



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***THE INFLUENCE OF THE PHYSICAL FEATURES ON USERS'
ATTACHMENT TO KLCC PARK, MALAYSIA***

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**THE INFLUENCE OF THE PHYSICAL FEATURES ON USERS'
ATTACHMENT TO KLCC PARK, MALAYSIA**

By

ATEFEHALSADAT AYEGHI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Science**

September, 2013

DEDICATION

In the Name of Allah swt. , I dedicate this thesis to those who have a special place in my heart: my parents, who have supported me all the way since the beginning of my studies.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

THE INFLUENCE OF THE PHYSICAL FEATURES ON USERS' ATTACHMENT TO KLCC PARK, MALAYSIA

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September, 2013

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Parks are perceived as an important part of the quality of life in densely populated urban areas (Harnik 2000). As Malaysia becomes more urbanized since the 90's, the need for recreational areas has been increasing. Based on the Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020, recreational areas are growing as one of the most essential areas in the city. However, as opposed to recreational areas in the western world, urban recreational areas in Malaysia have obtained very little attention from researchers, the reason being that Malaysia only has a short public parks tradition. The reason goes back to 1874, when British colonized Malaysia whereby throughout that period gardens and other forms of parks existed only for members of the royal families, this led public to be unfamiliar with such spaces (Mohamed & Nawawi, 2006). The main objective of the present

study is to identify the influence of physical feature on the usability of an urban park which will result in users' attachment to the park. KLCC Park was selected for this study because it is an important landmark for Kuala Lumpur city, and one that represents internationally the 'greenness' of the city. These make the KLCC Park as a major point of interest to locals and foreign tourists. Thus, it is essential to ensure continued visits that will increase usability of the park. The study adopted a quantitative method to determine the impact of physical features on users' needs in KLCC Park. To gain preliminary information on the topic, in-depth interviews with Kuala Lumpur City Hall Public Park managers were conducted to understand the current issues regarding urban parks in Malaysia, specifically in Kuala Lumpur. Casual observation was used to identify the physical features of KLCC Park and also to observe subjects prior to designing the questionnaire. The questionnaire survey was conducted with 330 park users to identify the influence of physical features on users' needs in KLCC Park. The participants were selected randomly from those who use the park. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 19.0. In order to achieve the objectives of the study as well as testing the hypothesis of this research, correlation and regression analyzes was carried out. The research found that physical features influence the usability of the park. In addition, hardscape features such as water features had a strong effect on users' passive engagement needs. The results highlight the importance of water features in fulfilling user' comfort and relaxation needs. The findings

will assist urban managers and urban designers to better understand the importance of specific physical features in creating more attractive places for users.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**PENGARUH CIRI-CIRI FIZIKAL TERHADAP IKATAN PENGGUNA
TERHADAP TAMAN PUSAT BANDAR KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA**

Oleh

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Taman adalah elemen penting yang menyumbang kepada kualiti hidup di dalam kawasan bandar yang padat penduduknya. Semenjak tahun 90an, Malaysia telah menjadi semakin pesat membangun, justeru itu keperluan kepada kawasan rekreasi menjadi semakin meningkat. Berdasarkan Pelan Struktur Kuala Lumpur 2020, kawasan rekreasi telah berkembang sebagai salah sebuah tempat yang terpenting di dalam bandar. Namun begitu, jika dibandingkan dengan kawasan rekreasi di dunia Barat, kawasan rekreasi bandar di Malaysia telah mendapat perhatian yang sangat sedikit daripada penyelidik dengan alasan Malaysia mempunyai tradisi tamanyang pendek tempohnya. Hal ini dapat dibuktikan pada tahun 1874 di mana Malaysia telah dijajah oleh pihak British. Sepanjang tempoh tersebut, taman bunga dan semua jenis taman telah diwujudkan hanya

