Pocket Settings for Promoting on-campus Social Learning: FGD

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Abstract
Recently, the implementation of outdoor learning spaces has emerged as a crucial measure to enhance the academic experience by facilitating the augmentation of students' social interactions and learning endeavours. Investigating Asian universities reveals that these campuses mainly prioritise indoor traditional learning approaches while exhibiting little integration of social learning practices that align with academic objectives. Hence, it is vital to augment the social learning activities of students within the premises of university campuses in Asia, with the aim of enhancing the overall social learning experience. This study aims to identify the design attributes of pocket settings for enhancing social learning activity in Asian universities. This study utilised qualitative, semi-structured focus group discussions (FGDs) involving professionals and academicians in the field of architecture to assess the attributes of pocket settings on the Asian campus grounds. The data is analysed using ATLAS.ti.8. The findings indicate that the implementation of design attributes, such as design and layout, elements and activities, accessibility and proximity, and safety and security, is critically important for providing successful pocket settings on university grounds that greatly enhance the social learning experience. The results of this study make a valuable contribution to the development of a pocket setting model specifically designed for Asian campus environments. This model aims to effectively integrate informal spaces into social learning activities, ultimately enhancing the overall academic social learning experience.
Keywords: Pocket Settings, Social Learning Experience, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Pocket Design Attributes, ATLAS.ti.

Introduction
The expansion of cities as a consequence of urbanisation has increased population density and decreased open space. As cities grow, the availability of large public spaces diminishes, necessitating the investigation of alternative strategies to improve urban viability and sustainability (Busck et al., 2008; Keppell et al., 2011; Currie, 2016). The creation of pocket

spaces and pocket environments is one such innovative concept. These dense, frequently underutilised areas offer substantial potential for enhancing the quality of urban life and mitigating some of the problems associated with urbanisation (Tabassum, 2018). A pocket setting is a small, often unconventional, and creatively designed urban green space typically located within a dense and bustling urban environment. These nearby spaces provide city residents with a much-needed respite from the concrete jungle and enhance the overall quality of urban life (Armato, 2017; Tabassum, 2018).

Pocket settings can be reclaimed vacant lots, transformed alleyways, rooftops, or underutilised spaces repurposed into vibrant and functional green areas (Hafner et al., 2018). These settings are intended to optimise the efficiency of the available space by incorporating seating, planters, trees, art installations, and other elements that encourage relaxation, social interaction, and environmental sustainability (Hafner et al., 2018; Salih et al., 2019). They are typically tiny, ranging from a few square meters to a few thousand square feet. Their small size makes them accessible and straightforward to implement in urban areas with limited space. They result from public-private partnerships or community-led initiatives (Hafner et al., 2018; Salih et al., 2020). These spaces also positively impact mental health and stress reduction. They provide an escape from the urban bustle, allowing people to unwind and calm (Salih et al., 2019; 2020).

In contrast, traditional classroom settings are no longer the primary domain of learning in the ever-changing education landscape (Keppell et al., 2011). While formal education plays a crucial role in shaping the intellectual foundation of individuals, informal learning spaces, such as nearby pocket settings and open spaces, offer a complementary and equally valuable aspect of learning (Rea, 2009). Diverse in nature and design, these spaces allow individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, and experiences outside the confines of a structured curriculum (Bento and Costa, 2018). The informal learning spaces provide a dynamic, interactive environment that encourages curiosity, originality, and lifelong learning (Bento and Costa, 2018).

Informal learning environments feature adaptability, informality, and accessibility. Instead of the classroom's structured environment, these spaces promote self-directed and self-motivated learning (Yang and Chau, 2011). Informal learning embraces the belief that knowledge acquisition occurs organically through exploration, experimentation, and direct interaction with the world. Informal learning spaces provide the optimal environment for students of all ages and backgrounds to discover, interact, and collaborate with others, transcending the boundaries of formal education (Salih et al., 2021). Due to urbanisation and limited space, it has become challenging to provide extensive informal learning spaces (Hu, 2017; Salih et al., 2021). Consequently, pocket settings on campus grounds, such as nearby urban spaces, plazas, and courtyards, offer emergent small settings to enhance learners' daily activities and socialisation (Salih et al., 2023).

