

QUALITY OF LIFE IN MULTI-STOREY AFFORDABLE HOUSING: A REVIEW

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Abstract: *The Malaysian National Housing Policy (2018-2015) explains that the housing sector has expanded to the fifth phase, which in the last phase explains about the affordable housing. However, the planning and implementation of affordable housing places more emphasis on home prices rather than the impact of the physical aspects on the well-being and quality of life of its occupants which has directly raised issues and problems that related to the quality of life of the occupants. Therefore, this paper attempted to investigate the quality of life dimension of multi-storey affordable housing and its relationship with socio-economic. The literature identified, five dimensions signify the quality of life of the occupants viz. environment, physical aspects, public safety, social involvement, and public facilities. This helps extend the literature on quality of life as a multidimensional as demonstrated by a growing number of studies that have been conducted. Further research and policy simulations are necessary to provide specific and relevant recommendations by considering composite household indicators that can significantly affect the quality of life.*

Keywords: *Quality of Life, Multi-storey Housing, Affordable Housing*

Introduction

According to Pauzi (2017), the National Housing Policy (NDP) is a guiding principle for the planning and development of the housing sector in Malaysia whose aim is to provide adequate, quality, and affordable housing to improve the quality of life of the people (National Housing Department, 2011). Through this policy, there have been various affordable housing programs specifically to help the low-income group (B40) and the middle-income group (M40) own a home where the program can also help build the country's economy as well as eradicate squatter problems and thus improve quality of life. Quality of life is an important aspect that society has used to evaluate their quality of life (Lahat, 2012).

Shafii and Miskam (2011) stated that the quality of life gained a place in Malaysia as the starting point in the Eighth Malaysia Plan, where every country's economic growth should be accompanied by an improvement in the quality of life. Malaysian Quality of Life Report (1999) defines the quality of life as a matter of personal development, healthy lifestyle, access and freedom to acquire knowledge, and adheres to a standard of living that exceeds individuals'

basic and psychological needs to achieve social well-being that's in line with national aspirations.

Housing is a basic need for every human being. But not all people can afford to buy a house, especially for the low-income group. As a result, the government has set up a number of affordable housing programs to help solve this problem. Among the housing programs created to help Malaysians own homes is the "Program Perumahan Rakyat" (PPR). Based on the report of the planning and implementation of affordable housing, the emphasis is more on home prices than the impact of the physical aspects of the home on the well-being and quality of life of the occupants (Rahim, 2011). As such, there are issues and problems related to the quality of life of the people living in the house.

Rahim (2011) explains that among the concerns raised by PPR residents are physical issues such as poor housing quality due to the structure of building materials, maintenance system problems, lack of community facilities, and flash floods. Problems also arise due to social issues such as the vandalism of public property and the symptoms of hanging out and free association among teenagers (Rahim, 2011 and Zairuslan, 2013). National Community Policies also address the common social problems of low and middle-income housing such as failure to pay rent and building management fees, lack of responsibility in the use and maintenance of public utilities, sanitation, health and environmental concerns, community communities unsympathetic and unified, as well as a low system of internal and external communities. Therefore, a good housing environment must be well equipped with adequate facilities and infrastructure. These two elements are closely related to each other, enhancing the quality of life of a community (Manan, 2013). There has been a lack of scientific literature research exploration to determine the socio-economic relationship and quality of life. Therefore, this study's objective was to investigate the quality of life of multi-storey affordable housing and investigate the relationship between life quality and socio-economic in multi-storey affordable housing.

Quality of Life

Quality of life has different meanings or definitions based on how it is being interpreted, and the meaning will also vary according to the time and place that the quality of life is evaluated (Manan, 2013). The study also stated that quality of life is subject to economic aspects and includes many other aspects such as social, psychological, cultural, political, and environmental aspects. Awang et al (2008) agreed that quality of life encompasses many aspects in which his study stated that quality of life was assessed in terms of self-sufficiency and access to the environment. The quality of life is assessed based on development and takes into account the views and perceptions of the community towards its surrounding (Awang et al., 2008). The United Nations (1985) explains that quality of life is a state of life in which interactions between factors including economic aspects such as gross income, and poverty, social aspects such as physician ratio with the population, social factors such as divorce, as well as physical and environmental factors that influence these people's development and human life (Manan, 2013). In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1993 presented the definition of quality of life as individuals' views and perceptions of their life-style and position in the context of their culture and system in which they were able to relate closely to their goals, expectations, levels, and burdens in life.

