



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**PREFERENCES FOR INTERIOR PUBLIC SPACES  
IN KUALA LUMPUR SHOPPING MALLS**

**FAZILAH BINTI FAZLE MOULA**

**FRSB 2009 2**



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**FAZILAH BINTI FAZLE MOULA**

**MASTER OF SCIENCE  
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**PREFERENCES FOR INTERIOR PUBLIC SPACES IN KUALA LUMPUR  
SHOPPING MALLS**

**By**

**FAZILAH BINTI FAZLE MOULA**

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

**July 2009**



*Dedicated to*

*My family,*

*My husband, Rusli bin Haji Tahir,*

*My son, Muhammad Aele Shafri Bin Rusli, and*

*My daughter, Nor Aelessya Shakira Binti Rusli*



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment  
of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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By

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**July 2009**

**Chairman: Suhardi bin Maulan, PhD**

**Faculty: Design and Architecture**

As users of shopping malls, people's needs play an important role in designing shopping malls, as it is not only for the quality of its shops and hospitality that matter, but also the interior public space it provides. People carry out various activities in interior public spaces whereby these spaces are crucial for the comfort of the customers who come to the malls. Unfortunately, the trend in the Malaysian malls' interior public spaces have not been as public spaces, as they are rather designed specifically for business spaces.

It is therefore suggested that the interior public spaces at shopping malls be designed according to people's needs and preferences. Thus, this study was carried out to investigate preferences of the Kuala Lumpur residents towards interior public spaces at shopping malls. For this, a survey was conducted on among 240 participants in Bukit Bintang, MidValley and Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman in Kuala Lumpur. The



major part of the survey was the photo-questionnaire of the interior public spaces at malls. Besides photo questionnaire, the survey also consists of questions to gauge the participants' perceived importance of the interior landscape elements at the public spaces in malls.

The results from the analysis indicated that interior public spaces at malls could be categorized into three dimensions, namely Business, Green and Seating Dimensions. Green Dimension refers to the dimension, which has the highest mean preference rating while Business Dimension is the dimension with the lowest mean preference rating. The analysis also revealed that seating places, public clocks, plants and water features are perceived as important interior landscape elements at the public spaces provided while artificial plants and business entities are perceived as less important than other interior landscape elements involved in this study. Based on the people's preferences, the study also showed five significant findings: the interior space at shopping malls as a place for public to spend time, to utilize and to relax, people preferred green interior and water features, while coherence and legibility are two important preference factors for the interior public spaces at shopping malls. The fourth and final significant findings are the rejection of business entities at public spaces in malls and that the age of the people who visited these places did matter in designing these spaces.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai  
memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

***'PREFERENCES'* PENDUDUK KUALA LUMPUR TERHADAP RUANG  
AWAM DALAMAN KOMPLEKS MEMBELI-BELAH**

Oleh

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Sebagai pengguna kompleks membeli-belah, kehendak orang ramai memainkan peranan yang penting bagi sesebuah kompleks membeli-belah, bukan sahaja kepada kualiti kedai-kedai yang terdapat di dalam kompleks membeli-belah dan layanan kepada pembeli tetapi juga kepada penyediaan ruang awam dalamannya. Orang ramai melakukan pelbagai aktiviti di ruang awam kompleks membeli-belah yang mana ruang awam dalaman memainkan peranan penting dalam memberikan keselesaan kepada orang ramai. Malangnya, senario di ruang awam kompleks membeli-belah di Malaysia lebih tertumpu sebagai ruang perniagaan.

Ruang awam dalaman kompleks membeli-belah seharusnya direkabentuk berdasarkan kehendak dan '*preference*' orang ramai. Sehubungan itu, kajian ini bertujuan mengenalpasti '*preference*' penduduk Kuala Lumpur terhadap ruang awam dalaman kompleks membeli-belah. Satu tinjauan soal-selidik telah dijalankan ke atas

240 orang di kawasan Bukit Bintang, MidValley dan Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman di Kuala Lumpur. Bahagian utama kajian ini terdiri daripada soal-selidik gambarfoto keadaan ruang awam dalaman di kompleks membeli-belah. Di samping itu, ianya juga mengandungi soal-selidik berkaitan elemen landskap yang dianggap penting oleh orang ramai di ruang awam dalaman kompleks membeli-belah.

Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahawa ruang awam dalaman di kompleks membeli-belah boleh dikategorikan kepada tiga dimensi yang dinamakan Dimensi-Perniagaan, Dimensi-Hijau dan Dimensi-Tempat Duduk. Dimensi-Hijau merupakan dimensi yang mendapat skor purata '*preference*' yang tertinggi sebaliknya Dimensi-Perniagaan mendapat skor purata yang terendah. Keputusan kajian juga menunjukkan tempat duduk, jam awam, tumbuh-tumbuhan dan elemen air telah dianggap oleh orang ramai sebagai elemen landskap dalaman yang penting manakala kehadiran pokok buatan dan entiti-entiti perniagaan telah dianggap sebagai kurang penting berbanding elemen-elemen landskap lain yang terlibat dalam kajian ini. Hasil kajian turut diperkukuhkan lagi dengan terhasilnya lima penemuan yang signifikan iaitu: ruang dalaman kompleks membeli-belah adalah merupakan ruang di mana orang ramai menghabiskan masa, menggunakannya dan berehat, orang ramai lebih suka ruang dalaman yang menekankan kehijauan dan kehadiran elemen air; dan '*coherence*' dan '*legibility*' merupakan dua faktor yang penting untuk ruang awam dalaman kompleks membeli-belah. Penemuan signifikan yang keempat dan yang terakhir ialah penolakan entiti-entiti perniagaan di ruang awam kompleks membeli-belah dan umur orang ramai yang memberikan kesan terhadap reka bentuk ruang awam dalaman kompleks membeli-belah.



