

Exploring Neo-Nusantara Concept in Kota Bharu, Kelantan Malaysia

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Abstract

This study explores the integration and acceptance of Neo-Nusantara design within the architectural and urban planning practices of Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia. By employing qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and field observations, the research examines how the community perceives and embraces traditional Nusantara elements alongside the city's Islamic identity. Key findings emphasize the importance of community involvement, cultural diversity, and religious tolerance in shaping the city's architectural identity. The study advocates for a balance between traditional and contemporary design, highlighting the need for policies that preserve cultural heritage while promoting urban growth. Challenges such as low tourism quality, poor public space maintenance, and connectivity issues are addressed with strategies like improved zoning and enhanced public awareness. The research concludes that integrating Neo-Nusantara principles can create a culturally vibrant and sustainable urban environment in Kota Bharu.

Keywords: Nusantara Architecture, Sense of Place, Local Identity, Urban Planning

Introduction

Since 2005, Kota Bharu has transitioned from being branded as a cultural city to adopting the concept of an Islamic City as its latest branding strategy. The municipal administration is considering the implementation of a rebranding strategy aimed at guiding the urban planning of the city, potentially incorporating elements of Islamic identity. The rebranding concept of MPKB-BRI encompasses the notions of "human with god," "human with human," and "human with nature," intending to foster environmental and communal development. According to the Kota Bharu Local Plan 2035, the city is still progressing towards the development of appropriate urban planning that adheres to the principles of the Islamic City concept.

Based on the observation, the concept of an Islamic City appears to emphasize urban design and aesthetics, communal activities and planning, and architectural design. The concept behind the product involves emulating elements from other Islamic nations. The research aims to investigate the local identity and the application of Nusantara Architecture in Kota Bharu while upholding Islamic values, with the objective of exploring innovative city concepts that do not rely on emulation of other Islamic nations. The concept of Neo-Nusantara will be redefined to align with the fundamental principles of Nusantara Architecture. This will involve emphasizing the unique significance of Kelantan in urban development, with a particular focus on the city center of Kota Bharu. The aim is to establish this area as a model for other city centers in the East Coast region, thereby setting a new standard for urban planning and design.

Kota Bharu, alongside Kangar in Perlis, remains unrecognized as a "Bandaraya," constituting two primary urban centers in Malaysia without such designation. This observation indicates that the advancement of the Islamic City concept in 2005 has been characterized by a lack of pace and inadequacy. This scenario suggests that Kota Bharu is deficient in urban planning that effectively represents the city's branding, according to a source cited in Utusan Malaysia in the year 2022. Nevertheless, the local governing body remains committed to revitalizing the concept of the Islamic City despite its tendency to overlook the importance of a regional sense of place that incorporates the traditions and cultural values of the local community. According to Harun et al. (2011), the results indicated that Kota Bharu, a city known for its Kelantanese Malay culture, is facing challenges in its pursuit to transform into an Islamic City. This predicament may be attributed to the insufficient cultural investigation conducted by architects and researchers on the Kelantanese culture. There is a necessity to research the local identity that imbues a sense of authenticity in the urban landscape, particularly in the context of Kota Bharu. Notwithstanding, there is a dearth of data and research pertaining to the resolution of the authentic identity of Kota Bharu. Furthermore, there is a lack of initiative towards regulating the implementation and interpretation of the rebranding concept while preserving its conventional authenticity. Kota Bharu is currently grappling with transforming its identity into an Islamic City, thereby impacting both the urban landscape and the local populace.

This study aims to examine the attributes of Neo-Nusantara Architecture and apply and construe its principles within the framework of the Islamic City concept in a Neo-Nusantara context with the following research objectives

Objective 1. To identify and analyze the unique local identities of Kota Bharu in terms of its urban design and architectural characteristics.

Objective 2. To assess how the community perceives and accepts the Nusantara design concept and strategy in architecture and urban planning, considering its potential applicability within the Islamic City of Kota Bharu.

