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ATTRIBUTES AND ACTIVITIES IN PUBLIC URBAN SPACES OF MALAYSIAN CITIES

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Abstract

In contemporary society, urban spaces have emerged as the predominant locale for communal assembly among the general populace. However, a significant deficiency of urban spaces is observed in the majority of metropolitan locations in Malaysia. This study raises the question of how urban space could promote community space in an urban area while considering activities and site physical attributes. Therefore, this study aims to identify the urban space attributes and activities in two categories of Malaysian cities: new urban areas and historical areas. This study uses cross-comparison and descriptive analysis to derive key attributes of urban spaces, including high walkability, diverse activities, vibrant street art, and green elements. The dominant attributes based on the evaluation were walkability, urban activities, street art, green elements, and aesthetically pleasing historic buildings. Primary activities were walking, photography, and cycling (100%). Predominant urban activities based on evaluation were walking, photographing, and sales booth streets. Sungai Segget Johor Bahru (mix of historical and new urban areas), Melaka Jonker Street (historical town) and River of Life Kuala Lumpur (a mix of historical and new urban areas) have the highest of urban space elements. Therefore, urban activities are highest in historical cities such as Melaka Jonker Street and Penang Street Art. This study provides stakeholders valuable insight into different urban space attributes and activity patterns between cities. By expanding the analysis scope beyond the main capital city in Malaysia and recommending further exploration of additional attributes, this research offers a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between urban space and activities.

Keywords: Malaysian Cities, Relationship Attributes, Urban Activities, Urban Spaces

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INTRODUCTION

In urban contexts, public spaces are indispensable elements that underpin the design and evolution of cities (Pasaoglulari Sahin & Doratli, 2004). Such spaces are characterised by their openness, granting unrestricted access to shared physical environments equipped with facilities for recreation (Plane & Klodawsky, 2013). Beyond mere physicality, effective public spaces act as arenas for human interaction and congregation, fostering a sense of community. They not only engender a salubrious lifestyle but also augment cognitive functions, bolster academic performance, and enhance fitness levels (Donnelly et al., 2016). Furthermore, they play a pivotal role in mitigating mental health concerns and attenuating stress (Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries, 2023). As underscored by Nasution and Zahrah (2017), public spaces remain an integral facet of urban design.

In contemporary urban settings, particularly given spatial constraints, the meticulous identification and evaluation of urban space attributes and their associated activities is paramount. Such an approach facilitates the mitigation of potential adverse repercussions on community cohesion (Francis et al., 2012). Public spaces, intrinsically tied to well-being and health, significantly influence a locale's sense of place (Wilkie et al., 2018). Notably, the urban emphasis is especially pertinent in the Malaysian context, where forecasts suggest an urban population surge of 85% by 2040 (Tey et al., 2014). Public space has a broad overview, to focus on and address urban issues, this study focused on urban space. Urban space is known also as a public space. However, it is focusing on public space in urban areas.

Malaysia, in general, grapples with a dearth of urban social spaces. Given this backdrop, the present study seeks to interrogate how urban spaces can foster community integration in urban settings, with a particular focus on activities and physical attributes of these spaces. The calibre of public spaces, encompassing architectural elements, furnishings, design, accessibility, and adaptability to diverse population needs, inevitably dictates both user density and the broader urban quality of life (Kostrzewska, 2017). Beck (2009) posits that well-conceptualised public spaces directly enhance inhabitants' quality of life. Yet, a disconcerting trend emerges: the planning and evolution of urban areas frequently overlook the vital role of public spaces, a sentiment echoed by multiple scholars (Pasaoglulari Sahin & Doratli, 2004; Duffy, 2020). Given these considerations, the primary problem this study addresses revolves around the optimization and revitalization of urban spaces in Malaysia.

