

# DISCOVERING THE QUALITIES OF FERRINGHI NIGHT MARKET AS AN URBAN CULTURAL SPACE

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## ABSTRACT

Street market in urban centres has become a part of the major commercial place for locals and tourists. In most revitalization projects, the image of the street market will be changed as the space becomes more modernized to attract visitors. As a consequence to the redevelopment of street markets, the arrivals of visitors and the visitor experience may also change. This paper examines the role of street market as an urban cultural space for the city. Through a case study on Ferringhi Night Market, Penang, the researchers conducted a survey among the locals and tourists, semi-structured interviews among the vendors and field observation to analyse the nature of Ferringhi Night Market as a street market and how visitors and vendors experience and perceive it. The study found that Ferringhi Night Market plays heterogeneous roles as a commercial and cultural space. There are several factors that contribute to the visitor experience at Ferringhi Night Market in terms of the elements, the spaces, the surrounding site, atmosphere, local activities, products and the presence of local people. To further improve the vibrancy of Ferringhi Night Market, this study suggests that the physical setting needs to support more social activities and cultural activities.

**Keywords:** Culture, street market, tourism, urban

## INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have been conducted on tourist destinations like resorts, parks, historic sites and cultural attractions. Within the last ten years, studies on street markets have started to gain attention by recent researchers (Hsieh and Chang 2006). Street markets and their temporary activities add vibrancy to urban places (Zakariya and Ware, 2010b). It is interesting to note how these traditions and hurly-burly events affect the urban space quality despite their small scale. The street market has potential to represent the culture of the local place. However, some street markets are lacking in cultural identity because they tend to offer mostly general items for daily use that can be found elsewhere. This happens when the street market is perceived only as a commercial space, rather than as a cultural space.

The street market is a typology of urban space that is common globally. It is one of the famous activities that occur on the streets. Based on *Living Streets*, Bain et. al (2012) mentions that, "...the activities they offer can encourage people to use the street". People that visit the street market usually engage in shopping activities while interacting with other people. This could make the street becomes more active and vibrant. In this sense, the street space benefits the residents and visitors by functioning as a market space. Visitors have the opportunity to purchase a range of goods from common items to special products of the place. This study aims to examine the values of a street market in the urban area towards its visitors and vendors. Street market has the potential to represent the culture of a town and city. It is often located in an accessible public space, which makes it easier for visitors to visit. Visitors would usually expect a different locality to offer different types of street

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market. It can allow people to experience different cultures, products, social interactions and other activities at the street market.

Some street markets offer a unique setting that turns them into a shopping area for tourists. Visitors can experience some part of the local culture by visiting a street market. It is made up of the informal business activities usually by the locals in the area. The income generated from the market activities contributes to the country's economy as well as the tourism industry. The sellers can gain higher income when more visitors visit the street market. Additionally, the social interaction between the users of the street market will also give visitors an experience of talking to a local person, and can create a memorable experience to the visitors.

## Street Market

“Street market” is defined as *“a temporary public market, normally set up outdoors on certain days of the week, often, but not always, in a street. Sometimes they can be found in a car park or in a market square”* (**The Wordnik - online**). The street market is an open-air market that operates in a designated street space, either all day long or during specific times. Sometimes, they can be found in a car park, or in the market square. Most street markets are temporary public market, normally set up outdoors on certain days of the week (**The Wikipedia-online**). It is one of the places that enable people to gather in the city area. Besides that, the street market is comprised of stalls that sell different types of products, ranging from food, clothes, merchandise and some unique local items (**Zakariya and Ware, 2010a**).

## The Types of Street Market

Street markets are varied according to their location in the outdoor city space. There are two general types of street market that can be found across different countries, which are permanent and temporary street market (**Yusuf and Sundramoorthy, 2015** and **Medina, 2002**).

1. Permanent street market  
Permanent street market is the daily street market that opens every day or permanently on certain days in a week or months. These types of market usually sell the daily items such as vegetables, meat, chicken, fish and other fresh products for the local community to purchase. The permanent street market usually has fixed stalls where the vendors have their own stalls that they rent.
2. Temporary street market  
Temporary street market is based on seasonal events, festivals and special occasions. This type of street market is often held in a public space in the city. Certain street will be temporarily occupied by market vendors to sell special products based on the local culture, events and festivals held at the market. The street market events add liveliness to the urban setting.

## The Spaces and Elements of a Street Market

The combined functions of spaces and elements can enhance the street. A street becomes vibrant when it is designed by integrating the spaces, elements and the activities of its people. The combination of spaces and elements could produce different settings and feel, which determines the space's durability and longevity. **Bain et. al (2012)** writes, *“The spaces and elements that make up the public right-of-way are critical to creating streets that support placemaking, mobility and natural systems.”* Similarly, the street market needs to have suitable spaces and elements that could enhance its function as a living street for the city.

## The Roles of Street Market

The street market is a unique urban culture. It is “*simultaneously a site of social, economic, and cultural exchange. Unlike the standardized architectural designs and transnational ownerships of both central shopping streets and suburban malls, they provide a ‘face’ of local social and cultural identity*” (Zukin, 2012:282). People often perceive street markets as the venue where commercial trade takes place. In fact, these spaces possess a rich source of everyday life. Zukin also addressed them as “*social spaces where cultural identities are formed, learned, and reproduced*”. The heterogeneous roles of street markets can be stated as a public space that unveils the commercial space, social space and cultural space (Amin, 2012; Hall, 2012; Lallement, 2010; Varda, 1975). Street market has an important role in showing the city’s local culture through the elements, spaces, activities and the cultural landscape of the place.

