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Exploring Cultural Image of Souq Putrajaya Public Realm

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Abstract

This study discusses on the issues of successes and weaknesses aspects of cultural image in the bazaars public realm in Putrajaya city. The poor quality and the lack of the local cultural image in the bazaars public realm in Putrajaya has reduced the function of the bazaar as a node. This study aims to improve the quality of the cultural image of bazaars in Putrajaya, that reflects the local culture image towards a successful public realm in modern urban context. The objectives of this study are to analyze the needs of consumers to create a successful public realm of bazaars cultural images in Putrajaya through visitor's perceptions and to assess the quality of the bazaar public realm's cultural image in Putrajaya through observations. This study used quantitative method involves the document analysis exploration related to the cultural images of Souq Putrajaya, fields observation and surveys of 321 civilians to analyze their perceptions of the Souq Putrajaya public realm. The findings show that the weakness of the local cultural image factors had caused Souq Putrajaya lack preferred by the visitors such as illegible access routes, misleading identity, lack of public facilities, ventilation, lack of local traditional products, socio-cultural activities and the attractiveness of the visual environment. It has reduced the comfort, social activities of visitors and the aesthetic value of the place. Masjid Putra became the most preferred nodes for visitors among the other Souq public realm. These findings should serve as guidelines in designing consumer friendly bazaars public realm and reflecting the local cultural images in modern urban contexts.

Keywords: Cultural Image, Public Realm, Bazaar, Souq Putrajaya

Introduction

The focus of this research is to discuss the success and weakness issues in the aspects of bazaars cultural image in Souq Putrajaya. This study begins with the idea that, bazaars that are implemented in Islamic cities and prioritize the image of local culture should be maintained and implemented in Malaysia. This is because the principles of Islamic urban design are a continuation of Islamic civilization. It prioritizes function, local cultural image as well as aesthetic value and indirectly conveys the message of Islam. According to Resad et al (2012), the image of local culture will be a guide to produce a new generation that has a strong sense of identity to the challenges in the era of globalization.

It is to find out the extent to which aspects of the cultural image of the bazaar public realm in Malaysia affect the needs of consumers. This is because most modern architecture, is less responsive to the emotional as well as cultural needs of its society (Salama, 2007). Public and consumer perceptions are important in the context of the built environment (Salama, 2007; Rapoport, 2016) because the public will recognize this created identity (Saleh, 1998) and interpret the visual images introduced by built environment designers (Salama, 2007).

According to Kamus Dewan, an image is interpreted as “something that is displayed in the view or perception of people” (Ghani & Ahmad, 1989). Lynch (1960) adds, it is a scene that can be explored and interpreted by observers. In this context, JPBD (2003) explains, the image of the city refers to the physical arrangement of the city that displays the civilization, culture, services and social progress of a country. However, Lynch’s studied are more emphasis on physical elements, but less on associating those elements with cultural aspects.

Linguistically, culture comes from the Latin language ‘cultura’ means ‘to develop. It refers to the patterns of human activity and symbolic structures that give priority to the activities, (Harper, 2001) the value of the material and psychic outcomes of a population (Yilmaz, 2014). In practice, according to Fathy (1994), tradition is defined as an inherited experience, the result of interaction between humans and their environment and the satisfaction of both their spiritual and physical needs (Al Sayyed, 2012).

In addition to commercial functions, bazaars are focal points for promoting local culture, social interaction and community life that contribute to place identity (PPS, 2010; Shakur et al., 2012; Al-Maimani et al., 2014; PPS, 2014; Zakariya et al., 2016). However, globalization has created competition between bazaars and modern shopping malls further reducing its existence and affecting its function in terms of cultural values, in Islamic cities including in Malaysia.

Traditional and modern bazaar studies have been extensively studied by various scholars from the aspects of cultural business product outcomes, racial identity, individual activities (Miller et al., 1998; Zakariya et al., 2016), ethnography (human culture) De la Pradelle (2006), and middle eastern bazaar architecture especially Africa (Yeoh, 2001: Ahluwalia, 2003). Yet there is little literature specifically on bazaars from a cultural perspective especially in the local context in Malaysia. Apart from that, there is still no study on the bazaar in Putrajaya, especially Souq Putrajaya. Therefore, this study complements the previous study of that aspect in the context of contemporary city in Putrajaya through the case study of Souq Putrajaya.

Method

This study uses a quantitative method research design in a single analysis covering the public field of Souq Putrajaya. The design of the primary data sources were obtained from public questionnaire surveys and supported by secondary data: field observations, documentation and picture analysis. The data collection process of this questionnaire study took two months starting from 6 September 2019. Site observations were conducted on Saturday, 23 March 2019 (noon) and Saturday, 18 January 2020 (evening). It is done in 3 time (8.00 am - 9.00 am), evening (2.00 pm - 4.00 pm) and night (8.30 pm - 9.30 pm).

This study involved a simple random sampling strategy. Respondents were randomly selected consisting of members of the public among vendors, residents and visitors of the Souq Putrajaya public square both from within and outside the country. It is used to allow everyone in the population to have an equal opportunity to be elected. Survey data collection was done manually through meetings with users including sellers and visitors in the Putrajaya Souq area. In addition, the online method is also used via email. The determination of the sample size is not based on the population of Putrajaya but uses the calculation table by (De Vaus, 1985). The total valid or applicable feedback is 321.

Public answers were analyzed from opened ended and closed ended questions. Based on the study of Boone & Boone (2012), the best way to display the distribution of Likert type data responses is to use bar charts in percentage rates. The purpose of the percentages used was to indicate the level of evaluation that differentiated each answer scale. The analysis as an overview include: 1) contextual background, 2) planning and design aspects, 3) cultural background which is dependent variable. While the aspects of Souq public realm cultural image as independent variables is representing 1) access and continuity, 2) identity, 3) comfort, safety and aesthetic, 4) socio-cultural activities, 5) visitor's preference have provided an explanation.

The objectives of this study is: 1) to analyze the needs of consumers for a successful culture image of bazaar public realm in Putrajaya through visitor's perception. 2) to assess the quality of the bazaar public realm's cultural image in Putrajaya. The research questions is: 1) "what are the needs of consumers to create a cultural image of a successful bazaar public realm in Putrajaya?" 2) How is the quality of the bazaar public realm's cultural image in Putrajaya?

Data Analysis and Discussion

i. Contextual Background

Putrajaya, developed in 1995, has a special function, as the Federal Government Administrative Center. Putrajaya covers an area of 4,931 hectares and contains 20 Precincts. Precincts 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are the Federal Government Administrative Centers. Precincts 2, 3, 4, 5 and 18 are the central area (core area) of Putrajaya. While the other precinct is the peripheral area of Putrajaya which houses residential, commercial and public facilities. The central area is separated from the peripheral area by an artificial lake (Arkitek Jururancang, 2008) (fig.1). Souq Putrajaya is a Semi Commercial Center (PPj, 2018) with an area of 34 square meters (Kumpulan Senireka, 2002). It is located on the ground floor of Dataran Putra in Precinct 1, Putrajaya. Dataran Putra is located next to Masjid Putra. The food court (medan selera) which is part of the Souq facility element is located below the Souq level which is connected to the promenade (fig.2).



Figure 2: Souq located below Dataran Putra (AJM Planning & Urban Design Group, 2012).

