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Visitor Preference Factors toward Shopping Centres' Thematic Corridor Study of Gandaria City, Indonesian Shopping Centre

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ABSTRACT

The existence of thematic corridor at shopping centre is one of the competitive uniqueness of shopping centres in Asian, especially shopping centres in Indonesia. This current research focuses on exploring visitors' perception towards the setting of thematic corridor at shopping centre. Excitement, happiness and arousal will encourage visitors' satisfaction to explore the shopping centre environment. This study is conducted under mixed method, started from focus group and continued with quantitative factorial analysis. The samples are 175 visitors of Gandaria City in Jakarta. Visitors' perception towards the ideal factors that shape the comfort for thematic corridor at shopping centre are the corridor legibility, social image and interaction, and thematic corridor decoration.

Keywords: Thematic corridor, shopping centre, visitor perception.

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1.0 Introduction

The social and economy growths trigger the economy era in the era of experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Besides that, for design, as stated by Williams (2006), the rationale of design is now centered on the experience. Iconic building and interiors are often seen as a part of this experience economy (Sklair, 2010). Constructed experience is the base for preferable design, either for product or for shopping environment, as the background focus of this research.

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This current research focuses on the shopping environment in shopping centers in Indonesia, which shows that there are visitors' preferences to the environment condition with theatrical experience (Kusumowidagdo, et al., 2012). This condition also gives functional benefits by facilitating shopping and recreational facility. Nowadays, the shopping centre functioned not only for transactional place, but also social place (Manfredini et al., 2014).

Corridor at shopping center is one of the places that facilitate the visitor to enjoy their shopping process. Generally, the shape of corridor at shopping center is functional, as an alley surrounded by outlets. Zacharias (1997), Kusumowidagdo et al. (2012a) and Kusumowidagdo et al. (2013a) are some of the researchers that conduct research on corridor at shopping center. The corridor researched by these researchers is a corridor with general spatial character which is commonly found at shopping centers.

There are many efforts done to give distinctive characters to the corridors as the differentiator of a shopping center, yet they still share visual similarities. Until now, in Indonesia, this functional corridor has still dominated shopping centers. Fortunately, since 1998 the thematic corridor as differentiator element of shopping center configuration is now found in many shopping centers (Kusumowidagdo et al., 2013b).

Frequently, thematic corridor that is specifically implemented in thematic concept becomes competitive advantage of the shopping center design. Thematic corridor is a corridor that has very different environment compared to corridor in usual shopping centers, since thematic corridor has specific theme and integrative implemented in the surrounding design of elements. Thematic corridor has beyond expectation environment, for example: carved outlets façade, the use of outdoor material, and dim light, as well as interior elements of accessories that support the corridor's theme. Thematic corridor has marked the existence of public spaces with new environment to the shopping centers nowadays.

Figure 1: The Difference Ambience Between Corridors (left) and Thematic Corridors (right) at Gandaria City Shopping Centre



Few studies have focused on the visitors' preferences for thematic corridor. Previous researches and literatures focus more on the corridors usually found in shopping centers (Zacharias, 1997; Wee and Tong, 2005; Kramer, 2008), and its effects on visitors' behavior (Baker, 1986; Bitner, 1990; Bitner, 1992; Turley and Milliman, 2000; Tabak et al., 2006; D'Astous, 2007), and less focus on the significance of visual aspects. Therefore, this current research is conducted to fill the gap already explained, by focusing more on exploring visitors' perspective toward the thematic corridor in from the visual aspect, with the following points of focus: problems formulation, factors of thematic corridor order that create

the sense of place, and at-home feeling that is created by modern shopping center. This research will give broad implications, aspect of practical knowledge for the management and for designers.

2.0 Literature review

Najafi and Bin Mohd Shariff, in their research on place (2011) explain that a place cannot be separated from its factors of shaping. The factors of shaping are physical factor and social factor. Thematic corridor as a place also consists of physical factor, which is the design that shapes it. Besides that, thematic corridor also consists of social factors, which are humans (visitors) and interaction at the corridor.

