

PLACEMAKING IN BATU PAHAT MARKETPLACE

KHOR CHONG KEAT

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An appreciation and dedication to my supportive parents and family, whom have always given me words of motivation.

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ABSTRACT

Placemaking is a concept and an overarching thought process that helps in the development of neighbourhoods in a city. It has a role in bringing people together to reach the ideas and share similar passions to create an important place. Bandar Penggaram old town was once a happening town as it is the business and administration center. However, it is now facing issues of population outflow, aging population and degradation of the township development due to the lack of appreciation of the local population towards the town. The public spaces in the town are not under proper planning and maintenance. This has led to circumstances of people especially the young generation abandoning them. The aim of this research is to identify the potential roles of Batu Pahat Marketplace and the methods that are able to enhance placemaking qualities in Bandar Penggaram. The research study had then outlined two placemaking frameworks for urban planning and the public market as the solution to remedy the current issues faced in the town. The frameworks basically covered planning and design considerations in 4 aspects, including access and linkage, sociability, uses and activity, and also comfort and image for a place. These aspects are suggested to improve the accessibility, foster social interaction, build and support local economy and promote a sense of comfort for the local community. Literature review was undertaken to obtain a comprehensive understanding of both placemaking concepts and public markets. Case studies on successful public markets in other countries are conducted by analyzing the placemaking qualities that were applied in these public markets. The findings are also obtained from a field survey, interviews and an online questionnaire survey for a more reliable result. In short, the research proposed the placemaking approach as the intervention to revitalize this old town.

ABSTRAK

Placemaking adalah satu konsep dan proses pemikiran yang menyeluruh untuk meningkat taraf pembangunan kawasan kejiranan dalam sesebuah bandar. Konsep ini berperanan untuk menyatupadukan orang ramai demi menjana idea dan memupuk minat bersama agar dapat membina dan menjayakan sesebuah tempat yang bermakna. Bandar Penggaram adalah sebuah bandar yang terkenal pada masa dahulu kerana statusnya sebagai pusat perniagaan dan pentadbiran. Namun demikian, bandar ini kini mengalami isu-isu seperti pengaliran keluar penduduk, populasi tua yang meningkat dan degradasi pembangunan perbandaran disebabkan kekurangan penghargaan penduduk terhadap bandar mereka sendiri. Kawasan-kawasan awam dalam bandar ini tidak mempunyai perancangan dan penyelenggaraan yang menyeluruh. Hal ini telah mengakibatkan pengabaian oleh orang ramai terutamanya generasi muda. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti peranan dan potensi pasar awam Batu Pahat dan kaedah-kaedah yang dapat meningkatkan kualiti *placemaking* dalam pembangunan Bandar Penggaram. Kajian penyelidikan ini telah menggariskan dua rangka pembangunan untuk perancangan bandar dan reka bentuk pasar awam sebagai cadangan penyelesaian bagi isu-isu yang dialami. Rangka pembangunan ini digariskan berdasarkan pertimbangan perancangan dan reka bentuk dalam 4 aspek termasuk akses dan rangkaian, sosial, kegunaan dan aktiviti, dan juga keselesaan dan imej sesebuah tempat. Aspek-aspek ini dicadangkan untuk meningkatkan kemudahan untuk akses, menguatkan interaksi social, memajukan bidang ekonomi tempatan dan juga mewujudkan rasa selesa dalam jiwa masyarakat setempat. Kajian literatur telah dijalankan bagi membentuk pemahaman yang komprehensif mengenai konsep *placemaking* dan juga berkaitan pasar awam. Kajian-kajian kes telah dilakukan terhadap beberapa pasar awam yang berjaya di negara lain dengan menganalisis ciri-ciri *placemaking* yang terdapat dalam aplikasi pembangunan tersebut. Dapatan kajian ini telah dikumpul daripada kajian tapak, sesi temubual dan juga kajian soal-selidik secara *online* supaya mendapat hasil yang lebih meyakinkan. Secara ringkas, kajian penyelidikan ini telah mencadangkan kaedah *placemaking* sebagai penyelesaian untuk mencergaskan semula bandar lama ini.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Public markets have existed for centuries. They have been the vital source of commerce and social discourse for over 6000 years (Lochaven Management Consultant, 2011). Today, public markets are ubiquitously present in most of the cities, town and villages around the world. However, it does not symbolize that all of these public markets are similar from when they started or similar from community to community.

