



**BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN URBAN PARK MANAGEMENT BY
THE KUALA LUMPUR FEDERAL AUTHORITY, MALAYSIA**

By

NOR AZAH BINTI ABDUL AZIZ

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
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Science**

May 2023

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in
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May 2023

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Park visitation is a popular recreational activity among urban residents. These attractions are related to park's products such as park's facilities, services and programs that enable visitors to enjoy their visit and have memorable experience. This research investigates urban parks management issues. Therefore, the purposes of this research are to identify and understand the management issues that occurs in mostly urban parks as well as to determine the proper management that will associated with best practices to be adopt in order to justify a safe and first-class environment in an urban park. The study's aim is to identify and analyse the Strategic Framework in Integrating "Best Management Practices" (BMP) for urban park in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

As stated in National Landscape Policy action plans under Thrust 3 Strategy 3.2 "Encourage Manageable and Sustainable Landscape Development Programs in Order to Achieve Beautiful Garden Nation". A good management in maintaining the urban parks is to provide a holistic path towards a better-quality living environment. It is an important initiative towards an effective quality of life by providing safe, healthy and clean landscape. Urban park is a valuable asset. Its preservation and maintenance contribute directly to the environment and socio-economic development. The strategic approach and method for this research is by recognizing the existing urban park management principles that are available.

This research used a qualitative method approached. The data collection will be collected through interview with selected respondents such as academicians, landscape architects, botanists, park managers, expertise and local authority. In executing the interview process, the researcher had chosen the semi-structured open-ended questions, in-depth interview method and conducted by site observation to evaluate the BMP performance and validate the written documents.

The findings from this study will enabled park management to identify the BMP that represent the overall urban park management towards sustainability in Kuala Lumpur. The result of the study show that application of BMP is the key to improve the management efficiency and practicality of urban park. At the end of the research, several recommendations of BMP for urban parks in Kuala Lumpur have been put forward as mitigation measures in order to sustain, to plan strategies and way forward towards first-class landscape management.

Keywords: Best Management Practices, management efficiency, first-class landscape management.

SDG: GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, GOAL 13: Climate Action, GOAL 15: Life on Land



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

**AMALAN PENGURUSAN TERBAIK DALAM PENGURUSAN TAMAN
BANDAR OLEH PIHAK BERKUASA TEMPATAN DI KUALA LUMPUR,
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Lawatan taman merupakan aktiviti riadah yang popular di kalangan penduduk bandar. Tarikan ini berkaitan dengan produk taman seperti kemudahan, perkhidmatan dan program taman yang membolehkan pelawat menikmati lawatan mereka dan mempunyai pengalaman yang tidak dapat dilupakan. Penyelidikan ini menyiasat isu pengurusan taman bandar. Oleh itu, tujuan penyelidikan ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti dan memahami isu-isu pengurusan yang berlaku di kebanyakan taman bandar serta untuk menentukan pengurusan yang betul yang akan dikaitkan dengan amalan terbaik untuk diguna pakai bagi mewajarkan persekitaran yang selamat dan kelas pertama dalam sesebuah taman bandar. Matlamat kajian ini adalah untuk membangunkan Rangka Kerja Strategik dalam mengintegrasikan “Amalan Pengurusan Terbaik” untuk taman bandar di Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Seperti yang dinyatakan dalam pelan tindakan Dasar Landskap Negara di bawah Strategi Teras 3.3.2 “Menggalakkan Program Pembangunan Landskap Boleh Diurus dan Mampan demi Mencapai Negara Taman Cantik”. Pengurusan yang baik dalam menyelenggara taman bandar adalah menyediakan laluan holistik ke arah persekitaran hidup yang lebih berkualiti. Ia merupakan satu inisiatif penting ke arah kualiti hidup yang berkesan dengan menyediakan landskap yang selamat, sihat dan bersih. Taman bandar adalah aset yang berharga. Pemeliharaan dan penyelenggaraannya menyumbang secara langsung kepada alam sekitar dan pembangunan sosio-ekonomi. Pendekatan dan kaedah strategik bagi penyelidikan ini adalah dengan mengenali prinsip pengurusan taman bandar sedia ada yang ada.

Penyelidikan ini menggunakan kaedah pendekatan kualitatif. Pengumpulan data akan dikumpul melalui temu bual dengan responden terpilih seperti Ahli Akademik, Arkitek Landskap, Ahli Botani, Pengurus Taman, Ahli Kepakaran dan Pihak Berkuasa Tempatan. Dalam melaksanakan proses temu bual, pengkaji telah memilih soalan terbuka separa berstruktur, kaedah temu bual mendalam dan dijalankan secara pemerhatian tapak untuk menilai prestasi BMP dan mengesahkan dokumen bertulis.

