UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

TRANSNATIONAL PLACE ATTACHMENT THROUGH CAMPUS PHYSICAL DESIGN FOR A UNIVERSITY IN MALAYSIA

EZAZ FATEMI

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TRANSNATIONAL PLACE ATTACHMENT THROUGH CAMPUS PHYSICAL DESIGN FOR A UNIVERSITY IN MALAYSIA

By

EZAZ FATEMI

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

In the name of God, the most beneficent, the most merciful.

I dedicate this work to:

My family and those who are in my heart forever.

Those try to add values and meanings to our world and make a better place for people.

And I dedicate it to all the teachers and lecturers in my life.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

TRANSNATIONAL PLACE ATTACHMENT THROUGH CAMPUS PHYSICAL DESIGN FOR A UNIVERSITY IN MALAYSIA

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EZAZ FATEMI

August 2018

Chair: Mohammad Yazah Mat Raschid, PhD
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Malaysia inspires to become a premier international education hub with expected intake of more international students' enrollment into the country. In line with this scenario, the infrastructural development of universities must also follow international standard and environmentally safe to attract international students. Malaysia essentially needs to understand the adjustment problems faced by international students and provides the right kind of support by enhancing sense of place attachment amongst international students in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) campus. The physical planning of UPM Serdang main campus is outspread due to its large area and seems to contribute to the lack of social interactions and attachment to the University; a factor which is considered as a hindrance to its effort to be a premier global education hub. This study aims to investigate the actual locations and level of place attachment amongst international students, current planning and design characteristics of places that provide sense of place attachment in UPM campus, key stakeholders' views on the importance of place attachment in UPM and finally, to formulate appropriate design strategies and recommendations that can assist UPM to be a global education hub.

A mixed quantitative and qualitative methods, acknowledged as explanatory sequential mixed methods are employed. The first method involves questionnaires survey conducted amongst UPM international students to understand students' perceptions on level of campus attachment, identifying and ranking of specific places of attachment. Meanwhile, the later qualitative phases include morphological study, physical observation to identify the physical characteristics of the places of attachment in eight specific locations in UPM. Finally, interviews with main stakeholders' also are conducted to gauge their opinion on the importance of place attachment through the planning and design methods of UPM facilities.

The result demonstrates that the international students are lacking sense of place attachment towards the University. The international students in UPM seem to have

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difficulties in adjusting to cultural differences and educational experience that is needed in the process of place attachment. Despite the efforts being made to upgrade the physical appearance or visibility of UPM, there are still several glaring weaknesses in facilitating and supporting place attachments amongst the international students that further hinder the internationalization of UPM as a global education hub. The lack of urban spine physical development for social and cultural connectivity from the main administrative area to other campus core areas is considered as the main contributor to the problem which is also exacerbated by decentralization of decision making and discontinuation of planning policies at the top management levels apart from the maintenance aspects. This study is expected to assist in formulating an appropriate set of planning and design strategies for a global educational campus hub in Malaysia by taking into consideration of the existing planning conditions and the views of stakeholders that can be employed worldwide.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

KETERKAITAN TEMPAT TRANSNASIONAL MELALUI REKA BENTUK FIZIKAL KAMPUS BAGI UNIVERSITI DI MALAYSIA

Oleh

EZAZ FATEMI

Ogos 2018

Pengerusi: Mohammad Yazah Mat Raschid, PhD
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Malaysia beraspirasi untuk menjadi hab pendidikan antarabangsa yang utama dengan jangkaan pengambilan lebih ramai pelajar antarabangsa masuk ke negara ini. Selaras dengan senario ini, pembangunan prasarana universiti mestilah juga mengikut piawaian antarabangsa dan selamat alam sekitar untuk menarik pelajar antarabangsa. Malaysia pada dasarnya perlu memahami masalah penyesuaian yang dihadapi oleh pelajar antarabangsa dan memberikan sokongan yang tepat dengan meningkatkan keterkaitan tempat di kalangan pelajar antarabangsa di kampus Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). Perancangan fizikal kampus utama UPM Serdang yang terbentang kerana kawasannya yang luas menyumbang kepada kurangnya interaksi sosial dan keterkaitan tempat kepada Universiti; satu faktor yang dianggap sebagai penghalang kepada usahanya menjadi hab pendidikan global yang utama.

