UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

INVESTIGATING THE FUNCTIONALITY AND CONSTRAINTS OF URBAN POCKET PARKS IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

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FRSB 2020 13

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By

PRAVEENA A/P BALAI KERISHNAN

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

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

INVESTIGATING THE FUNCTIONALITY AND CONSTRAINTS OF URBAN POCKET PARKS IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

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July 2020

Chair : Sreetheran Maruthaveeran, PhD
Faculty : Design and Architecture

Pocket parks are also known as mini-parks or vest-pocket parks because it is an urban open space at a very small scale. These parks were introduced in dense city areas to contribute to the environment, social and health benefits. Despite this, few studies have tackled the functionality and constraint of use of these parks. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the usability pattern and constraints of pocket parks in a Malaysian context through survey. The survey consist of N=390 respondents comprising of pocket parks users and non-users aged between 18–60 years old. Overall, there are slightly more female than male using the pocket parks in Kuala Lumpur and most frequent age group was people between 18-30 years old. Most of the respondents visit the pocket parks 'sometimes'; this is not surprising as 78% of them have to travel more than 300 m to reach the pocket parks nearest to them. Only 59 respondents use the park frequently; while 26 respondents have never used the parks. Most of the respondents visit the pocket parks by foot. Based on the statistical data, majority of the respondents prefer to visit the pocket parks in group; however, there was no significant positive association between the social factor companionship (group or alone) with the time spent in the parks. The statistical data also shows that the respondents prefer to spend longer time at the park in the evening and morning. Majority of the respondents use the pocket parks to 'rest and reduce stress'. Respondents also use the parks 'to take a shortcut' and 'to meet others'. Both male and female have similar motives of using the parks; however, of the 30 respondents that use the pocket parks as an 'easiest access to nature', 73.3% are female. Majority of the respondents stated 'time' as their major constraint in using the parks. Apart from 'time', respondents are also concerned about 'crowded activity area', 'poor hygiene of other park users' well as 'safety aspect'. The presence of 'homeless people' living in the park area and the presence of 'foreign workers using the park' also limited the park functionality. The respondents opted for pocket parks that are 'serene', yet the survey documented other preferences such as food trucks/bazaar and suggestions for

more activities such as zumba or aerobics. Food is one of the integral factors that brought more users to the pocket parks in Kuala Lumpur. This finding contradicts to small urban park users from other countries that visit the pocket parks as an opportunity to access nature for relaxation.

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

KAJIAN KE ATAS KEBOLEHGUNAAN DAN KEKANGAN MENGGUNAKAN TAMAN POKET BANDAR DI KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

Oleh

PRAVEENA A/P BALAI KERISHNAN

Julai 2020

Pengerusi : Sreetheran Maruthaveeran, PhD
Fakulti : Rekabentuk dan Senibina

Taman poket juga dikenali sebagai taman mini atau taman poket-mini kerana ia adalah kawasan terbuka bandar pada skala yang sangat kecil. Taman-taman ini diperkenalkan di kawasan bandar yang padat bagi menyumbang kepada faedah alam sekitar, sosial dan kesihatan. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian berkenaan penggunaan dan kekangan menggunakan taman poket masih terhad. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan mengkaji corak kebolehgunaan dan kekangan taman poket dalam konteks Malaysia melalui kaji selidik. Kaji selidik ini merangkumi N=390 responden yang terdiri daripada pengguna dan bukan pengguna taman poket berumur antara 18-60 tahun Secara keseluruhan, terdapat lebih wanita berbanding lelaki yang menggunakan taman poket di Kuala Lumpur dan kumpulan umur yang paling kerap adalah pengguna antara 18-30 tahun. Tiada korelasi antara jantina, bangsa, tahap pendidikan, status perkahwinan dan pekerjaan; namun terdapat korelasi negatif yang signifikan untuk masa yang dihabiskan di taman berdasarkan kumpulan umur (r=-0.107, p<0.05). Sebilangan besar responden mengunjungi taman poket ‘kadang-kadang’; ini tidak menghairankan kerana 78% daripada mereka harus melalui jarak lebih dari 300 m untuk ke taman poket yang berdekatan dengan mereka. Hanya 59 responden kerap menggunakan taman poket; manakala 26 responden tidak pernah menggunakan taman-taman ini. Sebilangan besar responden juga mengunjungi taman poket dengan ‘berjalan kaki’. Berdasarkan data statistik, majoriti responden lebih suka mengunjungi taman poket secara berkumpulan; namun, tidak ada hubungan positif yang signifikan antara faktor sosial (kumpulan atau bersendirian) dengan masa yang dihabiskan di taman. Data statistik juga menunjukkan bahawa responden lebih suka menghabiskan masa lebih lama di taman pada waktu ‘petang’ dan ‘pagi’. Sebilangan besar responden menggunakan taman poket untuk ‘berehat dan mengurangkan tekanan’. Responden juga menggunakan taman poket untuk ‘mengambil jalan pintas’ dan ‘bertemu orang lain’. Lelaki dan wanita mempunyai motif penggunaan taman poket yang sama; namun, daripada 30 responden yang menggunakan taman poket sebagai 'akses paling mudah ke kawasan alam semula jadi', 73.3% adalah wanita. Sebilangan besar responden menyatakan ‘masa’ sebagai kekangan utama mereka dalam menggunakan taman. Selain 'masa', responden juga bimbang dengan 'kawasan aktiviti yang sesak', 'tahap kebersihan pengguna taman yang lain ' serta 'aspek