Literature Review

Local Identity and Sense of Place Implementation in Urban Planning

Local identity can be defined as the heart spirit of a city that creates a different experience from that of another city. This distinct experience will include the unique atmosphere of a particular area, the people who live there, and their worldview. According to Shao et al. (2017), small-scale locales, such as city quarters or street level, are used to illustrate local

identity since they provide characteristics that help form a recognized image of the area and its inhabitants, helping to identify the area from other locations. It offers unique sensations by way of the physical, social, sensory, and memory aspects; such sensations include both pleasant and negative feelings. Local identity also derives starting from National identity, which contains the aspects of race, language, and religion. Moreover, the Regional identity explains the context of flexible terms, landmarks, nature and social and historical processes. This is followed by the Urban identity that contains urban pattern and context, social interaction and historical content. Urban context, social interaction and historical content will create the direction of the local identity, which includes the aspect of physical, social, historical and aesthetic value.

In the case of Kota Bharu, the bonding between the local identity value and the city branding development is far beyond the main agenda. This creates less attraction to the visitors and locals simultaneously, sparking the conflict between the cultural and new city branding identity of Kota Bharu, which is to become an Islamic City. Adib (2021) mention that conflict over cultural and Islamic identities has made tourists less interested in visiting Kelantan tourism sites, and the physical characteristics of Kota Bharu have become less authentic, reducing the number of tourists who return there.

Place identity and place attachment mainly include the connection between the physical and natural aspects. According to Shao et al. (2017), the quality of urban life can be improved through the integration of environmental, economic, and social factors when a sense of place is fostered. The natural surrounding element is one of the major points towards the sense of place and local identity unique value for a specific city. Furthermore, the natural element naturally gives a spiritual connection to the local community. Shamsuddin (2008) mentions that the importance of the natural surroundings and human activities in establishing a sense of place has received considerable attention in research on urban design and place quality. It also suits the agenda and ideology of Kota Bharu local authority to implement the idea of 'human and nature' in their manifestation of city branding. In addition, nature quality and preservation are needed for Kota Bharu in order to increase and comply with the standard. According to Najafi (2011), to preserve both the integrity of human existence within the environment and its quality, a sense of place must be created or preserved. The existing natural and physical features should be maintained in order to avoid the feeling of the place being lost and damaging the location's historical merits. On the other hand, it refers to the connection that exists between individuals and a trove of memories, interpretations, ideas, and associated emotions regarding different sorts of locations as well as the actual settings themselves. Radstrom (2011) mention that when cities make changes, they should do so to enhance the quality of life for their citizens, enhance the region's environmental sustainability, and never lose sight of the significance of a sense of place. The local identity of a location can change over time. It should not, however, become so removed from the surrounding environment that it blends in with the many other increasingly homogeneous locales.

Neo-Nusantara Characteristics and Guidelines

The term "Neo-Nusantara" was used to describe traditional ideas combined with contemporary components. Most of its applications can be discovered in creative fields such as music, fashion, and architecture. A grasp of architectural philosophy and theory is the foundation of Nusantara architecture. This type of research delves into a number of different components that exist in formal, tectonic, structural, representational, and aesthetic

principles that impact the form of building composition. The term "Nusantara Architecture" refers to a collection of vernacular buildings that were constructed prior to 1800 BC and can be discovered all around the Malay Archipelago. These buildings share several traits with one another as a result of the climate and geography of the area in which they were created. In this part of the article, we will refer to the current way of implementing the Nusantara idea in order to compose it back to the progression of the modern standard of Neo-Nusantara Architecture. Nugroho (2018) mentions that Nusantara's physical forms are greatly impacted by the availability of materials, adaption to the tropical climate, and the culture that created its soul. The method of constructing manifestation is characterized by traditional values as procurement values that must be followed through specific processions comprising various understandings.

