

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON PLAY LEARNING: REDISCOVER CHILDREN PLAY SPACE IN KUALA LUMPUR HIGH RISE PUBLIC HOUSING TO CULTIVATE PLAY LEARNING

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Neighborhood area plays an important role in children's play learning but children's ability to go outdoor and experience the natural environment is under threat due to the fear and risk, lack of investment environment, overcrowding, and poverty. Previous studies highlighted low-cost housing residents' major dissatisfaction towards their community life. However, previous studies have only mentioned the dissatisfaction of adult residents and children who live in low-cost housing space quality are also important as it will affect children growth development especially children who need space to cultivate play learning. Play opportunities and environments that promote play, exploration and hands-on learning are at the core of effective learning program. Therefore, this research will rediscover children play spaces in Kuala Lumpur high-rise public housing to cultivate play learning. In this research, interviews will be used as the research inquiry and will conduct interviews on children's preference of space and the characteristic of space that encourage play learning. This research will discover spaces to cultivate play learning for children in Kuala Lumpur public housing. This research will contribute to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Local Authority Council, and Kuala Lumpur City Hall. The benefits of this research will be improving existing public housing common spaces and improving design guidelines for the future public housing project. Future research can be researched using survey questionnaires towards bigger sampling. In conclusion, this study is to discovering potential space in existing Kuala Lumpur public housing to cultivate play learning for children.

Keywords: *Kuala Lumpur High Rise Public Housing, Play Learning, Play Learning Space*

1. INTRODUCTION

Background Study

Sustainable development goal 4, the quality of education established by the United Nations to ensure all children received an equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities. In the second target of Goal 4, the importance of early learning has also been entrenched to ensure all children have access to

quality early childhood development and primary education by the year 2030. In actual fact, children learn more when they are playing compare to learning in a formal and organized setting. The space where children spend most of the time, the home and community environment give an excellent opportunity to promote space for children to play, which means learning, the play learning.

According to Gillian Thomas and Guy Thompson, 2004, children are a powerful symbol

of our future and currently, they are losing connection with nature environment, their well-being, and environmental quality to promote play learning. The worse a local environment looks, the rarer chance for children to lay freely. With this environmental condition, children will hard to sense the environmental issue in the future. Notwithstanding Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia has done remarkably well in uplifting the standard of living of its citizens, there are emerging areas of concern that require urgent attention, particularly on the well-being of the children who live in high-rise public housing. Children have no pre-primary learning chances due to their family finances are not stable. The learning space quality is also constrained as they live in public high-rise housing which has a high density of residents. Part of the reason why books and toys are not available is also due to the lack of space in low-cost housing. NGOs have several cases where the family return toys to them due to a lack of space. (Children Without A study of urban child poverty and deprivation in low-cost- flats in Kuala Lumpur 2018 UNICEF Malaysia. Therefore, there is a need to rediscover children's play space in Kuala Lumpur's high-rise public housing to cultivate play learning to improve our country's children's growth development.

Problems statement

Motivational

UNICEF has been running a survey focused on the residents of Kuala Lumpur's public housing during the years 2020 and 2021 and aims to give an insight into the resident's experiences with urban low-income group families. The study found that children in these families faced challenges in having an effective engagement in home-based learning during pandemics. They are also having financial barriers to accessing education even after the school reopens.

The majority of parents report that online learning is not effective for children due to lack of suitability of space, inability to supervise their children, and lack of basic necessary equipment. Children's ability to sustain and remain engaged with such extensive periods of home learning is also limited. This leads to children struggling to focus and losing interest in learning. (UNICEF REPORT, 'Families on the Edge' MAY 2021 UNICEF Executive Director). Many educators are finding solutions to provide children with facilities or programs that are able to tap children

learning potential and the results find out that the most important way for children to learn is through play and children also gain knowledge and new skills through play. Therefore, an environment that promotes play, exploration, and hands-on learning is the core effective learning way for children.

According to UNICEF REPORT: 'Learning through play' October 2018 UNICEF Education Section, children's growth development and field of learning are complex and holistic, and all these can be encouraged through play. Space where children spend most of the time, home environment, neighborhood, and community space provide excellent opportunities to promote play learning for children from early years. Despite the above-mentioned, importance of play learning, Malaysia's education system yet still formally focuses on school-based learning for children. The children in Malaysia's low-cost housing are not losing their interest in learning but are losing their interest in a formal learning way that is fixed in Malaysia's education system. Since space that allows children to occur play learning is home and community space in Malaysia's low-cost housing, space in this environment needs to be discovered to cultivate play learning for children.

