



***EVALUATING PUBLIC EXPECTATION ON PHYSICAL AND  
FUNCTIONAL FACTORS OF COMMUNITY CENTER  
DESIGNS IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA***

**NASTARAN JAFARI**

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KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA**

By

**NASTARAN JAFARI**

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

**June 2015**

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## **DEDICATION**

In the name of God, who sees this thought. I dedicate this work to the people who help others at the top of their life and their aim is always to help others as well as all those who have a special place in my heart and sincere to beautiful: My merciful parents, my dear sibling and my nice friends. Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of University Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science.

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**June 2015**

**Chair: Assoc. Prof. Ir. Nangkula Utaberta, PhD**

**Faculty: Design and Architecture**

Community center as a public space must be seen and treated as a crucial part of the planning process for urban development. The Malaysian Government is consistently to improve the quality of life with Malaysian's aspiration toward becoming a developed nation. The main objective of this thesis is to identify significant criteria for formulating a design framework for responsive community centers based on community expectation in the Malaysia. To achieve this objective, four community centers in four regions of Kuala Lumpur were used as the case studies to show the participants expectation and evaluation toward using the community center in terms of physical and functional factors. Quantitative research was conducted in this research and data was collected through questionnaire survey and analyzed by using SPSS. The result of the questionnaire presented that, participants did not agree with the current situation of Malaysian Community centers, especially in terms of functional factor. The research also exposed and identified that access by public transport and condition of ventilation and lighting were the most important features in terms of physical factor. Moreover, having open space was the most important features in terms of functional factor which should be more considered and used in the future structure of Malaysian community centers. So, this study will contribute to City Hall architect, planners and urban designers who are in charge of the community center design to reconstruct and redesign better community center in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

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

**MENILAI JANGKAAN AWAM PADA FAKTOR FIZIKAL DAN FUNGSI  
REKABENTUK PUSAT KOMUNITI DI KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA**

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Pusat komuniti sebagai ruang awam yang harus dilihat dan dianggap sebagai suatu bahagian yang penting dalam proses perancangan dan pembangunan bandar. Kerajaan Malaysia secara konsisten berusaha untuk meningkatkan kualiti hidup ke arah menjadi sebuah negara maju. Kajian ini didorong oleh objektif utama iaitu mengenalpasti kriteria penting untuk merumuskan rangka kerja reka bentuk pusat komuniti yang lebih responsif berdasarkan jangkaan masyarakat di Malaysia. Untuk mencapai objektif ini, empat pusat komuniti dari empat kawasan di Kuala Lumpur telah digunakan sebagai kajian kes bagi mengkaji dan menilai jangkaan masyarakat terhadap penggunaan pusat masyarakat dari segi faktor fizikal dan fungsional. Kajian kuantitatif telah digunakan dalam kajian ini dan data telah dikumpulkan melalui borang soal selidik dan dianalisis dengan menggunakan SPSS. Hasil soal selidik yang dikemukakan, peserta kurang bersetuju dengan keadaan semasa pusat komuniti di Malaysia terutama dari segi faktor fungsi. Penyelidikan ini juga menunjukkan bahawa pencapaian dengan pengangkutan awam dan keadaan pengudaraan dan pencahayaan adalah ciri yang paling penting dari segi faktor fizikal untuk pusat komuniti. Selain itu, kawasan lapang adalah ciri yang paling penting dari segi faktor fungsi yang perlu diutamakan dalam pertimbangan dan digunakan dalam pembangunan pusat komuniti Malaysia pada masa akan datang. Oleh itu, kajian ini akan menyumbang kepada seni bina Dewan Bandaraya, perancang dan pereka bandar yang bertanggungjawab bagi merangka dan menghasilkan reka bentuk pusat komuniti yang lebih baik di Malaysia.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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This is to confirm that:

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

DBKL:	Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur
JKR:	Jabatan Kerja Raya
PJCC :	Petaling Jaya Community Center
MCA:	the Ministry of Civil Affairs

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of Study**

Nowadays people are more pressured compared to the last few decades, due to the introduction of social networking, completions for survival, busy urban lifestyle and many other reasons that lead them to a more stressful life causing more enclosed behavioral preferences. Pressured working environments, busy metropolitans and traffics have left people less concentrated on health and psychological happiness. To fulfill these gaps a lot of solutions have been introduced by experts in different fields. One is community centers by planners, that have been getting improved time by time. Community centers despite being accessible and convenient for most of the residents of an area, provides a huge range of programs and activities so that anyone is able to peruse his/her interest. The program and activities are not only to fulfill the users' needs, but to boost up their health physically, psychologically and socially. People after busy working hours and school spend their leisure time in their interest, activity and area such as community centers.

