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VISITORS PERCEPTION ON VANDALISM AND SAFETY ISSUES IN A MALAYSIAN URBAN PARK

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify and understand vandalism issues that occur in the selected case study site as well as to determine characteristics of the surrounding landscape associated with vandalism hotspots, and to justify safe environments in park areas. Questionnaire survey was conducted and specifically studies an urban park in the city of Shah Alam in the state of Selangor, Malaysia. The research indicated that people perceived vandalism to occur because of the opportunities provided by the surroundings, user behaviour, lack of security and enforcement, lack of maintenance and inspection, location and design of the facilities, and the materials used for such facilities. This research is very important because there is no other known research about perceptions of vandalism from Malaysian local park visitors' point of view, it should help planners, park designers and park managers in local or city councils in Malaysia, as well as the general public, to understand and expand their knowledge of vandalism in urban parks.

Keywords: Parks, Urban park, Vandalism, Safety, Park Management

1. Introduction

Since the nineteenth century, the provision of parks has been a major focus in promoting places for relaxation and recreation. Urban parks therefore can be regarded as public spaces, which cater to the needs of urban dwellers and the community as a whole. In other words, parks were designed to promote public health and to give some aesthetic value to an urban setting. Vandalism is not a new phenomenon affecting Malaysia. It has been one of the outcomes of the current social problems affecting younger generations in Malaysia today. Although the issue and the basic understanding of vandalism is known to every Malaysian, it has not motivated public, government, professionals or academicians to produce further research and studies regarding this issue in the urban open space environment. The current situation in Malaysia is that there is a lag in terms of institutional knowledge

about the problems of vandalism in urban open space, even though it is frequently mentioned by the media, and increasingly understood within the general public. This is not unusual in developing nations such as Malaysia which have developed without that institutional history to draw upon.

The results of vandalism in Malaysia or in other countries can be seen in a variety of locations: at bus stops; on signage and billboards; on walls at selected buildings in neighbourhood areas; and also on public facilities in parks and urban open space areas. Crimes are committed every day even in daylight (Ismail, 2002) but it can also be reduced if there are fewer opportunities for it to occur. According to an article in a local newspaper, *The New Straits Times* (Dalip, 2001), about RM2.4 million was spent by the Kuala Lumpur City Council and other government and private-sector agencies on repairing and replacing facilities damaged by vandals. In Selangor, vandalism of public properties is also on the rise with district offices and local councils incurring losses of more than RM10 million annually (Cruetz, 1998). This shows that vandalism in Malaysia is already on the verge of destroying public facilities, including plants and their surroundings.

The rate of urbanization in Malaysia has raised from 61.8 per cent in 2000 to 63 per cent in year 2005, and this will expected to reach 70 per cent in year 2010 (Datuk Seri Panglima Andrew L.T. Sheng, 2006). This ratio is based from about 4 million urban dwellers that live and work within Klang Valley (Kuala Lumpur and Selangor area) which is the largest urban settlement in Malaysia. Hence, 62 per cent of the population is urbanized (MCA, 2005). The total population was about 25 million in 2005, where the current population estimated in 2008 was almost 28 million people. As a young country, the growth for future population will also increase tremendously, where it is estimated that by the year 2025, the population will be expected to increase to 31.6 million people (MCA, 2005). As urbanization and population increases, this will mean more urban open space is needed to cater for the demands of the outdoor recreational needs. At the time being, Malaysian population's median age group is 23.7, which reflects the fact that Malaysia has a young population age structure. Furthermore, 33 per cent of the population is below 15 years of age and 4.5 per cent are above 65 years (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2008). This shows that the population of Malaysia is ageing, but very slowly and remains a young country. With urbanization and social demographic in mind, Malaysia has become an urban community which has led to crime such as vandalism.

Hence, the fundamental focus of this study is to investigate how vandalism issues in Malaysian parks are perceived, by identifying strategies to minimise vandalism and to help increase safe surroundings in urban parks areas. The purpose of this research is to identify and understand vandalism issues that

occur in the selected case study site as well as to determine characteristics of the surrounding landscape associated with vandalism hotspots, and to justify safe environments in park areas.

