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The evaluation of city landmarks through the study of place attachment in Surabaya, Indonesia

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Abstract. The presence of landmarks is one form of city identity. The city landmark is a symbol of pride that describes the city history, power, and future dream; it also reflects characteristics of the city and society. Theoretically, the identity or symbol creates a bonding with the society called as place attachment; since it represents the true meaning of the people and place characteristics. This research aims to evaluate current city landmarks of Surabaya through the place attachment study of specific young adults aged 19 yr to 22 yr. The implementation of mixed qualitative-quantitative research method is used to understand the respondents' spatial perception by observing their social life and place preferences in the city to define social and physical symbols. The social symbols and physical symbols were compared to reveals the current value of the city landmarks. This research found that the attachment of the young adults to the Surabaya's landmarks is weak. Young adults recognized the city landmarks in term of strong intrinsic value. It gives them a pleasant feeling by seeing the place. However, they were not engaged in the place. To improve its place attachment, the city landmarks should provide the affordance of desired and desirable activities.

Keywords: Icon, place preferences, symbol.

1. Introduction

According to Nas *et al.*, the definition of city landmarks or symbols are elements in urban areas that bear a specific meaning of a value that relates to people emotional dimension including attachment [1]. The elements could be carried by an urban object, cultural act or other expression. Surabaya as the case study, is the second biggest city in Indonesia, and it has a long history with the development of the country since the kingdom era. The current population of the city is 3.5×10^6 within an area of 350.43 m². Surabaya has a rapid urbanization and modernization of the city. Surabaya is known as Hero City symbolized by two circling animals facing danger. The name of Hero refers to the spirit of not giving up during the independence era in 1940s. In terms of landmarks, Surabaya has several buildings, statues and monuments that marked and symbolized the history of the city and patriotism of the citizen, such as *Tugu Pahlawan* (Hero Monument), *Tugu Bambu Runcing* (Bamboo Monument), *Balai Kota* (the Mayor's office), and *Patung Gubernur Suryo* (the statue of Governor Suryo).





Figure 1. City landmarks of Surabaya (left to right: Bamboo monument, Bravery facing danger monument, *Grahadi*, *Jalesveva Jayamahe*).

In most developing cities, spatial segregation based on socio-economics levels often occurs, so as Surabaya. This research is generated by the current situation of a specific group of young adults who has low interaction with the landmarks because of the spatial and social segregation of the city. It comes to a question of the sustainability of the city's landmarks if the young generation ignores the existence. This research will examine the group in perceiving the landmarks referring to their social life in terms of the feeling of attachment to the landmarks. Theoretically, place attachment represents a cultural meaning of bonding between people and place; and a reason for the young adults to stay close to a place [2]. The bonding could cover various feelings such as familiarity, homeliness, patriotism and solidarity.

Previous research in 2013 [3] has shown that the young adults (with similar social background with the current respondents of this article) have less interest to the city landmarks. They know the landmarks without having any social experience to the landmarks. The research focused on mental map analysis, which predominantly triggered by the respondents' ability in navigating themselves within the city area and it only focus in one dimension of urban symbols that is physical dimension. The respondents noticed the city landmarks definition as in Kevin Lynch's theory of City Image, which is an easily identifiable physical object as point of orientation [4].

This article extends the previous research in terms of the observation of social symbols, not only through mental map analysis. The previous research was also proven that the physical quality (landscape and urban design) of the landmarks is weak. In 2018, the city of Surabaya has received the Guangzhou International Award 2018 because of the improvement programs to beautify the landmarks and its landscapes. Hence, through this research is also important to evaluate the beautification's affect to the feeling of attachment of the young adults.

The research is based on an empirical work applying a mixed qualitative-quantitative research method to compare the identified physical and social symbols of the young adults. The specific objective of this research is to identify the place attachment of the current Surabaya's city landmarks and the young adults, and to explore the effects given by the socio-physical milieu of the landmarks to the young adults. The two results then discussed to observe the social symbols that perform also as place identity.