Learning space characteristics and design attributes can influence students' experiences on campus (Towers and Lynch, 2017; Gulwadi et al., 2019; Kaboudarahangi et al., 2023). However, the design characteristics of informal learning settings (including pocket settings) have not been discovered as thoroughly as the academic learning experience (Towers and Lynch, 2017; Gulwadi et al., 2019). Therefore, further studies are needed to investigate these aspects (Gulwadi et al., 2019). Thus, the current study aimed to identify the design attributes of pocket settings for enhancing social learning activity on campus grounds using a qualitative focus group discussion (FGD) approach.

Pocket Settings & Their Design Attributes

A pocket park or pocket setting is a small-scale nearby urban public space, usually ranging A pocket park or pocket setting is a small-scale nearby urban public space, generally ranging from 1000 m2 to about 4000 m2, as irregular paths, greenways, railways, or roads. It usually has one or two open sides (Nordh et al., 2009). The term "pocket park" was first used in the 1960s in New York City, and since then, it has been spread worldwide with different forms and terms (Peschardt, 2014). However, it usually refers to nearby public spaces that provide essential services to the surrounding community, offering environmental, social, recreational, intellectual, and mental benefits (Nordh et al., 2009; Peschardt, 2014). These settings are typically located in urban areas, surrounded by a few residences or businesses, for users to relax and appreciate the natural environment. Moreover, pocket settings have become necessary and must be readily accessible because they effectively contribute to city life; thus, they should not be considered trivial amenities (Peschardt, 2014).

On the other hand, the design characteristics of these pockets play a critical role in the perception of the space by enhancing users' social interaction, physical benefits, and recuperation (Peschardt, 2014). Baur and Tynon (2010); Peschardt (2014) have validated the need for additional research on the characteristics and components of pocket parks. According to Nordh et al. (2009), the softscape element best predicts the likelihood of recovery. Bauer and Tynon (2010) stated that proximity and easy access to these spaces are essential for space functionality. Lau et al (2012) concluded that hardscape elements and surrounding building geometry affect the usage of nearby pocket parks in Hong Kong. Peschardt (2014) argued that the design of pocket spaces must facilitate various activities, such as socialisation, healing, reading, walking, bicycling and play, and refreshment. Different critical characteristics of pocket settings have been identified by Sheshukova (2016), including maintenance, administration, visibility, and users' activities.

Similarly, Tabassum (2018) confirmed that the effectiveness of pocket settings is contingent on the type and quality of the design parameters and their adjacent urban morphology. However, evidence revealed disagreements regarding the design attributes of pocket settings, which may be attributable to the location and climate. Therefore, examining the design attributes of pocket settings designed for the Asian context is necessary.

Social Learning Settings

Jamieson (2003) defined a learning experience as a set of practices and activities in which the learner engages formally or informally in the learning settings. Everyday learning activities typically take place in informal learning settings, also provide an emerging learning mode and contribute to the social learning experience (Rea, 2009). Yang and Chau (2011) argued that social learning settings outside of classrooms, such as student socialisation places and on-campus pocket spaces, can enhance the learning experience by offering social learning activities. Learning occurs when students interact with one another in a social context on campus (Rea, 2009; Yang and Chau, 2011); depending on the place attributes (Perkins and Will, 2014), some non-classroom contexts can provide social learning settings that promote formal and informal learning. Social learning activities could enhance students' academic skills by giving flexible spaces for learning (Yang and Chau, 2011).

On the other hand, nearby social learning spaces that differ in size and are defined by the landscape or building boundary are one of the on-campus settings. These spaces provide students with seating and essential on-campus attributes. Most importantly, the existing studies found a need for well-designed contemporary social learning settings for teaching

within and outside the campus buildings (Salit et al., 2020). However, social learning settings, especially pocket settings, remain primarily untapped on Asian campus grounds. Therefore, studies are increasingly needed to evaluate informal social learning spaces, such as pocket settings (Towers and Lynch, 2017; Salih et al., 2021, 2023).

Method
Qualitative Data Collection Approach
For qualitative data collection applied in the current study, a focused group discussion was utilised to explore the experts' opinions about the design attributes of pocket settings for enhancing social learning activity on campus grounds. Therefore, the study population was experts, professional architects and academicians in architecture. Creswell (2014) asserted that quantitative data provides a valid method of data collection on social sciences topics. It has various steps in data analysis and collection by talking directly to people and seeing them act within their context. Qualitative research usually relies on purposefully selected participants, such as professionals in the topic, and sites that best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question. Creswell (2014) suggested considering four aspects in qualitative studies, including 1) the setting of research, 2) the actors or interviewees, 3) the protocol of the interview, and 4) the process of the interview.