According to a study conducted by Mohd Shamsuddin (1995), quality of life is defined as environmental conditions that include nutrition aspects, living conditions, health facilities, and

sewerage that can affect a person's life. Furthermore, according to Yahaya (1998), the quality of life is an aspect of the economic, social, political, and environmental elements of which it attains a level practiced and accepted by society. Norizan (2000) explained that quality of life covers two main areas, namely subjective and objective areas where it is stated that subjective quality of life refers to situations that reflect the lives of individuals who are happy and satisfied with matters related to their lives while objective quality of life related to social and cultural needs such as wealth status, social status and personal health.

Previous studies show that the dominant factors affecting the quality of life are environmental, housing, security, social, and public, and community amenities. The Malaysian Quality of Life Report (2011) aims to assess the quality of life of Malaysians whose quality of life is measured using 45 indicators for 11 key components (Menteri, 2012). Among the key components are transportation and communication, culture and leisure, social inclusion, income and distribution, education, family life, and work environment. In addition, quality of life can also be measured based on factors of housing and the housing environment (Manan, 2013; Lahat, 2012; Rahim, 2011; Shafii and Miskam, 2011; IKHM 2011). Rosli et al. (2018), Zainal et al. (2012), Shafii and Miskam (2011), and IKHM (2011) agreed that health and safety indicators can be used in measuring a person's quality of life. Furthermore, social participation and public utilities are also frequently used as an indicator to assess the quality of life (Lahat, 2012; Rahim, 2011). Ismail et al. (2015) described that quality of life could be measured using two indicators, namely subjective indicators related to satisfaction level and objective indicators related to physical elements.

Housing

Manan (2013) stated that a house is a basic need for every human being, built in a particular area over a period of time whose purpose is to make the house a place of protection, especially from rain, heat, and shelter at night. Bujang et al. (2010) agree that people need a house for shelter, and he further states that a house is needed for use as a living space. Providing an adequate house is important because the house's poor quality will affect the satisfaction of housing, peace, family health, academic achievement, family relationships, and other social indicators that will have a major impact on children's development (Nurizan, Juliana and Norfaizura, 1998).

According to Zairuslan (2013) the functioning of the home is not confined to a mere place of reflection or control over physical health alone, but the house should also be used to assist in the mental and spiritual development of the individual and the family. According to the Dictionary of Human Geography, housing is meant to form the housing, protection, welfare services, investment, and entry into employment, services, and social support (Manan, 2013). While the United Nations (1960) defines housing as a residential, neighborhood, and micro-environment where physical aspects are used as a shelter and the environment is necessary for the physical, health, and social well-being of a family and individual (Shaari, 2012). On the whole, people need perfect housing, a home that meets their needs and provides for the well-being of its residents, which indirectly can improve the quality of life (Meeks, 1980).

Affordable Housing

The definition of affordable housing is any housing provided by the government or the private sector which must meet the benchmark of affordable housing prices compared to the government-determined income for a country (Azmi et al., 2015). He also explained that affordable housing in Malaysia could be defined based on the prices offered because of these

affordable houses' pricing, which should be less than RM400, 000 per unit. According to Stone (2006), however, the definition of affordable housing can be interpreted if these three basic questions can be answered, namely, capable of who; on the standard of ability; and for how long? This means affordable housing should have its target groups, such as low-income and medium-income groups, meet minimum standards in line with the prices offered and the household's ability and the housing market to change over time. According to the Department of Town and Country Planning (2017), affordable housing is a housing development initiated by the government targeting low and medium-income groups to own a house. For the developing countries, the priority in the formulation of housing policy is more focused on providing adequate housing for the people, especially for the low and middle-income groups (Bujang, 2006). To delivering sufficient housing for the group, the construction of affordable housing should be given priority.

Zabardast (2006) argues that defining affordable housing accurately is subjective because it depends on government policies that are fundamentally different for different countries. However, the important thing is that affordable housing built should meet the basic needs of the home where the buyer is able to buy the house and still have the money to spend on everyday necessities (Cheah et al, 2017). The National Affordable Housing Policy states that there are two categories of affordable homes for which type I is under RM150, 000, and type II category is between RM250, 001 to RM300, 000. Some of the types of affordable housing introduced under the affordable housing program through the 2018 budget are:

- a) Rumah Mesra Rakyat (RMR)
- b) Program Perumahan Rakyat (PPR)
- c) Perumahan Rakyat 1Malaysia (PR1MA)
- d) Projek Perumahan Awam 1Malaysia (PPA1M)

Multi-Storey Housing

According to Muhamad Yahya (2013), multi-storey housing is defined as buildings with multi floors and need to use elevators or stairs. The study also clarified that the ownership rights to these multi-storey buildings are using strata ownership, which means that the ownership rights are divided by units within the building. The Development Planning Guidelines (Flat Real Estate Low Cost), 2013 also provide the same meaning for multi-storey, which having multiple floors and has separate ownership per unit. Examples of buildings that use strata ownership are flats, apartments, and condos. The need for this multi-storey development is due to the scarcity of land resources. The Housing Planning Guidelines (2016), describe the standard height of multi-storey buildings for low-cost and medium-cost apartments without elevators is four floors, and buildings with elevators are 20 floors.