## Factors That Influence the Vibrancy of Street Market

Each type of street market has its own style that could attract people to visit it. A successful street market usually has its own style to attract people. For example, the night market that functions once a week make people look forward to it. A street market that operates between the historical buildings or interesting settings will also attract people to visit it because of the aesthetics values and experience that they offer. Shamsuddin et al. (2008) found that there are three factors or qualities that attract users to the traditional street: (i) use and activities (ii) access and linkages and (iii) comfort and image. These factors can guide the evaluation of the qualities in the street market that could make it vibrant as an urban cultural space.

The landscape setting can also further enhance the comfort of visitors at the street market. Landscape setting includes provision of benches, offering a pedestrian-friendly environment, appropriate sidewalk width and shade. Mehta (2013) found that sitting spaces are one of the most important elements in “retaining people in public space.” This suggests that the sitting area at the street market is also important to accommodate people to walk and rest along the street market while shopping.

## Potential of Street Market towards the Vitality of the Town Center

The values and cultures could force the place to enlighten the identity of space. The space of street market could become one of the most liveable public places when the culture and heritage could be shown through the design elements and space. Every city will have its own speciality in terms of historical values that could become the place identity. Shamsuddin et.al. (2004) stressed that “*streets become the most significant urban elements that represent the people’s perception of the city’s identity*”. This revealed that the city’s image and vitality is dependent on the identity and activities of which the street upholds. In short, the vitality of street market serves as an attraction that draw people to the city. Street market events could attract people and make the street becomes active to the users when they want to look for certain products that are sold for a limited period of time. The locals will use this opportunity to experience the temporary events in their city. They will get the new experience and build a sense of belonging to the place through visiting it, while getting to know the local products such as traditional food, *kuih-muih* and others.

A well-frequented street market is often located at a busy and most accessible area that could attract both locals and tourists. Most locals will visit the street market that is near to their residential area or at a corner of their workplace. The sense of safety on the street will promote the street market’s name to the local people to visit it. The safety of the street area

depends on the environmental and physical comfort of the street (**Mehta, 2013**). A street market with a friendly pedestrian environment could attract more people to visit it.

## METHODOLOGY

### Case Study

The study was conducted on the Ferringhi Night Market in Penang, Malaysia. It is the second famous attraction for tourists to visit after Georgetown as mentioned in **Asia Web Direct, (2015)**. This nearly one-kilometer long night market is located alongside the Batu Ferringhi Street. It is well-known to tourists as it is surrounded by hotels, budget accommodations, eateries, the beach and other tourist attractions. It operates everyday starting from 7 p.m. till midnight. Souvenirs, watches, T-shirts, gadgets and cheap counterfeits are mainly products that can be identified there. This night market was chosen as a case study for its value as a tourist attraction for shopping. In order to achieve the aim and objectives of this study, several information is needed, which are to identify the spaces and elements that shape the street market's setting and experience. This study assessed the perceptions of the visitors towards the vibrancy of street market and its qualities as a commercial, social and cultural space among locals and tourists. The findings can guide the improvement of the quality and image of the night market itself and other street markets in Malaysia as well as a tourist attraction.

### Data Collection

The research methodology requires the data collection on the physical setting, the elements of the spaces, activities and users' experiences. Perception and feedback from users were gained from their thoughts about the Ferringhi Night Market. There are three main methods employed during the data collection, which are observation, survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The qualitative data were collected from the observation and semi-structured interviews, while the quantitative data derived from disseminating survey questionnaires among the visitors.

### Observation

The observation was conducted on weekdays and weekend in March 2015, from 7 p.m. till 11.30 p.m. Due to the limitation of this study, the observation was done during one week only. There are two kinds of observation, which are participant observation and direct observation (**Robson, 1993**). According to **Trochim, (1999)** participant observation is when the observer participates and shares the same experience as the observed group, and the interpretation of the experiences are included as primary data. Direct observation is carried out as the observer occupies the case study site to observe, analyse and record the data. The observation was documented through site mapping and photographing, based on the checklist that has been prepared beforehand to ensure the fieldwork is focused towards the objectives. The observation method gathered data on the following aspects:

- a) Observe and identify the condition and quality of commercial space, social space and landscape space at the chosen location.
- b) Identify the physical elements (hardscape elements) and to relate to how the elements influence the spaces' appearance and users' behaviours
- c) Observe and project time lapse mapping of visitors' activities in order to understand their behaviour patterns and how they react towards the existing space in the street market, and mapping the types of product to identify the abundance of products being sold, which may or not being part of the distinctive character of the street market.

## Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered face-to-face at the site location among locals and tourists. The targeted sampling was within the range of 30-50 respondents for each category. Due to limitation of time, only 30 survey questionnaire forms for each category were distributed and answered. There are four main sections in the questionnaire, which are:

- **Section A:** Demographic background
- **Section B:** Assessment of the social value of Ferringhi Night Market
- **Section C:** Commercial value and cultural value of Ferringhi Night Market
- **Section D:** The visitors' opinions and recommendations on the Ferringhi Night Market.