2. PERCEPTION OF SAFETY AND VANDALISM IN URBAN PARKS

The fear of crime relates closely to the issue of safety. The assumption according to Wekerle and Whitzman (1995), is that the fear of crime is a result of too many criminal offenders and insufficient criminal justice to protect the people. Among places that were regarded as commonly unsafe (Wekerle and Whitzman, 1995) are transportation-linked areas like bus stops, pedestrian underpasses, commercial areas, such as empty and quiet streets in shopping malls at night and weekends, old industrial areas and new industrial parks located at suburban areas. Parks are also often seen as unsafe places and this applies also to residential areas and university or college campuses.

Some urban parks, according to Wekerle and Whitzman (1995) have become 'hot spots' of crime and other criminal activities like drug dealing, bashing and sexual violence. Most park departments have not developed any type of security programs. New park planning ideas offering the sites as 'natural' to increase their biodiversity seem to create more alarming surroundings and also contribute to higher levels of fear among park users. This feeling of fear often hinders park usage especially by female users. *"Many park users are unwilling to use areas of a park they perceive as unsafe and many potential park users are deterred from using parks at all due to fears for personal safety"* (Marcus and Francis, 1998).

Vandalism and graffiti may occur in the most unthinkable places, on signage, building walls, bus stands, on plants and more. Absence of graffiti, damage and litter may indicate a cared-for environment, and a cared-for environment may suggest that it is safe for the community to use. Hence, according to Gray and Pelegriano (1973), the environment of the park clearly plays a vital role in attracting participants. The park must be capable of providing an environment which is attractive, safe and one offering facilities that will interest people sufficiently so that they will want to take part in the services being provided and not destroy them and this is what this research is intended to understand.

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to evaluate the level of safety and vandalism among park visitor, an urban park in Shah Alam was used as a case study site. The Shah Alam Lake Garden was built after Malaysia gained its independence in 1957. Being the largest urban park in Selangor State at that time, Shah Alam Lake Garden offers a variety of recreational activities for the communal and neighbourhood needs for all

those living near or far from Shah Alam. Thus, Shah Alam Lake Garden is always open to all sorts of problems, including vandalism which also relates to safety issues on using the park.

This research is very important because there is no other known research about perceptions of vandalism from Malaysian local park visitors' point of view. At every level of the Malaysian government, recreation and park facilities have captured increasing interest and involvement from all parties and agencies. However, the contribution has not been documented properly. Hence, there is no listing of Malaysian urban park studies or any statistical data on park user survey to support this research. Therefore, it is hoped that the findings from this study will be used for future park design and management in Shah Alam as well as in other Malaysian parks design and management.

4. SURVEY PROCEDURE

For this research, questionnaire surveys were conducted over a three-month period. The surveys consisted of pre-coded, scaled and open-ended questions especially for park users and non-users. Some structured types of questions were used in order to get a direct explanation of various aspects of park use. There were mainly two user profiles or respondent groups; one was the park users who use the park on daily basis and the second type was the residents who lived adjacent to the lake area; they could be either daily park users or not a park user at all at the Shah Alam Lake Garden. The residents were approached using home based questionnaire survey or the 'house-drop' method where the questionnaire sets were left in their mail-box consisting of a covering letter explaining the intentions of the research and the survey, the questionnaire set and a stamped return envelope addressed to the researcher in Shah Alam.

For the house-drop method, adjacent household profiling data was gathered from the Assessment Department at the Shah Alam City Council and was used to determine the selected residents living within two blocks or one kilometre adjacent to the Lake Garden in Sections 2, 3 and 4*. In total, there were about 200 residents who were selected, living in two blocks of houses less than one kilometre away from the park area. The selection of 1km was made because of the only housing area located around the lake area is about the 1km range radius. The rest of the area however, is monopolised by commercial and institutional buildings such as shopping complexes and government office buildings.

* The development and land use zones of Shah Alam district were divided according to numerical zones. In this case, Sections 2, 3 and 4 are the housing zones or the neighbourhood areas located at the western side adjacent to the Shah Alam Lake Garden. Section 1 is the Institutional land use occupied by the University Technology MARA, Malaysia (UiTM). However, there is no specific numerical categorization for this purpose, rather just a simple numerical based zone originally listed by the Selangor State Government of the Town and Regional Planning Department.

As for the second respondent group, the park users, the researcher used systematic random sampling where individuals were selected based on every 5th person found at the park during two weekdays use and every 10th person found at the park during two weekends. If a group was approached, the researcher would attempt to make eye contact and responded to those who made eye contact. There were about 80 people interviewed during park visitations.

