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Satisfaction Level of Night Market Traders at Kuala Selangor and Tanjung Karang, Selangor: The Influence of Basic Facilities

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ABSTRACT

Night markets remain an important component of Malaysia's informal retail economy, yet research has more often examined tourists, customers, environmental management and business resilience than traders' evaluation of the facilities that support day-to-day operations. This study aimed to evaluate basic facilities and examine their relationship with trader satisfaction in Bandar Baru Kuala Selangor and Tanjung Karang, Selangor. A focused re-analysis was conducted using original cross-sectional survey data from 150 night market traders, with 75 respondents from each market. Basic facilities were measured through seven items covering prayer-room convenience, public toilets, parking for customers and traders, market accessibility, portable toilets and public transport. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlation and a multivariable regression robustness check were examined. Parking for traders recorded the highest evaluation (mean (M) = 3.70, standard deviation (SD) = 0.97), followed by parking for customers (M = 3.61, SD = 0.98), whereas portable toilets (M = 2.33, SD = 0.94) and public transport (M = 2.31, SD = 0.92) were rated lowest. The basic-facilities index showed modest internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .636). Basic facilities were strongly and positively associated with trader satisfaction at the bivariate level ($r = .70$, $p < .001$; $r^2 = .49$). However, in the original multivariable model, basic facilities did not independently reach the .05 significance threshold ($\beta = .107$, $p = .054$), while location remained significant ($\beta = .785$, $p < .001$). The findings show that trader-oriented facilities are an important part of the operating environment and should be planned together with location and other market conditions.

1. Introduction

Night markets, commonly known as pasar malam, are a familiar feature of Malaysian urban and suburban life. They operate as temporary or periodic retail spaces where small traders sell cooked food, fresh produce, clothing, accessories and household items. Their potential as tourism and shopping attractions has long been recognised [1]. Research on Taman Sri Muda further documented

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the dynamism of the night-market retail environment [2]. The itinerant use of shared urban space has also been identified as a defining characteristic of night markets [3]. In Bandar Baru Kuala Selangor, later research described a dynamic market setting shaped by interactions among traders, products, customers and the surrounding environment [4].

Contemporary scholarship has expanded the discussion beyond tourism. Research in Selangor has identified spatial organisation, congestion, waste and environmental management as important operational concerns [5]. Facility accessibility has also been shown to contribute to night-market customer experience [6]. Malaysian research conducted during the COVID-19 period documented financial and operational pressures experienced by night-market traders [7]. Other work has examined vendors' perceptions towards international tourists [8]. Business-development research has additionally questioned whether participation in night-market trading necessarily translates into entrepreneurial growth [9].

The issue is operational rather than merely aesthetic. Traders arrive before the market opens, unload stock and equipment, remain on site for several hours, and clear the site after trading. Parking, toilets, prayer facilities, access and transport therefore function as working-environment supports. Evidence from traditional markets shows that satisfaction varies with the adequacy and condition of market facilities [10]. Market-management systems and service provision have also been associated with trader satisfaction [11]. More recent evidence links infrastructure quality with trader satisfaction [12]. Research on traditional-market service improvement further identifies public facilities, cleanliness, drainage and waste management as practical priorities [13].

Despite this growing literature, three gaps remain. First, night-market studies have more often examined tourists and customers than traders. Second, evidence on trader satisfaction is concentrated largely in permanent traditional markets rather than temporary night-market environments. Third, limited empirical attention has been given to how Malaysian night-market traders evaluate the basic facilities that support their work. Accordingly, this study aims to determine traders' evaluation of basic facilities and examine the relationship between those facilities and trader satisfaction in Bandar Baru Kuala Selangor and Tanjung Karang. The study is significant because it provides trader-centred evidence that can support local authorities and market organisers in planning more functional, accessible and context-appropriate night-market sites.

1.1 Research Objective and Hypothesis

The objective of this study is to determine traders' evaluation of basic facilities and to examine the relationship between basic facilities and satisfaction among night market traders in Bandar Baru Kuala Selangor and Tanjung Karang.