The sections are further explained as below in Table 1:

**Table 1** Sections of questionnaire

NO.	SECTIONS	PURPOSE	TECHNIQUES APPLIED
1.	A	To identify background of the users and their familiarity with the Ferringhi Night Market.	Multiple choice
2	B	To identify the qualities that supports Ferringhi Night Market as a social space and a place for interaction.	Likert scale
3	C	To identify the definite commercial and cultural value that defined the existing space of the Ferringhi Night Market.  To identify the best experience that Ferringhi Night Market served to the visitors.	Likert scale
4	D	To identify the factors that need to be improved in order to meet the tourists' demand towards Ferringhi Night Market.	Open ended

The data were then analysed using Microsoft Office Excel and tabulated in the form of charts and graphs.

## Semi-structured Interview

Semi-structured interview was conducted among the vendors of the night market. The vendors were selected upon their willingness to participate in the interview. Each vendor selected represent designated categories based on the products they sell, such as food, art and craft, accessories, gadgets and souvenirs. The verbally administered interview was carried out with a list of predetermined questions for guidance on what to be asked to ensure clarity and efficiency. Some follow up questions were asked as well for further understanding of the nature of the street market. The questions are mainly about their views towards the Ferringhi Night Market as an attraction that served the visitors in term of the products, cultural activities and their satisfaction and suggestions regarding the existing qualities of Ferringhi Night Market.

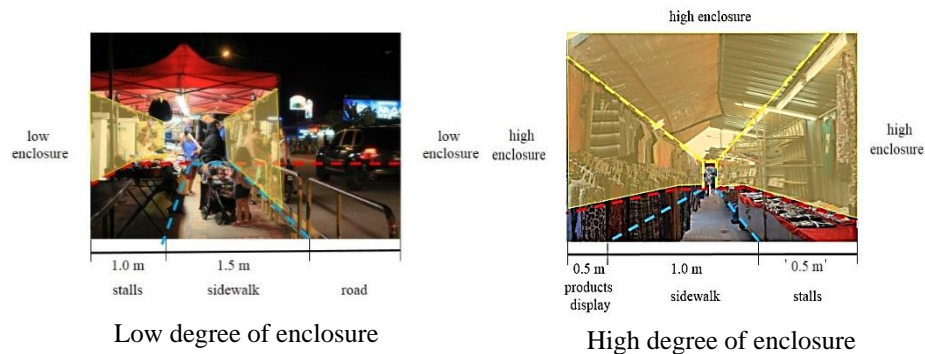
## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Observation and site mapping

Based on the observation and site mapping conducted in the Ferringhi Night Market, the condition and quality of the spaces, product distribution, activities and people's movement there were identified.

## 1. Physical Setting

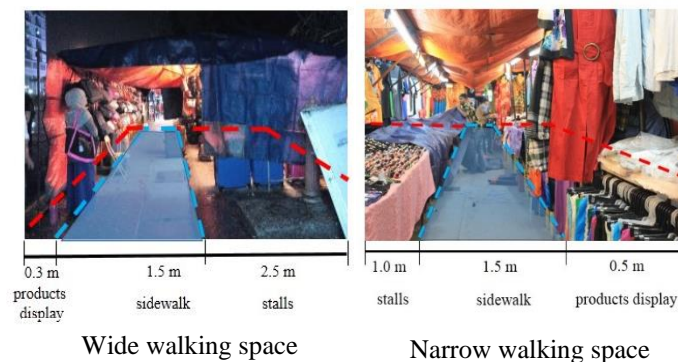
The night market operated on sidewalks. The width, material and condition of the sidewalk are different along the street. Thus, the nature of the stalls there also differ in terms of the degree of enclosure, composition and the size of the space where the stalls were accommodated (refer Fig. 2-4). Stalls that occupied the sidewalks can be identified on one side or both sides. It is interesting to note that low enclosure of stalls gives an interesting view to the colourful display of products from the adjacent street towards the night market and good ventilation as the space is usually crowded with people.



**Figure 2** Different degrees of stalls' enclosure



**Figure 3** Different compositions of stalls



**Figure 4** Different widths of walking space

The physical elements that influenced the appearance of the Ferringhi Night Market are the semi-permanent stalls with different types built materials, such as canvas and Zink stalls. Other elements that make up the setting are the railing, dustbins, benches, streetscape lighting and background (refer Fig. 5).



Figure 5 Physical elements

## 2. Circulation

Due to the narrow sidewalk and the high number of visitors, it is quite difficult to move within the space especially for the family with strollers. Thus, some of the visitors are willing to walk on the side of the main street rather than through the crowd of people. Most of the visitors walked in a linear pattern of which their starting point can be either from point A or point B (refer Fig. 6). The peak hour for this night market is at 9 p.m. and most crowded on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

The night market is surrounded by the local and Middle East eateries, hotel accommodations, shops and others. The night market's permeability encourages cross movement pattern among the visitors (refer Fig. 7). The informal trishaw hub was also observed near hotels. Due to the different land use that surrounds the site, the concentration of people is different in some part of this long night market. The night market space can be divided into three sections. The most concentrated areas (middle zone) are surrounded by eateries, while the moderate concentrated areas (upper zone) are surrounded by hotels.

