Impact of Night Commercial Activities towards Quality Of Life of Urban Residents

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Abstract

The intensity of night commercial activities in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur has affected the quality of life of the residents living in its vicinity. The findings have shown that night commercial activities such as pubs, bars, night clubs, night markets and restaurants had affected the quality of life of residents in the aspects of comfort, convenience and safety. This study has recommended buffer zones, re-conversion of land use from commercial to housing, using one way traffic system, and gated and guarded neighborhood. The Indicator Measurement Technique of QOL used for this impact study of night commercial may be able to be used for research of the same nature.

Keywords: Night commercial; quality of life; urban resident; scoring technique

1. Introduction

The definition of night commercial activity is an economic activity that operates during the night time such as pubs, bars, nightclubs, night market and restaurants. This has created a lot of negative impacts such as noise, traffic jam, criminal activities and cleanliness that affect the meaning of quality of urban life.
life in the surrounding vicinity. Proshansky and Fabian (1986) explains the meaning of quality of urban life as; is always concerned with whether people live well or poorly. There is more different meaning which emphasize on adequate services, economic matter, satisfaction of family, and social interaction. The varied nature of urban life, its people, activities, require the meaning of urban quality of life defined by researches according to the “slice of urban life”. The development of commercials activities during night time in urban area has become an urban phenomenon. This affects the quality of the environment and the quality of life of people in the surrounding area of the night commercial. This study questions the night commercial activities which create negative impacts in term of the quality of life for urban residents that were affected from the activities. For this particular research, Bangsar is chosen as the study area. The selection of the study area follows certain criteria which is (i) a top nightlife activity in Malaysia, (ii) an urban location with higher population in Kuala Lumpur, and (iii) located in the urban core of the country managed by the most advanced local authority in Malaysia which is Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL). Bangsar is an affluent residential suburb in the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, lying about four kilometers south-west of the city centre Kuala Lumpur. It is part of the Lembah Pantai parliamentary constituency.

2. Night Commercial

The American Heritage Dictionary (2011) defined nightlife as an establishment that stays open late at night and provides food, drink, entertainment, and music for dancing. The Free Dictionary (2009) has also had given a similar meaning of nightlife as social activities or entertainment that take place in the late evening or night such as nightclubs. Hennessy (2009) has detailed the meaning of nightlife which refers to the entertainment for adult at the night time which includes bars, restaurants, nightclubs and others. Sports or music arenas are not included in this definition of nightlife because the primary goal for these activities is not created connection with other people there, but more to access for the live performance. There a lack of similar terms with “night commercial” in the literature search thus, it can be assumed that night commercial activities are similar with the economic activities that operate during night time that include pubs, bars, nightclubs, night markets, and restaurants.

2.1. Effects of Night Commercial

According to Keohane (2006) reported that residents in East Village complained that there are too many bars, honking horns, loud drunk people, cat sized rats and vomit splattered sidewalks. This is due to the intensity of the night commercial activities that are carried out in that area. Heavy traffic congestion has become a serious problem the affects the quality of life in the East Village. Increased traffic on the avenue results in horn honking, which is loud enough to wake up people who live several blocks away. In addition, due to the open bar activities, crowds and taxis clogging up the streets, emergency vehicles such as police and ambulance will have longer time responding to emergency cases. Residents have also complained about street fights which occur late at night and the growing number of rats in the neighborhood, vomit on the sidewalks and an overload of garbage on the street. As the result of the domination of late night activities in the commercial areas, residents are forced to go outside of the vicinity for grocery supplies due to limited neighborhood commercials operations. Grant (2009) reported that residents of Manhattan complained about the multi-level sports, bar and restaurant in that area. In residential areas where nightlife is increasingly becoming concentrated, trendy business development operations consume the liveability of quiet residential neighbourhoods. Sidewalk obstruction and increasingly disturbing traffic, add to the residents’ complaints of noise. Nightlife activity destroys the quality of life and property values in the neighbourhoods. Quality of life issues surrounding bars and clubs is affecting almost all neighbourhoods in Manhattan. There is a 500 foot rule, where an alcohol
outlet serving residents cannot open within 500 feet of three similar establishments. Pears (2010) reported that there are plans to open a new nightspot in Tottenham, but it has been criticized by the residents association. They said that it will only add to the noise nightmare cause by existing clubs.