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji lokasi sebenar dan tahap keterkaitan tempat di kalangan pelajar antarabangsa, ciri perancangan dan reka bentuk semasa tempat yang memberi gambaran tentang keterkaitan tempat di kampus UPM, pandangan pihak berkepentingan utama mengenai kepentingan keterkaitan tempat di UPM dan akhirnya untuk merumuskan strategi reka bentuk dan saranan sesuai yang boleh membantu UPM menjadi hab pendidikan global. Kaedah kuantitatif dan kualitatif bercampur, dikenali sebagai kaedah bercampur berturutan juga diterangkan. Kaedah pertama melibatkan soal selidik yang dijalankan di kalangan pelajar antarabangsa UPM untuk memahami persepsi pelajar terhadap tahap keterkaitan kampus, mengenal pasti lokasi sebenar dan kedudukan tempat keterkaitan yang khusus. Sementara itu, fasa kualitatif kedua termasuk kajian morfologi, pemerhatian fizikal untuk mengenal pasti ciri fizikal tempat keterkaitan di lapan lokasi spesifik di UPM. Akhirnya, wawancara dengan pihak berkepentingan utama juga dijalankan untuk menilai pendapat mereka tentang kepentingan keterkaitan tempat melalui kaedah perancangan dan reka bentuk kemudahan UPM. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pelajar antarabangsa kurang merasai keterkaitan tempat pada universiti. Pelajar antarabangsa di UPM nampaknya mengalami kesukaran menyesuaikan diri dengan perbezaan budaya dan pengalaman pendidikan yang

diperlukan dalam proses keterkaitan tempat. Walaupun terdapat usaha untuk menaik taraf penampilan fizikal atau visibiliti UPM, masih terdapat beberapa kelemahan menonjol dalam memudahkan dan menyokong keterkaitan tempat di kalangan pelajar antarabangsa yang menghalang proses pengantarabangsaan UPM sebagai hab pendidikan global. Kekurangan pembangunan fizikal tulang belakang bandaran untuk hubungan sosial dan budaya dari kawasan pentadbiran utama ke lokasi teras kampus yang lain dianggap sebagai penyumbang utama kepada masalah yang diburukkan lagi oleh desentralisasi pengambilan keputusan dan ketidak-kesinambungan dasar perancangan di peringkat pengurusan utama selain dari aspek penyelenggaraan. Kajian ini dijangka membantu dalam merangka strategi perancangan dan reka bentuk yang sesuai untuk kampus hab pendidikan global di Malaysia dengan mengambil kira keadaan perancangan yang sedia ada dan pandangan pihak berkepentingan yang boleh digunakan di seluruh dunia.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 8 August 2018 to conduct the final examination of Ezaz Fatemi on his thesis entitled "Transnational Place Attachment Through Campus Physical Design for a University in Malaysia" 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 Doctor of Philosophy.

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Declaration by graduate student

I hereby confirm that:
- this thesis is my original work;
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Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee

This is to confirm that:
- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) are adhered to.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CoSComm	Corporate Strategy and Communications Office
CQA.	Centre of Quality Assurance
ha	Hectare
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HLI	Higher Learning Institute
IAQ	Indoor Air Quality
IEQ	Indoor Environment Quality
M	Mean
MD	Mean Difference
MED	Malaysian Education Blueprint
N	Number of Participants
OSHMO	Occupational Safety and Health Committee
PNC	Office of the Vice-Chancellor
POS	Public Open Spaces
PPP	Place, Person, Process
SD	Standard Deviation.
SEM	Standard Error Mean
SGS	School of Graduated Studies
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
Ver	Version

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

This chapter initially discusses the research background and problem statement that trigger this study. The roles of campus planning, place attachment and transnationalism in education system are scrutinized to identify the real issue in hand that could lead to better resolutions to enhance the internationalization of Malaysian campus and transnational students' enrollment.

Subsequently, this chapter describes the aim, objectives and questions which were generated from the identified issues and put forward the hypothesis and assumptions of this research. These descriptions revolve around the selected main case study area, University Putra Malaysia, Serdang. Finally, this is followed by the discussion on the significance and structure of the thesis at the end of this chapter.

