

**MICROARCHITECTURE AS CREATIVE TOURISM: IN
CONTEXT OF URBAN SHOPPING AREA**

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**MICROARCHITECTURE AS CREATIVE TOURISM: IN
CONTEXT OF URBAN SHOPPING AREA**

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Special to my departed grandfather Allahyarham Alias Bin Shamsudin
“Al-Fatihah”

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to introduce *microarchitecture* which could be used as a medium in creating and enhancing the creativity of public facilities and retail kiosk into creative tour at the urban retail and leisure settings. *Microarchitecture* has been defined as a compact structure found along the routes, roads, lanes, pedestrian walkways and such, where the *microarchitecture* could be a tool of tourism product through the creativity and innovation that had been exhibited in the urban public spaces. As the introduction of *microarchitecture* into the creative tourism, the quantitative analysis method had been carried out to study the typology of tourists who visited the chosen locations; Pavilion and Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC), their perceptions of creativity and last but not least, to identify their opinion on quality visual based on their experienced. The correlation analysis between creativity and the tourist's visual satisfaction was conducted to investigate whether there was any relationship between creativity and visual satisfaction. The outcome of the research had emphasized some of suggestions to introduce the importance of *microarchitecture* through the level of creativity in enhancing the tourist's visual experience.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk memperkenalkan seni bina-mikro di mana ia boleh dijadikan sebagai satu medium di dalam mewujudkan dan meningkatkan kreativiti kemudahan awam dan kiosk jualan kepada suatu lawatan kreatif di kawasan membeli-belah dan istirehat bandaran. Seni bina-mikro telah ditakrifkan sebagai suatu struktur padat yang ditemui di sepanjang laluan, jalan, lorong, laluan pejalan kaki dan yang berkenaan, di mana seni bina-mikro dilihat sebagai suatu produk pelancongan melalui kreativiti dan inovasi yang dipaparkan di dalam ruang awam di kawasan bandar. Di dalam memperkenalkan seni bina-mikro sebagai suatu pelancongan kreatif, suatu kajian analisa kuantitatif telah dijalankan bagi mengkaji tipologi pelancong yang melawat lokasi yang dipilih iaitu Pavilion dan Pusat Konvensyen Kuala Lumpur (KLCC), persepsi pelancong terhadap kreativiti dan akhir sekali ialah pendapat mereka terhadap kualiti visual berdasarkan pengalaman yang telah mereka lalui. Analisis “Correlation” di antara kreativiti dan kepuasan visual pelancong telah dijalankan untuk mengkaji sama ada wujudnya hubungan di antara kreativiti dan kepuasan visual. Hasil daripada kajian yang telah dijalankan memberikan penekanan terhadap beberapa cadangan di dalam memperkenalkan kepentingan seni bina-mikro melalui kreativiti di dalam meningkatkan tahap kepuasan visual pelancong.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In the efforts to enhance the development of tourism industry in Malaysia, the local government tried to facilitate and improve a better infrastructures, facilities and amenities to the residents and tourists. Many of the studies have been undertaken the synergy between the urbanization and tourism activities which both were interdependence to develop the economy and infrastructure of the country. This orientation had led the government to create a pleasant environment to attract the locals and tourist to visit the retail and leisure sites. However, in the studies had argued about the conceptual of authenticity that tourists seek which either they seek for the authentic experiences and nostalgia of the products or setting of the places (MacCannell, 1973, 1976; O'Meara, 2000; Ryan & Crofts, 1997; Cohen, 1988a; Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

This research aims to introduce the *microarchitecture* that could create and enhance the creativity of built environment which include the public facilities and retail at the urban shopping settings. *Microarchitecture* is defined as a compact structure that could be finding along the streets, alleys, walkways, pedestrian and

such. It is categorized into two categories which; (1) public facilities and (2) retail shops. In this study, relating the human behavior, spaces, creativity, local culture and visual aspiration probably can bring the uniqueness to the tourist visual experience into a creative tour.

As Vanolo (2006:7) puts it:

the construction of the image of the creative city lies in the building up of visual symbols-landmarks-of creativity, specific narrations, emphasizing the creative milieu of the cities, and the location of connected functional and, above all, cultural references.