keselamatan'. Kehadiran ‘golongan gelandangan’ yang tinggal di kawasan taman serta kehadiran ‘pekerja asing yang menggunakan taman’ juga membataskan fungsi taman poket. Responden memilih taman poket yang ‘tenang’, namun hasil kajian mendokumentasikan pilihan lain seperti trak makanan/bazar dan cadangan untuk lebih banyak aktiviti seperti zumba atau aerobik di kawasan taman poket ini. Makanan adalah salah satu faktor penting yang menarik lebih ramai pengguna ke taman poket di Kuala Lumpur. Penemuan ini berbeza dengan pengguna taman poket dari negara barat yang mengunjungi taman poket sebagai peluang untuk mengakses alam semula jadi bagi berehat dan menenangkan fikiran.

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Thank you.

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

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
ART	Attention Restoration Theory
CCZ	City Centre Zone
CETDEM	Centre for Environment, Technology and Development, Malaysia
DBKL	Kuala Lumpur City Hall or *Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur*
ETP	Economic Transformation Programme, Malaysia
GTP	Government Transformation Programme, Malaysia
NKEA	National Key Economic Areas, Malaysia
NRPA	National Recreation and Park Association, the United States
POS	Public open space
QOL	Quality of life
RAND	'Research and Development' Corporation
SE-Model	Socio-Ecological Model
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SPUGS	Small public urban green space
TCPD	Town and Country Planning Department
UGS	Urban green space
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Pocket parks are also recognized as mini-parks or vest-pocket parks, as they are small urban open spaces (Blake, 2017). These parks were introduced as the main green space in dense city areas to benefit large number of urban dwellers in terms of environment, social and health benefits (Seymour, 1969; Peschardt, Schipperijn and Stigsdotter, 2012; Shirleyana, 2013; Shahhoseini and Maulan, 2015; Abd El Aziz, 2017; Mesimäki, Hauru and Lehvävirta, 2019). Although considered as a scaled-down neighbourhood park, Blake (2017) reported that these small parks can promote small gathering or casual meeting with friends as well as providing the space for relaxing, for having lunch and for children's active play. According to Seymour (1969), pocket parks could perform a practical recreational function as well as contributing to the preservation of the city as a suitable place for residential and commercial activities. Similarly Armato (2017) stated that those who have pocket parks close to their home particularly in cities that lack green outdoor spaces are certainly fortunate especially when for many years, pocket parks were scattered over the urban environment without proper context.

Recent studies have documented the benefit of pocket parks for socialising, rest and restitution (Peschardt et al., 2012; Peschardt, Stigsdotter and Schipperrijn, 2016; Danford, Strohbach, Warren and Ryan, 2018); physical activities (Cohen et al., 2014); recreational and experiential potentials (Mesimäki et al., 2019) as well as restoration (Nordh, Hartig, Hagerhalla and Fry, 2009; Nordh, 2011; Peschardt and Stigsdotter, 2013; Duggal and Chib, 2014; Peschardt et al., 2016). Moreover, pocket parks were proven to contribute positively towards the urban microclimate (Lau et al., 2012; Lin, Lau and Gou, 2017; Park, Kim, Lee, Park and Jeong, 2017); and support urban biodiversity as well as the ecological function including the diversity of bird species in small parks (Jasmani, Ravn and van den Bosch, 2016).

More urban nature related studies had indicated that park vicinity and accessibility, the pattern of park use, qualitative factors such as the attractiveness of the natural elements including trees, grass and water features, as well as the variations of activities that can be conducted in the parks, are the key success factors for parks design and use (Jim, 2004; Wood et al., 2010; Sinou and Kenton, 2013; Haaland and van den Bosch, 2015). Accessibility and the time taken to access a public park often influences the level or frequency of use of the park (Grahn and Stigsdotter, 2003; Nielsen and Hansen, 2006; Neuvonen et al., 2007; Breuste and Rahimi, 2015).

