

COMMUNITY HAPPINESS THE DISTINCT ROLE OF ENVIRONMENT SETTING RELATEDNESS

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ABSTRACT

This study argues that although scenic beauty, preference, and restoration are correlated due to their functional significance over evolution. A total of 86 respondents were randomly selected involving in this study. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is used in the early stages to gather information about the interrelationships among variables. The Cronbach's Alpha (α) value was used to determine the level of reliability through the internal consistency for each factor. The objective of this paper is to determine the factors that influence on Happiest Selama Community. The output will be used to find the relationship between environmental setting and factors of quality of life among residents in Selama district.

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Keywords: Community, environmental setting, quality of life

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The quality of life is an important need of residents in the neighborhood that involved a sense of community. Social indicators are one of the components in well-being population at the aggregate level (Felce & Perry, 1995). It is given an influence in community well-being and happiness in their life that correlate with psychological effects. Psychological is a subjective feeling about each area of life that may also be reflected in reports of satisfaction and well-being (Felce & Perry, 1995). Same goes to the quality of life that defined the satisfaction of an individual's values, goals, and needs through the actualization of their abilities or lifestyle (Emerson, 1985). According to Malaysian well-being report 2013, specifically in a social index there are seven components to measure the Malaysian well-being, namely family relationship (score = 7.80), family income (score = 6.90), family health (score = 7.38), family safety (score = 7.39) families and communities (score = 7.80), family and spirituality (score = 8.28) and family and environment (score = 7.28) (Unit Perancang Ekonomi, 2013). The report explains that the highest score is family and spirituality. However, families and communities is a second highest in social index. It shows that social or community relationship is an important factor in order to create a well-being neighborhood. Same goes with to components of family and environment, even though, this component is located at level 6, but it is a factor that contributes to the measurement of social wellbeing index in Malaysia. It was explained that the environmental setting is an indicator to have an influence towards community happiness. Malaysian well-being is a tool to measure the level of well-being of the people which also includes aspects of inclusiveness and sustainable development (Unit Perancang Ekonomi, 2013). According to Majlis Daerah Selama, the district of Selama is known to be

one of district that achieved the happiness index. Therefore, this paper is to seek the factors that influence the happiness of community in the district of Selama.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Green or natural environmental setting that is reflected as high-quality landscape give psychological effects towards people or community on visual quality that evoke a positive response, while low-quality landscape will induce negative reaction (Han, 2010). Positive responses include happiness, safety, relaxation, exploration, and approach behavior; negative reactions comprise fear, sadness, stress, anger, and avoidance (Han, 2010). Thus, social indicators are appropriate for measuring societal and individual wellbeing. These indicators are describing the environments within people live and work. These may deal with issues such as levels of health care provision, crime, education, leisure facilities, and housing. The second subjective indicators intended to describe the ways in which people perceive and evaluate conditions around them (Pacione, 2003). Referring to Marans (2003), the place or geographic setting (city, neighborhood, or dwelling) would reflect the perceptions and assessments of a number of setting attributes that could be influenced by the occupant feeling and satisfactions. Marans (2003) argues that scholars were demonstrating these domains; communities, neighborhoods, community amenities and ambient environment are important for well-being of individuals and families. Thus, it could be summarized that the quality of life is the need of satisfaction, comfort, safety, happiness among the residents in the neighborhood. Under the quality of life (QoL) report Malaysia 2011, there are eleven components to evaluate QoL namely; income and distribution, working life, transport and communication,

health, education, housing, environment, family life, social participation, public safety and, culture and leisure (Unit Perancang Ekonomi, 2011) as shown in Figure 1

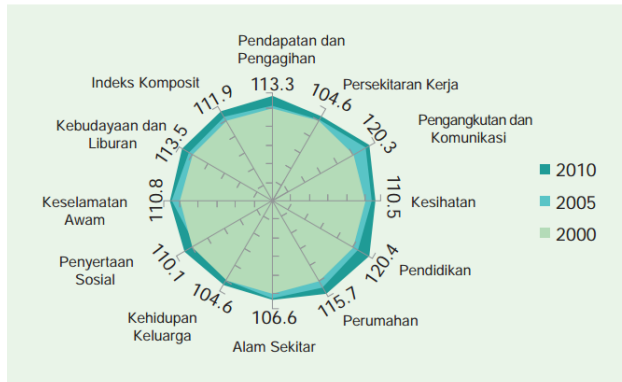


Figure 1: The Quality of Life in Malaysia in the Year 2011

(Source : UPE, 2011)

