THE IMPACTS OF URBAN TOURISM TO THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION IN BUKIT BINTANG, KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

BY

MAIMUNAH BINTI ABDUL AZIZ

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Urban and Regional Planning

Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design International Islamic University Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Recently, urban tourism has resulted to the various impacts towards an urban environmental condition. Urban area like in Bukit Bintang in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia has been threatened by the issues regarding its environmental quality. Therefore, this study was conducted to study on the various implications of urban tourism activities to the local environmental condition in Bukit Bintang through analyzing the causes and factors contributing to the impacts. The study generally applied the both qualitative and quantitative methods for the analysis in achieving the goal and objectives. The methods applied for the data analysis were the document analysis, observation and questionnaire survey. Moreover, the study has also suggested a few recommendations on how to defeat the negative implications regarding the environmental condition in the study area by adopting some relevant justifications applied by other scholars through some case studies as a strategic initiative. It is hoped that the paper presented will raise readers' concern on the current issues threatening the urban environment. On the other hand, the analysis and recommendation given perhaps could be a beneficial input for the readers, especially environmentalist and planners to refer for their future actions

ملخص البحث

أصبحت السياحة الحضرية اهتماماً بين المخطِّطين والباحثين لدراستها في هذه السنوات الأحيرة حيث إنّ هذه الصناعة قد تسبّب الآثارالعديدة، وحزئيةعلى الحالة البيئة المحلية في مدينة. وسريع الحضر وهائلههذااليومقد تمّ استغلالها من قبل ظاهرة ازدهار صناعة السياحة الحضرية. فيجبعلي بيئة المدينة أنتتلقى بعضالتغييراتحسب التطور السريع في ساحة السياحة الحضرية التي تدعو باستمرار زيادة عدد الزيارات كل عام. وفي قلقبهذه القضية، قد أُعدّتورقة البحث هذهلدراسة آثار أنشطة السياحة الحضرية نحو حالة البيئة المحلية في كوالالمبور، خاصة في جالنتار وبوكيت بينتانج. وأداء عملها بوصفها عاصمة، وأيضا باعتبارها العمود الفقرى للتنمية الاقتصادية في ماليزيا، تكون كوالالمبور والمدن العالمية الرئيسية الأخرى ضحية لآثار السياحة الحضرية. وقد فضّل بعض منهجية البحث في إجراء هذه الدراسة مثل تحليل الوثائق والملاحظة والاستبيان. ومن حلال تطبيق أسلوبَي الوصفي والكمّى، تهدف هذه الورقة إلى اكتشاف آثار صناعة السياحة الحضرية على العناصر البيئية المختلفة. وبجانب ذلك، فإنهاتوفّر أيضا في تفسيرات تسلسل على طريق تأثر هذه البيئة إلى بعض التغييرات بناءً على العوامل البيئية المحددة. وعلاوة على ذلك، اقترحت الورقة أيضا بعض التوصيات حول كيفية التغلب على الآثار السلبية بشأن الحالة البيئية في ميدان الدراسة من خلال تبنى بعض المبرّرات ذات الصلة المطبقة من قبل المخططين الآخرينببعض دراسات الحالة كمبادرة استراتيجية. ومن المؤمل أنّ الورقة المقدّمة سترفع درجة الاهتماممن القراء على القضايا الراهنة التي تهدّد البيئة الحضرية. ومن ناحية أخرى، لعلهذا التحليل والتوصية يكون مدخلا مفيدا للقراء، خاصة البيئة والمخطِّطين وإشارة إلى اتخاذ إجراءات في المستقبل.