Kusumowidagdo et al. (2015) explains that significant factors at corridor that should be considered are corridor legibility, social image and interaction, and store design. Legibility of corridor is the originality of corridor shape. Social image and interaction are factors that are influenced by lifestyle, density, similarities of ethnic background and segment.

Thematic corridor can also become a shopping environment. Baker (1982) reveals that there are factors to shape a shopping environment: environment factors, design factors, and social factors. The first factors, ambient factors, are all background factors that exist in the visitors' subconscious mind. Ambient factors can be the quality of temperature (temperature, humidity, and circulation), noise, aroma, and cleanliness. In relation with noise, acoustic also plays important function. Acoustic, in this research, is music and a means of information. Good acoustic can minimize the voice transmission through air and building structures to the other part of the shopping centre (Wee & Tong, 2005). In other research, a very bright, cheerful, and dynamic lighting is prevalent to the Asian shopping centres (Wee & Tong, 2005), lighting gives theatrical element, accelerates sales, leads the visitors, minimizes visual weakness as caused by structural condition inside the space, gives comfortableness to the visitors and sellers (Turley & Milliman, 2000). Other elements are scent and temperature. Scent influences the visitors (Baker, 1982, Mitchell et al., 1995, D'Astous, 2000). Artificial temperature is important for visitors' comfort (Kramer, 2008, Boon, 2011).

The second factors, design factors, consist of aesthetic (architecture, colour, scale, materials, texture, pattern, and accessories) and functional design (layout, comfort, and signage). These aspects are visible and can be consciously considered by the visitors. Corridor elements that influence the corridor environment are material, dimension, and finishing. For the corridor, material used for floor finishing and ceilings will function well to the corridor sustainability and image to the visitors (Baker, 1982; D'Astous, 2000; Kramer, 2008). Curve-shaped corridor is more interested for the visitors than monotonous corridor shape (Wee & Tong, 2005; Zacharia, 1997). Besides corridor dimension, there are outlets or retail wagons to create creative and dynamic environments. The outlets and wagons sell interesting, colourful, and seasonal products (Wee & Tong, 2005). Interior decoration also gives splendour environment to boost visitors' mood (Baker, 1982; D'Astous, 2000; Tabak Ozgen & Aycoll, 2006).

The third factors are social factors (Baker, 1982), which are other factors related to visitors in the shopping center environment. The social factors in this current research are other visitors (numbers, appearance, and behavior) and service of the personnel (which is also defined by numbers, appearance, and behavior).

The explained background, as well as based on the related theories which based in shopping centre general condition, have led the researcher to formulate the following research question : What are the factors for visitors' preferences in choosing thematic corridor at shopping centre? This question will lead to answer that fit to the specific context of thematic corridor in shopping centre.

3.0 Research method

This research is a mixed-method, started by using focused group and ended by survey. As a mixed method, this research is based on the principle of naturalistic inductive by conducting the design of sequential exploratory strategy with the following sequence; qualitative data for first phase and quantitative data for second phase (Cresswell, 2007). Sequential exploratory strategy is chosen to measure the preciseness of theories generated from the process of collecting qualitative data (Cresswell, 2007).

Focus group is a method of finding conclusion from the discussion group on specific issues, which is followed by survey. A survey research is a kind of research that takes samples from population or all population as the subjects. In this current research, survey is used to find out more compact factors of public space arrangement in thematic corridors and to measure several propositions by real-testing the respondents, in order to find more compact factors of public space arrangement. The survey result is analyzed by using factorial analysis.

4.0 Research subject

The subjects for this research are respondents categorized as young adults with range of age 18 to 35 years old (Papalia et al., 2008; Hay, 1998). The background criteria for choosing the subjects are because of their cognitive development is in the stage of achieving or known as *young adulthood* phase (Hay, 1998), achieving their career and family goals as well as self-actualization (Papalia et al., 2008).

Shopping centre is one of the places for their self-actualization phase, such as showing off their life style. Hay explains that the age category, in the context of development psychology, is strongly related to *sense of place* (Hay, 1998).

5.0 Research object

Located at an area of hectares, Gandaria City is a superblock concept, consists of Gandaria City shopping centre, Gandaria Heights condominium, Gandaria 8 office tower and five-star hotel. These five kinds of building are completing each other. The development was planned in 2004, taken under construction in 2008 and finished in 2010.

