Characteristic of Tourist Movement Pattern in Muar Royal Town, Johor

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ABSTRACT

The movement and mobility of human on the earth always continuously occurred due to of the needs as a human being. The movement creates relationship between human emotional values with visited places. However, tourists nowadays face limitation in their movement of journey while visiting plenty of attractions especially in Muar Royal Town, Johor. This article aims to determine the characteristic of tourist movement pattern in Muar Royal Town, Johor. This research applied a qualitative method through a semi-structured interview with seven respondents who have visited Muar, Johor. The result demonstrates the characteristic of tourist's movement pattern has a significant interaction in investigating the visiting characteristic as well as the spatial data and movement. In the macro level movement pattern, the findings indicate that Muar has the potential to be developed as a one day and three days one-night destination. Thus, it has positively affected to tourism destination management for improving the travel package for domestic and international tourists. The main contribution of this research is using the interview technique in investigating the complex visitor mobility during travel that related to the physical environment factor such as attractions, route and accessibility, and mode of transportation which effected by tourists' movement behavior pattern.

Introduction

The terms of movement can be viewed as a change of position or location. The understanding of movement concept can be analyzed as human's movement which demonstrates a pattern of mobility on earth (Fithriah *et al.*, 2018). The human's movement will be illustrated through the relationship formed between the places. It is similar with the context of tourism whereby tourist movement created to be to visit an attraction. This is showing the human needs to move from place of origin to destination with plenty of purposes. The concept of tourist movement pattern developed based on the points of tourist destinations namely routes taken to visit a destination and the routes taken from the duration of tourists visiting the place. There were researchers agreed that the main focus of travel pattern will be influenced by tourist behavior. Thus, knowing the attractiveness of destination through tourist movement pattern is important due to identifying the attraction attractiveness, tourist preference, cultural recognition and effectiveness destination marketing (Zhong *et al.*, 2019).

The movement and mobility of human on the earth always continuously occurred due to of the

needs as a human being (Fithriah *et al.,* 2018). Therefore, the movement creates relationship between human emotional values with visited places. However, tourists nowadays face limitation in their movement of journey while visiting plenty of attractions. The movement limitations can be occurred in aspect transportation and accessibility namely road congestion and the lack of supply of public transportation. As a result, the pattern of movement based on distance, mode of transportation and tourist typology are imperative elements that need to take into consideration (Caldito and Dimanche, 2016). This article has discovered that the previous studies have faced scarcity in investigating the characteristics of tourists' spatial behavior and tourist movement pattern in urban heritage areas in Malaysia and there is no study has been done in the context of Muar Royal Town, Johor. Previously, a study done by Md Khairi have emphasized on non-Spatial and spatial characteristics only focus international tourist's Behaviour in Melaka (Caldito and Dimanche, 2016). There also study done in Penang focus on virtual spatial movement (Md Khairi, 2017). While study done by Fornace *et al*. (2016) focus on Sabah as the main destination (Ismail *et al.,* 2020). None of the studies were focus Muar as the destination.Due to this gap and need in literature, this article intends to determine the characteristic of tourist movement pattern in Muar Royal Town, Johor.

Muar Royal Town Johor

Tourism Product Development

Muar, Johor is a royal town that well known as Bandar Maharani Bandar Di Raja. Hence, Bandar Muar is officially named for the district of Muar,

Johor, Malaysia. On 10th Muharram 1434 Hijrah equivalent to 24th November 2012, the declaration of the Maharani City as the Royal City of Johor was officiated by the Sultan Ibrahim ibn Almarhum Sultan Iskandar, Sultan of Johor (Hamdi *et al.,* 2019). It was a great beginning for Muar since this city has recognized as the ASEAN Clean Tourism City Award (ACTCA) by Chiang Mai, Thailand. This was an exciting start for Muar to be a sustainable town in the future. Majlis Perbandaran Muar (MPM) has taken the initiative to flourish the classic image of Muar through repairing and repainting old buildings. The classic buildings symbolized a civilization city that began in 1887.

The old and new tourism products development in Muar were identified in the Tangkak District Local Plan 2016, Muar District Local Plan 2002-2015 (Amendment), and Special Area Plan Report of Bandar Maharani 2023. The findings focused on the tourism products as the main sector that will drive the region's economy. There are two main tourism products profiling in Muar as listed in Table 1.

