



# Focus Group Discussion on Youth Participation in Vertical Housing Neighbourhood Space

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## Abstract

Focus group discussion series were set up at the vertical housing of Kerinchi People Housing Project, Lembah Pantai with two different groups in separate venue and time. The analysis was done by using Atlas.ti after transcribing and coding the audio-taped of discussion, searching for networking on youth participation. The findings show youth demanding indoor space compared to outdoor space due to open space inadequacy and absence of space quality yet lost the sense of belonging. Furthermore, the residents' committee neglected youth participation in the decision-making process or meeting with the committee has resulted youth for not to participate in the community actively.

Keywords: youth; vertical housing; neighbourhood space; focus group discussion

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## 1.0 Introduction

Youth living in vertical housing scheme are marginalised in participating neighbourhood space and the community as the residents misuse the space. The value of natural social interaction has rapidly decreased as this adolescent trendingly perform indoor activities that is easier to accomplish since the vertical housing scheme provides more indoor space compared to outdoor space. As mentioned by Browning & Soller (2014), youth are exposed to be marginalised for participating in the neighbourhood without an appropriate environment setting or planning. The marginalisation also happened as adolescence were unaware and not thoroughly blend into space and community. Schmid et al. (2011) had developed a method of measuring youth development using future expectations and intentional self-regulation relationship; Crean (2012) investigated youth involvement related to adult support and individual decision-making skills; Yeshpanove D. et al., (2014) indicated youth activity related to social and cultural measurement; and the latest research by Forrest-Bank et al., (2015) on positive youth development was throughout the perception of risk and resilience of public housing neighbourhoods. This paper aimed to outline youth marginalisation in space and community of vertical housing neighbourhood.

## 2.0 Youth in Vertical Housing Neighbourhood Space

Youth is indicated as a person between the age where he/she may leave compulsory education and the age at which he/she finds his/her first employment. As studied by Raja Suzana Raja Kasim et al. (2014), in Malaysia there were 13.3 million youth population ages between 15 to 40 represented 46% of the total Malaysian population. Youth should continuously join the community programme in making the society more liveable and efficient. Moreover, applying broad and continuous action plan and contribution for youth does not necessarily mean better outcome, but this action may recognising and integrating the different perception of the adult and adolescent (Li, H. et al., 2015). As indicated by Nyambe, A. et al. (2016), the Socio-Ecological Model (SEM) influences or determinants of involvement can relate to intrapersonal, interpersonal, organisational, environmental, and policy factors. One key impact on participation mentioned by Benner, A. D., Boyle, A. E., & Sadler, S. (2016) is Socio-Economic Status (SES). However, the shortage of space in neighbourhood public housing assumed to limit individual participation and interaction at the living environment (Chitrakar, R. M., Baker, D. C., & Guaralda, M., 2016). The availability of space has influenced user behaviour, physical activity and social interaction. As stated by Marouf, N. et al. (2015), "youth have fewer chances for outdoor activities due to increasing of variety technology upon communication, loss of outdoor space due to infrastructure demand and indoor activities trend of interest due to current working hour scenario (Vilhelmson, B., Thulin, E., & Elldér, E., 2017). This is evident in the rapid economic development and industrial construction in many emerging industrialized countries, particularly in Asia big cities. As a result, there are limited outdoor activity venues in urban areas especially for strata housing schemes (Sherry, C., 2017), which minimizes their outdoor activity and consequently affects their contacts with the community.

Lands are inadequate resources especially in the city (Yusup, M. et al., 2016). Pressures from housing sector mean more land are needed to build the house. The number of the vertical building has increased all over the world. The rapid process of urbanisation and industrialisation has brought about the densely populated cities as geographically and socially aggregate areas full of economic tendency. There are few factors contributed to the vertical living; urbanisation, increase in land value, lifestyle and scarcity of land. In Malaysia, the concept of vertical living has been introduced as early as seventieth. The vertical living concept has become popular in the major city which are Klang Valley, George Town and Johor Bahru. However, there appear to be several weaknesses in managing strata properties especially in dealing with the residents' satisfaction. There are many acts applied in strata management demanding of space in every housing scheme to trigger the shortage of space by abandoning the outdoor activities (Hilber, C. A., 2015).

According to Gidlow et al., (2012), neighbourhood space is a place for a community to accomplish good quality of life driven by balance social interaction and physical activity along with positive acceptance and manner. Vertical housing in this study is a neighbourhood unit as residence access the neighbourhood space without exorcising age division, gender inequality, race discrimination and political differences. Designing neighbourhood space is diverging to encompass the human needs, environmental character, aesthetic values, sense of belonging and liveability for a better quality of life. Neighbourhood space like public open space create enjoyable scenery, play a role in supporting social interaction and emphasise physical activities among the residents (Cauwenberg et al., 2015). According to Zieff et al., (2016) a quality neighbourhood space is likely to smooth chances for youth to physically active and socially engaged.