Zube and Moore (1987), reported that during the last few decades, open spaces particularly public and neighborhood parks, play areas, as well as plazas have attracted significant research attention. Of these, public parks were the most frequently studied open spaces. Further to this, Peschardt et al. (2012) reported that research on small-scale urban green spaces or pocket parks are still limited. Similarly, Cheisura (2004) stated that not much attention has been paid to urban parks in cities, especially parks in the community where people live and work; and this includes small-scale green areas. Besides, most of the studies on pocket parks were conducted in temperate regions and did not address the benefits as well as the functionality of pocket parks in tropical countries.

As a tropical country, most of the cities in Malaysia have significant green areas. Nevertheless, due to industrialisation and urban growth, the role of urban green spaces in Malaysia has become more vital in contributing to the quality of life in urban environment (Aziz, 2012). Therefore, more recreational options are provided by integrating open spaces with green walkways and blue corridors as well as activating these areas with new functionality to attract not only tourist but locals and local residents, especially in the City Centre Zone (CCZ) of Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia (Draft Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2040 (KLSP2040), DBKL, 2020). Moreover, like any other large cities, densification in Kuala Lumpur is inevitable (Nochian, 2015). Ibrahim, Md Dali and Che Haron (2016) also reported on the issues and problem in managing open spaces in Peninsular Malaysia. Their study highlighted the problems met by the local authorities in the administration of open spaces; and further suggested that extra attention needs to be given to the aspect of management to sustain these open spaces. Likewise, many governments are struggling to maintain the parks they already have, which makes the development of new parks nearly impossible (Harnik, 2008). Nevertheless, the 11th Malaysian Plan 2016-2020 has identified the development of good green open spaces as one of the strategies of the government to raise the living standards in the cities.

While the establishment of more good green open spaces are in the pipeline, it is important to understand the different views and preferences of parks users for an effective park design and to promote the parks usage (Sreetheran, 2010; Sakip, Akhir and Omar, 2015; Santiago, Gladkikh, Betancourt and Vargas, 2015; Paul and Nagendra, 2017; Nath, Han and Lechner, 2018). Furthermore, the established parks should cater to the multiracial community in Malaysia, mainly in an urban area (Sakip, Akhir and Omar, 2015).

According to Hoyle, Hitchmough and Jorgensen (2017), the design and optimal management of a public green infrastructure is strongly dependent upon the understanding toward the association between aesthetic experience, restorativeness and well-being, as well as the perceived and actual biodiversity. In Lee, Jordan and Horsley's study (as cited in Roberts, McEachan, Margary, Conner and Kellar, 2016), the beneficial health effects of green space is more likely the results of the usage and the activities conducted at the park rather than the presence of the park alone. On the other hand, Saw (2015) argued that neither the access nor the use of green space among Singaporeans significantly contributed to their well-being or health. This finding

contradicts the universality relationship between general well-being and the usage of urban environment from temperate regions.

Hence, this study aims to understand the functionality and constraints of use of open spaces in the capital of Malaysia, with particular interest on the urban pocket parks from the CCZ. Most of the pocket parks in Kuala Lumpur are located in the city centre. With the initiative to convert more spaces between building and downtown back lanes into public spaces such as open plazas and pocket park for attractions and for relaxation (KLSP2040, 2020), understanding the functionality and the constraints that limit the non-participation will contribute to improving the compatibility of the spaces for the urbanites in the CCZ. This study applied the socio-ecological model (SE-Model) as a research framework for analysing the functionality and usage of urban pocket parks.

1.2 Statement of Research Problems

According to Seymour (1969), small urban green spaces or pocket parks were introduced to benefit citizen of all ages by promoting recreation, reset and relaxation. Despite this, limited studies have investigated the usage, benefit and users' perception towards small urban parks, particularly in the tropics. The usage and perception towards these parks are crucial since the park spaces are often overlooked and degraded for other land uses, mainly in the cities undergoing rapid urbanisation (Haaland and van den Bosch, 2015). Besides, there is inadequate number of open spaces such as plazas and smaller parks within the Kuala Lumpur CCZ district and neighbourhood areas to contribute to the city amenity (Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020, Kuala Lumpur City Hall (Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur—DBKL), 2018); and the available parks are inadequately used due to cultural difference or other undesirable factors.