5. RESULTS

For this research, out of the 200 questionnaires distributed to the households living adjacent to the Shah Alam Lake Garden, 50 (25%) were returned to the researcher for analysis. In addition, 80 park users were interviewed on-site at the Shah Alam Lake Garden at different times in the morning, afternoon and evening, and according to specific days, which included at least three week days and rotated days on the weekends making the total number of 130 respondents participating in the questionnaire survey. For the purpose of this research, data and findings will be presented according to park user's occupational background to see the relevance between perceptions among the working and non-working people and the relationship with their visitation and lifestyles. Most park users found in the park area consisted of students who live near the University Technology MARA located about 5km from the Shah Alam Lake Garden area. Other park users worked for the government sector, which explains why users come mainly from the government offices located near by (37.5%; n=30). The second largest occupation for park user group category is people who worked in the private sector including firms, consultants, and other institutions which came to 20% or n=16. Details of the demographic background and occupation distribution of residence were will be explained in greater detail below (see Table 1).

The analysis explains what things people liked most about the park, having good recreational space and facilities provided at the Shah Alam Lake Garden is what people liked most about the park (23.9%; n=80). The results also indicated that beautiful scenery and peaceful surroundings make it the second most popular reason for visiting the park (14.4%; n=48). Respondents were also asked what things they disliked most about the park. The main response (18.8%; n=50) referred to the poor maintenance of trees and shrubs around the park areas, managing dirty toilets, cleanliness of the whole park, poor maintenance and not replacing broken park facilities like the exercising facilities, children's play equipment and other park facilities. The second largest group of responses were the comments on having too much indecent behaviour mainly by the younger group of users who use the park as their favourite spot for dating behaviour which is not appropriate in that setting (17.3%; n=46).

TABLE 1 - RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS FROM SAMPLE

Distributions	Participants		Household/resident		Park user	
	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%
Overall Participants	50	38.5	80	61.5		
Gender						
Male	25	50	31	39		
Female	25	50	49	61		
Age group						
18-22	5	10	36	45		
23-34	14	28	31	38.75		
35-44	9	18	12	15		
45-54	8	16	1	1.25		
55 and above	14	28	0	0		
Ethnicity						
Malay	44	88	64	80		
Chinese	3	6	11	13.75		
Indian	2	4	3	3.75		
Other (Sikh, Javanese etc.)	1	2	2	2.5		
Education level						
Primary school	0	0	1	1.25		
Secondary school	15	30	21	26.3		
College graduate	10	20	22	27.5		
University graduate	25	50	36	45		
Occupation						
Self employed/business owner	7	14	3	3.75		
Government worker	14	28	30	37.5		
Private sector worker	9	18	16	20		
Student	3	6	30	37.5		
Housewife/not working	4	8.2	0	0		
Retired	12	24	1	1.25		
Others	0	0	0	0		
Resident status						
Local resident (from Shah Alam)	44	88	52	65		
Domestic visitor (from other states)	1	2	0	0		
Migrated (from other country)	5	10	28	35		

There were ten main reasons why people usually visited the park and these comments will be explained according to gender preferences. Based on the multiple responses given, the main reason for visiting the Shah Alam Lake Garden was for relaxation (43 males and 56 females; 27.8%). The second most frequently reported reason was to commune with nature or enjoy the fresh air (n=28 male and n=34 female). The other reason was to exercise (30 males and 28 females; 16.3%); to just being with friends and family (23 males and 28 females; 14.3%); for sense of escape (6.5%); a fun place to be in (5.6%); to meet people (5.1%); for learning (3.4%) and some just had no reason at all (3.4%) for visiting the park.

Responses from the survey also indicate that most people who answered the questionnaire are aware of what vandalism means. Out of the 130 respondents, only 5% (n=6), had no idea or were unsure what vandalism was while 5% (n=7) respondent did not answer the question. Nineteen per cent of people said that vandalism is merely the act of destroying public property, and 15 per cent said that vandalism is unhealthy, negative or destructive behaviour towards public property. Nearly half of respondents, or 46 per cent, included both the act of purposely or sometimes with intention to destroy things, and also the behaviour to express or to release anger. Only 4 per cent said that vandalism is about misuse of all public property while 6 per cent said that it is irresponsible individuals who are selfish and with no importance or value in life, or came from gang cultures that are always against development and the establishment of parks. Overall, most responses indicate that the public is aware of what vandalism is regardless of its different meanings.