Therefore, the distinctive characteristics of tourism product and tourist activity in Muar are associated with visitor's preferences, feelings, and attachments. From that, a place could portray different meanings for people in their movements (Rosley *et al.,* 2018).

Royal Town Characteristic

Urban characterized as a town or city. Urban heritage tourism can be considered as a subfield of urban tourism. Most studies emphasis on either urban tourism or heritage tourism, instead of the combination of the two. The main reason for choosing Muar, Johor as study area due to its uniqueness of urban and natural heritage landscape and concept in the

Table 1. Tourism product classification in Muar, Johor

Tourism product	Tourist activity
Culture and heritage	1. Historic tour of natural and man-made things
	2. Local food hunting
	3. Visiting Malay-fishing village
	4. Homestay program
Nature	1. The paddy cultivation
	2. Giant prawn fishing
	3. Mangrove swamp tour
	4. Marine activities
	5. Sight seeing
	6. Water sport activity

(*Source:* Tangkak District Local Plan 2016Muar District Local Plan 2002-2015).

city and Malay-fisherman villages. Muar plays pivotal roles in portraying of Modern Johor Sultanate (Rosley *et al.,* 2018).

Furthermore, urban heritage also involves sustainability of development which considering the environment, social and economic resources that related to ethnicities, economic and cultural influences. It is related with seeing a similar pattern of urban morphology which associated some of traditional Malay towns. The physical building of urban heritage can be identified through numerous unique characteristics of traditional Malay towns in Muar. The basis unit of urbanization in the Malay culture can be founded that by seeing a clustered of community houses as a kampong (Samsudin *et al.,* 2018).

There are six (5) main characteristics of a traditional Malay city or a Royal Town (Syed Zainol, 1995) as listed below:

- The symbol of king's authority palace
- Traditional Malay villages that served as community and residential areas
- Mosque as a center of Islamic teaching spreads.
- Traditional market as a place for economic and social interactions
- Water bodies namely rivers and seas- mode of transportation and food source for community

Method

This article has implemented a qualitative methodology. Qualitative research involving human in many aspects of ethic namely article relational, situational and emerging (Fornace *et al.,* 2016). A total of seven respondents have been interviewed among the visitors who had visited Muar Royal Town, Johor. Besides, the targeted respondents are from the domestic visitors who came from adjacent districts or states. Therefore, identifying interviewees characteristic and behavior are deemed critical for emerged research findings.

Data Collection Procedure

The research instrument involved for achieving these research objectives is semi-structured interview.Thesemi-structured question was designed based on flexibility in how and when the questions are put, and how the interviewees react and respond. These interviews allow more space and time for interviewees to answer and express on their own terms.

In this phase, semi structured questions designed to get interviewees attention through "directed conversation" which derived no standardize question. The interview question been made based on the ontology of the spatio-temporal movement of tourist theory that derived the model of determining attributes of tourist and travel modes. In addition, the questions also been implemented for visitor who had experienced in visiting Muar Royal Town Johor. The question has been developed based on the adaptation of "Model of Determining Attributes of Tourist and Travel Modes" (Dejbakhsh, 2008; Zhong *et al*., 2019; Xia, 2007).

findings

This section indicates the main result of tourist's movement pattern characteristic in Muar Royal Town, Johor in terms of spatial data and temporal data.

Spatial Data

Spatial data of tourist's movement characteristic among visitors been analyzed in aspect transportation and accessibility.

Types of Transportation

This section indicates the types of transportation used by respondents. Types of transportation is an important element that need to be accessed in tourist's movement pattern. Therefore, route and schedule for transportation mode is crucial in travel itinerary during visiting Muar, Johor. The data shows that there are two types of transportation mode used by respondents namely road and water transportation.

Basically, there are six respondents (R1, R3, R4, R5, R6, and R7) used road transportation such as car, bus, and motorcycle while visiting Muar, Johor. This statement has been supported by R1 which is:"Now, I'm by my own motorcycle, because I often parking my car at home (Muar), comes here by motorcycle only because my wife likes to rest at home."

Meanwhile, there is a respondent (R2) accessed water transportation while visiting Muar, Johor from his origin. This is because, the visitor came from Dumai, Indonesia and he was intended to use ferry from Dumai to Muar. It can be evident that, R2 said that;

" I came here is because of waiting to depart to Kemaman, Terengganu. Just now, I have arrived at the port of Dumai-Muar by ferry".

