

Place Attachment in Public Space Case Study: Hiraq Square Lhokseumawe, Aceh – Indonesia

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Abstract

Concerning to the issue of place attachment, the research tends to observe the functional attachment which will affect the level of attachment in Hiraq Square Lhokseumawe (HSL), a renowned public space among local people in the city of Lhokseumawe, Aceh, Indonesia. Place attachment is known as a process to unite people and specific space that can encourage the sense of place. It is also indicating the interrelation between physical features and its function, by this process the sense of a place can be emerged. These concepts concentrate on the physical features and activities together with the meanings affected by users that will establish the meaning and the identity of the place. The research is conducted by applying indirect method to simplify ordinary patterns and people-particular patterns of the place. Overall, 120 respondents at certain area of HSL were questioned through questionnaire survey and 10 kiosk operators were questioned. The findings indicate that the people have a robust relationship with the local environment and appoint the significance of place as economics' dependence and recreational place. The level of functional attachment to HSL is range from level 1 to level 3, whereas level 3 implicates a higher engagement in loyalty, goals and obedience to the environment.

Keywords: *place attachment, public space, sense of place*

1. Introduction

Robust relation that occurs between emotional and functional in particular space or interrelation between people and particular places can arouse the sense of place, this occurrence is acknowledged as place attachment [1]. According to Relph [2], three components are needed taking into account to understanding a certain place, i.e. physical elements; activities and functions; and meanings or symbols. It clarifies that a particular place is contains of physical features, activity and meaning. Canter [3] also has alike judgment that a certain place is a mixture of three features involving of the activities, the concept of place and the environment. In this study, place attachment designates the relationship between physical elements and its function also relationship among the people and a specific place, hence the meaning of a particular place can be emerged [4]. This study assumes that the effect of unsuitable physical modification may distress the meaning and the attachment to the place will be slowly diminished. Place-based concepts and principles is used to examines this issue and focuses to the physical elements, activities and the meanings gripped by the people is the strength to deliver the identity and the meaning of the place. The research stresses on the elements of place attachment in investigating the relationship between psychological aspects and physical features of particular place. Consequently, this research is designated to distinguish place attachment in the Hiraq Square as public space that is renowned among local people in Lhokseumawe, Aceh, Indonesia.

Hiraq Square Lhokseumawe (HSL) was chosen as a case study, a popular public open space located in the center of Lhokseumawe, a city in the Northern Aceh, Indonesia. Lhokseumawe is known as the second largest city in Aceh Province after Banda Aceh. Lhokseumawe itself covers an area of 181.06 square kilometers, and consist of 180,200 people as a recent number of population inside the city. Being in between Banda Aceh and Medan, Lhokseumawe change become a significant regional center for the economy of Aceh Province. The HSL itself covers an area of approximately 14,904 M², its main function actually is as public space and located next to Islamic Center Grand Mosque of Lhokseumawe. HSL well known by local people as a place for relax with family and became the most visited place during school holidays. Lots of playgrounds and other facilities with improper arrangement can be found there starting from afternoon until midnight. This research focus to identify the particular functional and emotional attachment of people in HSL. This study is significant in recognizing the localities within particular place in the city as a local character and expressive among the people.



Fig 1: Atmosphere of Hiraq Square Lhokseumawe

2. Literature Review

In this research, place attachment is a key conception to reveal the phenomena of sense of place. Positive emotional attachment between people to their setting and environment can be understood as place attachment [5]. Place attachment emerge through the relationship between people to particular place base on their satisfaction, experience and value to that place [6]. The level of successful neighborhood to become a place is determined by emotional level of human investment within the place [7]. Meanwhile, human perceptions into the place are also in-fluenced by the psychological status of well-being which is produced from access into certain place [8]. In the last three decades, interrelated concepts of place attachment and sense of place have overwhelmed the theory [1] [2] [5]. Various studies have been created in the last 15 years to discover these concepts empirically. To understanding the quality of place, such measurement process has been conducted through approaching of how it is perceived and valued by society. Since urban environment objectives are to be used and perceived by society, therefore it is notable that attention should be given to the predispose of place dimensions [9]. To discover a such meaning of a place, can be clarified through understanding the attachment of the place certainly. This empirical study emphasis on measuring the intensity of attachment.

Current studies describe sense of place and place attachment by employing some variables to measure off attachments quantitatively, i.e. familiarity, period of discourse, reliance, place of identity, sense of belonging and sense of place [1] [10] [11] [12]. To recognizing sense of place or sense to territories level, Shamai [11] recommend a set of tool to measure up with seven level criteria from the 0 (zero) to 6th level. The ratings itself are not exactly suitable for any types of place, it is flexible to be apply depend on the types of place (refer to Table 1). In this study, findings of ratings in sense of place could help researchers in identifying form and level of attachment in HSL.

Table 1: Sense of place level, according to Shamai [11]

Level	Sense of place criteria	Keywords
0	Has no sense of place	No attachment
1	Knowing being in place	Understanding Symbols, Knowing
2	Has sense of belonging to the place	Sense of belonging; togetherness; sense of same fate; respected symbols
3	Has attachment to the place	Emotion; meaning; experience; symbol; identity; personality; uniqueness; difference
4	Understand the place goals	Share goals; loyalty; obedience
5	Has a place engagement	Commitment; engagement; behavior; investment of human resources in group activities; actively involved.
6	Sacrifice for the place.	Sacrifice; good commitment

3. Methodology

To measure a perception, researchers mostly implement two methods, namely direct or indirect assessment [14] [15]. Direct method consists of the phenomenology approach to examine and designate the human circumstances and activities that happen voluntarily in daily life [17]. The goal of this method is to recognize qualitatively the uniqueness of the place in holistic way. On other side, indirect methods are including self-reports process such as questionnaires survey, interview, description checklist and time-sampling [16].

