



TOURISTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS PEDESTRIAN
FACILITIES: A CASE STUDY OF BINTANG
WALKWAY, KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

Bukit Bintang is one of the most significant attraction destinations in Kuala Lumpur. This area is famous with its landmarks and shopping district with variety of commercial attractions. In such a crowded urban tourism destination with a huge number of people and vehicles had caused a certain issues that influence on pedestrian convenience and comfortability to move easily at the area. This study was conducted to explore tourists' perception who visited Bukit Bintang between February and March 2013. The study aim is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the existing pedestrian walkway at Jalan Bukit Bintang, to examine tourists' level of satisfaction after visiting the study area and the effect of tourists' demography on their perception. The most important components of the pedestrian facilities had covered in this paper such as connectivity, safety and amenities. A structured questionnaire was used to examine the facilities impact on tourists' perception. The questionnaire was distributed along the pedestrian walkway at Bukit Bintang targeted a sample of 80 tourists, 30 were local tourists and 50 were international tourists. The survey was conducted at different main shopping attractions at Bukit Bintang that are highlighted hereinafter. Findings reveal that respondents did not take any action toward the pedestrian circulation at the study area; however, they were satisfied in relation to the connection between the main attractions, lightings and pavements. Furthermore, they were dissatisfied with the signal time pedestrian crossing at the area, signage, landscape, benches, shades, public toilet and disable facilities. Some demographic factors (e.g. region, gender and age) were also found that it did not affect respondents' perceptions of pedestrian facilities. Partial pedestrian zone is recommended to achieve a success street shopping zone such as in Nuremberg Street. Also, there is a need to improve the safety elements such as bollards and signal pedestrian crossing time, and improve the pedestrian amenities, namely, shades, signage, benches, disable facilities and public toilet because they were rated very poor by respondents. The study helped to explore the pedestrian walkway facilities issues at the study area. This study generates a clear understanding of Bintang pedestrian walkway challenges and opportunities.

Keywords: Tourism, Urban tourism, tourist, perception, pedestrian facilities, Bukit Bintang, Shopping District.

ملخص البحث

الغرض من هذا البحث هو تحديد عناصر التسهيلات في ممر المشاة في بوكيت بينتاج، ودراسة مدى تأثير تسهيلات المشاة على إنطباع السائح بعد زيارة هذه المنطقة. تُعتبر منطقة بوكيت بينتاج الأكثر شهرة للتسوق في كوالالمبور ، وبناءً على ذلك فقد إختارنا هذه المنطقة لتكون منطقة البحث. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد نقاط القوة والضعف في ممر المشاة الموجود حالياً في شارع بوكيت بينتاج ، ودراسة مدى رضاء السائح بعد زيارة منطقة البحث ، وإيضاً تأثير ديموغرافيا السائح على إنطباعه. وبالتالي ، فهذه الدراسة تهتم بفهم علاقة ديموغرافيا السائح بإنطباعه ومدى رضائه. تُغطي هذه الدراسة أيضاً ممر المشاة في الوجهة السياحية الحضرية. استخدام إستبيان منظم لدراسة تأثير تسهيلات ممر المشاة على إنطباع السائح وتم توزيع الإستبيان في مناطق التسوق الرئيسية في المنطقة ، حيث تم المسح على طول ممر المشاة مستهدفاً 80 سائح بواقع 50 سائح أجنبي و30 سائح محلي. ساعدت هذه الدراسة الى استكشاف مشاكل المشاة في منطقته الدراسه ومنها الاتصال منطقه العبور و سلامه المشاة و وسائل الراحة. وايضا ساعد الدراسه الى فهم التحديات والفرص التي تواجهها ممر المشاة في بوكيت بينتاج.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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*This thesis is dedicated to my
Parents & Siblings,*

Who supported me all the way.