1.2.1 Limited Studies

Most studies associated with pocket parks had particularly examined the usage pattern in American or European context (Nordh et al., 2009; Nordh et al., 2011; Peschardt et al., 2012; Nordh and Østby, 2013; Peschardt, and Stigsdotter, 2013; Peschardt et al., 2014; Peschardt, and Stigsdotter, 2014; Cohen et al., 2014; Lorenzo et al., 2016; Currie, 2016; Danford et al., 2018). However, limited research has investigated the usage, functionality and constraints associated with pocket parks, mainly in an Asian context. Besides, most of the available literatures on urban green spaces in Malaysia are associated how urban green space can enhance biodiversity (Karuppannan, Baharuddin, Sivam and Daniels, 2014), the usage pattern of urban parks (Sreetheran, 2017; Nurhayati and Amanina, 2018), the change in urban forest cover (Kanniah and Ho, 2017), crime-related fear in the Kuala Lumpur urban parks (Sreetheran and van den Bosch, 2015) as well as socioecological perspective towards the use and constraints of urban greenway (Pa Theeba Paneerchelvam et al., 2020). Several conference papers that were published recently emphasized on pocket parks through the open space categorisation using classification system (Nochian et al., 2015); introduced a method to assess small urban parks through social-ecological characteristics and factors

(Jasmani, Ravn and van den Bosch, 2015) and a case study on how the characteristics of small urban parks influence bird diversity (Jasmani et al., 2016). One paper was published recently on the restorative environment offered by a pocket park in Kuala Lumpur (Hashim et al., 2019). For that reason, this study proposes to gather data and information from 10 urban pocket parks in the CCZ of Kuala Lumpur by employing quantitative research method to identify the functionality and constraints of use of urban pocket parks in an Asian context.

1.2.2. Converted into Other Land Uses

Despite the fact that the benefits of urban green spaces are progressively perceived in Malaysia, the country is still facing a big challenge on the provision of urban green spaces (Aziz, 2012). According to Teh (1989), significant urban areas like Kuala Lumpur and its surroundings, have seen dramatic land use changes caused by the establishment of commercial areas, including the overall conversion of forests and green space for development. Furthermore, the decline in public open space in the City Centre has been consistent mainly because of the land conversion for other uses (Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020, 2018). The Kuala Lumpur City Plan 2020 (2009) reported that the loss of green areas, pollution, and general challenges to quality of life in Kuala Lumpur were contributed by amassed infill, density as well as encroachment. Unfortunately, pocket parks are also among the small public urban green susceptible to land use changes and often converted for other uses (Senior Assistant Director (Landscape), DBKL, pers. comm., 20 February 2018).

In the recent years, several online news portals have reported on the objections and enquiries regarding conversion of urban green spaces in Kuala Lumpur into other uses. One example is the conversion of a green space in Medan Imbi that was earlier proposed for the development of two pocket parks under the jurisdiction of DBKL into a building complex in 2017 as shown in Figure 1.1. Public intervention and user perception can contribute tremendously in planning, designing and supporting urban green spaces however, according to Kabisch, Qureshi and Haase (2015), the general understanding towards the interaction issues between humans and urban green space are still incomplete to provide the required orientation for urban planners. To help bridge the gap between the importance of urban pocket parks for the urbanites, with the development of more multifunctional green infrastructures in the Kuala Lumpur, this study will identify the urbanites' preferences towards the presence, use and functionality of urban pocket parks in the CCZ.

MPs Bewildered By Mystery Building In Medan Imbi

• March 7, 2017

A mystery project now under construction on the former site of a park in Medan Imbi, Kuala Lumpur has earned the ire of several members of Parliament (MPs) and stakeholders, reported The Star.

This comes as the green space and playground was removed in October 2016 without Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) undergoing through the standard operating procedure of having a project notice or objection notice board at the site prior to construction.

"We do not know what the building is going to be used for," said Bukit Bintang MP Fung Kui Lun, who plan to raise the matter up in the next Parliament seating.

"Our enquiries and objection letters to DBKL have gone unanswered for more than six months... How can a green lung be sold off without an open tender or a development start without a public objection hearing?"

DBKL had announced in March 2016 plans to make the park a part of a community-oriented rejuvenation initiative.

Dubbed Signature Park Programme, the initiative was launched by DBKL with community-based urban rejuvenation organisation Think City Sdn Bhd at the junction of Jalan Khoo Teik Ee and Medan Imbi.

Proposed plans for the project included children's playground, seating area and elevated walkway.

Months later, people were surprised that the plans failed to materialise, and found a building under construction instead, said Fung.

Segambut MP Lim Lip Eng said a stop-work order should have been issued by DBKL upon receiving objection letters.

A Think City spokesman revealed that the organisation had submitted a proposal for two pocket parks to DBKL, which the latter supported in principle.

"That led to our first engagement session with the local community to get their feedback on the proposal, which is a key component of our community-centric approach to improving public spaces," said the spokesman.

"Since then, we were informed that a different direction would be taken so there was no further advancement made in this project."

Image sourced from The Star

Radin Ghazali, Content Writer at PropertyGuru, edited this story. To contact her about this or other stories email radin@propertyguru.com.my

Figure 1.1: An online article on propertyguru.com.my on the conversion of a green space into a building in Kuala Lumpur dated 7 March 2017.

