

SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS

**International Seminar on Urban Culture
Arte-Polis: Creative Culture and the Making of Place**

Bandung, 21-22 July 2006



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School of Architecture, Planning and Policy Development
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Head, Arte-Polis Organizing Committee
Woerjantari SOEDARSONO, Dr.

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Editors

Ahmad Rida SOEMARDI, MArch. MCP.
Ag. Adib ABADI, MSc.

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Department of Architecture
School of Architecture, Planning, and Policy Development
Institute of Technology, Bandung
Jl. Ganesha 10, Bandung, INDONESIA
Tel. +62-22-2504962, +62-22-2530706, Fax +62-22-2530705

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THE INFLUENCES OF BENTENG KUTO BESAK PLAZA'S ON PALEMBANG TOURISM MARKETING ACTIVITIES

Setyo NUGROHO and Widya Fransiska FEBRIATI
Lecturers Department of Architecture, Sriwijaya University. setyonug@telkom.net,
widyafans@telkom.net

ABSTRACT

Palembang with its Musi River has much potency to be developed into a waterfront-tourism city. Musi River is a well-known city icon which has major influence on the social life of the citizen from a long time ago. Along the river, there were many historical areas; one of these was called Benteng Kuto Besak (BKB).

Since the Sriwijaya Kingdom era, the area near BKB location had become the centre of economic and government. Meanwhile, the quality of place in this area declined, and further this condition eliminated the function of BKB as historical place in Palembang. In the last 10 years, the government had tried to revitalize BKB area to become a better of place by planning and developing an open space near by the Musi River. This open space was known as BKB Plaza. Many events had been held in this plaza, such as art performances, industries exhibitions, and other social activities. At the end, this planning policy was addressed to increase the image of Palembang as tourism destination.

This paper discussed about the existence of BKB plaza in the city context. Observation was done by observing the various activities (daily and eventually) which had been held in this place. The special quality of BKB plaza in selling the city's attractiveness would be discussed by using architecture and economic-tourism point of view. Both would be used to analyze the influences of BKB plaza's existence on Palembang tourism marketing activities.

Keywords: Plaza, revitalization, tourism image

INTRODUCTION

Located near by the Musi River, Palembang has much potency to be developed into a waterfront-tourism city. From a long time ago, Musi River has major influence on the social life of the citizen. Since the era of Sriwijaya Kingdom and Palembang Darussalam Sultanate, Musi River became the orientation of all city activities. These exotic story about the Musi River and Palembang history was documented by the existence of old buildings and historical places along the river, such the location of Keraton Palembang ruins, Kuto Besak Fort, Bahari Museum, Sekanak River and its old city, Kampong Kapiten, raft houses and so forth.

In 2001, the local city government had a revitalization program for BKB area. This program was conducted by redeveloping the physical quality of the space in front if Kuto Besak Fort. Before the revitalization program, the open space was covered/ hidden by the activities of traditional fruit market, with poor quality of environment. After the traditional market was relocated, and the space was redeveloped and became an open space near by the Musi River, known as Benteng Kuto Besak Plaza.

At the same time, the awareness of local government to promote the city tourism had been increasing. The paradigm of "Palembang as Waterfront Tourism Destination" became popular, and it was followed by many physical developments in many places. The uniqueness of local food, souvenirs, and the availability of facilities had encouraged the development of tourism activities. One of indicator was the use of BKB Plaza. Many activities had been held in this plaza, such as art performances, industries exhibitions.

In fact, these activities above only occurred for certain event and in a certain time. In the usual day, the plaza is relatively empty; there is no life in Plaza. The plaza will be enjoyed by visitors only for certain tendency. In other words, when there are big events, the plaza will busy, so many people come to enjoy the event. But on the contrary, the plaza will have "no life" if there is no big event. This condition brings to a question of what the motivation of people to come to the plaza is, the event or the tourism attractiveness of waterfront area.

