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FLAT LAYOUT AFFECTING SOCIAL INTERACTION

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Abstract:

Living cost influences lifestyle. Shelter is regarded as a necessity in living. This has brought about the demand for low cost flats resulting in the rising number of such flats. Population living in this lifestyle bear the deficiency of basic accommodation and proper maintenance, due to unregulated inspection within their compound. Social integration within the population has become a key point in helping create a better society. From the layout design of the building until the facility is ready, every aspect must be taken care of, thus it will help in building a society space that spill into outdoors. This paper explores the social interaction between users in different kinds of flat layout. It is through this comparative study, the concept of how different flats' configuration affects the different pattern of social behavior can be investigated.

Keywords: Low Cost Flats; Social Activities; Outdoor Spaces; Building Layout

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a country, which is still developing until now. However, at the same time, our land has become limited due to numbers of people migrating in-and-out of the cities especially in the urban area. To cater to this problem, building low-cost housings is one of the initiative taken by the government to provide shelter for everyone. Housing began to go vertical when higher density and cheaper construction maintenance cost are required (Long, 2007). Nonetheless, most of the flat were built on spaces with limited green access and minimum usage for public interaction due to the economic constraint. This causes problem in social interaction within the community. Residents' requirement for social interaction was not justified. (Abu-Ghazze,2009). Therefore, this study was done to find out which building layout from the design perspective could affect social behavior of the residences. Different flats configuration would offer different functional affordances.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The lack of adequate open spaces make the living room the most important house extension for social activities and other functional activities (Abu-Ghazze, 2009). They also influence how one sees, uses and engages in social environments. Low-cost housing is deprived of outdoor spaces, where people adapt to whatever spaces they are being provided. These are the way of achieving conformity to the physical and social environment for satisfaction. Engaging with neighbours and customizing outdoor space, enhance the nostalgic feelings of mutual residencies. In flats, social activities commonly were observed taking place near the units, including in the corridors, and the staircases (Abdul Aziz et al., 2011). The different height of flat house does not seem to significantly affect the differences in social interaction within the compound. However, the higher the level of open corridor housing, the less possibility of social activity takes place. In this type of housing, home and external areas are physically and socially connected. Using these outdoor spaces, people are introducing their regional domain.

Observed behavior is classified as both social and non-social (Sullivan et al., 2004). Social activities are defined as domestic and retreat activities. Domestic activities include day-to-day activities of household that is related to family work (clothes drying, child rearing and restraint of garbage) and outdoor area care (keeping facilities clean) (Abdul Aziz et al., 2011). The retreat activity contains all outdoors activities as a way to meet personal needs, for people to escape and feel comfortable when being

alone outside, which often include sitting, relaxing, taking a nap, reading or watching other activities. Social activities include all group activities, such as sitting in groups, talking, playing in groups, having conversation with others (Abdul Aziz et al., 2011).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

In order to study the social impact on high rise residential buildings, flats at PPR Taman Putra Damai, Lembah Subang and Apartment Sri Tioman II, Gombak were chosen. There are two main methods used to obtain relevant information regarding this topic. The first one is observation. To do a proper observation, two main spaces outside of the house were chosen, which are the corridors and stairs. The second method used to obtain data is through questionnaires. About 40 residences were involved in the survey. They represent the cumulative numbers in their representative apartment. All of the data were collected in a period of four months.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Within the period of 8 weeks, about 135 events we recorded in both buildings. These activities which involved social aspect were observed and included into the data collection.

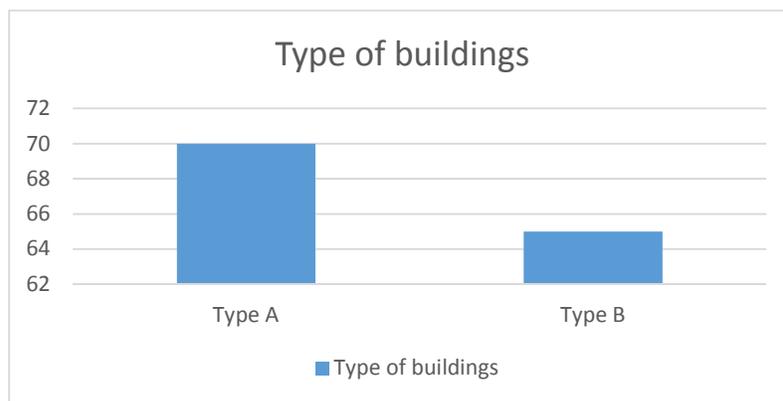


Figure 1: Number of activities in both buildings

Table 1 and Figure 2 show the variety types of activity done by residence in both apartment. Those activities were simplified into 5 categories, conversing between each other, group chatting, play in group, brief encounter and relaxing

Table 1: Statistic of different social activity in different group

CATEGORY	PPR TAMAN PUTRA DAMAI (TYPE A)		APARTMENT SRI TIOMAN II (TYPE B)		OVERALL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Conversing with each other	15	32.86%	19	35.38%	34	34.07%
Group Chatting	23	21.43%	23	29.23%	46	25.19%
Play in group	11	15.71%	9	13.85%	20	14.81%
Brief encounter	10	14.29%	5	7.69%	15	11.11%
Relaxing	11	15.71%	9	13.85%	20	14.81%
Total	70	100%	65	100%	135	100%

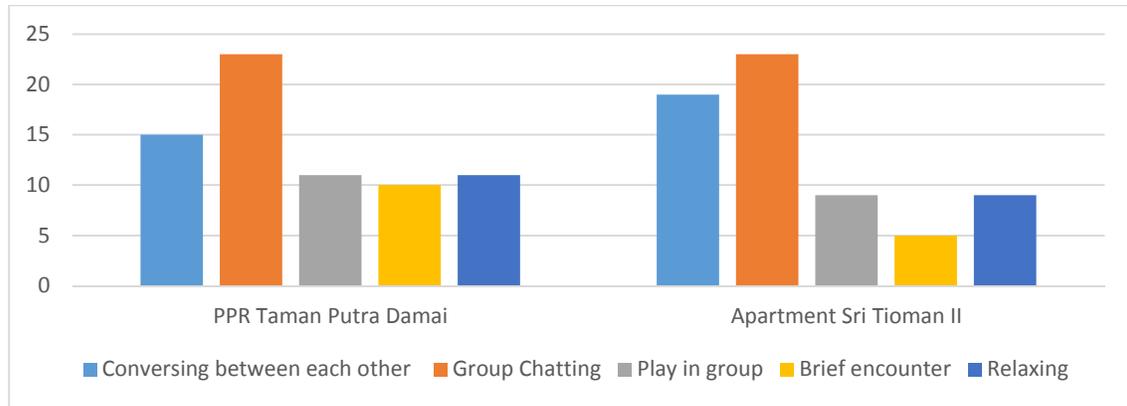


Figure 2: Activity through category

5.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, there is not much difference in social activities in building Type A and B. Some slight differences occur in small context of social activities such as brief greetings or small conversations, but overall, there is not much which can be distinguished. Possibly, more layout design need to be included in the study other than just the double internal (Type A) and clustered around corridor (Type B). This can possibly get a more varied results and help get better context on the building configuration which affects the social interaction.

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