Redefining Nusantara Architecture's application is to comprehend the local built environment by recognizing the interconnectedness of environmental conditions, nature, and people. A place inherently possesses the potential of its natural environment, which can include things like materials, soil conditions, temperatures, and other natural factors that are gifts from God and can serve either as a setting for human life or as a setting for human existence. This is primarily connected to the concept that underpins the branding of Kota Bharu City, which is the connection between "Human with human," "Human with nature," and "Human with God". Furthermore, Nusantara architecture also needs to serve the value of authenticity based on the original idea. It deserves not just a form carried on from one generation to the next but also to be accompanied by traditional values that are still passed down from generation to generation and are maintained through rituals and other activities that involve several people working together.

According to Nugroho (2018), the universality of the Nusantara Architecture dimension has fundamentally moved beyond the architectural forms dimension and up to the fifth dimension. The first dimension of the Nusantara system is the observation point. Since every human being has a desire for detail or observation points, the Nusantara architectural style constantly incorporates detail features. The second dimension is a form of ornamental diversity, and the third dimension is the space of Nusantara, which incorporates not only the physical scopes (floors, walls, and roofs) but also the human activities and traditions that are very much approaching the dynamism of local places. The fourth dimension is time, which is a product of further growth from the previous dimensions and is related to how the atmosphere of space shifts during the day (morning, noon, evening, and afternoon). Moreover, the energy and cultural factor that ties Nusantara Architecture with the growth of global architecture, which is currently being regarded as the last dimension of architecture, is the fifth dimension of architecture.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the framework and potential of Kota Bharu to redefine its identity and align with the principles of Neo-Nusantara Architecture. The interview and observation methods are utilized to address the research questions posed in this study, providing detailed insights into the current architectural landscape and the possibilities for its evolution within this specific cultural and architectural context.

Table 1

Research Questions and Inquiry

Research Question (RQ)	Strategy of Inquiry
RQ 1: What are the local identities of Kota Bharu with respect to urban design and architecture?	In-depth interview and observation
RQ 2: How do the community perceive and accept the Nusantara design concept and strategy in architecture and urban planning, in terms of its potential applicability in the Islamic City of Kota Bharu?	In-depth interview and observation

In-depth interviews and field observations were conducted in the city center of Kota Bharu to study and understand the community's celebration of the city across several aspects. To provide a comprehensive framework, it is essential to identify the local community's perception and acceptance. Information regarding the quality of lifestyle among the community and their acceptance of the Neo-Nusantara architecture approach was recorded and presented using direct quotes from respondents.

Result and Discussion

In this section, we dissect the data collected from the study's semi-structured interviews and site visits. The data was then coded deductively structured, and the features corresponding to each topic were identified. It is possible that several candidates will be offered similar questions and that some will be presented with unique questions designed to glean specific information from them.

Main RQ: What are the key characteristics of Neo-Nusantara Architecture that can be implemented and adapted to the Islamic City concept of Kota Bharu?

Aim of Research: To examine the attributes of Neo-Nusantara Architecture and to apply and construe its principles within the framework of the Islamic City concept in a Neo-Nusantara context.

Sub RQ	Deductive Codes	Strategy of Inquiry	Inductive codes	
			Coding	Final Theme
RQ!: What are the local identities of Kota Bharu in respect of urban design and architecture?	1. Urban issues in Kota Bharu	- Desk review - Interview	Urban Issues - Low culture and tourism quality affecting local identity. - Issues with public spaces, cleanliness, environmental factors, buildings, and facilities maintenance. - Connectivity and accessibility challenges - Difficulty in presenting local identity through cultural practices - Lack of solid translation of local identity in the majority of new buildings	Theme 1: Challenges in Preserving and Enhancing Local Identity Theme 2: Cultural Representation and Architectural Integrity Theme 3: Revitalization and Integration of Traditional Elements Theme 4: Tourism Development and Quality of Life Improvement
	2. Local identity and sense of place implementation		Implementation - Highlighting potentiality for tourism and improving quality of life. - Significance of surrounding context and connections in creating a sense of place. - Integration of old finishes and traditional architectural elements to infuse new spirit and soul into places. - Studying community behaviour through culture to create a sense of place. - Importance of diverse approaches and values to prevent cultural monotony	

RQ2: How do the community perceive and accept the Nusantara design concept and strategy in architecture and urban planning, in terms of its potential applicability in the Islamic City of Kota Bharu?

