CREATING PLACE ATTACHMENT TO RESTAURANTS WITH ETHNIC AMBIENCE IN ATTEMPT TO SUPPORT LOCAL VALUES IN BANDUNG

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Abstract

Individual attachment to a place is manifested in objective quality that includes; satisfaction, service acquired and time consumed, and also in subjective quality that includes; developing feelings towards the place, sense of belonging, assuming the place as a part of oneself, familiarity and continuous use of the place. Bandung is well known for its society’s creative culture, which is displayed on the growing number of community gathering, recreational and socializing places, such as restaurants. Some traditional Sundanese restaurants, those take part in the culinary department of creative industries in Bandung, have promoted innovations to their interior concept to gain interest and develop visitors’ familiarity and emotional attachment to the ethnic ambience offered. This study aims to explain that these days’ restaurants can reproduce traditional values by creating an emotional tie between human and place through interior atmosphere. By observing three restaurants which is built in different period of time, visitors from different cultural background are able to sense the Sundanese values through representational interior components adjusted to the contemporary interior styles and trends.

Keywords: Place Attachment, Sundanese Restaurants, Interior Atmosphere

I. INTRODUCTION

Creative industries have been growing potentials to develop in view of the fact that this particular industry has everlasting resources, which is based on the intellectuality and creativity of the practitioners. Interior design is one of the disciplines that focus on the development of the creative industry. The advancing information and communication technology forces the dynamics of the society to grow faster and as a result its lifestyle and culture becomes more zestful and varied. Interior design is dependent on the way a place is used, which holds a great importance to people’s interaction. A place can be viewed as a media of communication that people use to express their feelings and emotions, attitude and behavior through various activities they share. Essentially humans have similarities in their interactions with physical stimulants especially in a community with the same
cultural and educational background. Some behaviors become interesting to observe because those specific groups or communities continuously share activities and spend time with in specific places. The continuity in the use of a place is caused by the growing positive feelings of happiness, familiarity, and satisfaction, which subconsciously experienced by those groups and communities. Along the time, they accumulate and create an attachment between the people and the place, which is known as ‘place attachment’.

Place attachment has a strong connection with the urban culture of a city. Bandung is well known for its society’s creative culture, which is displayed on the growing number of community gathering, recreational and socializing places, such as restaurants. Bandung is also popular as one of the best culinary destinations in Indonesia because of its delicious traditional Sundanese cuisine. Some visitors continuously dine and hold activities in particular Sundanese restaurants in Bandung that can be seen from the development and busyness some of them have. As explained before, visitors subconsciously create an attachment to those places, which is caused by the dynamic connection between experience and behavior, also physical and social settings. Interior components inside the restaurants act as one of the important physical setting aspects that build the ambience and represent local ethnic values.

Some of the well-known traditional Sundanese restaurants that have regular customers, such as Rumah Makan Sari Sunda, Bumbu Desa and Bancakan, apply interior components that represent Sundanese values associated with the contemporary architectural and interior design. Those interior components include furniture, materials, colors, decorative elements, serving system and service offered.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Most visitors attracted to come restaurants with unique concepts make eating as just one of the many activities they do in the restaurant. The possibility to do other things than just eating is the key point to attract people to dine in specific restaurants. Their function is not merely for dining; more people come for leisure, to socialize, to work and to play. Their growing function causes people to spend more time in restaurants when they are not at home or work. They come periodically for special occasions, events, or simply to enjoy the facilities and service offered.

2.1 Place Attachment

The positive feelings that are continuously building when dining or visiting a restaurant can create an attachment between them and the restaurants. Personally, people build their consciousness towards a place, which grows into an attachment. Its fondness can be measured objectively through community sensation and satisfaction from the surroundings. Here are some definitions of ‘place attachment’, taken from Irwin Altman’s *Place Attachment* (1992):

1. Topophilia (Tuan, 1974). An affectionate bonding between human and place that focuses on the whole experience of sensation, memory, cognitive integration, affection and other activities that support it.
2. Place Dependence (Stokols, 1981) or the dependency towards a place, association between human and environment. It’s created when a person feels that the place he/she is using has provided his/her needs, better than other alternative places he/she can be.
3. Place Identity (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983); which becomes the sub-
structure of self-identity of a person. It includes memories, ideas, suggestions, emotions, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings and concepts of behavior and experience related to various and complex physical settings that define humans’ existence in their daily activities. This concept focuses on the role of a place in memory organization and stimulating humans’ expressions.