Vandalism obviously is a problem in Shah Alam Lake Garden and respondents were asked specifically to list or identify what kind of vandalism they saw on their recent visits to the park. Based from the survey questionnaire, vandalism is regarded as a problem when it is obviously seen in the surroundings, and the effects of the act have left marks or signs that the area or facilities have been tampered with. The comments gathered for this question were more than expected; the author managed to get about 181 comments back from the total 130 respondents surveyed. Most of the responses gathered were then divided into several categories: vandalism to park facilities (43.6%); graffiti (32.6%); damage which happened outside of the park area (12.2%). Other comments were about the damage to soft landscape elements including trees and shrubs (7.2%). Indecent behaviour or immoral behaviour among visitors themselves were categorised as vandalism because it creates an eyesore for other park visitors (3.87%). Only about 0.55% commented about items or park facilities being stolen, which included loss of iron rods or some part of the lighting structure made from cast iron. According to some respondent, this happened because there were always drug addicts around the park who might want to obtain money by selling the iron.

Besides data from the survey, the authors managed to get some information gathered from the Public Relations Division, at the Community Department (2003), Shah Alam City Council (MBSA). The data presented (in Table 2) below is based on written and electronic comments from the public regarding complaints on vandalism problems.

TABLE 2 - TYPES OF COMPLAINTS

Types of complaints	Number of Complaints
Involving Shah Alam City Council's Property	
• Signage stolen or damaged	41
• Damaged playground equipment	19
• Broken/damaged lighting placed at playground areas	33
• Broken/damaged lighting placed at shelter/gazebo	19
• Shah Alam City Council's buildings/structures	17
• Maintenance of public toilets	10
• Cleanliness of public toilets	3
• Rubbish - specifically at playground areas	12
• Neighbourhood disturbance	25
• Vandalism on signage	1
• Indecent Behaviour	8
Total	188

Complaints made by the public on vandalized public property owned by Shah Alam City Council from January 2003 – September 2003.

Source: Department of Public Relations (MBSA), (Community Department, 2003).

The responses regarding whether vandalism is seen as a major problem or not was classified into four categories: yes, it is a major problem; sometimes, or it is a minor problem; no it is not a problem; and unsure whether it is a problem or not. Basically, within these four categories, the results indicated that out of the 130 responses, 29 per cent said that vandalism is a major problem. Of these, 42 per cent of the responses were male and 58 per cent were female. The responses included:

Yes, vandalism is a major problem 38 comments (16 males & 22 females)

- "I hate it when people do not appreciate public facilities. It's like you do not love your own country and it shows lack of discipline among people or users".
- "No immediate inspections and lack of maintenance programs".
- "Often park facilities are broken, vandalised, destroyed and have graffiti which may create discomfort to other users".

- "I think it is the mentality of the Malaysian people who just cannot appreciate public facilities".

For the second category, about 54 per cent of male respondents mentioned that vandalism is either a problem or a minor problem, while 45 per cent of females said the same thing. Among the responses are:

Sometimes, but still a minor problem 57 comments (31 males & 26 females)

- "I think vandalism is still a minor problem here, not that critical at this point".
- "I think it is only a problem like so much rubbish around".
- "Vandalism seldom happens".
- "There is still routine check by city council officials, just that it is not routine and sufficient in number of security officers".

The third category implies that only 10 per cent out of the 130 responses says that vandalism is simply not a problem at Shah Alam Lake Garden. This varies between male and female where 36 per cent of males and 64 per cent of females indicate that vandalism is not a problem. For the final category, about 16 per cent or 21 people from both male (n=8) and female (n=13) mentioned that they were not sure whether vandalism is a major problem or not. Some of the responses are:

No, it is not a problem 14 comments (5 males & 9 females)

- "No, vandalism is not a problem here".
- "This park is well taken care of".

In the questionnaire given to the respondents, there was a question inquiring about the level of safety on their visits to the Shah Alam Lake Garden. The respondents were given a scale to identify their level of safety with 1 being completely unsafe and 10 being completely safe. Based on that inquiry, they were rated according to their feeling on safety issues. On a scale of 10, the mid-point or median (5) will be determined as being neither safe nor unsafe. Of the 130 responses, (n=40) 30.8% mentioned that they feel neither safe nor unsafe, which is the scale 5. The number also indicated gender differences, where 21 males responded to the questions and 19 female responses. About 3.1% said that they were completely safe and 3 of them were male respondents while only one female respondent mentioned feeling totally safe in the park. However only 1.5% felt that they were not at all safe during their visits to the park and this was balanced between male and female responses.