This event could bond a specific identity within the urban retail and leisure attractions where it would become a tourism product besides the daily retail activity. For this reason, it showed the importance of *microarchitecture* in the tourists or visitors visual experiences and gazes. In addition, the study had a focus to create a potential of *microarchitecture* to promote a new type of tourism through the integration between the creativity and the visual experiences to the tourists and the visitors in context of retail and leisure settings. But exactly, is it possible the creativity of *microarchitecture* could create a creative tourism in Malaysia? The *microarchitecture* designs in Malaysia bring a lot of negative typologies of the stereotypical in design elements, impressions and certainly not creative and innovative designs. Despite of all negative aspects of the *microarchitecture* designs, a creative design can bring an enthusiasm to the tourism product as the innovation and creativity could change on what are the tourists or visitors visualizing and at the same time to allow the tourist and the local to see the potential of the public facilities and retailing as the creative tourism. Thus, it can improve the comfort, safety and the attractiveness of the public spaces and the spatial planning for *microarchitecture* as the creative interpretation for the production of urban public facilities and retail at shopping area.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The urban retail and leisure settings in Malaysia had a specific theme and design for the *microarchitecture* which more modern to symbolize the urban culture and lifestyle. However, what actually the visitors and tourists experiences during their visit to the urban retail and leisure settings? Are they really satisfied with what they are gazing throughout their visit to the urban retail and leisure settings? In context of *microarchitecture* planning and design aspects at the urban retail and leisure area, it had only fulfill the basic requirement and its importance had been ignored in the planning and design stage. Thus, it resulted that no integration between the public facilities and retail in the building planning and design process and in addition, it had led to lack of creativity and innovation for the production of public facilities and retail kiosk designs. The public facilities and retail designs and appearances can be turned into the ‘creative tour’ and improve the quality of local society’s life. The first example was Australia, which is drafting its first national cultural policy in 1994, positioned itself as a ‘Creative Nation’ aiming to:

Increase the comfort and enjoyment of Australia life. It is to heighten our experience and add our security and well-being, in that it pursues similar ends to any social policy. By shoring up our heritage, in new or expanded national institutions and adapting technology to its preservation and dissemination, by creating new avenues for artistic and intellectual growth and expression and by supporting our artists and writers, we enable ourselves to ride the wave of global change in a way that safeguards and promotes our natural culture.

(Commonwealth of Australia 1994)

1.3 Objectives of the study

Microarchitecture should be able to enhance the uniqueness and the image of the urban retail and leisure sites. It is important to see the potential of this *microarchitecture* as the key features of the creative tourism in showcasing the resident's lifestyle and the country achievements and developments. Thus, the juxtaposition between *microarchitecture* and creative tourism can exhibit the successful of creative production, heritage and contemporary social and economy culture of Malaysian.

There are a few of objectives that have been identified in this study which:

- i. To identify the typology of visitors at the urban retail and leisure sites.
- ii. To determine the visitor's creativity perceptions that motivates them to visit the urban retail and leisure sites.
- iii. To determine the visitor's opinion on the level of creativity attributes for *microarchitecture* and the level of visitor's visual satisfaction based on their visual experience and gaze for the *microarchitecture* at the retail and leisure sites.
- iv. To determine whether the creativity had influences to the tourist visual experience.

1.4 Research question

- i. Are the elements of *microarchitecture* portrays the creativity development to the tourist?
- ii. Do *microarchitecture* giving both visual and functional creativity of the sites?
- iii. What are the tourists gazes for the site after visiting the area?
- iv. Are visitors satisfied with the visual and image of public facilities and retail kiosk at the sites?

1.5 Scope of research

In this research, the scope is focused on four most important areas that will be discussed in detail. All the four major areas will be discussed as below.

1.5.1 Literature review

The literature review is needed as the initial study for the basic understanding of the definition, theoretical and conceptual that involved in this entire study. It involved the understanding of *microarchitecture*, creative tourism and tourist gaze. Detail discussions were in Chapter 2.

1.5.2 Assessment of the typology of tourist demographic

Throughout the analysis and information gathered, this assessment is focused on identifying the tourist profile and their background who have visited the retail and leisure sites. It is used to analyze the typology of visitor's profile that visited the sites.

1.5.3 Assessment of the tourist visual perceptions to choose the retail and leisure sites

The assessment of the tourist visual perceptions to choose the retail and leisure sites will be act as the parameter to identify the visitor's visual factors that motivate them to visit a retail and leisure settings.

1.5.4 Tourists visual experiences

Tourists' visual experiences were determined in order to improve the authenticity of the environment and ambience on each retailing and leisure settings into creative tourism.

1.6 Study approach

There were four stages as the parameter for the study approaches. The following are the four stages that covered in this study.

1.6.1 Stage 1- Preliminary Stage

As for the preliminary stage, the literature review of *microarchitecture*, creative tourism and tourist gaze will be discussed in detail. The sources of the literature review were from articles, journals and publications. The main aim of the literature review is to create a synergy between *microarchitecture* and creative tourism in the context of tourist gazes lenses.

