The Importance of Context Markers Element in Developing Bandung Techno Park as a Tourist Attraction

Adrian Agoes , Ersy Ervina
Telkom University, STIEPAR AKTRIPA

Abstract

Increasing visitors to Bandung Techno Park (BTP) indicates the potential resources it has to develop as a visitor or tourist attraction. In spite of that, the management of this facility sees it largely as a form of impediment that slows down the pace of their business. They mainly consider the Techno Park to its primary function; becoming the hub connecting the ICT society consists of Business, Academic, and Government. In fact Bandung Techno Park is also meant to become the centre of scientific transmission to educate the people around it, particularly in regards to ICT. It shows that the increasing visit of the general community actually is in line with the BTP's vision, transmitting the knowledge about ICT to the people. Nonetheless, the case in BTP is that the management has difficulties in handling the visitors who increasingly outnumber the available staffs with no particular skill and facilities needed in handling visitors. This study has observed the facilities and interviewed the management of BTP to find out some of the feature needed in developing tourist attraction. The article focuses on one element, which is Context Marker, to establish the Techno Park to be a suitable tourist attraction for future visitors.

Keywords: Context Marker, ICT, Techno Park, Tourism, Research, Tourist Attraction

Introduction

In its effort to increase the quality of human resources in Indonesia, the government of Indonesia under President Joko Widodo intent to project the element of education on forth to stimulate the intellectual capacity of the citizens. One of the concrete programs is to establish Techno Park as the institution that comprises of academic, research, and business elements. The primary objective of Techno Park (or science park) establishment is to become the mean in facilitating the invention and production of a technology and engender them to commercial state, by synergizing the researchers, educational institution, and technology based companies (Petree et al 2000: 3).

Bandung Techno Park (BTP), considered as the pioneer to pilot the president's project of 100 Techno Park in Indonesia, has a pertinent objective as to facilitate the academic, business, and the government, and stimulate the society to enforce innovation in technology. The main business activities of BTP

are now in selling research services, selling technology based products, sponsoring start-up companies, and also to hold seminars and workshop in the subject related to innovation and ICT. It is now also expanding their business in renting out office space to ICT based companies.

Interestingly, BTP has gained increasing attention from the society, indicated by escalating number of visitors, particularly since the president launched his 100 Techno Park in Indonesia program.

Table 1:
Number of Visits to BTP in Latest 3 years

Year	Number of visits
2012	8
2013	14
2014	44

Source: Bandung Techno Park

The data above shows the number of visits BTP get in the latest three years. The numbers of visitors in each visit vary. While the data of the number of visitors in each visit has not yet available, but according to the management of BTP most of all the visits are in the form of groups. The groups are from different basis.

Table 2:
Type of Groups Visit to BTP (2012 – 2014)

Type of group	Percentage
High School	29.5%
University	24.3%
Company	8.9%
Government	37.3%

Source: Bandung Techno Park

As seen from the above data, most of the visitors are from government, as well as students from high schools and universities. The group visits from companies are still in low percentage, but those numbers doesn't include the routine business guests coming to BTP in its primary function to establish business cooperation. Most of the above group's motivations in visiting BTP are to learn what a Techno Park is all about (one of the managers in BTP refers to this as a socialization phase of BTP). What attracted the group visits to BTP are 1) the technology based innovation products built by the facility, 2) the architecture of BTP building, and 3) the workshop and seminars.

Initially, the management of BTP saw the increasing visit as a benefit as they consider it may give contribution in socializing the existence of the facility to the public (socialization phase). Notwithstanding, as the management regard they have come into further phase, they deem to have more contribution from the increasing visit, but according to them, they don't. The contribution they have in

mind is to have a concrete business transaction or at least business leads after each burdensome visit they have. In fact, according to the architect of BTP buildings, the initial intention of the BTP complex is actually to invite common people and general community to visit the area. It's intended to attract people to be interested in the building complex, afterwards, getting interested in the technology based innovation activities they have inside. Therefore, the escalating visit to BTP is actually in-line with the vision of BTP, that is to transmit knowledge and innovation spirit to the society surround it.