Research problems

Countless researchers raised that low and medium-cost housing in Malaysia has been facing two major issues regard to living quantity and quality. Razali raised the first issue in 1993, he mentions that the low-cost housing is insufficient in contrast with the current total demand in our country. See Tan raised the second issue in 1980, See Tan stated that most of the low-cost housing in Malaysia does not provide good living quality for the residents in base on the resident needs such as infrastructural, social life, and religious facility.

Interviewee of low-cost housing also raised their main dissatisfaction with their community life quality and social life quality. Moreover, there is no common space or space where the residents could exchange greetings on special days and events. Thus, it may be mentioned here that in terms of their living quality, the residents have clearly shown their dissatisfaction (Zehadul Karim, A. H. M. (2013). However, the current research paper is only focused on the dissatisfaction of adult residents in Malaysia's low-cost housing. As a matter of course, adults are able to voice out their dissatisfaction but

children's voice has been neglected. Furthermore, children don't have the ability to express themselves verbally. For children who live in low-cost housing, space quality is also important as the living quality will affect children's growth development, especially children who need space to cultivate play learning.

GAP

This study will discover play learning spaces for children who live in Kuala Lumpur's high-rise public housing only. The gap of this study will be the focus scope area of study, currently, this study is only focused on the urban city, Kuala Lumpur, future studies suggested studying the suburban and rural areas of Malaysia. Besides, Malaysia has few types of public housing and this study only focus on one housing type which is high-rise public housing. The future study suggested studying the low rise and landed public housing.

2. LITERATURE

2.1 Play Learning Space at Kuala Lumpur High Rise Public Housing

Kuala Lumpur High Rise Living Public Housing

YBHG.Datuk Zainal Abidin Bin Abu Hasan, Secretary General Ministry of Housing and Local Government (Habitat Magazine 2020/12th Issue: Housing for All, A Better Urban Future) mentions that Malaysia total population of living has more than 75% that are living in urban areas and the population is getting increasing yearly. The fast-growing population leads to inefficiencies in social activities and environmental aspects. For example such as green and open spaces are limitations in low-cost housing living environments. To achieve the "Wawasan Kemakmuran Bersama 2030", new programs were proposed in public housing to improve social life in low-cost housing such as providing community halls and libraries for the residents. In Malaysia's urban city public housing type, standardization and spatial efficiency result in minimum dwelling space. It causes life to spill into the outdoors which then becomes a vital social space for children. According to Abdul Aziz (2017), outdoors near home spaces in low-cost flats serve as important activity areas for children. Such spaces right at the door front,

though minimized for economic purposes, it is an ecologically important environment for children.

The current government's resident improvement program has lacked consideration of the aspects of improving children's life quality in public housing and only focused on the space that children prefer the most surrounding public housing. Therefore, this study will be focusing on improving children's life quality in urban high-rise public housing and will focus on the strategy to improve children's space in public housing through play learning.

The important of Play Learning Space

According to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government Annual Report, 2020, the main mission of low-cost housing projects is to improve the quality of life and well-being of low-income group people in Malaysia and the vision is to create a quality and sustainable environment to achieve a prosperous life in low-cost housing. However, according to Goh (2011), Malaysia's public housing design scheme has only been considering 19% of living quality when designing public housing.

2.2 Play Learning Space Characteristic

Children needs of play learning space

According to Flannigan (2018), play, especially outdoor play, is a crucial component of early childhood. Play is innate and instinctual for children and it will influence children's learning and development. And yet, there has been a trend of reducing outdoor play in school and community settings (Milteer & Ginsburg, 2012). Canada which facing several children's physical and mental health issues starts to reconsider the importance of outdoor play for children and investigate strategies to increase children spending outdoor time and outdoor activities. This research focused on investigating the children's play theme, play patterns, and behavior in daily life. the results suggested that increasing children's opportunity in engaging with loose parts in an outdoor environment will promote children's various positive growth developments. Researchers also proved that the implementation of loose parts at outdoor is an easy and affordable way to promote play for children.