Physically, public markets are different from each other obviously because of their individual specifics of presence, purpose and function. Besides, every public market has itself evolved over time in both their concept and practice. There are always slight difference from community to community to operate their public markets in their own ways. In fact in most cases, they are quite dramatically different.

It is quite clear the public markets do continue to serve an important need within the communities they operate in. These public markets existence is definitely due to its need. They have an important role to embrace and reflect the unique cultural, political, social and economic realities of the time and place in which they operate.

However, from time to time, the relation between demand and supply has changed due to the respective social and economic changes in the society. This then led to the emergence of new commercial formats like shopping centers, supermarkets and hypermarkets etc., which respond to customers' different needs (Salgueiro, 1992). Nowadays, consumers tend to choose the 'new' formats, to the detriment of the 'old' markets, due to reasons of comfort, accessibility, payment, business mix and concentration (Marques, 2014).

So, is there still a place for these traditional public markets to survive? It is vital to preserve and conserve the traditional market culture so that their spirit can continue and be inherited by the next generation. This is very important as these local public markets are able to showcase the community's identity and true culture better compared to giant commercial franchises.

A similar issue happened in Bandar Penggaram old town in Batu Pahat. Therefore, this research is intended to identify the main issues that led to the degradation of Bandar Penggaram so that a proposal that can deliver in-depth understanding and recommendations on revitalization of the town through public market architecture can be produced. The research proposes to enhance the placemaking quality of Batu Pahat marketplace for the local community.

1.2 Problem Statement

Bandar Penggaram old town was once a happening town as it is the business and administration center of Batu Pahat. However, it is now facing degradation due to new planning and development of the town. A clearer separation of zoning of the residential area away from the town center is made due to local authority planning. It brought a negative impact to the old town as the people are moving away from the town center. This scenario is most obviously seen in the Batu Pahat public market area along Jalan Shahbandar. There is a dull public market scenario and a lack of

activities here. Despite the local authority's structured plan to further develop this town, there is still little improvement to be seen from the urban site study of the town carried out in 2016.

1. Losing of productive population to promote the old town's development.

Productive population basically refers to the population that is capable of working and yielding economic profit, who are at the age between 21 to 60 years old. Bandar Penggaram is currently facing an issue of degradation of population due to the leaving of the young generation from the old town due to several reasons including better working opportunity, higher education opportunity, better living quality etc. In addition, the introduction of the North-South Expressway has elevated the convenience of usage of the roadway that travelers can access easily and in a shorter period of time. This had then reduced the number of visitors who drive into Bandar Penggaram as a stop point for their journey compared to previously when it was the favourite spot to visit for businessmen and travelers who pass by this area. This had made Bandar Penggaram lose its vitality and thus affected it in the social and economic aspects as the locals tended to look for business opportunities away from here. Therefore, it is very important to introduce a new catalyst that able to help revitalize the town and avoid it from turning into a blight downtown in the future.

2. No appropriate social platform for local community empowerment.

In Bandar Penggaram, the town is not equipped with enough appropriate social platform or community hub which provides good facilities for the use of the local community. The town is lacking in a conducive community center that could empower and gather the people. A visit to the site, identified an open public square called 'Dataran Penggaram' at the town. However, it is just an open space with a sitting area, without supportive facilities like washrooms, stores or cafés. It is under-utilized especially during the day time. There are no visitors here during the day time since there are no shaded areas. This will definitely discourage the public from using the facilities and leads to disengagement of the community. Therefore, to

revitalize the town, there should be a solution that is able to promote community empowerment.