1.6.2 Stage 2 – Data Collection

The data collection involved different parameters which include the personal experience, direct observation, and questionnaire surveys.

1.6.3 Stage 3 – Analysis and Synthesis

This stage involved the analysis on the data collected during the second stage. The analysis was done using Microsoft Excel and (cross tabulation and correlation) to find the connection and relationship between the creativity and the visitor's visual satisfaction. Some of the descriptive of analysis on the percentage and mean of the demographics, visual influences, the public facilities needs for retail and leisure settings, the visitor's rate on overall creativity and visual satisfaction for each location.

1.6.4 Stage 4 – Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

This stage will be the discussion, conclusion and the recommendation based on the analysis done on the third stage.

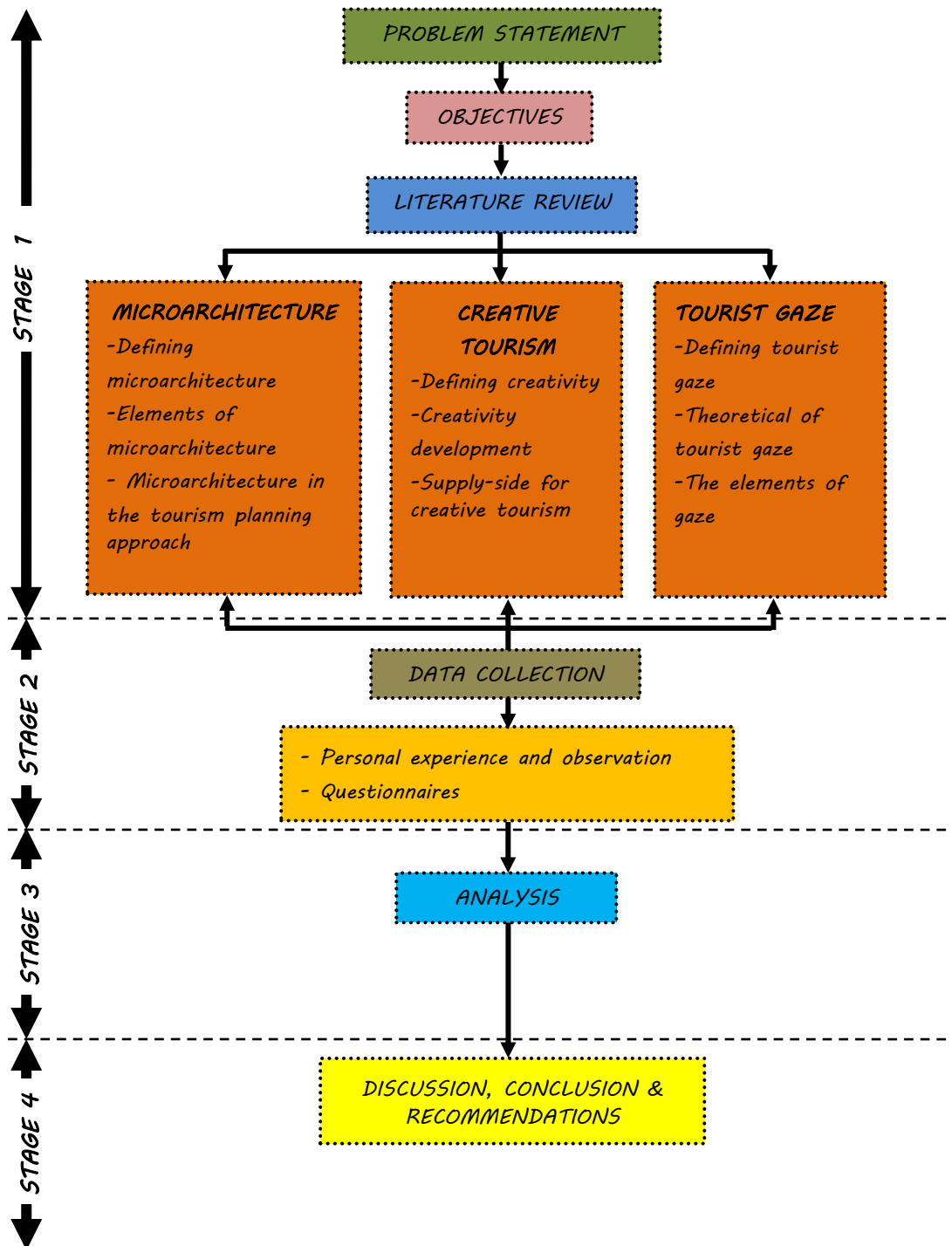


Figure 1.0: Study approach

1.7 Research method

1.7.1 Determining the sample size

There were no specific data to determine the numbers of tourists that visited the chosen locations, Pavilion and KLCC. The KLCC and Pavilion management had stated that the statistic of shoppers was the private and confidential data, thus, the specific data for the sampling only could be determined by using the primary resources of internet. From the article of *Malaysia's vibrant retail scene* that had been written by Chuang Peck Ming (2007), Tan Li Lin, the director for the business services and lifestyle division had stated that the Pavilion was located at the strategic area with high foot traffic which an estimated of 24 million per year.

1.7.2 Survey instrument

1.7.2.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire form was designed with three section which include

- i. Section A - Tourist profile
- ii. Section B - Tourist perception
- iii. Section C - Quality visual

For the first section, the question was build based on the tourist's gender, age, origin, occupation, highest education and monthly income. This section was important to analyze the typology of tourist profile that visits the sites.

The second section was build based on the frequencies, reason to visit the sites, the visual influences, visual perceptions, and public facilities needs for retail and leisure settings. This section was important to assess the importance of visual beauties and its influences to motivate the visitors to visit the sites.

The last section was build based on the tourist rates on the visual quality that they had been experience on sites. It involved overall rates for creativity and visual experience for each location. In addition the pictorial rating was used for the tourist to remember what they had seen, creativity that they had perceived and their visual satisfaction.

1.8 Study area

1.8.1 Pavilion

Pavilion brings a new trend on the shopping experience as it was labeled as the world-class urban shopping centre which included the international renowned fashion stores like Gucci, Prada, Versace and many more. Pavilion was strategically located at Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur where there were lots of other shopping area attractions included Lot10, BB plaza and Sungei Wang Plaza. It was easily to walk there from the nearest monorail next to Lot10 and Sungei Wang or used the Sky Bridge from KLCC. This seven-storey building consist 450 outlets that concluded into six shopping precincts where;

