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*“Public Participation: Shaping a sustainable future”*

## Creating Cultural Innovation: Towards a holistic approach in shaping a sustainable future

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### Abstract

This paper presents a review on holistic approaches of green building assessment tools (GBAT) for sustainable development (SD) showing the trends and conceptual framework. The method of the study is through literature review which highlighted the socio-cultural inadequacy of most GBAT. The paper proposes several hypotheses. Firstly, to use a holistic universal method to assess sustainability within the community's cultural context. Secondly, the assessment criteria for sustainability from the socio-cultural viewpoint would differ from the conventional tools. Thirdly, the study proposes that the community would prefer to shape their future environment with specific preferred values in their home environment.

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### 1. Introduction

In the effort to strive for a more holistic approach for a sustainable future in the built environment, a plethora of assessment tools have been established worldwide, enlisting many evaluation criteria. These

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assessment tools have become the means for countries to shape their future to be sustainable, designed base on particular philosophical basis deemed suitable for the country, such as “Triple Bottom Line” (TBL) and “Cradle to Cradle” (C2C). As a response to their locality needs, Japan, for example, innovated their philosophical approach named as ‘Glocal Approach’ (AIJ & IBEC, 2005), for their future sustainable architecture. However another aspect of sustainability, still arguably discussed is the socio-cultural aspect. Poston et al. (2010) revealed that social and cultural aspects are part of the criteria within a holistic sustainability framework. Darus et al. (2009) highlighted the significance of the non-technical issues such as social and cultural aspects, to developing sustainable rating systems in Malaysia. Shari et al. (2008), other than pointing the difference in focus and models between developed and developing countries, revealed the lack of attention towards the non-environmental aspects in Malaysian scenario. Many studies have evaluated whether these tools covered all the dimensions of their noble philosophical basis and approach such as Triple Bottom Line, towards achieving a sustainable future. Two significant aspects of sustainability identified to be in need of further attention were the Social and Cultural.

The research aimed at fulfilling the gaps identified towards achieving sustainability holistically through creating cultural innovation as an effort toward contributing to the pool of knowledge in sustainability through a holistic approach, within the socio-cultural aspects of the Malay communities, the indigenous communities in Malaysia.

This paper aims to present the reviews, the resulted conceptual framework and the proposed hypotheses for the research. The reviews are meant as a start to critically analyse the gaps and overlaps between the frameworks and noble philosophical basis of their invention with the intention to broaden the wider scope of sustainability, for a more holistic approach. Socio-cultural aspects are very contextual (Shari, Soebarto & Williamson, 2011; Poston, Emmanuel & Thomson, 2010) shaped by the communities’ customs and traditions that determined their norms and moral etiquette, as well as their spiritual faiths or religion. Undeniably, one community’s socio-cultural values in a home environment setting would differ from another (Omar, Endut & Saruwono, 2011). Therefore, the roots and the historical contextual background from which this proposal emerged are vital in understanding the innovation creation within the discussion presented in this paper. Furthermore, shaping the environment processes had started since the early civilization (Saruwono, 2010). The findings of this research will also contribute to shaping the future design for sustainable home environment in Malaysia, within the Malay communities’ socio-cultural context in particular and towards developing flexibility for other communities’ context in general. The study focuses on the socio-cultural aspects of the Malay communities in Negeri Sembilan, a central west coastal region of Malaysia. Their communities, well known for their unique and complex matrilineal custom and ruling systems, with strong historical link to the Malay ancient kingdoms of Sriwijaya, Pagaruyung (Minangkabau) and Melaka. The Malay communities of Negeri Sembilan reflected their socio-cultural uniqueness in their traditional built form.

This paper is divided into five sections; general information about GBAT; the manner in which the literature review was initiated and undertaken; intellectual views of the development of GBAT; the proposed conceptual frameworks and hypotheses and finally the further deliberations for the future direction based on the proposed hypotheses.

## **2. Green building assessment tool**

Green building has now become the flagship of sustainable development (SD) in this century (Ali & Al Nsairat, 2009). In the effort of tackling the global environmental problems towards a sustainable future, many comprehensive green building assessment tools (GBAT) were established globally, and Malaysia is of no exception. The assessment systems measure how well a building performs in achieving

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