

Factor Contributing to the Misuse of Public Space in the UNESCO World Heritage Site, George Town, Penang

Faktor Penyalahgunaan Ruang Awam di Tapak Warisan Dunia UNESCO, George Town, Pulau Pinang

Muhamad Ferdhaus Sazali¹, Asyirah Abdul Rahim¹ & Zikri Muhammad²

¹Geography Section, School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia,
11700 Gelugor, Penang

²School of Social and Economic Development, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu,
21030 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu

*e-mail: muhamad.ferdhaus@gmail.com

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Abstract

UNESCO World Heritage Site is situated in George Town, Penang. Most of the space inside the UNESCO World Heritage Site has a variety of business sectors. The traders are doing their business on a regular basis in their space and at the open space. Meanwhile, hawkers move from one place to another. However, there are also traders and hawkers that invade and do business in a public space and it causes the rise of conflict in public space. This study aims to identify factors that lead to misuse of public space in the World Heritage Site George Town, Penang. Questionnaires were conducted on a total of 312 traders and hawkers. Results of the questionnaire showed that the main cause of the problem is because Penang is famous for street food vendors. Thus, this study is very useful in ensuring the sustainability of public space, and the role of George Town Heritage City as a role model of the urban heritage preservation in the modern urban city.

Keywords abuse, conflict, public space

Abstrak

Tapak Warisan Dunia UNESCO terletak di George Town, Pulau Pinang. Kebanyakan ruang di dalam Tapak Warisan Dunia UNESCO ini mempunyai pelbagai sektor perniagaan. Peniaga berniaga secara tetap dalam ruang sedia ada dan ruang awam. Sementara itu, penjaja bergerak dari satu tempat ke tempat lain. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat juga peniaga dan penjaja menyalahgunakan dan menjalankan perniagaan di ruang awam sehingga menimbulkan konflik penyalahgunaan ruang awam. Kajian ini bertujuan mengenal pasti faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan penyalahgunaan ruang awam di Tapak Warisan Dunia George Town, Pulau Pinang. Soal selidik telah dijalankan kepada 312 peniaga dan penjaja. Keputusan soal selidik menunjukkan bahawa penyebab utama masalah ini adalah kerana Pulau Pinang terkenal dengan penjualan makanan jalanan. Oleh hal itu, kajian ini amat berguna untuk memastikan kelestarian ruang awam, terutamanya dalam mengekalkan kawasan ruang awam dan peranan Bandar Warisan George Town sebagai model pemeliharaan warisan bandar di dalam bandar moden masa kini.

Kata kunci penyalahgunaan, konflik, ruang terbuka

INTRODUCTION

UNESCO World Heritage site of George Town, Penang is a valuable heritage site in Malaysia. Recognition as a world heritage site had raised the image of this heritage city to a higher level (Rosniza & Nur, 2017). This area is a historic heritage site, which are the world's hotspots for urban heritage. So, due to that matters, many traders and hawkers who run the daily activities within this UNESCO World Heritage Site takes advantage of shared public sidewalks and open spaces near the building of their business to put the

merchandise such as textiles and foods. Some of the traders and hawkers had built the illegal structure on the public open space. It will affect the land use of the area. Changes in land use refer to changes occurring in an area that involves any activity undertaken by humans in turn altering the landscape of the area (Sumayyah & Zullyadini, 2016). Due to those matters, the illegal hawkers and some traders do not want to move when being asked to stop businesses in public spaces (Bosire, 2013). As such, this aggression factor be an issue to the management of the public space in the urban area especially in the heritage area. This is due to the invasion of the traders and hawkers are geared towards public space conflict. In this study, the public space conflicts that occur in the UNESCO World Heritage Site George Town, Penang will be identified. Objective of this study is to identify the factors causing the usage of public space in the World Heritage Site George Town, Penang.

PUBLIC SPACE

Public space is a major contributor to a prosperous quality of life towards achieving sustainable urban sustainability (Bahar, 2010 & Chiesura, 2004). JPBD (2004) has stated in the National Physical Plan (RFN) that public space is the land whether enclosed or not a predetermined or not or reserves for laying out wholly or in part such as public park, sporting area, recreational land and footpaths as so call as public space. On the other hand, there are different definitions of public space by various researchers from all around the world (Table 1).