APPROVAL PAGE

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I certify that I have read this study and that in n standards of scholarly presentation and is fully thesis for the degree of Master of Urban and Region	adequate, in scope and quality, as a
	Rustam Khairi Zahari Examiner
This dissertation was submitted to the department and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement and Regional Planning.	
	Mariana Mohamed Osman Head, Department Of Urban And Regional Planning.
This dissertation was submitted to the Kulliyyah Designand is accepted as a fulfilment of the req Urban and Regional Planning	
	Khairuddin Rashid Dean, Kulliyyah Of Architecture And Environmental Design

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents; *Mak & Ayah*,

Who introduced me to the joy of reading from the birth and to write from the heart.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1INTRODUCTION

Tourism and environment are the two interrelated factors relying to each other. The quality of the environment, both natural and man-made, is essential to tourism. However, tourism's relationship with the environment is complex. It involves many activities that can have adverse environmental effects. Many of these impacts are linked with the construction of general infrastructure such as roads and airports, and of tourism facilities, including resorts, hotels, restaurants, shops, golf courses and marinas. The negative impacts of tourism development can gradually destroy the environmental resources on which it depends.

On the other hand, tourism has the potential to create beneficial effects on the environment by contributing to environmental protection and conservation. It is a way to raise awareness of environmental values and it can serve as a tool to finance protection of natural areas and increase their economic importance (United Nations Environment Programme, 2001).

1.2 STUDY BACKGROUND

Tourism has been developing rapidly from more than past 50 years. Then, due to this phenomenon, tourism had slowly driven to the invention of jets and craft in the Europe which is offering the opportunity for people to travel outside of their usual place for many reasons. Besides, the dynamic growth in economic plus with the stable income in many countries especially the Asian Countries in these few years has

encourage more people to travel. As the result, tourism activities have consistently extending to the variety purposes until today. By referring to this situation, tourism is expected to expend into many expects while making profit to the economics of a country (World Tourism Organization, 2000).

In the sequence situation, as time passed by, development of tourism sector has diverges to the wider scopes, which is now, urban tourism, agro tourism, eco-tourism and some others types have gradually appeared to be the product of tourism. As illustrated by Thullen (1996), tourism industries have been increasing rapidly in these few years parallel to the development of economic and technologies which have expended the industry into the larger field. It cannot be disputed, and it has also been proved that tourism has brought to the huge benefits towards the economic and social development of a country. However, behind the 'happy story', there are still many implications of tourism need to be considered. As the development of tourism in the past years is seen beneficial too much towards the development of a country, many people do not really realize that some of the impacts are potential to be the 'future disaster' for them as the effects could not be seen clearly in a short time.

Based on the study context, urban tourism is one of the tourism products that have emerged as the result of tourism development since the past years. Urban tourism naturally occurred in the urban areas like cities and town. This is due to some reasons attracted numbers of people to come, which was elaborated in detail in Chapter Two later on (Literature Review). In Malaysia, there are many attractions for urban tourism activities such as in Penang, Melaka, and Johor Bharu. Being the capital city of Malaysia, for sure, Kuala Lumpur is the most dominant area for urban tourism activities in Malaysia (Ismail, 2008).

City is a place that consists of surplus population, a subject that serves the best opportunities for needs and services. This might be the best rationale for the consistent development of a city around the world (Ayhan, 2011). Referring to another idea, Keles (2008) has clarified a city as an image portraying the quality of a place through the level of development in many fields. All the things were done including infrastructure and economic are the factors illustrating characters of a place which then lead to the positive and negative impacts towards the others, including the environment. It could be alarmed from here that, urbanization is the result of our actions towards the desired development, while at the same time; it may lead to some impacts to the other sectors, which environment is also included.

Apart from the urban tourism context, environmental condition is another part discovered in this study as those elements ('urban tourism 'and 'environmental condition') are the two interrelated elements affecting each other, as supported and explained by the statement below:

"Tourism and the environment have a very complex and interdependent relationship. Tourism is one of the larges industries in today's world economy and is a great source of foreign exchange for many developing countries, whose major assets are their natural resources. At the same time, it is the environmental quality of a place that will determine the success of the tourism industry, since it is the principal attraction." (Thullen, 1996, p.1)

There are some arguments relating this issue as some might assume that tourism is actually good for the environment while some might say is it not, and some might also consider that tourism has brought to the both positive and negative impacts towards the environment. Basically, tourism had caused the varies impacts towards the environment like pollution, congestion and some other issues relating to the environmental degradation (Mason, 2003). Therefore, this study was initiated for the purpose of discovering the impacts of urban tourism activities to the local

environmental condition in Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur. It is intended to provide some information in determining the affected environmental factors to the urban tourism impact, while illustrating the form of explanation on how the factors were influenced by the activities related. Besides, it is also prepared in order to give some information and to create environmental awareness among people regarding the matter discussed in the problem statement later on.