1.2.3 Undesirable Factors

The desire to be in contact with nature plays a crucial role in providing the prospects for physical activities and to fulfil the important immaterial human needs such as relaxation (Krieger et al., 2009; Wood, Hooper, Foster and Bull, 2017); restoration and health benefits (Kaplan et al., 1998; Lorenzo, Corraliza, Collado and Sevillano, 2015); as well as improving the neighbourhood quality of life (Currie, 2016). A study on the barriers to recreational participation identified 10 recreational barrier factors which include; time constraints, money, leisure facilities, family concern as well as lack of awareness, interests and social skills as leisure constraints (Henderson et al., 1988). In the CCZ of Kuala Lumpur, the increasing concern towards homelessness in parks indicates a strong and aptly example of conflict with the aesthetic benefits of the urban parks for the urbanites. The DBKL has revealed that an estimated number of 800 homeless individuals live in the CCZ in 2018 (KLSP2040, 2020). The heavy presence of homeless individuals on public parks was also reported in many communities including the United States (Rose, 2019). An online report regarding this conflict obtained from an online news portal is shown in Figure 1.2. Based on the report, the park was showing signs of decay and there is an ongoing concern regarding the prevalence of homeless individuals and migrant workers who lived in this park. Presumably the urban pocket parks in the CCZ of Kuala Lumpur are inadequately used due to cultural difference or the undesirable factors caused by the presence of the unsheltered homelessness forced to sleep, eat, and live in the urban parks; this study explore which factors deter the use of pocket parks among urbanites in the Kuala Lumpur CCZ. Moreover, it is important to know how and why urban dwellers interact with nature.

Utama Spotlight Xpose Lokal Global Sukan Travel Video

RENCANA
Ain Arabia Bukit Bintang Jadi 'Hotel' Penagih, Warga Asing

RENCANA
Gunung Kinabalu: Impian Yang Belum Pasti Jadi Realiti

RENCANA
MyRentak Perkenal Seni Tari Irama Malaysia

RENCANA

Ain Arabia Bukit Bintang Jadi 'Hotel' Penagih, Warga Asing

Isnin, 08 Jun 2015
0:09 PM

SEJAK 10 tahun lalu 'Ain Arabia' menjadi salah satu lokasi tarikan bagi para pelancong di Bukit Bintang keranak kedudukannya yang terletak di tengah-tengah Kuala Lumpur.

'Ain Arabi' yang bermaksud 'Eye of Arabia' dibina di atas tapak seluas 0.2 hektar itu di persimpangan Jalan Berangan dan Jalan Beremi, bertujuan untuk dijadikan sebagai Taman Arab dengan hiasan teko gangsa gergasi yang mengeluarkan air dari muncung panjang ke dalam air pancut untuk mencerminkan tema di padang pasir.

Projek oleh Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL) ini turut melibatkan pereka-pereka dari Syria dan Uzbekistan.

Projek bernilai RM10 juta itu juga turut melibatkan pembinaan pintu gerbang di tempat masuk taman tersebut serta bangku, gazebo, lampu hiasan, pasu bunga, dan juga pokok-poko sawit.

Ain Arabi dibina bagi menyediakan tempat rehat untuk pelancong Arab yang semakin bertambah di Kuala Lumpur khususnya sekitar Julai dan Ogos.

Figure 1.2(a): An online news report related to homelessness in an urban pocket park in the CCZ.

Tetapi hari ini, tempat yang popular satu ketika dahulu bukan sahaja telah rosak malah dijadikan tempat melepak penagih dadah dan juga mereka yang tiada tempat tinggal.

Terdapat juga para peniaga di situ yang mendakwa taman berkenaan kini sudah bertukar menjadi tempat melepak pekerja-pekerja warga asing.

Menurut salah seorang pekerja Alam Flora, Sirul Lokman berkata, warga asing menjadikan air pancut di situ sebagai tempat untuk mandi serta mencuci pakaian.

"Kita boleh lihat mereka mengeringkan pakaian yang dicuci di bangku-bangku berdekatan.

"Jika kamu lihat dengan lebih dekat lagi, mereka meninggalkan berus dan sabun yang tersorok di beberapa sudut di situ," katanya lagi.

Menurut Sirul, muncung panjang pada teko gangsa tersebut digunakan untuk menyembunyikan tikar alas tidur dan bekas yang dipenuhi dengan barangan keperluan harian mereka seperti sikat, kasut, dan selipar.

Penyelia bangunan yang bekerja berhampiran taman tersebut, Mohd Alif Subramaniam berkata, kawasan itu tidak lagi dipenuhi dengan pelancong tetapi dengan penagih dadah dan warga asing.

"Tiada lagi pelancong yang mahu berkunjung ke situ.

"Kawasan ini telah menjadi tempat lepak penagih dadah dan tempat tinggal bagi warga asing.

"Saya telah melihat banyak pergaduhan berlaku di sini termasuk di kalangan warga asing," katanya.