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Thank you for everything.



I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 14 July 2009 to conduct the final examination of Fazilah binti Fazle Moula on her thesis entitled “Preferences for Interior Public Spaces in Kuala Lumpur Shopping Malls” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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## **DECLARATION**

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

---

**FAZILAH BINTI FAZLE MOULA**

Date: 28 August 2009

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

a.c.f	As cited from
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CIM	Content or Category-Identifying Methodology
dpi	Depth per inches
DVs	Dependent variables
$f$	Frequency
HSD	Honestly Significant Differences
ibid	Come from Latin word (ibidem) that give meaning repetition from same author that has mention in previous sentence
ICLUST	Hierarchical Cluster Analysis
IVs	Independent variables
KLCC	Kuala Lumpur City Centre
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
m	Mean
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
R	Regression coefficient
r	Correlation coefficient
s.d	Standard deviation
sig	Significant value
SMC	Squared Multiple Correllation
SPSS	Statistical Packages for Social Science
SSA III	The Guttman-Lingoes Smallest Space Analysis
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
USA	United States of America



VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
$\alpha$	Alpha
$\beta$	Standardised beta value
p	Significant value

## CHAPTER 1

### 1.0 Background of the Study

Kuala Lumpur had undergone a rapid urbanization which reached 100% (Lim, Nurwati, B and Ghafar, A, 2003). This condition has transformed the early shop houses to big departmental stores and finally to large malls (Bunnell, Barter and Morshidi, S, 2002), which has led to these giant business premise to become increasingly popular among Malaysians. Malls are the symbol of successful cities and they contribute to the economic growth of a country. Even though they are apparently viewed as enclosed buildings which consist of many smaller shops, this kind of environment plays an essential role to people. These malls also serve to accommodate for various functions for the people with special needs and preferences.

Uzzell (1995, p. 300), in his research conducted in Guilford, United Kingdom, states that “Shopping malls should not be regarded simply as a particular kind of architectural retail outlet, but as places providing a complex array of commercial, community and leisure facilities and satisfying many psychological need and preferences.” He found that users perceived shopping malls as places where they could accomplish their social, psychological, and spatial needs rather than the mall’s reputation as merely as a retail setting. In addition to this, the mall area that plays a vital role in affecting people’s judgement of the quality of the mall is a central area, which Uzzell calls as ‘social area’. Throughout the world, malls are not just places for activities related to selling and buying, but they are also for a wide range of activities from passive movement such as sitting and relaxing (Ozdemir, 2000; Anthony, 1995;

Uzzell, 1995) to active movement such as ‘mall walking’ (Ozdemir, 2000; Anthony, 1995). A study conducted in Malaysia by Lim *et al.* (2003) revealed that the major activities by the public during their trips to malls were such as buying daily their necessities, followed by outing with friends and family, window-shopping and recreation. The finding by Lim *et al.* (2003) also showed that Malaysians were also involved in a wide range of activities at shopping malls.

Based on the discussion above, shopping environment must also serve as a multi-functional building. Most importantly, malls should cater for shopping, leisure, relaxation, meeting friends and various activities just like the outdoor environment. In addition, malls are designed to resemble the characteristics of a city, which is complete with circulation areas including walkways, atriums<sup>1</sup> and corridors. According to Cybriwsky (1999), these kinds of areas can be classified as public spaces<sup>2</sup> which allow for passages, social interaction and relaxation. Moreover, any atrium in shopping malls should actually be designed the main purpose, i.e. for it to function as central public spaces, with business outlets set around it (Mohd. Hamdan, A & Mohamad Tajuddin, M.R, 2000).

Unfortunately, most of the interior public spaces available at most of the malls in Kuala Lumpur are fully occupied by business entities. This phenomenon is more rampant in the areas where public gather at a large, such as the main atrium floor spaces, corridors and walkways. Besides that, the transformation of public spaces into business areas and the extension of business activities in these areas at the malls

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<sup>1</sup> Atrium refers to a large high open space in the malls or other buildings (Longman Dictionary of contemporary English, 2001) and can be visible from other levels.

<sup>2</sup> Public spaces in this study refer to the areas in the malls such as the walkways, corridors and atrium.



in Kuala Lumpur cause other interior landscape elements (such as seating places, plants, water features, public clocks and sculptures), which should be in the public spaces, to always be neglected and forgotten.

A number of studies have documented that people have special needs and preferences towards shopping environment (e.g. Wolf, 2004; Lekagul, 2002; Uzzell, 1995). Most importantly, in the case of shopping malls, the principle used in designing a mall enables designers to come up with varieties of space for people who emphasize on place for relaxation (Carpenter, Walker and Lanphhear, 1975). This is particularly because some people may want to take a short break while shopping, change location from one part to another, rest and think before buying extra things (ibid). In addition, Casazza and Spink (1985) suggested that the major areas of a mall are designed to give impression on its public space and its anchor shops which are linked by plenty of retail stores, with common areas and a chain of public spaces (a.c.f. Lekagul, 2002).

In the context of malls in Kuala Lumpur, most of their interior public spaces have been changed into business areas and this leads to the change in the role of these public spaces, which have caused them to lose their viability and not becoming public spaces anymore. As a result, public spaces in malls turn to assimilate other shops where people can only browse and buy merchandises. If malls, as public places, do not provide amenities, which can be used by people to fulfil their physical and physiological needs and preferences, this means that they are merely the place for people to spend their money, while other purposes are ignored. For that reason, the