The design of public spaces should inherently encapsulate principles that foster integration and promote activities facilitating social inclusion (Kostrzewska, 2017). Such activities not only augment the social dimensions of spaces but also infuse them with vibrancy. For these public domains to retain their relevance and utility, it is imperative they are conceived and maintained as

vibrant social hubs (Chitrakar et al., 2017). A pressing concern, however, is the conspicuous dearth of social activities within these public realms (Shahpasand et al., 2016). Malaysia, in particular, faces a significant deficit in urban social spaces (Norhafizah & Shuhana, 2015). It becomes crucial, then, to quantitatively and qualitatively assess urban activities that could potentially catalyse the emergence of more such social spaces within the country. The efficacy of a public space can be gauged through the spectrum of amenities it offers, coupled with its spatial capacity to accommodate a myriad of activities across temporal scales (Harun et al., 2021).

Molina and Grundström (2012) advocate for a nuanced reconceptualization and reinterpretation of public spaces within the ambit of built environment research. While the discourse on public space is expansive, to zero in on urban challenges more effectively, this study narrows its lens to urban spaces, often synonymously referred to as public spaces. This study aims to identify the urban space attributes and activities in two categories areas in Malaysian cities: new urban areas and historical areas. This research begins by identifying the attributes of urban spaces in the study areas, thereby determining the types of activities in urban spaces at different locations.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

This study focused on six urban spaces in Malaysian cities, involving six urban spaces in five urban areas. The location was selected due to its population density and the criteria of historic buildings and a mix of new urban development. The study sites were chosen based on specific criteria: notably their population densities, the presence of historic architecture, and a blend of contemporary urban development. The locations, which include Ipoh Street Art, Penang Street Art, River of Life in Kuala Lumpur, Bukit Bintang Shopping Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Jonker Street in Melaka, and Sungai Segget in Johor Bahru, were selected due to their significant public concentration and their status as popular urban areas.

The data collected through structured observations at Ipoh Street Art, Penang Street Art, River of Life Kuala Lumpur, Bukit Bintang Shopping Centre Kuala Lumpur, Jonker Street Melaka, and Sungai Segget Johor Bahru. Each site's physical attributes and current activities were observed and evaluated. The observation was made in September 2022 at Ipoh Street Art and Penang Street Art during the weekend. However, observations for the River of Life in Kuala Lumpur, Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur, Jonker Street Melaka, and Sungai Segget Johor Bahru were made in early October 2022 during the weekend. The weekend period was chosen because more activities occur during this time, and people tend to visit urban spaces during the holidays rather than on weekdays. Weekends offer a wonderful opportunity to consider larger issues and engage in more

contemplative thinking. This study used cross-comparison and descriptive to review types of urban space attributes and types of activities.

The Central Place Theory was used to extract urban space attributes: accessibility, sociability range, activities, natural elements, and architectural features. This theory was highlighted to support the behavioural study. A German geographer, Walter Christaller, established the theory (Briney, 2022; Capello, 2009). It is important to explain each urban space attribute in this research as *“public space factors such as access, visual attraction, natural elements, and many others are significant, creation of social events is more important than physical features in social presence and interaction since it can provide participation opportunities in social activities and improve the sense of belonging to the place”* (Bigdeli & Ngah, 2013).

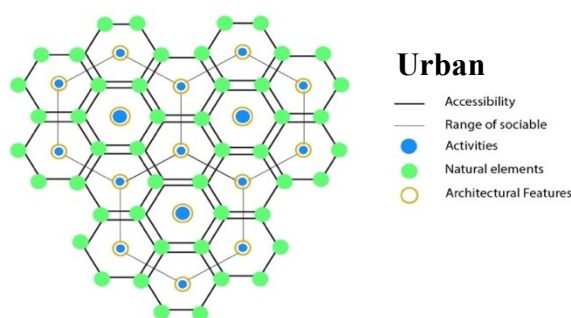


Figure 1: Urban Space Attributes Concept (Adapt from the Central Place Theory)

Accessibility is essential in urban life to connect one place to another. Regardless of social circles, everyone should have access to public spaces (Aini et al., 2019). The second aspect of urban space attributes is the sociability range. People can connect and participate in spectacles and ceremonies, or simply sit or wait in relative comfort and safety when there is life and sociability in the public realm (Das, 2008; Tibbalds, 2001). The variety of activities creates more diversity to enhance the well-being aspect of public life. Activities are the main attributes to attract more people to enter and use the public space. Natural elements play a role in attracting people to utilise various design characteristics and activities in urban spaces. Green spaces are necessary landscapes in an urban area that offer a natural setting and hasten other life events (Jabbar et al., 2022). The emphasis on architectural design will progressively consider our expanding knowledge of human senses and how they interact (Spence, 2020). The five main elements of urban space in this study, as shown by the connections in Figure 1.