1.2   Background Study

The author is an Iranian student with a background in architecture, building and planning studies. The interest in place attachment study is based on the author's curiosity in making a campus environment as not only a place to study but as a 'temporary home' where social interactions could happen in a 'homely' built environment. Being a transnational student, the concept of place attachment will not only placates the feeling of being an 'alien' in a foreign campus but also gradually assists the process of blending into the local community which could further increase productivity in terms of academic results and lifestyles satisfactions in the campus. Whilst current university internationalization programs do assist in the adjustment of international students; however, meaningful intercultural connection often occurs at an interpersonal level, not at an institutional level. Knight (1994) described internationalization as the "process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution". Despite the efforts intended to support international students, many students still have the adjustment problem towards the campus environment and educational system in Malaysia. The findings of the previous studies revealed that international students need to deal with academic challenges, social isolation, and cultural adjustment in Malaysian universities. Additionally, international students may feel significant misfortune when living far from their family and friends (Lee et al. 2004). While this is the case, inadvertently, when international students visit a campus they create enthusiastic connections with the campus, a factor crucial in understanding international students' behaviour (Wei et al., 2015). The built environment of the university campus provides much of the physical context for an international students' experience in Malaysia. The result showed that the physical development planning of UPM campus is weak and not well-planned (Abd-Razak et al., 2011). They emphasized that from the view of UPM physical campus planning, a

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widespread planning contrasts to the concept of sustainability as it increases the distance between areas, thus increasing reliance on cars.

Contextually, in terms of planning and design, campuses could reflect the multicultural curriculum, cultural background of the students, and the educational profile of the community by incorporating more diverse architectural form and organization, human scale, outward-facing orientation, prayer or ritual spaces, and even art from diverse cultures (Ali & Bagheri, 2009).

The concept of 'third place' has become integral in this study. Although people may become attached to many kinds of places, those referred to as 'third places', often create an atmosphere ideal for connecting with others (Oldenburg, 1999). He reiterated that 'third places' are those that "host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gathering of individuals". People grow attached to 'third places', in part, because these places promote productivity by providing resources, services or amenities to accomplish tasks outside of the work or home environment (Lewicka, 2011; Waxman, 2006a). Accomplishing tasks in a relaxed and pleasant setting often leads to a renewed sense of purpose, achievement, increased well-being (Cicognani, Menezes, & Nata, 2011; Najafi & Shariff, 2011; and Rollero & De Piccolo, 2010).

Parallel to the above notions, place of attachment needs to be identified and investigated to fill in the gap in the planning and design of campus on the manner it could enhance the internationalization of Malaysian universities in attracting foreign students' recipient. The current global universities' destinations lifecycles are much dependent on how successful are they in attracting the best minds from around the world with the hope that this will boost up their international ranking status. The idea of being out of place will not only alienate local students but it will also result in an undesirable domino effect of less international students' recipient to Malaysia. Those who went through bad educational experience and lack of sense of belonging would relay their negative opinions influencing other prospective students to study in other places. It can be concluded that the places where international students choose to live and study is ostensibly the most vital choice and decision they will ever make.

Subsequently, the preliminary author's apprehension on the topic of this research has led the author to design the background of study based on five main concepts which have influential effect on attachment among international students in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) campus; Malaysian education aspiration and internationalization, transnationalism and their challenges, place attachment and role of campus planning and design. The background also take into considerations of previous studies research protocols and outcomes pertaining to place attachment in justifying the need for this study to be conducted.

Transnational education has grown in importance in Asia and the Pacific region, with a growing number of cross-border educational institutions being founded to offer teaching and learning opportunities. Various Asian states such as Japan, Malaysia, and Singapore have also tried to develop themselves into regional hubs of higher education by capturing

the opportunities to turn higher education into a service industry (Mok, 2006). The number of international students in Malaysia has increased from 30,000 in the year 2003 to 70,000 in 2010 (Mahmud et al., 2010). According to Higher Education director-general Datin Paduka Ir Dr Siti Hamisah Tapsir, in 2017 a total of 177,000 foreign students were accepted to pursue their education at ten international campuses in the country. Building upon this foundation, Malaysia aspires to achieve its aim of becoming an international education hub by 2020, with a targeted of 200,000 international student enrollment into the country (Aziz & Abdullah, 2012) with further increase to 250,000 by 2025 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2015). The Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2015) was developed to further equip and support Malaysian government initiative towards becoming a high-income nation through quality education which implies the much needed improvement on the physical campus facilities planning and design to attract more international students recipient.

