

Domestic Visitors Safety and Security in Urban Environments: Some Major Issues in the Kuala Lumpur City Centre

Fauziah Che Leh



Abstract: *This article aims to discuss the level of safety and security of domestic visitors in eight urban tourism destinations in Kuala Lumpur city centre. Discussing safety and security importance for urban tourism destinations because it can influence of frequency and severity among tourist. Primary data were gathered from questionnaire surveys of 192 randomly sampled domestic visitors who are willing to be the respondents of the study. The findings indicated the reality of some security and safety issues faced by the Kuala Lumpur domestic visitors. The results show that concerns and anxieties have arisen among domestic visitors to their safety in the urban tourist location in the heart of Kuala Lumpur during their visit to the site. This harms the location of city tourism in downtown Kuala Lumpur in the future if it is not resolved. Safe city programs should be empowered and implemented more widely including in the urban tourism sector to address safety and security issues in the rapidly expanding urban environment.*

Keywords: *Safety and security; urban tourism; Kuala Lumpur City Centre; domestic visitor; crime; anxieties*

I. INTRODUCTION

The globalisation process, there has been a question of whether the country is capable of facing a dramatically changing challenge, including ensuring that security in tourist locations remains preserved. This is due to the rapidly changing globalisation and rapid technological change resulting in the competition among urban tourism sites increasingly fierce. The success or failure of a tourism destination depends on the ability to provide a safe and secure environment for visitors. Hence, every urban tourism site should ensure that the level of tourist safety on site is secure from the elements of the crime that can threaten the security of tourist's visiting. This should be emphasized as globalisation demands priority given to the element of an avalanche.

Kuala Lumpur city centre is an urban tourism centre that can attract a lot of tourists regardless of local or international. However, trip advisor and the Global Summit on Urban Tourism 2016 has listed Kuala Lumpur as the second most dangerous city in Asia. This is attributed to the high crime

rates, including snatch theft and serious crimes such as murders, rape and robbery that occurred among tourists travelling to Kuala Lumpur. Hence, this article aims to discuss the safety of domestic visitors in tourist locations of eight (8) city tourism destinations in central Kuala Lumpur. This article also aims to evaluate the safe urban tourism concept which related to the tourism industry and the implementation of the safe city model towards the Malaysia urban area. The main focus will be an urban area that has potential as a tourism location. This study is important to enable the formulation of a conceptual framework to support the government initiatives and contribute in this field towards achieving the safe urban tourism concept in the urban environment.

II. TOURIST SAFETY AND SECURITY ISSUES IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Urban tourism exists when the city is developed or initially has a unique feature proposed as a city tourism function and it is also enforced as a tourist destination and holiday activity (Law, 2002; Yin, 2016). According to Estelaji et al., (2012), urban tourism refers to the use of all the power and potential of the city either from natural or humanitarian aspects to attract tourists who embrace various cultural, social, historical, natural and political aspects. Therefore, urban tourism depends on the potential in urban areas, both physically and manly aspects (Law, 2002). Hotels and other tourist facilities are an integral part of this form of tourism to provide services not only for tourists but also for other affairs such as work and business. Besides, educational or current issues, conferences often held within the city area are intended to attract and promote the site venue.

This tourism activity stimulates the city's economy, and give an impact on creating employment opportunities for the locals (Yin, 2016). Ruetsche (2006) highlights several key elements that can enhance the visitor-friendliness in urban areas which are historic districts, waterfronts, convention centres, and exhibitions, festivals and events, special visitor districts, and retail and catering facilities. These elements are some of the visitor attraction of a city tourism destinations. Concerts, major business centres, major shopping malls and the city's theme parks constitute also a major attraction for city tourism. Each individual establishes a social relationship with other individuals within the urban zone and this contributes to the existence of safety and security issues in the urban environment (Leuterio, 2007; Galbrun et al., 2014).

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Tourism industry creates a unique environment in which the presence of tourists can alter the characteristics of the population at risk of crime and therefore the possibility for crime to occur will decrease (WTO, 1996; George, 2003).

The characteristics shown by tourists and tourism areas can increase the visitor's views as outsiders and make them less confident being in unfamiliar environment where they may be constrained by issues of limited language and knowledge (George & Booyens, 2014).