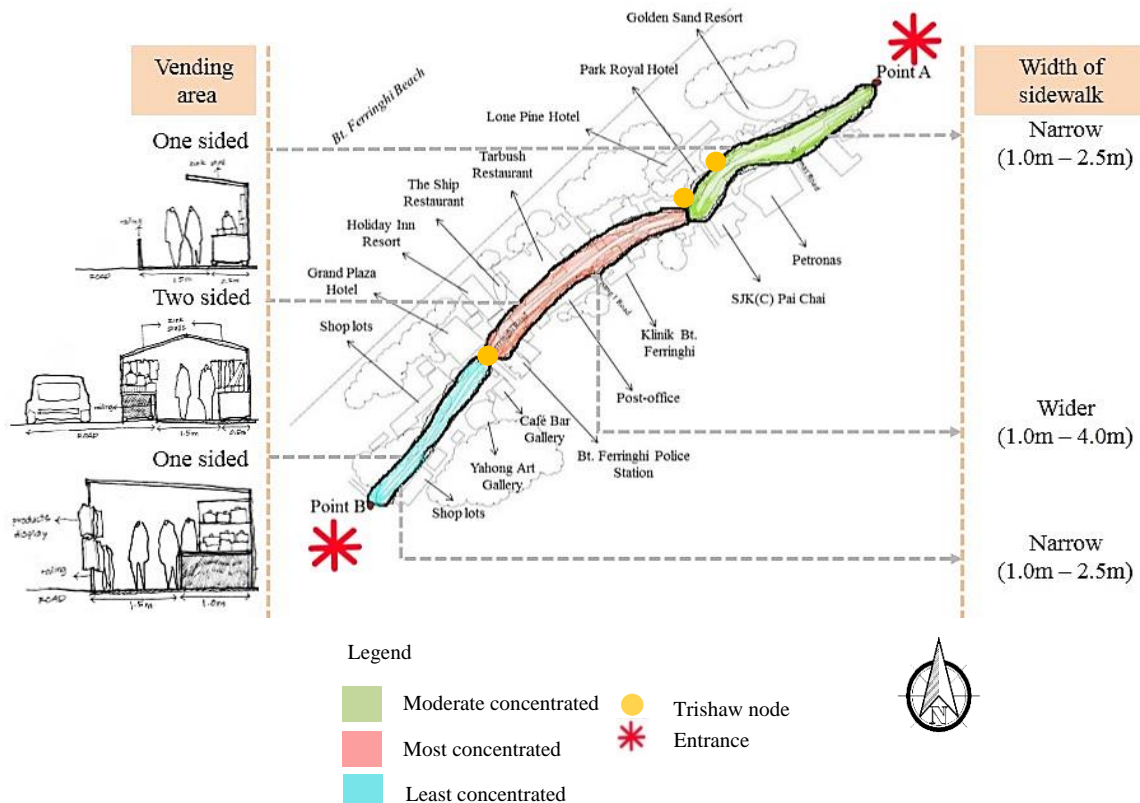
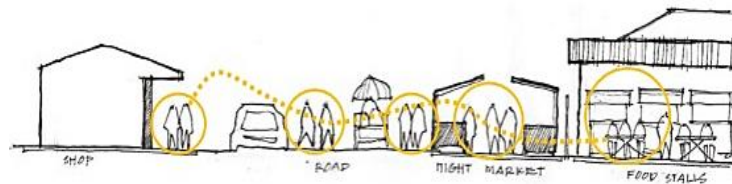


Figure 6 Batu Ferrighi Map-(reproduced: *source* Google Earth- online)





**Figure 7** The cross-section of the Ferringhi Night Market illustrating the relationship between the site context and the night market towards human movement

### 3. Activities

Based on the observation, most of the visitors would stroll and shop at the night market after having dinner at the eateries. The activities at the night market comprised of vendors selling their goods, visitors shopping and bargaining, taking photographs, and sight-seeing. However, the night market space is lacking in terms of supporting social spaces like a seating or gathering area. Most of the socializing and gathering activities took place at the restaurants and street food stalls located adjacent to the night market.

### 4. Products

Based on the inventory of products sold at the night market, the site is abundant with cheap counterfeits like watches, bags, and others. Some other recognizable products that can be identified there are arts and crafts, souvenirs, gadgets, accessories, clothes, toys and street food called “*apam balik*” (a type of local crepe). The other products are listed in Table 1:

**Table 1** Types of products

Types	Examples
Local food and beverage	Street food, seafood
Common food and beverage	Middle East food, Western food, Thai food
Arts and crafts	Paintings, ‘batik’ art, ceramic art, craft bags, masks
Souvenirs	Local T-shirts, key chains, fridge magnet,
Clothes	Swimsuit, scarf, shorts, dresses
Shoes	Sport shoes, sandal,
Accessories	Hairpins, bracelets, necklaces, earring, rings, cap, hat
Household accessories	Lights, pillow case
Cheap counterfeits	Bags, sunglasses, watches, purses, belt
Gadgets	Phone cases, earphones, DVD, USB cable
Toys	Beach plays, helicopter control

There were about 100 stalls at the night market, which were not arranged in any specific zones or types of products. For example, the arts and crafts products might be placed next to the gadget stalls or others. The vendors usually displayed their products by placing them on the tables with particular arrangement or hanging them in a bunch or placed them accordingly by pieces. In addition, most of the vendors there are foreign workers who are mostly from Bangladesh. They are fluent in speaking either Malay or English, or both. Findings from the inventory and observation found that there is a lack of local products and vendors that portray the image, authenticity and culture of Malaysia.