However, the visits are indeed troublesome. In Bandung Techno Park, there are no particular staffs to be assigned specifically to arrange visitors. Mostly their skills are based on technology and office work affair. General secretary who is used to having individual business guest mostly handles each guest visit they have. The group visited BTP tend to be treated similarly with individual business guest. They are accepted in a meeting room and get the explanation about the facilities, then meet with the intended person in BTP according to the business they have. However, when the group try to enjoy the facility, they have difficulties in understanding the information and absorbing the 'feel' of the place they visit. In spite of the beautiful garden and architecture design the BTP has, the group visitors just have to figure out the place by themselves. The visitors certainly get the explanation about BTP facilities, but they have lack of understanding about what the place is really is. Somehow the management or the marketing department just explain the place as a usual office visit done by individual business guest.

This paper is continuing the previous writing titled "Core Resource Bandung Techno Park as Tourist Attraction" (Ervina & Agoes, 2015), that argues about BTP having the potential resources to become a valuable visitor attraction. Yet, further study on the element of Context Marker is needed. The purpose of this study is to find out how BTP wants its visitors to perceive the establishment and also how BTP can manage to give more perspective and information to the visitors.

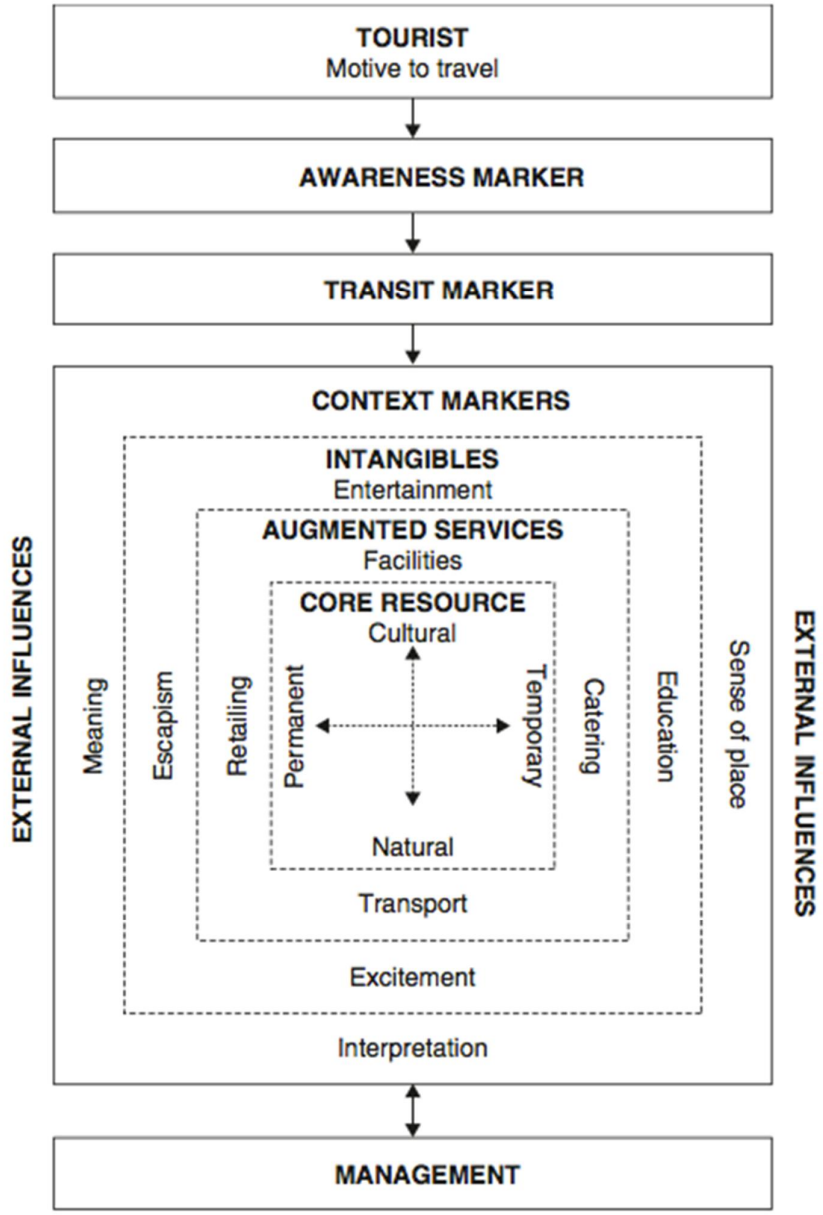
Literature Review

Techno Park Concept

The concept of Techno Park (also known as Science Park) refers to an establishment or a facility designed to facilitate the innovation, production, and commercialization of a technology based products. This activity should be a synergy of researchers, educational institution, and technology based companies (Pertree *et al.*, 2000: 3). Commonly, the companies involved in the Techno Park are those categorised as a 'start-up', or small enterprises that's a beginner in their business.

