The shophouse facade as a former of Medan City character identity

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Abstract. Medan City has a variety of cultures and ethnicities, which affect the face of the city. The distinctiveness of the architecture of shophouses in a city is an element forming a city identity. In its development, it appears that shophouses in Medan City are undergoing a transformation. Variety changes appear to be such shophouses, apparently leaving the collective memory of ethnicity identity as shophouses. This study aims to uncover the typology of character elements in the appearance of shophouses that characterize ethnic identity. With Habraken's version typology approach, classification of identity-forming characters is done which characterizes shophouse ethnicity. The results show that the appearance of Chinese shophouses is dominated by trellis and a little ornamentation, it appears that the dominant Indian shophouse with Hindu religious ornaments appears to be the dominant Malay shophouse ornamented with symbols of traditional Malay houses. It is expected that the results of this study will be the first step for further research on genealogy and the influence factors of design that look like shophouses that can be used as guidelines for the preparation of City Government regulations reaching the Medan City with an identity.

1. Introduction

Medan City is the third-largest city in Indonesia and has a variety of cultures and ethnicities, namely local tribes such as Deli Malay, Karo, Toba, Minang, Aceh and Javanese, and foreign tribes such as India, Caucasians, and Chinese. Diversity influences the development of Medan City as a place to live because of the city's face formation histories. The peculiarities of architecture are elements that form a city identity that is well known and understood by the community [1].

Medan City has a historic story seen from the reflection of heritage buildings that still exist today, where the buildings have various architectural styles that are influenced by various cultures and ethnicities, such as European, Indian and Chinese architectural styles. Buildings where living and trading (shophouse architecture) are now scattered in Medan City, ranging from shophouses with nuances of ethnic Karo, Malay, ethnic Chinese, ethnic Toba, Javanese-Balinese and ethnic Indians. In its utilization, the construction of shophouses becomes uncontrollable due to lack of attention to residential and non-residential conditions to the diversity of ethnicities in the city that are mixed in the area, so that shop buildings are labeled as buildings that damage the face of the city and cause loss of city identity while the existence of ethnic diversity that influences the shop building is precisely the identity of the city itself and produces a good face of the city known by the local community and outside the city.
Typical shophouses are categorized as Urban Vernacular-Architecture, which is vernacular architecture in urban areas [2]. Based on a study of the face of the city of Medan with its ethnic diversity that affects shophouses, the purpose of this study is to identify, classify, and reveal elements of identity building based on ethnicity found in Medan's shop facade as Urban Vernacular-Architecture with shop shades of ethnic nuances Malay, Chinese, and Indian.

2. Literatures Review

2.1. Typology Review as a Review Tool
The study of the elements that form the character of the shophouse identity uses a typology approach to obtain the spoils for a number of formation phenomena. Shophouses forms, which in the initial study showed the dominance of three ethnic groups, namely Malay, Indian, and Chinese. In a typological approach, there are three aspects that can be used as benchmarks to see changes in the physical environment of settlements that form a unified system [3], namely; (1) Spatial system (spatial system), namely various aspects of benchmarks related to the organization of space. This system includes space, orientation, and spatial relationship patterns (spatial patterns of space). (2) The physical system, namely various aspects of benchmarks related to the construction and use of materials used in realizing a physical building. This system includes matters relating to the structure, roofs, walls, columns, and floors (3) The system model (stylistic system) is a variety of aspects of benchmarks relating to the model or style that embody the form. This system includes facades, doors and windows, and other elements both inside and outside the building.

2.2. Shophouse
Architectural styles diversity in the area of the city of commerce is caused by migrants, invaders, and traders who have played a role in the formation of architectural styles of shophouses dominated by local cultural influences [4]. The row of shophouses themselves is a building that starts business activities, especially trading activities in an area which then along with the development of the city becomes the center of trade and services with various business activities [5]. In its historical development, the existence of shophouses is closely related to the presence of Chinatown which is spread in coastal cities of Southern China to Southeast Asia and plays an important role in the economy [6]. Distribution of shophouses in Asia is in Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka, and South China. All buildings including shophouses express cross-cultural correlations of various architectures reflected in the arcade, cross ventilation, cantilever floor (2nd floor), roof and ethnic details resulting in a new hybrid architectural style [7].