Table 1 Public space interpretations

Interpretations	Scholars
Social space that is accessible and open to everyone	Xing & Siu, 2010
Provided, managed and controlled by the local authorities use and benefit of the public where strangers can enter freely without let or hindrance	Ali, 1996
Open and the public is free to choose to use it and free to spontaneously perform various activities	Lynch & Carr, 1995
Public space is not subject to private ownership and not a single private space	Lofland, 1998
A place where public can forums, gather, learn, socialize and make new friends in a relaxed atmosphere	Brill, 1989
Place to interact with each other and a place to do ritual or ceremony	Kostof, 1992
Development or area that can be freely accessed by the public and it is for social interaction, relaxation or outdoor activities	Cybriwsky, 1999
Public space is a permanent feature of the city	Cattel et al, 2008
Free space for the public to walk, stand, sit, look, listen and talk freely without any obstacles or opposition from any party	Gehl, 1987
Fitness area which can affect the daily lives of individuals and society development	Hélène, 2007
Place to hang out and get to know each other	Bassand & Güller, 2001

RESEARCH AREA

UNESCO World Heritage Site George Town, Penang is an area of 259.42 hectares (Figure 1). The public space in this research includes the sidewalk, roads, parks, fields and open spaces. The selection of George Town, Penang as the study area is due to the potential of this research area in the country's tourism industry and there is no effort and initiative so far from neither the government nor the private sector in reviewing conflicts in public spaces in this UNESCO World Heritage Site. World Heritage Committee meeting in Quebec City recognizes George Town, Penang as a UNESCO World Heritage Site on July 7, 2008. It has been gazette as a 'World Heritage Site' by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) because of the brilliant aspect in the three main areas, namely Multi-Trade Port, Cultures and Shop Houses.



Figure 1 Map of Buffer Zone and Core of UNESCO World Heritage Site George Town, Penang
 Source: Penang Municipal Council (2016)

ANALYSIS

Conflict Factor Analysis

Studying factors affecting the public space abuse conflict is the main objective of this study. Thus, factor analysis has been carried out to identify the variables that really affect the conflicts that occur in the study area and eliminate unrelated variables. Reliability test was conducted to test the stability and internal levels of each new factor formed because of factor analysis conducted. Furthermore, an analysis of the relative importance index or Relative Importance Index (RII) is used to determine relative importance.

For the factor analysis in this study, two major tests were Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and validation factor analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the reliability of the questionnaire. In this study, both tests were conducted to determine whether the items in the questionnaire were reliable in the public space involved. Prior to the factor analysis, two important tests need to be done, namely Keiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett Test. Factorability of the correlation matrix can be detected through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy measure.

Referring to Table 2, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy value shows more than 0.50 which is 0.869. Kaiser (1974) recommended that a value greater than 0.5 as acceptable and adopted. Furthermore, according to Hutcheson, Graeme and Sofroniu (1999), values of 0.5 and 0.7 are common, 0.7 and 0.8 are good, 0.8 and 0.9 are very good and values greater than 0.9 are very good. Whereas the Bartlett test score got 1222.704 is big enough and significant (Sig = .000) indicating that it is appropriate to do factor analysis. Because of the results of these two tests, factor analysis can be done for this study.

Table 2 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test results

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.869
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1222.704
	df	45
	Sig.	.000

Furthermore, by examining the correlation matrix between all items, it is found that most correlation coefficients between items exceed 0.3. Hence, this finding meets one of the factors of factorability for factor analysis. Based on the anti-correlation matrix, the sampling adequacy measure for each item shown in the

diagonal for anti-image correlation matrix exceeds 0.5. This finding also satisfies the factorability of factors for factor analysis.

Furthermore, the value of communalities shows the variance ratio explained by the factor. This value should normally exceed 0.50. Referring to communal values because of this study, all conflict factor variables exceed 0.5. If there is a variable that is less than the value of 0.5, it should be removed and factor analysis should be repeated. Table 3, shows 14 variables of public space abuse variables used in this study before making varimax rotation. After varimax rotation, 4 items were not suitable for use and removed from this study. Removed items are "Abuse of public space by various parties", "The use of public space for certain long-term (family heritage) without any hindrances," "Weak monitoring and enforcement by Local Authorities" and "Public space management ". Therefore, only 10 items under the conflict factor variables used in this study.