untuk kegunaan ahli-ahli keluarga Diraja sahaja dan keadaan ini telah menyebabkan orang awam tidak terdedah dengan tempattersebut (Mohamed & Nawawi, 2006). Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti pengaruh cirifizikal taman bandar terhadap kebolegunaan taman tersebut kepada pengguna. Taman Pusat Bandar Kuala Lumpur (KLCC) telah dipilih untuk kajian ini kerana ia merupakan suatu mercu tanda yang penting bagi Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur dan secara globalnya taman ini melambangkan 'kehijauan' bandaraya tersebut. Keadaan ini menjadikan Taman KLCC sebagai tumpuan utama bagi pelancong tempatan mahupun luar negara. Oleh itu, adalah penting untuk memastikan kunjungan yang berterusan yang akan meningkatkan kebolegunaan pengunjung terhadap taman ini. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kuantitatif bagi menentukan kesan ciri fizikal terhadap kebolegunaan Taman KLCC. Untuk mendapatkan maklumat awal mengenai topik ini, temu bual mendalam dengan Pengurus Taman Awam Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur telah dijalankan bagi memahami isu-semasa mengenai taman bandar di Malaysia, khususnya di Kuala Lumpur. Pemerhatian casual telah digunakan untuk mengenal pasti ciri-fizikal Taman KLCC dan juga pemerhatian terhadap subjek dilakukan sebelum tinjauan soal selidik di reka bentuk. Sebanyak 330 tinjauan soal selidik telah diedarkan kepada pengguna Taman KLCC untuk mengenal pasti pengaruh cirifizikal pengguna kepada taman tersebut. Penyertaan dipilih secara rawak daripada pengguna taman tersebut. Data yang

diperolehi dianalisis menggunakan perisian SPSS versi 19.0. Bagi mencapai objektif kajian serta menguji hipotesis kajian, analisis terhadap korelasi dan regresi telah dijalankan.

Kajian ini mendapati bahawa ciri fizikal mempengaruhi kebolehgunaan taman tersebut. Di samping itu, ciriaktif seperti elemen arca air memberi kesan yang mendalam terhadap keperluan penggunaan secara pasif terhadap taman ini. Hasil kajian menekankan kepentingan elemen arca air dalam memenuhi keperluan keselesaan dan kerehatan pengguna. Hasil kajian ini akan membantu pengurus bandar dan pereka bentuk bandar untuk lebih memahami kepentingan ciri fizikal tertentu dalam mewujudkan tempatyang lebih menarik untuk pengguna.

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APPROVAL SHEETS



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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or any other institutions.



ATEFEHALSADAT AYEGHI

Date: 10 September 2013

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Urban parks and other greenspaces provide restoration from the mental fatigue caused by modern urban life (Harnik, et al. 2006). Urban park provides its users with psychological benefits (Harnik, et al. 2006). The importance of studying urban park is highlighted in Maslow's hierarchy of human's psychological needs, which is categorized into five groups. Those are psychological, safety, belongings and love, esteem, self actualization. Indeed, urban parks contributed to fulfill human psychological needs (Huitt, W. 2007).

Park use can be influenced by characteristics of the park (Bedimo-Rung et al. 2005). One of the significant characteristics of place is physical features (Bedimo-Rung et al. 2005). This study investigates the effects of physical features on enhancing usability of Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) Park in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It is important to find out what factors can meet users' needs in an urban park. The enhancement of park use can park ensures success of the park (Harnik, et al. 2006).

By definition, a good park is well used and having high usership. The ultimate validation is that, it meets people's needs. Carr et al. (1992)

categorized people's needs in an urban park into five groups based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, those are comfort, relaxation, passive engagement, active engagement and discovery. Besides, Whyte (1988) pointed out that people's needs in a park can be widely met by physical features.