Seorang pengurus hotel yang mahu dikenali sebagai Jerica berkata, 'Ain Arabia' tidak lagi menarik perhatian pelancong Arab seperti dahulu.

"Dulu pelancong Arab sering melepak di kawasan ini tetapi sekarang tidak lagi. Tempat ini sekarang digunakan oleh mereka yang tidak mempunyai tempat tinggal serta beberapa warga asing untuk tidur pada waktu malam.

"Walaupun menjadikan kawasan tersebut sebagai tempat tinggal dan tempat tidur, mereka tidak pernah mengganggu kenteteraman pelancong yang menginap di hotel kami," kata Jerica.

StarMetro telah membuat tinjauan di kawasan tersebut minggu lalu dan terkejut apabila mendapati ia berada di dalam keadaan yang mengecewakan.

Ketika dibuka pada 2005, kawasan tersebut dipenuhi dengan rumput hijau yang subur dan laman tersebut menonjolkan seni bina Arab.

Di situ juga terdapat sebuah pokok beringin besar yang telah lama dipelihara oleh DBKL kerana usia dan keindahannya.

Hari ini, teko gangsa gergasi itu dipenuhi dengan sampah sarap dan tidak lagi mengeluarkan pancutan air.

Kawasan air pancut telah ditutup untuk mengelakkan orang ramai daripada mandi di situ tetapi masij ramai yang membuang sampah sarap dan puntung rokok ke dalamnya.

Apa yang lebih menyedihkan apabila pokok beringin lama itu kini telah menjadi tunggul kayu.

"Ia kelihatan kering apabila pihak DBKL mula mencurah simen ke tanah.

"Sungguh merugikan kerana ia adalah pokok yang cantik," kata Mohd Alif.

Tags/Kata Kunci:
Ain Arabia, Bukit Bintang, DBKL

Figure 1.2(b): An online news report related to homelessness in an urban pocket park in the CCZ (cont.).

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

Research Aim

This research is aimed at investigating the functionality of the urban pocket parks in the CCZ of Kuala Lumpur and to identify the constraints that limit the usage of pocket parks among the urbanites.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the functionality of the urban pocket parks among urbanites in the Kuala Lumpur CCZ.
2. To identify the constraints which deter the usage of pocket parks among urbanites in the Kuala Lumpur CCZ.
3. To provide recommendations to improve the usability pattern of the pocket parks in the Kuala Lumpur CCZ.

1.4 Research Questions

Main Research Questions

What is the current usability pattern and constraints of using (how) pocket parks (what) in the Kuala Lumpur CCZ; and how it can be improved to encourage greater use among the urbanites (who)?

The following are the sub-research questions;

1. Who uses the pocket parks in Kuala Lumpur?
2. How are the pocket parks used?
3. What are the constraints that hinder the urbanites in Kuala Lumpur from using the pocket parks?
4. What are the characteristics of pocket parks preferred by the user in Kuala Lumpur?

1.5 Hypothesis

The usage of green space depends on the personal preferences of individuals towards nature. This study is designed with the assumption that the personal factor or demographic groups' preferences may impact how small urban green spaces are used. Therefore, there following assumptions form the basis of this study.

Null Hypothesis (H^0): There are significant differences in pocket park usage within the different demographic groups.

Alternative Hypothesis (H^A): There are no significant differences in pocket park usage within the different demographic groups.

1.6 Significance of the Study

According to Paul and Nagendra (2017), public and stakeholders' diversity of knowledge as well as the consideration towards the park users' viewpoint and preferences contributes effectively to the planning and management of urban nature. In the same vein, this research will contribute to the limited knowledge on users' perceptions of pocket parks in CCZ of Kuala Lumpur as well as the factors influencing the perceptions. The findings are expected to assist the local authority and park managers such as the DBKL to improve the characteristics of the pocket parks in Kuala Lumpur to ensure continuous use and its benefits to the urbanites. Although the provision for urban green space is described as the biggest challenge in compact city environment particularly during densification, this study will emphasize on the need to offset loss of urban green space with more small public green spaces in the CCZ of Kuala Lumpur. Additionally, the findings will contribute to the 'Urban Space, Nodes, Plazas and Parks Policy' under the Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020 (DBKL, 2018) to further develop pocket parks and plazas in the CCZ as well as urban centres to green and provide places to relax in the city.