Lynch (1960) suggests that this an unfamiliarity and problems with environmental learning have implications towards one's feelings of fear, insecurity and emotional stability. Fear of crimes can put constraints on one's lifestyle behaviour or promote defensive behaviour that encourages them to be more cautious about crime. Lynch (1960) finds that women are more concerned about crime either as a result of weakness that is exacerbated by sexual risks or by the difference in acknowledging fear.

In the planning of a city, one of the key challenges is improving the man-made environment and handling human and environmental interactions (Abbas et al., 2013; George & Booyens, 2014). According to WTO (1996), safety and security are two of the most important basic elements in the effort to provide quality in tourism. This is because the success or failure of a tourist destination depends on the ability to provide a safe and secure environment for visitors. Safety is one of the critical factors that affect the spatial quality of a city (Abbas et al., 2013; George & Booyens, 2014). Several researches have been conducted regarding the perception of tourist safety in the tourist destinations, for example, the study by George (2003), Campo-Martínez et al., (2010), Shu & Shih (2011) and George & Booyens, (2014). Therefore, studies related to safety and security at tourism sites should be considered in planning at national and local levels to promote safe urban tourism.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, high crime rates occurred in urban areas openly throughout America and Europe. This resulted in urban planners to be directed towards providing physical solutions and cultural approaches to deal with this threat (Abbas et al., 2013). The nature of a tourist-focused tourist area can provide opportunities for crime to happen (WTO, 1996; Ruetsche, 2006), even though they also can create a more effective visitor-friendly environment. Many critical factors need to be considered to improve safe urban space (Abbas et al., 2013). Among the elements to consider are (1) territoriality, (2) surveillance and (3) social interactions. Territoriality involves demarcation of public and private zones, reduction of escape routes for criminals and access control and increasing the responsibility and sense of belonging among residents. Surveillance refers to building structures towards streets and providing open spaces adjacent to the active functions, integration of functions and creating a diverse range of activities. The function of urban space will not be completed without the presence of individuals, especially through economic, social, cultural interactions as well as other aspects. The best urban environment is the environment that enables an individual to conduct social activities in a safe and secure environment (Abbas et al., 2013).

Oftentimes the tourism industry receives complaints that tourists do not get the proper service and treatment as a tourist. However, most tourists are considered the same and everyone receives similar attention. Tourist safety should be

everyone's focus and 'business priority'. This is because tourism is a major economic generator, and tourists pay taxes directly to the accommodation property and indirectly through sales tax or value-added taxes. Besides, safe tourism is the basis for a safe society. This can be the reason why the term "security marketing" is regularly used in current marketing. For travel marketing specialists, marketing techniques through television and magazine ads, capture new phrases and branding. All of these are important parts of marketing, but savvy marketers now know that tourism security marketing is also an important part of not only the overall quality of a product but also as a way of assessing the viability of a product (Wang & Pizam, 2011). Travel security is more than a mere closed-circuit television because it is a way for us to monitor various aspects such as tourist health problems, favourite food, risk reduction, safe and clean roads development and the ability to sell products that meet the needs of not only the guests but also residents (Campo-Martínez et al., 2010).

Here are some ways the safety of travellers can be spread to the general public and helps to improve the overall quality of life of the community. Many people outside of the tourism industry and visitors either do not realise or forget the many benefits that can be derived from the tourism sector of society. Among them are economic benefits such as increased employment opportunities, additional customer resources and increased spending, diversified economic resources - with the assurance that a community tourism business can not be channelled or relocated (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). Travelling also serves as a way to showcase local communities and products and tourism needs good road infrastructure, airports and good services. All these work to benefit both visitors and locals. The fact is, tourism that grows in encouraging environments is key to good economic development.

According to a study by Shu and Shih (2011) conducted in India on security issues in the tourism sector found that fear of being a victim of crime not only affected the willingness to visit but also had influenced the tourism industry. Based on this study in India, it was found that harassment, fraud and theft were the crimes most often experienced by tourists. In India, travellers who got out of the home to go sightseeing were at a greater chance of becoming victims of crime. A study conducted in India found that there was a correlation between the perceptions of tourists towards the decision to visit. Negative perceptions have caused tourists not to be interested in visiting India due to the factors of safety and fear of being in the area. This situation indirectly gave negative perceptions to other travellers to visit India.

The importance of safety and security for urban tourism destinations

Safe urban tourism is a new element that should be promoted in the tourism sector. The safe tourism concept is important as one of the factors to increase the percentage of tourist visited in the specific urban area. In a survey regarding public concerns over crime, that issue became the first one. The fight against crime should be implemented continuously because there is no doubt that the crime index should be reduced.