2. Literature review

The theoretical base of this research is related to urban symbols and place attachment. Both theory is a combination of environmental and psychological view. The way to evaluate the urban symbol in this research is by applying the study of place attachment as the emotional dimension of the symbol.

The definition of urban symbols in this research applies architectural perspective from Freek Colombijn and Peter Nas, and the psychological perspective from Donald Appleyard. Urban symbols defines as an object, act or other expression that carries an extrinsic value relates to human's emotion [1]. This extrinsic value is given by the observers, which bear a specific meaning, such as the feeling of familiarity, homeliness, patriotism and solidarity, or feelings related to pleasantness and unpleasantness [5]. These feelings reflect people's attachment to the place. Not all urban elements could be identified as a symbol of the urban area, but only those that contain an expression collective memory as the identity of a group [6]. Therefore, urban symbols have two functions in terms of

identity: the society and the place. In a simple definition, it is a filter to differentiate who/what is included and who/what is not.

According to Hernandez *et al.* [2], memory has a strong relationship with social interaction; more intense and higher quality of the interaction means stronger memory leads to a stronger attachment and identity. In this research, the group of respondents living in the city more than four yr meaning that they already have a strong memory to the city. The length of stay leads to the strength of attachment; the longer the stay, the stronger the attachment. This research will extend the theory of place identity as social symbols by examining the strength of the attachment to evaluate the city's landmarks. It is also observing the impact of the quality of social experience to the feeling of attachment and the development of identity to a place.

In the process of developing symbols, urban elements carry a specific dimension called socio-physical milieu [5]. The milieu is an interrelated factor of three values: intrinsic value of the urban elements, social value given by the observers, and interaction value of the observers and elements. Intrinsic value shows physical characteristics of the elements and broader structure connected to them. Lynch [4] and Cullen [7] give examples of this value referring to human ability to see visually, such as contrast, change, high, open and close. Social value of urban elements give a purpose of human wellbeing, such as feeling of satisfaction and enjoyable. The value of interaction is related to the physical appearance of the elements and possibility of action, such as openness give possibility of people to enter and do their activity freely, and closure give possibility to protect the area. These three values are interrelated to each other in developing urban elements becoming symbols.

Place attachment is an emotional dimension of people given to places that makes people attach or stay close to the place [2]. The attachment is an effective way to identify place identity as a social symbol [8]. Parallel with the idea of symbols development by Nasar (the socio-physical milieu), Jane Jacobs also highlighted the quality of places and social activity are the main factors in developing the identity, or in this research could be said as developing symbols. Hence, the development of elements becoming identity through place attachment study covers aspect of people, place and process, which Scannel and Gifford said as the tripartite model of place attachment [9]. These aspects have to be considered in this research method in observing the place attachment.

3. Research method

The article is an exploratory study using a mixed qualitative-quantitative research method. This research used a questionnaire and mental map to collect data, and the text analysis was determined using content analysis as qualitative analysis and distribution and correspondence analysis as quantitative analysis. The empirical work of this article is to answer two research questions: are the urban landmarks of Surabaya still relevant to the young adults nowadays? And, does place with a strong attachment always perform as an identity of the observers?

The data was collected from 44 architecture undergraduate students of Petra Christian University, Surabaya (purposive sampling). The total of 44 respondents are Petra Christian University (PCU) undergraduate students consist of 17 male respondents (38.63 %) and 27 female respondents (61.36 %) with aged 19 yr to 22 yr. About 16 respondents lived in Surabaya for less than 6 yr (37 %) and 28 respondents for more than 6 yr (63 %).

To extend the findings of the previous research as mentioned in the Introduction, the similar socio-economics group of the young adults is still relevant. Young people's perspective is considered to help in construct normative definitions, especially on cultural participation and cultural value, which also being part of city identity [10]. The reason of focusing on this specific group is to answer the need of sustainable perception of the city landmarks in facing the challenges of globalization and universalism, particularly from the perspective of a specific group of society that common people said they are as an exclusive group of young adults.