1. Characteristics of Neo-Nusantara

-Desk Review
- Interview

Characteristic
- Implementation of nature-related elements in urban design and architecture.
- Relation and connection between nature and traditional arts and culture
- Combination of traditional vernacular and modern architecture in Neo-Nusantara.
- Linking Nusantara and Islamic elements through program and celebration.
- Influence of Siam on the traditional outlook and craftsmanship.
- Diversity among the races in Kota Bharu

Theme 5:
Integration of Nature and Traditional Elements in Urban Design

Theme 6:
Fusion of Traditional and Modern Architecture

Theme 7:
Cultural and Religious Integration in Urban Spaces

2. Approach

Approach
- Community awareness and involvement in preserving cultural identity
- Developing new rules and policies to preserve Nusantara's identity in design
- Redefining zoning areas in Kota Bharu for better integration and appeal.
- Creating an elements list for local businesses to follow and comply with
- Utilizing the commercial sector to educate the community about culture and tradition.
- Highlighting community potential through proper platforms

Theme 1
Challenges in Preserving and Enhancing Local Identity

This theme addresses the multifaceted challenges faced in preserving and enhancing the local identity of Kota Bharu through urban design and architecture. One significant issue is the low quality of cultural and tourism activities, which hampers the preservation and recognition of local identity. Additionally, poor maintenance and management of public spaces, environmental factors, buildings, and facilities degrade the overall urban experience and detract from the city's cultural and historical appeal. Connectivity and accessibility challenges

further hinder the seamless integration of cultural sites and community engagement, limiting the expression of local identity. There is also difficulty in effectively showcasing local identity through cultural practices, leading to a diluted representation of the area's heritage and traditions. Moreover, many new buildings fail to incorporate elements that reflect the local identity, resulting in a loss of cultural continuity and authenticity. Understanding and integrating the surrounding context and connections are crucial for creating a sense of place that resonates with the local community's identity. To address these challenges, strategies such as redefining zoning areas, developing policies to improve public spaces, enhancing environmental standards, and fostering community involvement in preserving cultural identity are essential. These efforts aim to create a more integrated, appealing, and culturally vibrant urban environment that honors and enhances Kota Bharu's unique local identity.

Theme 2

Cultural Representation and Architectural Integrity

This theme explores the importance of accurately representing cultural identity and maintaining architectural integrity in the urban design and development of Kota Bharu. One primary challenge is the difficulty in effectively presenting local identity through cultural practices, leading to a weakened representation of the area's rich heritage and traditions. Additionally, there is a lack of solid translation of local identity in new buildings, which often fail to reflect the cultural and historical essence of the region. This disconnect results in a loss of cultural continuity and authenticity, further diminishing the city's unique character.

The significance of surrounding context and connections is crucial in creating a sense of place that resonates with the local community. By understanding and integrating these elements, urban design can better reflect and uphold the cultural identity of Kota Bharu. This theme emphasizes the need for creating an elements list for new buildings to ensure they embody local identity, thereby maintaining architectural integrity. Moreover, community awareness and involvement in preserving cultural identity are vital. Engaging the community in the design process and educating them about the importance of cultural heritage can foster a deeper connection to the built environment and ensure that new developments respect and enhance the city's unique character.

In short, addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that combines thoughtful urban planning, community engagement, and stringent design guidelines. By doing so, Kota Bharu can achieve a harmonious blend of cultural representation and architectural integrity, ensuring that its urban landscape reflects and honors the rich heritage and identity of its people.

Theme 3

Revitalization and Integration of Traditional Elements

This theme focuses on the revitalization and integration of traditional elements in Kota Bharu's urban design and architecture to infuse new spirit and soul into the city. A key aspect is the integration of old finishes and traditional architectural elements, which helps to maintain cultural continuity and breathe new life into urban spaces. This approach not only preserves the historical significance of the area but also enhances its aesthetic and cultural appeal.

