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## Measuring the Quality of Life in Low Cost Residential Environment

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### Abstract

The level of satisfaction with the residential environment affects the quality of life. Thus, the aim of this paper is to measure the quality of life on the current low cost residential environment under the management of City Hall Kuala Lumpur (CHKL). A questionnaire survey was distributed among occupants of public low cost residential. The findings indicate that the quality of life is measured using the objective and subjective indicators. Generally, occupants of the lower cost residential are satisfied with the physical design element but are unsatisfied with the physical environment elements.

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*Keywords:* Safety management system; construction organisations; safety officers; building contractors

### 1. Introduction

The Malaysian government has implemented a housing strategy of constructing low cost housing for lower income groups. During the economic decline within the late 1997, the four-tier pricing system for PPR schemes in metropolitan areas and major towns for the resettlement of squatters was implemented to ensure citizens, particularly lower income groups to continue to have advantages of affordable and quality housing (Ai Tee and Ahmad, 2012). This four-tier pricing system was created due to the economic recession in the late 1997. However, it is important to ensure that this system is able to create a harmonious society. Shiud (2004) highlighted that 32.7 per cent of the households in Kuala Lumpur have

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monthly incomes of less than Ringgit Malaysia (RM) 2,000 whereby 19.9 per cent have monthly incomes of less than RM 1,500 in the year 2002. This portray that 32.7 per cent of households in Kuala Lumpur can only afford to buy a low cost house. Low cost housing is generally defined as the appropriate housing units of which the construction is in accordance with identified minimum standards complying with a code of practice specially created for low cost houses (Wang, 1980). As a result of the implementation of the four tier system, all public low-cost housing units developed in urban areas are built as high rise flats. The flats can be up to 18-storeys high with 20 units per floor. According to Adam (1984), housing satisfaction is recognized as an important component of home owners' general quality of life. Moreover, the degree to which home owners' needs and aspirations are met by their housing conditions is a concern for housing developers. Besides that, measures of housing satisfaction offer necessary information to appraise the performance and achievement of the current and future housing projects (Preiser 1989, Natham 1995). The Development of Public Low Cost Residential and the The Quality of Life. According to the Helmi (1999), low cost housing can be built in various concepts of designs. The concepts can be core housing, single-storey housing, double-storey housing, quadrant, cluster links and walk up flats. The development of the Low Cost Flats in Kuala Lumpur is limited to those under the supervision of the City Hall Kuala Lumpur (CHKL). The public low cost flats scheme has been adopted in Kuala Lumpur with the introduction of Perumahan Awam Kos Rendah (PAKR) during the Third Malaysian Plan (1976 – 1980). Project Perumahan Rakyat (PPR) was then introduced, improved through the 7th Malaysian Plan as a result of the National Economic Action Council (NEAC) in December 1998 which was established to generate economic growth through construction activities, particularly in the development of low cost housing and to provide housing for rent to squatters in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and other major cities towards the goal of zero squatters by 2005 (Department of National Housing, 2008). "PPR Dasar Baru" is carried out under a new strategy enforced on 27 February 2002. One unit of PPR provides 3 bedrooms, 1 living room, 1 toilet and 1 bathroom. The implementation of this programme uses the design specification in CIS 2 to improve the quality of life of the low cost flats' occupants. The Department of Economic Planning Unit (1999) defines quality of life as, "Self-development, healthy lifestyles, access and freedom to pursue knowledge and standard of living beyond basic needs individual and psychological needs, to accomplish the level of social welfare equivalent with national aspirations". Nurizan (1998) highlighted that quality of life in the early stages has been measured through the development of social-economy and is followed by education, health, housing and other common facilities. According to the Economic Planning Unit (1999), quality of life refers to the changes in the community and social system from the unsatisfactory situation to a satisfactory situation. Thus, Quality of life has also changed due to the evolution of the development of the public low cost residential. A typical new design specifications that were introduced by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to be implemented for all low cost houses is tabulated in Table 1.

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