To evaluate the attributes and activities in the study area, this study used a scaled matrix structured observation criteria. In the urban design scope, Mironowicz et al. (2021) used the matrix of the study to identify the typology of

the observation places and the spatial impact scale. Usually, the observation matrix scale is divided into three to five scale measurements. Wang et al. (2015) conducted the study with three scales for a matrix scale observation. In this study, the matrix scale observation with three scales ranging from low (1), medium (2), and high (3) were used. Table 1 shows the matrix scale observations of urban space attributes. Zero (0) represents a non-existing urban space attribute at the physical site.

This study measured the following urban space attributes: walkability, activities, wall street art, light sculpture, media architecture, art sculpture, aesthetical historical buildings, green elements, and water elements. The measurement for the walkability aspect involved obstacles and walkway ease of use. Activity measurement is as follows: low (1 activity), medium (3 activities), and large-scale activities (more than 4 activities). The wall street art measurement is based on attractive design, colour, and scale proportion. Light sculpture, media architecture and art sculpture were also measured according to low, medium, and large scale. The aesthetic of historic buildings by the percentage of historic buildings in the study area was rated: 0-30% is low (1), 31%-60% is medium (2), and 61%-100% is high (3). This study observed green elements by the least, medium, and more green elements. The measurement of water elements context as lowest, medium and more water elements.

Table 1: Matrix Scale Observations of Urban Space Attribute

Urban Space Attributes	Matrix scale observation			
	0	1 Low	2 Medium	3 High
Walkability	None	There are obstacles	Moderate obstacles	Easy to use for walking
Urban Activities	None	Only one (1) activity in the urban area	3 Activities in the urban area	Over four (4) activities in the urban area
Wall Street Art	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not attractive design and colour • Small scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive design and colour • Medium scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Attractive design and colour • Large scale
Light sculpture	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale
Media Architecture	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale
Art Sculpture	None	The Lowest hardscape elements	Medium hardscape elements	More hardscape elements

Urban Space Attributes	Matrix scale observation			
Aesthetical historical building	None	0%-30% of the historical aesthetic buildings in the area	31%-60% of historical aesthetic buildings in the area	60%-100% of the area's aesthetical historical buildings
Green elements	None	The least amount of green elements	Medium green elements	More green elements
Water elements	None	The Lowest water elements	Medium water elements	More water elements

Table 2 shows the urban activities' matrix scale observation. It is divided based on the three-scale matrix, i.e., 1, 2 and 3. The zero (0) value refers to no activities in the urban space, one (1) stands for low, two (2) for medium, and three (3) for high. The walking measurement matrix scale is the lowest, medium and highest number of walking activities. Likewise, the scale for cycling activities. The photograph was measured by the photography provisions and activity: low, medium and high. Rickshaw activities are measured as small, medium and large-scale activities. Likewise, for river cruises. The same scale was used for the sales booth street activities.