The expansion of shophouses in Indonesia began in the 1800s in the commercial areas of each city, namely by large merchants who traded on their land in a wide shape with the use of front land for shops and the backside of the land for residential functions [8]. Basically, shophouses lined up on a block bordered by the main road (front), side lane and back road. Each shop is connected with a pedestrian protected from tropical weather. Based on research conducted by Wan Nordiana, shophouse style can be explained by typology, namely: neoclassical, eclectic, art deco, early modern, and modern [9] (Figure 1).
2.2.1. China Style of Shophouse.
The history of shophouse development began in Southern China (1840s-1930s). In the facade, there are several details and materials carried by workers from China that are applied to ornamental elements and shophouse ventilation [10]. To be able to analyze the front visuals of the shophouse in Medan related to ethnicity, the front visual of the shophouse is shown in the following figures (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Shophouse Typology at Ipoh, Malaysia [9].

Figure 2. Chinese Eclectic Style of Shophouse [10] [11]
2.2.2. Malay Style of Shophouse.
It is not very clear whether there is a pure Malay style shophouse. Because the origin of the shophouse itself is from South China, its movement to Southeast Asia has undergone changes regarding the local culture. The similarity of shapes and motifs of ornaments on doors, windows, vents, columns, beams, and roofs can be considered that the shophouse to be studied contains traditional Malay elements (Figure 3).

![Malay ornaments](image)

- a. *Sulur bayung*, generally found on the roof of rafter of traditional Malay buildings
- b. *Gunungan*, on the front door open to the inside
- c. *Tunjuk langit*, on the roof of a traditional Malay building
- d. *Buah butung*, on top of the roof of a traditional Malay building
- e. Wood carving motifs, on guardrails, windows, vents and doors
- f. Wall motif, *janda berhias*
- g. “*Tembok tembus*” partition wall motif

**Figure 3.** Malay ornaments (source: Shuaib [12])

2.2.3. India Style of Shophouse.
Indian-style shophouses are also estimated to absorb ethnic Indian elements. Shophouse with Indian identity is located in one of the areas in Singapore, namely Little India where the application of the elements of Indian culture is seen by the many traditional ornaments on the shophouse facade with attractive colors, as seen in the following picture (Figure 4).
2.3. Genius Loci: Character
Norberg-Schulz, in his book Genius Loci, discusses how phenomena man-made place related to visual appearance, complementary elements, and symbolization of meaning. Complementary elements in question are ornaments replaced in the building. In Contemporary Western architecture, genius loci no longer refer to guardian spirits but refer to the atmosphere of a location or "spirit of place" [1]. So is the local Indonesian architecture, including shophouses. Can be seen in traditional original early buildings that developed into contemporary ethnic buildings, no longer referring to guardian spirits. If the building is located in an ethnic, communal area, it will refer to the atmosphere and character of the location. However, the diverse ethnic existence appears in the visual front of shophouse with the application of ornaments and basic forms of eclectic ethnic architecture [13] which is if dominant in certain regions finally becomes the atmosphere of the location. The Eclectic itself is an architectural style that tries a lot of creative freely without rules and guidelines [14].

If in an area there is a plural ethnic community, the existence of each ethnic group will appear at the front view of each building so that the overall visual area seems to have no character or confusion if studied by semiotics with Venturi, Pierce, and Morris methods [15]. This is common in large cities with diverse ethnic populations in Indonesia, including Medan.

In the case of Medan City which is plural population, the visual appearance of the shophouse is analyzed based on the existence of the main tribes that have an influence on the development of the city of Medan, namely the Batak, Malay, Chinese, Indian, Javanese, Minangkabau and Acehnese [16]. However, in this study, the identification of elements of the shophouse's front facade will be limited to the Malay, Chinese, and Indian tribes.

3. Methodology
The research used is the descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive research is to provide a description of a broader picture of a situation or phenomenon [17]. Qualitative research methods are based on an intellectual understanding with the ability to reason logically and are supported by relevant data [18].