To achieve the government policy, The Federal Department of Town and Country Planning being the focal point for developing and coordinating the overall framework on Sustainable Development Indicators for local authorities through MURNInets (Malaysian Urban-Rural National Indicators Network for Sustainable Development) has now incorporated Happiness Index into the framework. According to district council of Selama Perak, they had reached the happiness index for their district. They believed this sense of happiness have a relation with a place or geographic setting (natural with rural approach).

Additionally, the senses of happiness in the neighborhood are related with the sense of fear of crime. According to Pain (2000), fear of crime is not an inherent characteristic of the individuals but rather something that may come and go, dependent on and influenced by one's

experiences, especially as they relate to one's position in society. Nevertheless, individual understanding of fear of crime differs as it depends on the situation in which one feels fear of crime (Schneider, R. H., & Kitchen, 2007) on design and the environment (Spinks, 2001), as well as their psychological and social life factors (Minnery, J. R., & Lim, 2005).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The research method included a structured questionnaire, which was administered in the context of face-to-face structured and formal interviews. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain the data from the respondent. Residents in area Bandar Selama were involved as respondents, and 86 respondents were participants in this study. They were considered valid to be the respondents as 83.3 percent were permanent residents of Bandar Selama. 79.1 percent of respondents were living in Selama residential area for more than 5 to 7 years. The observation and image capture also have been used to capture the environmental natural setting around the neighbourhood of Bandar Selama.

3.1 Case Study

The study area involved Bandar Selama with the size of 7,952.74 hectares, which is known to be the development centre of Selama Local Plan area. The land use encompasses a wide area of 1,068.32 hectares which covers a few primary reserves like institutions and society facilities, housing, business, recreation and also industrials area (Majlis Daerah Selama, 2009). The study area basically consists of an agricultural community that is based on an agrarian Muslim Malay community (Figure 2).

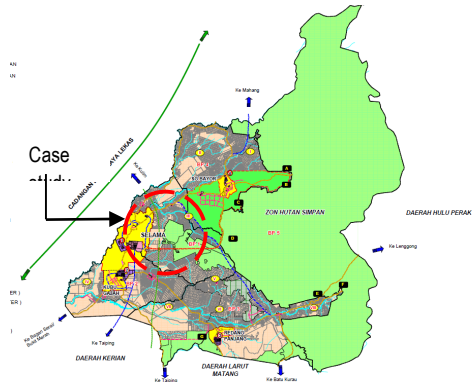


Figure 2: Case study area at Bandar Selama Perak
(Source :Majlis Daerah Selama, 2009)

The existence of waterfalls, such as LataRambung, LataDamak, LataTebing Tinggi and LataPanggung are the natural resources that have special potential to attract more visitors (Majlis Daerah Selama, 2009) as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Geographic setting and physical environment in Selama

(Source :*Majlis Daerah Selama, 2009*)

The total area for housing development in Bandar Selama is around 608.7 hectares with a total estimation for the housing unit at 4,789, which consists of public and private housing scheme areas, Rancangan Perumahan Kampung Tersusun (RPKT), traditional villages, new villages and staff quarters.

3.2 Measuring the constructs

The questionnaire contains four main components, namely (a) background of respondent, (b) perception of safety (POS), (c) fear of crime (FOC) and (d) sense of community (SOC). Every item in the questionnaire will be followed by eight choices of answers using the Likert Scale. Choices of response range from (1) Highly Disagree to (8) Highly Agree for the POS, FOC and SOC dimensions. A high score indicates that the respondent has a high degree of POS, FOC and SOC while conversely a mean score indicates a low of POS, FOC and SOC. The validation and confirmation of all constructs were done using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). EFA is used to gather information about the interrelationship among a set of variables (Pallant, 2005). The result for the level of reliability was found by calculating the Cronbach's Alpha. The dimensions of the construct have a good reliability value as the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeds 0.60 (Nunnally, J.C. & Bernstein, 1994). The results indicated that the Alpha values for perception of safety (POS) = .88, fear of crime (FOC)=.94, and sense of community (SOC) = .96. These results of Alpha value for all construct and dimensions achieved good Alpha reliability levels (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha value for all construct