4. Result and discussion

The analysis process was started by reading and analyzing the mental maps. The analysis shows the interaction between people and place in terms of two things: social meaning related to their social activity, and understanding the city structure in terms of their navigational ability. The comparison is

needed to distinguish the reason for urban elements recognition. Some important findings need to be highlighted as follow:

- i. In imaging the structure of the city, the role of the main street of A. Yani is important. Other streets connecting to the main street looked like branches of the main stem. The respondents started their maps by drawing the main street from the bottom to the top of the paper. The location of the university that is at the southern part of the city (the bottom of the paper) is clearly shown.
- ii. The landmarks are noticeable along the streets; means the respondents know how to get there mainly from the main street of A. Yani. Only some maps indicated district of an area since the physical border of districts is unclear in the city. The landmarks related to places that often visited and have an interesting form or landscapes.
- iii. The maps do not indicate the pattern of the toll roads, although most of the respondents using the roads often. On the other hands, they know the connection of the roads both to the southern and western part.

The figure 3 shows three examples of the mental maps from the respondents of this research. In a more detail explanation of the urban recognition (particularly for the symbols identified as place or social identity), a deeper interview has been undertaken through questionnaire. From these mental maps and questionnaires, it showed that students recognized some building as a landmark, e.g., the Mayor's Office (figure 2), by looking at its position at the end of a major street and its surroundings.



Figure 2. The *Balaikota* (Mayor's Office).

The analysis process was continued by using content analysis to determine the category of places, the reason why they visited, and the activities that happened in the mentioned place. We obtained the keywords by using open coding. Below is an example of open coding of reasons for visiting.

"Because needs, for example, the needs to buy something or seek entertainment." – respondent 19

"Leisurely walk, buy things, eat, or watch movie" – respondent 24

From the answers, we can obtain several keywords of reasons for visiting the mentioned place, namely: "needs", "to buy something" and "seek entertainment". Furthermore, below is an example of open coding of the activities that happened in the mentioned place.

"Eating, drinking, shopping, watching a movie, or just spending times with others."

– respondent 19

"People were leisure stroll, did some window shopping, selling-buying activity, watching a movie, eating, talking, or just hang out while playing with their phone." – respondent 24

From the answers, we can obtain several keywords of the activities that they did or saw when visited the mentioned place, namely: "eating", "buying a drink", "shopping", "watching a movie",

“spending time with others”, “walking”, “selling and buying activity”, “talking”, and “hang out”. After we collected these keywords from the open coding stage, we grouped them using the axial coding to become categories. From the axial coding stage, there are eight categories of reasons for visiting and seven categories of activities. See the example of the axial coding stage in Table 1 and Table 2.