However, to become a major player and enjoy the benefits of having international students, Malaysia essentially needs to understand the adjustment problems faced by international students and provides the right kind of support (Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011). Tseng and Newton (2002) summarized the key adjustment problems faced by international students into four categories: (a) general living adjustment, (b) socio-cultural adjustment, (c) personal psychological adjustment, and (d) academic adjustment. General living adjustment includes areas such as adjusting to weather/climate, transportation systems, paying bills, health care systems, food and housing arrangements while socio-cultural adjustment refers to experiencing culture shock, discrimination and getting used to new values, norms, holidays and customs. Depression, loneliness, feelings of isolation, homesickness and frustration make up the issue of personal psychological adjustment while academic adjustment is linked to learning a new educational system, lack of language proficiency, and acquiring new learning strategies. Further studies have shown international students experienced challenges adjusting to food, weather, financial arrangement, health care, accommodation and local language (Tseng & Newton, 2002; and Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007).

To help facilitate relationships between international students and their domestic hosts, many universities engage their students in extra-curricular activities on campus such as physical and social programs, multicultural events, and discussion groups for international students to learn colloquialisms with their domestic peers, or the hosting of cross-cultural meals (Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002). Despite various university efforts intended to support international students, many students still reported psychological, social, and academic challenges to their integration into the university culture. Hechanova et al. (2002) found that international students experienced less social support than domestic students, most likely because their family and friends were not close and visiting them was difficult and infrequent. Meanwhile, Ward et al. (2009) suggested that these methods may result in quick and superficial collisions among students, but not meaningful relationships and strong social ties—those that may result from place attachment. In addition to social obstacles, international students are often unaccustomed to certain pedagogical styles within the western learning environment which emphasizes competitiveness, assertiveness, individualism, questioning, discussion and a focus on the personal development of the whole student (Cruickshank, Chen, & Warren, 2012; and Moores &Popadiuk, 2011).

The process of adjustment by international students has resulted in the need to focus on the concept of place attachment investigating people's interactions with natural and cultural landscapes (Chung et al., 2011and Ramkissoon et al., 2013b). Place attachment is one of the most influential factors in humans' psychological health, and is therefore powerful in constructing an individual's identity (Tuan, 2007) and may reduce the socio-cultural and psychological problems among international students (Shal et al., 2011). They argued that secure attachment style can also reduce the homesickness and is reflected emotionally with the influence of the physical and the cultural characteristics of the people and the setting. Place attachment is an important concept affecting people's willingness to take care of a place and have independent effects on willingness to engage in behaviors that maintain or enhance valued attributes of the setting (Stedman, 2002).

Due to the above factors, the Malaysian higher education sector needs to streamline its strategy for internationalization with greater improvement on the course, quality of student services such as accommodation and recreation facilities, and others relating to the teaching resources, in particular well-qualified lecturers and capable administrators (Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011). Sedaghatnia et al. (2015) argued one of the ways education institutions reach this goal is meeting the needs and expectations of students. Therefore, the infrastructural development must be of international standard to attract foreign students, staff and recognition; and must be environmentally safe and of high sanitary standard (Musa et al., 2012). University campus is the place, where international students spend most of their time, and thereby affect their views on the host country. As a result, the facilities and programs for the overseas students became an important issue for the contemporary university (Wei et al., 2015). Meanwhile, Brown (2005) pointed out that a well-designed physical environment could result in students' to be proud of themselves. Not only classrooms, but the whole university campus can potentially be an effective learning space (Brown & Long, 2006). Similarly, Natasha et al. (2012) agreed that building facilities and design influenced students' learning efficiency in the high education institution. Likewise, Dober (1992) approved that physical environment are among the most important factors influencing students' engagement, learning and personal development. In summary, many researchers have agreed upon the importance of the physical elements of campus such as safety, comfort, accessibility and campus layout (Marcus and Francis, 1998). In addition, for a university campus to be sustainable, it must preserve the environment, stimulate economic growth, and improve society (Alshuwaikhat & Abubakar, 2008).