‘Place attachment’ in this paper is defined as a positive emotional attachment to a place indicated by individuals through excitement, belonging, satisfaction and dependency they have towards it. Furthermore, making the place a part of them.

2.2 Culinary Industry in Bandung and The Interior of Traditional Sundanese Restaurants

Bandung is well known by its creative society. The surfacing of many places for gathering and socializing, such as restaurants, is one of the manifestations of how creative this city has grown. Haryoto Kunto in his book entitled *Semerbak Bunga di Bandung Raya* (1986) wrote, “The Flower City (Bandung) has the most restaurants compared to other cities in Indonesia.” The official website of West Java’s Department of Culture and Tourism ([www.bandungtourism.com](http://www.bandungtourism.com), accessed on March 2010) stated that nowadays there are approximately 400 restaurants and cafes. Bandung has now become the barometer of the culinary industry in Indonesia. Its practitioners never stop learning to keep up with the trends, analyze the market and innovating their menus. It has never failed to open new career opportunities, draw new employment and expand local tourist destinations.

The menus offered are always varied, from local to traditional to international. Each restaurant tries to present different menus, facilitations and atmospheres, which attracts people to visit the region, city or country where they are built. Bandung has its own culinary taste. One of the restaurants that keep on expanding in numbers is the traditional Sundanese. They offer only traditional cuisine, similar to Padang, Menado or Bali traditional restaurants. They have also been the key attraction and icon for West Java’s culinary tourist destination.

In the beginning, traditional Sundanese restaurants surfaced in areas around Bandung, one of them was Sindang Reret restaurant at Lembang and Ciwidey. Whilst the first restaurants that opened inside the city were Babakan Siliwangi and Ponyo, which was first open on Asia Afrika Street and then move to a suburban area then finally reopened a branch on Malabar Street. After Ponyo had opened, Sari Sunda restaurant followed by opening a branch on Soekarno-Hatta and Lengkong Street. Some of the owner of these restaurants started the business to raise profit and reserve Sundanese tradition through cuisine and architecture-interior design of their buildings.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study use descriptive research approach by describing and measuring several characteristics of interior components and trying to see their relations in terms of attachment to a place. The data collecting begins with surveying all the Sundanese restaurants in Bandung. There are more than 50 Sundanese restaurants that have been registered to West Java’s Department of Culture and Tourism. Those are mostly family type restaurant. By choosing three restaurants which is built in different period of time, and observing the interior treatment for walls, floor, and ceiling, there are several components which can reflect the origin of Sundanese ethnic atmosphere. Here are some of the restaurants...
that apply ethnic Sundanese interior components inside the building.

1. Sari Sunda Restaurant, Setiabudi

Sari Sunda Restaurant is located on Setiabudi Street. Its architecture and interior design is very typical around the 1990’s. Some of the architecture-interior designs they apply are; the flooring that uses different types of material, its elevation that is made varied depending on the needs (gazebos, lesehan or areas where visitors sit on the floor, and stages), the wall that uses local materials such as bamboo sticks and wickers. It has exposed ceiling and roof, which is loosely covered by materials from bamboo with natural coating. Decorative elements that hang on it are lamps made of bamboo. The furniture layout is designed to support their serving system, a la carte with the waiters coming to the visitor’s tables.

2. Bumbu Desa Restaurant, Pasirkaliki

Bumbu Desa Restaurant is located on Pasirkaliki Street, Bandung. Its architecture-interior designs are typical in the 2000’s, which displays the combination of modern and Sundanese style. Some of the architecture-interior designs character that they apply are; the flooring that uses different materials, the walls that have different finishing materials, but not as much wickers as they have in the 1990’s. Every wall is given decorative materials such as pictures and Sundanese traditional utensils. On the main building, the roof is exposed and is covered by white gypsum board. Decorative elements are hung on its ceiling, such as lamps and pictures of batik patterns. The furniture layout is designed to support buffet dining, so
that it facilitates the visitors to enjoy their dining experience.

