



**STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL LANDSCAPE AND ITS
INFLUENCE ON LEARNING EXPERIENCE AT AWARD-WINNING
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KELANTAN, MALAYSIA**

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ON LEARNING EXPERIENCE AT AWARD-WINNING SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN KELANTAN, MALAYSIA**

By

NIK ROH HAYATI BINTI WAN ABDUL RAHMAN

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science
Universiti Putra Malaysia**

January 2008



My special dedication to:

My beloved mother,

Hjh. Meriah bt Hassan

My dearest children

Nik Hatfina Hijriyah

Nik Abdul Haqem

Nik Abdul Hasib

Nik Hafizah Izni

My supportive brother, sisters, nieces and nephews.

Abstract of this thesis is presented to the Senate of University Putra Malaysia in
Fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master Science.

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January 2008

Chairman: Associate Professor Noorizan Bt Mohamed, PhD

Faculty: Design and Architecture

Many school grounds are designed to reflect only adult values and usages rather than the student's needs. Yet, school landscape holds remarkable potential to support learning and providing plentiful of spaces, which offers various qualities and experiences. This study attempts to identify the characteristics of three schools landscape design, which had won the National Landscape Competition in Kelantan from 1999 to 2005, whether it has significantly influenced the student's perception and learning experience. The selected schools are MRSM Pengkalan Chepa, SM Sains Tengku Mohammad Faris Petra, and SMK Kota. The general objective of the study is to acknowledge that school landscape is part of learning experience. Qualitative and quantitative methods are the research methodology of the study. The study is divided into two phases which are site observation and the correlational survey. The survey data



was analyzed by using SPSS version 12. The study found that there is a significant positive relationship between the students' perception of school landscape with learning experience. However, school landscapes of the selected three award-winning schools only influenced students' perception and learning experience at moderate level. The results signified that students' perception of school landscape and learning experience had been influenced by the characteristic of the school landscape and the activities that took place in it.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Sarjana Sains.

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SCHOOLS IN KELANTAN, MALAYSIA**

Oleh

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Pengerusi: Profesor Madya Noorizan Bt Mohamed, PhD

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Kebanyakan reka bentuk landskap sekolah mempunyai ciri-ciri nilai dan kegunaan untuk orang dewasa berbanding ciri-ciri yang diperlukan oleh para pelajar. Sedangkan pada hakikatnya, landskap sekolah mempunyai potensi yang luar biasa dalam membantu proses pembelajaran iaitu dengan menyediakan pelbagai ruang yang menawarkan berbagai-bagai pengalaman yang berkualiti. Kajian ini cuba mengenal pasti ciri-ciri tiga buah landskap sekolah di Kelantan yang telah memenangi Pertandingan Landskap Kebangsaan sejak dari tahun 1999 hingga 2005, sama ada ianya mempunyai pengaruh yang nyata terhadap persepsi pelajar dan pengalaman pembelajaran. Sekolah-sekolah yang terlibat ialah MRSM Pengkalan Chepa, SM Sains Tengku Muhammad Faris Petra dan SMK Kota. Objektif umum kajian ini adalah untuk menyatakan bahawa landskap sekolah adalah sebahagian dari pengalaman pembelajaran. Kaedah kajian kualitatif dan kuantitatif digunakan dan ianya dibahagikan kepada dua fasa iaitu membuat pemerhatian kawasan dan mengedarkan soal-selidik



kolerasi kepada pelajar-pelajar sekolah menengah. Data dari soal-selidik dianalisa menggunakan SPSS versi 12. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan yang nyata antara persepsi pelajar terhadap landskap sekolah dengan pengalaman pembelajaran. Walau bagaimana pun, landskap sekolah hanya mempengaruhi persepsi pelajar dan pengalaman pembelajaran pada tahap sederhana. Hasil kajian mensasarkan bahawa persepsi pelajar terhadap landskap sekolah dan pengalaman pembelajaran yang diperolehi darinya adalah dipengaruhi oleh ciri-ciri landskap sekolah dan aktiviti yang dijalankan di dalamnya.

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I certify that an Examination Committee met on 17 Januari 2008 to conduct the final examination of Nik Roh Hayati Bt Wan Abdul Rahman on her Master Science thesis entitled “Students’ Perception of School Landscape And its Influence on Learning Experience at Award-Winning Secondary Schools in Kelantan, Malaysia” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulation 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the degree of Master Science.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotation and citation which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

.....

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EPRD:	Education Planning and Research Department
EDA:	Exploratory Data Analysis
MRSMPK:	Maktab Rendah Sains Mara, Pengkalan Chepa
PEB:	Program on Educational Building
PMR:	Penilaian Menengah Rendah
SMSTMFP:	Sekolah Menengah Sains Tengku Muhammad Faris Petra
SMK:	Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Scenario of School Landscape in Malaysia

School landscapes are usually designed based on the enthusiasm of the principals, headmasters, teachers and gardeners. The designs usually concentrate on attractiveness, neatness and cleanliness of the site rather than providing space for students to mingle around, explore the nature and play. An effective school landscape design can stimulate learning among the students. Referring to “Deraf Garis Panduan Landskap Negara Terperinci untuk Bangunan Pendidikan”, which was drafted in 2001, only 5 to 6 percent of the total green area contributed to the learning process, whereas, the other areas could not fulfil the functional landscape criteria.