The architecture types of buildings in Gandaria City complex are explained in detail in the Table 1.

Table 1. Architecture type in Gandaria City superblock

No	Architecture Type	Total of Floor	Width of Area
1	Gandaria City phase 11	7 floors	140.000 m2
	Gandaria City phase 2	8 floors	36.000 m2
2	Gandaria 8	36 floors	36.000 m2
3	Gandaria Height	39 floors	80.000 m2, 84.000 m2 (phase 2)
4	Hotel	39 floors	85.000 m2

Gandaria City shopping centre was designed as nodes in the Gandaria City Superblock, as influenced by modern contemporary design. Rooms are designed with the concept of connectivity for the complex the public spaces arrangement is one of the implementation of that concept, which is furthermore implemented in the aspects of architecture and interior.

Figure 2: Corridor Thematic: The Old Town, Batavia themed(left) and Corridor Thematic : the Futuristic City (right) at Gandaria City, Indonesia.



6.0 Study 1

In the thematic corridor area, comfortable setting order for thematic corridor area is defined by the following criteria: decoration for thematic corridor, accent, furniture of thematic corridor, dynamic elements of thematic corridor, decoration for tenants' area, finishing for dining area, finishing for floor, lighting, visitors' environment, various restaurants, crowd density, lifestyle, and directory.

First, the decoration for thematic corridor. In the thematic corridor area, the theme choice is very important to be implemented in all space interior. Visitors' familiarity with the theme will decide whether the thematic corridor is likeable or not. Themes and decorative ornaments give identity of place that is memorable for the visitors and become the main uniqueness of a shopping center.

There are two different environments in the dining area on the third floor, the environments are like in the outdoor area. There are artificial tree, stone flooring similar to the street outside, combined by dark colors for the floor and bright colors for the wall and classic-shaped pool (Male, 20)

I like it, because outdoor concept in indoor mall is rare. The decoration for outdoor is detail to the accessory such as street light and artificial tree. Therefore, when we are in the mall, we will not get bored with the boring mall environment since there are specific areas that can boost our mood and become a cool hangout place. (female, 24)

In Gandaria City, the thematic concepts it has brought to its visitors are Batavia, the city old town, and global cities or new town. The Batavia old town theme adapts the morning situation of old town area in Jakarta, while the new town theme adapts nightlife situation in big cities of the world.

Based on the observation result, the theme implemented in the thematic corridor makes the area a memorable image for the visitors of shopping center. Theme choice and process of interior elements

are significant to be paid attention to, in order to be integrated with the technical functional of the shopping center, such as appropriate width of tenants' area, mechanical and electrical facilities, and interior maintenance.

Second, the accents. Thematic corridor has several accents, which are *art sculpture*, ornaments, or interior elements with surprising shapes. In Gandaria City, the *art sculptures* and various elements function as accents to strengthen the theme, as proven by the research informants' opinions.

Plus, there are some decorations such as water fountain, trees, replaces of terracotta that support the environment, and even be completed with park benches and street lights. (Male, 30)

Third, furniture of thematic corridor. Based on the observation at both shopping centers, furniture here is defined as furniture outside the tenants' area. The furniture, with various styles and colors, contribute to the outdoor environment in thematic corridor. Besides furniture at the tenants' outlets, there are outdoor furniture to make visitors feel like they are outside, as acclaimed by the participants for *focus group discussion*,

What makes this more interesting is because the furniture is not only found in the restaurant area, but also outside the area so it feels like I am outside, at the roadside. Besides that, park benches are placed there to make me feel like in the park. (Female, 34)

Fourth, the dynamic elements of thematic corridor. Dynamic elements of thematic corridor are water fountain, LCD projection in dining area, live music, and routine activities at thematic corridor.

Water fountain gives dynamic impression. Indeed, if there is something dynamic or movable, such as interior element, live music, or other decorations, it will make the environment alive (Male 27)

Fifth, the decoration for tenants' area. Decoration for tenants' area is focused more on the front area of tenants' area, by considering the fact that from the corridor line, the decoration at front are of tenants' outlet can stimulate the visual experience of the visitors and hence invite them to come in.