There were also questions in the survey asking the respondent whether they felt safe if they were to visit the park during night hours. Out of the 130 respondents surveyed for this question, only (n=15) 11.5% said that they were totally safe during their night visits. This was different between genders where only two females said that they were safe and the others were 13 male respondents. Otherwise, most of the responses said that no, they are not safe during night hours. Others were unsure about their safety simply because they had never visited the park either at night or were just not comfortable being alone there.

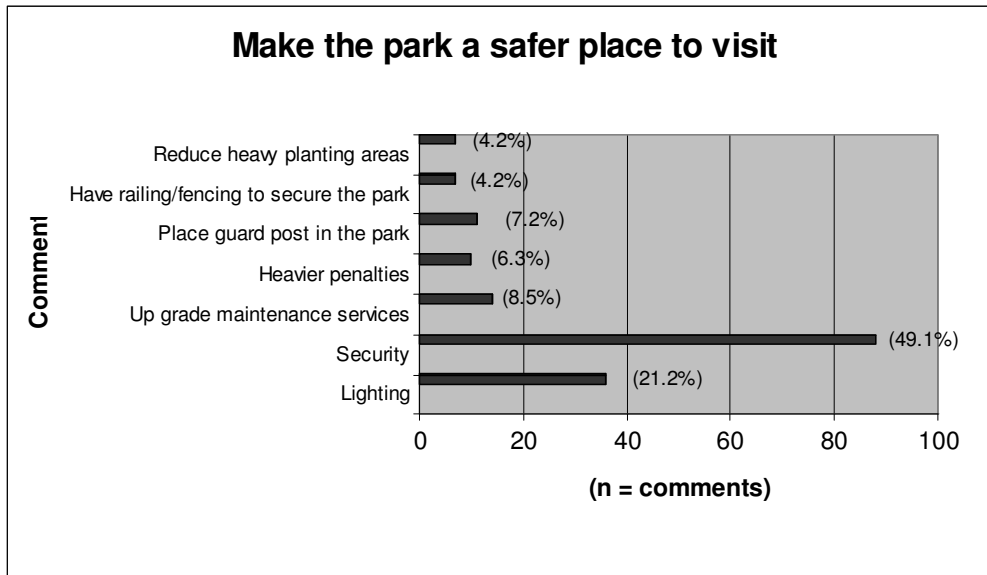


FIGURE 1 - FINDINGS ON HOW TO MAKE PARK A SAFER PLACE TO VISIT.
Source: Author's Questionnaire survey

Among criteria identifying the level of safety among visitors is also their perception of the overall design in the park as to whether there are places where anyone can hide and were unsafe for the visitor. For this inquiry, the respondents were asked to write in his/her knowledge of places, areas or situations where people can hide. There were 173 responses specifically gathered for this inquiry. Of that number, (n=122) 70.5% comments said yes, there are places where people can hide. Another (n=46) 26.6% comments indicated that they were unsure of such places and finally only (n=5) 2.9% comments of the visitor strongly stated that there are no such places in the park where people can hide. This is because the park is wide open and anyone can see what is happening around them. Finally, the visitors were asked to give some opinions and ideas regarding this matter. Out of the total respondents surveyed for this question, seven (7) main themes or concerns emerged and they are issues of security, lighting, upgrading maintenance services, placing guards in the park, heavier penalties for offenders,

place railings or fencing to secure the park at all times, and reducing heavily planted areas for safety reasons as presented in Figure 1.

6. FINDINGS ON THE PERCEPTION

The research has investigated how vandalism issues and the level of safety in Malaysian parks are perceived by gaining further insights into the benefits of recreational usage and identifying strategies to minimise vandalism as well as to increase safety measures in Shah Alam Lake Garden. Parks have always been regarded as a place for enjoyment, where people can relax and enjoy themselves without being interfered with by other visitors. Although vandalism is not a new phenomenon in Malaysia, the implications seem to be ignored by the public, and a lack of remedial measures by the local authority, Shah Alam council, has prevented them from identifying and addressing this issue. Through observation from this research, the researcher has found that the tolerance level of the people was high in accepting vandalism. Although vandalism was clearly seen in several spaces in the park, people from the surveys has regarded that vandalism is still a minor problem. This shows that some Malaysians do not seem to notice vandalism environments and probably are tolerating with any kind of environment pertaining to vandalism.

