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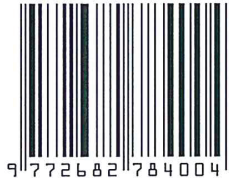
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# TABLE of CONTENTS

<b>DESIGNING MOTIVATOR STATIC FORMS TO PREVENT RISK DISEASE: CONSIDERATION FOR GRAPHIC DESIGNERS</b> Muhammad Nur Firdaus Nasir <sup>1</sup> , Ruslan Abd Rahim <sup>2</sup> , Azahar Harun <sup>3</sup> , Musaddiq Mohamad Khalil <sup>4</sup>	<b>1 -14</b>
<b>TRADITIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ARTEFACTS IN THE SULTANATE PALACE OF MELAKA: THE BENEFITS OF SUSTAINING CULTURAL VALUES THROUGH THE FURNITURE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN RELATED FIELDS IN MALAYSIA</b> Siti Nurmasturah Harun <sup>1</sup> , Haszlin Shahrudin <sup>2</sup> , Mohammad Azroll Ahmad <sup>3</sup> , Elivio Bonollo <sup>4</sup> , Wan Noor Faaizah Wan Omar <sup>5</sup>	<b>15 -25</b>
<b>A DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR DEFINING USERS' QUALITY PERCEPTION IN PRODUCT DESIGN</b> Nur Shahidatul Aina Muhammad Firdaus <sup>1</sup> , Haszlin Shahrudin <sup>2</sup> , Mohammad Azroll Ahmad <sup>3</sup> , Elivio Bonollo <sup>4</sup> , Wan Noor Faaizah Wan Omar <sup>5</sup> and Zakiyah Hasan <sup>6</sup>	<b>26 - 35</b>
<b>LOST SPACE IN CHOW KIT</b> Noor Syarafina Sallehudin	<b>36 - 41</b>
<b>STOP MOTION AS A MEDIUM TO TEACH AND LEARN EXPERIMENTAL ANIMATION</b> Siti Hajar Aznam <sup>1</sup> and Hafizah Rosli <sup>2</sup>	<b>42 - 49</b>
<b>MALAYSIAN PERCEPTIONS ON RAYANI AIR'S ISLAMIC CORPORATE IMAGE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FUTURE ISLAMIC AIRLINES</b> Nadia Mohd Nazri <sup>1</sup> , Nor Azura Adzharuddin <sup>2</sup> , Abdul Rauf Ridzuan <sup>3</sup>	<b>50- 56</b>
<b>A STUDY OF STUDIO ENVIRONMENT ON STUDENTS' PROJECT OUTCOME</b> Akma Suhaila Md Noor <sup>1</sup> , Haszlin Shahrudin <sup>2</sup> , Mohamad Azroll Ahmad <sup>3</sup> , Elivio Bonollo <sup>4</sup> , and Wan Noor Faaizah Wan Omar <sup>5</sup>	<b>57 - 65</b>
<b>PEMODELAN REGRESI LOGISTIK BINARI BAGI MASALAH RUMAH TANGGA DI KALANGAN PASANGAN SUAMI ISTERI DI SUATU KAWASAN BANDAR, NEGERI KEDAH</b> Siti Nor Ain Zainon <sup>1</sup> , Zaliha Ali <sup>2</sup>	<b>66 - 89</b>
<b>A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING AIDS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</b> Muhd Fitri Safwan Bin Ghazali <sup>1</sup> , Wan Noor Faaizah Wan Omar <sup>2</sup> , Hasnul Azwan Azizan <sup>3</sup> , Haszlin Shahrudin <sup>4</sup> , and Mohammad Azroll Ahmad <sup>5</sup>	<b>90 - 107</b>
<b>IMPLEMENTING ANIMATION PRODUCTION PROCESS: CASE STUDY OF DESKTOP APPLICATION LEARNING SYSTEM (MILO) FOR FRONT OFFICE MANAGEMENT</b> Hafizah Rosli <sup>1</sup> , Pak Yuan Woo <sup>2</sup> , Aslinda Mohd Shahril <sup>3</sup> , Ezwani Azmi <sup>4</sup> and Irina Mohd Akhir <sup>5</sup>	<b>108 - 117</b>
<b>DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR DYSLEXIA LEARNING AIDS</b> Siti Nur Solehah <sup>1</sup> , Wan Noor Faaizah <sup>2</sup> , Hasnul Azwan Azizan <sup>3</sup> , Haszlin Shahrudin <sup>4</sup> , and Azrool Ahmad <sup>5</sup>	<b>118 - 125</b>