2.2. Meaning Quality of Life

According to MacCall (1975), the best way of approaching quality of life is to measure the extent to which people’s ‘happiness requirements’ are met – i.e. those requirements which are a necessary (although not sufficient) condition of anyone’s happiness – those without which no member of the human race can be happy. Quality Of Life also can be referred to as the state of social well-being of individuals or groups, either as they perceive it or as it is identified by ‘observable indicators’. Social well-being is explained as the degree to which a population’s needs and wants are being met. A `well society’ is one in which all people has sufficient income to meet their basic needs, where all are treated with equal dignity and have equal rights, where they have reasonable access to their needed range of services, and where their opinions are heard and respected (Johnston 2000). This definition of quality of life is very practical and workable because it is suggested that social well-being can either be perceived or identified.

3. Methodology

The background study was conducted to gather information and findings from previous researches regarding the impact of night commercial activity to the urban residents. The results served very well in formulating the questionnaire as an assessment tool to measure the level of quality of life. The study locations are Bangsar Baru, Bangsar Park, Lucky Garden, and Bukit Bangsar. The site selections are based on the distance and range of night commercial area which covers 934.38 meter radius from the center of night commercial that is located in Bangsar Baru. The aspects of quality of life that will be used to represent the effect of night commercial activity are comfort, convenience and safety was identified through observation done by the researcher. The activities of night commercial being studied are bars, pubs, nightclub, night market and restaurants. The sample size calculated is based on the formula by Sekaran (2002) and the result from the calculation showed that questionnaire methods required 97 sample respondents from the population of the study area which are 3533 persons. However, there were problems encountered by the researcher to attain that target due to the following reasons (i) the target respondents are the urban residents who value their privacy living in an upscale and elite residential area, and (ii) the unsafe night condition exposed to the researcher during data collection such as wild dogs, drunken people and other unforeseen activities. Due to these problems only 53 respondents were able to be randomly surveyed by a random sampling technique whereby the probability of sample of the population to be selected is the same.

4. Results

The analyses of the surveyed data are shown in the form of frequency, mean and scores. Measurable Indicator Scoring Technique developed by Hafazah Abdul Karim (2008) is used to show the processed data taken from each measurable indicator within the aspects of comfort, convenient and safety and assessed by giving scores based on the mean. The higher score means the higher degree of comfort, convenient and safety.
4.1. Score of Comfort

The highest score acquired from mean of the Likert Scale of 1 to 5 for an aspect of comfort towards night commercial activities that affect the quality of life of urban residents in the study area is neutral (3) which is 66.7 percent. There are only 22.2 percent for the negative score (2) and only 11.1 percent for the positive score (4) that affect the aspect of comfort (Refer table 1).

Table 1. Score of Comfort

| No. | Factor                        | Frequency | Mean | Score |
|-----|-------------------------------|-----------|------|-------|
| 1.0 | Cleanliness of Housing Area   | 5 7 24 14 3 | 3.06 | x     |
| 1.1 | Day Commercial Activity       | 3 9 14 20 7 | 3.36 | x     |
| 1.2 | Night Commercial Activity     | 7 15 16 10 5 | 2.83 | x     |
| 1.3 | Pest Threat                   | 6 16 15 11 5 | 2.87 | x     |
| 2.0 | Noise Level                   | 15 28 7 3 0 | 1.96 | x     |
| 2.1 | Music/Karaoke                 | 7 25 18 3 0 | 2.32 | x     |
| 2.2 | Traffic Jam/ Vehicle Horn     | 19 26 8 0 0 | 1.79 | x     |
| 2.3 | Night Visitors/ Customers/ Outsiders | 8 26 14 5 0 | 2.30 | x     |
| 3.0 | Odour                         | 9 19 21 2 0 | 2.38 | x     |
| 3.1 | Vomit/ Urination              | 3 8 30 12 0 | 2.96 | x     |
| 3.2 | Cooking From Restaurant       | 13 21 15 4 0 | 2.19 | x     |
| 3.3 | Garbage                       | 10 15 22 6 0 | 2.45 | x     |
| 3.4 | Smoke from Vehicles           | 8 10 30 5 0 | 2.60 | x     |
| 4.0 | Alcohol (Psychological)       | 7 15 31 0 0 | 2.45 | x     |
| 5.0 | Communication With Neighbours | 8 33 9 3 0 | 2.13 | x     |
| 6.0 | Using the House Balcony/Front Garden | 7 22 16 8 0 | 2.47 | x     |
| 7.0 | Family’s Sleep                | 11 31 11 0 0 | 2.00 | x     |
| 8.0 | Family’s Rest                 | 13 28 12 0 0 | 1.98 | x     |

