



EVALUATION ON THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT
OF THE PEOPLE HOUSING PROJECT (PHP)
IN KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA

BY

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the
degree of Master of Science (Built Environment)

Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design
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JANUARY 2019

ABSTRACT

The Government of Malaysia has made continuous effort to ensure accessibility to affordable housing among the low-income households, particularly in urban areas. The *Projek Perumahan Rakyat* (PPR) or the People Housing Program (PHP) was introduced in the 8th Malaysia Plan, with the intention to relocate squatters as well as to develop affordable housing projects to provide comfortable houses for the low-income urban community with adequate infrastructure and basic amenities in suitable urban locations. Thus, in providing a sustainable, a physically healthy and quality living environment (indoor and outdoor), that would have significant influence in shaping human behaviour, productivity and development of an individual, family and community at large. It is the aim of this study to evaluate the existing living environment (indoor and outdoor) of the People Housing Project (PHP). The main objective however is to review literatures on the housing design, planning and living environment with the specific reference to the development of the People Housing Project (PHP). Another is to determine whether the current design, planning and living conditions meeting the needs and wellbeing of the households in terms of appropriateness and adequacy. Finally, is to identify the key factors of design and planning to achieve basic needs and well-being of the occupants. To achieve the aim and objectives of this study, qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted. The literature on the policy, development and laws relating to housing for the low-income families in Malaysia were reviewed. Two case studies, within the jurisdiction of *Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur* (DBKL), were selected for evaluation. Observation and face-to-face interviews were employed to gauge the occupants' opinions. Measurements of the house were also taken to analyze quantitatively the provisions of spaces in accordance with the Uniform Building By-law (UBBL). By and large, this study found that the residents' satisfaction level of their living environment (indoor and outdoor) is low and that the physical and psychological conditions related to the key factors of adequacy, suitability, affordability and quality is far from qualifying them as comfortable domains.

خلاصة البحث

تبذل حكومة ماليزيا جهوداً مستمرة لتوفير وضمان إمكانية الحصول على المسكن بأسعار معقولة بين الأسر ذات الدخل المنخفض ، لا سيما في المناطق الحضرية. وقد تم تقديم برنامج *Projek Perumahan Rakyat (PPR)* أو برنامج الإسكان الشعبي (PHP) في خطة ماليزيا الثامنة ، مع نية نقل واضعي اليد إلى جانب تطوير مشاريع سكنية بأسعار معقولة لتوفير منازل مريحة للمجتمعات الحضرية ذات الدخل المنخفض، والبنية التحتية المناسبة والمرافق الأساسية في مواقع حضرية مناسبة. وبالتالي ، توفير بيئة معيشية مستدامة وجيدة ونوعية جيدة (داخلية وخارجية) من شأنها أن يكون لها تأثير كبير في تشكيل السلوك البشري والإنتاجية وتنمية الفرد والأسرة والمجتمع ككل. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تقييم البيئة المعيشية القائمة (الداخلية والخارجية) لمشروع الإسكان الشعبي (PHP) غير أن الهدف الرئيسي هو استعراض الأدبيات المتعلقة بتصميم المساكن والتخطيط والبيئة المعيشية مع الإشارة المحددة إلى تطوير مشروع الإسكان الشعبي (PHP). وعلى جانب آخر ، هو تحديد ما إذا كانت الظروف الحالية للتصميم والتخطيط والمعيشة تلي احتياجات ورفاهية الأسر من حيث ملاءمتها وكفايتها. وأخيراً ، هو تحديد العوامل الرئيسية للتصميم والتخطيط لتحقيق الاحتياجات الأساسية ورفاهية المقيمين. ولتحقيق الموضوعات وأهداف لهذه الدراسة ، تم تبني مقاربات نوعية وكمية. حيث تم استعراض الأدبيات المتعلقة بالسياسة والتنمية والقوانين المتعلقة بالإسكان للأسر ذات الدخل المنخفض في ماليزيا. تم اختيار دراستين للحالة ، في إطار اختصاص منطقة كوالالمبور (DBKL) للتقييم. حيث تم استخدام المقابلات الشخصية والمتابعة وجهاً لوجه لمعرفة آراء المقيمين. وتم أخذ قياسات المنزل أيضاً للتحليل الكمي لأحكام المساحات وفقاً لقانون البناء الموحد (UBBL) على وجه العموم ، وجدت هذه الدراسة أن مستوى رضا السكان عن بيئتهم المعيشية (داخلي وخارجي) منخفض وأن الظروف المادية والنفسية المتعلقة بالعوامل الرئيسية للكفاية والملاءمة، والقدرة على تحمل التكاليف والجودة هي بعيدة كل البعد عن اعتبارهم كمنطقات مريحة.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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This thesis is dedicated to my beloved husband, Mohd Sharawardi Moh Hanaffi; my lovely daughters, Nur Shafa' Irdeena and Nur Shafa' Mikayla, my parents, Mohamad Johdi Salleh and Rosmawati Abd Rahman; my sisters, Nurul Ain, Nurul Khusna, Nurul Adawiyah; and my brothers, Mohamad Solehuddin Hakimi and Mohamad Solehuddin Haeqal, for their endless support, love, encouragement and understanding throughout the years of my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful.

