

The Evaluation of Neighborhood Facilities and Services of Low Cost Housing (LCH) in Kuala Terengganu: Residential Satisfaction Perspective

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Abstract

In Malaysia, the National Housing Policy made housing one of the main objectives in fulfilling the needs of the people. Therefore, a study on the status of one housing program for the poor and those from the lower-income bracket, namely the Low-Cost Housing (LCH), in influencing the quality of life of its target group was carried out. A field study was done to evaluate the consistency of neighbourhood facilities and services of the LCH with the housing needs of the target group. The main instrument in primary data collection was using a survey method utilizing structured questionnaires. Around 325 household heads for six flat-type low cost housing programs in Kuala Terengganu were involved in this study. Results showed that residents are dissatisfied with neighbourhood facilities. This study recommends an immediate improvement of neighbourhood facilities in these low-cost housing.

Keywords: Evaluation Program, Neighbourhood Facilities, Low-Cost Housing Program, Residential Satisfaction

Introduction

The Malaysian National Housing Policy is designed to provide sufficient, quality and affordable housing to increase public well-being (Department of National Housing, 2011). One type of housing being developed is low cost housing formed specifically for the poor or low-income group. The main objective type of housing is to help the poor or low-income groups through the provision of cheap and affordable housing.

The Department of National Housing (2011) has set the housing standard and one of the main aspects is providing neighbourhood facilities and services. This includes a drainage

system, parking lots, a garbage disposal system, a communication system, schools, clinics, a police station and others. However, the LCH has received stern criticism from the people. The LCH was criticized for failing to provide comfortable and quality housing. Most individuals occupying low cost housing claimed to be unsatisfied with the housing characteristics and facilities provided (Nurizan 1998). Despite these trends, very few housing quality studies have been undertaken in developing countries (Fiadzo et al. 2001). In Malaysia specifically, several researches regarding facilities and services have been done, for instance by Faridah et al. (2015), Ahmad Ezanee et al. (2012), Abdul Ghani (2006) and Zakiyah et al. (2003). Meanwhile, scholars from other countries have also conducted studies on residents' satisfaction of neighbourhood facilities, such as Iyanda & Mohit (2016), Asiyabola et al. (2012); Liu (1999); Ukoha and Beamish (1997), Mohit et al. (2010) and Turkoglu (1997).

Neighbourhood's facilities and services: An important factor that will affect the quality of life is the residents' satisfaction with their neighbourhood's facilities and services (Abdul Ghani, 2006; Holt-Jensen 2001; Leby & Hashim, 2010; Iyanda & Mohit, 2016; Asiyabola et al. 2012; Nor Aini et al. 2011; Nurizan 1998). Theories of residential satisfaction are based on the notion that residential satisfaction measures the difference between households' actual and desired housing and neighbourhood situations (Abdul Ghani 2006). Residents make their judgments about residential conditions based on their needs and aspirations. They are likely to feel dissatisfied if their dwelling and neighbourhood facilities do not meet their residential needs and aspirations (Abdul Ghani 2006).

In the context of neighborhood facilities, basic facilities and services in the house are necessary to enhance a resident's daily activity (Kaitilla 1993). The facilities and services in a housing area should include the provision of public transportation, parking lots, schools, health care, police station, communication and recreation facilities (Asiyabola et al. 2012; Holt-Jensen 2001; Abdul Ghani 2006).

The accessibility to the facilities is also an important aspect that will affect residents' quality of life (Leby & Hashim 2010). This means that the house should be in close proximity to work, relatives or, and should have any postcode discrimination (Hawtin 2007). According to Holt-Jensen (2001) and Nicola (2003), appropriate location and accessibility of service delivery are attributes to a good quality of life that meets the community's needs. Turkoglu (1997) and Kellekci and Berkoz (2009) found that accessibility to educational institutions, such as primary and secondary schools, and health institutions, such as clinics and hospitals, are a crucial indicator that influences user preference in environmental quality. A location near to the town centre genuinely influences a user's preference (Mohit et al. 2010; Kellekci and Berkoz 2009; Pushpa and Rosadah 2008).

Meanwhile, the UK Government has added a number of quality housing facilities as suggested in the *Sub-Committee on Standards of Fitness of Habitation in 1946*, such as suitable arrangements for garbage disposal, disposal of waste water and a proper drainage system (Humphrys 1968).