Though many researches have been conducted on how place attachment can support the accomplishment of tasks, identity formation, personal restoration, and socialization, (Lewicka, 2011), only a handful focuses specifically on place attachment among international students. There have been recent calls for more research on how place attachment develops and evolves (Cross, 2015; Lewicka, 2011; and Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014). Furthermore, place attachment studies have mostly been performed and tested in North and South America and in Europe but not in Asian countries (Sakurai et al., 2017). Most importantly observed is that although research on the integration of international students into campus life is available, it rarely intersects with the role that the design of the built environment plays in this process. By understanding the relationship between place attachment and internationalization of campuses, various suggestions for environmental planning and design, such as strategies for encouraging

participation and interaction between users as well as international students in the campus, could be recommended.

1.3   Problem Statement

Malaysia is progressively becoming a hub for education as international students are constantly flocking the corridors of Malaysian universities and colleges are still attracting many international students from different parts of the world (Aziz & Abdullah, 2012). However, these opportunities do not come without challenges. Students are faced with a lot of problems when arriving to a new campus, such as finding living accommodations, the problems of adjusting to different challenges in getting familiar with a new living environment, which is different from their hometowns (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). Despite the cultural diversity international students bring, this group faces a variety of challenges in adjustment. Misra et al. (2003) identified three major areas of challenges that international students which are encounter academic, emotional and social difficulties. International students also experience difficulties in adjusting to cultural differences, language challenges, and educational system (Olivas & Li, 2006) resulting in the need to adapt to their new educational and social environment (Ginter & Glauser, 1997). Additionally, international students may feel significant misfortune when living far from their family and friends (Lee et al. 2004).

It was revealed that international students in Malaysian campuses have several challenges too. Many researchers have agreed upon the importance of the physical elements of campus such as safety, comfort, accessibility and maintenance in Malaysian campuses (Najib et al., 2012). Results have shown that social interactions, accommodation quality, academic services, facilities and comfort affect international students at UPM campus (Abd-Razak et al., 2011).

Malaysia is not a nation that just has a culture which is uniquely tied to one ethnicity or language. Malaysia has become a truly multi-cultural and multi-racial society with three major ethnic groups. The Malays are the largest ethnic group, the Chinese is the second largest community with twenty-three percent of the population, and seven percent are Indians. Despite university efforts intended to support international students, many students still reported psychological, social, and academic challenges to their integration into the University's culture. Left unaddressed, these challenges may lead to isolation, reduced retention and cultural shock or the affective, behavioral, and cognitive disorientation that sojourners experience when in an unfamiliar culture (Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013) and miscommunication which can lead to lack of social support are the big challenges that international students experience in new environment (Chen, 1999). In fact, the cultural similarity between international students' way of life and host culture has likewise risen as an essential factor, with more prominent likeness inferring less trouble amid the abroad experience (Ward et al., 2001).

Campus places can facilitate restoration by helping people forget the personal or social pressures encountered in daily life and can take the form of a positive change in mood, a renewal of directed attention capacity, or a reduction of stress, which regulates the self (Rollero & De Piccolo, 2010). Campus places also enforce personal identity by providing

a physical context that reflects users' values, and lays the foundation for memories and experiences (Najafi & Shariff, 2011; and Rollero & De Piccolo, 2010) and evoke passion, creativity, and self-exploration merely by being physically interesting or full of interesting people (Upitis, 2004).

Exploratory studies indicate that place attachments develop to different intensities within different spatial scales such as house, neighborhood, and city (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). Whereas, when people are not able to develop strong bonds with their place of residence, they are prone to leave (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). Steadman (2003) noted that the physical features do not produce a sense of place directly, but influence the symbolic meanings of the settings, which relates to the strength of place attachment. Although research on the integration of international students into campus life is available, it rarely intersects with the role that the design of the built environment plays in this process. This integration may reduce the aforementioned challenges faced by international students while increasing empathy, compassion, respect, and perceived value of diversity among all students (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998; Clements, 2000; and Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002). On a university campus, it is often the places outside the classroom where pleasant and voluntary intercultural contact and social connections may occur (Tupper et al., 2008). Research also suggests that when users have pleasant experiences in a place, they may become attached to the place and the people inside (Waxman, 2006a). It added a practical support to the current literature and identified campus physical planning and design quality as a significant dimension of an inclusive campus environment.