Alhamdulillah, all praises to Allah s.w.t for the strengths and His blessings in completing this thesis. This study would not have been completed without the contribution of many individuals to whom, I am most grateful. First and foremost, a special appreciation goes to my supervisor, Asst. Prof. Ar. Dr. Srazali Aripin, for his excellent supervision, admirable guidance, continuous encouragement and support. His wide knowledge, invaluable help of constructive comments and useful suggestions throughout the thesis work have contributed to the success of this research.

I would like to express my appreciation to all lecturers at the Kulliyah of Architecture and Environmental Design for their helpful advice, valuable ideas and guidance during my study. My acknowledgement also goes to all administrative staff and technicians at the Kulliyah of Architecture and Environmental Design for their assistance and cooperation. During my study, I have collaborated with many classmates and friends for whom I have great regard. I wish to extend my warmest thanks to all those who helped me with my research, for their kindness and moral support. Thanks for the friendship and unforgettable memories.

Above all, I thank my beloved husband, Mohd Sharawardi Moh Hanaffi for his endless love and prayers, who always stands beside me and encourages me constantly. Without his encouragement and understanding, it would have been impossible for me to finish this work. I also owe a lot of gratitude to my lovely daughters, Nur Shafa' Irdeena and Nur Shafa' Mikayla who have been great sources of motivation and inspiration as well as giving me strength, happiness and joy in life. I also owe my loving thanks to my beloved parents, Mohamad Johdi Salleh and Rosmawati Abd Rahman for their support and understanding. My special gratitude also due to my siblings, Nurul Ain, Nurul Khusna, Mohamad Solehuddin Hakimi, Nurul Adawiyah, Mohamad Solehuddin Haeqal and families for their loving support. Last but not least, my deepest gratitude goes to those who have indirectly contributed in this research. Your kindness means a lot to me. Thank you very much.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MUWHLG	Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government
PHP	People Housing Project
PPR	<i>Projek Perumahan Rakyat</i>
UBBL	Uniform Building By-Law 1984
KLCH or <i>DBKL</i>	Kuala Lumpur City Hall or Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur
NDP or <i>DPN</i>	National Development Policies or <i>Dasar Pembangunan Negara</i>
Kg.	<i>Kampung</i>

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Having a house for shelter is one of the basic needs of human life. A shelter is even more critical for the lower income groups so as not to end up homeless or living in the streets. Houses for shelters can be rented or bought depending on the affordability levels of those families. Indeed, the Malaysian government is very concerned about housing for the poor through its National Housing Policy championed by the Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government (MUWHLG) or previously known as the *Kementerian Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan* (KPKT) and through its aggressive public housing programs in the 10th and the 11th Malaysia Plans. This thesis recognises that one of the housing schemes that the government has successfully introduced and built is the People Housing Projects (PHP) or *Projek Perumahan Rakyat* (PPR). This study intends to examine the quality and standards of living environments in terms of its design, provisions of spaces, facilities and amenities of PHP. The living environment (indoor and outdoor) of the occupants in houses built under PHP would be evaluated through a qualitative and quantitative approach. Two People Housing Projects (PHP) completed housing projects in Klang Valley, Selangor Malaysia are studied in terms of the overall living environment encompassing both the indoor and outdoor spaces, facilities and community development of the housing neighbourhoods. In addition, this study aims to evaluate those existing housing schemes of PHP in terms of its suitability and appropriateness of the design, functional layouts and planning of the housing unit. These aspects

would inevitably contribute to the wellbeing of the occupants. In other words, the physical and psychological comfort of the occupants living in PHP houses is to be evaluated for their wellbeing. This is important because many researchers have come to an agreement that appropriate design and planning of a house (internally and externally) would contribute to the healthy living environment of the occupants physically, psychologically and physiologically (Bateson et al., 2016).

This chapter highlights the issues and challenges of the existing living conditions of PHP which then leads to the statement of problems. The research objectives are established to meet the aim of the study. Research questions are also established to complement the objectives of the research in the study. An appropriate methodology is adopted to ensure that the aim and objectives of the study are met. Finally, the outcome of the study would benefit the designers, architects and planners in the planning, designing and constructing a more suitable and quality living built environment for the low-income population particularly for the People Housing Project (PHP) in Malaysia.

