



Appraisal of residential satisfaction in double-storey terrace housing in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



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ABSTRACT

Double-storey terrace housing is considered as a popular housing type in Malaysia. However, empirical studies identified that, an increase in crime rate in urban areas has affected on residents' satisfaction of landed housing such as double-storey terrace house. In addition, design of double-storey terrace house lacks ventilation and natural lighting which have also affected on residents' satisfaction. As a result of residents' dissatisfaction, double-storey terrace house is found as the most modified housing types in Malaysia. Thus, this paper aims to appraise residential satisfaction in two double-storey terrace neighbourhoods - Taman Sri Rampai and Taman Keramat Permai in Greater Kuala Lumpur. The research objectives were formulated based on a dynamic interaction approach which includes three main processes-cognitive, affective and behavioural. In order to examine and compare the residential satisfaction in two neighbourhoods, five components of double-storey terrace housing were analyzed through residents' perception on the level of satisfaction. The recommendations of the study suggests that two housing design and five neighbourhood elements can enhance residents' satisfaction with double-storey terrace housing.

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1. Introduction

Since 1970s, Malaysia has experienced rapid industrialization, and its economy has undergone major structural changes. Instead of depending only on agriculture and assembly-type industries, Malaysia's industrialization efforts have shifted to manufacturing and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sectors. As a result, rapid urbanization has followed parallel with the industrialization in the country. One of the main aspects of Malaysia's urbanization is expansion of selected urban areas in the country. The implementation of the Malaysian New Economic Policy (NEP) from 1970 onwards, specifically encouraged the participation of the Bumiputeras (indigenous Malaysians) in the industrial and commercial sector of the economy, has a profound effect on the rate of urban population growth. Poverty level in Malaysia has declined from 49.3% in 1970 to 3.8% in 2009 (EPU, 2014, p.4). In 2014, GDP per capita has reached US\$ 8100 (RM 24,300), almost doubling each decade. Indeed, Malaysia has been

transformed from a poor, colonial plantation economy into a modern, upper-middle income country (Hazari & Nina, 2011).

Over the past forty years, Malaysia has experienced a rapid increase in the construction of terrace housing units all over the country either by the government or private developers, in order to meet the increasing demand of middle-income housing need (Erdoyu et al., 2010). There are about 1.05 million 2-3 storey terrace houses which accounts for the highest percentage (21.7%) among the twelve types of housing stock that exist in Malaysia (JPPH, 2014, p.4). Although Malaysians prefer double-storey terrace housing, there are empirical studies that demonstrate some problems associated with this housing type (Mohit and Elsawati, 2012). Sidhu (2005) reports that crime rate in Malaysia has increased significantly since 1991 in urban areas, particularly in Greater Kuala Lumpur that affects satisfaction level of the residents of landed housing like double-storey terrace houses. A study by Ismail et al. (Undated) show that double-storey terrace houses in Malaysia lacks ventilation because its design is not suitable for tropical weather that also affects satisfaction level of the residents. Erdoyu et al. (2010) report about six distinct modifications that have been adopted in double-storey terrace houses in Malaysia. These are - extension, addition, reduction, division, removal and relocation

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which indicate dissatisfaction level perceived by the residents. Thus, double-storey terrace house is considered as the dominant type of housing in Malaysia that demonstrates the dynamic interaction (satisfaction/dissatisfaction) between residents and their residential environment.

2. Aim and objectives

The main aim of the paper is to investigate the factors and examine their effects on the overall residential satisfaction of double-storey terrace housing with the following objectives:

2.1. Research objectives

- a) To examine the factors affecting the overall residential satisfaction/dissatisfaction with double-storey terrace housing (cognitive objective);
- b) To explore the levels of residential satisfaction/dissatisfaction perceived by the residents of double-storey terrace housing (affective objective);
- c) To investigate the behavioural characteristics of the residents of double-storey terrace housing (behavioural objective); and
- d) To provide recommendations that will help improve the level of residential satisfaction of the residents of double-storey terrace housing.

