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## Residential Location Preferences: New Perspective

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### Abstract

The objective of this paper is to explore residential location and how they relate to travel behavior. The literature focuses on preferences in relation to physical and demographic aspects, such as land uses, facilities, transportation facilities, transportation services, car ownership, income, household size and travel accessibility. However, this study also addresses social and cultural issues such as racial diversity. The case study reported here is based on Iskandar Malaysia development region. Reliability Analysis, Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling are applied to determine the significance factors and the relationship which have been tested to 384 respondents. The results identify that religious factors are influential in terms of residential location preferences. These findings add a different perspective on travel behavior studies, which are heavily dominated by research from Western Europe, North America and Australasia. It is suggested that transport researchers need reject universal conclusions and be clearer about the contexts in which their findings most apply.

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### 1. Introduction

Residential location preferences studies are a focus of attempts to study on the people's preferences on residential location and the factors that influence the decisions. Recognizing the potential of people's preferences, land use and transportation policy will be driven into the new perspective in which policy makers will need to

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understand the people's needs before proposing any policies. Susilo et al., (2012) explained that in order to propose solution for transportation-related matters, understanding on people's preferences should not be framed solely with physical characteristics, but the inclusion of social aspects will add significance effects on people decision.

During the past two decades, the literatures have shown that urban form characteristics, such as density, settlement size, land-use mix, accessibility and local streets lay out are cumulatively affecting attitudes towards residential location preferences and travel behaviour alongside socio-demographic characteristics, housing location and job location (e.g. Aditjandra, 2012). However, many researchers failed to include the socio-cultural and religious characteristics as potential factors that may influence people's decision in residential location preferences and travel behaviour.

Furthermore, research by Susilo and Dijst (2009) and Susilo and Waygood (2012) explained that although land use characteristics have some significance in explaining travel behavior, individual's attitude are often more strongly associated with travel behavior than land use policies or others physical oriented policies. Nevertheless, despite identifying these links, there have not been many studies which have developed a comprehensive framework to address connections between this built environment characteristics and travel behaviour, taking into account of the fact that individuals may self-select a residential location with specific neighborhood characteristics. Schenier (2010) in his research about social inequalities in travel behaviour has highlighted that findings on the social needs on trip distance are very limited. Therefore, this study provides a comprehensive framework to enhance the relationships between residential location preferences and its relation to travel behaviour.

## **2. Literature Review**

There are many studies that focus on physical characteristics in residential location preferences and travel behaviour. Very less consideration was given to social aspects and therefore many researches have revisited the issues of residential location preferences. The argument by Handy et al., (2005) is that understanding on the built environment should be expanded to gather social needs and preferences as this has to be given fair consideration in order to change travel behaviour. This section briefly summarizes some of the relevant literature on built environment and travel behaviour as well as its relation to residential location preferences. For more comprehensive reviews, see Handy (2005), Van Acker and Witlox (2005), Susilo et al., (2012) and Aditjandra (2012).

### *2.1 Trends In Transportation Solution*

Implementation of solutions based on urban form and structure are usually the focus of policy to solve transportation problems (Abrahamse et al., 2009). Alongside this, in condition of fast urban growth scenarios, supply-side initiative is needed. Building new infrastructures are common in many countries in addressing transportation solution, especially in developing country like Malaysia. Handy (2005), however, questioned on impact, where by, new transportation investments have on development patterns and eventually, effect on travel patterns though. Since the early of 1990s, such studies have appeared with increasing frequency. In response of the studies, many researchers began to examine the effect of specific characteristics of the built environment on travel behaviour at a disaggregate level as an effort to test the hypothesis that shape the built environment that can be used to reduce automobile travel (Handy, 2005).

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