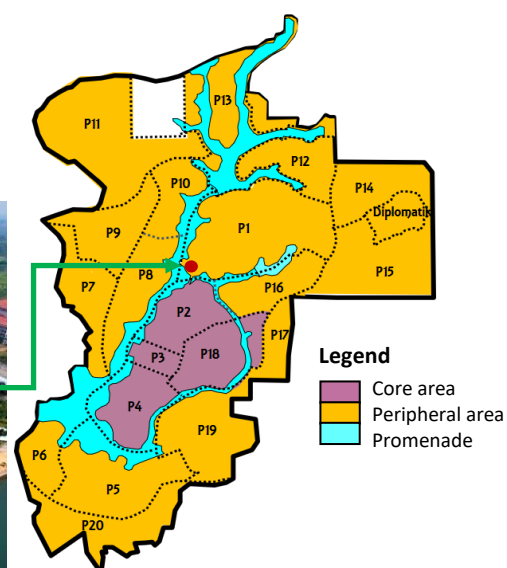


Figure 1: Precinct division plan showing the core area of Putrajaya (Author, 2021)

ii. Planning and Design Aspects

Souq Putrajaya was chosen as the case study because it adapts the concept of bazaar layout planning in Islamic cities with the unification of modern urban planning and design. Putrajaya integrates the concept of Islamic urban design (Putrajaya Holdings, 2003; Rahim & Ujang, 2018; Moser, 2010) and modern 'City in a Garden' (AJM Planning & Urban Design Group, 2012). According to Kumpulan Senireka (2002), the design of the Souq Putrajaya building features the image of an exotic middle eastern bazaar with the integration of modern style in its public spaces. However, according to observations, the Souq Putrajaya public realm features more middle eastern style as well as a combination of local and modern identities that create identity confusion. In addition, there is very little business diversification of local traditional goods compared to foreign goods.

The effect of lack cultural value has weakened the function, local identity and uniqueness of this bazaar and further reducing the attraction of visitors to the bazaar. The significant weakness in the quality of the local cultural image value in the Souq Putrajaya public realm has reduced its function and attractiveness as a node. The bazaar should better promote the image of local culture both in terms of design and socio-cultural activities. Therefore, this study aims to improve the weaknesses of the quality of cultural image in the bazaar. According to Huxtable (2004); Karssenber & Laven (2016); Garvin (2016), bazaar public realm encompasses all publicly accessible and non -proprietary spaces including buildings, streets, parks, squares and the environment. Therefore, the Souq Putrajaya public realm including souq's courtyard, food court and promenade in front of the food court.

iii. Responden Background

Chart 1 below is a survey of questionnaires conducted on visitors to the Souq public realm among the general public. As a result of the survey questions, 321 valid responses were received out of 337 responses. They were analyzed at the overall sample level using a frequency procedure. Respondents represent a spectrum of visitor populations around the Putrajaya Souq. For the purpose of distinguishing cultural background categories, they are

classified into Malaysian and Asian. This group represents the estimated visitor population. It clearly shows that 97.8% are local visitors and 2.2% visitors are from Asia including 1 Arab, 2 Filipinos and 4 Indonesians. Based on the respondents' choices and observations, it was found that the presence of local visitors dominated the Souq and its surroundings compared to foreign visitors. This is because the majority of respondents are Putrajaya residents and/or work in Putrajaya. Some of them are the Souq vendors who are Malays, Chinese, Bangladeshis, Indians and Indonesians. Most of the foreign visitors are from China. The others are from Indonesia, Philippines, Japanese and Arab. Foreign visitors were the most dislike to visit this place because based on its hidden location, lack of clear signage to the Souq, lack of sales activities done especially local traditional goods and less attractive environment. Therefore, it gave less memories to them.

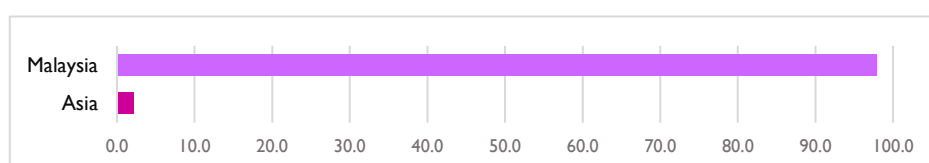


Chart 1: Cultural background of the visitors

iv. Access and Continuity

Chart 2 below is a scale of quality assessment of access to the Souq in percentage rate in terms of 'very weak, weak, moderate, good excellent' through closed-ended questions. It proves out of 321 respondents, the majority of respondents experienced that the level of access by walking to the Souq was either good or excellent (43.3), followed by easy finding a way to the Souq (40.5), signage design to the Souq (31.8) and Souq's gateway/entrance design (26.7) is the weakest.

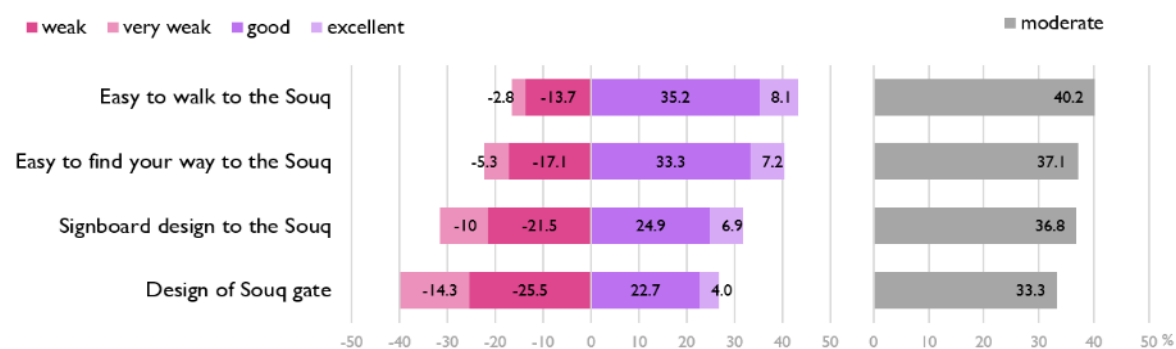


Chart 2: Access and continuity

Based on the statistics chart 2, the majority thought that it was easy to walk to the Souq compared to find a way to the Souq that was located on the Putra Square ground floor. This is because the majority of respondents are Putrajaya residents who have been familiar with the Souq while the escalator giving visitors comfort heading to the Souq (fig.3). However, based on observations, Souq is illegibility. The main factors are the accessibility to the Souq is unimageability due to its location hidden under the square (fig.4) and its facade was obstructed by the escalator. 3 out of 321 public respondents through open-ended questions commented the "Souq and Medan Selera are located in a hidden location". Another 1

respondents said "visitors do not know there is a food court under Dataran Putra" and another 1 respondent said "signage is not clear". Based on the statistics chart 2, the walkway to the Souq is lack of disabled friendly which also proofed by a public respondent commented through open-ended questions said "Souq is not disabled friendly". Is was because there are no ramps or lifts provided from the top of Dataran Putra to the Souq.



Figure 3: Escalator to the Souq from Putra Square which blocks the facade of the Souq (Author, 2021)



Figure 4: The view from the top of the Putra bridge shows that the facade of the Putrajaya Souq is invisible because it is hidden under the Putra Square (Author, 2021)

The second factor is the unimageability and attractive signage design based on the choice of public respondents from chart 2 including the lack of signage to the Souq. For example, based on observations, one of the 1 pillars of the shading structure on the escalator path leading to the Souq was only written 'Selera Putra' without any word 'Souq' (fig.5). The design of directional signs to the Souq is small and unattractive apart from no information signage about the Souq stating the location and promoting activities there (fig.6-7). This "unimageability signage" is evidenced by a public respondent through open-ended questions.



Figure 5: The shady structure on the escalator leading to the Souq is only written Selera Putra on one of the pillars (Author, 2021).



Figure 6: Directional signage to the Souq is unclear, small and unattractive (Author, 2021).



Figure 7: Traffic signs to the Souq is unclear located and small (Author, 2021).

The third factor is the design of the Souq entrance which is also unimageability based on the choice of public respondents from chart 4 statistics. Based on the observation, the Souq entrance is unattractive because it is small, combined with 'welcome' inscriptions and hung under the ceiling. It should be written on the walls of the building with large, clear and more creative writing. The main gate is an arch wall. However, it is less prominent because the view of the arch is blocked by a barrier structure that connects to the mashrabiya. This reduces the aesthetic value and sense of welcoming effect to the Souq (fig.8). Compared to the food court, its gateway looks clearer and more attractive with a sleeker design, arch and geometric shape logo adorned with lighting. However, instead of local identity, it displays a middle eastern style. In addition, there is an engraving of the words 'Welcome to Selera Putra' (fig.9).



a wall structure that obstructs the view of the arch

Figure 8: The unattractive signage of the Souq gate as well as the wall structure that obstructs the view of the arch (Author, 2021).