Table 2: Matrix Scale Observations of Urban Activities

Activities Attributes	Matrix scale observation			
Scale	0	1 Low	2 Medium	3 High
Walking	None	The lowest number of walking activities	Medium number of walking activities	The highest number of walking activities
Cycling	None	The lowest level of cycling activity	Medium level of cycling activities	The Highest Level of cycling activities
Photograph	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low photography section • Low Photography activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium photography section • Medium photography activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High photography section • High photography activities
Rickshaw	None	Small-scale rickshaw activities	Medium-scale rickshaw activities	Large-scale rickshaw activities
River Cruise	None	Small-scale river cruise activities	Medium-scale river cruise activities	Large-scale river cruise activities

Activities Attributes	Matrix scale observation			
Sales booth streets	None	Small-scale sales booth streets	Medium-scale sales booth streets	Large-scale sales booth streets

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Urban Space Attributes Cross-Comparisons

In this study cross-comparison analysis utilized to identify the urban space attributes and urban activities in two categories within Malaysian cities: newly developed urban areas and areas with historical structures. In the present study, an empirical evaluation was conducted to count, compute the percentages, and assess urban attributes using a matrix-scale observation criterion. The attributes of urban spaces were cross-compared based on observations collected in September and October 2022. This study used cross-comparison analysis to identify the urban space attributes findings based on our observation in Table 3. The result indicates that the highest percentage of urban space attributes are walkability (100%), activities (100%), green elements (100%), wall art street (100%), and aesthetic historic buildings (83%). Bukit Bintang area has most of the new modern buildings along the main street. A moderate percentage of urban space attributes are art sculpture elements (67%), media architecture (50%), and natural water elements (50%).

Table 3: Cross-comparison Urban Space Attributes Findings

No.	Attributes	A	B	C	D	E	F	Count	Percentage (%)
1.	Walkability	/	/	/	/	/	/	6	100%
2.	Urban Activities	/	/	/	/	/	/	6	100%
3.	Art street wall	/	/	/	/	/	/	6	100%
4.	Light Sculpture	x	x	x	x	/	/	2	33%
5.	Media Architecture	x	x	/	/	x	/	3	50%
6.	Art sculpture elements	x	x	/	/	/	/	4	67%
7.	Aesthetical historical building	/	/	/	x	/	/	5	83%
8.	Green elements	/	/	/	/	/	/	6	100%
9.	Nature Water elements	x	x	/	x	/	/	3	50%
Total		5	5	8	6	8	9		

Note: The location names are as follows; A- Ipoh Street Art; B- Penang Street Art; C-River of Life Kuala Lumpur; D-Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur; E-Jonker Street Melaka; F-Sungai Segget Johor Bahru

The pattern in media architecture is shown in Sungai Segget Johor Bahru, Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur, and River of Life Kuala Lumpur. Only the River of Life Kuala Lumpur, Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur, Jonker Street Melaka and Sungai Segget Johor Bahru have the art sculpture elements. In the urban design view, the sculpture elements are one of the visitor attractions to encourage more interest and vibrancy. However, natural water elements like those at the River of Life Kuala Lumpur, Jonker Street Melaka, and Sungai Segget Kuala Lumpur, can be used for recreation. The geographical area with natural rivers can be used as an attraction. The light sculpture is a minor attribute (33%), as listed in Table 3. Two areas have light sculptures: Jonker Street Melaka and Sungai Segget Johor Bahru. Light and art sculptures have tiny implementation attributes. The study found art sculptures at Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur, Jonker Street Melaka, and Sungai Segget Johor Bahru. However, light sculptures are only at Jonker Street Melaka and Sungai Segget Johor Bahru. These attributes are not implemented widely in Malaysia's main capital city urban space.

To summarise, most areas have walkability, activities, and Wall Street art elements. Wall street art is the main concern in most of Malaysia's urban spaces. The geographical and historical areas influence certain areas' lack of attributes. There are no rivers at Penang Street Art, Ipoh Street Art, and Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur. Likewise, there is no historical factor at Bukit Bintang. However, Penang Street Art and Ipoh Street Art have a historical factor. Ipoh Street Art and Penang Street Art lack light sculpture, media architecture, art sculpture and nature water elements. Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur lacks light sculpture, an aesthetical historical building and natural water elements. Furthermore, River of Life lacks light sculpture elements, while Jonker Street Melaka lacks media architecture elements. Sungai Segget Johor Bahru has all urban space attributes listed in Table 3. These attributes help us identify and review the current attributes in different areas.