Dapatan daripada kajian ini akan membolehkan pengurusan taman mengenal pasti BMP yang mewakili keseluruhan pengurusan taman bandar ke arah kelestarian di Kuala Lumpur. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan BMP adalah kunci untuk meningkatkan kecekapan pengurusan dan kepraktisan taman bandar. Pada akhir penyelidikan, beberapa cadangan BMP untuk taman bandar di Kuala Lumpur telah dikemukakan sebagai langkah mitigasi untuk mengekalkan kecekapan, merancang strategi dan ke hadapan ke arah pengurusan landskap kelas pertama.

Kata kunci: Amalan Pengurusan Terbaik, kecekapan pengurusan, pengurusan landskap kelas pertama

SDG: MATLAMAT 11: Bandar dan Komuniti Mampan, MATLAMAT 13: Tindakan Terhadap Perubahan Iklim, MATLAMAT 15: Kehidupan di Darat

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
KLCH	Kuala Lumpur City Hall
JLN	Jabatan Landskap Negara
JPBD	Department of Town and Country Planning
NEM	New Economic Model
BMP	Best Management Practices
NKRA	National Key Result Area
NLP	National Landscape Policy
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LMP	Landscape Management Plan
SLM	Sustainable Landscape Management
SULAMs	Sustainable Urban Landscape Management System
EDM	Ecological Design Management
EMS	Environmental Management System
LA	Landscape Architect
BT	Botanist
AC	Academician
PM	Park Managers
LO	Local Authorities
EP	Expertise

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Research Background

Increasing of urban population and the changes in the lifestyle of city dwellers towards a healthy lifestyle increased the development of urban parks in Malaysia. Conurbation creates challenges to urban circle where sustainable development is extensively accepted as a strategic framework in city planning where urban park acts an important part exclusively for the quality life of urbanised people. Urban park has been defined as demarcated open space areas, mostly subjugated by vegetation and water-body, and generally reserved for public use (Konijnendijk, 2013). As stated in National Landscape Policy (National Landscape Department, 2011) which focuses on the wellbeing for the citizen, by providing adequate green spaces for recreation and social interaction in Malaysia. The policy would help not only to achieve a sustainable landscape but also a high-quality urban environment. Urban park creates a conducive ambience through providing eco-friendly facilities. Balancing the usage of natural resources, together with precise preservation, and conservation procedure helps in creating and improving urban park management towards future planning, and development.

Malaysia has formulated the New Economic Model (NEM, 2009) which paved Malaysia's commitment in pursuing sustainable development based on three trusts which is high income, inclusivity, and sustainability. During the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 25 September 2015, Malaysia together with 192 world leaders embraced the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a global obligation towards sustainable, resilient and inclusive development attached with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 169 targets, including 200 indicators inclusively for five dimensions of alphabet P; People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership in pursuing green growth for sustainability and resilience in Malaysia (SDG, UNDP 2016). It aims to create development that balance the social, economic and environment pillars. (Twelfth Malaysia Plan, 2021)

Apparently, when discussing on public park management, the evolution of the management has not kept pace with urban landscape development (Greenhalgh, and Worpole, 1996). Even though some attention has been devoted to the urban landscape development process, rather less attention has been given to urban park management, and the lack of research into management and maintenance issues (Osman, 2006). The management of urban park seems to focus on day-to-day maintenance routine rather than a long-run strategic planning.

Today, urban park is significant asset to many Asian prominent countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. These countries are highly urbanised and industrialised. As stated by Maulan (2002), since 1990s, the need and demand for urban parks have just started to grow in Asian developing countries, namely Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. These countries undergo massive demographic changes impact from rapid urbanisation. Hence to achieve a quality urban park for the citizens, an effort must be developed to make sure it is well managed, maintained and well serve to the citizen. Urban parks stand as a social services provider and very importance for city sustainability that is clearly addressed to strives the 3 pillars of sustainability by the United Nation World Commission on Environment and Development (The Brundtland Report, 1987) which consists of economic growth, environment protection, and social equality.

Landscaping works are often not followed by proper management practices and maintenance programs due to enlightenment of effective supervision and guidance. The variety of urban park design planning concepts and themes which derives as cultural concepts, up to the urban modern concept minimalist design, have a significance role in selecting maintenance mode, to safeguard the design concept and themes (Ahmad, 2003). In Malaysia, urban park is the main places of visit for city dwellers, especially during the weekend. The high cost of living has caused parents to often take their children to have fun and play in urban parks as it is free and there's an ample parking space. Therefore, proper maintenance is very necessary to ensure visitor satisfaction is prioritised.