According to Yogman (2018), play is intrinsically motivated and leads to active engagement and joyful discovery. This study emphasizes that children are able to learn more from their surroundings, for example, from their parents and teacher. Therefore, parents and teachers are suggested to learn the essential components of play to promote healthy children's growth development and enhance their learning process although free play is to remain an integral aspect of children's daily life. Sahimi (2017) mentions that we should take into consideration research to understand environmental aspects from children's perspectives as children will have different views and perceptions from adults. Through the research's outcome, children do have preferences for the outdoors, and spaces where they spend most of their time throughout the day.

According to Zwierzchowska (2021), the urban environment and the contemporary urban lifestyle limit the opportunity for contact with nature. This study emphasizes that contact with nature is valuable for children's health, well-being, and children growth development. Many researchers acknowledge the importance of nature towards children's growth development and for future improvements, the nature-oriented environment is suggested to involve children's growth development.

According to Barrable (2021), the nature connection, which describes a positive relationship between humans and the rest of nature, has been recognized as a worthwhile goal of all education. Successful short-term interventions in increasing nature engagement in children have been reported by the previous researcher, however, until now, there have been no empirical studies that have studied more in-depth the strategy to engage with nature which can promote nature engagement and the positive effect on children and previous researchers' result shows that children's affinity with the natural world is able to nurture by engaging with mindfulness activities in a nature reserve environment. The connection that children have with the non-human natural world holds the promise of supporting wellbeing and mental health, well as increasing pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors.

However, the current study only focused on the strategy to promote play opportunities for children and focus on cultivating play learning for all ages of children. The current study only takes

place at kindergarten and the children's preferred play spaces are spaces that they spend during free time which is out of their learning period. The current study studied the importance of nature for children and only focused on the strategy to allow children to have nature engagement and proved that nature is able to promote positive well-being and cultivate pro-environmental attitudes for children engaging with nature. My study will focus on promoting and cultivating play learning for children starting from age 4 and study play as a term of learning aspect. My study will research on strategy or solutions for children to cultivate play learning in nature settings.

Application of Play Learning space in High Rise Living

According to Birch (2017), spatial designers, who engage children in their design process, most often frame children in this context as experts in their own lives. This research combined their theory and stand on children's perception of creativity, play and transgression and found out that children are a potential co-designer and also the user and the researcher also gave a point to a new understanding of this participatory role, the children, in which children move towards the main role of the designer.

According to Nguyen, L (2020), the built environment plays a key role in cultivating daily social interaction which is able to bring richness and liveliness to social life and can improve individuals' well-being. However, specific studies on high-rise apartment buildings conclude that they ignore the needs and lifestyle habits of their residents and hindered child development. The provision of appropriate space for social interaction in the neighborhood is very important as this study found out that social interactions mostly take place in the circulation areas which is not a place designed to be a children's play space had created social annoyance among residents. Therefore, it is important that future designs of high-rise apartment buildings provide appropriate opportunities and spaces to accommodate actual children's play spaces.

The current study focused on finding solutions to exchange ideas through the play between adults and children through spatial design only. The current study focuses on raising the issue and mentioning the consequences of misuse of space for social interaction due to the space limitation in high-rise living. This study

will focus on children, discovering space in high-rise public housing, and discovering strategies to imply the spatial design of play space in Kuala Lumpur's public housing physically to cultivate play learning for children.

3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

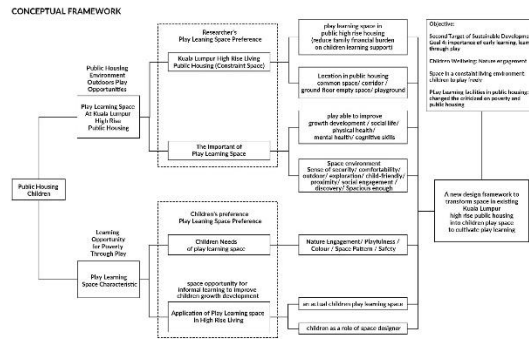


Figure 1. Model of Conceptual Framework

4 CONCLUSION

From the literature review, framework designed to rediscover space in Kuala Lumpur public housing, identify spaces that are able to transform into play learning spaces, and identify the characteristic of play learning space. This framework can be used to design several play learning spaces for all Kuala Lumpur public housing, design a new play learning space for children, transform the common community space into children play learning space to improve children's growth development.

5 CONTRIBUTION

This research will improve existing Kuala Lumpur public housing common spaces and improve or provide a new scheme of design guidelines for future public housing projects. This research will contribute to families with children who currently live in Kuala Lumpur public housing and the government public housing design department. The benefits of this research will be the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Local Authority Council, and Kuala Lumpur City Hall.

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