Program Perumahan Rakyat (PPR)

According to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, the “Program Perumahan Rakyat” (PPR) was created by the government to relocate squatters and meet the housing needs of the low-income group. The PPR is divided into two categories, namely PPR Rent and PPR Owned, which is for PPR rent for low income and squatter at RM 124 per month. In contrast, Owned PPR's purpose is to enable the low-income group to own a house for RM 35,000 in Peninsular Malaysia and RM 42,000 in Sabah and Sarawak. Planning and construction of PPR housing use the specification and design of low-cost housing as defined by the National Housing Standard for Low-Cost Real Estate Housing. In short, the features of PPR for the urban type of PPR in urban areas are 5 to 18 storey houses whereas for PPR in the suburban

type of dwellings are terraced houses, thus PPR has a total area of not less than 700 square feet and has three bedrooms, one living room, one kitchen space and two bathrooms per unit of the house. Besides, basic amenities are built in the PPR, such as halls, prayer rooms, business spaces, kindergartens, playgrounds, and garages.

Quality of life and Socio economic

The concept of socio-economy is broad and encompasses various elements such as the level of pay, wealth, health, education, and quality of life that encompass the spiritual and mental aspects. According to Richard Ho (1975), socioeconomic development encompasses all aspects of development such as education, health, income, housing and opportunities, working conditions, military facilities, quality of life, and more, including spiritual and psychiatric aspects. Some many ways or approaches can be used to measure a person's quality of life. According to Katiman Rostam (2004), socioeconomic indicators such as income, employment, health, and education are among the socio economic factors commonly used in measuring the quality of life. According to a study conducted by Keyvanara et al. (2011) and Brennan et al. (2012) in relation to the relationship of quality of life and socioeconomic status explain the socioeconomic factors used to identify such relationships as ownership (home, vehicle), occupation (job, job type), income (high, low), rent or lease payments and education. Keyvanara et al. (2011) also explained the results of their study found a direct and significant relationship between quality of life and variables of Isfahan's socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic variables for health status, namely physical and mental health, showed a significant positive relationship with quality of life, whereas housing status was not related to quality of life.

Nanor et al. (2018) conducted a study on the relationship between quality of life and socio-economic characteristics in Kumasi, Ghana. The results show a significant relationship between quality of life and socioeconomic characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, educational background, household income, and housing type. One possible interpretation of this study's findings is that higher scores on socioeconomic dimensions and housing reflect a better quality of life. The study shows that the respondents' marital status and education level have a significant relationship with the quality of life. According to him, the level of education affects the quality of life through the income earned by an individual, and usually, the income will be higher for those with higher educational attainment. According to Ahmad (2008) and Ross and Wu (1996), education profoundly affects a human being's life because educated people can acquire, maintain, and change their quality of life. Education has a positive impact on the quality of life and helps the community break out of poverty, build a democratic society, and build a prosperous society. Ahmad (2008) emphasized that education is vital in building quality life.

Thumboo et al. (2003) conducted a study on the quality of life of Asian urban people and found that the relationship between quality of life and socioeconomic status varied by race. In this study, the Chinese, Malays, and Indians' quality of life in Singapore is measured to determine the population, socioeconomic status, mental features, and other relevant indexes. The quality of life or well-being of a person can be achieved and made more meaningful if the government can play a better role, especially in increasing income, providing more health facilities and affordable housing, and providing a better working environment (Hussain et al., 2017).

Conclusion

This research discussed theories and concepts of quality of life in multi-story affordable housing. The literature identified, five dimensions signify the quality of life of the occupants viz. environment, physical aspects, public safety, social involvement, and public facilities. The study discovered that quality of life should be initiated at local scales. The future direction of the research is to produce indicators of quality of life in relation to economic and social aspects. It is important to continue to test the quality of life in multi-story affordable housing dimensions, so that additional reliability evidence and construct validity can be achieved. Hence, it is hoped that this paper will encourage positive debate and gain some attention from the policymakers, practitioners and researchers in Malaysia.

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