Malaysian campus physical development plan is an effective tool to shaping campuses' life, especially among students to promote a sustainable living community (Abd-Razak et al., 2011). However, there are many problems that exist in campus under this background, due to international students' demands often ignored in campus life (Wei et al., 2015). The campus planning of UPM seems to have adverse impact towards students' lifestyle and educational experience (Abd-Razak et al., 2011). It also pointed out the importance of social integration with other students in the campus environment. A clear image of an area can enable residents to feel comfortable, secure and emotionally involved and to identify with that area (Casakin, Hernández, & Ruiz, 2015). Meanwhile, understanding international student's needs is a cornerstone for any well-designed campus, the design that attracts more students, facilitates their activities and encourages them to spend more time when undertaking these activities (Francis, 2003).

The critical note on the Malaysian campus demonstrated that the physical development planning of UPM campus is weak and not well-planned (Abd-Razak et al., 2011). They emphasized that from the view of UPM physical campus planning, a wide-spread planning contrasts to the concept of sustainability as it increases the distance between areas; thus, increasing reliance on cars. All these problems hinder international students from feeling comfortable themselves in their context.

In the making of places, designers largely focus on the quality of the physical components. However, the aspect of attachment is not sufficiently considered in the planning and decision making process in Malaysia (Ujang & Zakariya, 2015). In

emphasizing the making of places, researchers stressed on research related to sustaining the physical elements and activities. Nonetheless, the importance of place attachment amongst the users is less explored in campus studies. The cultural characteristics, physical planning and design aspects combined with the students affective perceptions and functional needs form place attachment (Ujang, 2012a).

The statement of problem for this study is listed as follows:

> **Transnational University students of UPM campus need to adapt to their new educational and social environment to feel comfortable, secure and emotionally involved which are integral in their adjustment process. Despite this, international students in Universiti Putra Malaysia seems to have difficulties in adjusting to cultural differences and educational experience that is needed in the process of place attachment. While campus physical development plan is an effective tool to shaping campuses' life, especially amongst international students to promote a sustainable living community, the planning and design of UPM Serdang campus which is widely spread out seems to be lacking in assisting the process. There is an urgent need to identify the key locations for place attachment; planning and design characteristics, the level of place attachment amongst international students and views of experts to understand the manner the campus planning and design promotes and further enhances the place attachments among the international students. This is to assist UPM to be established as a global education hub that attracts international students' recipient.**

The findings will have the potential to impact campus design to facilitate more opportunities for interaction and positive campus experiences for all students.

1.4   Research Questions

To address the aim of this research, the following research questions are formulated as guidance throughout the process. The main research question for this study is stipulated as below:

> *Main RQ:* **How does the physical planning and design of Universiti Putra Malaysia campus support and enhance the sense of place or place attachment amongst international students to assist them in adapting with educational and social environments in the process of campus internationalization?**

To answer the main research question, the following four sub-research questions are essentially articulated:

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Sub-RQ1: **What are the specific locations and their rankings; and the actual level of place attachment from the international students' perception in UPM campus?**

There are specific locations in the campus which are able to attract more international students because of their value. The level of the place attachment in the campus may have a positive connection with users' experiences and meaning in UPM's environments. In this manner, the students may have an affective tie and bond with certain areas in the campus.

Sub-RQ2: **What are the physical planning and design characteristics of the specific locations of place attachment for international students in UPM campus?**

The physical planning characteristics such as accessibility, safety, well-maintained amenities and planning and design based on international students' needs have become a key factor to enhance the sense of place in the campus areas. It can be said that where users feel more comfortable and secure they will spend more time, so the comfortable feeling and satisfaction of the campus areas and environments are directly related to the basic information from the architectural planning and design.

Sub-RQ3: **What are the views of stakeholders on place attachment in relation to the design and planning of UPM campus as an educational hub?**

The opinions of stakeholders could be a reliable reference to understand the importance of place attachment in UPM campus among international students. Meanwhile, their opinion may reveal the physical design and planning's weaknesses and gaps in the campus which international students face in UPM.