### **3.0 Focus Group Discussion**

Two focus groups had been conducted to represent youth and stakeholder. Both discussions were held in separate venues and time in accordance with researchers' and participants' schedule. The selection of participants should have a clear justification and satisfy a specific purpose related to the research question, which is why qualitative methods are defined as 'purposive' (Collingridge & Gantt 2008). The first FGD was attended by twelve youths who lived in Kerinchi People Housing Project, Lembah Pantai. These youth were chosen to represent each of the six blocks in this neighbourhood. They were interviewed to express their opinion and shared the feeling upon the neighbourhood space, public facility and social interaction within their living environment. They were selected randomly among female and male gender aged between 15 to 25 years old to represent the dominant ethnic lived in this neighbourhood. The second FGD represented the stakeholders with nine participants consisted of three Residents' Committee members, a Town Planner from Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL), a Town Planner from Federal Department of Town and Country Planning Malaysia and four members of the Malaysian Youth Council (MYC). The first FGD was held at the community hall of "Kerinchi People Housing Project" between 3-5pm. The time was appropriate for the youth to be in the discussion. The second FGD group was held between

10am-12pm at Armada Hotel, Petaling Jaya. The venue is accessible for all stakeholders as it is close to the study area. These FGDs were held in September and November 2014.

A speaker and moderator has been appointed to deliver the questions in both sessions. Information obtained from all respondents were used to verify and confirm the assumption highlighted in the literature review and the scenario of youth in the vertical housing neighbourhood space in Malaysia. The questions asked were all open-ended question, obtaining final answers comprehensively and related to the study objectives. The entire process of semi-structured interview was improvised and conversational, while key points and answers were recorded in a form to be evaluated and sorted. This has given respondents chances of sharing reliable information and easily extract the answers. All respondents' point of views were related to the objectives and questions. Transcribing method was applied to extract data from FGD for analysing the findings. This process retrieves each word from audio recorded-tape in both FGDs as the transcript not able to represent the whole interview setting.

## **4.0 Result of Findings**

### **4.1 Youth Focus Group Discussion**

Table 4.1 reveals the relationship between respondents, coding phrases and themes is slightly average and not reliable. In neighbourhood space, five (5) coding phrases had been identified frequently response by respondents. Four (4) respondents preferred indoor space compared to three (3) respondents for outdoor space. There is a similarity between the youth group who chosed to be passively stayed in the house or at the cyber café as they were struggling to manage their living condition. As for the youth in the school age, they were active at the outdoor space like the soccer field, multi-purpose court or playground having leisure and recreational activities. The problem was raised by three (3) respondents (Y4, Y6, Y10) as two of them (Y4, Y10) denied participating in outdoor space due to limited space and time constraint. However respondent (Y6) preferred outdoor space because of the space in the house was packed with other family members. Precisely, (Y10) has explained the implication of not choosing outdoor space because she is not close with the community and only a tenant who is always busy with her university life.

Referring to the public facility, three (3) respondents (Y1, Y3, and Y8) agreed that the facility is available for the youth but five (5) other respondents (Y5, Y6, Y7, Y8, Y12) responded the facility was insufficient. However, three (3) of them (Y5, Y6, Y7) stated that the problem about inadequate public facility was due to the limited number of units and lack of choice in public facility. Eventually (Y5 and Y7) highlighted the implication has led to the problem of not participating in the neighbourhood space. Although (Y6) responded to the insufficiency of the facility, he prefers the outdoor space. Hence, (Y6) does not require the public facility to participate in the neighbourhood space actively. As for the suggestion, (Y6, Y7 and Y12) manage to overcome the problem by looking for other activities or space outside the neighbourhood. However, only one respondent (Y8) prefers the existing facility and

chosed to be in this neighbourhood space.

Regarding social interaction and participation, only (Y1) has involved in the community under the neighbourhood women society as she is a full-time housewife. While five (5) respondents (Y3, Y5, Y6, Y7 and Y8) stated to be marginalised. The residents' committee has marginalised these youth from participating or involving in any formal meeting. As (Y5 and Y7) revealed the unprofessional manner of committee members had driven the marginalisation of adolescent to be part of the organisation.