## B. Survey questionnaire among visitors

### 1. Respondents profile

The target sample was among locals and tourists with 30 respondents in each category. The survey identified the profile of the respondents in terms of their gender, the purpose of visiting the Ferringhi Night Market and with whom they visit the night market (refer Table 2).



**Table 2** Percentage of the gender, purpose of visiting and the companion of the visitors

Respondents criteria		Locals (Percentage %)	Tourists (Percentage %)
Gender	a) Male	40%	46.7%
	b) Female	60%	53.3%
Purpose of visiting	a) Shopping	43.3%	60%
	b) Sight-seeing	43.3%	30%
	c) Eating	10%	10%
	d) Others	3.3%	
Visiting with	a) Alone	0%	6.7%
	b) Family	40%	30%
	c) Friends/Partner	60%	63.3%

A slight majority of the visitors were female locals and tourists. The most common purpose of visiting the night market for locals and visitors are for shopping and sight-seeing. Tourists tend to shop more compared to the locals. Locals may have visited other night markets in Malaysia before as it is a common phenomenon, but for tourists, shopping at the night market offers them a unique experience. In terms of the companions during the visit, the majority of the visitors went there with their friends or partner, followed by those who visit with their family.

It can be concluded that the visitors perceived the Ferringhi Night Market as a place for shopping and sight-seeing. Since there are few numbers of stalls that sell food at the night market, eating-out activities are minimal, although it indicates a future potential. The night market also attracts visitors to come with their family, partner or friends, rather than alone. This shows that this night market is a social place where people go to shop and walk together, which makes it different than going to a market to shop for groceries.

## 2. Assessment of the social value of Ferringhi Night Market

There are two factors that were identified to evaluate the existing qualities of night market as a social space for visitors, which are in terms of the atmosphere and the facilities.

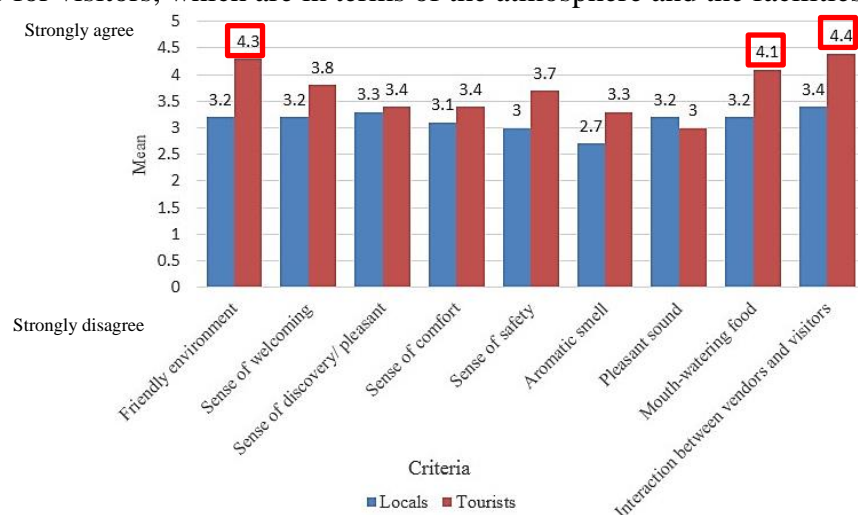
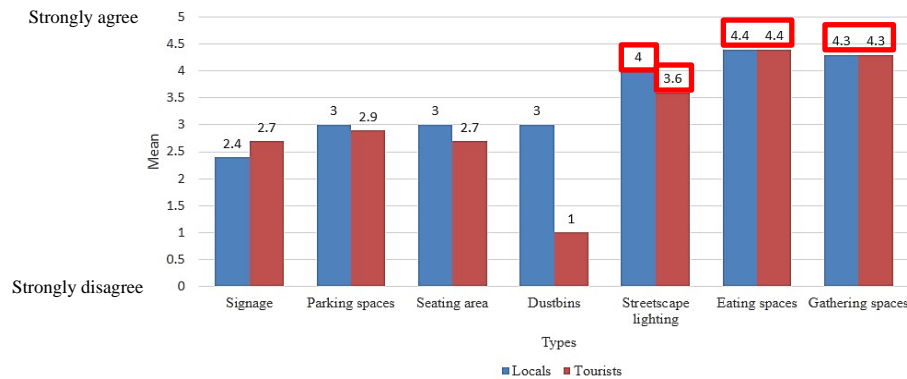
**Figure 8** Atmosphere at the Ferringhi Night Market

Figure 8 shows the attributes that make up the atmosphere of the Ferringhi Night Market. Most of the locals rated the atmosphere as having neutral qualities for all the above criteria, which are the friendly environment, sense of welcoming, sense of discovery, a sense of comfort, sense of safety, pleasant sound, mouth-watering food and interaction between

vendors and visitors. On the other hand, tourists generally rated these qualities higher than the locals. According to the tourists, the qualities that contribute to the atmosphere of the night market are the ‘interaction between vendors and visitors’ (mean=4.4), ‘friendly environment’ (mean=4.3) and ‘mouth-watering food’ (mean=4.1).