Sub-RQ4: **What are the planning and design strategies to improve place attachment and internationalization of UPM based on Sub-RQ1, 2 and 3?**

Based on physical planning and design strategies of the specific locations of the campus and awareness of stakeholders' opinion, the author would be able to recommend a comprehensive planning and design strategy to enhance sense of attachment in the campus lifestyle.

1.5   Research Aim

The main research aim is as follows:

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To investigate planning and design characteristics, level of place attachments amongst the international students and experts views on the manner in which physical planning and design of Universiti Putra Malaysia campus supports and enhances the place attachment amongst international students to adapt with educational and social environments through campus internationalization. In fact, this study aims to investigate how the campus planning and design could be improved to support and facilitate the campus attachment amongst UPM international students with appropriate recommendations on campus planning and design strategies in order to establish UPM as a global education hub.

To pursue the main aim of the study there are four objectives, which are explained hereunder:

1. To ascertain the specific locations of place attachment of international students and actual level of place attachment in UPM campus amongst international students.

2. To investigate the design and planning characteristics where international students prefer to stay on-campus.

3. To seek experts opinions on the importance of facilitating sense of attachment amongst international students in UPM campus.

4. To recommend design and planning strategies to improve sense of attachment in UPM campus based on the investigation objective 1, 2 and 3.

1.6   Research Focus

The focus of this study is on the relationship between the main variables which are campus planning and place attachment in UPM. The campus environments are understood as a place represented by international students' experience and its physical planning and design. In this manner, the research is viewed based on international students' perceptions, physical planning and design settings, views of stakeholders and users' needs in the campus.

The context of the study is the UPM campus. The areas consist of the most significant places such as faculties, libraries, cafeteria, international accommodation and common area by main administrative buildings. These areas are selected by questionnaire surveys of the international students from the University. Faculties of Agriculture, Engineering and Design and Architecture, Sultan Abdul Samad and Engineering - Architecture libraries, Muhammad Rashid Accommodation and the main cafeteria at the

administrative building are eight top areas where international students spend their time in the campus.

1.7   Assumption

The main assumption of this study is summarized as follows:

> **The place attachments amongst the international students could be facilitated and supported with appropriate campus planning strategies which will further elevate the internationalization of Universiti Putra Malaysia as a global educational hub.**

1.8   Significance of Study

This section briefly discusses the significance of the study to the campus planning and design into four main factors.

1.8.1   Significance to Global Prominence

While the world market for higher education is dominated by the traditional major players such as the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, new players have emerged in recent years. These include China, Malaysia and Singapore where each is estimated to have a respective market share of 7%, 2% and 2% (Lasanowski, 2009). According to (Mahmud, Amat, Rahman, & Ishak, 2010) the number of international students in Malaysia has increased to 70 thousand in 2010. (Mazzarol et al., 2002) highlights several pull factors that can affect the relative attractiveness of a host country for international students. These include among others, the reputation and profile of a country, the cost of education as well as the local environment.

Global prominence is one of the most important shift of Malaysia Education Blueprint which focus on enablers for the higher education ecosystem. In fact, Universiti Putra Malaysia will be known as an international education hub with a difference, one that provides values-driven and globally relevant education, and is recognized by students for its balance of quality and affordability, good quality of life and rich cultural experiences. Above all, UPM will be a globally-connected higher education player that is renowned for its academic and research expertise.

1.8.2   Significance to Financial Sustainability

Without doubt, Universiti Putra Malaysia needs to move from a system that is highly dependent on government resources. One way to achieve financial sustainability is to focus on the number of international students in the campus. The physical planning and design strategy can enhance sense of place in the campus and create a friendlier environments for individuals. In fact, one of the plans proposed in the Higher Education blueprint is to achieve the international hub status by increasing the number of

international students, through the promotion and marketing of Malaysia as an excellent international hub for higher education.

In this manner, the research's strategy may enhance sense of identity and make UPM as a global brand in educational system and attract more international students to the country.

1.8.3   Significance to International Students' Life

If Malaysian Higher Education aims to attract more international students and plays important role globally, Malaysian campuses should improve their facilities. This improvement should be based on stakeholders' opinion and try to solve transnational student's problem.