The tenant design also supports the theme. Besides the tenants' area, they are also given chance to put benches outside the outlets, like in the city park. It's impressive because the corridor is wide (Male, 29)

Sixth, corridor dramatic lighting. The most important aspect in lighting is corridor lighting intensity. Dramatic corridor lighting will give different impression, especially to support thematic impression desired and to elevate the visitors' emotion.

What I mean here is the main street dining with two themes, nightlife and daylight, with its shapes based on the theme. The combination of night and day can also be found in the interior situation too. I guess it has something to do with my mood. Our different mood can trigger the sense of place to the areas here. (Female, 34)

Seventh, *finishing* for wall is the choice of material for wall, the composition for placement, and color combination. Different impression resulted between the thematic corridor and non-thematic corridor give sensation to the visitors of both places.

It is just like in the outdoor because there is more material, not just one material. It feels exciting because there is a combination of materials. The use of expose material such as

bricks gives detailed outdoor impression, such as in interior wall, as well as the additional floor ornaments with special themes like the tenants' facade para tenant (Male, 24)

Eighth, floor finishing. Floor *Finishing* is the choice of material for floor, the composition for placement and color combination. The floor finishing for thematic corridor is adjusted with theme choice. Visitors can feel the tactile differences for floor material as a sensation felt in the thematic corridor.

The floor uses outdoor material, it feels like I am in the outside. (Female, 23)
Different materials are used for floor and it is exciting. There are cement tiles and ceramic tiles with rough texture surface (Female, 20)

Ninth, the variety of tenants' outlets/restaurants. The variety of tenants' outlets/restaurants, ranged from the menus they offer, the kinds of restaurants and local food, contribute to sense of place. The arrangement, decoration, and specific events held by the tenants also contribute to the effort of creating product image to the visitors.

The tenants' outlets there (in the mall) are very modern, like café or lounge. It feels like in the global situation, there is Japanese food and else. Live music is available in the evening. Very lively and vibrant (Female, 21)

Tenth, the familiar environment for visitor. Familiar environment for visitors contributes to create *sense of place*. The group of visitors, for both shopping centers, can be found outside and inside the restaurants areas. Both Ciputra and Gandaria City allow the tenants to use some areas of corridor to be used as dining area. Open dining area symbolizes familiar environment, as well as stimulates the visitors to join in the activity.

Another example is from the visitors. I often see visitors walking with their family, or with friends. It feels more exciting since the atmosphere in main street dining is very comfortable. The night and day interior also influences the mood of walking with family and friends. (female 30)

I feel that v-walk space is more relaxing. There is a beat difference in V-walk space and shopping space. If we walk to shop, we walk fast and efficient. Some are sitting, and I sense familiarity there. When we are in the V-walk space, it feels slower, more relaxing, there is a different atmosphere. (Female, 34)

Eleventh, crowd density. Crowd density can be interpreted as existing territorial and density that still fill the comfort feeling that is expected, as explained by the following account from the participant of *focus group discussion*.

Familiarity and density are comfortable. Although the mall is crowded, still feels exciting and (I am) comfortable being there. (female, 20)

Next is the visitor lifestyle. Visitors' lifestyle that is exciting is the activities they do and the way they dress in the mall. Based on the observation, the modern trend can be resulted from the process of observing the mall visitors.

Hangout in the mall can become a lifestyle, because of its atmosphere, since there are indoor and outdoor environment. (FGD-2-CWS)

The directory functions also one of the indicators, that functioned to give orientation. Clear orientation in this definition is to give direction to the visitors, and to provide information about tenants' area and other zones.

Although the environment is different, directory is still important for the clarity. In this area, the directory is quite interesting and informative (FGD -6-CWS)

The last is zoning for tenants' outlet. Zoning for tenants' outlets is categorizing tenants' outlets based on the service type and product characterization which is adjusted with the theme of thematic corridor. For example, in Gandaria City, cafés or restaurants with modern food as its product are grouped and located at the *New Town* zone under the theme of modern town currently. Cafés or restaurants with traditional food as its product are grouped or located at the *Old Town* zone under the Betawi theme.