Constructs	Items	Description of Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)
Perception of safety (POS)	1	Whenever you are out at night, how far do you feel safe?	.76	.88
	2	How far do you feel safe if you are walking alone in the neighborhood at night?	.79	
	3	How do you feel when you are home alone at night?	.76	
Fear of crime (FOC)	1	I feel worried when I come across vandalism	.67	.94
	2	I feel worried when walking in areas with dense and unkempt vegetation	.75	
	3	I feel worried when walking along abandoned housing project areas	.79	
	4	I worry when I come across people loitering about near to residential area	.82	
	5	I feel worried when I come across people who are intoxicated	.78	
	6	I worry when encountering people who are homeless	.79	
	7	I feel worried when I hear about news regarding crime through the media	.87	
	8	I feel worried when I hear stories or experiences about being victims of crime from friends and neighbours	.80	
	9	I frequently reflect on images of crime when reading crime related news	.72	
Sense of community (SOC)	1	I can identify all resident in this street	.83	
	2	I can identify most of the residents here	.86	
	3	Most of the community knows me	.85	
	4	I always participate in community activities organized by the community association	.78	
	5	My neighborhood has a face book group to get any information or	.41	

	anything happened in this community		
6	I look after my neighbours' children/ plants/ pets when they go on vacations	.79	
7	I value my neighbour's/community's views or comments	.83	
8	Whenever there are problems in this residential area, they are solved by the community	.74	
9	I feel that I am one of the community members in this residential area	.86	
10	I can trust the community here	.87	.96
11	I feel this residential area is good to live in	.87	
12	I am happy living among the community in this residential area	.82	
13	The community here always share important events such as birthday parties, weddings, festivals	.78	
14	(Deepavali, Hari Raya and so on) The community here care about each other	.82	

5.0 CONCLUSION

Respondent involved in this research is 45.3% female and 54.7% male. They were 32.6% aged in 40s followed by the 50s (24.4%), 30s (16.3%), 60s and above (14%) and 20s (12.8%). 57% of respondent have stayed in the residential area for more than 7 years and above, followed by 5 to 6 years (22.1%), 3 to 4 years (14%), 1 to 2 years (4.7%) and less than 1 year (2.3%). Most of the respondents are owners of houses (83.3%), married (69.8%) and had higher education up to university level (45.3%) followed by secondary education (34.9%). Most of respondents are Malay (62.8%) followed by Indian (20.9%) and Chinese (16.3%). They came from different background religion which are Islam (59.3%), Hindu (18.6%), Buddha (11.6%) and Christian

(10.5%). Most of them working in government sector (32.9%), self-employed (farmer/ business/ retailers-27.1%), private sector (22.4%), retirees (14.1%) and unemployed (3.5%).

Fear of crime (FOC) consists of three dimensions (physical environment, social environment, indirect victimization) and the result found that respondents have higher sense fear of crime on physical environment (PHY) with 18.5 percent compared to social environment disorder (SOC= 18.2%) and indirect victimization (VIC=18.3%) as shown in Figure 4. The physical environment element involved physical design that could affect the sense of fear such as abundance building, vandalism, bushes, etc.

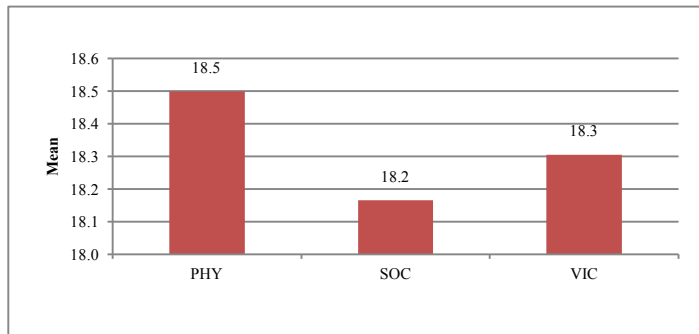


Figure 4: Mean difference value on fear of crime dimensions – physical, social environment and indirect victimization.