# LOST SPACE IN CHOW KIT

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## ABSTRACT

*In today's cities, large numbers of vacant, unused lands in the city centre can be easily seen. These terms can also be called as lost space. Lost space is the undesirable urban areas that are in need of redesign, making positive contribution to the surroundings or users. Revitalisation of lost spaces can provide opportunities for reshaping a city's appearance, and streetscapes in enhancing the city's experience for the community and at the same time solving the issue of lacking of public spaces in the city centre. This study therefore examined the elements of a public space in a city centre by revitalising the lost space. It is found that a successful public space includes three main elements of access and linkage, comfort and image as well as use and function. Thus, this paper aimed to design a successful public space in context of lost space underneath Chow Kit Monorail Station. This study applied qualitative method to analyse the lost space underneath Chow Kit Monorail Station. This study examined the reason why there are lost space in Chow Kit. With the guide of the successful public space attributes, the lost space will be proposed with new design that could revitalize the lost space as a successful public space. The findings shows that the space has not meet the three attributes of successful public space. Therefore, from the synthesis done, a new design was proposed to achieved the aim to revitalize the lost space as a successful public space.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

New York State Department (2009) defined lost spaces as the “opportunities waiting to happen”, where lost space in the city has been described by many as a functionless and meaningless space, in other word empty. Public spaces reflect the social life and interaction of people. When this social interaction is missed in a public space, it means the public space is lost (Ehsan Zarebidaki, 2013). Therefore, it is substantial to revitalise the lost space as a new public space via this paper's aim of the elements of successful public space in a city centre by revitalising the lost space which eventually will provide some guides and propose new designs of the successful public space attributes. The study aim at revitalising the lost space underneath Chow Kit Monorail Station as a successful public space for people. There are two research objectives which has been established. First is to identify the factors

of the existence of lost space in Chow Kit. Second is to propose a new design that could revitalise the lost space as a successful public space.

## 2. REVITALISING LOST SPACE AS A NEW PUBLIC SPACE

Al Shams et. al (2013) defined public space as “the space that is open to all, owned by all and used by all members of the public”. Public space consists of outdoors environment, which generally gives relief from the urban hectic life (Project for Public Place, 2000). According to Project for Public Places (2000), places that are great for people have four key qualities, which are sociability, uses and activities, access and linkage as well as comfort and image. Many researchers have come up with a set criteria to design a good public space. Table 1.0 concludes all the criteria outlined by four authors. It can be seen that access and linkage, use and activity as well as, image and comfort, are the main three elements that been studied by most of the researcher.

Table 1.0: Matrix of the criteria of good public space by authors

Author	Carmona (2004)	Williams and Stephens (2001)	Mets (2013)	Project for Public Place (2000)
Criteria of Good Public Spaces	Ownership			
	Access	Ease of movement	Convenience	Access and Linkage
	Use			Use and Activity
		Character	Identity	
		Continuity and Enclosure		
		Attractive	Attractivity	Image and Comfort
		Legibility		
		Adaptability		
		Diversity		
			Cleanliness	
			Safety	
			Climatic	
			Sociability	

Source: Edited from Carmona (2004), Williams and Stephens (2001), Mets (2013) and Project for Public Place (2000)

From the definitions and research done by other authors regarding public space, it can be categorised that lost space was a part of public space. However, it is a space that is underutilised and was not designed well hence there are limitations or in other words no activities being held in the space.