Figure 9: Medan Selera gates feature middle eastern styles such as arch, geometric shape logos and more attractive with lightings (Author, 2021).

The unaccessability and unimageability of Souq public realm, reducing the attraction and making visitors hard to find the Souq especially tourists from abroad unless they are guided by a tour guide. Compared to the bazaar gateway in the middle east, which further accentuate the local identity, imageability and more attractive as it adapted traditional style with decorative details. Examples are the gates of Khan el Khalili bazaar in Cairo, Tabriz bazaar in Iran and Koza Han bazaar in Turkey. These findings prove that the unaccessability and unimageability of bazaar public realm reduces its function as the visitor attraction.

A good public realm should be easily identifiable and accessible (Thompson, 2002; Ryan, 2006; PPS, 2015; MacKenzie, 2015; Al-Maimani et al., 2014; Garvin, 2016), through a good arrangement (Garvin, 2016). According to Lynch (1960), good structure means having an orderly and continuous pattern of development. The easily identifiable layout, the clarity of the scenery in terms of physical form and function, make a place easy to be found (Lynch, 1960). According to Kaplan (1975), way-finding is important to give a sense of security to individuals. He adds, focal points can increase the clarity of a place. According to the study of Zakaria & Ujang (2015) among the criteria that facilitate and encourage walking activities are clear signage. This suggests, a focal point located at different levels, should have adequate more directional and information signage while the gateway should be a larger, clearer and attractive local architectural design. These elements are not only as a clear guide, but also as a sense of welcoming and attraction to visitors. This is important to highlight its function as a focal point.

The following are some of the suggestions from visitors among the public regarding access to Souq Putrajaya through open-ended questions. 17 out of 321 respondents provided clarified feedback on signage and route issues. In terms of signage, 10 respondents suggested "signage should be clearer & more attractive". From the 10 respondents, 2 suggested "signboards need to be bigger" and one suggested "create a screen/montage in Dataran Putra". 1 other respondent suggested "directional signs be created in bilingual", 1 suggested "posters should be arranged in an orderly manner" and 1 suggested "addition of more posters". In terms of routes, 3 respondents suggested that "an easy route to the Souq should be created". From the 3 respondents, 1 suggested that the "escalator should be changed directly into the Souq" and another suggested "create facilities for the disabled".

v. Identity

Chart 3 below is a scale of local identity assessment of 4 places involving Souq Putrajaya, food court, Souq's courtyard and promenade in percentage rate in terms of 'very weak, weak, moderate, good, excellent' through closed-ended questions. It proves out of 321 respondents, the majority of respondents believed that the promenade most reflected the local identity either good or excellent (48), followed by the Souq's courtyard (36.8), food court (32.4) and Souq Putrajaya (22.4). This shows that Souq Putrajaya has the weakest local identity compared to the 4 places.

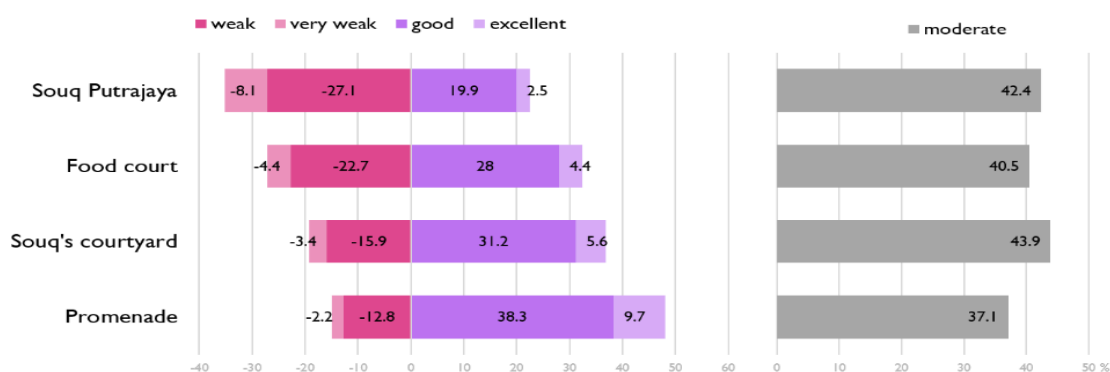


Chart 3: Local identity of the Souq public realm

Based on the statistics chart 3, the majority of respondents thought that the promenade reflected local identity. However, based on observations, the landscape elements on the promenade feature more middle eastern style combined with a little archipelago style. The middle eastern style is applied to the geometry shape pond, tiles and geometrical patterned of fence. While the archipelago style is applied to the plant shape fountain and plants patterned of lamp posts (fig.10). The pavilion adapts to the middle eastern style with geometrical patterned arches and mashrabiya (fig.11). Most of the plant species are tropical plants such as *Livistona rotundifolia* palm and *Bougainvillea sp* shrubs. This combination of identities has weakened the local identities and created misleading identity.



Figure 10: The archipelago style on plant shape fountain and plant patterned of lamp posts. The middle eastern style with geometric shape ponds, tiles and fences (Author, 2021)



Figure 11: The lakeside pavilion adapts the middle eastern style with geometric patterned arches and mashrabiya (Author, 2021)

Based on observations, the Souq's courtyard combines modern, middle eastern with some tropical plants. The modern style is featured by a tensile structure (fig.12) and the ship-replica children's playground (fig.13). It was combined with the middle eastern style by date palms (*Phoenix sylvestris*) which is the major species in the courtyard and the arch with fountain in the corner of the playground but dysfunction (fig.14). Some tropical plant species are also planted in minimal quantities such as *Bougavillea sp* and *Senseiverra sp* (fig.15).



Figure 12: The date palms (*Phoenix sylvestris*) is the major species in the Souq courtyard (Author, 2021)



Figure 13: A modern style adaptation of a ship-shaped children's playground structure in the courtyards (Author, 2021)



Figure 14: The dysfunctional arch with fountain in the corner of the playground (Author, 2021)



Figure 15: Tropical plants in minimal quantities such as *Bougavillea sp* and *Senseiverra sp* (Author, 2021)

However, the design of the food court, dominates the Islamic architectural style and landscape of the middle east with elements such as arcade decorated with arches and geometrically patterned mashrabiya (Kumpulan Senireka, 2002) (fig.16). The modern image is glass windows and air conditioning. The local image is much less prominent except for the durian shaped replica in the middle of the food court (fig.17).



Figure 16: Middle eastern style with arch and geometric patterned masyrabiya in Medan Selera arcade (Author, 2021)



Figure 17: Replica of durian as a symbol of local fruits in Medan Selera (Author, 2021)

Based on the statistics chart 3 and 9 out of 321 responded through open-ended questions regarding the image of Souq Putrajaya beside observations, Souq Putrajaya most reflects the identity of the middle east with a combination of little modern and archipelago style. This statement is supported by 4 respondents in open-ended question argued that "Souq displays an indefinite identity", the other 4 respondents said "Souq does not feature Malay features" and one respondent said "most of the goods sold are from Thailand". However, another 1 respondent said "the Souq features an interesting assimilation or combination of Arabic and Malaysian architecture". This shows that there is a society that is still not understand with misleading identity.

According to Kumpulan Senireka (2002); PJH (2003), the middle east concept of Souq was built with the aim of evoking 'exotic' bazaars such as in Cairo and Damascus as well as to be coordinated with the Putra Mosque construction concept. Therefore, according to observations, it is dominated by middle eastern style but integrated with modern style and little archipelago style. Imitations of the middle eastern Islamic style are displayed from arch along the walls of the Souq arcade, geometrically patterned stair railings, lampstands on each pillar shaped like copper vases in ancient Egypt and large pillars like buildings in ancient Egypt (Gosse, 1916; Mark, 2016; Bell, 2017) as well as the date palm plant (*Phoenix sylvestris*). The traditional style of the archipelago is through the wooden mashrabiya pattern of simple geometric shape that is often applied in Malay houses. The modern style is through a simple form, the use of glass windows, air conditioning technology and an escalator as the entrance to the Souq (fig. 18). Roof structure is invisible because the it is part of the floor of Dataran Putra.

