Bantul as a Child Friendly City

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ABSTRACT

City is belongs to everyone, including children as the next generation of our future. Children have the same right as adults to access urban infrastructure, public facilities, and services that appropriate with their age. In this context, provision of playing ground in the city become a necessity and should be accessible for all children. Unfortunately, playing ground in city tends to be marginalized and children are forced to play in the street. This condition could make playing become dangerous activities, considering any possibilities to such accidents.

This issue becomes the main discourse in child friendly city, In 2009, Indonesian Minister of Women Empowerment recommends Bantul as child friendly city. Bantul has characteristic of both urbanized area and urban periphery. This paper aims to find out whether Bantul could be called child friendly city by evaluating public perception. Respondents who were participated in this research were including adults and children at school age. Public perception was gained through interview and questionnaire. Data that have been collected were analyzed by qualitative and quantitative methods. From the analysis, it is found that people perceived Bantul as child friendly city according to its public facilities that accommodate children's comfort and safety although Bantul itself was not designed as child friendly city.

Keyword : child friendly city, perception, Bantul

INTRODUCTION

Children are our future generation. Our nation's future depends on what they perceived at childhood stage. It is important to nourish and protect them at their growth by providing a safe playground and a comfort environment.

City as a place where children spent most of their childhood, could has impact for their character development. A safe and comfortable environment could bring a good influence for children and build a good character when they grow old and visa versa. A decreased open space and playground would bring a bad psychological effect because children do not have joyful experience and lack of playful memories. This condition should be highlighted in urban development; especially considering 43% or 33,584,440 of Indonesia’s children (people in the age below 18) lived in urban area (Unicef, 2004).

However, most cities in Indonesia tend to ignored and marginalized children in urban life. It is hard to find a safe and comfort playground in city and children are forced to use street as their playground.

This paper is written in belief that children are parts of the citizen. They have the same right as older people to access urban infrastructure, public facilities, and services that appropriate with their age. This concept often called Child Friendly City. Indonesia is already support and begins to implement Child Friendly City through Regulation of the Minister of Women Empowerment of the Republic of Indonesia No.02/2009 on Child Friendly City Policy. In 2008, there have been 5 cities developed as Child Friendly City; Sidoarjo, Gorontalo, Jambi, Solo and Kutai Kertanegara (www.gemari.or.id). In 2009, Yogyakarta received an award as Child Friendly City.
The development of Child Friendly City is more devoted in a small-medium city. A large city (metropolitan) tends to have more complex problems, such as homeless children (anak jalanan) and lack of open space (www.gemari.or.id). Based on this context, Bantul serves as a valuable case study for this research. Mutia Hatta, Ministry of Women Empowerment, in her fieldwork to Bantul in 2009, recommend Bantul as Child Friendly City (www.regional.kompas.com).

Statistically, the number of children in Bantul is quite large, 13,713 people (aged 0-6 years). This amount does not include children aged 7-18 years.

Child Friendly City

Child Friendly City is a development strategy that integrates commitments and resources from government, community, and private sector in a comprehensive and sustainable plan in order to accommodate children needs and fulfill their rights (www.kotalayakanak.org). A city that has been called as child friendly city should ensure that every child who lived there, get their rights fulfilled. According to Convention on the Rights of the Child, children rights on urban area are:

1. Rights to have a place to live
2. Rights to privacy
3. Rights to get protection, to feel safe and secure
4. Rights to live in a healthy environment
5. Rights to play
6. Rights to education
7. Rights to public transport

In order to create a child friendly city, some physical indicators such as access to school, access to open space, access to playground should be provided. According to the Appendix from Women Empowerment Ministerial Policy Draft 2007 concerning Child Friendly City, it is noted that such a city should be:

1. Non discriminative
2. Give proper interest for children
3. Reassure that children rights are fulfilled

4. Respect children opinion and expression

In Indonesia, child friendly city became a program adopted by Ministry of Women Empowerment since 2006. In 2011, 10 cities and 24 districts remained as prototype for child friendly city, those are; cities (Padang, Pariaman, Jambi, Banjarmasin, Surakarta, Semarang, Malang, Pontianak, Manado, Kupang) and districts (Aceh Besar, Serdang Bedagai, OKI, Lampung Selatan, Karawang, Kuningan, Banjarbaru, Boyolali, Sragen, Klaten, Sidoarjo, Malang, Kutai Kartanegara, Gorontalo).