1.1 Problem Statement

The government has developed many public parks to ensure the recreational need are utilised for the well-being of the people. As Malaysia is gearing towards Sustainable Development Goals, people awareness and concern towards first class landscape maintenance has opened the eyes of all parties involved in this matter. Chemical-free management towards a clean environment towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the hope of urban park visitors. The main intention of developing urban parks is to provide settings and facilities for the recreation and leisure needs of people. The products provided in most urban parks are to attract people to visit and enjoy the recreational opportunities and feel comfy and at ease wand with all the facilities provided. City dwellers have begun to be sensitive about maintenance works in the open area, especially those involving the use of hazardous chemicals high-intensity horticulture practices, and, heavy-duty machinery in open spaces.

1.1.1 Weakness in implementing BMP in park management

The evolution started in 1995, "National Landscape Guidelines" was published by the Department of Town and Country Planning (JPBD) as references for landscape development and maintenance in Malaysia, Sreetheran (2006) and National Landscape Department has continued to revise the version of 2nd Edition on 2008 together with *Panduan Penanaman Pokok Teduhan* and *Piawaian Produktiviti Penyelenggaraan Landskap* in the same year. In 2012, Jabatan Landskap Negara published *Garis Panduan Landskap Negara Taman*, these guidelines area formed with the main emphasis on the provision of presenting a specific reference to professionals, especially to those involved in the landscape architecture industry.

To illustrate the seriousness of urban parks for sustainability, this research analyses strategic urban park management in Kuala Lumpur that marked its movement in Malaysia's evolution. However, Osman (2005) study reveals the problems of urban park planning development and management are similar to many developed countries. He stated that currently there isn't a strategic management framework being applied in Malaysia. Practicing a problem-solving approach based on the involvement and familiarity of the managing organisations, instead of applying a comprehensive strategy to achieve sustainability aims for future prospect.

1.1.2 Ineffective park management procedure

Government of Malaysia has acknowledged the importance of urban parks as open green spaces in the era of nation-building. Urban parks are also a major contributor to the physical and aesthetic quality of the urban landscapes. In the Malaysian Town and Country Planning Act (Amendment), Act A933 in 1995, the provision of a park as part of open space has been made mandatory in the statutory planning procedure and became the condition in layout plan approvals in all new development orders. The planning standard for Open Space and Recreation (JPBD, 2000) dictates that the allocation of these parks provision is for the purpose of recreation and leisure activities. Most local authorities in this country have their own setup to look after the park's development, operation, and maintenance in their locality.

Although many studies have been conducted in attempting problem-solving approach in managing green spaces, most of the research are more towards a specific area rather than an overall solution that can accommodate all types of urban landscape spaces. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether the adoption and implementation of the BMP principles in urban park management are experiences rather than objects, practicality or theory which is difficult to accommodate blue-print to measure quality. Recreation services have a high labour content. Therefore, their provision to park end-users often varies from employee to employee, from user to user and from day to day.

According to Reeves (2000), high quality urban park eventually helps to fabricate a more civilised urban park to the city.

1.1.3 Weakness in developing a strong managing culture of urban park

Issues of public concern on how to develop a strong managing culture in Malaysia urban parks that enhance safety and convenience Malaysia prides with having first class world infrastructure, instead of maintaining those facilities. Inadequate maintenance of public buildings, infrastructure and facilities accelerate to mishap and disaster. As mention by Lee, L.T. (2018), playgrounds that are poorly maintained can cause accidents and injuries. Failure to trim tree branches that blocked signboards along highways and roads inconvenience motorists and lead to road accidents. He added Malaysia is good at providing state-of-art buildings and infrastructure, instead of sustaining these facilities properly. Most of the management have many shortcomings and weaknesses. He also added that every Malaysian and especially authorities must imbibe a strong maintenance and safety culture.

Lee, L.T. (2018) statement reflect the lacking of proper management in maintaining and keeping facilities and infrastructure in good and safe condition for prolong usage. The impact of not doing proper maintenance will cause management costs to increase. This will increase the burden for the top management to obtain financial resources. Figure 1.1 show example of poor management in one of Kuala Lumpur's urban park. The observation triggers the researcher's effort to explore the best management practices to be adopted in Malaysian Urban Parks as it supports 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in line with 12th Malaysian Plan Cluster IV: Environment, Chapter 8: Advancing green growth for sustainability and resilience (Twelfth Malaysia Plan, 2021).