An important component of this theme is the need for diverse approaches and values to prevent cultural monotony. By embracing a variety of traditional and contemporary design elements, the urban environment can reflect the multifaceted nature of the local culture,

fostering a richer and more vibrant community identity. Highlighting community potential through proper platforms is also essential. Providing opportunities for local artisans and craftspeople to showcase their work and participate in urban development projects can promote cultural heritage and support economic growth.

Studying community behavior through cultural practices is another crucial element. Understanding how the local community interacts with and perceives their environment can inform the design process, ensuring that new developments resonate with residents and respect their cultural traditions. This insight can guide the creation of public spaces and buildings that reflect the community's values and way of life.

In a nutshell, the revitalization and integration of traditional elements in Kota Bharu's urban design and architecture are vital for preserving cultural heritage and enhancing the city's identity. By combining old and new, embracing diversity, and involving the community in the design process, the city can create a dynamic and culturally rich urban landscape that honors its past while looking towards the future.

Theme 4

Tourism Development and Quality of Life Improvement

This theme addresses the dual goals of enhancing tourism and improving the quality of life for residents in Kota Bharu. A critical aspect is highlighting the potential for tourism and leveraging it to enrich the local economy and cultural landscape. By developing strategies that showcase the city's unique heritage and attractions, Kota Bharu can become a more appealing destination for tourists, which in turn can generate economic benefits and promote cultural exchange.

Improving the quality of life for residents is equally important and intertwined with tourism development. Ensuring that the city's infrastructure and public spaces are well-maintained and accessible not only makes the city more attractive to visitors but also enhances the daily lives of its inhabitants. Addressing issues such as cleanliness, environmental factors, and the maintenance of buildings and facilities can significantly improve urban living conditions.

The commercial sector plays a crucial role in this theme by educating the community about culture and tradition. Businesses can serve as platforms for cultural engagement, providing both locals and tourists with opportunities to learn about and appreciate the city's heritage. This educational aspect can foster a greater sense of community pride and encourage the preservation of cultural practices.

Additionally, fostering community awareness and involvement in cultural heritage preservation is vital. By engaging residents in tourism development initiatives and highlighting the benefits of a vibrant cultural sector, the city can ensure that its growth is inclusive and sustainable. Efforts to involve the community in decision-making processes and to create platforms for showcasing local talent and traditions can enhance the sense of ownership and pride among residents.

In summary, tourism development and quality of life improvement in Kota Bharu are deeply interconnected. By focusing on both aspects, the city can create a more dynamic and appealing environment that benefits both residents and visitors. Through strategic planning, community involvement, and the promotion of cultural heritage, Kota Bharu can achieve sustainable growth and a higher quality of life for its people.

Theme 5

Integration of Nature and Traditional Elements in Urban Design

This theme explores the integration of natural elements and traditional architectural features in the urban design of Kota Bharu to create a harmonious and culturally rich environment. The implementation of nature-related elements in urban spaces is essential for enhancing the aesthetic appeal and environmental quality of the city. Incorporating green spaces, water features, and natural materials can create a more pleasant and sustainable urban environment, promoting the well-being of residents and visitors alike.

The relationship between nature and traditional arts and culture is another key aspect of this theme. Integrating natural elements with traditional design practices can reflect the cultural heritage of Kota Bharu, creating spaces that resonate with the local community and honor their history. This approach not only preserves the city's unique identity but also promotes a deeper connection between people and their environment.

The combination of traditional vernacular and modern architecture in the Neo-Nusantara style embodies this integration. By blending traditional design elements with contemporary architectural practices, the city can create buildings and spaces that are both functional and culturally significant. This fusion respects the past while embracing modernity, ensuring that new developments are rooted in the local context.

To effectively integrate these elements, developing new rules and policies is crucial. These guidelines should encourage the use of traditional materials, design motifs, and sustainable practices in urban development projects. Creating an elements list for local businesses and developers to follow can ensure that new buildings and public spaces reflect the city's cultural heritage and environmental values.