The Accessibility

According to the data obtained, visit to urban heritage destination in Muar, Johor can be measured through the attributes of transportation mode and accessibility information. In this context, the data were demonstrated based on the accessibility within the selective attractions area. Therefore, visitors consider transportation accessibility system is important to support tourist activity that influencing the tourist flow. In terms of the accessibility, there are six components emphasized by the respondents namely reachable to all attractions, not accessible for car, sufficient facilities for all, accessible for transit, problematic, and not distance-friendly area.

For the reachable to all attraction's component, respondents agreed that using road transportation modes such as motorcycle and walking can reach all attractions easily at Muar. It can be evident that through the data obtained from R1, R5 and R6, for example the statement given by R1 which is: "I think if I visiting Muar, I would rather ride a motorcycle than a car, because I do park at home, and it is easier to go around by motorcycle". This statement was supported by R5 which is "At Muar Town area, very accessible by walking".

Next, for the category not accessible for car have been described by three respondents which are R1, R4, and R7. In this context, visitors more preferred to access the road at Muar Town by walking and motorcycling. The R1 statement shows that Tanjung Monyet (Tanjung Ketapang) is the most preferred place that can be accessed by walking as the interview was recorded as follow,:"Like the Tanjung Monyet which situated at the end of here (Tanjung Emas), I used to have access before, now I can't access by car… right? Because there is no parking available for parking lots ... Oh, it's near where people can just walk to because I noticed many cars could only get near the front. "

For the aspect sufficient facilities for all have been agreed by one respondent (R1). The sufficiency of facilities can be thoroughly seen via public transportation provided such as a public bus. It was stated by R1 which is; "I'm never using a taxi and bus to Muar, but the bus, I always heard of Mayang Sari bus company. It's good that there are no restrictions on passengers for using the public buses because people prefer these free things."

Besides that, there are two respondents agreed that the facilities at Muar Town are accessible for transit. For instance, the facilities that can be accessibly used for transit are ferry and express bus. R2 stated his opinion about this situation which is; "In terms of convenience, I see a lot of taxis, but I do like the ferry from Dumai to Muar ... sometimes depends on time, during the night, like me to go to Muar and then go to Kemaman, but at first, it sometimes stops at Port Dickson Port " Next, there is a respondent stated that visitor might be will be facing difficulties in terms of traffic congestion and insufficient of facilities. Due to that, R3 gives his point of view about the issues which is; "In terms of roads system in urban areas, when the city is too crowded, it will occur jammed. It been a long time ago, there was no change when I driving a car, I also do not like traffic congestion. The road space was just that, even the number of cars increasing… so the problem occurred was in the city." Last but not least, the accessibility at Muar Town can be seen through the aspect of a certain areas that characterized not distance-friendly for visitors accessing the road by walking. Therefore, that areas suitable for visitor using grab car or other transportation. It was stated by R7 which is; "I am going Wetex Mall just takes a bus for entertainment like right now from the bus terminal to Wetex should take a Grab Car, and the area is not distance-friendly and walk-able."

Tourist Movement Around the Location

This section emphasized the tourist movement around the location. This research acquires the data of the visitor's movement from one location to another location. Therefore, it is vital to investigate several aspects such as the attraction locations visited by visitors, mode of transportation used, and the experiences that have been faced.

The data of the interview demonstrates the different experiences that been faced by all respondents. It seems that there are three respondents (R1, R3 and R4) had experienced using car as a platform of movement around the attraction's location visited. From that, some issues have been highlighted based on their experiences at a different location. For example, R1 using car for a long-distance journey destination from Muar Town to Sabak Awor. According to the movement experiences, traffic congestion issues occurred especially at Muar bridge. R3 also using a car to reach Sabak Awor village whereby the traffic still under control but still congested. Meanwhile, R4 faced smooth movement of the journey from Bukit Gambir to Muar by car. The statement of

the interview has been stated as follow."I drive my own car like today is my journey from KL at 9 am, straight to Bukit Gambir at 2 pm something like that after everything is settled, I keep going here.. tonight I want to go dinner with friends"

Other than that, there are three respondents (R2, R5 and R6) had experienced accessing Terminal Ferry, Bentayan Bus Station, Maharani Bus Station, and Muar Town by walking. All these places mentioned are smoothly accessed by walking due to the facilities of pedestrian walkway along the road. For instance, the statement was provided by R5 which is as follow;

"Still by walking for those who are strong or young ... Only the city area of Muar is packed with cars so it is very dangerous ".