## 3. CASE STUDY AREA

The study is confined to the area of the Chow Kit, which is located in the City Centre of Kuala Lumpur. Chow Kit is chosen due to its function as one of the main locations of economic activities, residential as well as the existence of good public transportation. The site chosen is a lost space or an area which is not being fully utilised under the Chow Kit Monorail Station. The site is chosen due to its potential location, which is surrounded by heritage buildings and shop lots, nearby the node of Chow Kit, which is the Bazaar Chow Kit and Chow Kit Market and the most important is it is located just under the Chow Kit Monorail Station, which is the other important node in a city. Hence, the lost space should not be there and it become a potential that should be think of in becoming a good public space.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

After considering the objectives of the study, the research questions, the limitations and the scope, this study focus on qualitative data namely the behavioral observation and interviews. Qualitative method is used which focused on behavioral observation and physical observation. In doing so, this study is able to design a successful public space, which connects to each other within the area. Observing physical traces are also done to analyze the behavior of the people towards the identified lost space in Chow Kit. Observing physical traces helps to know why the space is there, how people actually use it, how they feel towards their surroundings, and generally how that particular environment meets the needs of its users (Zeisel, 1981). The survey is done via annotated diagrams, photographs, sketches and counting. This inventory and analysis place a value or judgment on the site conditions based on the designer's perspective. Finally, the findings are processed through cross analysis technique of the data obtain which are the spatial structure of the site.

## 5. FINDINGS AND ARGUMENT

The site was analyzed why it becomes a lost space and why the facilities provided was neglected. Through the qualitative approach, a greater understanding of what criteria is needed to promote successful public space was provided through synthesizing the site based on the successful public space theories and data synthesized for observation. Broadly, the design proposal was a response to the two aforementioned objectives, to create a successful public space. The study has tried to improve the environment of the lost space in such a way to create a public space as one of the node in Chow Kit. It may become livable and create a sense of place in the area. From the analysis done, it can be concluded that the space just functions as a bus stop despite its size that can be used for other activities. Other than that, facilities provided were not functioning. Other than the public bus users, the other users tend to just pass through the space. Furthermore, the space was not responding to the surrounding commercial area. Hence, there is a need to provide activities and permeable linkage to the surrounding. Figure 1.0 and 2.0 show the existing condition and behavioral observation of the site.