People do not just need a safe environment, but the sense of security must be in them. The issue of tourist safety in terms of crimes, accidents and congestion involving tourists who are travelling in the designated city tourism destination can be identified. The study of security issues is of paramount importance as one of the factors that makes an attractive area as a tourist destination is security factor. Areas with high rates of crime and high accident rates will cause tourists to feel unsafe to travel to the area.

Safety and security are important to provide quality in tourism. The concepts of safety and security and their influences on the urban tourism industry need to clarify. Discussing safety and security importance for urban tourism destinations and the role of their influence on frequency and severity. Crime is a phenomenon that often happens in places of a tourist spot. A particular crime issue can be a threat to both foreign and domestic tourists. There are two types of criminal breakdowns, namely the crime of violence and property crime (Ahmad Nazrin Aris & Zainab, 2009). Violent crimes allegedly referring to murder, rape, obscene honour, mutilation, rioting, injuries, criminal intimidation and others. Meanwhile, property crime refers to stealing, robbing, snatching, homelessness and others. Both crime types have been a serious matter towards the tourist in the urban tourism destination. This is due to the accumulation of large groups of people in the same areas and, conversely, as a barrier to potential travellers. By taking into consideration of all the phenomena nowadays, research into the security level in tourism areas in cities has become a concern.

Safe tourism should be implemented in tourist locations all over the world as it produces more than just a safe community. Safe tourism creates marketing opportunities in the new world. Safety and security issues are important as tourists and tourism areas have various features that expose tourists to various types of crime (WTO, 1996). Research findings by Abbas et al., (2013) identified that crime prevention can largely be achieved through the application of citizenship, surveillance and social interactions of factors in environmental design.

The increase in criminal cases among tourists should be taken accordingly as it can cause worry and fear. Concerns about crime create social negative effects through two key mechanisms:

- i) When an individual feels uncomfortable and unsafe, they will feel weak and isolated rather than enjoying safe and secure situations.
- ii) Fearfulness encourages individuals to invest time and money to take security measures to reduce the threat of crime. An individual tends to spend more time at home, not visiting a particular place and buying excessive keys to lock the door grill of their home.

Safety and security are vital to providing quality in tourism (WTO, 1996). Therefore providing quality tourism experiences which incorporate principles of safety and security are becoming an overriding objective of tourism destinations to ensure that tourists will make their return visit in the future. According to WTO (1996), planning for tourism safety and security requires consideration of risks originating in four source areas:

- Human and institutional environment outside the tourism sector

- The tourism sector and related commercial sectors
- The individual traveller (personal risks)
- Physical or environmental risks (natural, climatologically, epidemiological)

Table 1 shows the synthesis of previously studies conducted by scholars regarding urban-related studies in affecting security and safety levels.

Table 1: Urban-related studies in affecting security and safety levels

Article Name	Variables	Finding
Applying design ideas to promote security of urban spaces	- Territoriality Demarcation of public and private zones Reduction of escape routes for criminals and access control Increasing the responsibility and sense of belonging among residents - Surveillance Building structures towards streets Providing open spaces adjacent to the active functions Integration of functions and creating a diverse range of activities - Social Interactions Taking into account the cultural, social and emotional needs of the populace Residents' involvement in events and decisions Improving neighborly connections and developing friendly relationships	Crime prevention can largely be achieved through the application of citizenship, surveillance and social interactions of factors in environmental design.
Safe Navigation in Urban Environments	.Crime data	Develop a novel application that utilizes crime data to provide safe urban navigation
Factors influencing repeat visits to a destination: The influence of group composition.	Factor influencing repeat visits	Factors influencing repeat visits to a destination were identified among group composition.
Township tourism demand: Tourists' perceptions of safety and security.	Characteristics of township tourism	The important of safety and security in urban environment

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An examination of the effects of motivation and satisfaction on destination loyalty: a structural model	Motivation and satisfaction on destination loyalty	Motivation and satisfaction among tourists influence as they are frequently visited by urban tourism products. The primary data was distributed in the eight (8) urban tourism destinations in Kuala Lumpur City Centre that aims to gather the data on perceptions of safety and security among domestic visitors. Domestic visitors who agreed and willing to answer the questionnaire were taken as respondents of the study. The data were analyzed descriptively using mean and crosstabs to understand the reality of some security and safety issues faced by the Kuala Lumpur domestic visitors.
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III. RESEARCH AREAS