Appropriate place zoning will give exact integration for the expected situation, as resulted from appropriately locating the outlets based on specific services and product characters. For the visitors, the compatibility of environment with its services and product characters can encourage their activities enthusiasm in the thematic corridor, as explained by the following account:

Dim ambience is supportive. We have our meal in Liberia Café with live music and we feel so enthusiastic, it feels like in the city with outdoor experience. This type of café is located in this area, not in the old city area with bright atmosphere (Female, 21)

It is easier to find restaurants in one area, such as in V-walk area. The peranakan area is the place for Chinese food and Japanese food restaurants. (male, 22)

7.0 Result Study 2 and discussion

For Gandaria City, the factors of thematic corridor order that shape *sense of place* are the thematic corridor legibility, social image and interaction, and decoration of thematic corridor.

Table 2. Analysis Result for Factors of Thematic Corridor Order at Gandaria City

Factor	Eigenvalue	Factor-shaped variable	Value of Loading
Thematic corridor legibility	4.782	Finishing of floor interior	0.846
		Finishing of floor	0.816
		Furniture choice for dining area	0.790
		Directory	0.783
		Zoning for tenants' outlets	0.781
		Good lighting	0.775
		Thematic decoration	0.734
		Dynamic corridor elements	0.689
Social image and interaction	3.254	Various tenants' outlets	0.745
		Atmosphere for visitors	0.693
		Visitors' lifestyle	0.573
		Density of crowd	0.528
Thematic corridor decoration	2.109	Accent of vocal point / art sculpture	0.698
		Decoration for tenants' outlets	0.634

The first factor, thematic corridor legibility, has eigenvalue 4.782. Thematic corridor legibility means that the originality of thematic corridor at Gandaria City is excellent in old town theme of Jakarta City, Batavia theme and new town/modern city with gives the impression of outside for the visitors. The whole elements of interior are implemented based on those themes. Items influence the thematic corridor legibility, based on its order of importance, and are *finishing* of floor interior, *finishing* of floor, furniture choice for dining area, *directory*, and zoning for tenants' outlets, good lighting, and thematic decoration

For finishing for floor interior, white color is implemented as a inspiration implementation of Jakarta old town theme. Conbloc is used for floor finishing giving rough impression to make visitors feel they are at outdoor area. The furniture arrangement for thematic corridor area can be interpreted as furniture arrangement for *outdoor area*, *street furniture* as well as tenants' furniture in the corridor zone. The directory also appears following the theme. Zoning for dining area is adjusted between the area of old town and modern city. Restaurants with local and traditional products are with old town theme, while restaurants with modern and fusion products implement the theme of modern city. The lighting for both zoning areas is dramatic. The lighting for old town zone is artificial lighting and natural lighting from *skylight*. *Skylight* lighting gives dynamic characteristic to this area in order to adjust with the light and dark light of outside area. For new or modern city zone, the lighting is dimmer to give the night-light sensation. The dynamic thematic decoration for old town zone uses LED lights that can change colors.

The second factor is social image and interaction with eigenvalue 3.254. Social image and interaction means image of lifestyle at shopping centre and social interaction between visitors which influence the *sense of place* at thematic corridor. The indicators for thematic corridor which influence *sense of place* are various tenants' outlets, familiar atmosphere for visitors, visitors' lifestyle, and density of crowd. Various tenants' outlets and many choices of the outlets is one of the indicators that support the factor of social image and interaction at Gandaria City. Beside that, the familiar atmosphere for visitor, supported by new *lifestyle*, gives the impression for modern society social image. Density of crowd invites interaction for the visitors to be engaged in exploring the thematic corridor or visiting the tenants' outlets.

The third factor is thematic corridor decoration with the eigenvalue 3.254. Thematic decoration is a decorative element as an implementation of the chosen and used theme. The indicators that influence of *sense of place* for thematic corridor, in its order of importance, are the existence of *accent/vocal point/art sculpture*, and decoration of tenants' areas. Some vocal points are used to strengthen the Batavia theme, such as colonial statues, the replica of antique cannon, and advertisements neon signs for interiors, as implementation of modern city with futuristic effect. For the decoration of tenants' areas, there is uniqueness since they use their own themes, yet still adjust to the theme of modern city and old town as the themes which are conceptualized by the management of Gandaria City.