1.3 SITE BACKGROUND

As stated in Part 1.1 previously, there are few tourism attractions available in Malaysia like in Penang, Johor Bharu and Melaka. Being the capital city of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur city is well known as the developed urban area consists of a few urban tourism attractions area like in Dataran Merdeka, Central Market, Kotaraya, Bukit Bintang and Masjid Jamek area. The area chosen for the study is Bukit Bintang area, which is located in the heart of the Kuala Lumpur city centre.

In the early story of the area development, as it is located within Kuala Lumpur, Bukit Bintang area was dominated by the Chinese population since the area were started as the tin mining area. The history of the urban development was initiated by rejuvenation of the clustered retail area proposed by Tan Sri Yeoh Teong Ley in 1980's. This phenomenon was injected by the deadly May 13 tragedy which has resulted into big impacts to the area development. The area has undergone through a series of transformation stages which has brought the area into a success shopping and entertainment destination attraction today.

Bukit Bintang area has been developing rapidly since its early development. Until now, there are lots of tourism attractions available in the area like the understanding shopping malls supported the sophisticated tourism accommodations.

Bukit Bintang area is famous among the tourist as the 'Golden Triangle' area as the area is currently surrounded by 3 main road; which are Jalan Imbi, Jalan Pudu and Jalan Sultan Ismail.

This 'Golden Triangle' area is mostly favored by the teenagers and youth generation in Malaysia. There are many sophisticated malls were built within this area like The Berjaya Times Square City Plaza, BB Plaza, Pavilion Shopping Mall, Sengei Wang Plaza, Lot 10 and many more. Besides, there are also nightlife events were carried out d in this area such as exhibition, street concerts, retailing activities and parties. The magnificent urban design elements in this area have strongly supported the development of the area to be promoted as the urban tourism destination, merely for shopping and entertainment.

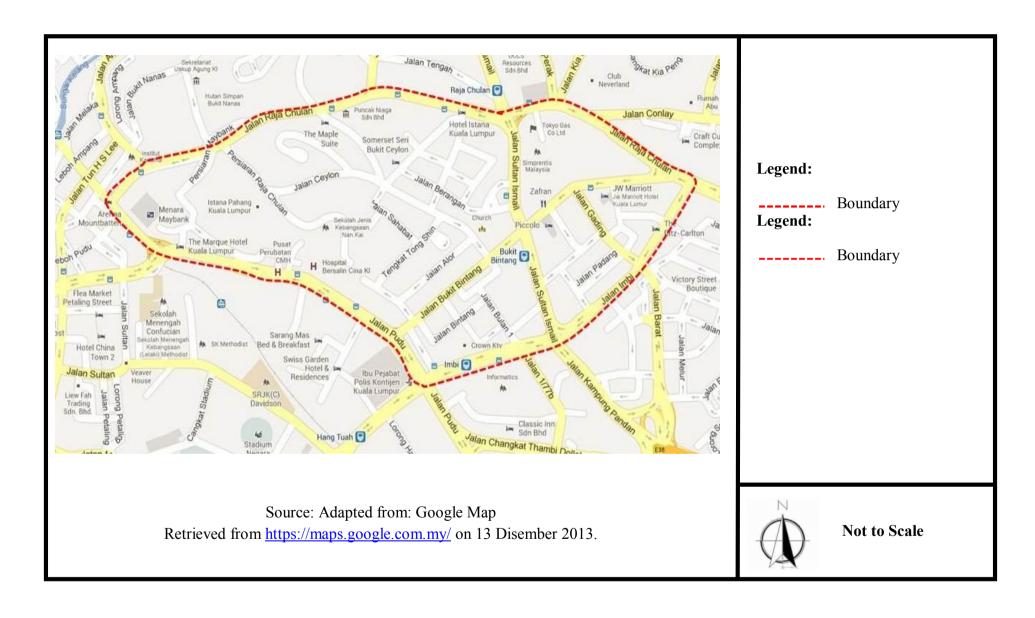


Figure 1.1: Study area's boundary: Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