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LIST OF ABBERVATION

BB	Bukit Bintang
EU	European Union
GSC	Golden Screen Cinema
KL	Kuala Lumpur
KLCP 2020	Kuala Lumpur City Plan 2020
DBKL	Kuala Lumpur city Hall
KLSP 2020	Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020
NTRRR	The National Tourism Resource Review Commission
SPSS	Statistic Package for the Social Science
SRS	Simple Random Sample
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives
WTO	World Tourism Organization
et al.	et alia: and others
Ed.	Edition
Vol.	Volume

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of few things that individuals resort to when seeking joy in order to release the stress caused by daily routine. People, by visiting the city attractions, always come across new facts relating to history, culture and nature. It also contributes to the State's economy and reflects the identity and culture of its people. Tourism may be defined by three different aspects: the people movement, the economic sector and the people needs (Chadwick, 1994). Matheson and Wall (1982: 1) explained that: "Tourism is the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater their needs."

With that in mind, tourist, according to Oxford English Dictionary (1990: 917) is "a person who travels for pleasure, usually sightseeing and staying in hotels; a person on an excursion or sightseeing". According to Mohd. Yusoff (1992: 3) cited from Wall (1980: 11) that:

The National Tourism Resource Review Commission (NTRRR) defined a tourist as "one who travels away from home for a distance at least 50 miles (one way) for business, pleasure, personal affairs or any other purpose except to commute to work."

Tourism, nonetheless, encompasses, inter alia; eco-tourism, cultural tourism, educational tourism and urban tourism. Be that as it may, this paper focuses more on urban tourism as it is a travel activity in urban areas, by promoting urban employment, industrial and recreational needs in cities (Wang, 2011).

In recent years, tourism has become the most active economical variable in the cities (Fainstein & Gladstone, 1999). According to Zhou (2005), in 1950 the number of international tourism had improved, which made it an important source of income for many countries. Thus, due to the tourism economical importance, the researcher undertook urban tourism as the main topic of the study.

In the book of “Urban Tourism: The visitor Economy and the Growth of Large Cities” by Christopher Law (2002), he categorised the elements of urban tourism to primary, secondary and additional elements. The primary elements are places for activities such as (cultural, sport and entertainment activities) and places for leisure time (historic areas or monuments and green areas or parks).

In addition, the secondary elements are adaption, catering facilities, shopping, hotels and markets. The additional elements are: accessibility (transport) and touring information (maps, guides, signage and indicators).

Wang (2011) said that the establishment of the urban tourism facilities depends on the city facilities i.e. infrastructures, transport, public information services, financial services, etc. Moreover, Lamb and Davidson (1996: 264) mentioned that:

Transportation is one of the three fundamental components of tourism. The other two are the tourism product (or supply) and the tourism market (or demand)... In some cases, the transportation experience is the tourism experience.

Thus, transportation is one of the most important elements that control the development of tourism that links between the destination areas. However, in the tourism destination, there should be a mobility control that reflects the management which controls visitors flow, reduces traffic congestion and pollution. It follows; the trend to a sustainable transportation has increased. Many of the European cities try to

promote a sustainable urban development by re-directing the urban development and sustainable movement especially walking and cycling.

According to Cooper, et al. (2005), the transportations modes are road, rail, water and air. Walking, on the other hand, is a good example of the road transport mode. In addition, the concept of “walkability” is a primary principle of an urban design, according to Gehl (2010) the urban environment attractiveness increases the level of walking. The main features of a walkable urban environment are: accessibility, convenience, attractiveness, road safety, linkage etc.

This research focuses on Bintang walkway as a good example of urban tourism destination and the pedestrian challenges that face tourists in that particular area. Through researching the tourists’ expectations and satisfactions, we will determine the strengths and weaknesses of the walkability in the urban areas from tourists’ view. This is in line with the opinion of Tasci, Gartner and Cavusgil (2007) who mentioned those understanding visitors’ perceptions, satisfaction and managing the total visitor experience is one of the destination successful marketing methods.

In a nut shell, this study evaluates the pedestrian facilities and determines whether they meet the tourists’ needs in that particular area and how to provide the tourists with a good walk connection network to all attractions.