1.2 ISSUES AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Accessibility to own a house is an issue faced by Malaysians especially the poor and the low-income earners. This is due to the fact that land prices in the city are much higher compared to suburban areas and for the public sector to develop low-cost houses with low-cost pricing faces great challenges in terms of profit margin and project's viability. On the other hand, having a house in urban areas becomes a necessity because of job opportunities and locations, better infrastructure and social facilities, and more efficient transportation facilities. But, in major cities like Kuala

Lumpur, the price range of houses is between RM200,000 to RM 1 Million and for the needy Malaysians to own houses seem to be difficult and unaffordable. Since 2002, the government had started to implement the *Projek Perumahan Rakyat* (PPR) or People Housing Project (PHP) by relocating squatter settlements in Kuala Lumpur and other big towns and introducing various financial schemes for low-income household earners either to own or to rent a public housing unit under this scheme. The implementation agency to ensure the development and delivery of the People Housing Project (PHP) is the National Housing Development Board under the Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government (MUWHLG), which started in February 2002.

Nonetheless, the residents have the right to comfortable and quality design and standards of living environment despite renting or buying the houses under PHP. Initial investigations show that there are a lot of negative complaints openly expressed by the residents living in the low-cost houses or PHP especially with regards to the size, space layout and the number of rooms. Limited space for a study area, inconvenient spaces for interactions with neighbours and close relatives as well as inadequate space for performing Jemaah prayers are among the complaints put forth by the residents. With the general provision of limited spaces of the PHP housing (either 2 or 3 bedrooms), therefore had caused poor privacy and inappropriate personal space of the occupants. Hence, this study focusses on the evaluation of house design and planning under the People Housing Project (PHP) in terms of adequacy, affordability, quality, and suitability. The preliminary finding indicates that many of the low-income families have to endure staying in cramped and often unfavourable living conditions of the PHP. This “urban slum” conditions should be addressed with improved design and planning for future PHPs in Malaysia.

In short, the state of affairs of the privacy, space requirements, aesthetic, facilities, and amenities of PHP experienced by the needy and their families should be highlighted and henceforth will be highlighted in this study. In fact, the target for the provision of PHP adequacy, affordability, quality, and suitability are among the key factors to ensure the wellbeing of the needy families living in People Housing Project (PHP). It is acknowledged that these determinant factors pose immense challenges to the public housing providers hence to achieve the balance of both the physical and psychological needs of the occupants in PHP.

To achieve a sustainable living environment is believed to be far more complex than simply providing the physical shelter. Evaluation of the living built environment (internal and external) of PHP is, therefore, necessary and relevant. People Housing Project (PHP) under the Public Housing scheme raises concerns to homeowners which appear neither appropriate nor adequate in terms of meeting the needs and requirement of the households of the residents. With an advantage of buying affordable houses, among the complaints expressed by the residents are the provisions of size, space and the number of rooms in PHP. Most researchers believe that these are key factors affecting the occupants' wellbeing. Small houses or cramped houses can affect the occupants' ability to feel the comfort, tranquillity, and calmness in their own house. It is believed that living environment the interplay between indoor and outdoor plays an important role in the occupants' wellbeing.

1.3 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The research focuses on housing for low-income earners; it is aimed to evaluate the existing living environment of the People Housing Project (PHP). The key objectives to meet the research are as follows:

- 1- To review literatures on the housing design, planning and living environment with specific reference to the development of the People Housing Project (PHP) of Malaysia.
- 2- To determine whether the current design, planning (aesthetic, privacy, space requirements, facilities, and amenities) and living conditions of the People Housing Project (PHP) meet the needs and wellbeing of households in terms of appropriateness and adequacy.
- 3- To identify the key factors of housing design and planning to achieve basic human needs and wellbeing.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research intends to answer the following questions:

- 1- What is the current development of the People Housing Project (PHP) under the Low-cost Housing scheme in Malaysia in terms of design, planning and standards of a living environment?
- 2- To what extent that the current design and planning (aesthetic, privacy, space requirements, facilities, and amenities) and living conditions of the People Housing Project (PHP) meet the needs and wellbeing of households in terms of appropriateness and adequacy.
- 3- What are the key factors for house design and planning that could achieve human needs and wellbeing?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The study would serve as important information as design and planning guidelines for the designers, architects and planners in designing and constructing a more comfortable living environment for the community of the People Housing Project (PHP). The research is primarily to cater for the comfort and wellbeing of the PHP occupants. In accordance to the aspirations of the Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government, this research will provide valuable insights into the community's wellbeing and living environment of the People Housing Project (PHP) in Malaysia via studying two existing PHPs. Indeed Malaysia's public housing development is targeted towards building more convenient and comfortable houses for its people. Hence, the study would eventually provide hands-on information and hard facts about what the people really need and want for PHP to deliver to its target group. The findings of this research will, therefore, be a significance to the housing studies in Malaysia.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this research will emphasise on the architectural knowledge, insights, and understandings that should be incorporated into the design and planning of the People Housing Project (PHP) of Malaysia.

1.7 LIMITATION OF STUDY

The study of housing is dynamic in nature and normally requires appropriate numbers of case studies and respondents. As a researcher, the limitation is experienced at every stage of the research. Such limitations are noted in the case study. The selected PHP