Table 4.1: Youth Respondents' Code based on Theme of discussion

Theme	Code	Respondents
Neighbourhood Space	Indoor space	Y1, Y3, Y4, Y10
	Outdoor space	Y6, Y8
	Problem	Y4, Y6, Y10
	Implication	Y1, Y3, Y10
	Suggestion	Y4
Public Facility	Availability	Y1, Y3, Y8
	Sufficiency	Y5, Y6, Y7, Y8, Y12
	Problem	Y5, Y6, Y7
	Implication	Y5, Y7,
	Suggestion	Y6, Y7, Y8, Y12
Social Interaction and Participation	Involvement	Y1
	Marginalise	Y3, Y5, Y6, Y7, Y8
	Committee	Y3, Y5, Y7
	Community	Y1, Y6, Y8
	Problem	Y3, Y5, Y6, Y7, Y8

#### 4.2 Stakeholders' Focus Group Discussion

Table 4.2 depicts the relationship between respondents and the coding phrase had not influenced the discussion. In neighbourhood space, only six (6) respondents responded to the questions. Two (2) respondents (S8 and S9) indicated the government preferred more vertical housing units compared to open space provision. Four (4) respondents (S1, S2, S3 and S6) revealed the shortage of outdoor space in vertical housing scheme. Respondents (S1, S2) justified the problem as youth cannot be part of the community because of limited outdoor space.

In relation to public facility, seven (7) respondents (S1, S2, S3, S5, S7, S8, and S9) agreed there is no available facility suitable for youth while five (5) of them (S1, S2, S3, S8 and S9) notified the existing facility was not sufficient to serve the youth and population in this neighbourhood. Furthermore, insufficiency issue was highlighted by three (3) respondents from the residents' committee (S1, S2 and S3) as they faced the situation since the time they moved into this neighbourhood. The respondents from the government sector (S8, S9) outlined the insufficiency was due to the provision of the facility according to the guidelines meant for overall population. Meanwhile, the NGOs were not able to visualise the scene as the residents' committee members did, yet they responded and voiced out the right of youth based on complaint and report.

In social interaction and participation, three (3) respondents (S1, S6, S8) responded

youth did not involve neither in committee organisation nor community decision making. Another three (3) respondents (S2, S4, and S7) admitted, youth were marginalised to participate in the residents' committee. Respondents (S6, S8) responded it was different between not involve and being marginalised, as youth were struggling to survive with the urban lifestyle.

Table 4.2: Stakeholders' Code based on Theme of discussion.

Theme	Code	Respondents
Neighbourhood Space	Indoor space	S8, S9
	Outdoor space	S1, S2, S3, S6
	Problem	S1, S2, S3, S6, S8, S9
	Implication	S1, S2
	Suggestion	-
Public Facility	Availability	S1, S2, S3, S5, S7, S8, S9
	Sufficiency	S1, S2, S3, S8, S9
	Problem	S1, S2, S3, S8, S9
	Implication	S8, S9
	Suggestion	S1, S5, S7, S8, S9
Social Interaction and Participation	Involvement	S1, S6, S8
	Marginalised	S2, S4, S7
	Committee	S1, S2, S4, S7
	Community	S6, S8
	Problem	S1, S2, S7, S8

### 4.3 Thematic Analysis

Figure 4.1 shows the networking of every feedback by respondents from the discussion. As for youth, the secondary school and university students had responded by justifying the problem and implication, but they were not able to provide any suggestion. Nevertheless, the unemployed youth able to examine the implication based on the problem outlined by another group. The employed youth made some suggestion based on implication and problems raised by other group. In the stakeholders' group discussion, all group members able to respond on identifying the problem but the residents' committee members managed to justify the implication of the problem. The NGOs and government sector participants did not respond as expected that they were capable of suggesting solution to the problem.

Figure 4.2 shows the networking of respondents' feedback in the public facility theme discussion. In the youth FGD, the secondary school students responded in identifying problem, examining the implication and suggesting solution but the university students only suggested improvement for insufficiency of the facility. Nevertheless, the unemployed and employed youth did not identify the problem or any implication but they agreed to verify the availability of the facility. For stakeholders, all groups had identified the problem while the planners examined the implication based on governance perspective with some suggestions. The NGOs and residents' committee members had suggested solution to solve the facility insufficiency.



Figure 4.3 shows the feedback on social interaction and participation by respondents. The connection of each respondent during the involvement and marginalization as illustrated. There is no university students responded on social interaction as they felt not interested to socialise with the community. The employed and school students stated they had been marginalised from residents' committee organization and programs. The marginalisation occurred in the community interaction as the employed youth was misunderstood for not being actively participating as they were busy working day and night. Meanwhile, the residents' committee members refused to accept youth representative in the organisation because they did not contribute any idea in the meetings. The NGOs argued on youth for not actively giving ideas as they were not given a chance to sit in any meeting. Meanwhile, the government agencies' participants agreed youth should actively participate in decision making process or community engagement in sharing their desire and opinion for government to provide better space and facility for the community.