Specifically, there were eight (8) urban tourism destinations selected as the study location which are:

- a. National Mosque
- b. Sultan Abdul Samad Building
- c. Kuala Lumpur Tower
- d. KLCC
- e. SOGO
- f. Merdeka Square
- g. Central Market
- h. National Museum

The location of each urban tourism destination in Kuala Lumpur city centre is shown in Figure 1. The selection of eight (8) city tourism destinations was based on the following arrangements: (1) Different product attributes - heritage, culture and heritage and shopping which are the city's main tourist attraction when visiting Kuala Lumpur city centre. Apart from that, the selected travel locations are also 'affordable to visit' tourist spots among local tourists and most bag pack travellers when visiting Kuala Lumpur city centre.

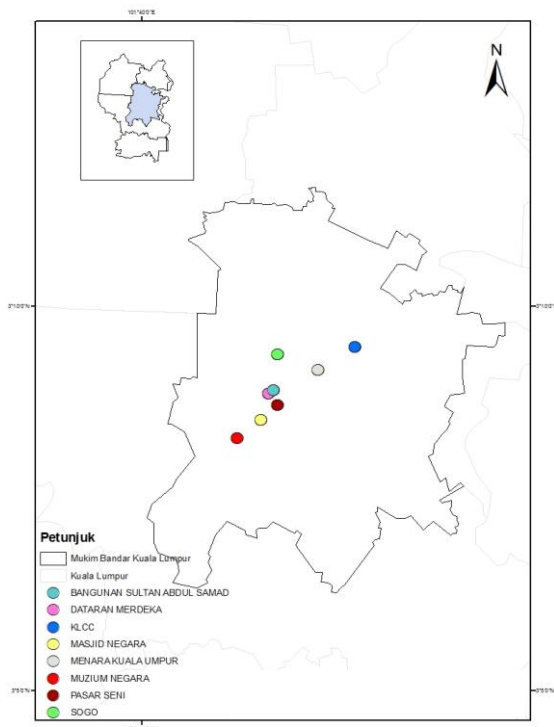


Figure 1: Research areas

IV. METHODOLOGY

The methods used in this study involve primary data were gathered from the questionnaire of 192 randomly sampled domestic visitors. This study is focused on domestic visitors

V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows the visitors' perceptions (mean) of safety during their visit to Kuala Lumpur City Centre. The respondents surveyed recorded satisfactory mean only on variable perceive Kuala Lumpur City Centre to become like an urban tourism destination and perceive Kuala Lumpur to be as a city. Meanwhile, the mean is medium for four other variables. This shows that they feel unsafe when visiting Kuala Lumpur city centre during the day or at night and a large number of visitors at a location does not make them feel safe. This illustrates that being in public places does not guarantee the safety of an individual.

Respondents are also required to provide information related to how they have been involved in criminal while travelling in Kuala Lumpur City Centre. There were a handful of respondents who had been as a victim of grazing and piracy when visiting Kuala Lumpur City Centre. The type of crimes which occurred among the respondents during their visit show in Figure 2.

Table 2: Visitor perceptions of safety during their visit to Kuala Lumpur City Centre

Perception variables	Mean
Perceive Kuala Lumpur City Centre to be as a urban tourism destination.	4.0365
Perceive Kuala Lumpur to be as a city.	4.0325
Feel in public in Kuala Lumpur City Centre during the day.	3.8906
Feel in public in Kuala Lumpur during the night.	3.6562
The large number of people makes more feel.	3.6406
Valid N (listwise)	3.8958

N=192

Respondents are also required to state their actions they will be taken if they find any unpleasant rumours related to the safety and security of tourist locations to be visited. Most respondents have taken steps to check the current status of the security level of the place to be visited either through mass media, electronic or individual contact. Table 3 shows respondents' actions if any unpleasant rumours related to the safety and security of tourist locations.