Sadly, vandalism and safety issues cause a perennial drain on parks managers and local authorities worldwide. Vandalism and safety is an international problem, not peculiar to Malaysia alone, but developing nations need more structured management tasks to deal with it. As a young country, these social issues seem to be a major problem among youngsters in Malaysia and are often manifested in schools and public places like parks. The seriousness of this problem is not fully recognised or appropriately responded to by the authorities. Since the major elements in this research has been conducted to find out what the people think, it is In therefore hoped that this information will be able to help fill the gap mentioned earlier in this paper.

Several findings have emerged from this research and these are the following statements that can be made about vandalism and safety issues at the Shah Alam Lake Garden:

- Most people are aware of what vandalism is;
- Damage to park facilities was the largest identified type of vandalism, with graffiti being the second most common;

- 73% think vandalism is a problem, of which 29% think it is a major problem and 44% think it is a minor problem. Only 11% think vandalism is not a problem while 16% were unsure about the matter;
- People appear to be unaware of their level of safety, with most of them indicating being neither safe nor unsafe;
- A large number of people, however, indicated that they do not feel safe if they were to visit the park at night;
- There were several places in the park that were identified as potential hiding places;
- Upgrading the security system and enforcement routine and more lighting, seem to be the most common suggestions on how to make the park a safer place;
- The main thing that people liked about the Shah Alam Lake Garden was its close location to the City Centre;
- The thing that they disliked the most was the poor maintenance;
- User perception towards vandalism being a major problem does not appear to affect their comments on the type of vandalism which has been seen.
- The level of safety among respondents as a whole does not appear to be related to how they feel towards visiting the park at night.
- Their preferences on the visitation time do not appear to be related to their feeling of safety towards night visits.

7. DISCUSSION

This research has identified a sound level of understanding by respondents about local vandalism, park safety and park use. The literature review by Cohen (1973) shows that although it was done over 30 years ago, the characteristics of vandalism that he identified are still relevant today, and this is reflected in the site which is the Lake Garden of Shah Alam.

The intention of this research was not to totally stop vandalism, which is certainly impossible. However, this research is directed towards understanding the first level of knowledge of the problem and later, helps to determine measures on how to minimize the current situation through design and park management considerations. The conclusions suggest that it would be possible to initiate management

and planning options on managing vandalism, and also to help increase personal safety at the case study site which could provide better quality surroundings and improve human comfort within the environment of the park.

Based on the findings, this section will build on proposed recommendations using terminology from the significant findings such as *identify, security, community involvement, overall design, and to propose a new department to be set up within the Shah Alam City Council structure*. This will then further discuss the implications and the needs for future research. The first proposed recommendation identifies what is akin to Harnik's study of *The Excellent City Park System (2003)*, and then will focus on several measures to achieve an excellent city park system, although this research will only look into one of its seven measures, which is about safety and crime. Details from Harnik's study could be a follow-up to the Shah Alam study. Another study is by Kaplan, Kaplan and Ryan (1998) on the *Design and Management of Everyday Nature*, focusing on how to engage people in park management. However, the rest of the proposed recommendations or guidelines evidence is gathered solely from the results and findings in and further synthesized to generate and create new proposed recommendations or guidelines. The Figure 2 below explains the cause of vandalism problems and safety issues identified (refer to the boxes presented on the left-hand side) and later shows an outline of what will further discuss (boxes on the right-hand side).