H1: Basic facilities are positively associated with the satisfaction of night market traders.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Night Markets as Informal Retail Environments

Night markets occupy a hybrid position between commerce, public space and local culture. Their temporary or periodic operation lowers barriers to entry for small traders, but it also increases dependence on shared public infrastructure and site management. Research in Taiwan shows that night markets combine shopping, tourism and local cultural experience within a distinctive market environment [14]. Related work found that night-market experience and image are shaped by interactions between the physical setting and visitors' perceptions [15]. These findings help explain

why the quality of the operating environment matters not only to customers but also to the traders who depend on the same temporary space.

The temporary use of roads, parking areas and other public spaces creates practical pressures for access, circulation, sanitation and waste management. Recent evidence from Selangor shows that night-market operations can generate local economic value while also producing spatial and environmental challenges [5]. These conditions suggest that trader satisfaction should be understood partly as an evaluation of the market as a managed working environment.

2.2 Basic Facilities and Trader Satisfaction

Basic facilities in this study refer to practical site provisions that support market operations: prayer-room convenience, public toilets, parking for customers, parking for traders, market accessibility, portable toilets and public transport. These facilities affect how easily traders can enter the site, prepare for business, remain at the market and leave after closing. Their importance may be amplified in temporary markets because traders cannot rely on permanent business premises for sanitation, parking or other support.

Evidence from traditional markets supports a relationship between facilities and satisfaction. Users' satisfaction has been shown to vary with the adequacy and condition of market facilities [10]. Trader-focused research also indicates that market-management systems and service provision influence satisfaction [11]. Infrastructure quality has likewise been identified as an important determinant of trader satisfaction [12]. Public facilities, cleanliness, drainage and waste management have been identified as priorities for market service improvement [13]. At the customer level, facilities were found to positively influence satisfaction in a revitalised traditional market [16]. Together, these findings support the expectation that more positive evaluations of facilities should be associated with higher trader satisfaction.

2.3 Research Gap

The preceding literature indicates a clear imbalance in the evidence base. Visitor experience and tourism remain prominent themes, while trader-centred facility assessment receives less attention. Studies of trader satisfaction are also more commonly situated in permanent traditional markets than in temporary night-market settings. The present research addresses this gap by focusing specifically on the relationship between basic facilities and trader satisfaction in two night markets within the Kuala Selangor district.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Study Setting

The original study used a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional survey design. Fieldwork was conducted in the Kuala Selangor district following instrument pre-testing in October 2015. The present article is a focused re-analysis of that original dataset and statistical output. The study sites were the night markets at Bandar Baru Kuala Selangor and Tanjung Karang, Selangor. They were selected because they shared broadly comparable operating characteristics, including numbers of traders and visitors, accessibility, product range and operating hours.

3.2 Population and Sample

The unit of analysis was the night market trader. The original study focused on traders who had operated at the same location and with the same product for more than one year. A total of 150 usable questionnaires were collected, comprising 75 respondents from Kuala Selangor and 75 from Tanjung Karang. Sample-size planning was guided by the Krejcie and Morgan approach [17]. Because recruitment took place during live market operations and the thesis documentation contains both probability-sampling and field-availability descriptions, the present article does not claim strict probability representativeness beyond the two study sites.

3.3 Instrument and Measurement

The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The basic-facilities section contained seven items: comfort and convenience of the prayer room; sufficiency of the public toilet; parking space for customers; parking space for traders; ease of access to the night market; availability of a portable toilet provided by the local authority; and ease of obtaining public transport. Overall trader satisfaction was measured through the satisfaction section of the original instrument.

3.4 Reliability and Data Analysis

The original analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The seven-item basic-facilities index produced $\alpha = .636$. Although .70 is commonly preferred for established reflective scales [18], the facilities included here are operationally heterogeneous indicators. Accordingly, alpha is reported as a diagnostic rather than treated as evidence that the seven facilities form a strictly unidimensional construct, consistent with wider cautions about relying on alpha alone [19]. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the facility items. Pearson correlation was used to examine the bivariate relationship between basic facilities and satisfaction, following standard applied statistical guidance [20]. The original multivariable regression coefficients were retained as a robustness check to determine whether the bivariate relationship persisted after hygiene and sanitation and location were entered simultaneously. Statistical significance was evaluated at $p < .05$.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The original study sought cooperation from Majlis Daerah Kuala Selangor before field data collection. Participating traders were provided with information about the study, informed consent was obtained, responses were treated as confidential, and no personal identifying information was collected. The data were used for academic purposes.