Urban parks offer a wide range of emotional, social and physical benefits to urban citizens (Kaplan, 1989). Urban parks are important for population health by providing opportunities for activities, enjoyment of nature, social connections, and escape. (Hayward and Weitzer, 1984). Many researchers have confirmed the value of urban parks in terms of health, as well as social and psychological well-being (Ulrich, 1981; Aslanboga & Gül, 1999; Dines & Cattell, 2006). Therefore, it is essential to ensure park success. Whyte (1988) revealed that park use is an important indicator of success.

Studies on urban parks have focused on the relationship between attachment and individual's environmental experiences and behaviors such as perception, preference, and satisfaction. Kyle et al (2004) studied the effect of place attachment on users' perceptions of environments, while Ryan (2005) explored the relationship between place attachment and environmental experience. More recent studies examined the association of park use and physical activity (Ries et al, 2009), measuring place related satisfaction and attachment of national park visitors (Sivalioğlu and Berköz, 2012), and explored the ability of place

attachment to predict place-specific and general pro-environment behavior (Elizabeth, 2010).

Christopher et al (2012) examined the association between place meaning and place attachment within an urban park. His research revealed that meanings associated with physical features influence individual's behavior and attachment. This study is noteworthy in that it highlights the importance of physical features in strengthening place attachment and park use. This finding is supported by pioneering research by Whyte (1988) who claimed that the physical features of an urban park have a profound effect on whether people will use the park or not. Thus, the physical features of a park are important factors that contribute towards enhancing usability of urban park.

This brief review presented above shows that in recent years there have been growing interest in urban parks' studies and also highlights the importance of physical features for the development of successful parks through meeting users' needs. However, all the above mentioned studies have taken place in developed countries. Urban parks in Malaysia have received little attention from researchers.

It is believed that people's perception of cities and also the way they use public open spaces in Malaysia may be different from that of developed nations (DBKL, 2012). Thus, the factors that can influence park use in Malaysia may also be different from other countries. Hence, there was the

need to determine whether physical features influence usability of urban parks in Malaysia. The hypotheses for the present study were adopted from the pioneering research by Whyte (1988) who claimed that physical features influence park use.

In this study the influence of physical features on enhancing usability of KLCC Park is identified. Norhaslina Hassan (2012) pointed out that KLCC Park is designed to provide a myriad of world class urban park for the urbanites to enjoy, enhancing the quality of urban living in the city of Kuala Lumpur. Besides, he added that KLCC is currently the most prominent element and point of reference in the Kuala Lumpur urban landscape. Therefore, it is essential to ensure the success of the park by enhancing the usability of the park through meeting users' needs in KLCC Park which can be provided by physical features.

1.2 Problem Statement

Malaysia as a developing nation is facing a fast urbanization process with the cities growing at a remarkable rate. According to Goh (1991) the urbanization process in Malaysia is accompanied by an increase in the urban population. This urban growth is not the same for all the towns in Malaysia, but in general the state capitals are growing faster than the smaller towns, despite the government's policy of 'balanced regional

development' over the past decades. The government envisages that the country will become a fully industrialized nation by the year 2020, and it is anticipated that 70% of the country's population would be living in urban areas by then (Zainuddin, 1996; Nurhayati & Manhor, 2009). As Malaysia is highly urbanized and industrialized so the demand for urban parks in Malaysia has grown (Maulan, 2002).

In addition to fast industrialization, the large urban migration was another aspect that triggered the growth of urban parks. In the recent decade, urban parks are growing as one of the most essential spaces in the urban structure. An increase in the number of people has extremely changed the quality of life in populated urban areas. City planners in recent decades have started to see urban parks as places that could improve the peace and relaxation of urban life, it offers an area for citizens to escape from the hustle-and-bustle of urban life that forms much of their everyday schedule.