Sen & Arslan's (2016) questionnaire on 400 visitors to 4 bazaars in Khans district, namely Pirinc Khan, Koza Khan, Fidan Khan and Emir Khan found that Koza Khan is most visited by foreign tourists because it maintains its traditional design that gives uniqueness, nostalgia and memory. Similarly, the Khan el Khalili bazaar which was awarded great public spaces by (PPS, 2015), is due to the bazaar's historic traditional architecture resembling the commercial complexes of the Ottoman empire. It creates nostalgia for the past in traditional Arabian bazaars. This shows the image of the local culture or traditional identity of a country leaves a memory in addition to creating a unique and distinct identity. However, the application of modern technology as an image of advancement needs to be applied.

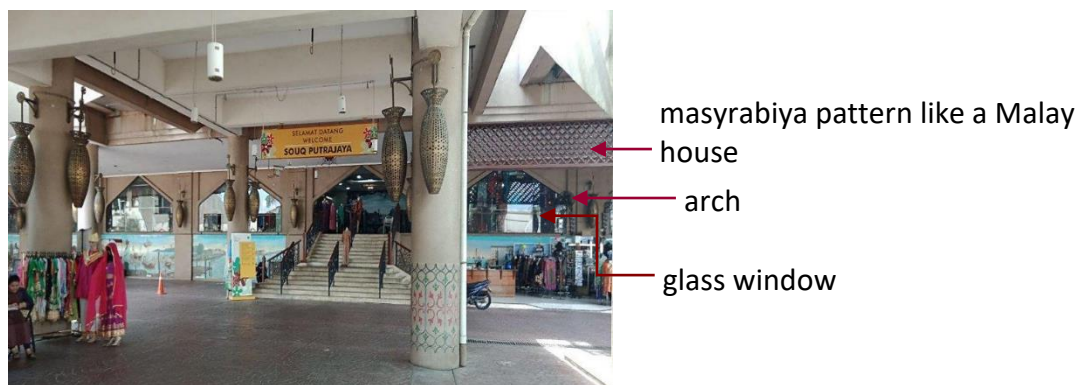


Figure 18: The souq combines middle eastern, modern and little archipelago style (Author, 2021)

These findings prove that, the weakness of local identity in the Souq public realm reduces its function as a visitor attraction. This analysis shows, mixing identity creates a vague identity and weakens local cultural characteristics. According to Tran (2010), a combination of various cultures on architecture will create a weak, a vague, misleading identity and lacking image of uniqueness. Therefore, the originality of the concept and cultural identity of the local community is important for creating a unique identity and strong visual quality.

These findings show that there are designers who are less sensitive on identity crises that create misleading identity. This is due to the adaptation of global thinking in society. According to Shamsudin & Ujang (2008), globalization in urban Malaysia is clearly shown from the appearance of buildings that have lost their traditional value. Bianca (2000), Burckhardt (2009); Saoud (2002) & Omer (2014) interpret that, the true Islamic architecture is any system, style or technique that refers to the teachings of Islam and takes into account the needs of weather, geography and culture (Omer, 2010; Omer, 2012). Thus, the true identity of Islamic architecture which features the culture of a city's society. Therefore, a bazaar must display a local identity, no imitation of foreign culture while integrating modern technology to provide a high quality cultural image to a building. It is able to provide nostalgia and a sense of belonging to attract more foreign and domestic visitors.

Below are the suggestions of visitors to improve the image of the Souq public realm through open-ended questions. 43 out of 321 people have responded. 26 respondents suggested that "Souq public realm should feature a Malaysian/local image". From the 26 respondents, 3 people suggested "the appearance of a unique identity in Malaysia" and another 3 suggested "the appearance of a theme by state in Malaysia". Followed by "Islamic image" (4), "modern image" (3), "Malay image" (2), "combination of Malay and Islamic image" (2), "combination of modern and eastern image" (2), "combination of image Malaysia and modern" (1) and "originality of design" (1). However, the term east is unclear whether it means the Islamic identity of the middle east or the eastern culture which refers to the culture of the archipelago.

4 respondents who suggested, the Souq should display an "Islamic image" was because the "Souq is near masjid". Moreover, it shows most societies understand that only Islamic design brought by the middle east refers to Islamic values and culture because according to history, the middle east is the birthplace of Islamic religion and civilization. Yet, according to some

local writers such as Utaberta & Rasdi (2013), that the true identity of Islamic architecture should reflect the culture and identity of the local community. This means that the local image still provides Islamic values and culture because the culture practiced is Islamic culture not Muslim culture. This analysis shows that the local identity is most preferred by the community because the majority of Putrajaya residents are Malays and it was rare applied in Putrajaya to symbolize the race and country.

vi. Comfortable, Safety & Aesthetic

Chart 4 below is an evaluation scale on the design features of the Souq public realm, which became the quality of its public realm in percentage rate in terms of ‘strongly disagree, disagree, moderate, agree, strongly agree’ through closed-ended questions. It proves out of 321 respondents, the majority of respondents agreed that the Souq public realm has wasted a lot of space either agree or strongly agree (73.2), followed by offering beautiful views towards the lake (58), children can play in the children’s playground (50.7), has aesthetic value (42.3), tensile structure prevents the facade of the Souq (38.6), offers fresh air (38.6), give a sense of calm (32.7), a comfortable place to sit (31.5), quiet atmosphere and privacy (31.1), gives a cool feeling in hot weather (31.1) organized, neat and harmonious (30.5).