This research will observed the influence of BKB Plaza on Palembang Tourism Marketing activities. The basic method of this research is qualitative and descriptive research, because it's aimed to describe precisely the real condition and activities held at plaza. Further, those realities will be analyzed to find the other tourism potency of Plaza. Besides the architecture of an open space, the research also used tourism and marketing theory to enrich the theoretical frame. By doing all, this paper has some recommendations for better used of Plaza in tourism marketing activities

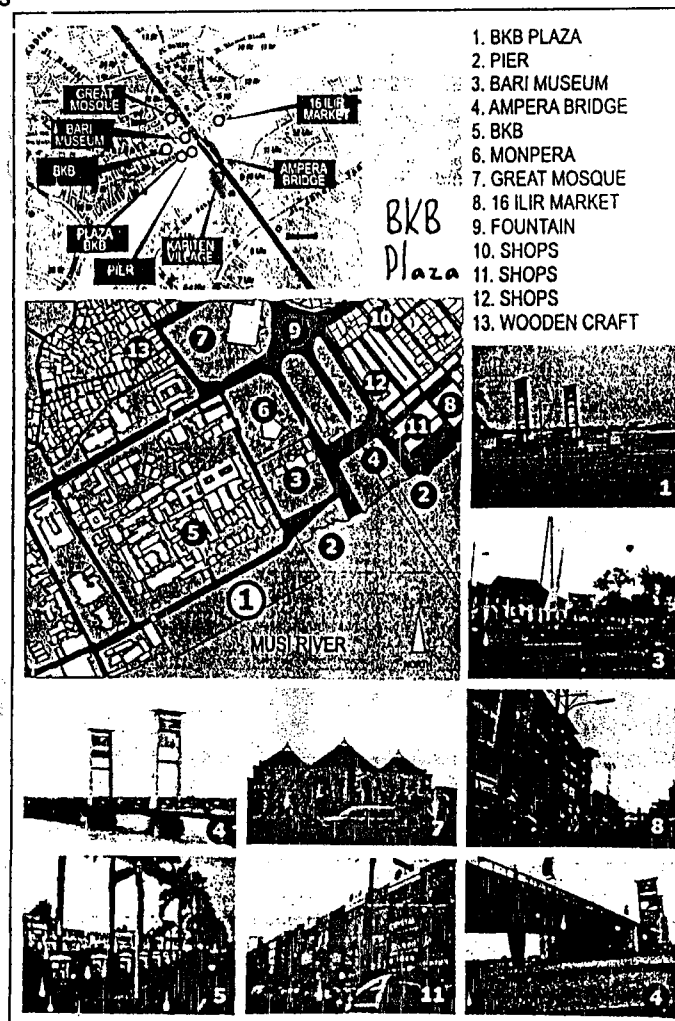


Figure 1. BKB Plaza location and other city tourism potency

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Plaza As 'Special' Open Space

Whyte (1980) mentioned that the successful plaza is the one that has social life. There are some amenities in Plaza that can be studied to know whether one plaza is successful or not. Those amenities are sitting spaces, sun, trees, water, food and streets. The sitting space enable people to enjoy the plaza and have social interaction one another. Sun can be enjoyed or rejected by the people who use the plaza. It depends on the time people use the plaza. In the midday, people tend to avoid the sun, and look for shadowed area. Trees ought to be related much more closely to sitting space. Its greenery effect makes the feeling of convenience arise. Water will be good if can be touched, looked, and felt by the people. Foods attract more people to come to plaza. A good plaza starts at the streets corner. If it is a busy corner, it has an active social life of its own.

According to Spilanne, in every tourism destination, there are some elements which have strong relationship one another. Those elements are attraction, facilities, infrastructure, transportation and hospitality. Attraction in one object has something can attract people to come and enjoy it. It can be formed as site attraction and event attraction. Site attraction is a permanent attractiveness with fix (permanence) location. In another way, event attraction occurs eventually, with non permanent location or movable location. As mentioned above, things that can attract tourist to come in certain object could be scenery, climate, cultural, historical, ethnicity and accessibility of the object. Those become attraction for certain object that invite tourist to come. Facilities are needed to serve the tourist while they enjoy the object. Generally, facilities must be located near by the object so that they can fulfill the needs of tourists. In another words, the location of facilities must make the object of tourism as their orientation. The kind of facilities could be hotels and restaurant (in many level of service) and also the support industries. The supports industries are any industries or business in many scales that support the tourism activities such souvenir shops, guide center, duty-free shops. Those are linked together and must create a good atmosphere for tourist in enjoying the object. Infrastructure makes attraction and facilities are utilized. It makes all the system in tourism program work properly. Including in infrastructure are water system, communication, power and electricity, health facilities, sanitation and drainage, streets, and safety system. Transportation is related to everything that makes people easily come and get to the location, including the transportation system, and the complete information system of transport facilities, destination, safety system in hub, city map etc. Hospitality is concerned with the ability of people (as host) to behave hospitable. This behavior can be described as the willingness to welcome and serve the guests. This positive behavior will bring positive reaction from the guest (tourist) and further will bring positives effect to the economic of people around the tourism location.

