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Exploring Identity's Aspect of Continuity of Urban Heritage Tourism

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Abstract

Continuity is one important aspect forming identity of a place. This research aims to investigate the influence of continuity in one of the historic corridors of Medan city. It uses three indicators; values, nostalgia, and familiarity. The uniqueness of research area has become an important tourism attraction that generating tourist's quality of life. This research uses mix method, and it shows that the physical aspect; the existence of heritage buildings, the past story is the largest aspect shaping identity. Unfortunately, aspect of familiarity is weak yet majority respondents had a desire to visit this place again in the future.

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Keywords: Heritage tourism; place identity; continuity

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the current economic generators, especially for developing countries (Kundu, 2012). Tourism is one of welfare generators or quality of life (QoL) for the local community, both in terms of individual and the general public (Hamzah et al., 2013; Khosravi and Mohamed, 2013). Tourism also aims to improve the tourist's QoL through various ways such as, resting, relaxing, recreation and even increase the knowledge and insight to the new things (Constanta, 2009). Today tourism grows in line with the increasing of income and quality of global society life, where travelling is a basic requirement. Heritage tourism is the favourite one. Heritage tourism oftentimes mingled with cultural activities, thus enriching more experience. As a result, the heritage tourism becomes the most

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influential and fastest growing (Boyd, 2002). In tourism, one of the most important things is tourist satisfaction. If they satisfied, then they will return. Moreover, they will be a potential marketing tool (Voon and Lee, 2009). In heritage tourism, tourist satisfaction lies in the peculiarities of its region. Therefore, it is necessary creating the tourist perception of heritage elements, would be even better if they create an emotional and psychological relationship between tourist and the surrounding area (Brown, 1992). Distinctiveness are produced both in physical and non-physical elements of the heritage area (Ashworth et al., 2007). The distinctiveness divergence between one place to another and become the main attraction for tourist. A satisfying place integrated with feeling, emotion, and behavior. A satisfying place creates a harmony between the elements of physical, social and cultural and it is affecting the identity of a place. There are four factors influence identity of a place; continuity, distinctiveness, self-esteem and self-efficacy (Twigger-Ross & Uzzel, 1996).

The purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of continuity in heritage tourism area in Medan City. Aspects of continuity could reshape and maintain continuity of place identity (Twigger-Ross & Uzzel, 1996).

2. Aspect of continuity

Continuity is one of the aspects forming the identity (Twigger-Ross & Uzzel, 1996). Its existence can help continuance, reshape, and maintain the identity of a place. For example, the presence of an older building whose existence can help us remember or turning back a memory (Lalli, 1992). Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) defined continuity into two forms; the place-referent continuity and place-congruent continuity. Place-referent continuity means a place can produce continuity aspects, for example: physical forms, which exist in a place, may remind visitors of the stories in the past. Definition of place-congruent continuity is a person that knows his true identity in a place that has the values that he holds in his life, not because of the physical place. Other theory called "elective belonging" when people know for sure themselves with a place. People choose a place because it represents the values, ideas, and lifestyle, not because of its physical form, but rather to the values contained in it (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996). Those values are customs, religion, principle of life, habit or others. In this research, assessed value is the value of architectural heritage buildings, the story and history of the area, and cultural activity of research area. The continuity aspect is an inseparable aspect of the forming process of true identity. There is element of time in sustainability aspect where a place physical character is nothing but more particularly to the values contained therein, the stability of the values espoused and connectedness one person memories (memory, nostalgia, experience). This research had specified three indicators to notice the continuity aspect that is forming the research area identity, such as values, nostalgia or memories, and familiarity (see Figure 1).

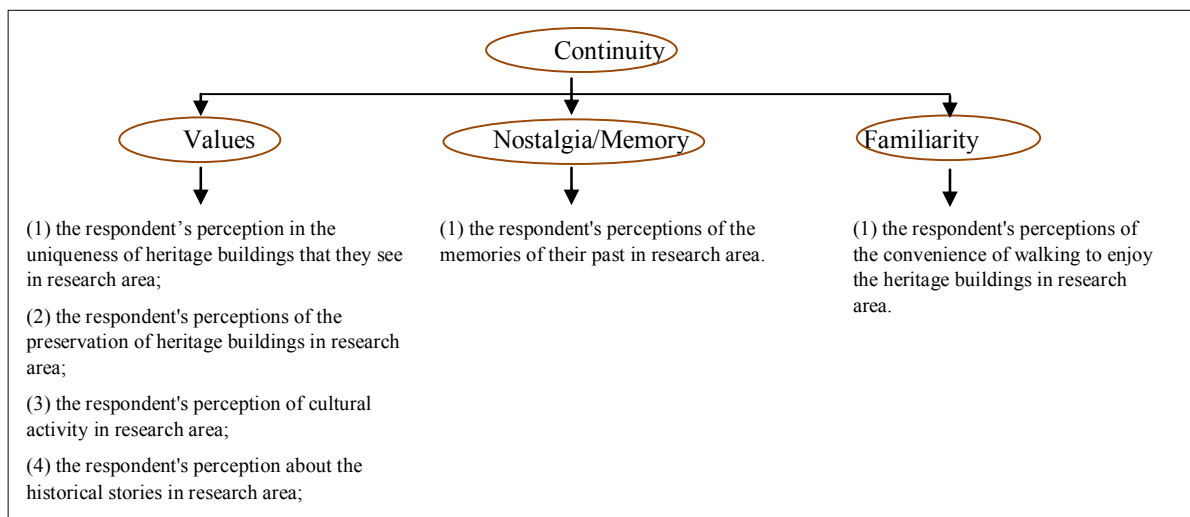


Fig. 1. Aspect of continuity in research.

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