The community centers of many countries such as Japan, China and United States are being used for the social welfare, social interaction, recreational events, cultural programs, religious activities and moral development of people, interest based courses, library and meeting spaces in benefit of the local community. Both in Europe and America, the number of community centers has been increased with the prime goal to foster community cooperation by enhancing strong network among the dwellers (Broady, et al. 1990; Fisher, 1994; Xu, et al 2008). Although the Malaysian owns of the community centers, but these are under not utilized sufficiently and their usage is limited.

So, the increased amount of leisure time available combined with a growing recognition of the particular needs of different age groups has altered the demand on local communities for leisure activities. Many of the older type of recreational facilities often do not meet community needs because they are only suitable for a limited range of activities or they may not be easily access to the vast majority of the community either because of location or limitations of usage (Sanoff, 1988; Lotfi & Koohsari, 2009). Pasaogullari & Doratli (2004) claimed that access to, and utilization of community center as a public space and their physical and functional structures are among the issues that are negatively affected by rapid urban growth. However, a long-term strategy, with the dwellers and community's expectation needed to be planned for optimum usage of community center where attract people to use it.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

A community center should be regarded as an essential amenity of normal community living in normal circumstances (Smith, M. K, 2002). Today's, many studies focus on a sense of community and sense of belonging through the significance of this in the community center, sustainable design and define energy goals related to environment, the effect of the community center on individuals and the role of centers that can play in the service network. In addition, discusses physical activity in community centers and its effect on people's health in society. So, there is a paucity of research, as results, becoming a vague situation, which depends on the role of architect, and designers and their strategies contribute to the development and optimum usage of the community center.

According to DBKL (2004), The design of the community center provides a hall, which can be used at any time for recreational activities or social gathering. These community centers do not meet with people's aspiration and choices which are being more diverse. The design should reflect generally the changing needs and growing expectations of the people. The Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur through its local authority, Kuala Lumpur City Hall aims to promote social cohesiveness among its inhabitants. One of the strategies to achieve this is the provision of public facilities and recreational facilities which could bring people together and further enhance the city living environment. As the planning authority for Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Lumpur City Hall is responsible for ensuring that facilities for the community are distributed in a fair and equitable manner.

Nurul et al (2014) acknowledged that, It is important that the provision of such services and facilities should be available to all citizens. The government is the main director in ensuring these basic components providing within these areas. In Malaysia, through the local planning authority, zonings for the local services and public facilities provide an important impact towards the availability of these services within a neighbourhood. The rest depends on the supply and demand of each service and facilities required by the residents. There are various issues concerning the provision of these local facilities and public facilities, especially in developing countries like Malaysia. Most of the time, the issues revolve around quality and catchment area and accessibility. Nurul et al (2014) declared that, during her survey observation, the researcher visited the recreational facilities like the community center around the study area for several times and different times. She found the few of them that are provided, but underutilized. This situation has arisen due to inadequate function and facility which are provided in the community center such as children's playground, soccer fields, sport facilities, library, kindergarten and other activities. Beside this, poor accessibility and inappropriate condition of building like ventilation. This is also acknowledged by claims highlighted in the National Urbanization Policy. At present, the provision of local services and public facilities in the case study areas are in moderate condition. The definition of moderate in this context is, most facilities are facing some issues or problems related to their provision. The lack of recreational facilities in community center was identified (Nurul et al., 2014).

Utambarta et al, 2010 acknowledged that, the community center of Kuala Lumpur is nothing more than a large empty space, used only for specific purposes like marriage ceremony or birthday ceremony and games like badminton, ping pong; it faces with the shortage of activity which hold on at the community center. For more, the thought of all-functioning room dates back to a century ago with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's universal spaces's idea. The existence of the long span of space without any columns which make it high enough for limit functions such as sports activity and community gathering. Although this idea was attractive, simple and logical, limitation of usage is the issue of this idea. This space is suitable for weekly badminton and community gathering that occurs in a blue moon. Other activity faces with difficulty in this space like chess. It means a waste of air conditioning and light energy for other functions. Eventually, for having the space for badminton activity other function victims and perhaps even makes it difficult to hold a gathering. According to Lucien Kroll (1986) "How does an architect see himself? This isn't about corporate identity, but an evaluation towards the produced architecture: whose game are we playing? Is it our own? Is it the capitalists, philanthropist or corporate powers'? Do we serve as priests and bishops, or bow to the power of governance and politics, or are we turning towards local organization, individual dwellers and the relationship between them? It is this question that will most influence the design of everything built and lived in compared to the efforts of the architect himself." Based on this fact, architects play a professional role to bring satisfied demand and social needs of community in the center. It should solve that which activity and feature should be added in the community center for optimum usage regarding the current situation of the Malaysian community center with only wide building and seldom usage.