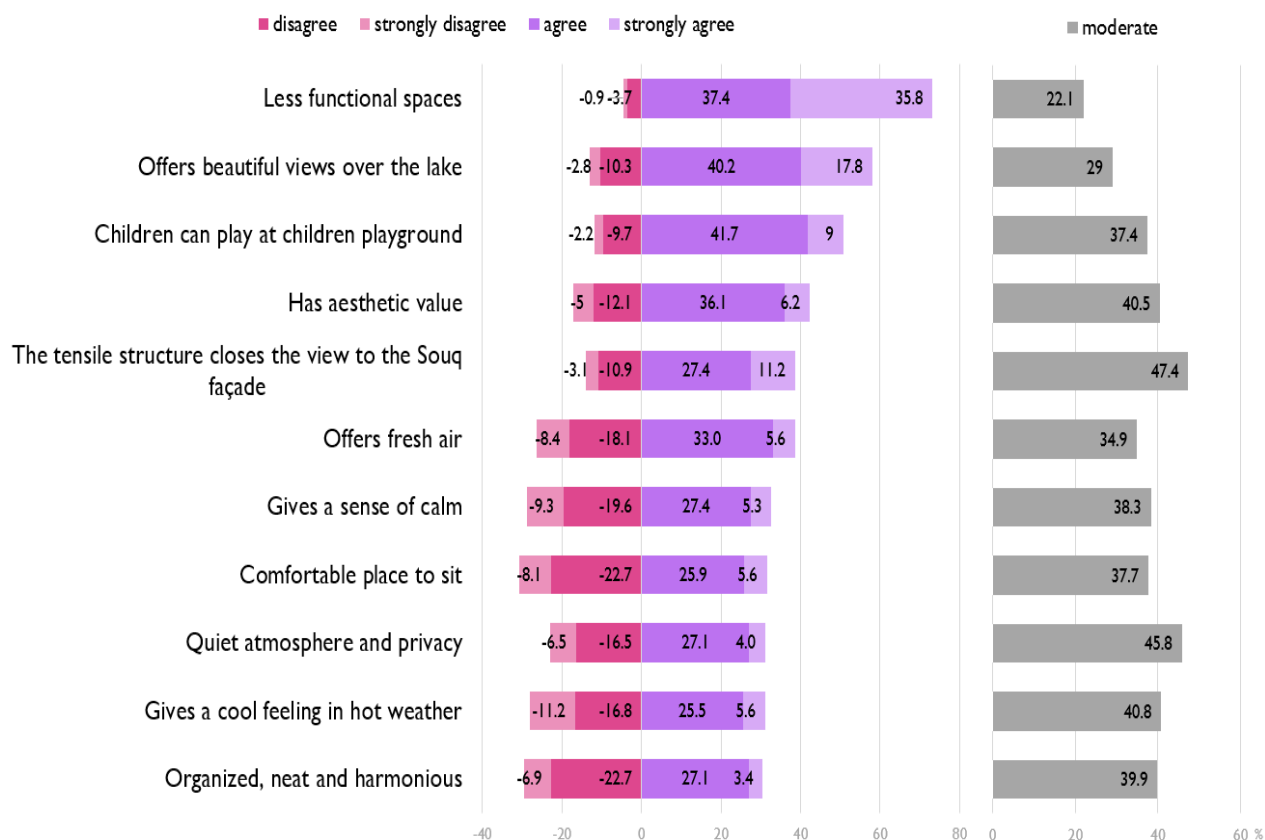


Chart 4: Design features of the building and courtyard of the Souq

The following is the public's assessment of the design features of the Souq public realm through an open-ended question. 32 out of 321 people provided clarified feedback on comfort, safety and aesthetic issues. In terms of comfort, 2 people said "dirty Souq environment", other than "hot" (2), "dysfunctional shading structure" (from hot weather) (2). In terms of safety, 2 people said "children's playgrounds are not safe to use". In terms of aesthetic value, 9 people said "the design of the Souq public realm environment is gloomy / unattractive / not colorful", followed by "the Souq environment is unattractive and colorless / not cheerful" (1), "business space is not pretty" (1), "likes to see the scenery from afar" (but is blocked by a wall) (1), "the shores of the lake are very serene" (but is blocked by a wall) (1), "layout of fibrous environmental elements" (1) and "the surroundings of the Souq feel empty" (1).

Based on the statistics chart 4, perception of public respondents in the open-ended question and observations, the Souq public realm featuring the image of wasted empty space is a major factor of the weakness of the Souq public realm. It shows that the quality factor of function or comfort is the main concern of visitors. It is also evidenced by the opinion of a public respondent in an open ended question who said "the Souq environment feels empty". This is due to a waste of space because the function of the space is not optimized. For example, part of the arcade area is not used for any business activities (fig.19) including two spaces on the top floor of the Souq building. In addition, the Souq's courtyard was only housed with plant boxes and very little seating as well as two waterfall structures placed at two corners but not functioning. So is a replica of a fountain in a dysfunctional yard (fig.20).

In addition, the opinion of 2 public respondents in the open-ended question, said "the Souq environment is dirty", otherwise "hot" (2). Based on observations, this dirty environment is related to a replica of a fountain at the entrance of the dirty Souq and a garbage house that emits a foul odor and pollutes the surrounding air. The hot atmosphere is related to the opinion of 2 other respondents who said "tensile structure does not work". In addition, palm plants also provide less shade during hot weather. These findings prove that, the weakness of comfort quality in the Souq public realm reduces its function as a visitor attraction which is the main factor of the weakness of the Souq public realm in this context. The element of comfort that needs to be applied in the public realm of the Souq is like a space that is more optimal in its functions such as providing shade, a place to rest, many stalls and maintaining cleanliness. Yet the modern tensile structure not only provides less shading, but has even created a fibrous image and obscured the view of the facade of the Souq building. A good public realm should have comfortable features (Ryan 2006; PPS, 2015; MacKenzie, 2015; Garvin, 2016) through a good arrangement (Garvin, 2016). Among them are providing shade, (Clark, 2004; Ujang et al., 2015) rest facilities (Francis, 2003; Clark, 2004) and food (PPS, 2015). According to Lotfy, Soliman & Mandour (2016), elements of amenities in public public spaces include seating, signs, public art, plants and elements that can enhance the space. According to Gehl (2007) study, the main requirement of a good open space design is functionality. Function plays a major role in Islamic architecture as opposed to aesthetic value (Omer, 2010; Utaberta & Rasdi, 2013; Ahmed, 2014). Thus, the main principle of an Islamic garden is an orderly, neat, balanced, harmonious unification of geometry, water, planting and architecture around it aimed at saving space and facilitating movement (Clark, 2004; Ali 2006; Burckhardt, 2009; Habibshaikh, 2013).

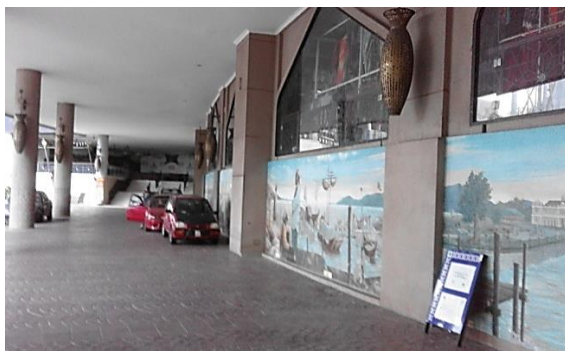


Figure 19: Waste of space along the arcade on the left of Souq building (Author, 2021)



Figure 20: The fountain at the Souq entrance was dirty and dysfunctional (Author, 2021)

Based on the public's perception in the closed-ended question, "offering a beautiful view towards the lake" became the second highest choice. This is because based on observations, among the public facilities provided at food court is a covered arcade overlooking the lake shore offering beautiful visual views and fresh air. Apart from that, the porch on the roof of Medan Selera also offers visitors the the view of the lake environment (fig.21). However, the majority of public respondents (9 people) in (open question) said "the design of the Souq public realm environment is gloomy / unattractive / not colorful". This is because based on observations, a replica of the fountain at the entrance of the Souq also was dysfunction and the lack of cheerful color applications on the building except for mural paintings on the arcade wall. This statement was added by a respondent who said "the layout of the souq environment is messy". It is seen from the arrangement of posters at the entrance of Souq which distorts the view (fig.22) and the untidy tensile structure design that even blocks the facade of Souq (fig.23). In addition, the fence around the playground not only reduces access and continuity of the route but also its aesthetic value. The statement "unattractive" by 9 members of the public is also related to the impression of a public respondent of the closed-ended question who said "business space is not beautiful". Based on observations, the retail space is simple without any elements of architectural ornaments. In addition, the wall in front of the courtyard also obstructs the visual view towards the lake which also reduces the attractiveness of the Souq public realm (fig.24).



Figure 21: The porch above the food court offers the scenery of the lake environment (Author, 2021)



Figure 22: A dysfunctional fountain, lack of cheerful color applications and the posters at the entrance distorted the view (Author, 2021)



Figure 23: The unarrangement and design of tensile in the courtyard of the Souq that have less shading effect, messy and obstruct the view towards the Souq (Author, 2021).



Figure 24: A wall in front of the courtyard that blocks the visual view towards the lake (Author, 2021)

This analysis shows that the aesthetic value to be the second weakness factor questioned by the public. The landscape design in the Souq's courtyard should be more neat, organized, its facade is not obstructed, have a landscape visual attractive and a cheerful atmosphere with colors. Oldenburg & Brissett (1982) stated that, in order to produce a quality public field, the facade of a public building must have cheerful, colorful and attractive features. Among the key principles of an Islamic garden is also an attractive design and aesthetic value (Clark, 2004; Ali, 2006; Burckhardt, 2009; Habibshaikh, 2013). Quality public spaces provide attractive, (MacKenzie, 2015) and aesthetic values (Clark, 2004; Sen & Arslan, 2016) such as the visual appeal of the surrounding landscape (Lynch, 1960; Ujang & Shamsudin, 2012; Nahavandi, Zabetian, Ahmad & Kheyroddin, 2017). For instance, according to Gani, Mohamed & Ujang (2015) study of Taman Tasik Taiping, visitors are most attracted to natural landscape elements such as flora, fauna and lakes compared to structural elements such as jetties, pavilions and so on. Similarly, according to the study of Ujang et al. (2015), based on public perception in Taman Saujana Hijau and Taman Putra Perdana, Putrajaya, the amount of greenery, trees and landscape features of the park are the most attractive to respondents.