4. Results

4.1 Respondent Profile

The sample comprised 150 traders. The largest age group was 30-39 years (33.3%), followed by 40-49 years (24.0%). Most respondents were Malay (79.3%), 64.0% were male, and 54.0% reported Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia or Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (SPM/STPM) as their highest education category. The profile therefore primarily represented active working-age small traders.

4.2 Evaluation of Basic Facilities

Table 1

Descriptive evaluation of basic facilities (n = 150)

Basic facility item	Mean	SD	Reported level
Parking space for night market traders	3.70	0.97	High
Parking space for night market customers	3.61	0.98	Moderate
Night market is easy to access	3.19	0.92	Moderate
Prayer room is comfortable and convenient	3.13	1.01	Moderate
Public toilet is sufficient	3.04	1.04	Moderate
Portable toilet provided by local authority	2.33	0.94	Low
Easy to obtain public transport	2.31	0.92	Low

Note. SD = standard deviation. SD values were calculated from the reported five-point response frequencies for each item.

As shown in Table 1, parking was the most positively evaluated facility. Parking for traders recorded the highest mean ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.97$), followed by parking for customers ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 0.98$). Prayer-room convenience ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.01$) and public-toilet sufficiency ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.04$) were evaluated at a moderate level. The weakest areas were portable toilets ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 0.94$) and public transport ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 0.92$).

4.3 Reliability and Bivariate Relationship

The seven-item basic-facilities index produced Cronbach's $\alpha = .636$. The value indicates modest internal consistency and should be interpreted cautiously given the heterogeneity of the facility indicators. Table 2 presents the bivariate relationships with trader satisfaction. Pearson correlation showed a strong positive association between the overall basic-facilities index and trader satisfaction ($r = .70$, $p < .001$). The squared correlation ($r^2 = .49$) indicates that the two measures shared approximately 49% of their variance at the bivariate level. H1 was therefore supported in the bivariate analysis.

Table 2

Pearson correlations with trader satisfaction

Facility dimension/item	r with satisfaction	p-value
Basic facilities (overall)	.70	< .001
Prayer room	.83	< .001
Public toilet	.62	< .001
Parking space	.55	< .001

At item level, prayer-room provision showed the strongest reported association with satisfaction ($r = .83$, $p < .001$). Public toilets ($r = .62$, $p < .001$) and parking space ($r = .55$, $p < .001$) also showed positive and statistically significant relationships with trader satisfaction.

4.4 Multivariable Regression Robustness Check

Table 3

Original multivariable regression coefficients for trader satisfaction

Predictor	Standardised beta	p-value	Interpretation at $p < .05$
Basic facilities	.107	.054	Not significant
Hygiene and sanitation	.046	.359	Not significant
Location	.785	< .001	Significant

Note. The original overall regression analysis of variance (ANOVA) was significant at $p < .001$.

Table 3 presents the original multivariable regression coefficients and provides an important qualification to the bivariate result. Once basic facilities, hygiene and sanitation, and location were entered simultaneously, basic facilities recorded $\beta = .107$ with $p = .054$. This is close to, but does not meet, the conventional .05 threshold. Hygiene and sanitation was also not significant ($\beta = .046$, $p = .359$), whereas location was the dominant independent predictor ($\beta = .785$, $p < .001$). The article therefore does not claim that basic facilities independently predict satisfaction after the other factors are controlled. Instead, the supported conclusion is that basic facilities have a strong bivariate association with satisfaction, while location accounts for much of the independent multivariable effect.

5. Discussion

The central finding is that traders who evaluated basic facilities more positively also tended to report higher satisfaction. The overall relationship was strong at the bivariate level ($r = .70$), supporting the proposition that facilities form part of the trader experience. Comparable market research shows that facility conditions are associated with user satisfaction [10]. Trader-focused evidence also links market-management systems with satisfaction [11]. Infrastructure quality has similarly been identified as an important contributor to trader satisfaction [12]. Public-facility conditions remain a recurring service priority in traditional markets [13]. The present finding also complements evidence that facility accessibility contributes to night-market customer experience [6], while extending the analysis from visitors to traders.