Indirect method was applied in this study by using questionnaires, interviews, observation technique to explain activity patterns and specific patterns human movement in the place. 120 respondents were involved in the survey that divide into two categories namely mobile users (60) and static users (60). The static user mostly are sidewalk vendors which have crucial role. Meanwhile, mobile users commonly are visitors, and local residents who came to pay a visit in HSL periodically. At the same time in-depth interview has been taken to 10 (ten) of respondents in the study area. All respondents indicate the main users of study area which consist of various groups of ages between 18-24 and 25-49 years old and 53% of them are women. Questionnaire consists of attributes that created as indicators for the evaluation and cross examining it with the literature. Assessment process is calculated based on a 5-point scale based on the fairness quality measurement. Analysis conducted through triangulation technique between data, interview and observation. This study assume that the nature of attachment is set on the place attributes and function within HSL.

4. Result and Discussion

Functional Attachment Form

Findings from the interview (as presented in Table 2) indicates that the attachment has been stated in 5 (five) terms, include length of engagement, level of familiarity, dependency, satisfaction and sense of comfort. These responses indicate the significance of open space to strengthen economic and social activities. Findings also emphasize that the place depends on earning fixed income and business chances in daily. Satisfaction level from respondent mostly expressed regarding to the facilities in open space in terms of its availability and diversity, street access, and the number of visitors. Meanwhile, the quality of physical and environmental comfort is revealed in term of ease of access-ibility and facilities for weather protection. Generally, people are happy with the physical improvement in the area, diversity of street ven-dors, and number of visitors. Other respondents indicate the importance of location and pedestrian intensity in sustain-ing their attachment to HSL

Table 2: Indicators of functional attachment

Place	Indicator
Hiraq Square Lhokseumawe (HSL)	
Short-term relationship develop attachment to place periodically visit, particularly in weekend and holiday, strengthen familiarity. Activities of street vendors. Attraction in the area, such as playground lots. Drinks and eat food as an attraction. <i>Keywords: Familiarity, Open space O' Activities, Street Vendor, Social-Relationships.</i>	Engagement
High familiarity level with the place. Image able, can describe the area very well. Concern on physical changes in the area Most street vendors are known each other People engage with the street vendor frequently <i>Keywords: Images, Changes, Street vendor, Events and attraction</i>	Familiarity
Place to gain income The area is economically potential. Length of engagement induce understanding over the space. Opportunity to earn money develop attachment to the area. Attachment is due to recreation activities and to earn money <i>Keywords: Daily income, Economic activities, Attachment, Control</i>	Dependency
Satisfied with a low price of food and drinks offered in the area. Many people to visit as attractions A special highlight of playing lots for children. <i>Keywords: Diversity, Sustainable life, Low price</i>	Satisfaction
Happy with the place Easy to get food, drinks and playing lots for children Comfort access and walking through <i>Keywords: Facilities, Low Price, Accessibility, Walking</i>	Comfort

Functional Attachment Level

Findings from survey mostly designate a positive feedback. Attachment to HSL was the main question in the questionnaire that need to respond by respondents. Table 3 summarize that the average rate of 2.42 out of 4.0 express high respond. This result represents a strong functional attachment to HSL which is expressed by respondents. Regarding to their purposes, most of respondents approve that HSL are the best place, as well as perceive comfortable being there during night. Meanwhile, most of respondents were not to satisfied with improvements in HSL, they agreed that the effort to improve the area was very minimum. Feedback to the statement number 1 (this place is better than other place in city) indicates strong functional attachment to HSL (value: 2.65). Figure 2 shown summarize positive feedback from respondents, they satisfy to HSL and assume it can function properly compared to other places in Lhokseumawe.

Table 3: The level of functional attachment to HSL based on the average value

Component	Statement		HSL	
			Mean	Std. Dev
FUNCTIONAL AT-TACHMENT N=120	01	This place is better than other place in city (Best)	2.65	.635
	02	The comfort of location is sufficient (Comfortable)	2.51	.623
	03	Finest place to meet my goals (Goals)	2.32	.645
	04	Very important place (Important)	2.22	.621
Reponse format: 1= strongly disagree, 4= strongly agree			Average Value	2.42



Fig 2: Percentage of functional attachment level to HSL (N=120)

5. Conclusion

References Both static and mobile respondents describe the significance of HSL as place for economic dependence as well as spatio-temporal recreational place in the city especially at night for children. Moreover, respondents agree that HSL is accessible place for them and their family member regarding to its adjacency between HSL to the road. Respondents also recommend HSL to become an alternative place in supporting their incomes at night compared to other open space in Lhokseumawe. Most of static respondents argue that HSL becomes their dependence place to get personal needs and a major place for their livelihood. The form of functional attachment clearly affect the attributes associated with the main function within HSL. In accordance with the sense of place level recognized by Shamai [11], it can be concluded that the functional attachment level to HSL is between level 1 to level 3. Level 3 implicates high level of commitment to HSL which is represented by the faithfulness to daily economic activities, as well as a place to earn revenue and daily needs. However, most of static respondents indicate their sense of place dependency and identity, meanwhile mobile respondents were attached to the function which is offered by HSL. The results of this research are in line with theory that the functional attachment level is diverse in pursuance of user's role in the place.

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