(Note: PHY: Physical environment, SOC: Social environment, VIC: indirect victimization)

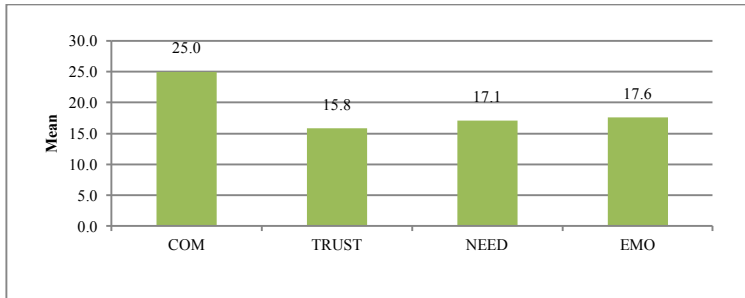


Figure 5. Mean difference value on sense of community dimensions – community involvement, trust and influence, needs and sharing emotion

(Note: COM: community involvement, TRUST: trust and influence, NEED= Need, EMO: Sharing emotion)

For the sense of community in Bandar Selama, this study found that the community involvement (COM) is the main attribute in the community relationship with 25 percent. It is followed by sharing emotion (EMO=17.6%), needs (17.1%) and trust and influence (TRUST= 15.8%) as shown in Figure 5. The result explained that community ties among respondents are higher because of community involvement. The activities involvement such as *gotong-royong* (cooperative activities), knowing their neighbours in their street, participate in community activities and has a face book group community.

Good relationships among the community in the neighbourhood provide the sense of safety among residents. This is referring the result of how often respondents go out at night. How often go out at night it is the one indicator to measure the sense of safety of residents (Cozens, Hillier, D., & Prescott, 2001). This result is shown in Figure 6. Referring to the graph, it is explained that respondents feel safe go out at night for 5 to 6 times in a week with 28.2 percent.

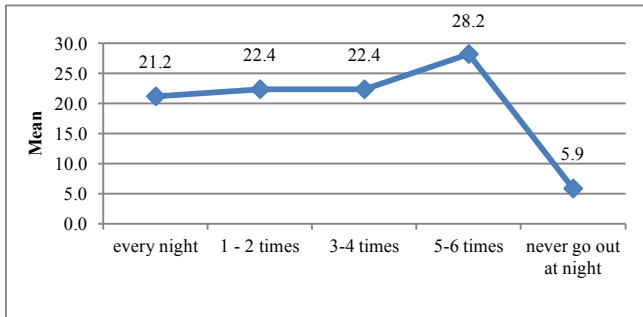


Figure 6. Mean difference frequencies of go out at night

Table 2. Pearson product-moment correlation between fear of crime and sense of community

Correlations		
	Fear of crime	Sense of community
FOC	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.379**
	N	83
SOC	Pearson Correlation	.379**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
	N	60

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It is followed by 1 to 4 times in a week (22.4%) and every night (21.2%). The number of respondents that never go out at night only 5.9% (21 respondents). The factors that contribute towards not going out at night are age factor (4.7%), incapable-healthy condition (5.8%) fear with darkness (1.2%), worried if burglary happen in their home (5.8%), do not have enough money (1.2%), busy with their job (1.2%) , prefer to rest with family(2.3%) , and no reason to go out at night (2.3%). This finding shows that most of the respondents feel safe to go out at night which it could be

related with trust among their community to help each other if there is unwanted incidents occurred.

The correlation between fear of crime (FOC) with the sense of community (SOC) was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The result has shown in Table 2. The output shows that there was a medium, positive correlation between the two variables [$r=0.379$, $n=60$, $p=0.00$]. The output explains that SOC helps to explain 14 percent of the variance in respondents' score on the FOC. This finding can be explained that if the feeling of fear of crime among residents is increased, thus the community activities will be increased. It shows that sense of fear on crime gives an influence on community relationship. This result is consistent with previous scholars that community relationship can reduce the sense of fear on crime (McMillan, D.W., & George (1986); Taylor, Gottfredson, S. D., & Brower, 1984)..

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper was supported in part by the Majlis Daerah Selama. The authors gratefully acknowledge extremely valuable discussions with Majlis Daerah Selama for information contribution

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