Focus Group Discussion
The data collection tool was a semi-structured focus group discussion (FGD) to obtain qualitative data from experts in the field of architecture. A semi-structured focus group is a facilitated group discussion in which general open questions are asked through a semi-structured process and interview guide to increase the quality of information and the procedure (Cohen et al., 2017). It is also economical in time, producing a large amount of data in a short period. Therefore, the semi-structured focus group was considered an ideal tool for this research to develop and confirm the data contained in the quantitative part. The current study employed the FGD protocols of Creswell (2014); Cohen et al (2017) to design and organise semi-structured FGDs. Cohen et al (2017) suggested that the number of participants involved in the focus group should be small, between four and twelve people per group. FGD also can include five or six questions during a specific time (Cohen et al., 2017).

In the current study, the FGD protocol was developed from a thorough analysis of previous studies regarding the study objective. Then, the research team prepared the event protocol and sent invitation letters attached to a summary letter and the focus group guidelines to 30 experts in the field to familiarise them with the research gist. Of these, nine experts agreed to participate in the FGD, dividing them into two groups based on their backgrounds. The first group included five lecturers with doctoral degrees in Architecture from four universities: University Brunei Darussalam, Infrastructure University, Kuala Lumpur, Heriot-Watt University, and University Putra Malaysia. Besides, four professional architects from Malaysia participated in the second FGD. The first FGD was conducted on 10th March 2020, from 9 am to 12 pm, followed by the second FGD from 2 pm to 5 pm. The two FGD sessions were conducted at Universiti Putra Malaysia.

The research team in this qualitative study utilised multi-sensory tools, including a visual presentation, tape recording, and photo-taking. The chairman of the focus group discussion introduced the goals of the event. Meanwhile, the primary researcher presented a visual presentation to introduce the research aims. Besides, five assistants participated in the event to help record and document the general content.

FGD Protocol and Validity and Data Analysis Process
The semi-structured protocol of the FGD was developed through an analysis of previous studies regarding the study objective. The purpose of this protocol was to guide the FGD chair as a standardisation method for the FGD. It consisted of three open-ended questions related to design attributes of pocket settings for enhancing social learning activity on campus grounds. The respective questions were as follows: 1) How would you describe the students' social experience in on-campus pockets on the campus ground? 2) How would you describe the student's learning experience in on-campus pockets on the campus ground? 3) Could you briefly explain the design factors affecting students' social learning activity in the nearby campus pockets?

Then, the FGD semi-structured protocol was reviewed by three experts in architecture from the Faculty of Design and Architecture at UPM to check the content of the FGD. The three experts agreed that the FGD items and protocol were relevant and valid. After collecting the data through the FGD event, the collected data from the two sources were evaluated, analysed, coded, and categorised independently by two reviewers. Data reliability was established by comparing responses from the two parallel focus groups. The trustworthiness of inferences was ensured by multiple coding, audit trail and member checking with focus group participants who reviewed the themes for validity. The final agreement on stud themes, categories, and codes was reached by comparing the two researchers' independently done thematic content analysis. The data was analysed using a description and thematic text analysis approach using Atlas.ti.8. The researchers agreed that the main theme of the current study is "design attributes of pocket settings for social learning."

Result and Discussion
Most of the data on experts' perceptions of the design attributes of pocket settings for enhancing social learning activity on Tropical campus grounds agreed. Overall, similar themes and codes were seen within the two groups.

Participant Characteristics
Nine experts, including (5) lecturers in architecture and (4) professional architects, participated in the FGDs. Their age ranged from 35 to 55 years (mean age = 43.04 years old ± 0.24). There were more males (77.77%, n = 7) than females (22.22%, n = 2).

Social Learning Activity on Tropical Campus Ground
This part discusses the results of the first and second questions in the FGDs regarding the students' social and learning activities in pocket settings on Asian campus grounds. The content analysis of this part illustrated the views of the experts into two categories: "social activities in on-campus pocket settings" and "learning activities in on-campus pocket settings." The first category was split into three codes: a) on-campus pockets in the Asian campuses enhance social activity, b) on-campus pockets in the Asian campuses lack social activity, and c) a need to improve students' social activity on Asian campus grounds. The second category was divided into three codes: a) on-campus pockets in the Asian campuses enhance learning activity, b) on-campus pockets in the Asian campuses lack learning activity, and c) a need to improve student's learning activity on Asian campus grounds.