3. Literature review

3.1. Theoretical foundation

Theories of residential satisfaction all hinge upon the notion that residential satisfaction measures the differences between household actual and desired (or aspired to) housing and neighbourhood situations (Galester & Hesser, 1981). According to prior research on residential satisfaction, there are three main theories upon which most of the empirical studies are based. These are - housing needs theory, housing deficit theory and psychological construct theory. Rossi (1955) introduced the notion of “housing needs” to conceptualize residential satisfaction/dissatisfaction in the life cycle changes. Morris and Winter (1978) introduced the notion of the “housing deficit” to conceptualize residential satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Galester (1985) introduced the notion of “psychological construct” of residential satisfaction which is based on the conceptual foundation that individuals may be seen as cognitively constructing a “reference” condition between needs and aspirations for each particular facet of their residential situation. Most empirical studies on residential satisfaction have used one or a combination of the three theories. A host of variables representing housing and neighbourhood characteristics, individuals’ socio-demographic attributes as well as their perceptions of housing and neighbourhood conditions have been analysed in most housing studies (Lu, 1999). However, some empirical studies have demonstrated that housing deficit is a useful theory in explaining residential satisfaction and mobility behaviour (Bruin & Cook, 1997; Husna & Nurizan, 1987).

3.2. Empirical studies

Residential satisfaction has been discussed in numerous empirical studies which examine characteristics of the users (either cognitive or behavioural) or characteristics of the environment, both physical and social (Amerigo & Aragonés, 1997). Characteristics of users included are - socio-demographic attributes of residents and behavioural characteristics of residents as

well. On the other hand, the characteristics of environment included are - housing characteristics and neighbourhood characteristics. In fact, those characteristics have been viewed as the essential elements in determining residential satisfaction/dissatisfaction levels (the dynamic interaction). On the other hand, behavioural characteristics of residents are considered as the result of the dynamic interaction. A summary of the main findings from residential satisfaction studies has been presented in Table 1.

It appears from the foregoing review of empirical studies on residential satisfaction that while various housing, neighbourhood and household characteristics determine the level of residential satisfaction/dissatisfaction, the effects of these factors as determinants of residential satisfaction/dissatisfaction tend to vary by housing types, tenures, countries and cultures what stand to indicate that further studies are required to determine residential satisfaction/dissatisfaction on case-specific situations to guide public policies on housing and urban development (Mohit et al., 2010, p.20).

4. Methodology

Methodology of the study covers the research design, the sampling frame and design, and sample selection. Then, it explains data collection and techniques of analysis as well.

4.1. Research design

The study is formulated based on the idea of the dynamic interaction between the residents and their housing environment which includes three processes namely, cognitive, affective and behavioural. Those processes, however, begin with negative or positive perceptual attitudes, and feelings (cognitive process) residents have while perceiving the objective attributes of their housing environment. Once the residents have evaluated the objective attributes, they will move to affective process that is residents’ satisfaction/dissatisfaction attitudes towards their socio-physical housing environment (i.e. subjective attributes). After that, the process moves towards the last stage (i.e., behavioural process) which is adaptive, or non-adaptive behaviours that residents show in order to make the physical setting satisfactory by either adaptive or modified housing environment or moving out from the residential area.

Based on literature review, there are two main factors which determine residential satisfaction/dissatisfaction namely, residents’ characteristics and housing environment characteristics. Besides that, residents’ behaviours are considered as the result of these factors. Thus, those factors are analyzed through the formulation of questionnaires that were used as a primary source of data. The data gathered during the field survey such as questionnaire, interviews and observation together with the secondary data (literature review), were analyzed in order to evaluate the level of residential satisfaction/dissatisfaction with double-storey terrace housing.

4.2. Sampling design

A two-stage sampling was used for this study. These are as follows:

- a) Selection of study neighbourhood from two geographic areas; and
- b) Selection of households for the questionnaire survey.

Based on the age of housing areas, two double-storey terrace

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