The third factor is safety which involves children's playground equipment. Based on observations and interviews with vendors, the wide distance of the ship's replica stairs has caused some children fell. It is also evidenced by the opinion of 2 public respondents in (open question) who said "the children's play equipment is not safe to use". It shows the safety factors among the weaknesses of the Souq public square that affect visitors. A good public field should have safe features (Clark, 2004; Ryan, 2006; Gehl, 2007; Garvin, 2016). These three factors are able to encourage social activities in the public square of the Souq. The study of Rahim, Ujang & Said (2018) on Islamic public space in Putrajaya showed that public space should be optimal function by provided public facilities. The conclusion of their study shows that the quality of functions such as comfort, modern technology, safe, aesthetically visual attraction are the factors that make a public space as to be preferred as a focal point.

The following are suggestions from the public on improving the design of the Souq public realm through open-ended questions. 49 out of 321 people provided clarified feedback on comfort, safety and aesthetic issues. In terms of comfort, 11 people suggested “improve the level of cleanliness”, followed by “add shading” (7), “upgrade and add public facilities” (4), “add seating” (3), “good air circulation” (2) and “provide ATM machines” (2). In terms of safety, 3 people suggested "increase the level of safety in children's playgrounds". In terms of aesthetic value 5 people suggested “layout and landscape design should be improved” and “create a cheerful and colorful atmosphere around the Souq” (5), followed by “add mural paintings on the walls” (3), “high fountain on the lake shores” (1), “art sculpture” (1), “reduce too many posters because it has distorted the scenery” (1) and “optimal use of space to be more cheerful” (1). This analysis shows that the community prefers the Souq public realm which is comfortable, reflect local features, safety and aesthetically in order to attract more visitors.

vii. Socio-cultural Activities

a. Vendor Activities

Chart 5 below is a quality assessment scale of the frequency of vendor activities in the Souq in percentage rate in terms of ‘very weak, weak, moderate, good excellent’ through closed-ended questions. It proves that out of 321 respondents, the majority of respondents observed that local traditional goods business in the Souq is most often done either good or excellent (29.3), followed by cultural activities (13.1), arts activities (12.8), handicraft activities (12.5) and learning activities other than the above the least performed (9.4).

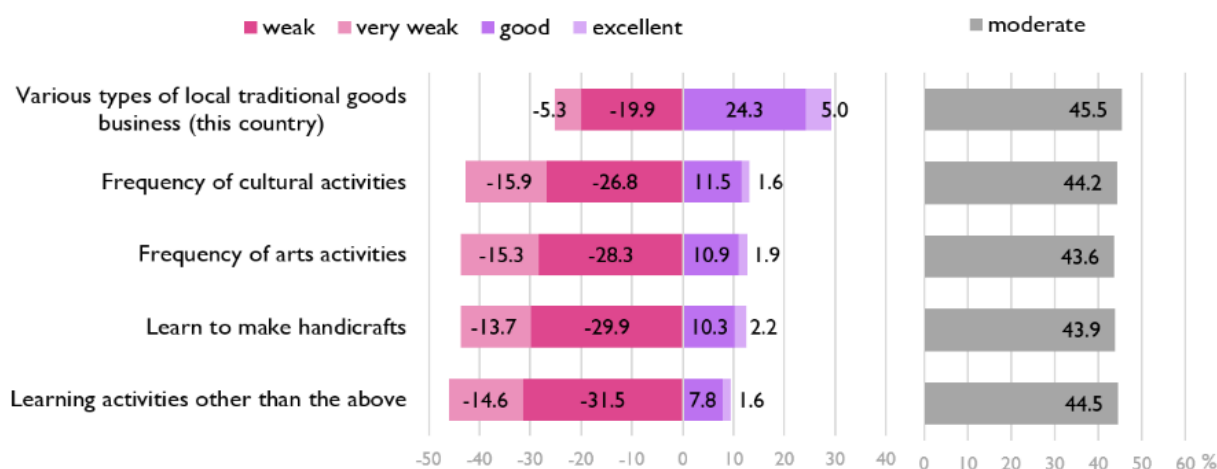


Chart 5: Socio-cultural activities in the Souq

The following is a public assessment of socio-cultural activities in the Souq public realm through open-ended questions. 12 out of 321 people provided clarified feedback on the business, arts and cultural activities as well as social activities of the visitors. In terms of business, arts and cultural activities, 4 people said no/less arts and cultural activities, followed by no interesting activities (2), less utilized space (1), no traditional Malaysian food and no diversity of business activities (1).

Based on the statistics chart 5, perception of public respondents in the open-ended question and observations, although the majority of respondents chose local goods business activities in Souq most frequently, the percentage of respondents who agreed either good or excellent

was almost the same as the percentage of respondents who agreed either weak or very weak. While the percentage of moderate rates is higher than the positive and negative rates. This indicates only moderate frequency of local goods business activity. The proof is that a respondent in an open question said "there is no variety of business activities done in the Souq". This is because based on observations, the quantity and type of goods sold are minimal. Most of the items sold in the Souq were clothing (fig. 25-26). The rest are souvenirs, home decor items and women in minimalist rates. However, most of the goods sold are not local goods but imported from Southeast Asia such as from China, Thailand and so on. This is related to the perception of a respondent in an open-ended question who said "space is underutilized". For example, an arcade area that is only partially used for business purposes while the rest is left empty. Apart from the Souq's courtyard which was left empty except for the crops was also underutilized. It should be able to be used for the purpose of business activities by adding attractive kiosks with sales of local traditional products.

Apart from that, learning activities such as handicrafts making in the Souq are almost never done as most of the items sold are unlocal handcraft items. It was also stated by 4 respondents in an open question that "no/less arts and cultural activities". Arts and cultural activities are also very rare and not diversified. Among them is only an exhibition of parrots on Sundays. It was also stated by 2 respondents in an open question that "there are no interesting activities in the Souq". However, there is a lack of local traditional foods. It was also stated by a respondent in an open question that "no traditional Malaysian food is sold in the food court".



Figure 25: Most items sold in the Souq are clothes and some souvenirs (Author, 2021)

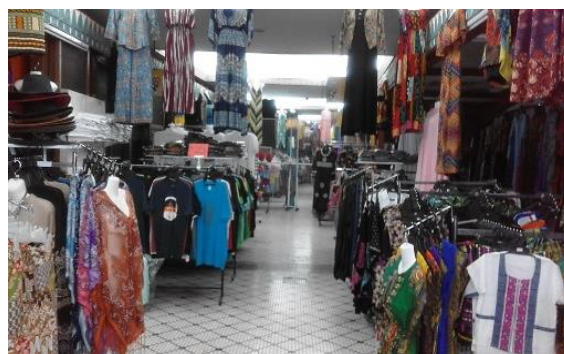


Figure 26: Clothes shop on the upper level of the Souq (Author, 2021)

Lack of local goods and business activities reduced the foreign visitors to the Souq public realm. This shows that business activities need to be increased and diversified by giving priority to local traditional goods. Apart from that, other activities such as learning, arts and culture also need to be intensified to attract more visitors. In addition, the local handicrafts making can also create public interest to learn and love it as it leaves a memory.

This finding shows that, the lack of local products in the Souq reduces its function as a main attraction which is a major factor in the weakness of the Souq public realm in this context. The diversity of local traditional business activities as well as the uniqueness of local arts and culture encourage visitors to the Souq public realm. In addition to serving as a place to relax,

food and beverage businesses that prioritize the culture of the local community are able to attract more visitors to visit a bazaar.