Besides, for the most parts, studies in the temperate region had examined on the pocket park usage (Nordh et al., 2009; Nordh et al., 2011; Peschardt et al., 2012; Nordh and Østby, 2013; Peschardt, and Stigsdotter, 2013; Peschardt et al., 2014; Peschardt, and Stigsdotter, 2014; Cohen et al., 2014; Lorenzo et al., 2016; Currie, 2016; Danford et al., 2018) limited research has investigated the usage and constraints of pocket parks among residents, mainly in an Asian context. Therefore, this study will fill this gap by understanding the usability pattern of pocket park and constraints associated with the use in a tropical context mainly among the diverse ethnicity community and environment in Kuala Lumpur.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The pocket parks in the CCZ of Kuala Lumpur are mostly inhabited by the homeless communities and migrant workers at nights. This restricts the number of park users and also raises safety concerns of park usage at late hours. The risk of visiting the park during the late hours limits the accessibility of the researcher to further investigate the functionality and constraints associated with the urban pocket parks usage at night. Therefore, study is only focused on the functionality and constraints associated with the urban pocket parks usage during the day time.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

Figure 1.1 presents the flowchart that represents the organisation of this thesis. This thesis is organised into five (5) chapters; with a possible publication plan decided during the thesis writing. Chapter 1 consists of the introduction to this study including the statement of problem, research aim, objectives, hypothesis as well as the limitation of study and research framework. Chapter 2 covers the existing literature review on urban green spaces, the urban green space in Malaysia, issues and problems, pocket parks, the benefits of pocket parks as well as an overview of the Socio Ecological Model (SE-Model). The following chapter explains on the research design and the approaches considered for the data collection and analysis; including description and background of the study area. The results and the overall findings of the survey are discussed in Chapter 4; and this includes the functionality and constraints associated with pocket parks in the CCZ of Kuala Lumpur. The final chapter summarises and concludes this research thus providing recommendations for future research on the usage of pocket parks.

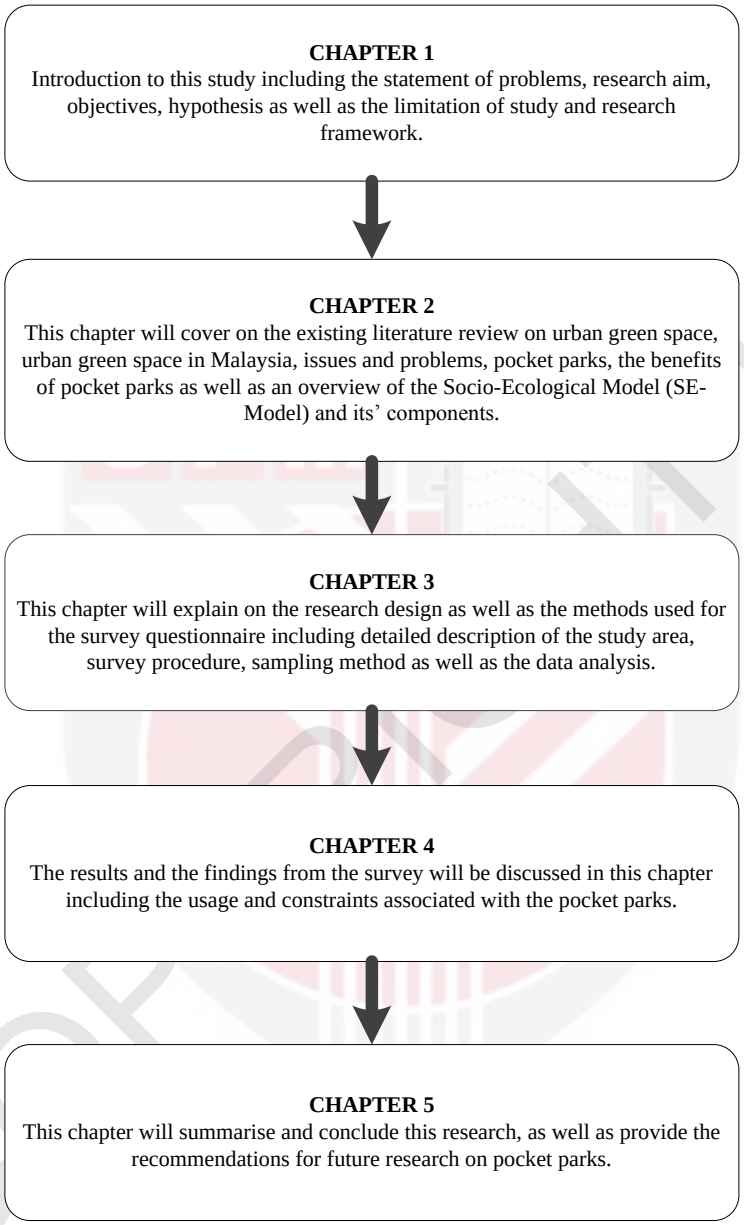

Figure 1.3: Flowchart representing the organisation of this thesis.