Figure 1 Focus Group Discussion on 10th March 2020, UPM
Source: Author Records

The results from both FGDs showed the consensus of experts about the lack of social and learning activities on Asian campuses. The code "on-campus pockets in the Asian campuses lack social activity" emerged in many scopes (n= 8 experts) in the two FGDs. Besides, the code "on-campus pockets in the Asian campuses lack learning activity" appeared in many areas by all the experts (n= 9 experts) in the FGDs. The code, "a need to improve students' social activity on Asian campus grounds", emerged in five scoops (n= 5 experts) and "a need to improve student's learning activity on Asian campus grounds" appeared in four spoons (n= 4 experts). However, only one professional architect from the second FGD asserted that students in the Asian campus's nearby pockets have good social experiences. This different result may be due to his perceptions of outdoor activities in the nearby on-campus pockets in some private universities in Asian countries. Some experts commented as follows:

"I graduated from a public university in Malaysia; I do believe that we do need to enhance such experience" (Expert 2, 1st FGD).

"Our students neglect to use the outdoor spaces for social and learning activities" (Expert 4, 1st FGD).

"I think these spaces are heavily underutilised" (Expert 3, 2nd FGD).

The experts also asserted a need to enhance students' social learning activity in on-campus pockets, especially on Asian campuses. They agreed that having informal learning activities on campus grounds can enhance the social learning experience. Some experts commented below:

"The students should be mandatory in the outdoor pocket spaces to get benefits from these spaces" (Expert 3, 2nd Group).

"I would say the focus could be on the learning part; two types of formal and informal learning should be encouraged to take place in outdoor pockets on campus ground" (Expert 1, 1st Group).

The findings demonstrated a lack of students' social and learning activities in the adjacent outdoor pockets on Asian campuses. The qualitative evidence showed a need to enhance students' activities on Asian campus grounds to contribute to social learning. On the other hand, evidence from previous European studies confirmed that individuals should engage in 60 minutes of outdoor activities daily in nearby natural environments to reap various social

benefits (Towers and Lynch, 2017). Previous literature also contributed to these findings, which demonstrated that increasing levels of learners' engagement in on-campus pockets positively impact the learners' social learning (Ibrahim and Fadzil, 2013; Salih et al., 2023). These findings enhance the evidence in the research gap about a need to promote students' experience on campus grounds.

Design Attributes of Pocket Settings for Social Learning
This part discusses the results of the experts' opinions regarding design attributes of pocket settings for enhancing social learning activity on Asian campuses. It also explains the proposed enhancements on points by the experts regarding open space issues on Asian campuses. It categorises the results into four codes, which are "design and layout," "elements and activities," "accessibility and proximity," and "safety and security". Most experts agreed on the characteristics' nature and suggested enhancements. The experts mentioned the elements in different terms. However, these terms have merged into the mentioned four codes, see Table 1.

Table 1
Experts' opinion on design attributes of on-campus pockets for social learning.

Design attribute	1st Group: Experts					2nd Group: Experts			
Code	*Ex. 1*	*Ex. 2*	*Ex. 3*	*Ex. 4*	*Ex. 5*	*Ex. 1*	*Ex. 2*	*Ex. 3*	*Ex. 4*
Design and Layout	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
Element and Activities	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Accessibility and Proximity	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Safety & Security	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1

The most common code was "elements and activities" (n= 8 experts). The experts concurred that hardscape and shade elements are essential attributes for students' activities in the on-campus pockets. Besides, the experts also confirmed the need to enhance the "elements and activities" as the main attributes of pocket settings for students' on-campus activity, as providing various activities affects students' usage and contributes to a chance of use. The content analysis of the FGD also showed the consensus of experts (n= 6 experts) clearly that "design and layout" is a critical attribute that affects students' usage of the on-campus pockets. They also confirmed that the "design and layout" of the current spaces needs enhancement as it does not meet expectations and needs and does not enhance the related subject of social and learning activities. Some experts stated that the design of the proposed pocket must be reasonably harmonised with the surrounding environments and suitable for all university communities. Over half of the experts (n= 5 experts) also explicitly asserted that "accessibility and proximity," referring to the close distance of informal spaces, is an essential factor affecting users of campus spaces in Asian Universities.