Nasi Bancakan Restaurant is located on Trunojoyo Street, Bandung. Its architecture-interior designs create an atmosphere of traditional Sundanese food stall with vintage food they offer. Some of the architecture-interior designs they apply are; the flooring that uses similar materials, the elevation that is made varied depending on the needs (lesehan or area to sit on the floor and area with dining tables), and the wall applications that use local materials such as wickers. Its ceiling and roof follow the original architectural form of the building. Decorative elements on the ceiling are neon lamps and lanterns, and on the walls are some posters with pictures. The furniture layout is designed to support buffet system.

Source: (personal documentation, 2009)
Figure 3: Entrance and cashier at Bumbu Desa Restaurant, Sukajadi, Bandung

Source: (personal documentation, 2009)
Figure 4: Buffet at Bumbu Desa Restaurant, Sukajadi, Bandung

Source: (personal documentation, 2009)
Figure 5: Entrance and dining area at Nasi Bancakan Restaurant, Trunojoyo, Bandung

3. Nasi Bancakan Restaurant, Trunojoyo
Source: (personal documentation, 2009)
Figure 6: One of the stalls and dining area at Nasi Bancakan Restaurant, Trunojoyo, Bandung

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Humans through multiple sensations, which are coordinated in the neuron centers, can recognize and estimate the objects that surround them to perceive the interior of a building. Perception is the foundation of the creation of humans’ place consciousness through experience they have had. Positive feelings towards a place can be built through sensation, memory association, cognitive integration, affection, positive interactions with its community, and various activities done. They can also well support the emotional attachment between the human and the place.

Traditional restaurants have almost always displayed local ethnic atmosphere of the region they are from. They aim to create a feeling similar to where their cuisines come from. Some of the elements that build the atmosphere of traditional Sundanese restaurants are interior components that represent traditional Sundanese values. Through memory association of specific occasions, visitors perceive the place so they subconsciously build the feelings of comfort, happiness and familiarity to the atmosphere they build.

The representation of Sundanese values on the interior components of traditional Sundanese restaurants can differ depending on the image they want to build and the contemporary interior trends. In the first case, before 1990’s Sundanese values were displayed all over the interior components, such as floors, walls, ceiling, façade and furniture that use natural materials such as wood and bamboo, reflecting the characteristic of saung (traditional Sundanese gazebo). The dining area mostly still dominated by lesehan type, preserving the traditional culture whereas the Sundanese family likely eating together by sitting on the floor. The Sundanese restaurants which are built in this period are also keeping the natural architectural components such as plants, gardens, and fish ponds.

After the 1990’s, the utensils they use and decorative elements, combined with modern interior style that has minimum ornaments, but still they can represent the Sundanese values. The dinning area mostly dominated by dinning tables and furnitures are made of modern material from the factories. Even though, people are still coming, interested by the new model of buffet system. Plants, gardens, and fish ponds still become part of the whole interior but in smaller scale.

Whilst in the 2000’s, some of the restaurants, such as Nasi Bancakan, came up with new concept. The owner try to represent traditional atmosphere through whole interior components, so that visitors feel like they are eating at a slummy uncomfortable stall. Despite of the uncomfortness, people still can enjoy their activities, because somehow the interiors can creates the feeling of nostalgic.
V. CONCLUSION

The development creative industry in Bandung, especially in traditional culinary department, forces the management of traditional Sundanese restaurants to endlessly innovate their concepts to be offered to the visitors. Beside the innovation of their service system, interior design is one of the main factors that attract visitors and create attachment through nostalgic feelings they offer. Visitors from different cultural background are able to sense the Sundanese values through representational interior components adjusted to the contemporary interior styles and trends. The Sundanese values on the interior components of traditional Sundanese restaurants from the old period until now are still represented by using natural materials such as wood and bamboo, and also the image of saung and natural landscape.

References