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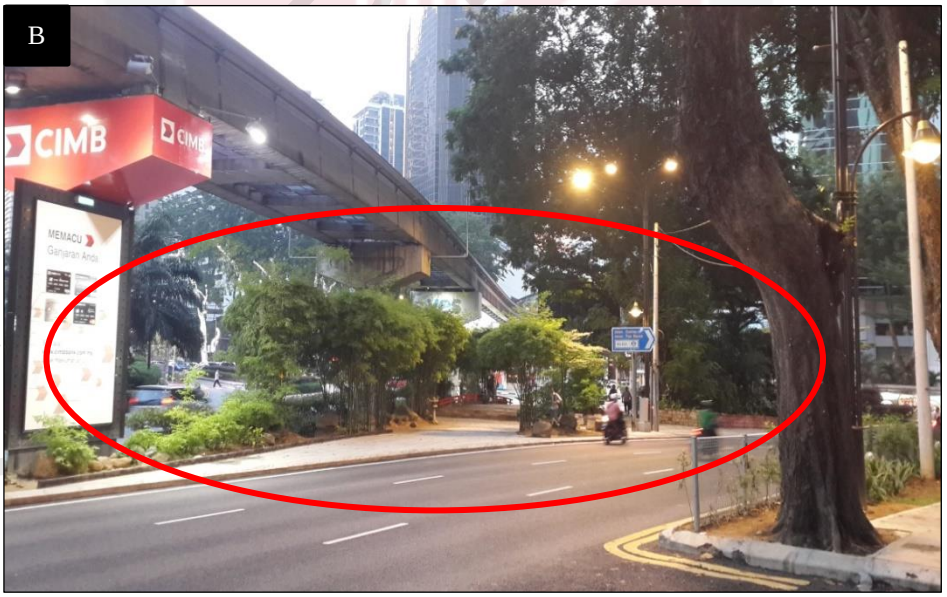
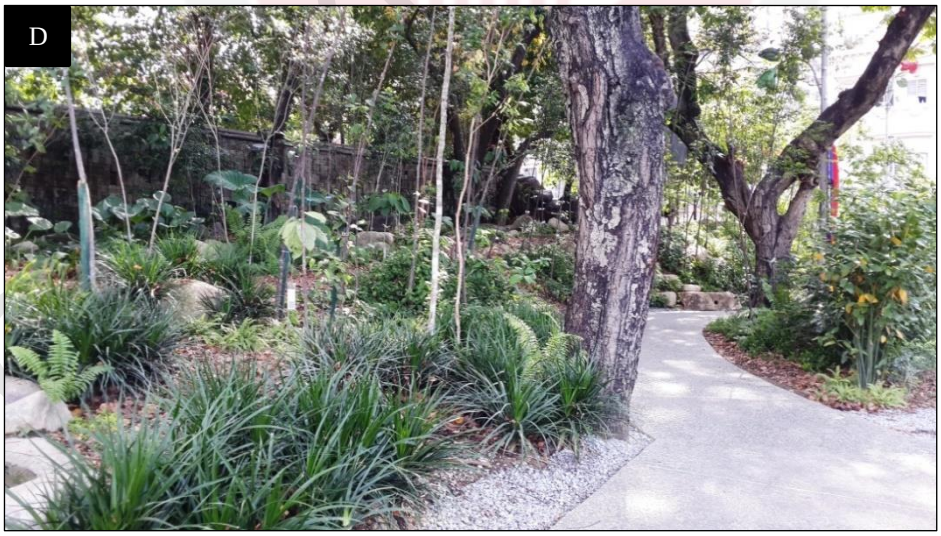
APPENDICES

A. The Laman Tuanku Abdul Rahman that was undergoing renovation.



B. The Laman Jepun that was excluded because it is located in the middle of a busy road (Jalan Sultan Ismail off Jalan Raja Chulan).

C. The waterfall garden along Jalan Tun Perak (online resources). Picture taken before the revitalisation.



D. The Laman Tun Perak after the revitalisation in 2017.

BIODATA OF STUDENT

I am Praveena a/p Balai Kerishnan. I was born in Kuala Lumpur on 1 September 1984. I have completed my degree in Forestry Science majoring in Nature Parks and Recreation from University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) in 2007. Currently, I am working as a Research Officer (Non-research and management scope) in Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), in Kepong, Selangor.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Praveena, B., Sreetheran, M. & Suhardi Maulan. (2020). Factors Influencing the Usability Pattern and Constraints of Pocket Parks in Kuala Lumpur. *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*, Volume 50, 126647 (April 2020). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2020.126647.

Praveena, B., Sreetheran, M. & Suhardi Maulan. Factors contributing to the Usage of Pocket Parks—a Review of the Evidence [First review by *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*, April 2020].

Praveena, B. & Sreetheran, M. (2018). Investigating the Usability Pattern of Pocket Parks in Kuala Lumpur [e-proceeding, page 1169-1179]. *IFLA World Congress 2018* held on 18-21 July 2018 at Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Marina Bay Sands, Singapore.

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