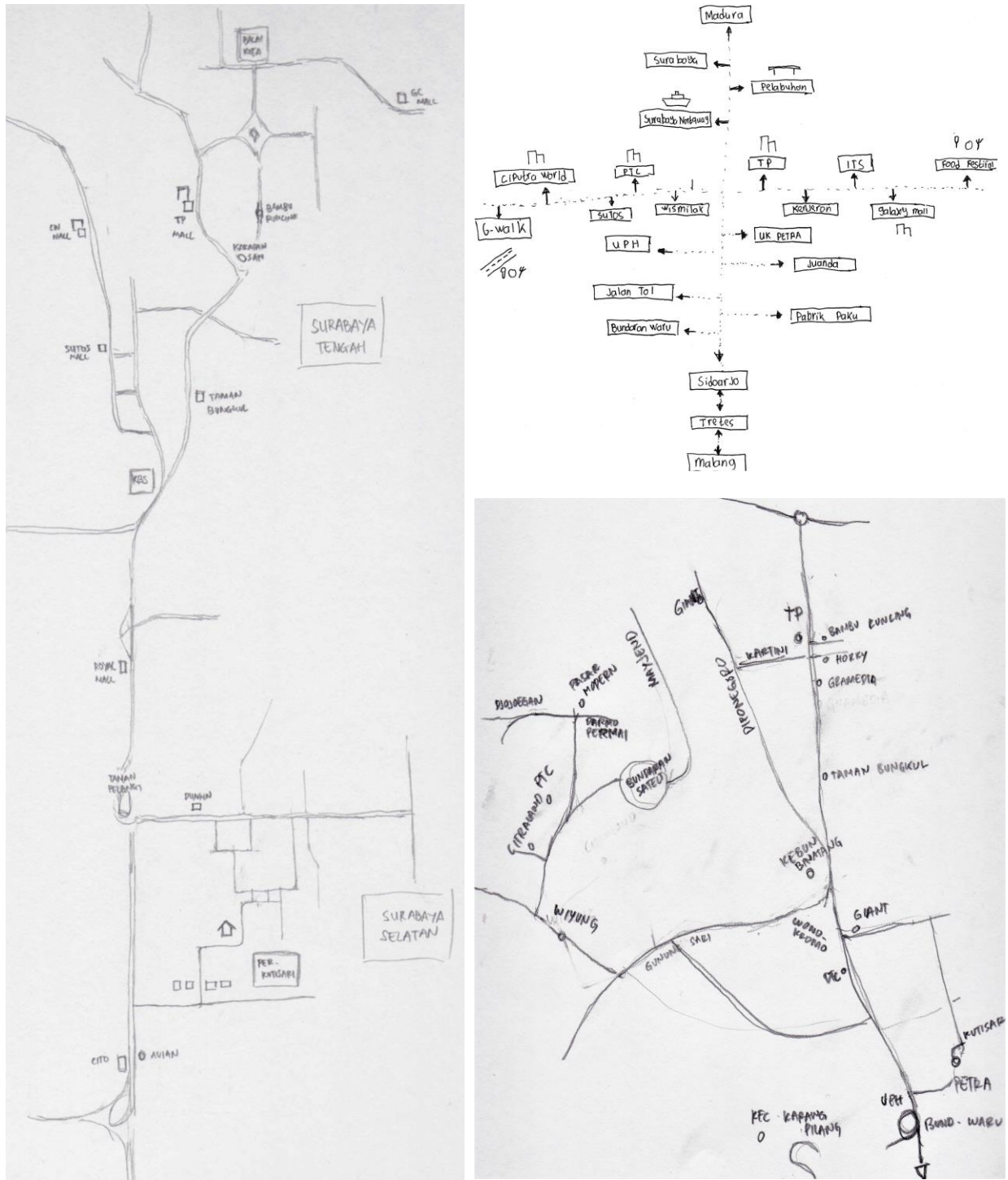


Figure 3. Examples of the mental maps drawn by the respondents.

Table 1. Example axial coding of the reasons of visiting.

No	Keyword	Category
1	Business reason Going out with family Going out with friends	Meeting people
2	Seek entertainment Refreshing To have a recreation Watching movie To walk	Looking for entertainment

Table 2. Example axial coding of the activities occur in mentioned place.

No	Keyword	Category
1	Leisure stroll Looking around	Leisure stroll
2	Hang out Meet friends Spending time Having conversation	Hang out and meet others

We analyzed the categories by using histogram to obtain the frequency. The frequency will read the emergence of the most answered categories. Figure 4 shows the distribution analysis results of the place. The respondents found to choose the mall more. The malls were Tunjungan Plaza (f = 11; 25 %), Pakuwon Mall (f = 11; 25 %), and Galaxy Mall (f = 8; 18.18 %). The places which are known as the landmark of Surabaya also found to be mentioned, such as Bamboo Monument and Tugu Pahlawan. However, the frequency was really small.