The Ministry of Education had launched a 3K program in 1993 which focussed on safety, cleanliness and beautification of the school ground. Accordingly, many schools have developed their school landscapes with the concept “Sekolah Dalam Taman”. The National Landscape Guideline for Specific Area had proposed that the concept “Sekolah Dalam Taman” should be compatible with the function, weather and indoor activities. However, the present school landscape is generally not focusing on the function of the school ground as an extension of the classroom. At present, the landscaped area looks pleasing to the viewers but it is least used by the teachers as an outdoor classroom. This is because the landscape is assumed to be just



as a decoration and for beautification, therefore, it should not to be disturbed. Study by Titman (1999) had identified the constraint that discouraged teachers from taking more lessons in the school landscape because they were lacked of training and confidence, pressures of time and timetable, perceived lack of curriculum need, insufficient funding, health and safety concerns, and other administrative burdens. Many school administrators assume that having big trees in the school compound will cause litter (dried leaves) and damage the concrete structure. Therefore, they tend to chop down the trees and replace them with asphalts or cement pavements (Figure 1.1). However, students prefer to have big trees in their school compound so that they can use the place for social interaction.



Figure 1.1: The cement pavement in school compound

A conducive learning environment should be comfortable to students. However, the elements that provide comfort to the students such as shade is rarely considered in landscape design. Thus, the school ground lacks shady trees especially around the

main buildings and paved area. Besides, landscape furniture such as benches is always misplaced at open sunny areas (Figure 1.2). Students' needs are hardly put into consideration when designing the school landscape. What seems beautiful to the eyes of the teachers and administrators is assumed to be likewise to the students as well.



Figure 1.2: Landscape furniture placed at open sunny space.

School grounds are public environments where students spend significant amount of time (Stine, 1997). Regarding to school's function as a place to educate people, it is necessary for the school to develop a school landscape where students could gain experience and knowledge from it. School landscape is not designed just to beautify the school compound but what is most essential is the learning experience offered to the school community especially the students. School landscapes offer various qualities and experiences and hold remarkable potential to facilitate learning (Johnson, 2000).

School Landscape Guidelines

The National Landscape Guideline for Specific Area (Educational Environment) has analyzed the existing educational environment and identified some common problems such as no total planning for the school landscape, inappropriate designs for certain space, no systematic planting method, inappropriate materials for hardscape and lack of maintenance. The design is more for beautification rather than functional, and there is usually a lack of funds for landscape development. Therefore, the department has proposed that the space around the school building be developed for multiple uses rather than only for beautification. The space should be used for relaxation, social interaction and exhibition.

There should be certain spaces where students can gain knowledge either through the information labelled on the signboard or from the landscape elements such as plants. Other variation of the space includes garden for recycle and experimentation and fishpond and pets' shelter where students could explore via manipulation of the area. Planning for effective school landscape should involve the landscape specialist and the cost for the landscape development should be 5% of the total development and the minimum size landscape area should be 10 % of total available area for school landscape (Jabatan Landskap Negara, 2001).

The main objective of the school landscape is to provide conducive learning environment which encourages positive social interaction among students and teachers. Moreover, the intention of creating school landscape is to provide the ecosystem that is human and animal-friendly. The specific objective of the

landscape concept for secondary school is to control students' movement and activities at certain academic blocks. However, the space usage should be at maximum level. Students are also encouraged to explore the surrounding areas.

The Involvement of School in National Landscape Competition

The National Landscape Department has organized an annual competition, which is known as "The National Landscape Competition". It is an annual event held since 1993 in conjunction with the National Day celebration. The main objective of the competition is to perpetuate interest and awareness in the art of landscaping (Jabatan Landskap Negara, 2003). It also aims to stimulate development of quality landscape towards realizing government's vision to transform Malaysia into a Garden Nation. The basic landscapes elements being evaluated are soft landscape, hard landscape and landscape furniture. Besides, other seven criteria are also being evaluated namely:

1. Efforts to preserve the landscape environment.
2. Efforts in respect to manpower input, idea and initiative.
3. Landscape design with regards to landscape composition, use of space and identity.
4. Efforts in respect to education and extension.
5. Overall cleanliness inside and outside the premises.
6. Effectiveness in meeting objective and function.
7. Maintenance and up-keep of landscape areas.

There were fifteen categories of prizes, and in 1999, schools, too, have been included in the competition. Schools from all states in Malaysia have participated in the competition and all the winners of state level competition are nominated for the National Landscape Competition. The winners of the National Landscape Competition (School Category) can be seen in Table 1-A (Appendix A).

Statement of the Problem

Today, almost every school has landscaped its areas either at the front yard or the entire area. It is a commendable effort for teachers who have developed the site for the pleasure of the school community. This eyes pleasing school landscape is hoped to be appreciated by the school community especially the students. Due to my experience as a landscape officer for Jabatan Pelajaran Negeri Terengganu from 1996 until 1999, I had realized that students appreciated the beautiful school landscape only for a while. However, as time passed by, students gave just a glimpse to the beautiful landscaped areas and in certain cases; students tend to vandalize the shelters provided for them.

As Adam (1993, p.129) stated that many current initiatives to develop school landscape are fragmented and of variable quality. Many schools focus on one aspect of usage and their ad hoc approach to filling the grounds with play structures, sculptures, planting and painted surfaces will not solve problems of scale, use of space or vandalism. Mathew (1995) stated in Malone and Tranter (2003), advocates that school landscape is designed to reflect only adult values and usages rather than the student's needs.