Table 3 Variable factor of conflict factor in public space

Item	Conflict Factor
a.	Not enough space for business space
b.	Communities are unaware or sensitive to public space functions
c.	Abuse of public space by various parties *
d.	Use of public space for a long time (family heritage) without any hindrance *
e.	Not sensitive to rules and regulations
f.	Influenced by the actions of others
g.	Business and economic opportunities
h.	Penang is famous for street food vendors
i.	Demand by customers is very high
j.	Weak monitoring and enforcement by Local Authorities *
k.	There was abuse of power in public space management *
l.	Authorized or granted by the Local Authorities for business in public space
m.	No notice or summons is given by the Local Authority if it abuses public space
n.	Complaints of public space spaces to Local Authorities are not entertained

Note: * Items removed after varimax rotation

Table 4 shows the Eigen value and percentage variance. Eigen value shows the ratio of variance contribution for each factor extracted through factor analysis. The highest value of Eigen values will be at the top of which shows the contributing factors. According to Chua (2014), only factor having a value greater than 1.0 only can be extracted as a factor to the variables in the study. Whereas the Eigen values less than 1.0 will be removed from the list of factors.

Table 4 Eigen values and percentage variance variables of factors causing the abuse of public space

A.Components	B. Total Variants explained		
	C.Eigen value	D.Variance (%)	E. Cumulative (%)
Factor 1	4.672	46.725	46.725
Factor 2	1.102	11.020	57.745

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Thus, because of this factor analysis, it is found that the variable of the conflict factor has been compiled into 2 main factors. Factor 1 shows the Eigen values of 4.672 and factor 2 shows the Eigen value 1.102. The percentage of variance obtained by factor 1 is 46.725 percent and factor two is 11.020 percent. Both factors contributed 57.745 percent change in overall variance. Table 5 shows the rotation of the matrix component (Rotated Component Matrix) after making varimax rotation. The findings show that all variables pass the 0.5-level rating as suggested by Hair et al. (2006). Varimax rotation has yielded two factors that can be extracted. Each factor produces 5 items each. Factor 1 has been labeled as a Physical Consumption and Economy while factor two is labeled as Social.

Table 5 Factor loading for physical consumption and economics factor and social factor

Statement	Factor Load	
	1	2
Factor 1: Physical Consumption and Economics		
1. Demand by customers is very high	0.772	
2. Affected by the actions of others	0.758	
3. Not sensitive to rules and regulations	0.746	
4. Business and economic opportunities	0.642	0.360
5. Penang is famous for street food vendors	0.619	0.364
Factor 2: Social		
1. No warning, notice or summons is given by the PBT if it abuses public space		0.815
2. Public space conflict complaints to local authorities are not entertained		0.732
3. Authorized or granted by the Local Authorities to trade in public space		0.702
4. Communities are unaware or sensitive to the function of public spaces.	0.405	0.613
5. Business space is not enough	0.408	0.603

Note:

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Reliability Analysis of Variables of Conflict Factors

Reliability testing was conducted to test the stability and internal levels of each new factor formed because of factor analysis conducted. The overall value of Cronbach's alpha for both factors is 0.873 (Table 6). This value shows the good and high level (Lay, Khoo & Ley, 2016) that can be applied in this study.

Table 6 Reliability analysis of variables of public space abuse conflict factors

Factor	Factor	Item Bill	Cronbach's alpha
Factor 1	Physical Consumption and Economics	5	0.817
Factor 2	Social	5	0.805
Total value of Cronbach's Alpha		10	0.873

Public Space Abuse Factor

In measuring the public space abuse factor, a total of 14 question items in the form of Likert Scale have been asked to the respondents. The questionnaire includes public space usage factors (6 questions), economic factors (3 questions) and law enforcement factors (5 questions). However, after running the factor analysis test, only 10 items left and 4 items were removed. Subsequently, based on the 10 questions, the Relative Interests Index (RII) and min analysis were used to measure the factor of abuse of public space in the highest position so low. The overall score of the public space abuse factor is thoroughly assessed. This feedback includes 312 respondents consisting of 103 business people and 209 hawkers.