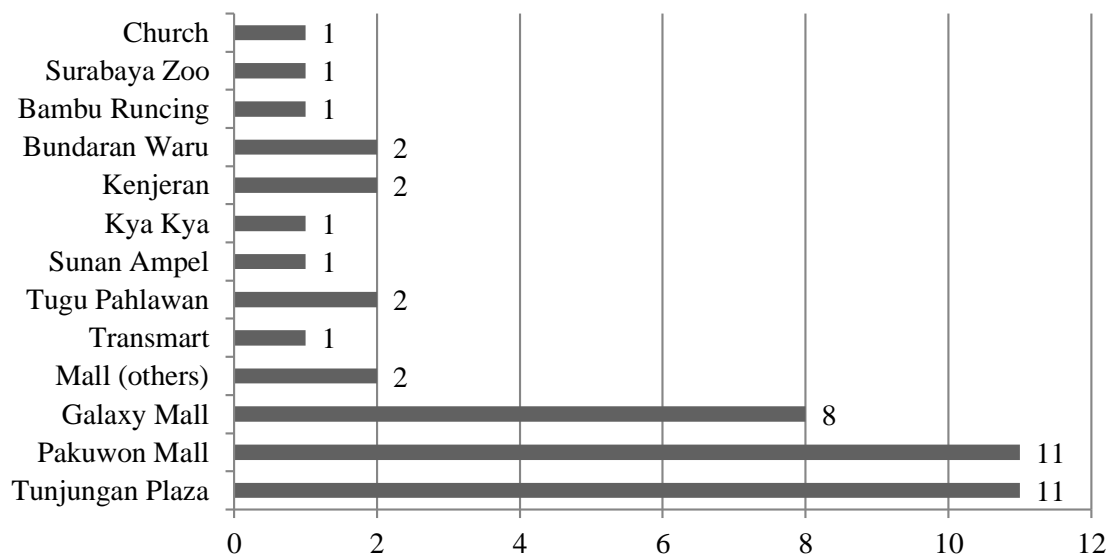


Figure 4. The mentioned place in Surabaya City that respondents know well.



Figure 5. The three most chosen malls: Tunjungan Plaza, Pakuwon Mall, and Galaxy Mall.

Figure 6 shows the distribution analysis results of the reasons for visiting. Students tend to visit the mentioned place because they were looking for entertainment (f= 31; 46.27 %), meeting others (f =11; 16.42 %), and shopping (f = 9; 13.43 %).

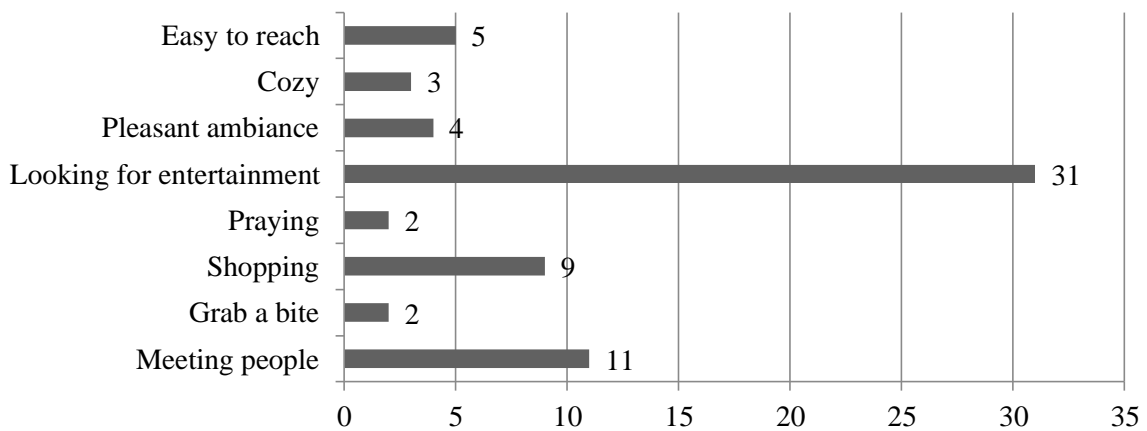


Figure 6. Reasons for visiting the mentioned place.

Figure 7 shows the distribution analysis results of the activities that happened. In mentioned place, it was found that the visitors were leisure stroll (f = 29; 26.13 %), having a recreation (f = 23; 20.72 %), buying things (f = 22; 19.82 %), and eating and drinking (f = 18; 16.22 %).