Tourist Attraction Framework

In order to understand about tourist attraction, we can take a look at how tourist attraction is constituted. Benckendorff (in Buhalis & Costa, 2006) offered a framework to understand about this.



Source: Tourism Business Frontier (2006)

Figure 1
Framework of Understanding Tourist Attraction

The framework proposes that there are three types of markers that establishes lure to travel in the tourist side. The first is the awareness marker, the second is the transit marker, and the one at the tourist attraction is the context marker. Benckendorff proposed a more broaden sense of these context markers.

He stated that:

> *"They (context markers) create a sense of place and help visitors to understand the attraction through interpretation. It is through the use of context markers, such as signage, brochures and interpretation, that visitors can conceptualize or derive meaning from the attraction (Benckendorff, 2006)."*

Interpretation Concept

As to comprehend the concept of interpretation stated above more thoroughly, there are some definitions offered as follows:

> *Interpretation defined as an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects by first hand experience and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information (Tilden, 1977)*

Interpretation Australia (2004) defined interpretation as a means to communicate ideas and feelings that help people understand more about themselves and their environment. Furthermore, interpretation can be implemented as a way to convey the concept of cultural, natural, even educational theories, to build awareness and developing appropriate attitude of the visitors (Wearing *et al*., 2007). Some valuable purposes served by interpretation are to provide an enjoyable and meaningful experience to visitors; and to increase the public understanding about the place they visited (Knudson, Cable & Beck, 1995). Three other benefits offered by interpretation are, first, assisting visitor in developing awareness and understanding of the destination to enhance the experience and enjoyment. Secondly, interpretation can also be used as a tool to manage the flow of visitors. Third, eventually, interpretation would increase sense of place both for the visitor and the community surround it (Cooper in Medlik, 1993).

As for the form of interpretation, Cooper (in Medlik, 1993) listed the possible media for interpretation, shown in table 3 below:

Table 3
Possible Interpretive Media

Personal Attended Services	Non-personal Unattended Services
Information duty	Audio-visual displays
Guided walks	Signboards
Talks to groups	Self-guided trails
Reconstructions of the past	Visitor-centre displays

Source: Medlik (1993)

In the substance of technology, experience can also establish by using technology. The dimension in creating experience can be distant or close experience. In close experience, the visitors come to the place of production. When using technology in a close experience, it could be categorised as techno-interaction (Sundbo & Hagedorn-Rasmussen, 2008).

Methodology

This research is using a qualitative method, benefiting the model offered by Benckendorff (2006) to analyse the context markers element in Bandung Techno Park in order to develop it as a tourist attraction. This method is used as it has a constructive approach to find out the answer to the research questions. The model is chosen because it emphasizes on sense of place, interpretation, and meaning of the studied place, which is accordant in answering to how Bandung Techno Park would convey themselves to the visitors.

The data is collected through observation at the location of Bandung Techno Park and also interview with the respondents. A semi-structured interview was chosen to establish connection with the respondent and allow them to forward their thoughts voluntarily. The respondent chosen are the managers in Bandung Techno Park, and also the architect of BTP buildings.

The data recorded during the observation and interview activity are using notes, photographs, and video. The respondents selected are from the managements and the architect of Bandung Techno Park. Some literature study and also excerpts from seminars are used as data in this research. The analysing technique is going through the coding, verifying, and reporting process. The data collection is referring to the framework offered by Benckendorff. Interpretation then constructed as the final analysing process, with reference of the data collected using the framework of the literature resources.

Results and Discussion

Overview of Bandung Techno Park

Initially Bandung Techno Park established with the purpose to generate sustainable innovative products based on technology. The other purpose is also to commercialize research outcome and to facilitate technology-based start-up companies. They are focusing on eight main businesses that include Research and Development, Educational Training, Consultancy, Facility Provider, Business Mediation, Information Distribution, Certification, and Production Support.