Community awareness and involvement are also vital for the successful integration of nature and traditional elements in urban design. Educating residents about the importance of cultural and environmental preservation can foster a sense of pride and responsibility towards their city. Engaging the community in the planning and implementation process ensures that developments align with local values and needs.

In conclusion, the integration of nature and traditional elements in urban design is essential for preserving the cultural identity and enhancing the livability of Kota Bharu. By blending natural and traditional features, the city can create a harmonious and sustainable urban environment that honors its heritage and supports the well-being of its residents. Through strategic planning, community involvement, and thoughtful design, Kota Bharu can achieve a unique and vibrant urban landscape.

Theme 6

Fusion of Traditional and Modern Architecture

This theme delves into the fusion of traditional and modern architectural elements in Kota Bharu's urban design, aiming to create a cohesive and dynamic cityscape that honors cultural heritage while embracing contemporary advancements. This fusion is essential in maintaining the city's historical continuity and authenticity amidst modern development pressures.

The combination of traditional vernacular architecture with modern design practices, especially within the Neo-Nusantara framework, offers a pathway to achieving this balance. Traditional elements such as intricate wood carvings, pitched roofs, and the use of local materials can be integrated with modern architectural techniques to create buildings that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing. This blend respects the cultural heritage of Kota Bharu while meeting the demands of modern urban living.

The influence of Siamese craftsmanship on traditional architecture is another vital aspect of this theme. By incorporating these unique design elements, the city can celebrate its multicultural heritage and enrich its architectural landscape. Highlighting community potential through platforms that showcase traditional craftsmanship and integrating these elements into new developments can enhance the city's unique identity.

To effectively fuse traditional and modern architecture, it is important to create an elements list for new constructions. This list should ensure that new buildings incorporate significant traditional features while also adhering to contemporary design standards. This approach not only preserves cultural identity but also ensures architectural integrity and innovation.

Community awareness and involvement are critical in this fusion process. Engaging the local community in urban planning and development projects ensures that the resulting designs resonate with residents' values and cultural heritage. This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership and pride in the evolving urban landscape.

Studying community behavior through cultural practices is also essential. Understanding how residents interact with their environment can inform the design process, ensuring that new developments are not only culturally relevant but also meet the practical needs of the community. This insight helps create spaces that are both meaningful and functional.

In conclusion, the fusion of traditional and modern architecture in Kota Bharu is crucial for creating a cityscape that honors its rich cultural heritage while embracing modernity. By thoughtfully integrating traditional design elements with contemporary practices, developing guidelines for new constructions, and involving the community, Kota Bharu can achieve a harmonious and innovative urban environment. This approach ensures that the city remains culturally vibrant and relevant in the face of modern development challenges.

Theme 7

Cultural and Religious Integration in Urban Spaces

This theme focuses on the integration of cultural and religious elements into urban spaces in Kota Bharu, aiming to create a cohesive and inclusive environment that reflects the city's diverse heritage. Cultural and religious integration is essential for fostering a sense of belonging and respect among the various communities residing in the city.

A primary aspect of this theme is the incorporation of Nusantara and Islamic elements through urban programs and celebrations. These elements can be reflected in the design of public spaces, community centers, and religious buildings, ensuring that they resonate with the cultural and spiritual values of the local population. Festivals, markets, and public gatherings that celebrate both Nusantara and Islamic traditions can enhance community cohesion and cultural awareness.

The diversity among the races in Kota Bharu is another significant consideration. Urban spaces should be designed to accommodate and celebrate this diversity, promoting inclusivity and mutual respect. This can be achieved through multicultural design elements, such as public artworks, architectural motifs, and shared spaces that reflect the city's rich cultural tapestry. Community awareness and involvement are crucial for successful cultural and religious integration. By engaging local residents in the planning and design process, urban spaces can be tailored to meet the needs and preferences of the community. Educational programs and workshops can further enhance understanding and appreciation of the city's cultural and religious heritage.