Tourism Marketing Activities

Because of its ability to attract people, the attractiveness of plaza can be included in one of tourism marketing strategy in city. One basic theory use to analyze the plaza from marketing point of view is Marketing mix theory. Marketing mix is the set of marketing tools tat the firm uses to pursue its marketing objectives in the target market. McCarthy (1996) in Kotler (1997) mentioned the 4P's as marketing mix tools; Product, Price, Place and Promotion. Product is the most basic marketing tools, which is offered to the market including its quality and design. It is related to what things that satisfy customer (needs and wants). Price is a critical tools of marketing which represent amount of money or satisfaction that customer pay to get the product. Place is related to the customer's convenience in accessing and getting the offering product. Promotion includes all the activities to communicate and promote product to target market. The key points fro promotion is effective communication to the customer. To see the BKB Plaza existence from tourism marketing point of view, this paper will try to elaborate BKB as tourism product with 4p's analysis.

DISCUSSION

BKB Plaza as one unique open space and tourism object.

With its uniqueness and historical back ground, the BKB plaza is a valuable open space and tourism destination in Palembang. As a open space in city center, BKB Plaza should become a place for people to socialize one another. BKB Plaza should have its own social life which reflects its special character. The design of open space elements must support this objective. By using Whyte Analysis, those condition has not created for BKB Plaza yet.

Table 1. The Analysis Of Element Of Plaza

Elements of plaza	Criteria	BKB's condition
Sitting space	Available in many form, sit table space, benches etc. Shadowed area is more comfort for the people Socialiy comfortable	Available but not comfort for people to sit while enjoys the scenery. Few are shadowed by the trees, but mostly are not.
Sun	Access to the sun should be protected, so that the over warmth temperature can be reduced.	In the midday, the sun reflects the tile of plaza, and it makes plaza become hot.
Trees	Trees provide a satisfying enclosure. A good combination of trees and sitting spaces will provide a very pleasing combination of shade and sunlight	Only a few trees at plaza.
Water	The design must make people easily touch, look and feel the water.	There is no design for water form at plaza. Plaza is just an open area which covered by the tile.
Food	Must be accommodating by a regulation and clear zoning.	There is no zoning for street vendor. But there is location for restaurant located beside the plaza.
Street	The area when the street and plaza meet should be a transition area where the ones end and the other begins. Features such retailing, sit table place should be available along the street to make a good streetscape. Sidewalk must be a part of plaza.	The street along the plaza is a one way busy street. The vehicle werę vary, car, public city transportation, becak, motorcycle.

Source: Analysis

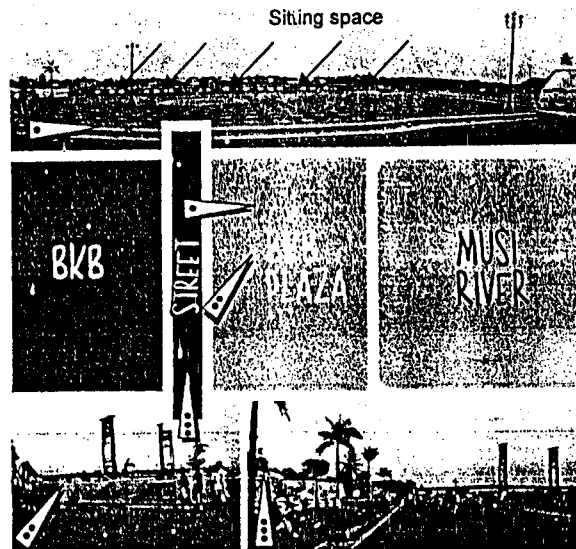


Figure 2. The daily condition of BKB Plaza

BKB Plaza and Tourism Marketing Effort.

As a part of city icon, BKB Plaza becomes one tourism object for non-local visitors. The existence of Plaza can not be separated from its surroundings. Plaza is not only one singular tourism object. It is also a part of a series of other historical object located near by the river, such Benteng Kuto Besak, Museum, Sekanak River, etc. The analysis of element around the Plaza is needed to explore the existing condition.