As opposed to urban parks in western countries, urban parks in Malaysia have received very little attention from researchers. The reason could be that Malaysia lacks a parks tradition and history (Mohamed & Nawawi, 2006; Roziya 2013). In an interview with urban planners of Kuala Lumpur City Hall (KLCH), it was claimed that the people's perception of the city in some Asian cultures such as Malaysia was different from that of western countries. In Malaysia in addition, cultural beliefs and the exclusive nature of people's behavior makes them prefer individual activities and communication with one another, rather than group activities (DBKL,

2012). Hence, the city streets have been used more in comparison with other types of public open spaces. Moreover, as implied by Maulan (2002), the current open spaces are not appreciated as the city's heritage; and therefore, the open spaces are regularly under risk of land purchase, changes and adjustment (Federal Division of City and Nation Preparing, 2005). Mansor & Said (2008) had stated that green infrastructure and open spaces in Malaysian towns and cities are not well structured. This issue is reflected in decreased park usage. Moreover, Nurhayati and Manhor (2009) identified that lack of safety in urban parks reduce the usability of urban parks in Malaysia. Furthermore, they added there is a need of understanding what factors can promote usability of urban park in Malaysia. In addition Roziya (2013) investigated that urban parks in Kuala Lumpur are not well-managed and well-maintained which resulted in reducing park use.

Mohamed & Nawawi, (2006) claimed that the KLCC Park seemingly was not meeting the needs of the community, even though it was near other effective public places, such as the mosque, the town center area, public workplaces and shopping complexes. This depends on users' goals which requires an understanding of their needs. In the other words, when a place does not meet users' needs, the users do not use the place.

According to the Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020 the population of teenagers, youth and the aged will increase and therefore this requires greater attention to their needs in terms of facilities. Currently, the needs

in recreational areas are not adequately met and there is a lack of open spaces, recreational areas, and sport facilities, especially within the city center. The Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020, also states that by improving facilities for recreational activities we could also help popularize the parks among both residents of Kuala Lumpur and tourists (KLCH, 2003). Thus, it was clear that there was a need to improve the facilities at urban parks.

In summary, it can be stated that urban parks in Kuala Lumpur are under utilized and do not adequately meet users' needs. There is a need for greater attention to physical features of the parks to provide more facilities for recreational activities.

The objective of the present study is to identify the influence of physical features of KLCC park on the park use. The results of the study will help to understand the importance of physical features in enhancing usability of urban park by meeting users' needs. This is one of the first studies to investigate the importance of physical features in providing users' needs in urban park in Malaysia. This study will make an important contribution in our understanding on the influence of physical features of an urban park on users' needs in the park. The findings will also be useful in guiding future park researchers, planners as well as designers in creating urban parks that meet users needs, as a means to increase the quality of urban life.

1.3 Research questions

Main research question:

What are the influences of physical features on enhancing usability of KLCC Park?

Specific research questions:

What are the physical features of KLCC Park?

What are the influences of physical features on user's needs in KLCC Park?

1.4 Research objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify the physical features of KLCC Park
2. To identify the influence of the physical features on enhancing usability of KLCC Park

1.5 Research hypotheses

Based on the research questions and objectives, referring to previous studies by Whyte (1980) that explores the importance of physical features to create park success, the hypotheses of this study are:

H1: Physical features influence on enhancing usability of KLCC Park.

1.6 The study area

The context of this research is an urban public park in the Kuala Lumpur city center. Parks and open spaces provide a setting for a wide range of social and recreational activities, promote biodiversity and nature conservation; enhance the visual environment and contribute to the economic development of the city (KLCH, 2003).

The KLCC Park in the heart of Kuala Lumpur city center was selected for this study. The KLCC Park is well known as a KLCC landmark. The park was designed to provide greenery to the PETRONAS Twin Towers, and the surrounding area. With the hustle and bustle of the city center the park is a major tourist attraction and is well known to the locals and tourists.