In general, having an expectation of people in the desirable community center has significant impacts on attracting participation. Indeed, the findings from this study will provide bases for formulating a design framework for responsive community centres in the future.

### **1.3 Significance of Study**

Involvement at the community center, enhance awareness about community issues and provide social and recreational opportunities. A center can contribute to the need to socialize as well as to structure the lives of older adults. Community centers and associations have played a significant part in the life of many local communities and networks. Rad & Ngah (2014) believe, people live in the city and city without people will die. Among various facilities, community center is one of the prime civic facilities aiming to facilitate community interactions, efficient network of community bondage and thus contribute to community development. Therefore, the approach of community development with the provision of various civic facilities and amenities is widely adopted in the planning and development process (Yasmin & Parvin, 2008). Attending in the community center, provides social and recreational opportunities where make stress relief or mental wellbeing for resident (Havir, 1991; Kaczynski & Henderson, 2007). In this regard, participation at the community center served to make the community a social place such that the social networks extended outside the walls of the center (Glover, 2004). Access to the community center and this local facility is a vital aspect in

community design and planning towards better quality living (Barton et al., 2010; Lotfi and Koohsari, 2009). Utambarta et al, (2010) declared that, studies on the community center development is very important for the nation. Although, the community center in Malaysia now not getting enough attention. So, Deep and integrated study should be conducted in order to create a friendly and more joyful atmosphere for the welfare of the community which is beneficial for designers to create the better community center.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study are presented as bellow:

1. To identify the physical and functional factors which influence the usage of spaces in the community center.
2. To Review and analyze current conditions (physical and functional) of spaces in Kuala Lumpur community centers.
3. To identify significant criteria for formulating a design framework for responsive community centers based on community expectation in the Malaysia.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

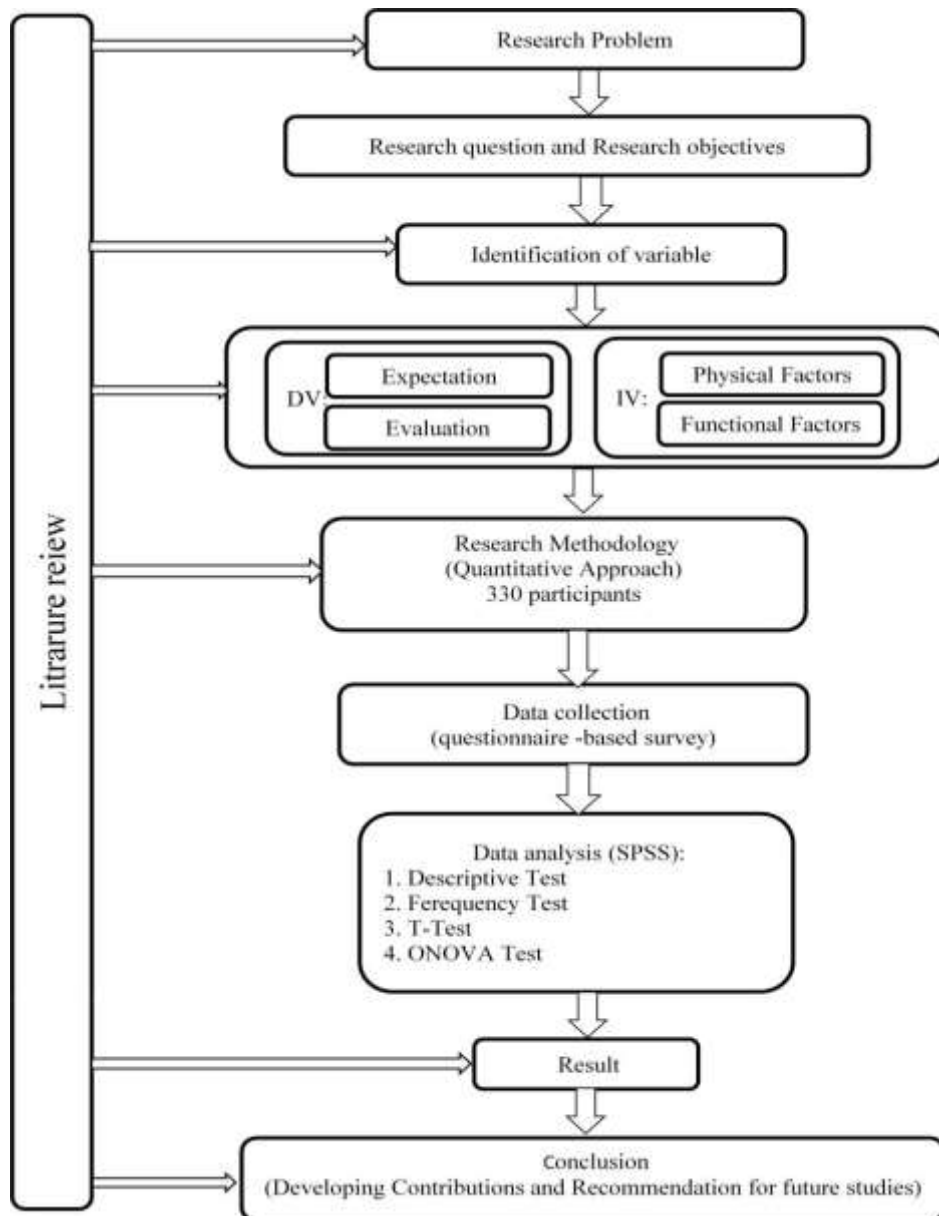
To achieve the purposes of the study, the following research questions were posed:

1. What are the physical and functional factors which influence the usage of spaces in the community center?
2. What is the current condition (physical and functional) of spaces and the gap between the expectation and the current condition of Kuala Lumpur's community center?
3. What are the significant criteria for formulating a design framework for responsive community centers based on community expectation in the Malaysia?

#### **1.6 Research Methodology**

This research process was conducted through the background of the study via the recognition of the issues and maintained the study goal and objectives based on the theories on literature review and issues relevant to the study. Seminar papers, journal publications and international and local literature were used as the method of description documentation study. The data were also gathered from the questionnaires which were distributed among 330 the local residents in four regions of Kuala Lumpur city. The questionnaire was provided according to the objectives and variables of the study. The questionnaire is derived into seven parts which are concluded 2 parts related to physical factors regarding public expectation (accessibility and building design), one part about a functional factor regarding public expectation, 2 parts related to physical factor regarding public evaluation, one part about a functional factor regarding public evaluation and the last part

belongs to participants demography. In addition, A five-point Likert-type scale is used. Then, the obtained data were accumulated and analyzed by SPSS software version 20. The results were presented in tables and figures focusing on the topic of residential requirement in their community center regarding physical and functional factors. As the main objective focuses on participant's evaluation and expectation, the collected data would be shown in numerical and statistical analysis.



**Figure 1.1 Research Framework**  
(Source: Author, 2015)

This figure illustrates the connection among literature review, problem statement, research questions, research objectives, research variables, data collection procedure and data analysis. In addition, the process conducted (i.e from designing framework for obtaining results, conclusion and contribution) has also been elaborated.

## **1.7 The Scope and the limitation of Research**

This study focuses only on the physical and functional factors which are implemented in the construction and usability of a community center. Moreover, it focuses on the people's expectation dealing with the physical and functional factors and compares it with the current condition of Kuala Lumpur community centers in four regions which are under DBKL support as the samples. There are three (3) types of community centers, which named community center, community hall and multipurpose hall. The concern of this study focusing on the type of community centers, which is under DBKL maintenance and support. Therefore, multi purpose hall, which covering this factor has been chosen for this thesis.

Although there are other factors such as management, maintenance, economic and cultural behavior factors which are involved to this issue, but This study only focused on physical and functional factors and were excluded other factors.

## **1.8 Thesis Structure**

This study is divided into 5 chapters. The first chapter is introduced as introduction which elaborates on the background of study, problem statement, significance, objectives, questions, methodology and scope of research. Chapter 2 reviews the literature concerning the definition of community center, the role and importance of community center as a public space in urban planing, history of community center and in Malaysia, people's expectation about a community center and physical and functional factors. Chapter 3 describes the methodology in terms of research design and methodology, introducing the study area, survey questionnaire as a method of collecting the data and the size of sample, reliability and validity of this research and finally the SPSS as the method of analysis. Chapter 4 developed for the discussion on findings of gathered through the questionnaire and archival study. The findings were categorized based on the four main themes of the questionnaire namely the expectation of physical factor, expectation of functional factor, evaluation of physical factor and evaluation of functional factor, the current condition based on archival study as well. Chapter 5 released the analysis and proposed the framework as a recommendation and suggesting for optimum usage and some ways to enhance the participant in the Malaysian community center based on the people's expectation of community centers. Finally, the last chapter; chapter 6 allocated to research conclusion and further study.

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