The evaluation result in Table 4 is based on the matrix scale observation of urban space attributes in Table 1. This study evaluated the result by the percentage and mean value for each element in urban space attributes to see its average percentage. Table 4 shows the evaluation result of the urban space attributes. Several attributes have the highest percentage: walkability (16%), activities (16%), wall street art (15%), green elements (13%), and aesthetic historic buildings (12%). Six locations are rated easy to walk; the River of Life Kuala Lumpur had only moderate obstacles. The walkway along the river is well-maintained. The following areas have more than four (4) activities: Ipoh Street Art, Penang Street Art, Jonker Walk Melaka, and Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur. Sungai Segget and River of Life Kuala Lumpur only have three (3) activities.

Penang Street Art, Ipoh Street Art, Bukit Bintang, and Jonker Street Melaka are the highest because they have the most attractive designs and colours. River of Life Kuala Lumpur was rated medium scale, while Sungai Segget Johor

Bahru has only small-scale wall street art. Based on the site’s physical conditions, River of Life Kuala Lumpur, Jonker Street Melaka, and Sungai Segget have the highest green elements. Bukit Bintang has medium green elements, and Penang Street Art and Ipoh have the least green elements. Most old town cities in Malaysia, such as Penang, Ipoh and Melaka, have the highest number of historic buildings. River of Life Kuala Lumpur was rated medium, while Johor Bahru was rated the lowest. The historical factors influenced the historic aesthetical building in Malaysia. The following elements were rated moderate: water elements (9%), media architecture (7%), and art sculpture (7%). The lowest percentage is light sculpture (5%). Light sculpture attained the lowest evaluation result because it is the least implemented element in Malaysia's city urban spaces. Only three areas have water elements: River of Life Kuala Lumpur, Jonker Street Melaka, and Sungai Segget Johor Bahru. The geographical factors influenced this attribute.

Table 4. Cross-comparison Urban Space Attributes Findings Evaluation

No.	Attributes	A	B	C	D	E	F	Count	Percentage (%)	Mean
1.	Walkability	2	3	2	3	3	3	16	16%	2.67
2.	Urban Activities	3	3	2	3	3	2	16	16%	2.67
3.	Art street wall	3	3	2	3	3	1	15	15%	2.50
4.	Light Sculpture	0	0	0	0	2	3	5	5%	.83
5.	Media Architecture	0	0	3	3	0	1	7	7%	1.17
6.	Art Sculpture	0	0	1	1	2	3	7	7%	1.17
7.	Aesthetical historical building	3	3	2	0	3	1	12	12 %	2.00
8.	Green elements	1	1	3	2	3	3	13	13%	2.17
9.	Water elements	0	0	3	0	3	3	9	9%	1.50
Total		12	13	17	15	22	20	100	100%	

Note: The locations are as follows; A - Ipoh Street Art; B- Penang Street Art; C-River of Life Kuala Lumpur; D-Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur; E-Jonker Street Melaka; F-Sungai Segget Johor Bahru

The River of Life Kuala Lumpur and Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur are rated large scale while Sungai Segget Johor Bahru is low scale. Sungai Segget Johor Bahru has the highest number of art sculptures, Jonker Street Melaka is rated medium, and River of Life Kuala Lumpur and Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur are rated the lowest. Sungai Segget Johor Bahru is rated as the largest scale for

light sculpture, and Jonker Street Melaka is rated as medium. Other locations do not have the light sculpture element.

This study used mean descriptive to see the average value for each urban space attribute. Walkability and activities attain a neutral mean score (2.67). The following attain low mean values: wall street art (2.50), media architecture (1.17), art sculpture (1.17), aesthetical historical building (2.00), green elements (2.17) and water elements (1.50). Light sculpture attains a very low mean score (0.83). The mean score is reflected in the percentage level of the cross-comparison evaluation.