Public Perception of Child Friendly City

Public perception of Bantul as child friendly city is an assessment mechanism to measure whether Bantul is friendly enough to be proclaimed as child friendly city. Perception itself is defined as a process where people as individuals give meaning to its environment (Gibson, 1986). Based on the definition, perception is a subjective matter and it depends on time, place, and experience from each individuals. Two individuals could have different perception over the same subject.

Children perception is egocentric, self-centered and short term (Kalnins, 2002). Kalnins (2002) also noted that in the context of relationship between children and adults, children have perception that adults tends to neglect their opinion. On the contrary, adults have perception that children are not smart enough to be heard (United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1975). Those conditions become obstacles in developing child friendly city because it discourages children participation in urban development.

RESEARCH METHOD

The data collection for this research was done through primary and secondary survey. Data on primary survey was collected through interview with children, parents and government agencies that related with provision of children facilities. The data was
documented through an interview record, photo and mapping. While secondary survey was done in government agencies to collect statistical data related to children population and provision of facilities.

Data collection in this research includes:
1. Children accessibility to play
2. Public perception on children rights to feel safe
3. Public perception on Bantul as child friendly city
4. Government support to child friendly city

Data analysis was done through qualitative and quantitative method. Qualitative analysis was used to analyze the interview, while quantitative analysis was used to analyze questionnaire that have been given to measure public perception of Bantul as child friendly city.

CHILDREN ACCESSIBILITY TO PLAY

Children needs and have rights to play. Play is important to the development of children's character itself and also to the development of civic society, including democracy (Hart, 2002). In respond to that, government usually builds a playground for children. But what children actually need, is more than a playground. In his research, Hart (2002) noted that children need a safe environment and neighborhood that enable them to play, explore, learn, and move easily and free from any form of violence but still close to their home.

However, according to the interview with staff of Bantul government agency, Bantul does not have a playground or any specific zone that was built for children to play. From the observation, it is found that there is some open space often used as playing area for children; Lapangan Paseban (located in the front of Mayor office), yard in the front of Bantul Great Mosque, and some community yards.

At Lapangan Paseban (see figure 1), children have to pay for play. There are people who rent playing facilities (such as toy car) and children have to pay some money to play with it. If they could not pay, they could not play with it. They can only play sport (such as football) and they have to compete with adults to use the field. If the field is already used by adults, they could only sit on the edge of the field and watch the adults play.

Figure 1. At Lapangan Paseban, children play by riding a toy car, they have to pay some money for it.

Another open space that has been used as children playground is yard in the form of Bantul Great Mosque (see figure 2). In that yard, there are playing facilities such as swings and seesaw. This facility is free, but it is not well maintained. It can be dangerous for children and could lead to accident such as falls.

Figure 2. Playing facilities in the yard located in the front of Bantul Great Mosque.

Lapangan Paseban and the yard in front of Bantul Great Mosque were an example of open space that has been used as playing area for children. But those open spaces were at district scale. In the context of Bantul as urban area, not all children could access it. Only children who live near that place could access and play in those open spaces.
Otherwise, children have to be escorted by their parents. It makes accessibility of children to such playing area is limited, or difficult.

In a more micro scale, there is some community yards that used as playground for children. In fact, those yards were not designed specifically for playground. Those yards were just green field used as community open space, as place for sports and community events. Children often used those yards as playground to do sport activities (such as football and racing), traditional play (such as layangan), or just to meet their peers. This type of open space as playground is more accessible for children because it is located in their neighborhood. Children could reach their community yard by walking or bicycle (see: Figure 3). But in the other side, parents become more aware of the children’s safety, especially when the community yard is located over the highway.

![Figure 3. Children riding bicycle](image)

According to in-depth interview with children (age 7-15 year), they feel comfort and safe to play in a place that easy to be access, such as their own neighborhood. In the contrast, when asked about a bad place, they mentioned a place with traffic, full of stranger, and a high possibility of bullying, such as market.

**PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD TO GET SECURITY**

The right of children to feel save and secure in urban space includes safety of children when playing and safety of the children from the external threat (for example: harassment or criminal acts such as kidnapping or extortion). Ensuring the rights of the child to safety in urban space will provide a guarantee for development of the child and maximize the potential of children. In the process of observation, it was found cases of children who use highway as a playground (see: Figure 3). This condition reflects the lack of guarantee of the rights of children to get a sense of security when playing because of potential accidents.