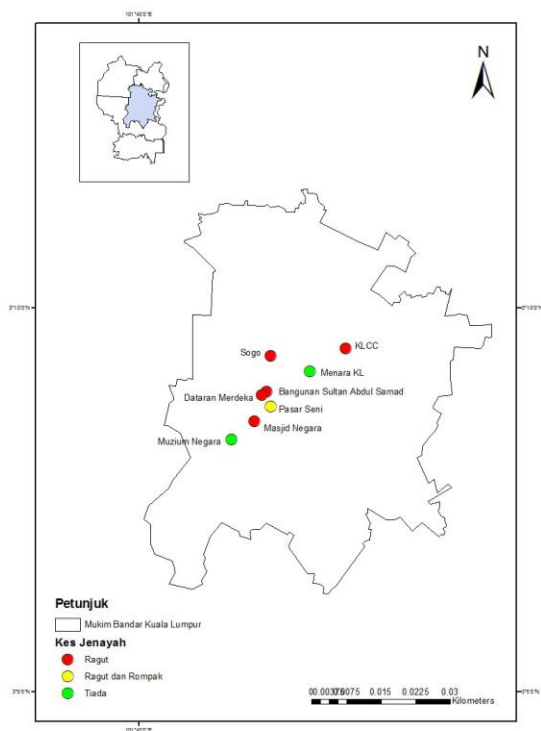


Figure 2: Type of crimes by location

Table 3: Cross-tabulation gender and if respondent received news about problems of safety and security of tourist locations

Gender	If you received news about problems of safety and security of tourist locations what do you do?				
	Double check the status of these news	Accept these news face value without checking the status of these news	Find other travel sites safer	Others	
Male	62	12	15	1	90
Female	66	9	27	0	102
Total	128	21	42	1	192

Respondents need to give their opinion, how security controls in Kuala Lumpur City Centre are effective among tourists. There are a few recommendations to deal with crime in urban areas. Majority of respondents believe in the policy's ability to control safety and security in Kuala Lumpur City Centre (Table 4).

Table 4: Cross-tabulation Gender and how security controls are effective among tourists

Gender	how security controls are effective among tourists					Total
	Police	Tourist police	CCTV	Crowd	Others	
Male	44	20	16	10	0	90
Female	58	16	15	12	1	102
Total	102	36	31	22	1	192

VI. DISCUSSIONS

Proposal for Crime Fighting in Urban Tourism

1. A recommendation that severe penalties on criminals towards foreign tourists to restore tourist confidence in the safety situation in Malaysia. The problems faced are not just internal security but include foreign labour, illegal immigrants and foreign immigrants involved in criminal activities.
2. Malaysian tourism companies must fulfil their promises in the travel packages offered to foreign tourists. MATTA needs to come up with proof that Kuala Lumpur is a safe city, which can help boost the country's tourism industry.
3. Concerns regarding crime are still high and people still doubt that crime is declining. Some efforts to curb and reduce crime through the following methods:

i) First is closed-circuit television (CCTV) which is the focus of implementing downstream process over the upstream process. "Preventing crime is a better choice", the downstream process refers to the system of criminal justice which are the processes of inquiry, arrest and criminal prosecution. The upstream process refers to the prevention of crime to ensure that people are safe and feel safe. The government needs to install CCTVs in their residential areas so that "they can detect the identity of the criminals involved in housebreaking". The action emphasizes on the arrest of criminals after a crime happened (downstream process) rather than preventing it. The CCTV equipped with a monitoring system should be used for preventing crimes (upstream process) and if a crime happens, only then we use CCTV to get an image to catch the criminals (downstream process). "Find the cause of the crime" and measures to prevent crime from happening. This task is a difficult challenge.

ii) Authorities are facing difficulties in arresting those involved due to the presence of "TONTO" agent. TONTO is an informant who receives protection money from contractors or business owners. TONTO stands for "Tolong Orang & Tiada Orang" (Help People & Lie to People).

VII. CONCLUSION

This study helps in identifying the level of tourist safety and security issues in Kuala Lumpur city centre based on perception among domestic visitors. The findings indicated the reality of some security and safety issues faced by the Kuala Lumpur domestic visitors. As a way forward the relevant authorities might need to review the city's existing crime prevention programmers, to empower them, and to make them even more effective. Other than that, safe city programs should be empowered and implemented more widely including in the urban tourism sector to address safety and security issues in the rapidly expanding urban environment.

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AUTHORS PROFILE



Fauziah Che Leh, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and Environment, Faculty of Human Sciences, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia. Her research interests in urban tourism and health tourism. The urban tourism research has significantly enhanced our understanding of the dynamics of location, in terms of their characteristics and the interactions

between peoples with cultural, social, historical, natural and political aspects. The urban tourism research has specialized in the use of safety and security in the urban tourism site. Safety and security are vital to providing quality in tourism especially in order to providing quality tourism experiences among tourists. Whilst, the health tourism research has enhanced our understanding on the health, wellness and recreational-based tourism by refer to hot spring as a medium of the research.