Based on the findings refer to Table 7, traders and vendors conclude that the three main factors of abuse of public space in this Heritage Site, first, are items 'e' which is "Penang is known for street food vendors" with a mean value of 4.08 and value RII 0.816. The second highest factor is the item 'c' which is "not sensitive to rules and regulations" with a mean value of 4.02 and a value of RII 0.803. The third factor was the 'a' item of "very high customer demand" with a mean value of 3.99 and a value of RII 0.798.

Based on the main factor of abuse of this public space, it is linked to the census by The New York Times Newspaper readers in the United States who have chosen George Town, Penang as 2nd place among the 44 destinations to be visited in 2009 (The Star Online, January 2009). This clearly shows that this study area is a tourist attraction around the world. This shows evidence of the existence of hawkers in the streets around this Heritage Site which is the focus of the world on the issue of street food traders.

Table 7 Overall factor conflict of public space conflict

Position/ Ranking	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	RII	Item
1	Penang is known for street food traders / vendors	4.08	0.654	0.816	e.
2	Not sensitive to rules and regulations	4.02	0.715	0.803	c.
3	Demand by customers is very high	3.99	0.634	0.798	a.
4	Authorized or granted by the Local Authorities to operate in public spaces	3.92	0.687	0.795	h.
5	Communities are unaware or sensitive to the function of public spaces.	3.97	0.73	0.794	i.
6	Influenced by the actions of others	3.96	0.691	0.792	b.
7	Business and economic opportunities	3.96	0.714	0.791	d.
8	No warning, notice or summons is given by the PBT if it abuses public space	3.92	0.727	0.784	f.
9	Public space conflict complaints to local authorities are not entertained	3.86	0.672	0.771	g.
10	Not enough space for business space	3.75	0.682	0.75	j.

Furthermore, in the context of consumption and economic factors that resulted in the abuse of public space abuse, (Table 8), the findings show that the top three factors are the first, the 'e' item, "Penang is known for street food traders / vendors" with a mean value of 4.08 and Value of RII 0.816. Second, the 'c' item is "not sensitive to rules and regulations" with a mean value of 4.02 and a value of RII 0.830. Third, the 'a' item is "very high customer demand" with a value of 3.99 and RII value of 0.798. This suggests that abuse of public space is one of the factors of consumption and economy.

These listed factors are the ones that lead to conflicts of public space abuse. This is in line with the theory of conflict by Max Weber that defines conflict-related power and Karl Marx defines conflict involving economic or community structures (Marshall, 1998). In this study, it can be seen clearly that the power element in mastering public space and generating the economy in business is a major factor in this conflict. All these factors if not controlled and addressed in a systematic manner will damage the existing public space in the study.

This shows evidence of the existence of hawkers in the streets around this Heritage Site which is the focus of the world on the issue of street food traders. In the context of planning, Winston in Michelson (1970) states that 'human beings shape development and subsequently human development'. This means that planning has a long-term impact on the future. Urban planning and development that is not systematically causes this conflict to occur.

The public space area has been used as a business area for traders. It is supported by Urry (1995) opinion that many 'legacy towns' are influenced by commercial phenomena to attract customers, visitors and tourists where merchants in these heritage towns use various strategies to attract diversity of investment capital and increased competition. This is a factor in this study that abused public space into illegal commercial space.

Table 8 Physical and economic use factors that influenced public space abuse conflict

Item	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	RII	Position/Ranking
Factor 1: Physical and Economic Use					
e.	Penang is known for street food traders / vendors	4.08	0.654	0.816	1
c.	Not sensitive to rules and regulations	4.02	0.715	0.803	2
a.	Demand by customers is very high	3.99	0.634	0.798	3
b.	Influenced by the actions of others	3.96	0.691	0.792	4
d.	Business and economic opportunities	3.96	0.714	0.791	5

Furthermore, in the context of social factors that result in conflicts of public space abuse, (Table 9), the findings show that the top three factors are the first, the 'h' item is "permitted or granted by the Local Authorities to trade in public space" with min value 3.92 and Value of RII 0.795. Second, the 'i' item is "Community not aware or sensitive to public space functions." With a mean value of 3.97 and RII value of 0.794. Third, the 'f' item is "no warning, notice or summons granted by PBT if misusing public space" with

a mean value of 3.99 and a value of RII 0.798. This suggests that abuse of public space is one of the social factors.