From the parents’ perspective, majority of respondents, i.e 77.27% of the respondents (136 of 176 respondents) stated that the activities of children outside the home is not dangerous or have a guaranteed level of security. While 19.31% of respondents (34 of 176 respondents) not sure about the level of safety of children when the activity outside the home.

Level of safety of children when doing outside activity was also
strengthened by the results of parents' perception about the suitability of the location frequently visited by their children. Most of the respondents, i.e., 84.07% (95 of 113 respondents) have a perception that the location outside their home who often visited by the children are suitable to serve as a place of children's activity, while only 15.92% of respondents (18 of 113 respondents) stated that a location outside the house frequently visited by the children are not suitable to serve as a children's activity area.

From the children's perception, the level of security when they doing outdoor activities is affected by the personal territory. Every child has an intangible personal boundary when doing outdoor activities, that is where children feel comfortable and safe because they have been familiar with the area. When the children feel that they are in an unfamiliar environment, the security level is reduced because it has been out of their personal territory. It was also revealed in interviews that the children have a sense of isolation when they were in an unfamiliar environment. The feelings of isolated are transferred to be a feeling of insecurity for the children so they tend to avoid the area.

Figure 5. Public Perception on The Children Rights to get Security

Reasons/arguments:
- Located near home
- Far from highway
- Location is known
- Activities is known
- Just play
- Positive activities (i.e., learning)
- Safe
PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON BANTUL AS A CHILD-FRIENDLY CITY

To be eligible as a child-friendly city, Bantul has to meet several indicators that ensure the fulfillment of children’s rights in urban spaces. In this case, the public has a subjective standard of success indicators of a child-friendly city. Based on the survey, most respondents (61.93% or 109 of 176 respondents) stated that Bantul is eligible as a child-friendly city. The perception was supported by a number of arguments. Most respondents (58 of 109 respondents who consider Bantul as a child-friendly city) argued that the infrastructure facilities for children are inadequate, especially facilities for early childhood education (ECD) and outdoor playgrounds which are the main indicator of a child-friendly city.

However, as much as 32.95% of respondents (58 of 176 respondents) stated that Bantul was not eligible as a child-friendly city, while 5.11% of respondents (9 of 176 respondents) did not answer. The group of respondents who stated that Bantul has not become a child-friendly city argued that the open space, education facilities, and the child’s playgrounds have been inadequate both in terms of the amount and quality.

The different perception about the eligibility of Bantul as a child-friendly city then was confirmed to relevant stakeholders, including the Department of Public Works, Regional Development Planning Board, Social Service, and Department of Education. Until now, the Government of Bantul Regency has given enough attention to the development of children in Bantul district. However, the attention is still in the form of mentoring and training in education and sport. Education and playground facilities were still not developed because there were no standards and guidelines for that. From this point there are indications that although the Government of Bantul Regency has implemented a policy in the field of education for the children but still has not been matched with the children’s need.

To create Bantul as a child-friendly city, some facilities and supporting policies are required. Facilities needed including playground that is safe, comfortable, and accessible; toys; sport facilities; and parks. Most respondents (115 of 176 respondents) stated that the most important factors needed to create Bantul as a child-friendly city is save and comfortable playground in term of quality and quantity.

Figure 6. Public Perception on Bantul as Child Friendly City

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<tr>
<th>Reasons/Arguments:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adequate children facilities</td>
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<td>Safe and comfort</td>
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<td>Educational facilities</td>
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<td>Recreational facilities</td>
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<td>Parks</td>
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<td>Mayor have concern for children development</td>
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<td>Bantul’s vision (Bantul Projo Tamansari) support children development</td>
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Bantul is ELIGIBLE as child friendly city

Bantul is NOT eligible as child friendly city
CONCLUSION
Child friendly city is such an urban planning strategy to ensure children got their rights fulfilled in every urban aspect. To support this program, children should have contribution in any city development program. Children should be a part of participatory planning approach in development program. Their opinion should be respected and their needs should be accommodated. In the context of Bantul as child friendly city, public perception had accepted that Bantul is eligible to be nominated as child friendly city although Bantul itself was not designed with specific concern to fulfilled children rights. Factors that affect children perception on Bantul as child friendly city are:

1. Existing facilities were enough to accommodate children needs
2. Existing parks and open spaces were enough as playground
3. Bantul environment was secure enough for children

However, Bantul still need to increase the accessibility for children to play. Bantul should have to start designing its urban area with more focus on children needs.

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