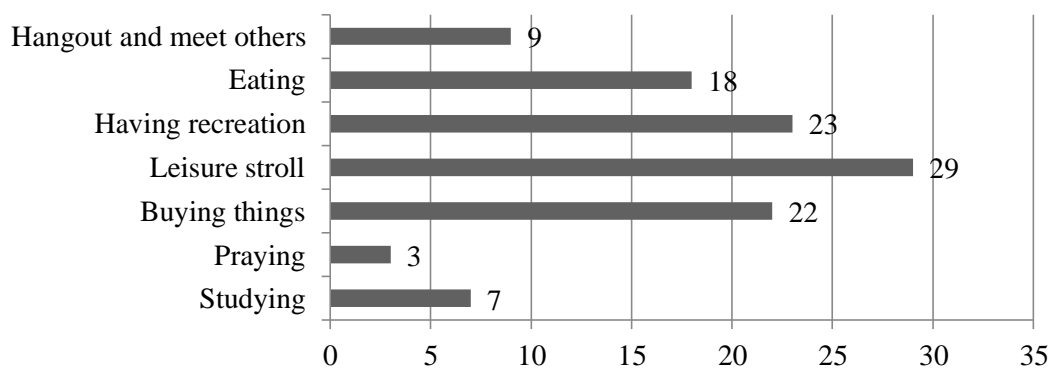


Figure 7. The activities that occur in the mentioned place.

The analysis is continued with selective coding by using correspondence analysis. The analysis was to determine the places that tend to be considered by respondents based on the reasons for visiting and the activities that occur. See figure 8 for the correspondence between places and the reasons for visiting. Also, see figure 9 or the correspondence between places and the activities.

As the most mentioned places, the respondents tend to visit Tunjungan Plaza, Pakuwon Mall, and Galaxy Mall because they were looking for entertainment, to do shopping, and seeking for a cozy

place. The respondents recognized these places for its ability to hold certain activities, such as just for leisure stroll, having a recreation, and eating. However, these reasons and activities also tend to be found in landmarks such as Bamboo Monument and Tugu Pahlawan. So, even if these landmarks have the same ability as the malls, the respondents have themselves more attached to the Malls. Concluded that the malls are more appealed for young people than in the landmarks of the city. Long distance of the malls to their houses is not an issue, as they travel by car.

The city landmarks are strongly recognized by them in terms of the strong intrinsic value carried by the elements. This intrinsic value is one of socio-physical milieu of the elements in becoming symbols/identity, particularly in connecting the elements to a broader urban structure. In recognizing the Mayor's Office, shown in their mental maps and questionnaire, the students identified the landmark because of its position at the end of a major street, the huge setback compares to its surrounding, and the beautiful and open landscape connected to the pedestrian ways. However, two other social milieus which are social and interaction values are relatively weak. In the case of the Mayor's Office, the openness of the space does not give a feeling of possibility for them to enter and do their activity in the area. On the contrary, the interaction value, that is offered by the space, gives them a feeling of satisfaction and pleasant by only seeing the place, not engaging their activity in the place.

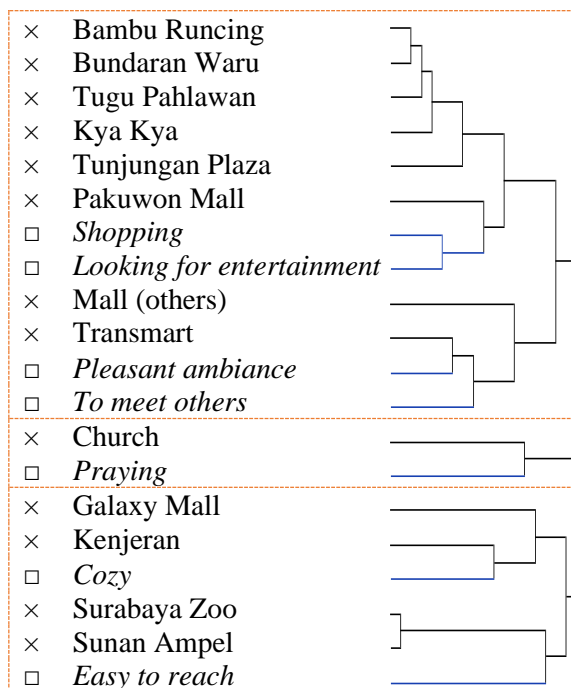


Figure 8. Correspondence between the name of place and the reasons for visiting (P -value = 0.0021).