Figure 1.1 : The problem of wild weed is not well maintained in Taman Tasik Titiwangsa

(Source: Personal photograph, Nor Azah Aziz, 2021)

In Malaysia, several urban parks were found to be lacking in attracting or maintaining visitation (Baharuddin, 2006). The park concerned, involved a significant amount of allocation, investment and human resources. These, include Taman Cempaka Bangi (Asmah, 2012), Taman Pertanian Malaysia Shah Alam (Baharuddin, (2006) and Taman Tasik Shah Alam (Abd. Haris, 2013). These parks failed to sustain the visitation after a period of time due to poor facilities management (Abd. Haris, 2017). As the infrastructure and facilities provided had involved a large financial investment by the government, it will be a big loss to the nation especially the Local Authority and community surrounding if the urban park is not fully utilised by the public. Therefore, this study is to focus the strategic framework in integrating Best Management Practices (BMPs) attributes as determinant factors for urban park management in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

1.2 Research Questions

The research acknowledges the absence of proper urban park strategic framework management that causes inefficiency monitoring to Local Authorities in Malaysia. The main research question is **how to identify the best urban park management practices that are appropriate for urban park in Malaysia?**

The following sub-research questions were also developed for this study.

1. What aspects influence urban park management efficiency in Malaysia?
2. What is the best landscape management practices (BMPs) for urban parks?
3. How to promote the BMPs in urban park management?

The above questions help the research explore and assess urban park management current practices in Malaysia, determining principles of BMPs and recommend a strategic framework in integrating BMPs for urban park in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

1.3 Aim of the study

The study's aim is to identify and analyse the Strategic Framework in Integrating "Best Management Practices" (BMP) for urban park in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

1.4 Objectives of study

This study will anticipate the following objectives:

- a) To recognise the angles that could influence the efficiency of the current practices in managing urban parks in Malaysia.
- b) To identify and analyse the principles of BMPs in urban parks management.
- c) To recommend a strategic framework in integrating best management practices (BMP) in urban park management in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

1.5 The Scope of the Research

The research will focus on best management practices that can be applied at urban park in Malaysia. It covers the significance of BMPs, its development, and potential issues and problems that could affect park management. The research findings are significant to improve the current practice and could become a foundation for the development of the Landscape Act. This study is significant to the objective of BMP that gearing towards improving the quality of environment, quality of information delivery and work result efficiency

1.6 The Thesis Structure

The research is presented in five chapters. It is organised as follows:

Chapter 1 provide an introduction and a background study that help develop the framework of the research. It includes the research background and context, aims and objectives. It also deliberates the significance of the research.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of urban park chronologies and its management phases. It will also discuss in detail the BMPs Principles related to landscape management including principles, significance, development, issues and problems that generally happen in urban park management identified from the literature review. The chapter present the researcher's final BMPs principles outcome from the theoretical framework. This chapter also describes the theories of the study on the attributes. Theoretical framework is set up as a primary research based on the literature review earlier. A comparison between the management elements in the existing management guidelines and the existing approaches and ideas deliberates management issues and how it influences future development of urban park management practices in Malaysia context. Finally, this chapter provides insights into the

issues and problems that will direct the need of BMPs for the urban park management in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Chapter 3 discusses research methodology. It covers the BMP Principles which were identified under theoretical literature analysis in Chapter 2. This chapter will deliberate the development of the research approach and clarifying the whole research analysis process. It will explain the option of the research methods for the data collection and the justification for selecting of the respondents.

Chapter 4 presents the outcomes, analysis and discussion from the interview's session, site observation and document studies. On top of that this chapter highlights the respondent's feedback and comments on the issues and problems facing park management. It then discusses the significance of adopting the BMP Principles for the urban park management.

Chapter 5 presents the major outcomes of the research. It consists of the conclusions and recommendations that lead to applying BMP for Urban Parks in Malaysia. This chapter ends with remarks about the contribution of this research to the knowledge enrichment of BMP in Urban Park Management.

1.7 Conclusion

The primary objective of this research is to identifies the best management principles suitable for achieving a sustainable urban park in Kuala Lumpur. Understanding the growth and progress of urban parks in Malaysia will justify changing the park management method to a more ecologically sustainable approach. Finally, this research concluded with the need for integrating of Best Management Practices from the standpoint of urban park management that can be implement by the Kuala Lumpur Federal Authority.

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