The facilities are planned to have eleven main buildings that is going to be developed in several phases. Figure 2 shows the master plan of BTP complex. By the time this research is conducted, BTP only has two established buildings, which is the Main Building, and Research and Business Development Building. In the beginning, BTP complex are located in the Learning Centre Building at Telkom University. As for March 11, 2012, the new location is made official. It is now located in its own area, but still inside Telkom University, also known as the area of Bandung Technoplex.

Source: photobucket.com

Figure 2
Master Plan of Bandung Techno Park Complex

Products of Bandung Techno Park

BTP has produced several technology-based products, those are:

Mobitick: Mobitick (mobile ticketing) is an electronic payment system applied on economy class commuter buses; **U-Kit**: A practicum tools in microcontroller subject, used as a learning media to study how electronic hardware works, particularly microcontroller. **Smart Parking System**: This is one of BTP's products that has been launched commercially. The system provides integrated solution for a parking need including parking software, hardware, as well as consultancy in parking management system, using radio frequency identification technology (RFID). **Postur Check**: This is the tool to check whether one's body is in a good proportion or not. Normally used by the military to filter the good candidate. **Incinerator**: This tool is a breakthrough made by BTP operated to burn out trash, using a mix of water and diesel fuel. **School Presence System**: a system created to ease the class roll service at school, using radio frequency identification (RFID) technology.

Bandung Techno Park Architecture

As for the architecture, this work of Jeferiasthama Architecture has made it into the Indonesian Architecture Week exhibition held in Tokyo, Japan in 2011. According to its principal architect, the initial concept of this building complex is

to become ‘The Center of Transmitting Valley’. The whole complex take shape from the city it dwells in, Bandung. As Bandung is located in the valley surrounded by mountains, so is the design of BTP complex replicated the shape of a valley. The buildings also intended to incorporate the concept of edutainment. Besides education facilities, the main building also equip with exhibition hall and simple recreational area. The application of the Transmitting Valley concept is seen through the design of the buildings forming the shape of ‘hills’ with its roof covered with real green grass. These hill-like buildings are positioned surrounding the main building. The main building itself took the shape of a sky-high antenna-like tower, representing the transmitter conveyed in the concept (Aditama, 2015). The main building of Bandung Techno Park (the one in the centre) is called the Main Office. The facilities available at this main office are simple sport room, cafeteria, refresh hall, 3D printing room, multi media room, display product room, training room, meeting room, praying room (mushola), and co-working space.

Bandung Techno Park Vision

It was acknowledged in an interview with the management of BTP, that they consider Bandung Techno Park, or any techno park, should not be considered as a ‘park’. It is actually a business entity, similar to Wall Street that houses trader offices, a techno park is also a house to start-up companies. In that matter, the main focus of BTP’s activities should be in business premises. The visits, according to them, are starting to be regarded as ‘distracted’. On the other hand, the chief architect of Bandung Techno Park buildings revealed that in fact, the purpose of the architectures of BTP is indeed to be inviting enough, so that common people and general community are tempted to find out more about what’s in the building. They expect to thereafter visit the building, and afterward learning about innovation and technology here. In building this complex, the concept to imply in BTP lays in the term ‘Park’ itself. According to the chief architect, the term ‘Park’ should not be left merely as a decorating word only, but it should imply the concept of ‘open for public’. The term ‘park’ should be reflected in the design of the buildings of BTP. In respect to that concept, BTP main building will play the role as the ‘lobby’ of the whole complex. People should be tempted to play around in the main building, then lead through the ‘valley’ visiting the other building surrounding it, which has its own function. The founding father of BTP declared in the launching event of 100 Techno Park in Indonesia, that the main purpose of BTP is to educate people about innovation in technology.

Even though, the visits are regarded as distracting, it is also admitted that they have certain benefits as well. One of the benefits they can recognize is that it helps them in socializing the existence of Bandung Techno Park to the public. As they call this the stage of socialization. Furthermore the management explain that they can understand the visits as long as they get to the next stage, which is the stage of business benefit. The other benefit they can recognize, which they don’t see it substantiate yet.

Flow of Guest Visit

The present flow of guest visits itself, explained by the management as an ad hoc process. In the occasion of any guest visit, they will then delegate the task to any staff available in certain department. In many instances, the task would be delegated to the office general secretary. Each group coming would be accepted in the lobby and ushered to the multi media room to get brief presentation about BTP and its facilities. If there is certain person that would be met by the group on appointment, then the group will be directed to meet the person. Subsequently, the group will be given the time to look around the BTP facilities. Most of the guests, according to the management, are interested to look around the display room at the main office. Display product room is the space to showcase some of the technology-based innovation products invented by Bandung Techno Park. In this area, people can see some of the displayed products. For the lack of information displayed in the area, and also insufficient skilled officers, it is reported that the guests would just examine the displayed products themselves.