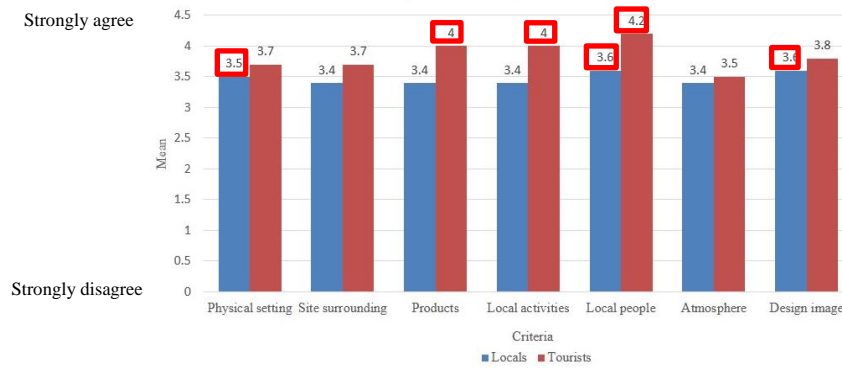
**Figure 9** The condition of the existing facilities at Ferringhi Night Market

The facilities of the night market comprised of signage, parking space, seating area, dustbin, streetscape lighting, eating space and gathering space. Both locals and tourists agreed that the night market has good facilities in terms of eating spaces (mean=4.4), gathering spaces (mean=4.3) and streetscape lighting (mean = 4 and 3.6). However, most of the eating and gathering spaces are actually located at the site context of the night market and not within the market itself. The survey also revealed that both locals and tourists were less satisfied with the availability of seating area, parking spaces, signage and dustbin. This shows that other activities like eating, sitting and gathering within the night market are less likely to occur. Currently, the site context provides spaces for these supplementary activities that support the night market activities. In terms of lighting, most of the respondents agreed that the night market lighting was good. Although there were only street lamps along the sidewalks, the stalls’ lighting brightened the space at night. It can be perceived that the stalls’ lighting adds ‘spark’ or liveliness towards the space.

### 3. Assessment of the cultural value and commercial value of Ferringhi Night Market

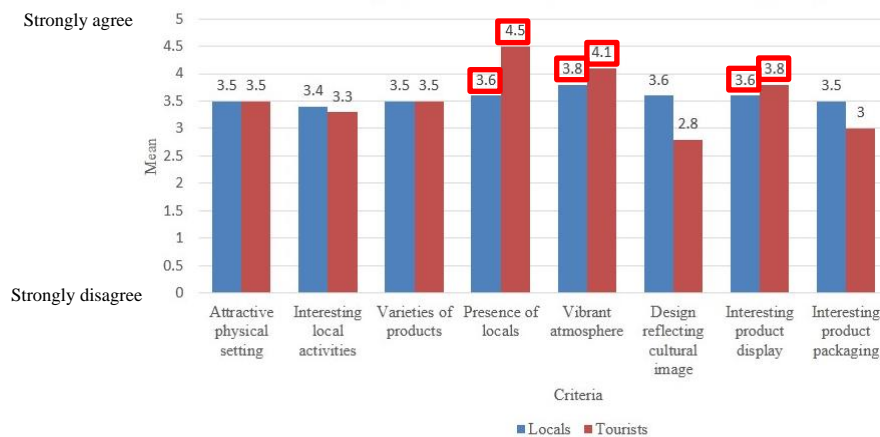
The survey identified the visitors’ perceptions towards the factors that have a strong contribution towards the cultural value and the commercial value of the night market. There are six criteria that represent the cultural value, which are physical setting, products, local activities, local people, and atmosphere and the design image (refer Fig. 10).

Most of the locals agreed that the presence of local people (mean=3.6) and the design image (mean=3.6) have a strong contribution towards the cultural value of a space, followed by the physical setting (mean=3.5). The other factors were rated as neutral. The results demonstrate that as the locals were well experienced with the nature of street markets in Malaysia, they perceived that the design image which can visually portray the identity of a space has a strong contribution to cultural value. Additionally, the presence of local people could support the identity of the place.



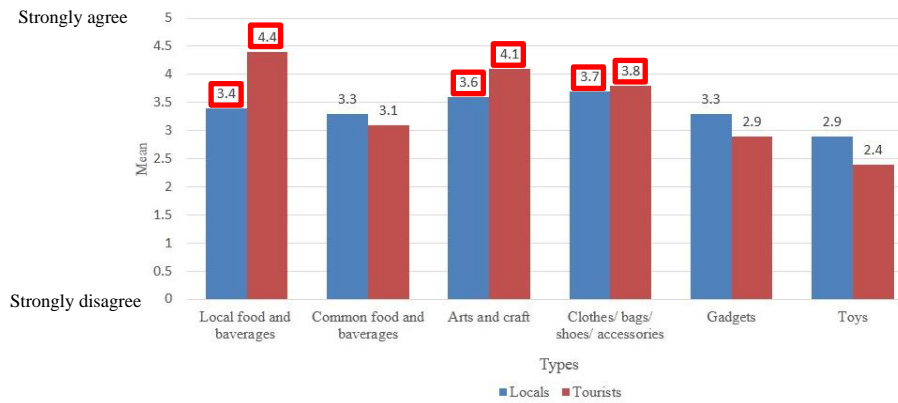
**Figure 10** The perception of visitors on the cultural value

Interestingly, all of the criteria as shown in Figure 10 are agreed by the tourists. The presence of local people (mean=4.2), local products (mean=4.0) and local activities (mean=4.0) were ranked among the highest. It may be explained by the fact that those three criteria offer a new experience for the tourists that they could not experience in their own countries or other places.