In this scenario, by discovering international students' opinion, UPM campus will be able to enhance its design and characteristics planning in UPM campus and build appropriate environment and places where oversea students can establish emotional like. In fact, places play a vital role in developing and maintaining self and group identity of the people (Davenport & Anderson, 2005).

The main purpose of the new design and planning strategy for the campus is to improve the international students' campus life. Indeed, the new strategy has a key factor to reduce distress and grief among individual, encourage the use of campus spaces by improving physical and social activities among the students and less fear of campus crime.

1.8.4   Significance to Campus Design Knowledge

This study aims to enhance sense of place attachment amongst international students through planning and design of UPM campus and make a comfortable and friendly campus design and planning strategy to encourage students to spend more time in the campus. In the course of these interactions, anonymous spaces turn into places endowed with meaning which serve as objects of attachment (Williams, 2003). It should also be mentioned that attachments may not only be to the campus areas solely as physical entities, but may be primarily associated with the meanings of and experiences in place which often involve relationships with other people. In reality, people's relationship to their own living environment is a key issue for a better understanding of their well-being and quality of life (Altman & Low, 1992).

Most importantly, the study is significant in formulating planning and design strategies for internationalization of Malaysian campus. High level facilities with user friendly campus design and planning are built to generate greater degrees of active and collaborative learning, more interaction with faculty members, potential for increased interaction with other students of diverse backgrounds and beliefs, and easy access to the campus programs which directly support the educational and social goals of the

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University. Meanwhile, psychological and socio-cultural problems will be reduced amongst international students in the campus.

1.9   The Thesis Structure

This thesis consists of eight main chapters. First chapter describes and states the general topic and gives the background which provides the literature that are related to the topic. The chapter also includes the thesis statement; the outline of the current situation of the campus planning and design and the challenges that transnational students face in UPM. In fact, the first chapter evaluates the current situation of the campus and identifies the gap. In short, chapter one answer the questions of "Why is the author doing the study?" and "What is the significance of it?"

Chapter 2 discusses literature field of knowledge related to the topic. This chapter is simply a summary of what existing scholars know about the particular topic. That is, what other researchers have already written on the campus planning design and also it is a prelude to further research, a digest of scholarly opinion. The author referred to as much of the existing research as possible by reviewing major scholarly books and journal articles which give more up to date material and knowledge. In a nutshell, this chapter tries to answer "What is known and unknown?" in terms of campus planning and enhancing sense of place attachment among transnational students in UPM campus.

Chapter 3 establishes the conceptual and methodological approaches and strategies to understand the context. The chapter demonstrates mixed method techniques; and how the data was collected, recorded and analyzed. Meanwhile, rational for sampling or choice of cases, representatively of samples are discussed. In fact, the third chapter answers "How is author going to discover his aims and objectives?"

Chapter 4 gauges the level of attachment amongst the international students; to find out the perceptions of transnational students about their campus environments. Furthermore, the fourth chapter discovers the top places where the individuals prefer to enjoy and spend their time on-campus. Most importantly, the chapter demonstrates the relationship between variables of place attachment and the campus physical planning and design characteristics.

Chapter 5 morphologically analyses the planning characteristics of UPM campus. This chapter explores the patterns of the campus environments in both built and open spaces where transnational students enjoyed to be on-campus. The considerations of these patterns have a significant role in attracting more individuals to the site; furthermore, they can demonstrate the advantages and disadvantages of the campus environments.

Chapter 6 examines campus places and place attachment dimensions through observations. The non-participant observation is the active acquisition of information from a primary source. The 21 variables which have a crucial key to attract or avert individuals to the campus areas are selected for this method.

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Chapter 7 discovers stakeholder views to present appropriate strategy development. The chapter demonstrates unique insight into the campus internationalization and its planning and design; because they are secure resources to assist the author with his decisions. The chapter also increases transparency and leads to superior decision making for creating a friendly and unique campus environments.

Finally, Chapter 8 discusses the findings and concludes the thesis by constructing principles and recommendations for the campus design and planning strategy which cause a greater place attachment in the campus amongst international students. The recommendations are based on the four methods that the researcher discovered.

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