Table 2. The Tourism Analysis of BKB Plaza

Element of tourism object	Existing condition	Effort needed
attraction	Site attraction: Scenery ; Ampere Bridge and Musi River Historical: Benteng Kuto Besak, museum, Ampere bridge, the old city. Kampung Kapiten Event attraction: Yearly: Bidar competition, Sriwijaya festival Eventually: industry exhibition, art performances. Daily: none	Make a program that link all the attraction into one tour package. Bring the memory of the old city life as a valuable story.
Facilities	Available: public toilet, boat landing Not available: hotels, souvenir shops, guide center, musholla.	Provide the unavailable facilities by connect the tourism network with other facilities near by the plaza Comprehensive tourism management to optimize the use of facilities near by the plaza
Infrastructure	Available but the usage is less optimum.	Optimize the infrastructure management, to increase the utilize of infrastructure system
Transportation	Location can be accessed easily by using public transportation No clear information and signs for further information of schedule, take and drop point, city map etc	Provide information center Provide information board at the most visible side of plaza Special parking area for tourist's transportation
Hospitality	No formal education of hospitable behavior for tourism industry	Formal / informal education of hospitality Increase the awareness of citizens as host to behave hospitable to the guest

Source: Analysis

As a tourism object, BKB Plaza is a product of tourism industry. Located near by the high valuable building and sites, BKB plaza becomes a premium node that represent the present and the past of Palembang. In order to conduct a comprehensive marketing effort, the analysis of marketing mix is important, as follows:

Table 3 The Marketing Mix Analysis Of BKB Plaza

Product	The plaza has attractiveness which comes from the potency of plaza itself, and old building around it. By having these, we can say that the Plaza become a primary node where visitor can experience the city in present and past time. The histories of plaza location bring a special feeling of the old memory of Sriwijaya and Palembang Sultanate.
Place	Plaza has special location with advantages such locate at river front, center of city, historical site, near by other city landmark and other historical buildings.
Price	The easiness to get to the plaza and enjoy the scenery make the low cost of tourism
Promotion	By observing the daily activities held at Plaza, it reflects that the promotion for tourism attractiveness of BKB Plaza is still minimum. Only a few of people come to enjoy the scenery of Plaza. The Plaza will be full of people only if there area specific event such yearly and eventually activities.

Source: Analysis

CONCLUSION

The plaza is a high value salable product that has some advantages and potency for tourism. The design of plaza still creates less social life of plaza. The open space element designs are

not maximized in creating the lively situation at plaza. Some elements are no use because its position is not completed by other elements, for example some sitting spaces are not completed by trees or shadowed area, so that people can not use it in midday. Street (food) vendor must be accommodate because it can attract more people come and creates the plaza more life. This effort must be followed by clear regulation and hard law enforcement in application.

From the marketing- tourism analysis, we can see that as a destination, Plaza has some advantages that can attract people to come. The attractiveness of Plaza it self and the other place in its surroundings can be a powerful promotion tools. Besides the tangible potency, there is also intangible tourism potency that can be promotion tools; those are the old story of Palembang and the exotic Musi River.

Marketing effort to sell the uniqueness of the Plaza (and its surroundings) is still minimum if we compare to the potency it has. The attractiveness of other valuable area near the plaza has not supported the Plaza yet. It seems that the tourism development programs made by the government are not powerful enough to increase the visitor.

In any business, powerful promotion is highly needed. The promotion program should be created interestingly and further stimulate the curiosity of people outside Palembang to come and visit the Plaza. One thing that they need to know is the assurance of activity at destination. A series activities in their vacation, will assure them to join the tourism program. They will be more interested to come and visit Palembang (and also the plaza) if there is a series of place to visit wit a series story to hear. In other words, besides the physical development tourism program, the arrangement of tourism activities in interesting tourism package will invite visitors and make marketing effort is successful. It can be done by linking all the attractiveness around waterfront redevelopment area into certain tourism package, and make the BKB Plaza as the starting and ending point (primary node) of those activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It needs further effort to optimize the Palembang tourism marketing activities, as follows:

- Comprehensive management of tourism to link all the tourism aspect of Area Plaza
- Providing better facilities at location
- Improving the design of Plaza as open space to make it more lively
- Promoting all the valuable place around waterfront area (the BKB, Museums, Sekanak River, old city etc) into a certain tourism package, and make the BKB Plaza as starting or ending point of the tour.
- Making a clear regulation and hard law enforcement to assure the effectiveness of implementation
- Improving the capability of society (as hosts) in managing the tourism industry, including the hospitable behavior in welcoming and serving the tourist (guests)

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