The evidence according to the questionnaire study of Zakariya et al (2016) to Pasar Payang visitors, their main attraction to the market is local traditional food followed by local traditional clothing. Similarly, the main business in Pasar Siti Khadijah which prioritizes the daily necessities of the community such as food, clothing and local traditional handicrafts (Azuddin, 2016; MPKB, 2016; Ibrahim & Dawood, 2020) has become the main attraction for visitors there. According to PPS (2015), open space design that attracts people was that it encourages them to carry out activities such as being a community center. Gehl (2007) says, the main issue in creating a good open space is to provide the needs of users for the whole community. According to Schaar (2013) study, the 3 factors that most influence the sense of place in a market are: 1) interaction among the market community, 2) the orderly physical development of the market gives consumers a sense of security and comfort, 3) the image of market culture from society's perception affects their relationship with the physical environment of the place.

The following are suggestions from the public regarding the improvement of socio-cultural activities in the Souq public realm through open-ended questions. 80 out of 321 people were responded. From these, 24 people suggested "diversified/multiplied activities in the Souq", followed by "cultural/artistic activities" (18). From the 18 people, 2 people gave examples of art activities such as "music", one suggested "dances and games with traditional elements of local people to evoke a lively atmosphere and bustle around the streets of the Souq", 2 people suggested "art market style concept" (such as Central Market, Kuala Lumpur) and one suggested a "batik weaving activity". Next, 11 others suggested "more business of local traditional goods ". From the 11 people, one suggested to "encourage small & medium industrial enterprises (SMEs) that reflect Malaysia's identity". Next, 9 others suggested "increased local traditional food products" (9), followed by "added/diversified stalls/sales shops" (7). From the 7 people, one suggested "empty space for shops/kiosks that sell suitable goods and attract tourists". Next 3 other people suggested "diversify a lot of handicraft activities in the Souq" (3). From the 3 people, one gave the example of "creating a local handicraft learning center in the Souq", while another respondent suggested "activities organized by state handicraft centers (such as in Terengganu/Melaka) to be held there". Next, 2 others suggested "increasing community activities in the Souq", and "diversifying food and restaurants" (2), followed by "increasing learning activities in the Souq" (1), "enlivening activities in the Souq at night" (1), "commercial activities are located close to eating area "(1) and "creating Muslim product shops "(1). This analysis shows that the community prefers the Souq public realm which provides various activities, especially local traditional business products such as goods or food and beverages in order to attract more visitors and provide nostalgia.

b. Visitor Social Activities

The following Chart 6 is an assessment scale of frequency on social visitor's activities in the Souq public realm in percentage rate in terms of 'never, rarely, moderately, often, very often' through close-ended questions. It proves that out of 321 respondents, the majority of respondents proved that the most frequent activities done by visitors are sitting on the promenade (37.1), followed by walking on the promenade (35.5), chatting with family and

friends (28.4), eating/drinking at Medan Selera (25.9), sitting in the Souq’s courtyard (24.3), cycling along the promenade (23), playing with children in the children’s playground (19.3), watching arts / cultural events (12.1) and shopping in the Souq (11.2) is the least performed activity.

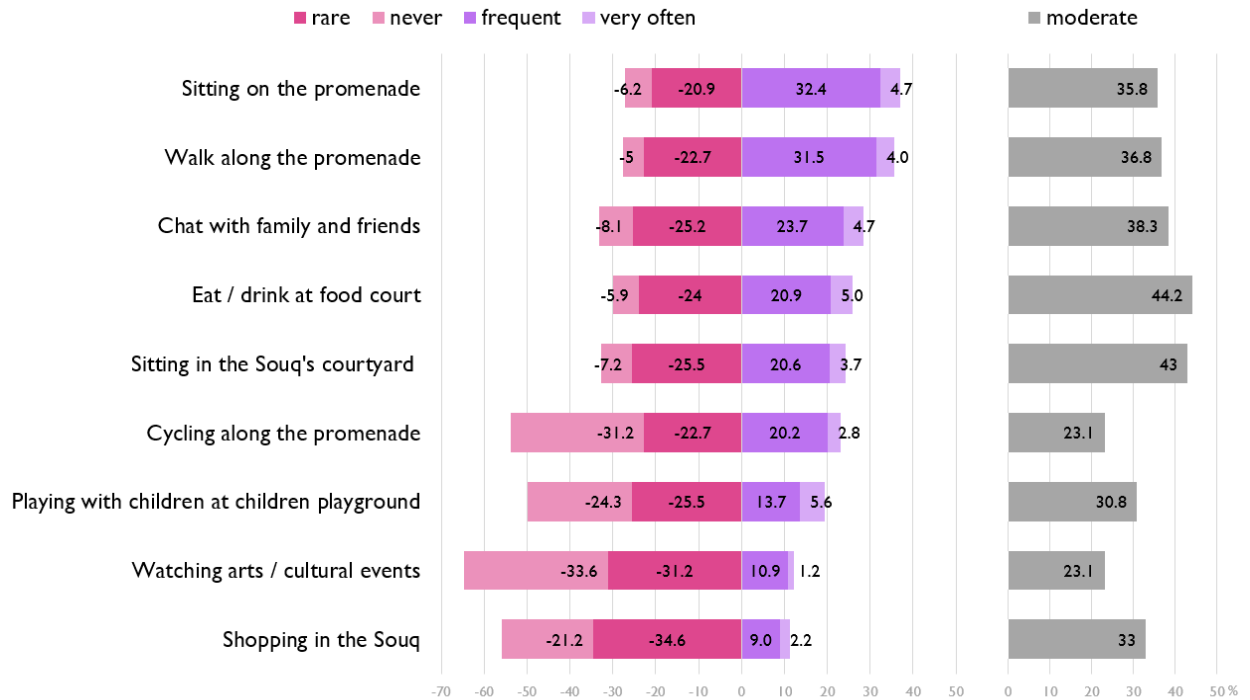


Chart 6: Social activities of visitors in the Souq public realm

The following is a public assessment related to socio-cultural activities in the Souq public square through open-ended questions. 12 out of 321 people provided clarified feedback on the business, arts and cultural activities as well as social activities of the visitors. In terms of visitors social activities, 2 people said a suitable place for recreation, followed by a suitable place for leisure (1).

Based on the statistics chart 6, perception of public respondents in the open-ended question and observations, the most frequent social activity performed by visitors was sitting on the promenade. This is because of the attractions of the lakeside environment which offers beautiful views, fresh air and seating. However, it was less shade because all tree species are palms. In addition, less seating provided there as there is only a pavilion (fig.27) and a fountain pool which also used as a seating. The other activity that visitors often do is walking along the promenade (fig.28), cycling, enjoying or/and taking pictures of the lake scenery. The social activities done at the promenade was also acknowledged by 2 respondents in open ended question that "it is a suitable place for recreation". Based on the study of Rahim, Ujang & Said (2018), Dataran Putra is the main focal point in Putrajaya compared to other focal points due to the visual attraction of its beautiful promenade.

It was less activity did at the Souq's courtyard due to lack of seating and shade. The most notable activities performed were parents accompanying their children at the children's playground and taking pictures. On the other hand, based on respondents' choice in closed questions and observations, the least social activity is shopping at Souq because of uncomfortable factors such as lack of seating, shading, visual attractive, local traditional goods, besides limited to costume and souvenirs. This related to Kumpulan Senireka (2002) statement, its sales are targeted mainly for foreign tourists. Business hours are short at Souq as it closes at 7pm while the food court closes at 8pm (fig.29). Lack of lighting around the courtyard cause the lack of visitors at night. However, the beautiful lighting from the pavilion lamps and along the promenade at night attract some visitors to enjoy the atmosphere there (fig.30).



Figure 27: Sitting is the main activity did by visitors at the promenade (Author, 2021)



Figure 28: Walking is the second activity did by visitors at the promenade (Author, 2021)



Figure 29: Silent atmosphere at Medan Selera arcade after 8pm (Author, 2021)



Figure 30: The beautiful lightings along the promenade provide aesthetic value and visual attraction (Author, 2021).