By its nature, urban tourism had caused to some impacts to the environment. On some view, it is perceived that the environmental condition is being neglected today as the effects cannot be seen clearly in a short time. It is also supported statement quoted below:

"Since the dangers posts by global warming are tangible, immediate or visible on the course of day-today life, however awesome they appear, many will sit on their hands and do nothing of a concrete nature about them. Yet waiting until they become visible and acute before being stirred to serious action will, by definition, be too late." (Giddens, 2008, p.2)

As urban tourism happened in the urban areas like cities and town, the impact could be explored within the urban areas like Bukit Bintang in Kuala Lumpur; for the local research. Compared to other industries like manufacturing, tourism is perceived contributed to the light impacts towards the environment. In another simple explanation, it does not really harm the environment. This might be the best reason for the lack of concern among people regarding the impacts of urban tourism. However, the impacts could be appeared clearly for us to see once the used of environment has surpassed its limit. Then, it is too late to control.

The more the technologies were enhanced, the better economic supported a country development, the more promotion and attention were given to the tourism arena, and then more tourists will be produced. Looking forward towards the future, a city is imagined to be the best place for the economic and societal development; ecosociety city. By neglecting this seductive ambition, it the same like allowing the future destruction towards the environment. The extreme desires towards urbanization might ruin all the dreams that have been created today (Bookchin, 1999).

Due to the increase number of local population, more development was done in order to cater the huge number of people. Plus, more products were also produced. As the result, it has also invited more people to visit and stay in the city as there are numerous of things could be seen and done (Neto, 2003). The implication of this has been revealed by Dumitru (2010) that urban tourism have caused to many impacts towards the environment and these impacts are also depend on the extension number of the opportunities offered in a place supported by other factors that bring to its rise or declines.

1.3 ISSUES

- Issues regarding the environment is seems to be neglected far behind while urban tourism has become the desired industry in the city as it has the economic means.
- 2) The environmental impacts of urban tourism are always seen as a light impact as the effects cannot be seen clearly by eyes and does not occur in a short time.
- 3) Lack of environmental awareness regarding the effects of urban tourism towards the local environment as the impacts were not identified clearly.
- 4) As the time passed by, lack of environmental awareness among the local people has gradually brought to the environmental dilemma in the urban area.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

i. What are the environmental elements affected by the impacts of urban tourism activities Bukit Bintang?

- ii. How does urban tourism affects the local environmental condition in Bukit Bintang?
- iii. What are the factors relating to the urban tourism that has caused to the environmental degradation in Bukit Bintang?
- iv. How to control the negative impacts of urban tourism on the local environmental condition in Bukit Bintang?

1.6 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this research is to study the various implications or urban tourism industry to the local environmental condition in Bukit Bintang, Malaysia. Below are the objectives rectified in order to achieve the goal:

- To study on the current environmental condition in the major tourism attraction in Bukit Bintang.
- ii. To determine the environmental elements affected by the urban tourism industry.
- iii. To study on how the urban tourism affects the local environmental condition in Bukit Bintang.
- iv. To propose some ideas and recommendation to control the urban tourism impacts.

1.7 SCOPES OF STUDY

The research was take place in an urban tourism attraction in Kuala Lumpur, which is Bukit Bintang. Objectives and scopes of study were further delineated as follows:

Objective 1:

To study on the current environmental condition in the major tourism attractions in Bukit Bintang.

Scope:

To analyze the current environmental condition in the 6 major attractions in Bukit Bintang, which are?

- i. Jalan Bukit Bintang's area
- ii. Jalan Sultan Ismail's area
- iii. Jalan Imbi's area
- iv. Jalan Alor's area
- v. Jalan Ceylon's area
- vi. Jalan Bulan's area

Objective 2:

To determine the environmental elements affected by the urban tourism industry.

Scope:

To study on the different stages of effects of urban tourism industry on the various environmental elements.

Objective 3:

To study on how the urban tourism affects the local environmental condition in Bukit Bintang.

Scope 1:

To study on the stages of the types of impacts left by the urban tourism industry in Bukit Bintang.