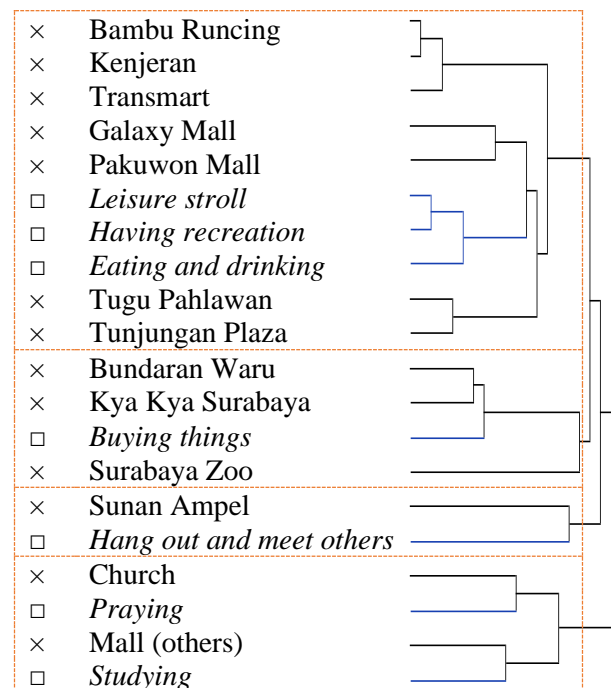


Figure 9. Correspondence between the name of place and the activities happened (P -value <.0001).

5. Conclusion

For a place or urban elements in becoming a symbol, it is necessary for the place to have a dimension of socio-physical milieu and place attachment creation with the people; as both can develop a connection between the place and the people. In one hand, the finding shows that the city landmarks in Surabaya have a strong socio-physical milieu in terms of physical characteristics and its connection to the city's structure. However, the landmarks have a weak attachment to the respondents. On the other hand, the three above mentioned malls carry a strong attachment to the respondents as the malls

related to their social activity. The respondents have an emotional bonding with the malls especially due to the feelings of familiarity and homeliness (other feelings such as patriotism does not appear in this research).

It is evident that the Surabaya landmarks, particularly *Tugu Pahlawan* (Hero Monument), *Tugu Bambu Runcing* (Bamboo Monument), and *Balai Kota* (the Mayor's office), strongly identify the city of Surabaya. The respondents confirm that these landmarks create place identity of the city. On the other hands, place identity does not automatically perform as social identity; or place symbols are not always associated with social symbols of the people.

Urban identity is stronger when physical and social qualities are strong. The beautification program from the government to the city landmarks seems relatively successful. The research shows that there is an increase of value carried by the landmark compare to the previous research in 2013. The respondents recognized the landmarks more by its quality of intrinsic value and urban structural interaction, rather than just by knowing the landmark as an orientation point. This also means that the beautification or conservation program from the local government is potentially more successful if it is combined with creating a place that attract more people to have their personal and group social experiences in and around the landmark.

The physical setting qualities of the milieu is an important factors in attracting the social activity . Therefore it can be concluded that unless it is intended to be primarily function as a sculpture, to improve its place attachment, the immediate milieu of Surabaya city's landmark should provides the affordance for desired and desirable activities to take a place. In the hot and humid climate of Surabaya, this can be done by providing cool and shaded place for people to do their social activities. A place to meet friends, to hang out, to play or it can be a place for an eatery establishment where people can sit, relax and watch city life go by.

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