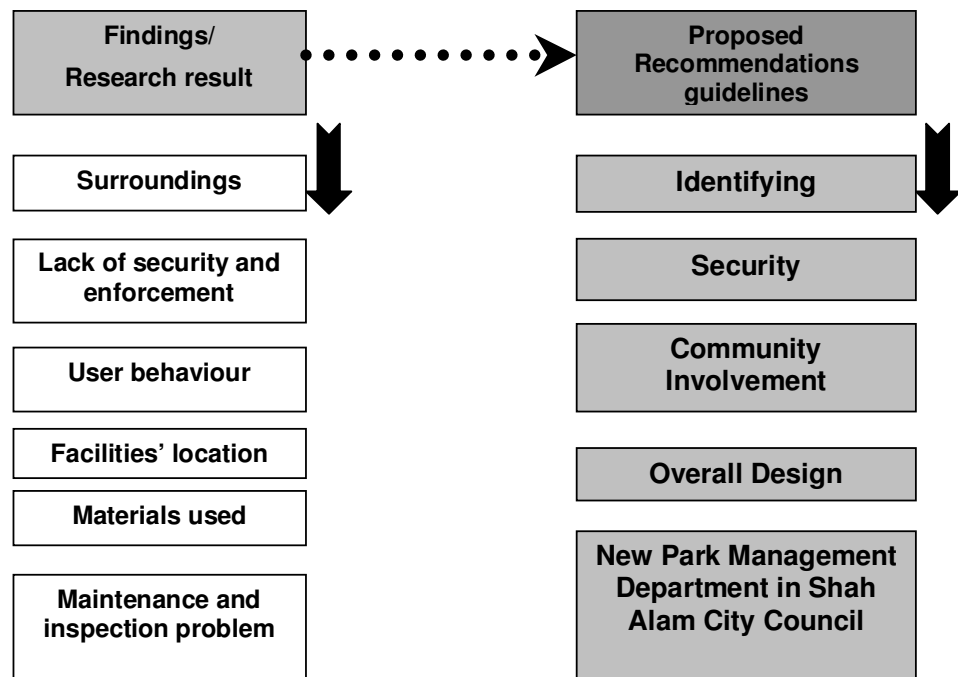


FIGURE 2 - THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDENTIFIED FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH RESULT AND THE PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS GUIDELINES OR STRATEGIES.

This research has proposed some recommended guidelines to help overcome the problem by first identifying vandalism issues, offenders and the surroundings, and enhancing security and enforcement levels in the park. Other recommendations involve enhancing community awareness, overall design and management options by encouraging more activities especially during after dark hours. A new park management department in the organizational structure of the Shah Alam City Council is also proposed.

This research had several limitations while the data was being collected. Because of security and safety reasons, all surveys were only conducted during daytime hours between 7.30am to 6pm. Therefore, it was not possible to survey problematic and potential vandals. Furthermore, this research did not intend to probe deeply into the character and attitudes of people, but rather to observe the areas or hotspots where vandalism occurs. It is the main aim of this research to only identify vandalism issues in Shah Alam Lake Garden and to contribute to strategies for dealing with vandalism in Malaysian urban parks.

The other limitation of this study is that the questionnaires used were not translated to more languages, other than Bahasa Malaysia and English. This is because Bahasa Malaysia has always been the first language in Malaysia, followed by English as the second language. Therefore, it is assumed that Indian and Chinese people would understand both languages. Furthermore, the survey might not represent the total park users and non users at the Shah Alam Lake Garden; it was mentioned in this research that the survey was done during the month of Ramadan (fasting month for Muslims people), therefore, had limited the number and range of users who were interviewed and who had participated in this research.

Based on the limitations of the methods used in the study, several suggestions for future research are listed. First, the possibility of using the park after dark or at night to increase safety; the researcher is unsure how the suggestions would be accepted in the Malaysian culture. Therefore, it is suggested that further research and study be made on cost implications to the councils and user behaviour. Secondly, this study has been limited in soliciting only park users as respondents and residents of near-by households but not the vandals themselves. In order to get a better view and understanding on why they do it, further and a more in-depth ethnographical research is needed. Finally, other suggestions should be based on the observation technique which was used in this research; the observations were intended to examine the behaviour among younger generations at their favourite spots. This research, however, has not succeeded in capturing the behaviour of the younger users at their favourite spots.

This research is not intended to create a perfect solution for vandalism or safety measures in urban parks, but it should help various councils, government agencies, the private sector and individuals. This

approach and its ideas will be beneficial, however, and can be applied by the local authority in Malaysia, especially to the Shah Alam City Council, because the approaches given came from ideas gathered based on interviews and survey responses from the park users themselves. It is hoped that the problem of vandalism and safety will be minimized and be learned by all multi-cultural, racial and religious communities in Malaysia. It is also hoped that it will become a reference for developing strategies in dealing with vandalism and safety issues in Malaysian urban parks.

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