1.1 STUDY BACKGROUND

Tourism is one of the fastest growing economies in Malaysia. According to Jabatan Perdana Menteri (2010) the tourism sector is the fifth industry after oil, gas, financial services and palm oil. Moreover, in 2010 Malaysia achieved 24.5 million tourists’ arrivals (Intel, 2011). United Nation World Tourism organization (2011) stated that Malaysia is the 9th of the top ten tourist cities. Kuala Lumpur (KL) is one of the most

urban destinations in Malaysia; it attracts many of tourists locally and internationally. KL urban development is a key element to elevate the city's status to a global city through variety of projects. This is a direct outcome of the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, vision that Malaysia shall be developed by 2020 with a global city at its heart. The city planners chose to concentrate all the activities from economic, office spaces to shopping complexes at a small area known as the "Golden Triangle", and this has led many businesses to that area.

Bukit Bintang (BB) is well-known as one of the most significant attraction destinations in KL. BB is located in the "Golden Triangle" area of KL. BB area is famous for its landmarks as it is a shopping district that offers world-class hotels and variety of commercial attractions with luxurious restaurants. It is also called "Arab Street" for the numerous Arab tourists that visit it annually. BB is a lively urban area with many activities, thus, this area is more often full of people and traffic congestions.

BB, being one of the most significant areas in KL, heavy traffic and crowded roads are some of the problems that may face tourists while visiting the area and that entails some concerns regarding safety and convenience. Thus, the study seeks to examine the tourists' perceptions of walkability facilities in the area.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENTS

The quality of services in a tourism destination is very crucial in the success of the tourism destination. According to Gunn (2002: 45) "Greatest economic impact from travel occurs through the travel service business. Accommodations, food services, transportation, travel agencies."

Thus, services in a tourism destination are very important. Haber and Lerner (1998) said that visitor's services can improve destinations' benefits. Services can be one of the attractions of a specific destination; it may affect the visitor's intention to visit the place again.

Therefore, the services quality is one of the main elements to evaluate the city facilities. However, Drucker (1973: 61) pointed that

It is customer who determines what a business is. It is the customer alone whose willingness to pay for a good or a service converts economic resources into wealth, things into goods... What the customer thinks he is buying, what he considers value is decisive- it determines what a business is, what it produces, and whether it will prosper.

Tourists' satisfaction can be impact from the quality of destination services. The best way to evaluate tourists' satisfaction is evaluating the service elements and attractions. Tourists' satisfaction study is helpful to understand their needs and the aspects that destination needs to improve and offer.

As highlighted in some studies tourists' numbers have decreased due to dissatisfied of the destination facilities. For example, tourists' number decreased to visit the National Park in Malaysia due to the poor quality of the facilities (Choi &Chu, 2010).

Pedestrian infrastructure is one of the city services for accessibility and connectivity in cities. As highlighted in the study of the Walkability in Asian Cities by Gota, Fabian, Mejia and Puntie (2011) that only Hong Kong is a walkable city that offers all the pedestrian facilities compare to other Asian cities, however, in the study shows that the walkable concept is needed in the Asian cities as an alternative mode to transport within the cities but the facilities are not fulfill the pedestrian needs. The pedestrian infrastructures that have covered in the Walkability in Asian Cities study are connectivity (availability of pathways and no conflicts), safety (crime, crossing

safety etc) and amenities (benches, street lights, public toilets etc) and Hong Kong scored the highest in each element.

In Kuala Lumpur (KL), Bukit Bintang (BB) is a well known tourist destination. It offers many tourism products, entertainments and an urban life style. BB is identified as a shopping district with many of commercial activities such as sales, meeting points, business points, etc.

However, it is one of the heaviest traffic movement areas in KL as well as one of the leading pedestrian hubs, and that require the tourists' facilities in BB area to be provided in an improved manner. One of the tourists' facilities is the pedestrian walkway that facilitates easy movement in this commercial area. Hence, this study is to explore the tourists' perception on walkability and whether they are satisfied with the existing pedestrian walkway or not. With that in mind, the following problems have been identified:

1. The issue of urban areas connection with the surrounding attraction areas and the vehicles movement adjacent to the pedestrian walkway challenge the tourists' convenience in the area. As highlighted in the Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020 (KLSP 2020) outlined the pedestrian connection as one of the major issues in Kuala Lumpur city centre.
2. The design of the streetscape and the landscape are neither pleasant nor attractive for an urban commercial area. There are insufficient spaces for people to enjoy at the site while sitting at cafes or walking in the street. (Jacob, 1995)
3. The issue of the safety that may discourage tourists to visit the area or to feel secure. According to Ahmad Fitri Bin Amir (2009: 1) stated that:

Safety and security are crucial aspects for the development of all tourism destinations. It is natural to have anxiety typically with regards to our safety and security due to little knowledge we have on the destination we intend to visit as relatively compared to knowledge that we have about our home country. Many people including tourists concern that they might be in the risks of injuring their physical and health-being by becoming a victim of cases like crime, terrorism, road accidents etc.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the problems aforementioned, this study will specifically answer the following questions:

- Whether Bukit Bintang walkway offers the pedestrian facilities elements?
- Whether the tourists are satisfied with the pedestrian walkway in terms of connectivity, safety and pedestrian amenities at Bukit Bintang?
- What are the factors that affect on tourists' perception towards pedestrian walkway?

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The study aims generate clear understanding of Bintang pedestrian walkway as a tourism destination in the tourists' perception and to understand the challenges and opportunities of the pedestrian walkway. The following objectives will be achieved in this study:

- To analyze the strengths and the weaknesses of the pedestrian walkway elements in the study area.
- To identify tourists' satisfaction with the existing pedestrian walkway condition in Bukit Bintang.

- To understand the factors that influencing tourists' perception towards pedestrian walkway.

1.5 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

As most of the previous studies on destination walkability, this study will fill the gaps by focusing on walkability facilities and its effectiveness. The study will uncover how tourists perceive the pedestrian facilities, safety and amenities.

The first contribution is to the tourism industry. In this paper the researcher assesses the pedestrian products that Bintang walkway offers and this will help the tourism industry investments and how it should be applied to enhance tourism attractions.

The second contribution is benefiting the tourism planners on how to develop the tourism standards in urban areas. The government sector will utilise the information provided in this research to understand what are the strengths and weaknesses of the pedestrian walkway facilities, and address the challenges that face the urban areas compared to international level which would lead to review the policies and apply a future development to the pedestrian walkway at the study area.

The third contribution that the study offers is to the public at large, as the study will deepen the people awareness on green transportation, being a crucial step towards a sustainable city.

1.6 SCOPE AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is spatial, temporal and contextual, and it may be explained as follows:

- Spatial: The study is only applied on Bukit Bintang walkway. It focuses on tourists who visit BB and their perceptions on pedestrian walkway.
- Temporal: the study focuses on the tourism facilities and mobility within 2013. It evaluates those strategies by studying tourists' perceptions and satisfactions toward pedestrian walkway in urban area. Furthermore, it concentrates on how to improve the pedestrian connections, safety and amenities.
- Contextual: This paper only focuses on tourists' perceptions and satisfactions in relation to movement facilities in Bukit Bintang. Therefore, this study will not cover the tourism sector in all urban areas of Kuala Lumpur.

The conceptual context of this study is based on tourists' perceptions and satisfactions with the pedestrian walkway. Admittedly, the tourists' perception differs as well as depends on their characteristic and experience with the pedestrian walkway, connection, safety, amenities, attractiveness and comfortability.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This chapter provides a foundation for the research. It contains a discussion about the research topic, objectives and structure of the study, as well as the problems that will be addressed.

Second chapter, it covers a detailed literature review. As the tourism study in literature is focused on urban areas as well as Bukit Bintang. It presents selected theories that relate to pedestrian facilities in the selected area, urban tourism and tourists' perception.

Third chapter introduces the background of the study area and the different methods of the study in details for better understanding of Bukit Bintang characteristics.

Fourth chapter focuses on analyzing and discussing the findings of the survey regarding the site observation and the tourists` perception towards pedestrian facilities at the selected tourist destination area. The findings will be presented based on the research method of the study in order to answer the overall questions.

Fifth chapter, it provides a summary, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research on this topic and conclusion.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This Chapter introduces the importance of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, contribution to knowledge and scope of the research and research framework. The importance of the study is to unveil any existing issues in relation to tourists` perceptions towards the pedestrian facilities at Bukit Bintang, and this is the basis of the formation of the problem statement followed by the objectives and research questions to highlight the aforementioned issues. Therefore, the outcome of the above would certainly offer a great contribution to help overcome any issues discovered along the way, however, that is subject to the limitation of the study.