According to Gehl (2011), social activities occur if the outdoor environment is attractive enough for them. Similarly, according to Garvin (2016), a good public place is a place where people have fun with themselves and want to spend their time there. The open space design that attracts people is one that facilitates their activities to be carried out (Francis, 2003; Salama & Wiedmann, 2013; PPS 2015) and encourages them to spend more time when carrying out activities (Thompson, 2002; PPS, 2015; Abbasi et al., 2016). Examples are recreational and socializing, (Francis, 2003; MacKenzie, 2015; PPS, 2015; Abbasi et al., 2016). This suggests a public space and its use depends not only to the physical structure, but also the opportunity to use and socialize there (Garvin, 2016). This analysis shows that in addition to prioritizing local goods, comfortable, safety places, attractive visual and fresh air, livable activities at night with cultural activities can attract more visitors.

viii. Visitor's Preference

Chart 7 below is an evaluation scale of visitors favourite places at the Souq public realm in percentage rate 'in terms of strongly dislike, dislike, moderate, like, strongly like' through closed-ended questions. It proves that out of 321 respondents, the majority of respondents strongly like to visit Masjid Putra (86.6), followed by Dataran Putra (65.2), promenade (62.3), Souq's courtyard (31.4), food court (30.5), children's playground (29) and Souq Putrajaya (28.9) was the strongly disliked.

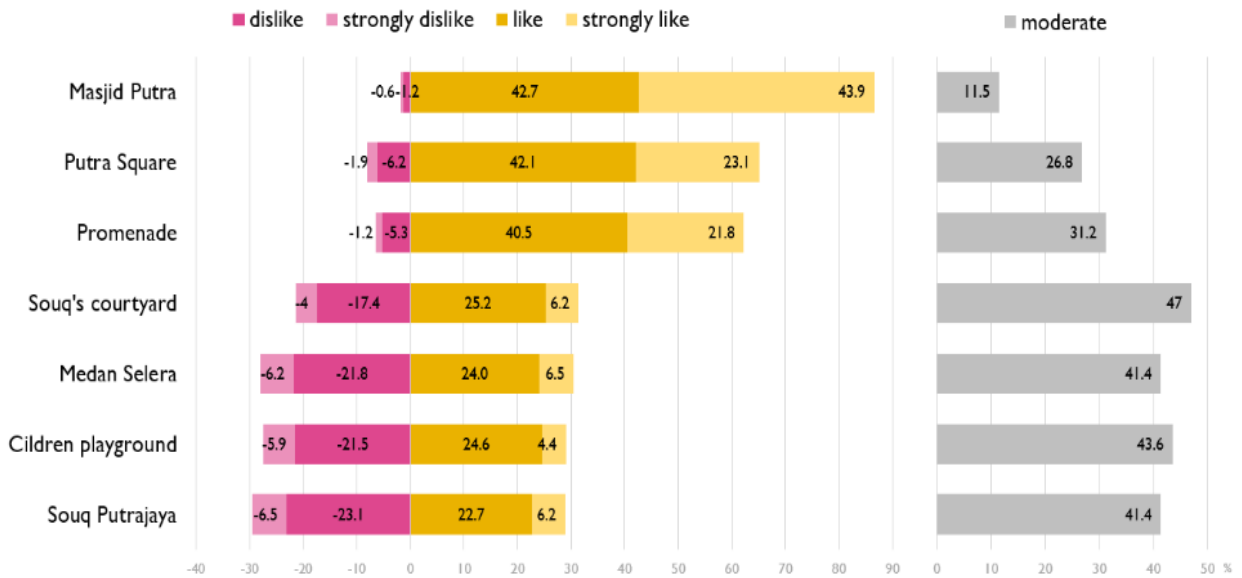


Chart 7: Visitors favourite places at the Souq public realm

The following is the public's perception of visitors favourite places at the Souq public realm through open-ended questions. Only 12 out of 321 people gave clarified feedback on positive and negative images. In terms of positive image, 1 person each said "I like Masjid Putra", "I really like the whole area of Souq Putrajaya and Masjid Putra" and "Souq Putrajaya is an interesting place". In terms of negative image, 7 people said "Souq Putrajaya is less / unattractive", followed by 1 person each saying "Souq Putrajaya is a boring place", "Souq Putrajaya is less known to locals" and "Malaysians may not return to Souq".

Based on the statistics chart 7, perception of public respondents in the open-ended question and observations, Masjid Putra is the most preferred because of its traditional architecture making it a famous focal point in Putrajaya besides easily seen from afar and accessible. According to Rahim & Ujang (2018) study, a comparison between the iconic Islamic buildings in Putrajaya shows that the Masjid Putra was preferred by the public as a landmark because apart from being a place of worship, its architectural style is more unique than other Islamic buildings in Putrajaya through the authenticity of middle eastern traditional architectural style. According to their study, in terms of legibility, it was the most clearly seen from afar, has a clear side and a path that is easy to find.

Souq is the most least favourite place to visit and less prominent because based on visitor's comments in open questions, apart from the lack of variety of business, arts and cultural activities that highlight the local image, the majority of respondents said "Souq Putrajaya less / not attractive", followed by Souq Putrajaya is a boring place", "Souq Putrajaya is less known to locals" and "Malaysians may not return to the Souq". Based on observations, the main factor of it less visitors were the lack of local cultural image in terms of socio-cultural activities especially business. The second factor is that its architectural style lacks of local identity, misleading identity, less unique and less aesthetical value. Other factors are lack of accessibility, lack of comfortable public facilities such as shading, seating, dining and so on.

This phenomenon creates a weakness of place attachment for visitors visiting the Souq public realm compared to the successful middle east and Malaysian bazaars. Stedman (2003) says a bazaar public realm has potential in creating place sentiment, place identity and place attachment because it is a quiet place. Meaning and attachment to a place (place attachment) is born of sentiment or sense of place produced by the location, nature, story, psychological and social processes of the individual (Hague & Jenkins, 2004; Smaldone et al., 2005; Brehm et al., 2013; Cresswell, 2014). This analysis shows that the visitors prefer the Souq public realm which features the image of local culture especially in business activities, as well as comfortable, has visual attractive and safety.

Conclusion

The overall findings of the study show that the access to the Souq is unelligibleity. This is due to the unfriendly walkway of the disabled, the hidden location of the Souq, the unclear and uninteresting information signage causing it to be less identifiable. The weak and unimageability identity of Souq Putrajaya also creates misleading identity apart from not having a distinct identity that features the local culture. The uncomfortable factors are the lack of public facilities such as dining, seating and shade as well as lack of cleanliness and fresh air circulation. Moreover, the poorly structured design and lack of visual attraction in Souq's courtyard have reduced its aesthetic value. Unoptimization use of space also reduce the function of the bazaar such as the lack of its local goods business and learning activities. It affects the lack of visitors to Souq compared to the Masjid Putra, Putra Square and the promenade.

This study also shows that the authenticity of traditional architecture can provide an imageability, memories and aesthetic value to the building. The lack of Malay design has resulted in Putrajaya not having its own cultural identity that symbolizes Malaysia. These findings prove that the cultural characteristics of the local community should be highlighted in urban design to symbolize the community identity of a city. This is in line with the statement of Kahn et al (2011); Rasdi & Utaberta (2012); Utaberta & Othman (2012); Utaberta & Rasdi (2013), that the application of national architectural identity through modern Malay traditional architecture is important because it symbolizes the heritage of Malay civilization with modern style and technology. However, according to Mursib & Rasdi (2016), differences in race, religion and culture in Malaysia realize problems in the formation of national identity.

According to the study of Rahim et al (2018), the factor of a public space has a clear identity, is the authentic of national identity, unique, legibility, integration of modern technology that is environmentally friendly, prioritize function by providing various public facilities and visual attractive. Therefore, taking into account the perceptions and suggestions of visitors, this study takes the approach that visitors prefer bazaar public realm that prioritize the image of local culture in terms of business activities, architectural and landscape design, as well as the integration of modern technology. Besides that, was accessibility, providing specialization of goods, a variety of comfortable public facilities including fresh air, attractive visual, safety and liveable at night to attract more visitors to do social activities.

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