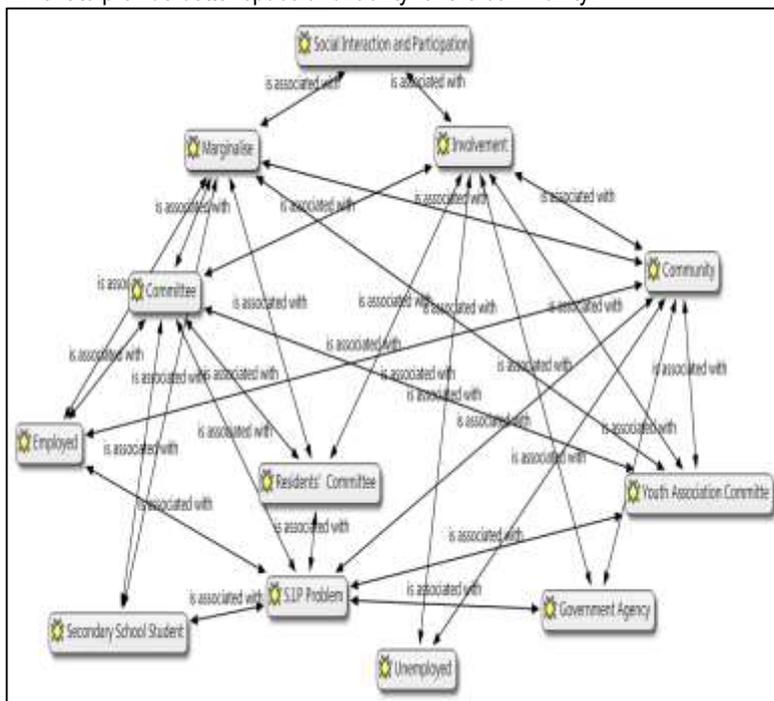


Figure 4.3: Thematic analysis of Social Interaction and Participation.

## 5.0 Discussions and Conclusion

It seems coherent that youth living in the vertical housing neighbourhood have not intensively participated within the space and community. The enjoyable form of neighbourhood spaces

were associated with the presence of more people, yet they were the victim of inappropriate environment space design especially for high-density public housing scheme as mentioned earlier by Browning and Soller (2014). The involvement of one people should not be marginalised by another group of people especially the adolescent even adults did not care about these youth livelihood (Crean, 2012) and the culture does not suit youth lifestyle at present time (Yespanove, D et al., 2014). This group was marginalised as they faced problem in accessing the space and facility because of unavailable and insufficiency (Marouf, N. et al., 2015). The neighbourhood space should be allocated strategically to serve better accessibility and encourage people to get actively socialise because youth living in vertical housing prefer more enjoyable moment at home (Sherry, C., 2017) as the space and facility were not adequate (Hilber, C.A., 2015).

In social interaction and participation discussion, the attitude of some people in the community (Forrest-Bank et al., 2015) does not really accepted youth directly into their organisation yet the youth do not actively interact with them. As for the residents' committee members, youth do not have good communication in the meeting session. Eventually, the NGOs argued that adolescent should be exposed in any organisation and decision-making process to develop confident level and encourage soft-skill to interact with other people (Li, H. et al., 2015). As a good neighbourhood community, they should not contradict youth appearance and involvement intention to become better generation in the future (Zieff et al., 2016). They must help the youth to be a better person and motivate them to be the pillar for future development towards a better quality of life and a healthier living environment.

As the conclusion, youth lived in this vertical housing neighbourhood space did not involve in the community especially the employed youth and university students because they were too busy handling their life and out of expectancy to be in the community. They did not have proper interaction with the local people. From the community's perception, adolescent at the age of 15-18 years old were not involved in the committee discussion due to bureaucracy system and the residents' committee members were not impressed by the youth behaviour and communication skills. Youth were also facing on insufficiency of space and facility in mobilising their participation in the community. The uprising issue within this vertical housing scheme is space and facility's insufficiency. The neighbourhood does provide the facility but the numbers are inadequate for youth. The government agencies need to emphasize this matter by encouraging youth's voice and involvement in the decision making process. The community should support the government's policies implementation by considering youth as part of their committee members. Youth should be guided and supported by the whole community for them to be the leader of the future generation.

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