

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT
CRITERIA FOR THE ELDERLY
INSTITUTION IN MALAYSIA:
THE CASE OF RUMAH SERI
KENANGAN (RSK)**

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ABSTRACT

Elderly people of the ageing population are a global phenomenon with implications for all facets of human life. The pace of population ageing around the world is rising dramatically. The United Nations (2019) stated that the proportion of the population aged 60 years or older in Asia was 16.3% in 1995. This percentage is projected to increase substantially, reaching 22.9% by 2050. Malaysian's ageing population is one of the fastest-growing segments of society. This scenario has indirectly influenced the sectors related to the elderly's physical health and well-being. The increasing rate of the elderly population in Malaysia has led to a growing demand for the elderly institution. The elderly institution is offered for aged people who cannot live in their homes due to health reasons and as a social arrangement to prevent loneliness. Elderly people in institutions generally suffer from health problems, depression, and anxiety. Consequently, they usually require an outdoor environment or natural spaces to spend time gardening and performing other therapeutic activities. The outdoor environment for the elderly can stimulate physical activities, increase socialization, and decrease isolation. The impact of the physical and outdoor environment on the elderly's self-perceived health and their experience of being away from home is limited. However, limited understanding of the impact of outdoor spaces and insufficient consideration of elderly needs in design at RSK in Malaysia must improve for a better-built environment. This research aims to develop the outdoor environment criteria for the elderly at RSK in Malaysia. This research explicitly studied RSK Taiping and Seri Iskandar as the elected representatives of institutions of the elderly in Perak State. This research adopted a mixed-method research design. The research data was obtained from the observation, survey checklist and semi-structured interview. The data was analysed to determine the domains influencing the physical environment of the elderly living in RSK towards developing the criteria for the outdoor environment for the elderly. This research has discovered that 48 of 60 criteria from previous research are significant physical environment domains of the outdoor environment in RSK. The physical environment domain identified in the study would lead to better development of an outdoor environment for the elderly in RSK. The study's results are particularly compelling for the complete planning and design of the outdoor environment for the elderly at RSK. The proposed outdoor environment for the elderly's criteria is hoped to be reflected in future policy for the elderly institution facilities development.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Overview

The world's population is ageing, and it has been recognized as one of the four global demographics 'megatrends', which are population growth, population ageing, urbanization, and international migration (United Nations & Social Affairs, 2015). Globally, there has been an increasing growth in the proportion of people aged 65 years and above. The population of the elderly is predicted to almost double from about 12% to 22% by 2025. It is estimated to be at 9 million to 2 billion people by 2050 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017). According to World Population Prospects 2019 (United Nations, 2019), by 2050, 1 in 6 people in the world will be over the age of 65.

The increasing growth in the proportion of people aged 65 years and above is attributed to several causes: a decrease in fertility and a rise in life expectancy (Wu, Huang & Pan, 2021; Moulaert, Wanka & Drilling, 2017). The phenomenon will continue, and it will have an impact on social, economic, and sustainable development. Overall, population ageing poses a unique mix of challenges, including changing disease burdens, higher health and the elderly institutions care spending, labor shortages, dissaving, and potential issues with old-age economic security (Gehrke, 2020; Granger, 2015).

Malaysia is also one of the countries experiencing rapid growth in the elderly population. In Malaysia, the elderly or retiring senior citizens have increased to extraordinary numbers. The tsunami, or phenomena of demographic challenges, particularly the ageing of the elderly, is just getting started. The situation is a direct consequence of the decades of socio-economic development, public health and physical planning policies where falling fertility and rising longevity have resulted in the rise of new generations of ageing population (Taasim, 2020; Foo Chung, Pazim & Mansur, 2020; Yusuf, Mohamed & Basah, 2020; Hamid, 2015).

In the physical planning and built environment, the elderly conditions become more astringent due to shifts in their health and social roles into the background (Zhung et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2020; Wen, Albert & Von Haaren, 2018; Fumagalli et al., 2017;