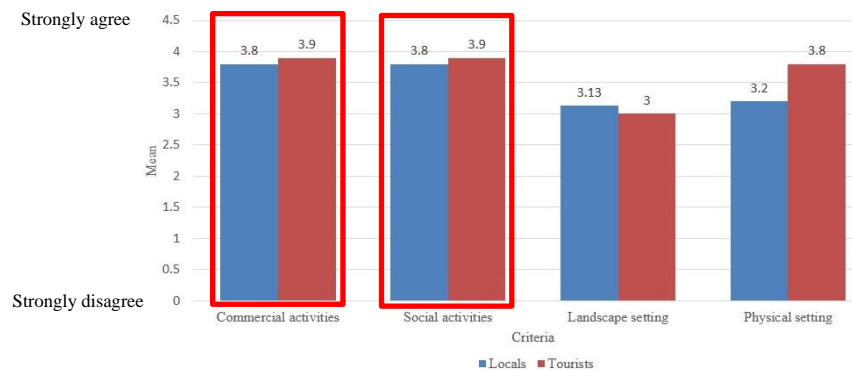
**Figure 11** Visitors' experience on the cultural values at Ferringhi Night Market

The top three cultural experiences at the Ferringhi Night Market that were agreed by both visitors are the presence of local people, vibrant atmosphere and interesting product display (refer to Fig. 11). It was found that there is a difference in perception towards the cultural value and the way they experienced the 'culture' itself at the Ferringhi Night Market. The experience of the physical design that reflects the cultural image was ranked the least among tourists. This revealed that the cultural design image of the night market did not meet their expectations in order for them to experience the cultural value. Besides, local activity, as being assessed by the tourists, was among the top three criteria that has a strong contribution to the cultural value. Nonetheless, the tourists evaluated the interesting local activities and the cultural experience that they had at the night market as neutral, where this was the least rated by the locals. The result disclosed that it is not in line with their expectation of the cultural value. It may be explained by the fact that there was repetitive of products sold and lack of socializing area within the night market itself. Almost all along the nearly 1km night market, the stalls displayed similar items and there was a lack of unique and authentic products.



**Figure 12** Products that were bought or intend to buy among visitors at Ferringhi Night Market

Figure 12 illustrates that there is a similar pattern on the products that visitors and tourists bought or intend to buy. It can be identified that local food and beverage, art and craft, as well as clothes, bags, shoes and accessories were preferred the most. It can be interpreted that most of the visitors tend to appreciate things that reflect to their attachment, experience and the places where they visited as well as affordably priced products. On the other hand, the common food and beverages, gadgets and toys are neutral, which they were appeared to be least preferred to be purchased as they were typical products that were insignificant and less memorable prior to their experience of the night market or Pulau Pinang generally.



**Figure 13** Interesting experience that Ferringhi Night Market offered for visitors

At the end of the survey questionnaire of this section, the respondents were asked to evaluate the interesting experience that Ferringhi Night Market offered for them (refer to Fig. 13). The evaluation was made based on four aspects, which are the commercial activities, social activities, landscape setting and physical setting there. Interestingly, both visitors agreed that the Ferringhi Night Market offered the best experience in term of commercial and social activities.

There seems to be a definite correlation between the commercial activities and social activities. Previous result showed that most of the leisure or social activities were supported by the site context area. The night market itself was lacking in the availability of seating area. Spaces for visitors to sit and stop can function to encourage people to socialize, watching and listening to other people or enjoying the sight, sound and smell, instead of just having social interaction between vendors and visitors. It can be concluded that the vibrant atmosphere of the Ferringhi Night Market did not solely depend on its commercial activities, but the social activities as well. Indirectly, the commercial and social activities there are represented the cultural activities of Malaysians as the night market can be perceived as *“the stage upon which the drama of communal life unfolds”* (Carr et.al, 1992:3).

#### 4. Respondents' recommendations

The respondents' opinions and recommendation towards Ferringhi Night Market was collected to further improve the design of the night market based on the users' demands in. From this section, the visitors' opinions and attachment to this place and strategies to improve the market in the future could be identified.

First, generally, the visitors expressed their memorable experience through the night market's ambience which was different to the other shopping places, contributed by the diversity of people and culture, local food and the cheap products. Second, the majority of them intended to revisit Ferringhi Night Market. The strategic location of the night market that is located within the vicinity of eateries, hotel accommodations and beach attraction explained the fact that the night market had potential to attract international tourists as well as local people, where the night market offers them additional experience in Batu Ferringhi. Third, however, most of them suggested to improve the availability of facilities there such as a seating area, condition of the walkway pavements and width, and the signage for wayfinding, as well as adding variety and quality of the products. Some of the tourists also recommended more cultural and authentic experience instead of Westernized appearance and products which were indifferent from their places. This was also consistent with the fact that the night market provides not only a venue for shopping or social space to fulfil their leisure purpose, but also a place *"to experience authentic local culture"* (Hsieh.A.T,et al,2006:143).