3. Improper and under-utilized public market design leads to pollution and an economic downturn of the town.

The local public market in Bandar Penggaram is under-utilized due to its mono-functional space of design. The existing public market is only utilized in the morning and left inactive in the afternoon and at night. Furthermore, the hygienic condition of the public market is not properly managed. There is no proper waste management system for the existing public market as the solid waste is scattered around and the liquid waste is directly discharged into Sungai Batu Pahat flowing beside the public market. This in the long run will definitely cause environmental pollution to the river. The scenario of this public market is dirty with wet floors, and smelly, which discourage the visit by the community. In addition, the improper planning of the public market does not allocate enough parking spaces and appropriate services area for loading and unloading works. This condition caused a worse traffic congestion since the vendors can only unload by the roadside while sharing the same road with other users. The unhygienic environment and lack of parking facilities has made many customers give up on local public market as they tend to shift their shopping to new shopping centers like Batu Pahat Mall since it is convenient to access and provides a hygienic shopping environment. Therefore, a new well-integrated public market should be proposed to make a change to the current scenario.

All of the above issues are the important elements that need to be taken into consideration for revitalizing Bandar Penggaram. A proposal will be delivered through this research with the justification of feasibility to implement.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

This research aims to identify the potential roles of Batu Pahat Marketplace and the methods that are able to enhance its placemaking qualities in Bandar Penggaram. The objectives of this research is as follows:

1. To investigate the reason for the blight of the downtown area of Batu Pahat.
2. To identify the aspirations of the local community with regard to their ideal market scenario.
3. To determine the roles of the public market in the placemaking of Bandar Penggaram, Batu Pahat.
4. To identify the elements of placemaking that can contribute to the competitiveness and success of public markets.

1.4 Research Questions

The main focus of this research is concerning how the public market can help in urban revitalization in Bandar Penggaram, Batu Pahat. The research questions are as below.

1. What are the reasons that contributed to the lack of activities at Bandar Penggaram old town area?
2. What does the public market mean to the Batu Pahat local community and their aspiration for it?
3. What are the roles of the public market and how does it contribute to the placemaking of Bandar Penggaram old town?
4. How can placemaking elements help in making Batu Pahat marketplace competitive and successful?

1.5 Significance of the Research

This research is significant in giving a positive impact to Bandar Penggaram, Batu Pahat in terms of:

1. Identifying the opportunities within Bandar Penggaram to outline the viable social activities and program in the existing communal spaces that are underutilized.
2. Providing an opportunity for the public market to retain its position for locals' social gathering and participation.
3. Creating a new Batu Pahat Marketplace as a new public place for the local community through architecture.

The design strategies identified in this research were used in the author's design thesis as well (Appendix A).

1.6 Research Statement

Recently, Bandar Penggaram, Batu Pahat is facing the difficulties of losing their young workforce in the old town as the young generation start moving out to explore better opportunities. There is a sign of degradation of the old town as it faced challenges from newly blooming development out of town. Although the local authority have the intention to develop the town, like refurbishing the townscape and upgrading the riverfront development work, there is not much progress since the proposal. The research intends to propose the use of a new Batu Pahat Marketplace to act as the catalyst for urban revitalization. By well integrating and fusing the communal spaces and commercial spaces in the new public market, it creates both social and economic benefits to the locals as well as revitalize the town's community scenario.

1.7 Scope of Research

The scope of the research is limited to the context of the central town area of Bandar Penggaram, Batu Pahat to make the data site specific. This is because the research ensures the suitability of the application of the data for the specific local community and target users. Moreover, this research focuses on placemaking of the public market in the town whereby the intention is to create a public place that belongs to the local community as their ‘third place’. Lastly, the research on the market is limited to how it is able to contribute to placemaking and revitalization of Bandar Penggaram.

1.8 Research Methodology

In order to achieve the above mentioned aim and objectives of this research, a comprehensive research methodology was designed and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The overall flow of the research is divided into 4 main sections, which is identification of research problems, data collection, data analysis and conclusion and recommendations. There are basically two main source of data collection, which can be categorized into primary data and secondary data.

The primary data is basically sourced from interviews, questionnaire survey, and urban field study. Meanwhile, data that is collected from existing literature reviews of books, journals, relevant articles, reports and websites are the secondary data of this research. The data collected are then being analyzed and further interpreted. Figure 1.1 shows a summary of the research methodology flow.