Furthermore, R7 stated that the movement based on purposes lead to change the location of visit. This is means that the movement of pattern will change from place to place once the respondent accomplishes different task such as collecting data for educational purposes and buying fast food at Muar Town. It can be evident that through this statement which is "Car used for education purposes and motorcycles used to buy goods and fast food". Therefore, the mode of transportation used by R7 would be different based on the purposes of visit.

Finally, R5 agreed that the visitor movement around the location would be smoothly accessed via public buses at Muar Town. This is because Muar considered as not walkable area for elderly visitors. The statement is recorded as follow;

"The bus is suitable for older people and unless we really want to go to Wetex and don't want to stop".

Temporal Data

Spatial data of tourist's movement characteristic among visitors been analyzed in aspect visit frequency which considering time spend, time distance, time distance and the corresponding time or duration.

Overall time allocation for one trip of visitation

This section focuses the overall time allocation for one trip visitation taken by each respondent. This element is a vital in investigating the tourist movement in Muar. Thus, the data obtained demonstrate how many days taken by the visitor for visiting Muar and the status of staying. All in all, in terms of overall time allocation for one trip visitation taken

showed five categories namely 3 days 2 nights, 2 days 1 night, 1 day or half day, 1 day, and half day. Meanwhile, for the status of staying indicate three categories which are staying at accommodation family and relatives, not staying at accommodation, and staying from evening until night. There is a respondent who preferred to stay at Muar for 3 days and 2 nights. This is because the respondent more comfort for staying at family and relative's accommodation. Also, the research has found R4 stated that staying 2 days and 1 night at Muar more suitable for the visitor who had a long journey and intended to stay at family and relative's accommodation. This statement has been agreed by R1 which is; "At least I will stay a long time at my aunt's house. I never stayed at a hotel. So if I went to my cousin's house for 3 days two nights, during the weekend". Other than that, R2 and R3 preferred to visit Muar for 1 day or half day of visitation due to not staying at any accommodation. This statement is recorded from R2 which is; "I didn't stop at any hotel, I would go straight back to Kemaman for a day or a half here." Whereas R3 stated that "Ohh, I rarely stay at any accommodation during the night here, approximately at 9.30 pm in the evening we will go home (Simpang Renggam)" Furthermore, it has been recorded that there are two respondents preferred to stay Muar from evening until night which considered as half-day of visitation. For instant, the statement from R5 is recorded as follow; I'm not sure whether I intended to stay overnight or not, it's because I like to do some activities during the evening until night moment ... because in the morning I don't know what to do".

Time Distance

This research has found that time distance in determining of tourist movement pattern is important. In this context, time distance taken from visitors' region to the destination have been evaluated thoroughly. Basically, this section focused on four categories in time distance from visitor's region which are 2 until 3 hours, 3 until 4 hours, 4 until 5 hours, and 7 until 8 hours. For each category, mode of transport used, and issues have been recorded.

All in all, there are three respondents took 2 until 3 hours to travel to Muar. For this case, the respondents (R3, R4 and R6) mostly from adjacent districts or state by driving own car. Basically, the visitors took 2 until 3 hours in travelling journey to Muar does not face problems in traffic congestion.

The traffic still can be controlled during normal season. For example, R3 statement is as stated; "Uncle (me) move from home, it can be 2 hours or 3 hours because I take a stop and rest so much". It is supported by R4 which is "From KL to Bukit Gambir took 2 and a half hours, then to Muar in 30 minutes if not crowded".

For the category 4 until 5 hours, R2 experienced a long-time distance from Dumai, Indonesia to Muar Ferry Terminal especially during peak hour. Meanwhile for R1 and R7 experienced 3 until 4 hours in the journey from Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. For instance, the statement of interview from R7 have been recorded which is "From KL it takes about 3 hours, but if from Pagoh by bus for almost 1 hour, but by car or motorcycle in half an hour". Besides, R1 and R5 have faced 7 until 8 hours of journey from Klang, Selangor and Pulau Pinang due to traffic congestion during peak season.