Urban Activities Cross-Comparison

Table 5 shows the observations of urban activities in the six study areas. This study used cross-comparison analysis to identify the activity’s attributes and findings. The result listed in Table 5 indicates that the highest number of activities, and hence the major activities, are walking (100%), photography (100%), and cycling (100%). Only a few locations offer sales booths on streets (67%), rickshaws (33%), and river cruises (17%). Sales booth streets refer to areas that offer kiosks and sell something between the lanes in the old commercial area, such as in Penang, Ipoh and Melaka. Penang Street Art, Ipoh Street Art and Jonker Street Melaka are the most famous sales booth streets. Various businesses attract tourists to go there. The following sites offer sales booth streets between the lane and outdoor services: Penang Street Art, Ipoh Street Art, Melaka Jonker Street and Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur.

Table 5: Cross comparison Urban Activities Findings

No.	Urban Activities	A	B	C	D	E	F	Count	Percentage (%)
1.	Walking	/	/	/	/	/	/	6	100%
2.	Cycling	/	/	/	/	/	/	6	100%
3.	Photograph	/	/	/	/	/	/	6	100%
4.	Rickshaw	x	/	x	x	/	x	2	33%
5.	River Cruise	x	x	x	x	/	x	1	17%
6.	Sales booth streets	/	/	x	/	/	x	4	67%
Total		4	5	3	4	6	3		

Note: The location names are as follows; A- Ipoh Street Art; B- Penang Street Art; C-River of Life Kuala Lumpur; D-Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur; E-Jonker Street Melaka; F-Sungai Segget Johor Bahru

The rickshaw activities are famous in historical town centres such as Melaka and Georgetown. Ipoh and Georgetown have the same historical concept, but there are no rickshaw activities in Ipoh. Rickshaw activities are popular in Melaka and Georgetown, where they are offered to local and international tourists. There are only three sites with a river: River of Life Kuala Lumpur,

Sungai Segget Johor Bahru and Jonker Street Melaka. Jonker Street Melaka is the only site that offers river cruise activities. The geographical factor with nature elements also influences river cruise activities. Melaka river cruise is popular among visitors, especially during the weekend and public holidays. Table 5 shows Jonker Street Melaka has the highest activities provision, such as walking, cycling, photographing, rickshaw, river cruise, and sales booth streets. It offers more user attractions and various activities. It is influenced by the historic sites that attract visitors. Melaka, a city rich in culture and history, is one of Malaysia's most popular tourist destinations (Ying Yi Chung & Tan Terence, 2021).

The second highest activity is at Penang Street Art, offering walking, cycling, photography, rickshaw, and sales booth streets. Penang is the highest visitor attraction in Malaysia. The various activities are linked to visitor attractions. Melaka and Georgetown are the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) heritage sites. In the Straits of Malacca, Melaka and George Town have grown over more than 500 years of trade and cultural contacts between East and West (Jyoti et al., 2021). Asia and Europe's influences have given the towns a unique, concrete, intangible multicultural legacy (Jyoti et al., 2021). Based on the activities listed in Table 5, Ipoh Street Art and Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur offer walking, cycling, photography and sales booth streets. River of Life Kuala Lumpur and Sungai Segget Johor Bahru offer walking, cycling and photography.

This study evaluated all activities and assigned either low, medium or large scale. Table 6 shows the urban activities evaluation, where the highest (large scale) urban activities are walking (26%), photography (26%), and sales booth streets (18%). Walking is distributed by the lowest, medium, and highest number of walking activities. Most areas have the highest number of walking activities. This measure is based on studying the crowd and walking density.

Table 6: Cross-comparison Urban Activities Findings Evaluation

No.	Urban Activities	A	B	C	D	E	F	Count	Percentage (%)	Mean
1.	Walking	3	3	2	3	3	3	18	26%	2.83
2.	Cycling	2	3	1	1	3	1	11	17%	1.83
3.	Photograph	3	3	2	3	3	3	17	26%	2.83
4.	Rickshaw	0	3	0	0	3	0	6	9%	1.00
5.	River Cruise	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	4%	.50
6.	Sales booth streets	3	3	0	3	3	0	12	18%	2.00
Total		11	15	5	10	18	7	67	100%	