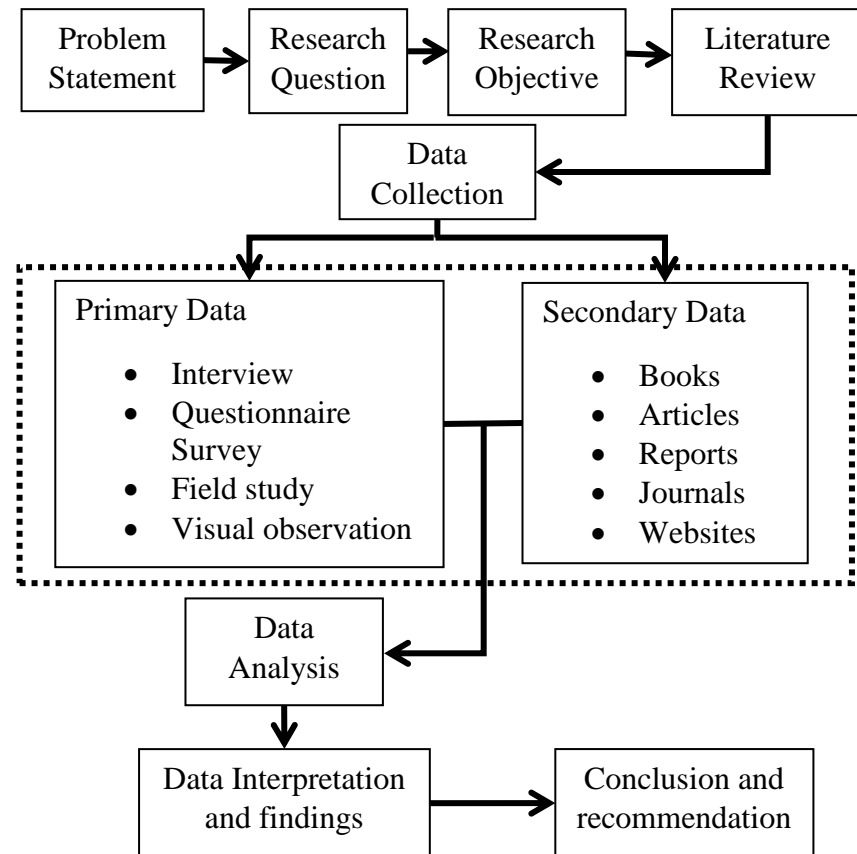


Figure 1.1 Summary of Research Methodology Flow

1.9 Expected Findings

At the end of this research, an outcome is expected that includes a recommendation that can enable the related parties and the local community to collaborate and work on a united aim with the local authority to build themselves a new public place that is able to revitalize the town. The research provides in-depth findings, discussions, and recommendations on the opportunities of public spaces in the town, a market typology that suits the local social context and also a design framework on making a public market a great place.

1.10 Structure of Dissertation

There is a total of six chapters in this dissertation. Chapter 1 gives an overall brief introduction of the research, including topic on background study, research aim and objectives, research questions, research statement, research methodology and also the expected findings. Chapter 2 is about the literature review of topics that relate to placemaking concepts, theory of third place, market architecture design and planning guideline etc. All of these information are derived through readings, discussions, site observations, interviews as well as questionnaire surveys.

Next, Chapter 3 covers the research methodology that is used to obtain the primary and secondary source of data and how these data collected is analyzed and further documented in Chapter 5. However, Chapter 4 will analyzes 3 case studies of successful public market designs by using the related design framework derived. Last but not least, Chapter 6 will conclude the findings and discussions from Chapter 5 and outlines the recommendations on the limitations, challenges and frameworks provided. Appendices are attached to relate the research findings with the thesis design proposal at the end.

1.11 Conclusion

In short, this research intends to identify the main reasons that contributed to the dull scenario and lack of activities in Bandar Penggaram, Batu Pahat old town area especially the public market zone. With the site specific data collected, this research would help to outline an appropriate guideline and solution to revitalize the township through architecture. The research puts priority on the public market to initiate the revitalization due to its characteristic of public building and its indivisible relationship with the local community life. As a public building, it allows people to access and gather easily which thus eases the spread of awareness on township revitalization.

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