The Corresponding Time or Duration

The corresponding time or duration should take into consideration in determining tourist movement pattern. This is important to identify the corresponding time or duration for preferable activities and attractions visited by visitors. Therefore, this section emphasized on three components which are the preferable activities, attractions visited, and estimated duration for each attraction visited.

According to the data collected, the research has found that there are five respondents more preferred to explore local food in Muar. Basically, the duration taken by the visitors (R1, R4, R5, R6, and R7) for visiting each local food attractions is within 30 minutes until 2 hours. In this context, there are six restaurants mentioned by the respondents namely Asam Pedas Jalan Joned, Warung ABCD Muar, Bentayan Restaurant, Cendol Stall, Satay Restaurant, and Mee Bandung Stall.

For example, the statement recorded from R1 which is;"If I eat longer at Asam Pedas JJ, situated at Joned Road. At the very least, I'll stay a long time at my aunt's house. When I go to shop I go to my aunt's ABCD shop in Parit Haji Bakhi. If I had dinner, I'll go to the Bentayan Restaurant, it would be 45 minutes or so for each restaurant.".

Besides, R5 stated that "Food hunting is the best activities because it represents a culture itself, like cendol, like satay, mee bandung, and the maximum duration I took too much is within 30 minutes for each stall". Furthermore, R4 preferred to explore Muar local food restaurant for 2 hours in one place, for instance the statement is recorded as follow;

"The longest activity is to look at nature and eat, over 2 hours at one place ... and sport activity also"

Other than that, there are two respondents who took a long time for sightseeing activities in Muar. The duration for one place visited is 30 minutes until 1 hour. The data demonstrates that R2 can be considered as nonexploratory visitor in travel movement. Due to that, the duration needed in one place for sight-seeing activities is 30 minutes only as it is stated in the interview namely; "Ohh the Tanjung Emas,, I've never been to it, but in the afternoon I could see people jogging up to the Maharani bus station, seeing it as exciting. Now I prefer walking alone, relaxing here and there, I enjoy relaxing… it's not too long, 30 minutes." Moreover, R3 prefers to experience leisure and recreation activities at Tanjung Emas for the half day of visitation. It was recorded as follow "Relaxing here is a long time, sometimes from evening until night, 9:30 pm I will go back". Meanwhile, R4 more likely to do natural biodiversity tours and sports activities. These types of activities have been focused at Tanjung Emas and Muar River whereby the duration of each activity is 2 hours. The statement is recorded as follow; "The longest activity is to look at nature like Sungai Muar and eat at Tanjung Emas, over 2 hours in one place ... and sport activity".

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on finding in the study, the type of transportation preferred is one of the characteristics of the tourist movement patterns. The data shows that road transportation is preferable among visitors. The vehicles preferred is a car, motorcycle, and bus. Apart from that, there is a respondent using these three types of road transportation based on different purposes. Besides, the water transportation such as ferry have been accessed by the visitor who came from Dumai, Indonesia to Muar. This type of visitor can be considered as a transit visitor. In this case, visitor accessing Muar road as transit road to travel to other places.

The next aspect is the accessibility within the attraction area. In this context, the visitors have highlighted the specific area in Muar and its accessibility which using different modes of transportation. The result has found that there are certain areas in Muar town that can be reached by walking, motorcycling,

and car. It is reachable for all types of visitors with different issues like traffic congestion and insufficient facilities that lead to time-consuming in a visitor's journey. For the aspect of tourist movement around the location of attractions has shown the visitor's movement around the location of attractions based on visitors' journey experience. The visitor's experience portrays the issues that have faced in a journey such as long journey distance, traffic congestion, smoothly accessed and movement based on purposes.

Overall time allocation for one trip of visitation also considered as the characteristic of the tourist movement. Generally, the data shows that visitor intended to stay at Muar for 2 days and more with family and friends. For solo traveler intended to visit for one day or half day. The next aspect is time distance from visitor's region. The data demonstrates that the time taken in a day journey from a visitor's region to destination. It shows that the time distance taken by the visitors, not more than 8-9 hours to arrive at Muar City center.

Finally, the data for the corresponding time or duration for preferable attractions or activities has shown that most of the visitors like to take the longest time to do local food hunting activities. It can be evident that the corresponding time or duration taken by the visitors for each Muar local restaurant is in the range of 30 minutes until 2 hours.

Aknowledgment

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