Redefining zoning areas in Kota Bharu for better integration and appeal is also essential. Thoughtful zoning can create vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods where cultural and religious

elements are seamlessly integrated into daily life. This approach encourages interaction and cooperation among different community groups, fostering a harmonious urban environment. Moreover, developing new rules and policies to preserve and promote cultural and religious identity in urban design is vital. These guidelines can ensure that new developments respect and reflect the cultural and religious significance of the area, maintaining the city's unique character and heritage.

In summery, the integration of cultural and religious elements into urban spaces in Kota Bharu is fundamental to creating a cohesive and inclusive urban environment. By incorporating Nusantara and Islamic traditions, celebrating diversity, involving the community, and implementing thoughtful zoning and policies, Kota Bharu can enhance its cultural and religious identity. This approach not only fosters community pride and cohesion but also ensures that the city's urban spaces are vibrant, inclusive, and reflective of its rich heritage.

Conclusion

This study, "Exploring Neo-Nusantara Concept in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia," delves into the degree to which Nusantara design concepts are accepted and incorporated into architectural and urban planning practices within the context of the Islamic City of Kota Bharu. The focus is on understanding how the local populace perceives and embraces the Nusantara design strategy, considering its potential applicability alongside Kota Bharu's unique Islamic identity. Kota Bharu stands out due to its Islamic culture, rich cultural history, and diverse population, making it an ideal case study for this investigation.

Our research highlights the significance of community bonds, religious tolerance, ethnic diversity, traditional artistic expression, and cultural practices that define Kota Bharu's identity. Community involvement and collaboration in urban planning and design are emphasized, reflecting the importance of local activities such as "gotong royong" and "rewang," which foster strong community connections and a sense of place. The local community's acceptance and understanding of Nusantara design are significantly influenced by Islamic principles and the religious tolerance prevalent among the city's diverse faiths.

The study explores the integration of Nusantara design in urban planning and architecture, emphasizing the need to balance traditional vernacular components with contemporary architectural techniques. It examines the impact of Siamese craftsmanship on Kota Bharu's traditional worldview while advocating for a harmonious blend of design elements to avoid overdesign. Furthermore, the research investigates the potential of incorporating Nusantara design through Islamic celebrations and activities, noting that the successful translation of these elements relies not only on physical aspects but also on how spaces are used and embraced by the community.

Our research underscores the importance of maintaining cultural identity through urban planning, focusing on the local acceptance of Neo-Nusantara architectural principles in a city with a strong Islamic legacy and diverse cultural traditions. This study illuminates the need for a balance between modernity and tradition, highlighting the relevance of cultural preservation in urban development decisions. By exploring the defining aspects of Neo-Nusantara, the research sheds light on how these design components can be effectively integrated into Kota Bharu's urban fabric to maintain its cultural identity and sense of place. Additionally, the research identifies various methods proposed by interviewees to foster the acceptance of Neo-Nusantara ideals among the local population. These methods include educating the community about their cultural identity and traditions, showcasing potential promotional platforms, and involving local authorities and businesses in cultural preservation

efforts. Understanding the interplay between Islamic principles and the Nusantara aesthetic is crucial in this investigation, revealing the extent to which Islamic beliefs influence urban planning decisions and architectural designs in Kota Bharu.

Finally, the study examines the impact of community participation and local government activities on Kota Bharu's urban landscape. By redefining zoning districts and integrating commercial, recreational, historical, cultural, and communal spaces, the city can evolve into a more vibrant and dynamic environment that aligns with its cultural identity. The research also addresses the challenges and potential benefits of implementing Neo-Nusantara principles in Kota Bharu, including the political challenges affecting cultural performances and artistic endeavors, and proposes strategies to overcome these obstacles and reconnect culture and arts through a novel framework.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the application of Neo-Nusantara design concepts within the unique context of Kota Bharu, highlighting the critical role of community involvement, cultural preservation, and the harmonious integration of traditional and modern architectural elements in fostering a vibrant and culturally rich urban environment

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