Methodology

In this research, all housing areas under the LCH category built for the low income group and managed by either the federal or the state governments were considered a population. The research location was Kuala Terengganu. Only flat-type LCH were chosen as study samples. The researcher found only six flat-type LCH around the Kuala Terengganu area. These six LCH are the Flat Ladang Gemilang 2, Flat Pulau Duyong, Flat Bukit Kecil 2, Flat Kondo Rakyat Kuala Ibai, Flat Kampung Kolam and Flat Gelong Bilal. According to the Housing Unit, Terengganu Secretary Office, most flat-type LCH received criticism from the residents due to lower quality of the houses compared to single-type or terrace LCH.

Table 1:

A list of low-cost housing schemes and the number of housing units

Number	Low Cost Housing Scheme	Number of houses	Total sample of respondents
1	Flat Ladang Gemilang 2	192	36
2	RMM Pulau Duyong	120	22
3	PAKR Bukit Kecil 2	145	27
4	Perumahan Kondo Rakyat, Kuala Ibai	1000	186
5	Rumah Pangsa Kg Kolam	96	18
6	Flat Gelong Bilal	192	36
<i>Total</i>		<i>1745</i>	<i>365</i>

Source: Housing Unit, *Pejabat Setiausaha Terengganu dan Perbadanan Memajukan Iktisad Negeri Terengganu* (PERMINT) 2011

By using the Yamanae (1973) formula, the sample size of this study was as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{e^2 N + 1}$$

According to Table 1, there are 1745 units in total in all the low-cost housing schemes. As the Researcher is unable to choose all 1745 housing units as samples for this study, a statistical formula was used to select the sample size of this study.

n = Total housing units surveyed

N = Total housing units in the area

e = Error level of 5% to 95% confidence level

Based on the calculations below, the number of housing units in the study was 325.

$$n = \frac{1745}{(0.05^2 \times 1745)}$$

$$n = \frac{1745}{4.112}$$

$n = 325.407 = 325$ houses

The researcher could only interview the household head; around 325 of them were selected, sampling the six aforementioned flat-type LCH in Kuala Terengganu. From the 325 respondents forming the research sample, 88.4% of them were Malays, while the rest were Chinese (8.8%) and Indians (1.2%). These respondents were interviewed based on a structured questionnaire, with its compatibility and reliability having been tested beforehand. In this study, research was done to identify the consistency of the characteristics of neighbourhood facilities and services of LCH houses with the target group needs. Average index was used based on responses on a Likert Scale of five ordinal (1= very not satisfied and 5 = very satisfied) measuring the satisfaction level. The classification of scale index adopted from Mc Caffer and Zaimi Majid (1997) (Faridah et al. 2015) is as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Classification of average index

Classification	Rating Scale
Very not satisfied	1.00 – 1.50
Not satisfied	1.50 - 2.50
Moderate	2.50 – 3.50
Satisfied	3.50 - 4.50
Very satisfied	4.50 – 5.00

Result and Discussions

The pattern of responses from the residents of the six LCH in Kuala Terengganu seems similar. The mean overall satisfaction for neighbourhood facilities for each LCH is as shown in Table 1. Overall mean score for the six LCH is 2.85. The score shows that the overall satisfaction is at a moderate level. The residents in Flat Bukit Kecil, Flat Kg. Kolam, Flat Gelong Bilal, Flat Ladang Gemilang 2, Flat Pulau Duyong and Flat Kondo Rakyat gave a moderate rating for their neighbourhood facilities and services with average means scores of 2.80, 2.63, 2.87, 2.91, 3.23, 2.66 respectively.

Table3:

Overall satisfaction with neighbourhood facilities and services

Bukit Kecil	Flat Kolam	Gelong Bilal	Ladang Gemilang	Pulau Duyong	Kondo Rakyat	Overall Mean
2.80	2.63	2.87	2.91	3.23	2.66	2.85

Table 2 shows the average score values for each of the attributes used in measuring satisfaction with neighbourhood facilities as rated by all the respondents. The residents in Flat Bukit Kecil, Flat Kg. Kolam, Flat Ladang Gemilang 2, Flat Pulau Duyong and Flat Kondo Rakyat expressed low satisfaction for the parking facilities and public transport. Residents in Flat Ladang Gemilang were also dissatisfied with the parking facilities (2.33) and moderately satisfied with the public transport (2.53). Residents in Flat Duyong were moderately satisfied with the parking facilities (2.77) and public transport (2.73). Similarly, respondents in Flat Kondo Rakyat expressed moderate satisfaction with parking facilities (2.80). They stated that the parking lots provided are too small for parking their cars or other vehicles. For most of respondents who were not satisfied with public transport, no form of public transport was

provided near their residence. These findings corroborate the findings of the study of low cost residential areas in Malaysia done by Abdul Ghani (2008) and Zakiyah et al. (2003), in which many residents were dissatisfied with their parking lots/car parks.

