apart from that, each person's perspective is built into who they are which some people call it personality. This is differentiate by each person's personality of how they experiences the spaces involving the five senses of human; the sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch. The five senses of human system does influences how people behave towards their surroundings. This is because the body has senses, and the external sensory system working together to send the information to the brain and process it and link up with the motor systems that control the actions (Hughes, 1995), which give people to experience various feeling when they enter the spaces.

As summary, behavioral pattern of people on the street reflect the liveliness of the city as well as their activities and the interactions between them in order to fulfill their needs and preferences. Besides, people activities and attraction are the key factors that can contribute to the place distinctive (Zaidin, 2010). Thus, the presence of people and the activities held by them can bring the attraction and liveliness to the spaces as well as enhance the diversity of the street.

## 2.2 Livability of Urban Street

The livability are defined as an urban system that contributes to the physical, social and mental well-being and personal development of all its inhabitants (Rosly, 2010). Livability also stated as the physical quality that is required in order to make a great street and does affect the uses of the street (Jacobs, 1993). The good quality of life as experienced by the people are help create the conditions of happy citizens which will contribute to a vibrant urban cities.

It is also defined by a physical setting which can give a significant impact to the people's experiences. This is the point where the setting's physical and cultural characteristics meld with an individual's affective perceptions and functional needs (Bott et al., 2005). It is developed when users feel that a place is significant, and that it is able to provide conditions to fulfill their functional needs, as well as, support their behavioral goals better than a known alternative (Williams, Anderson, McDonald & Patterson, 1995). There are criteria to be look into which brings contribution in making Malaysia as a better places for living.

### 2.2.1 Connections of Public Streets

Generally, connections of public streets also defined as accessibility is the most important elements of the public realm. According to Davies (2000), connections of public streets which is:

- a) Walking; a safe, attractive and well cared for public realm will encourage people to walk
- b) Public transport; how well it connects and bring ease to people
- c) Streets and traffic; efficiency of the traffic
- d) Utilities infrastructure; how well the facilities serve the user needs.

Thus, connections of public streets should ease the people's movement to travel and also has sense of inviting for people to come and use its facilities.

### 2.2.2 Urban Structure of Public Streets

Urban structure of public streets should meet the needs of people. This is because by achieve the people's need and adapt to their activities reflect of good public space (Nurbazliah, 2010). The elements of urban structure may influence people's perspective and can enhance their experiences throughout the spaces. According to Davies (2000), there are:

- a) The movement framework; the quality of different routes can be rated to help decide which should be developed or where improvements are needed
- b) Mixing uses; a full range of local services and facilities, including commercial, educational, health, spiritual and civic uses
- c) Landscape; creating the environment as a whole where landscape occupies the space
- d) Landmarks, vitas and focal points; the design of streets, the concentration of commercial, community and civic uses in the centers and the use of distinctive landscaping and building forms will all help create a place that is easy to read.

### 2.2.3 Sense of Safety

Safety and security are vital elements in any urban development. Thoughtful design is an important instrument in enhancing everyone's sense of well-being and making places more user friendly, easy to understand and secure (Motloch, 1991). Thus, the safety and secure environment allows people confidently to enter the space and use its function. It is also make the spaces more approachable and interactive.

### 2.2.4 Sense of Comfort

Comfort is an attribute of successful public spaces, and is a measure of good public places. The sense of comfort are relevant in creating a vibrant and livable city. It is influenced by environmental, physical, social, and psychological factors (Carmona & Tiesdell, 2003). For instance, protection from weathering allows for the continuation of streets activities (Ujang, 2015). The qualities of comfort influence the time taken of people to use the spaces, i.e. the existence of trees, greenery, and water features which promotes a sense of relaxation to the users. It also encourage longer place engagement as well as the feelings of safety and security (Ujang, 2015). Thus, sense of comfort can generate a good and positive city image and perception to the people.

## 2.3 Preferences of Urban Heritage

The urban definition is relating to a town or large city. While, heritage defined as historical culture and events of the past. The Malaysian landscape comprises many towns and cities which are of historic and cultural significance. Heritage trail defined as a journey which experiencing and appreciating the natural heritage which brings the trail explorer to learn more about a places history, culture, architecture, flora and fauna through visiting historical sites and buildings (Malaysian Urban Conservation Initiatives). The heritage assets should be well and properly connected together to derive its benefits. It is important for future generation to appraise our history timeline so that they will treasure it into their heart as the Malaysia's citizen.

Shamsuddin (2011) supported that cultural values affect the behavior in the streets and reflect the direct pedestrian response to the environment. Also, a mixture of activities and use can create a successful community and public space that enables the street to attract more people to come. The physical setting of the places play an important role in creating a livable city in terms of sense of directions and basic human needs and comfort. Meanwhile, microclimate does influenced the people's experiences and their behavior towards the spaces. In a hot and humid country like Malaysia, environmental conditions in public spaces and around buildings, such as microclimate, sunlight, shelter, air movement about buildings and lighting, play a vital role in creating a comfortable space (Norhafizah et al. 2014). The heritage definition can be discussed from different dimensions (MUCI) (Figure 2 -3):

- a) Heritage as inheritance; inherited or handed on from one generation to the next
- b) Heritage as place; sense of identity and belonging of particular individuals or groups
- c) Heritage: material culture, the geographic and human environments; combined creations and products of nature and of man
- d) Cultural heritage: monuments, groups of buildings and sites; cultural heritage
- e) Tangible and intangible heritage; monuments, historic city or landscape (tangible) and processes and practices (intangible).



Figure 2: Cultural heritage; National Monument, KLCC, Sultan Abdul Samad Building, and KTM Berhad



Figure 3: Tangible and intangible heritage; Deepavali day, Merdeka day (festive events), Wayang Kulit (performing arts), and Wau Bulan (traditional craftsmanship)

The classification and explanation of heritage are varied depending on field of interest and organizations. There might be built heritages, cultural heritages, significant places, and ways of living, stories, and skills. The content of heritage should not be limited to certain type of heritage asset (MUCI). Therefore, the heritage assets should be preserved both cultural and historical so that our next generation can be appraise and learn from the history.

### 3.0 CONCLUSION

This study was an empirical analysis of behavioral responses, and perceptions of people to the urban heritage trail in modern city environment. In addition, this research emphasizes an approach to design that incorporates the elements of the behavioral environment (its uses, activities,

management), the elements of the urban street design (its concept, uses, fixed, semi-fixed and movable), and the places that have a sense of place for the people (Mehta, 2006). This identifies the factors that need to be considered in future guidelines and policies for planning and design in urban spaces in relation to city liveliness and heritage trail. It is hoped that these factors will be taken into consideration as a guide to create a friendly urban environment for the users as well as the visitors. Using the integrated approach, this study was an exploration of new ways to employ the understanding, design, and management into the urban public space, thus, creating a livelier city for the people.

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