Note: The location names are as follows; A- Ipoh Street Art; B- Penang Street Art; C-River of Life Kuala Lumpur; D-Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur; E-Jonker Street Melaka; F-Sungai Segget Johor Bahru

Most people have a smartphone and can use it everywhere. Photography has been popular since 2010 because a smartphone captures everything with a visual display. The place can attract people through the photography section. Most study areas offer more views for the photography section with many exciting elements. This study measured the photography activity and section in urban space. The measurement scale is low, medium, and high photography activity and sections. Most urban spaces provide the highest photography section and activities regarding the cross-comparison activities findings evaluation. River of Life Kuala Lumpur has a medium section for photography. By October 2022, there are several new enhancement points in providing urban fabric elements such as softscape, hardscape elements and wall street art in River of Life Kuala Lumpur (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Urban Fabric Elements in River of Life Kuala Lumpur

Most sales booth streets are at Ipoh Street Art, Penang Street Art, Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur, and Jonker Street Melaka. The sales booth street offerings at Ipoh Street Art, Penang and Jonker Street Melaka use the same concept of being located between a lane and commercial shop houses because of the urban form and historical factors. The following activities are rated medium: cycling (17%), rickshaws (9%), and river cruising (4%). Most cycling activities are in Penang Street Art and Jonker Street Melaka. It is also in a historic place with the same urban form concept, influencing the cycling activities there. However, there are medium cycling activities in Ipoh, and the lowest is in the River of Life Kuala Lumpur, Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur, and Sungai Segget Johor Bahru. Only Penang Street Art and Sungai Segget Johor Bahru offer rickshaw activities, and both have large-scale rickshaw activities. Most rickshaw activities in Melaka and Penang are offered in the evening and at midnight.

The river cruise activities are only offered at Jonker Street Melaka. The trip frequency is 15 – 30 minutes at midnight on the weekend. This activity is in high demand from the visitors. The mean value is the average for each attribute. Walking (2.83) and photography (2.83) have a neutral score mean value. Cycling (1.83), rickshaws (1.00), and sales booth streets have a low mean value. The lowest mean value is river cruise (0.50). The average mean value represents the

percentage result in (Table 6). The result shows the highest is walking (2.83) and photographing (2.83), the rest shows a low score mean.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to identify the urban space attributes and urban activities in two areas in Malaysian cities: new urban areas and historical areas. Data were collected via structured observations. Key attributes of urban spaces include high walkability, diverse activities, vibrant street art, and green elements. Light sculptures were the least prevalent. Dominant attributes based on the evaluation were walkability, urban activities, street art, green elements, and aesthetically pleasing historic buildings. Primary activities were walking, photography, and cycling (100%). Predominant in urban activities based on evaluation were walking, photographing, and sales booth streets. Rickshaw activities were popular in historical centres like Melaka and Georgetown. Jonker Street offered various activities: walking, cycling, photography, rickshaw rides, river cruises, and street vending. Common activities included walking, photography, and sales booths. Urban spaces across six study areas involved walking, photography, and street vending.

This study yields insights for stakeholders regarding the pattern of urban attributes' and activities. It provides academia with insights into the interplay between urban attributes in contemporary and historical areas. Urban space usage is vital for health crisis planning and fostering social interactions. Urban spaces can boost social interaction through diverse activities. To summarise, Sungai Segget Johor Bahru (a mix of historical and new urban areas), Melaka Jonker Street (a historical town) and River of Life Kuala Lumpur (a mix of historical and new urban areas) have the highest urban space attributes. Therefore, urban activities are highest in historical cities such as Melaka Jonker Street and Penang Street Art. Jonker Street Melaka not only has attribute but also offers a vibrant urban experience. The study focuses on Ipoh, Georgetown, Kuala Lumpur, Melaka, and Johor Bahru. Further research in different urban areas is recommended for a comprehensive understanding. For a broader grasp of the urban-activity relationship, extending the analysis beyond primary centers and considering additional variables is advised. Public space provision is essential to support local government efforts to build a livable city and promote urban development towards a sustainability framework.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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