#### C. Semi – Structured Interview among Vendors

The interview was conducted among the vendors based on the categories of the products sold. From the interview session, most of the vendors stated that the number of visitors to the Ferringhi Night Market was highest during the weekends compared to the weekdays.

The vendors informed that there were differences in terms of the current number of visitors that visited this area as compared to previous time. Nowadays, the number of visitors is less compared to certain years before. This is because most of the products sold at Ferringhi Night Walk were cheap counterfeits such as bags, clothes, watches and others, instead of unique local products. Other than due to the economic crisis, the vendors felt they should also offer more quality goods. On the other hand, the vendors reported that they were satisfied with the present physical condition and the facilities provided as compared to years before where they needed to sell their products using their own umbrella and do not have their own lot as compared to today.

### DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

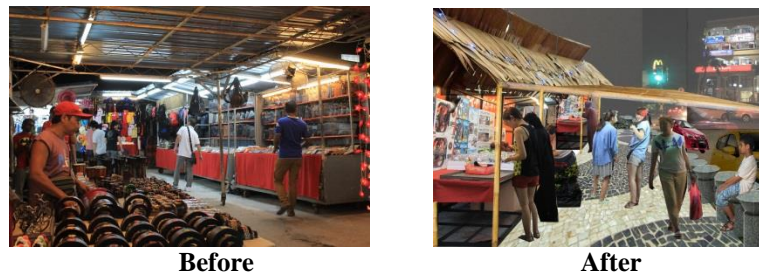
Based on the findings from the analysis, several criteria have been listed out to improve the Ferringhi Night Market with more values and functions to the visitors. The recommendations is based on the constraints that were identified from the findings, such as lack of seating area, the similarities of the products sold, the arrangement of the vendors, lack of parking area and the improper width of the pedestrian walkway. All of the issues guide the design recommendation at the street market.

Most visitors suggested better facilities and organized arrangement of the stalls. By providing better facilities such as parking area, seating area and signage, visitors can have a more conducive visit and the market will become more interesting also exciting. This could also encourage visitors to enjoy walking in the street market.

#### i. **Strategy 1:** Enhancing the physical setting

To improve the physical setting on Ferringhi Night Market, there are several elements that could be improved, such as the sense of welcoming, the design image, interaction between

vendors and visitors, the facilities, the visibility, and the sense of safety (refer to Fig.14). By considering all of these elements, the qualities of the street market could reflect its culture, and enhance the social and commercial values.



**Figure 14** The design recommendation of the Ferringhi Night Market's physical setting

To present the sense of welcoming, the arrangement of the stalls could be arranged on one side only. Therefore, the visitors from the main street could look into the display of products with less obstructions. Moreover, by having the “Nipah atap” as the roof and wave patterns for the pavement, the identity of the Batu Ferringhi as one of the famous beach areas in Penang could be enhanced. The railing might also function as the seating area to enhance the comfort level for the visitors, so that they could stop and sit along the night market. This also could improve the sense of safety for the visitors by having the divider between the pedestrian walkway and the main road.

- ii. **Strategy 2:** Increase the varieties of products sold at the Ferringhi Night Market and the sense of discovery with interesting local activities

The findings suggested that people tend to purchase things that are related to their experience of visit to Penang. Several studies revealed that food is perceived as a significant factor that encourage tourists to travel and possibly serve the utmost experience for them (Lee, K., & Scott, N., 2000; Jalis, et. al, 2014; Kivela & Crofts, 2005; Quan & Wang, 2004). Lee, K., & Scott, N. (2000:2) stated further that it “conveys meaning and may evoke authenticity, identity, cultural values, nostalgia, or neophobia (Fischler, 1988; Verbeke & López, 2005)” (refer to Fig. 15). Thus, the visitors may enrich their experience with diverse local activities and the aromatic senses by promoting local food and beverage within the night market itself aside from the site context only.



**Figure 15** Local food and beverage

## CONCLUSION

It is crucial to understand the visitors' perspectives towards the Ferringhi Night Market in order to serve as reference for further improvement of the place and other tourist night markets in the future. Night markets and street markets that serve as a tourist attractions should be planned not only to cater the needs of local people, but also the needs and desires



of tourists. Thus, it is imperative to understand the essential factors to attract both categories of visitors. This study concludes by suggesting that in order to improve the role of street market as an urban cultural space, it needs to possess these qualities:

### **1. Social value**

The atmosphere of the space needs to encourage interaction between vendors and visitors, friendly environment and evoke a sense of discovery. The space also requires gathering and eating spaces to support social activities within it for it to be livelier.

### **2. Cultural value**

In order to sustain the cultural value, the street market needs to be vibrant with the presence of local people, has interesting local activities and abundant local products. Furthermore, creating an attractive physical setting that visualizes the cultural image and with colourful stalls' lighting that 'sparks' the night market could help the visitors to perceive and enjoy the culture or image of the space visually.

### **3. Commercial value**

Since visitors seek for products that represent the local place, street markets should offer varieties of local products for visitors to choose from and interesting product display can further enhance the quality of commercial activities.

It is interesting to note that such commercial activities on the street bears extraordinary values. In another word, street market is a visible urban culture which bears city's wealth of public life. Thus, conserving 'the life' on the streets is crucial for the city's image while cater for the needs and enjoyment for locals and tourists.

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