1.7 Scope and limitations of the research

This study are primarily about users' needs in KLCC Park and how these needs can be met by physical features of the park. Studies on users' needs are generally wide, and also there are different type of park as well as physical features of park. Hence, in order to make the study specific, the concepts of the study are narrowed down. The term 'user' is defined accordingly.

a) The place

Place is a space that is valuable for its users. As regards to place, place has three main components, those are physical features, activity and meaning. In this study, just one urban public park was selected as the place which is KLCC Park. KLCC Park is regarded as a type of 'place' where the physical features, activities and meaning coincide. Due to the location of the park which is close to the Twin Towers, the park is well known both locally and internationally. Good public transportation provides easy access for people from all around Kuala Lumpur. In addition, as KLCC Park is surrounded by different types of buildings including commercial buildings, hotels, mosque and residential buildings, it is the focus of a variety of users. More importantly, KLCC Park is an important landmark in Kuala Lumpur city center, and hence KLCC Park has been

the focus of majority of users. Therefore, the KLCC Park is an ideal choice for the study.

b) Urban park

According to Basri (2011), Urban park in Malaysia is a park that is located in urban area and is designed for 50,000 people. As Kuala Lumpur City Hall (2009), indicates the population of KLCC Park at an estimated 50,000 per year that is located in the center of urban area. Thus, based on the classification of parks in Malaysia by Basri (2011), the KLCC Park can be considered as an urban park.

c) Physical features

Bedimo-Rung et al. (2005) classified characteristics of Urban Parks into six groups: physical features; condition; access; aesthetics; safety; and policies. It has been pointed out that characteristics of urban parks contributed to park use. Besides, it has been claimed that the main characteristic of urban parks that influence park use is physical features, so such characteristic can has strong influence on success park too. Thus in this study the main focus is on physical features to find out their influence on park use by providing users' needs.

d) The users

The users are the participants who experience the park. By definition, the user is one who manipulates for a purpose (American Heritage Dictionary, 1985). For example, a person who just sits at the park to view the sunset is also considered as a user.

e) Users' needs in an urban park

Carr et al. (1992) categorized people's needs in an urban park into five groups based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, those are comfort, relaxation, passive engagement, active engagement and discovery. In this study the main focus is to measuring these needs.

1.8 Significance of the research

This research explores the physical features of an urban park and their influence on park use. In addition, it is designed to show how individuals use the park, and how the physical features influence the way they use and experience the park. As Whyte (1988) ascertained, the physical features of an urban park have a profound effect on whether people will use the park or not. Thus, the physical features of a park are also key factors for ensuring success park.

Study about urban park is important as the use of an urban park will result in enhancing the quality of urban life. Therefore, It is important to know what factors can enhance park use. Additionally, since physical features

contributions to the park use, so it is worth to focus on the relationship between physical features and useability of urban park. As there is no previous study about the influence of physical features on park use in Malaysia, so the study will further strengthen the knowledge of urban physical features in the Malaysian context by studying the influence of such features on use of Kuala Lumpur City Centre Park. In addition, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on urban park characteristics, users' needs in an urban park. The study is significant in further informing the what are the physical features influence usage of urban park, also how users use the park and what kind of activity users attached to. Finally, the study reveals how users' needs was met at the park. Thus, the study provides a framework in securing the Kuala Lumpur City Centre's success.

In overall, the findings of the study would reveal the importance of the physical features of the KLCC Park for improving park use. This can assist planners and designers to design urban parks that can meet users' needs so it will lead to increase park use and consequently ensure the success of urban park.

1.9 Research organization

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to the study, which includes a background of the study, a

statement of the problem, the research objectives, scope and limitations of the study as well as organization of the dissertation. The second chapter provides a review of literature to define the key areas of the study and also to find out gaps in previous studies. The third chapter describes the planning involved in the study in detail, how it was conducted and also techniques used to analyze the data as well as describes the pre-test of the questionnaire. Chapter four describes the findings of the study, with a discussion of the results and a summary of the major findings. The final chapter (chapter five) discusses the significance of the findings of the study, implications of the study, limitations of the research, and recommendations for further study as well as the conclusion.

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