Observations were made with a typology study approach that was used to learn about "common similarities" or "appropriations" in the cases of the front elevation of the shophouse. The stages of typology studies are in the form series of analysis processes by classifying architectural objects based on plots of similarity in various form types. The variables in this study are based on the typology of the facade of shop buildings, namely the appearance of roofs, walls, floors, doors, windows, vents, and ornamentation. The initial stage was carried out identification of 100 visible shophouses, which were divided into shophouses with Indian, Chinese, Malay characteristics by five architect experts. The analysis was carried out by the classification method by compiling the shophouse visual elements based on the common similarity of types of doors, windows, ventilation, and ornaments.
Interpretatively [19] a discussion was held to obtain the character of shophouse who confirmed the character of Chinese, Malay, and Indian identity.

4. Result and Discussion
Based on the results of observations found elements of ethnic identity that are Chinese, Malay, and Indian ornaments with their respective characters on walls, windows, doors, roofs, and ornamentation (Table 1).

Shophouses with ethnic Chinese characteristics are characterized by the dominance of the trellis on windows and massive rolling door metal. In the window lattice section, an attempt to add an identity in the form of Chinese decorative ornaments. Chinese ornaments are found on the walls and also between arch ornaments at the top of the window. In addition, the dominant roof formation uses the *ngang shan* roof with zinc material.

The shophouse facade with Indian ethnic characteristics is found in the type of Indian ornament both in the form of ornament of Indian floral motifs and also an ornament of Indian Gods' creation / imaginary motifs with attractive colors. The motif or decorative ornaments predominantly characterize the identity of Indian ethnic shophouses. These ornaments can be found on walls or doors and windows on the look of shophouses.

The shophouse facade with ethnic Malay characteristics displays ornaments on arch vents shaped like symbolic flowers typical of Malay ornament. Ethnic Malay elements appear in the form of wooden windows and coloring a mixture of yellow and green on the walls of the shop that gives the impression of a Malay color.

| Table 1. Facade elements of Malay, Chinese and Indian shophouses (source: analysis 2019) |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Elements | Malay | Chinese | Indian |
| 1. Door | ![Malay Door](image1) | ![Chinese Door](image2) | ![Indian Door](image3) |
| Elements | Malay | Chinese | Indian |
|----------|-------|---------|--------|
| 2. Window | ![Malay Window](image1) ![Malay Window](image2) ![Malay Window](image3) | ![Chinese Window](image4) ![Chinese Window](image5) ![Chinese Window](image6) | ![Indian Window](image7) ![Indian Window](image8) ![Indian Window](image9) |
| 3. Wall | ![Malay Wall](image10) ![Malay Wall](image11) ![Malay Wall](image12) | ![Chinese Wall](image13) ![Chinese Wall](image14) ![Chinese Wall](image15) | ![Indian Wall](image16) ![Indian Wall](image17) ![Indian Wall](image18) |
| 4. Roof | ![Malay Roof](image19) ![Malay Roof](image20) ![Malay Roof](image21) | ![Chinese Roof](image22) ![Chinese Roof](image23) ![Chinese Roof](image24) | ![Indian Roof](image25) ![Indian Roof](image26) ![Indian Roof](image27) |
5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the typological analysis above, it can be concluded that the appearance / dominant facade of ethnic Chinese shophouses displays massive trellis and doors, the appearance of ornaments and signs of Chinese ethnicity is not so dominant. While the ethnic Indian shophouses look more dominant, displaying ornamental elements of religious symbols and the formation of temples / Hindu temples on the roof. The appearance of Malay shophouses displaying signs of wisdom symbols adopted from the ornamentation of traditional Malay houses and roof formations also refers to the formation of traditional Malay houses as ethnicity. In general, it is predicted that there will be a significant change of meaning if this review is approached from the De Quincy's typology version, which underlies genealogy transformation.

This study is a preliminary study of the typology of shophouses that still requires further studies in terms of morphology and genealogy or the interpretation of the influence of whether the underlying typology appears to be shop-houses like the study above.

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