In this regard, according to the George Town Special Region Plan (RKK), "road sharing", the use of sidewalks and walkways for outdoor seating as well as space for displaying merchandise while maintaining adequate pedestrian access is permissible. However, these permissions have been misunderstood by traders and hawkers to monopolize and abuse public spaces to inconvenience other public users. This is much contradicted to the proposed road-sharing practices.

Public space abuse is still ongoing because of the awareness of traders and hawkers on public space issues still low and not meet the requirement or standard. People generally do not know, are not sensitive and less sensitive to this issue. This will not only happen among individuals, but also to those responsible for planning and conducting a project or development project in a place (Rasip, 2006).

This problem can be solved if the Local Agenda 21 Program that considers the involvement of all parties can be conducted in this area of study. The LA 21 program can focus on co-operation between Local Authorities, communities and the private sector towards sustainable development. If successful, this program can create a comfortable, safe and harmonious environment and create a healthy and sensitive society on environmental, social and economic issues.

Table 9 Social factors that influenced public space abuse conflict

Item	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	RII	Position/Ranking
Factor 2: Social					
h.	Authorized or granted by the Local Authorities to operate in public spaces	3.92	0.687	0.795	1
i.	Communities are unaware or sensitive to the function of public spaces.	3.97	0.73	0.794	2
f.	No warning, notice or summons is given by the PBT if it abuses public space	3.92	0.727	0.784	3
g.	Public space conflict complaints to local authorities are not entertained	3.86	0.672	0.771	4
j.	Not enough space for business space	3.75	0.682	0.75	5

Subsequently, based on the analysis on the factors that resulted in the abuse of public space abuse, Table 10 shows the level of consent of traders and hawkers about the conflicting factor occurring at this World Heritage Site. Based on the questionnaires and analyzes conducted, the findings show that 104 respondents of 33.3 percent among the traders and hawkers stated moderately agreeing with this conflict factor. Meanwhile, 208 respondents, 66.7 percent agree with the factors listed have resulted in public space conflicts. As such, it can be concluded that respondents agree with the factors that result in abuse of public space that have been listed. This should be taken seriously to achieve the sustainability of public space.

Table 10 Level of conflict factor approval by traders and traders

Stage of Conflict Factor Approval	Score	Number	%
Do not agree	14-32	0	0
Average	33-51	104	33.3
Agreed	52-70	208	66.7
Amount		312	100

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, there are a lot of factors causing the abuse of public space in The World Heritage Site George Town, Penang. All factors that had been listed are lead to the abuse of public space. In this study, abuse at the public space in George Town, Penang is at the stage of initiation or apparent of the conflict, it can be clearly seen that the occurrence of illegal occupation of public space by the traders or hawkers. This abuse must be resolved to avoid the issues and problems related to this abuse grew into something much worse in the future. As an example, James (2002) states his study in Africa, hawkers leave garbage after they trade in an area and the number of hawkers is increasing every day and week. The abuse of the public space will lead to the conflict. Conflict of public space in the city cannot escape from the struggle for an area or location. Kevin (1939) states that the location of the conflict involves a conflict between the location and the environment. Cities that have interests will face conflict or problem involving

a few individuals or groups. In this study, the location of public space becomes a struggle between the traders and hawkers in the use of public space in the city. As such, it is a problem that must be eradicated among the community so people, traders and hawkers are more concerned and aware of the issues and problems surrounding them particularly involving the public interest. Urban structure should be preserved from various social and physical aspects of the city. Public spaces that well function and the role are in line with the actual function of the public space will play a bigger role in the preservation of the city, especially in the issue of preservation of the heritage. City will achieve sustainability when all issues and conflicts can be addressed and resolved.

CONCLUSION

Thus, all the results in the retention and development planning, particularly involving the public space must be taken seriously and given special close attention by the relevant authorities, especially for those involving the new development taking place or involving public space consumerism. It is very important to achieve uniformity in the designing and development of all which involve in managing the public space in the city. The concept of sustainability in the city must become the main goal in every city. This has led to the need for applied sustainability elements in the city to ensure sustainability can be achieved in tandem with urbanization. So, it is very important to preserve and conserve our heritage rather than being exploiting by the irresponsible person.

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