Total score

Percentage Score of Comfort

|                  | 0 4 12 2 0 |
|------------------|------------|
| Percentage Score | 0.0 22.2 66.7 11.1 0.0 |

4.2. Score of Convenience

The highest score for an aspect of convenience towards night commercial activities that affect the quality of life of urban residents in the study area is neutral (3) with 60.0 percent. There were 20.0 percent of negative score (2) and 20.0 percent of positive score (4) that are related to the aspect of convenience (Refer Table 2).

Table 2. Score of Convenience
### Table 3. Score of Safety

The highest score for an aspect of safety towards night commercial activities that affect the quality of life of urban residents in the study area is positive (4) with 50.0 percent. There were 38.9 percent of neutral score and only 11.1 percent of negative score (2) that affect the aspect of safety (Refer Table 3).
4.4. Final Score for Quality of Life

This final score represents the level of quality of life which covers the aspect of comfort, convenience, and safety in the study area impacted by night commercial activities. The highest score is neutral (3) with 28 point of score. It follows by positive (4) with 14 point and the negative (9) with only 9 point, which is the lowest score for quality of life (Refer Table 4).

Table 4. Final Score for QOL
5. Discussions

The study the impact of night commercial in Bangsar towards quality of life of urban residents showed that the findings for the observation method is compatible with the finding of questionnaire method which are (i) the conflict of building use activity of night commercial with the surrounding area, (ii) change of building use activity from housing to night commercial, (iii) increasing volume of traffic at night, (iv) disturbance of night visitor, customer, outsider at the neighborhood area, (v) misuse of pedestrian walkway and veranda way for night commercial activity, and (vi) pest threat and garbage by night commercial activities.

Aspects of comfort, convenience, and safety are compromised with the current intensity of night commercials. A negative score in the survey findings are (i) noise level, (ii) traffic jam and vehicle horn, (iii) comfort of family’s sleep, (iv) comfort of family’s rest, (v) accessibility for residents vehicle and public vehicle, vi) security of residents vehicle, and (vii) criminal activities from snatch thieves. Findings also showed that the overall of quality of life is neutral with 28 point of score for the total aspect. The highest score of comfort is neutral with 66.7 percent that acquired 12 point of total score comfort. Then, the highest score of convenience also is neutral with 60.0 percent that acquired 9 points of total score convenience. Besides that, the highest score of safety is safe with 50.0 percent that bring 9 points of total score safety.

The aspects of quality of life that had been determined as highly appropriate for the research of the impacts of night commercial in Bangsar towards urban residents are comfort, convenience and safety. In this study, there are 60 night commercial activity namely, (i) 19 units of pubs, bars and nightclubs, (ii) two areas of the night market, and (iii) 39 units of restaurants (Refer Table 4.71). This discussion will continue to focus on the aspects that have negative scores.

5.1. Aspect of Comfort

This aspect received the highest negative score which is 22.0 percent. The indicators that have been negatively ranked are noise level which specifically came from the traffic jams and vehicle horns. This has affected the family’s sleep and family’s rest. Thus, both of these indicators had also been negatively ranked too.

5.2. Aspect of Convenience

This aspect received the second highest negative score which is 20.0 percent. The indicators that have been ranked as negative is the accessibility to enter and exit neighborhoods shops by using the residents’ own vehicles and public transport.
5.3. Aspect of Safety

This aspect received the lowest negative score which is 11.0 percent. The indicators that were ranked negative are the security of residents’ private vehicles also the criminal activity of snatch thefts.