Parking was the strongest-rated facility dimension in the descriptive results. This is operationally plausible because traders must move stock, cooking equipment, display materials and other supplies to temporary sites within a limited set-up window. Adequate trader parking reduces logistical friction before and after business hours. Earlier Malaysian research recognised access and site organisation as important features of night-market operations [2]. More recent Selangor evidence confirms that spatial organisation and circulation remain practical management concerns [5]. International night-market research also highlights the importance of the physical market environment in shaping experience [14].

Sanitation-related facilities remain a weaker part of the operating environment. Public toilets received only a moderate rating, while portable toilets were rated low. For traders who remain at the site for several hours, sanitation is directly relevant to comfort and the practical ability to remain at work. Traditional-market research shows that inadequate facility conditions can reduce user satisfaction [10]. Service-improvement research also identifies public facilities, cleanliness, drainage and waste management as priority areas [13].

The strong item-level association involving prayer-room provision is particularly meaningful in the local context. Most respondents were Muslim, and night-market operating hours overlap with evening prayer periods. This finding suggests that facility planning should reflect the actual demographic and temporal needs of users rather than apply a generic infrastructure checklist. Context-sensitive provision can therefore include clear access to nearby prayer facilities even where permanent purpose-built infrastructure is not feasible.

The regression robustness check adds an important qualification. Although basic facilities were strongly related to satisfaction in isolation, their coefficient became marginal after location and hygiene and sanitation were entered together. Location was by far the strongest independent predictor. This suggests that facilities should not be managed as detached amenities. Their value is embedded in the wider spatial setting, including accessibility, proximity and the organisation of the

night-market site. This interpretation is consistent with recent Selangor research emphasising the spatial and operational dimensions of night-market management [5].

6. Practical Implications

For local authorities and market organisers, the findings support a trader-centred facility audit when selecting, licensing or renewing night-market sites. Priority should be given to clearly designated trader loading and parking areas, usable toilets within reasonable walking distance, portable toilets where permanent facilities are unavailable, clear access to prayer facilities, and safer connections to public transport. These interventions should be integrated with site accessibility, cleanliness, waste management and pedestrian circulation because the regression results indicate that the broader location context is central to trader satisfaction. The practical objective is not to convert temporary markets into permanent facilities, but to ensure that temporary trading does not mean inadequate operational support.

7. Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be recognised. First, the study is based on two night markets within the Kuala Selangor district, so the findings should not be generalised to all Malaysian night markets. Second, the original data were collected in 2015. The analysis remains useful as an archival benchmark of trader experience, but contemporary replication is necessary to determine whether facility expectations have changed. Third, the basic-facilities index produced $\alpha = .636$ and contains conceptually heterogeneous indicators. Future work should develop separate validated dimensions for sanitation, mobility, access and religious-support facilities rather than assume a single reflective construct. Fourth, the cross-sectional design demonstrates association rather than causality. Fifth, the original thesis documentation contains some ambiguity regarding the field sampling procedure; future studies should use a clearly documented probability or stratified sampling frame. Multi-site research across urban, suburban and rural markets, combined with objective facility audits and trader perception measures, would provide a stronger basis for policy recommendations.

8. Conclusion

Basic facilities are meaningfully associated with night market trader satisfaction in Bandar Baru Kuala Selangor and Tanjung Karang. Parking was evaluated most favourably, while portable toilets and public transport were the weakest facility areas. Overall basic-facility evaluations were strongly correlated with satisfaction ($r = .70$, $p < .001$), and prayer-room provision showed the strongest item-level relationship. However, the multivariable robustness check indicates that basic facilities did not independently reach statistical significance once location and hygiene and sanitation were considered, while location remained the dominant predictor. The contribution of this study is therefore not a claim that facilities alone determine satisfaction. Rather, it shows that trader-oriented facilities form a substantial part of the market experience and should be planned as part of an integrated spatial and operational system. For local authorities, the evidence supports practical, context-sensitive improvements that make temporary markets easier and more dignified places in which to work.

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Data Availability Statement

This article is based on the authors' original thesis research dataset and the statistical outputs reported in the thesis. Supporting research materials may be requested from the corresponding author, subject to availability and the confidentiality commitments made to participants.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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