Table 4:
Satisfaction with neighborhood facilities

Neighborhood facilities	Bukit Kecil	Flat Kolam	Gelong Bilal	Ladang Gemilang	Pulau Duyong	Kondo Rakyat
1.Parking facilities	1.74	1.89	3.19	2.33	2.77	2.80
2.Public transport	1.74	1.94	3.11	2.58	2.73	2.30
3.Education facilities	3.63	3.50	2.92	3.67	3.77	2.46
4.Shopping facilities	3.74	3.50	2.69	3.00	3.09	2.49
5.Hospital/ clinic	3.78	2.94	2.61	3.44	3.73	2.47
6.Police station	3.63	2.94	2.50	3.03	2.82	2.38
7.Recreational facilities	1.93	2.22	3.11	2.06	2.82	3.02
8.Lift services	1.96	1.94	2.47	3.17	3.09	2.32
9.Garbage disposal	3.11	3.17	3.17	3.11	3.73	3.04
10. Public phone	2.00	2.11	2.86	2.47	3.23	2.85
11.Drainage	3.04	2.83	2.97	3.17	3.77	3.14

The residents of Flat Bukit Kecil were satisfied with the provided education facilities, shopping facilities, hospital/ clinic and police station. Meanwhile, residents in Flat Kondo Rakyat were unsatisfied with these facilities. For most of the residents who were dissatisfied with the provided education facilities, shopping facilities, hospital/ clinic and police station, these facilities were not accessible and are at a far distance from their residences. This finding is consistent with Ahmad Ezanee et al. (2012) who found that many LCH residents in Selangor were unsatisfied with school and health care services.

Regarding recreational facilities, the residents in Flat Gelong Bilal, Flat Pulau Duyong and Flat Kondo Rakyat were moderately satisfied with the provided recreational facilities. Meanwhile, residents in Flat Bukit Kecil, Flat Kg. Kolam, and Flat Ladang Gemilang 2 were dissatisfied with the provided recreational facilities, with mean scores of 1.93, 2.22 and 2.06 respectively. They stated that recreational facilities were inadequate. This finding is consistent with Zakiyah et al. (2003) who found that many low cost residents in Kedah were dissatisfied with the children's playground provided.

Regarding lift services, Flat Ladang Gemilang's residents and Flat Pulau Duyong's resident gave a moderate rating. Residents in Flat Bukit Kecil, Flat Kg. Kolam, Flat Gelong Bilal and Kondo Rakyat were rather dissatisfied, with mean scores of 1.96, 1.94, 2.47 and 2.32 respectively. These results are similar with those of Faridah et al. (2015) in which residents of LCH in Kuala Lumpur are mostly unsatisfied with lift services.

For garbage disposal, most residents were moderately satisfied, except for residents in Flat Pulau Duyong who were very satisfied with a mean score of 3.73. Residents in Flat Gelong Bilal, Flat Pulau Duyong and Flat Kondo Rakyat were moderately satisfied with the public phone facilities. Meanwhile, residents in Flat Bukit Kecil, Flat Kg. Kolam and Flat Ladang Gemilang 2 were dissatisfied with the public phone facilities with mean scores of 2.00, 2.11

and 2.47 respectively. They stated that the number of public telephones was inadequate, and most were not working or damaged. The residents' level of satisfaction with drainage in Flat Duyong was very high (mean score of 3.77). Meanwhile, other residents were satisfied with the drainage system put in place, with average scores of 3.04, 2.83, 2.97, 3.17 3.17 and 3.14 in Flat Bukit Kecil, Flat Kg. Kolam, Flat Gelong Bilal, Flat Ladang Gemilang 2 and Flat Kondo Rakyat respectively.

Conclusion

In this study, neighbourhood facilities and services of LCH in Kuala Terengganu have been identified as being of low quality, inaccessible and inadequate. These problems affected negatively on the quality of life and, as a result, the residents were dissatisfied. Therefore, this study recommends proper planning, evaluation and monitoring of low-cost housing programs by the government and the housing development agency in the state to ensure that neighbourhood facilities of high quality are delivered along with housing units. Apart from that, the current situation in these housing areas needs to be improved and the existing facilities enhanced, to meet the housing needs of the residents.

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