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that the causes for the negative effect are from the night visitors, consumers and outsiders who patronize the study area using the night commercial services. Besides that, the activities from the night commercial itself contributed to the negative impacts towards urban residents.

5.4. Indicator Measurement Technique

Based on the analysis, an Indicator Measurement Technique of quality of life was further developed to measure the impacts of night commercial towards urban residents. This technique can be used by other researchers, local authority or developer to help them justify the level of quality of life of residents affected by night commercial activities. This technique consists of three aspects of quality of life namely comfort, convenience and safety. Each aspect is provided with a different indicator that determines an aspect in detail. The scale of score also has been developed to measure the level of quality of life. The higher the score of aspect and indicator means that higher level of quality of life of residents (Refer Table 5).
| Aspect of Measurement | Indicator                                                                 | Score                      |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Comfort               | Cleanliness of Housing Area                                               | 1 = 0.00-1.00 = Very Uncomfortable |
|                      | Day Commercial Activity, Night Commercial Activity, Pest Threat           | 2 = 1.01-2.00 = Uncomfortable |
|                      | Noise Level                                                               | 3 = 2.01-3.00 = Neutral     |
|                      | Music/Karaoke, Traffic Jam/ Vehicle Horn, Night Visitor/Customer/ Outsider | 4 = 3.01-4.00 = Comfortable  |
|                      | Odour                                                                     | 5 = 4.01-5.00 = Very Comfortable |
|                      | Vomit/ Urination, Cooking From Restaurant, Garbage, Smoke of Vehicle       |                            |
|                      | Alcohol (Psychological)                                                   |                            |
|                      | Communication With Neighbors                                               |                            |
|                      | Using the House Balcony/ Front Garden                                     |                            |
|                      | Family’s Sleep                                                            |                            |
|                      | Family’s Rest                                                             |                            |
| Convenience           | To go to Facilities                                                       | 1 = 0.00-1.00 = Very Inconvenient |
|                      | Religious, Shopping, Eating Outlets, Playground, Community Hall,          | 2 = 1.01-2.00 = Inconvenient |
|                      | Public Transport, Clinics/ Hospital, Police Station, Other Amenities       | 3 = 2.01-3.00 = Neutral     |
|                      | Rubbish Collection                                                        | 4 = 3.01-4.00 = Convenient  |
|                      | Accessibility                                                             | 5 = 4.01-5.00 = Very Convenient |
|                      | Pedestrian Walkway, Residents Vehicle, Public Vehicle                     |                            |
| Safety                | Security of Residents Belongings                                          | 1 = 0.00-1.00 = Very Unsafe  |
|                      | Vehicle, House, Landscape Furniture/Trees/Flowers, Pets                   | 2 = 1.01-2.00 = Unsafe      |
|                      | Safety of Residents Family                                                | 3 = 2.01-3.00 = Neutral     |
|                      | Criminal Activities                                                       | 4 = 3.01-4.00 = Safe        |
|                      | From Snatch Thief, From Burglary, From Rape                               | 5 = 4.01-5.00 = Very Safe   |
|                      | Social And Moral Problem                                                  |                            |
|                      | Vandalism, Gangsterism, Fights, Drunkenness, Drug Addiction, Prostitution  |                            |
|                      | Police Patrol                                                             |                            |

6. Conclusion

These studies are able to pinpoint the cause of the lack of quality of life thus prompting the local authority to find ways to solve these problems from becoming serious. This is very important to ensure that urban residents are able to live in a harmony with an overall quality of life. The following are some contributions from the output of this study, (i) The planning theory of night commercial and technique to measure the level quality of life towards urban resident’s impacted by night commercial activities could be developed as a reference for future planning, (ii) Housing developers could identify more strategies to ensure their development can achieve a high quality of life for the urban residents relating to night commercial area, and (iii) The local authority can examine the land use zoning and the development proposal by the developer that contain night commercials activities in the housing area or night commercials in the surrounding vicinity. Thus, further actions can be taken to ensure the quality of
life of urban residents will not be highly affected by night commercial activities in proposed housing development.

Acknowledgement

The writers would like to acknowledge Universiti Teknologi MARA for any support that has been given during the course of carrying out the research.

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