The Need of Context Markers

It is apparent that the management did see the benefits of group visits to the establishment. Nevertheless, the intangible benefit of group visit has not yet recognised. Stated by the founding father, as well as designed by the chief architect, the main purpose of Bandung Techno Park is to educate the people about innovation and technology. Obviously, despite the recognized benefit of socializing is considered reached, and business benefit of the visits has yet to substantiate, Bandung Techno Park should continue to accept group visit as this exertion is consistent with its own vision.

The management's objection on the added load to their assignment is understandable. Organizing group visits do require certain skill and extra effort. This task cannot be left to the general secretary alone. The aim of group visits is actually to have a more understanding and awareness of the sense of place. From the BTP side, it should be seen as a very valuable occasion to explain the vision and mission of this institution to the visiting guests. It is expected that the visiting guests would be enlightened about innovation and technology. In order to accomplish that goal, the management should establish the element of context markers. Context markers through interpretation would then create meanings and sense of place to the visitors of Bandung Techno Park. If interpretation remains overlooked, it is concerned that the guests would be left wandering the complex without getting any value and having lack of understanding about the meaning of the place.

Several notions can be taken to help ease the management's effort to maintain the group visits, yet keeping them off distraction from their major daily activities in business premises. As suggested by cooper (1991), BTP can then establish several forms of interpretation. The most suitable one according to the condition of lacking staffs, BTP can concentrate on creating non-personal unattended services that is audio-visual displays, signboards, self-guided trails, and visitor centre displays.

As a matter of fact, BTP already has some posters in the display product room, explaining the brief history, vision and mission, main business activities, and the products they've been invented. These visual displays in fact help the visitors in understanding a little bit about BTP. In the multi-media room, BTP already precede the presentation using the audio-visual display technique. These already good notions are still viable to be improved.

One interesting fact is that the character of BTP is a technology-based institution. Thus, it would be keener for this institution to have some techno-interaction facilities in displaying that information. The products of BTP also have the preferable feature to be treated as a techno-interaction visitor display. Namely the posture check should be available for the visitors to try on in live. They can learn the process of measuring their own posture and will have more understanding about the invention. This way the visitors will have more engagement with the information and would absorb the feel of the place rather than through static posters. Another interpretation tools to be created are the signage. To help direct the visitors, some signage around the buildings could also be established.

Other than that, the presence of a particularly assigned staff is still necessary; this will give the personal touch to the visitors. The most relevant workforce needed is for the information duty. BTP main office has a very beautiful lobby, yet there hasn't been any receptionist assigned in that area. One of the advantages that the BTP has is that it is located within the Telkom University area and it has one study program that learns hospitality subject. The students of this study program are actually available for BTP to help them welcoming the group visits. This form of cooperation has already been discussed, but is yet to be elaborated.

For the conducted activity, even though it has been practiced by BTP, it would be more effective to have a pre-written script explaining how BTP wants the visitors to perceive the institution. This could be the utmost effective way in influencing the visitors and will have more personal connection between BTP and the visitors. It will also give the opportunity to interact for question and answer.

As for the conclusion, it is apparent that Bandung Techno Park should open themselves for visitors, as it is inherent in their vision to educate as large society as they can about the importance of innovation, particularly in technology premises. To overcome the difficulties in managing the incoming guests, the management should give attention to context markers as one of the necessary element in developing a tourist attraction. The most viable context markers come in the form of interpretation. Some technique and interpretation system can be applied by Bandung Techno Park in order to fulfil the vision of BTP to inspire the society in innovation on technology-based premises.

Of course a more elaborate study to determine the exact design of all the necessary interpretation system should be done further. This study has concluded

to the greater extent that should Bandung Techno Park be developed as a tourist attraction or a visitor attraction, then the element of context markers should immediately come into attention. As this study is limited to conclude the necessity of context markers without having the visitors as the respondent, it is therefore suggested to conduct further research on visitor management system. That research should comprise the study to design the most appropriate interpretation system for this institution as well as designing the flow of the visitors.

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