- i. Couture Pavilion – The street-front boutique from the world famous fashion label
- ii. Centre court (Bintang circle) – the atrium and open area for events
- iii. Connection – the restaurant street and bistros, fitness centre, cinema and more.
- iv. Gourmet Emporium – the food court area which well known as ‘Foodrepublic’
- v. Home – the shops that offer products used for residential
- vi. Seventh Heaven – offer the relaxation with the spas



Figure 2.0: Vibrant ambience for urban retail and leisure site at Pavilion



Figure 2.1: Modern and minimalist retail design in Pavilion

1.8.2 KLCC

Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC) was the most popular attraction as the twin skyscraper. Suria KLCC was retail podium at the bottom of KLCC tower which offer the international fashion label and luxury goods, Science Centre and underwater aquarium. In particular for urban shopping mall, it offers most of the luxury and fashionable shops such as Burberry, Jimmy Choo, Louis Vuitton, Marc Jacobs, and many more. It had 6 levels for the retail outlets with different style and character. On the other hand, the KLCC Park offers the relaxation and leisure activities to the visitors which the features were the lake symphony, jogging track and footpath, Ornamental water features and children playground. KLCC is one of the best spot to the tourist and the local to do leisure activities and at the same time they can do the shopping activities.



Figure 3.0: Vibrant ambience at KLCC Park



Figure 3.1: Public facilities provided at KLCC Park

1.9 Significance of the study

This study was important in three aspects which are; (1) the authenticity of *microarchitecture* as a tool of creative tourism, (2) the motivations of the tourists and visitors in context of retailing and leisure settings and finally (3) the synergy between creativity and visual satisfactions. Thus, this study is expected to introduce a contemporary tourism element of *microarchitecture* in retail and leisure settings because it could be helped to give an idea to solve the issues and problems related to the planning and design aspects of *microarchitecture* as the creative tourism. It was essential to study on how importance of creativity and the visual perspectives, thus, details information and the ideas about creativity of *microarchitecture* and the tourist visual perspectives could be a fundamental information to help towards a better planning on creative tourism for retail and leisure settings.

1.10 Conclusion

In summary, the issues, problems, objectives, scope and significance of the study that have been discussed earlier could improve the appreciation on the importance of *microarchitecture* in retail and leisure settings into creative tourism in Malaysia. In addition, with the information and data collected, it will help to achieve the objectives of this study. Thus, the result of this study could be introduced the *microarchitecture* through creating and enhancing the visitor's experiences and nostalgia as well as the authenticity of local built environment.

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