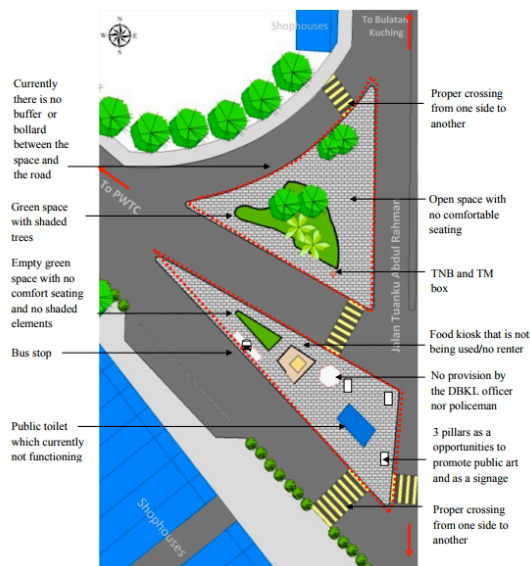


Figure 1.0: Existing condition of the site

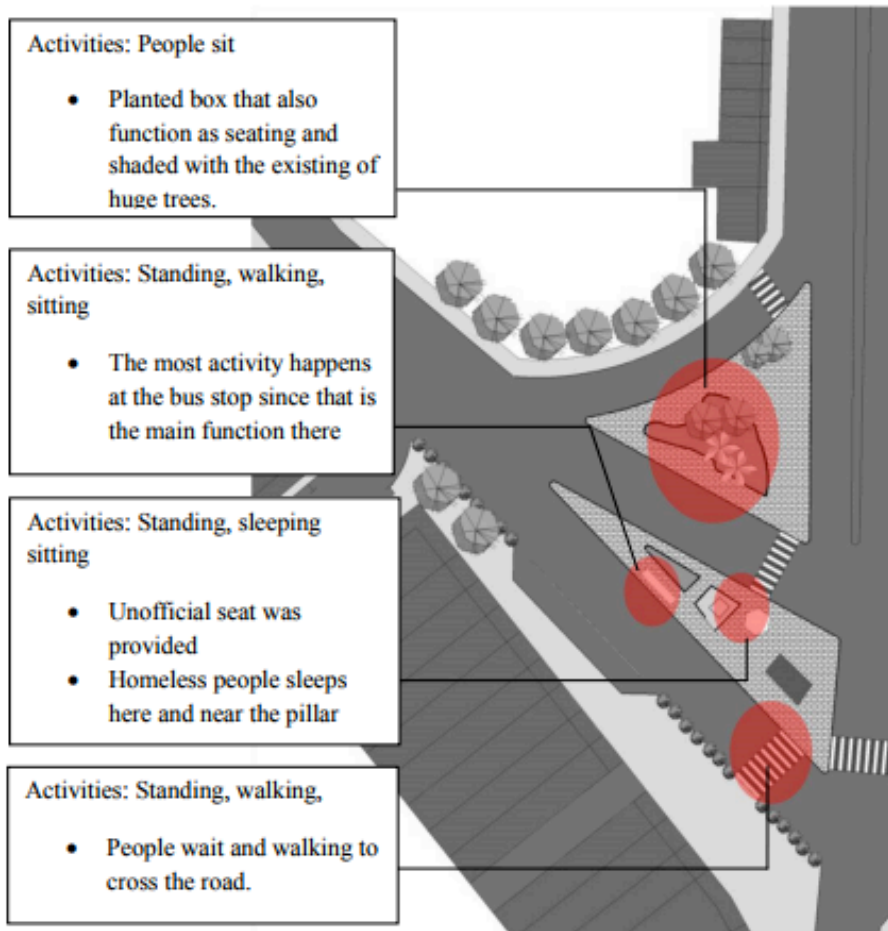


Figure 2.0: Behavioural observation on the site

From the findings of the lost space underneath Chow Kit Monorail Station, it can be seen that the lost space can be turned into successful public space. This space may become one of the major nodes in Chow Kit. The design of the space, aims to provide public space for people, to connect them to streets and buildings, and provide them with a place where they can take a break from the city's traffic and busy traffic. The proposal also tried to suggest a public space where people can enhance their social interaction, based on observations made. Figure 3.0 and figure 4.0 show the concept plan and proposed layout of the site.

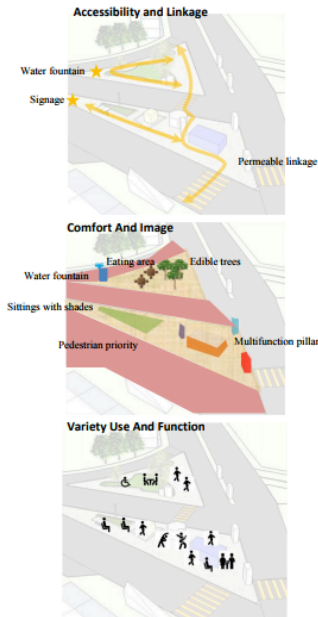


Figure 3.0: Concept Plan



Figure 4.0: Proposed Layout

## 6. CONCLUSION

This paper has successfully reviewed the elements of successful public space in a city centre by revitalising the lost space. This paper has pointed out in brief the elements of a successful public space used by most researchers which are access and linkage, image and comfort, as well as the use and activity in the public space. These criteria will become the guide to revitalise a lost space in a city centre as a successful public space. From the research done, a new design was proposed to achieved the aim to revitalize the lost space as a successful public space in Chow Kit.

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