Regarding "safety and security," some experts (n = 4 experts) emphasised the role of safety and security in different scopes. They confirmed that safety from "criminal" or "road traffic" might affect students using the university pocket space. Some experts emphasised the mentioned factors as below:

> "I think the same here we can just amend the current space to become more usable through providing basic activities and elements" (Expert 2, 1st Group).

"I think we should think about the elements of safety, not just safety from the elements but also in terms of personal safety. This space should be built a bit far from road traffic" (Expert 3, 1st Group).
"Then, the proximity of the spaces again should be improved and enhanced" (Expert 1, 2nd Group).

The qualitative evidence of the experts in this study revealed the significance of well-designed pocket settings for enhancing students' social learning on Asian campuses. The experts believe that the design attributes of these pocket settings, such as design and layout, elements and activities, accessibility and proximity, and safety and security, have a critical impact on students' social learning, see Figure 2. The mentioned result, consistent with studies conducted in Europe and the USA, reported that determining and applying the successful characteristics of nearby pocket parks on campus grounds can provide various benefits and experiences to the students (Mertens et al., 2019). The findings of the two FGDs showed that the pocket parks designed with multiple elements and activities are preferred for students' on-campus social learning. The results also concur with Abd El-Aziz (2015); Salih et al (2020), in which the availability of various elements and activities was usually essential for users of small parks. In sum, the current study's findings revealed that pocket settings on campus ground designed with the proper design attributes are critical for enhancing students' social learning. These attributes must align with different students' various social and educational activities. The predicted design attributes of the pocket settings on Tropical campus ground to enhance social learning include a) design and layout, b) elements and activities, c) accessibility and proximity, and d) safety and security. Therefore, the findings provide pragmatic approaches for developing responsive pocket settings that enhance the on-campus outdoor experiences, especially on Asian campuses. The result study findings are of great importance for academic administration, policymakers, landscape and urban planners, and researchers in this field.
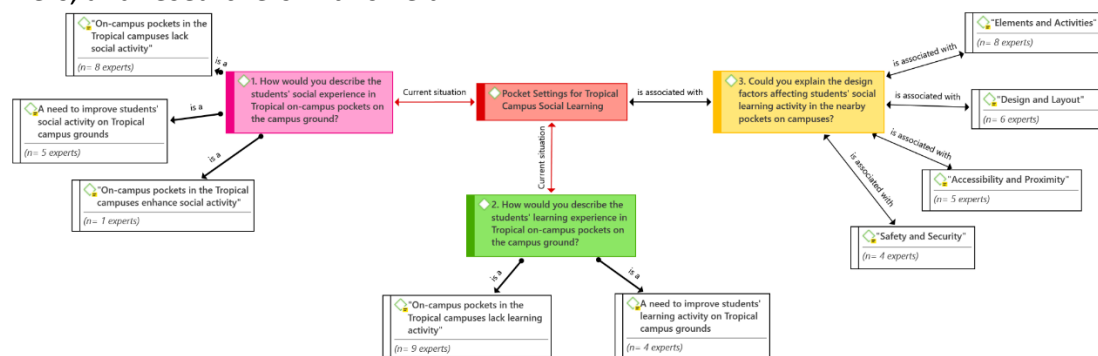

Figure 2 Focus Group Discussion Results
Source: Author Records using Atlas.ti.8

Conclusion
In sum, the current study's findings revealed that pocket settings on campus grounds with the proper attributes are critical for enhancing students' social learning. These attributes must align with different students' various social and educational activities. The predicted design attributes of the pocket settings on Asian campus ground to enhance learning include design and layout, elements and activities, accessibility and proximity, and safety and security. Therefore, the findings provide pragmatic approaches for developing responsive pocket settings that enhance the on-campus experiences, especially on Asian campuses. The study

findings are significant for academic administration, policymakers, urban planners, and researchers in this field. The present study exhibits a few limitations. First, the chosen sample consisted of nine experts affiliated with architecture schools at Asian universities, necessitating a cautious interpretation of the findings. Second, the present study examined the design attributes of pocket settings in tropical locations. Therefore, it is imperative to approach the conclusions with caution. Third, there are several characteristics and features that have the potential to impact consumers of pocket spaces. It is advised that future research be conducted to undertake a comprehensive study that incorporates a broader range of design criteria and examines the influence of social and cultural factors on the design of on-campus outdoor settings.

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