In this section, the researcher compares the findings from Baker's theory (1982), Mina and Bin Mohd Shariff (2011), and Kusumowidagdo (2015). From the comparison of previous research findings, it can be concluded that:

1. Baker (1982) discusses about shopping environment in broad, while this current research specifically focuses on the environment of thematic corridor, and therefore, at a glance, the factors are different. However, there are similarities among the indicators. Ambient factors and design factors are still found as the current research findings, although those factors appear in different forms, which are as thematic corridor legibility and thematic corridor decoration. Social factors as found in (Baker, 1982) are also found in this current research as social image and interaction.
2. There are several indicators which are found in (Baker, 1982) yet do not appear as findings in this research, which are scent as one of the ambient factors and personnel service. Scent cannot be found in the shopping centers as the research objects. Also, it is assumed that the absence of personnel service is resulted by the location of this research, which is at thematic corridor only.
3. This current research findings support the result of previous research, which is Najafi and Bin Mohd Shariff's research (2011) that claims that a place consists of physical factors and social factors. From this, it can be concluded that this current research can be regarded as the extension of Najafi and Bin Mohd Shariff's theory (2011). The difference lies in the scope of the theory, since Najafi and Mina focus on the broader context while this research focuses deeper

on the context of thematic corridor at shopping centers. The physical factors in this research are defined by corridor legibility and thematic corridor decoration. The social factors in this research are found in social image and interaction.

4. New result from this current research is different from the theory of Kusumowidagdo et al. (2015), which is about the thematic factor of corridor decoration. The similarity of this research result with Kusumowidagdo is the factor of place legibility, and social image and interaction. However, the factor of place legibility in this research is focused on the concept of place decoration as an element of surprise, while at functional corridor; the place legibility is focused more on the shape and function in facilitating shopping process.

8.0 Conclusions

The results of research can be concluded as follows:

1. Visitors' perception in choosing the thematic corridor of Gandaria City Jakarta, is influenced by the legibility of thematic corridor, social image and interaction, and decoration of tenants' outlets.
2. The factors cannot be separated from sociocultural condition and geographical condition. The sociocultural condition of crowded public places in shopping centers can give restorative function. Geographically, thematic corridor with historical and futuristic themes brings about nostalgia for past times, as well as hopes and expectations for the future.
3. The anomaly condition, which has become the uniqueness of thematic corridor with simulation of environment under each theme, brings experiential benefits for the visitors, besides the functional benefit of corridors in facilitating the shopping process.

9.0 Limitation

The findings discussed above can be generated by the following conditions:

1. Influence of time. Time, era, and period influence human perception on shopping centres and trends of spatial character at shopping centre. For research of human perception, it is limited to the range of age, which is 18-35 years old, where during this age visitors can feel the benefits of shopping centre environment. Trend of spatial character is limited to the third era period of shopping center, which is 1998 until this current research was conducted.
2. Influence of sociocultural condition of Indonesia especially Jakarta City. Global culture influences the life style changes of society, as well as being influenced by the city development condition.
3. Influence of geographical condition of Indonesia especially Jakarta city. Geographical condition inspires shape and theme for physical order of interior in public space. Besides that, social conditioning will also influence social character of area, such as through special events and tenants in shopping centre.

10.0 Implication

First, aspect of practical knowledge for the management of shopping centre. For the management of shopping centre, the aspect of practical knowledge that can be useful is the factors of public space arrangement, types of relation, scales of *sense of place*, and its relation. This can develop the perspective of design and its relation with the visitors. Future practical researches focus on management and design can be done to map the similar things at different shopping centres to explore its strengths, weaknesses, and comparisons with other shopping centres.

Second, aspect of practical knowledge for the designer/design implication. For the designers, the design implications to implement are the formulation of factors that can be considered for shopping centres, especially thematic corridors.

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