OFF-CAMPUS STUDENT HOUSING PREFERENCES:
CASE STUDY – STATE OF SELANGOR

NAPREC (R&D) 21/16

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RESEARCH PROJECT FUNDED BY:
THE NATIONAL REAL PROPERTY RESEARCH COORDINATOR
(NAPREC)
VALUATION & PROPERTY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
MINISTRY OF FINANCE, MALAYSIA
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Alhamdulillah. The researchers wish to thank the National Real Estate Research Coordinator (NAPREC) for funding this research and Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Perak for providing the required support to enable its successful implementation and completion.
ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify the attributes of off-campus student housing preferences in enabling insight towards the formation of a Student Housing Guidelines in the Malaysian context. The objectives are: 1. to identify the off-campus student housing preferences and its attributes for dwelling purpose; 2. to identify the differences in student housing preferences between IPTS students and IPTA students; 3. to investigate the relationship between variables of student profiles and housing preferences; and 4. to formulate a structural model reflecting off-campus student housing preferences. Collection of primary data was via two sets of structured questionnaires in Likert scale type of questions distributed randomly among on and off-campus students in selected public and private universities located within the State of Selangor. A pilot study was conducted among 100 respondents comprising undergraduate students of Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam Campus to gauge the effectiveness and validity of the questionnaire designed. Results of pilot study indicated good reliability and validity with KMO value of >0.6 and p value (significance) of < 0.05. Anti-Image correlation among all attributes was >0.6. Objective 1 result ranking signifies that off-campus students are more concerned on the quality of housing offered followed by aspect of housing environment; while aspect of type of house and cost of rental have the lowest mean score. In Objective 2, private university (IPTS) students showed a significantly higher inclination towards housing location and housing quality, with almost no significant difference in housing environment preference between private university (IPTS) and public university (IPTA) students. In the case of Objective 3, the correlation results indicated that from 4 independent latent variables, only gender has relationships with all attributes of housing. In achieving Objective 4 the researchers applied a structural model using SEM-PLS deriving the results by testing its construct reliability, composite reliability and indicator reliability; discriminant validity and convergent validity analysis. Findings of this research offers significant implications to local authorities, developers, the Higher Educational Institutions, and local communities as stakeholders. The researchers recommend that any future studies should analyse separately differences between the 4 variables with all the attributes. Further research should be conducted throughout Malaysia to accurately project a clear trend of off-campus student housing preferences trends and inclinations.
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PUBLICATIONS


Submitted research paper titled: Off-campus student housing preferences in Selangor, Malaysia; for proceeding and journal review at the 4th International Conference on Science and Social Research (CSSR2017), 6 – 7 December 2017, Melaka, Malaysia.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Over the last few decades, the effect of enlarging student population on residential communities evidenced from various media and lay discourses have pointed towards increasing societal impacts (Kinton, 2013). In parallel with Malaysia’s National Higher Education Strategic Plans, by the year 2015, it was expected that 50% of the 18 to 30 year old groups of population should gain access to tertiary education. As a result of this rapid expansion of HEIs, there occurred high concentrations of students in residential areas located close to university campuses (Thuraiya et al., 2014).

The obvious question here is: is every university able to accommodate the enrolled students? The idea of all university students living on-campus is no longer viable. Evidence from numerous studies reported that the number of students enrolling in tertiary institutions is far greater than the available student accommodation (Thuraiya et al., 2014; Hilmy et al., 2013; Khozaei et al., 2012). Holloway et al. (2010) mentioned that housing the off-campus is a dilemma exercised by all universities across the United Kingdom. The Housing Market Analysis (2011) study by the University of Maryland also reported that students have to rent from private housing within the locality of their campuses because of the inadequacy of student accommodation provided by the university.

Findings from a study by Dasimah et al. (2010) on the negative impacts of studentification showed off-campus students often bring side effects not only to the physical condition of the rented house, but also to the local communities. Some of the effects are traffic congestion, air pollution, vandalism, noise pollution, "khalwat" (close proximity according to Islamic definition), and not managing the garbage disposal. A house is one of the essential needs of living (Jiboye, 2009). As the off-campus students enter into new levels of learning, they are moving away from their hometowns to new
places. This transitional period causes them to find themselves in new housing conditions. Housing conditions can influence a student’s academic performance (Thomsen and Eikemo, 2010; Korevaar, 2004). Conditions such as house regulations, overcrowding, roommate incompatibility, tenant-landlord disputes, or rising rents can affect students’ academic performance. Thus, it is essential to house the off-campus students with adequate accommodation by taking into consideration their preferences to bring the students' ability to full potential (Allis et al., 2011).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

As different groups of society have different preferences and needs, it is crucial to identify the off-campus student housing preferences as they are often taken as the economically determinant group of people (Tan, 2012; Thomsen and Eikemo, 2010; Murray et al., 2004). With changing student population distributions unfolding in many cities in developed countries, many local authorities cooperate with universities and local governments to enable the development of student housing. Examples of these collaborative imperatives are Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) in Canada, House of Multiple Occupations (HMOs) in United Kingdom, and other off-campus student lounges in Germany.

However in Malaysia, student housing is still bound to the management of the universities. Students have the silent power to say what are the preferences and needs they desire for a living. Interestingly, despite all these, the development of off-campus student housing has still not been sought in partnership with private developers, universities or the local governments (Hilmy et al., 2013; Khozaei et al., 2012). With limited sources of income, off-campus students have to deal with the rising rents of private housing rental. Hence, to cut cost on housing rental expenses, they have to live with multiple occupations to reduce the rental paid per person (Thuraiya et al., 2014). Additionally, they need to forgo comfort and must accept the low standard of living. It is here that this research seeks to make contribution to develop an off-campus student housing preferences structural model which can later give
significant inputs towards the formation of a Student Housing Guidelines in the Malaysian context.

Thus, the research questions that arise out of these observations are:
1. What are the student housing preferences?
2. Are there any differences in housing preferences between private university (IPTS) students and public university (IPTA) students?
3. What is the relationship between student profiles and housing preferences?
4. How do housing preferences and student profiles influence student housing preferences?

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this research is identifying the attributes of off-campus student housing preferences to give a significant input for the development of an off-campus student housing preferences structural model. This structural model will become a blueprint for property investors and stakeholders to be used in providing demand-oriented housing.

The objectives of this research are listed below:

1. To identify off-campus student housing preferences for dwelling purposes;
2. To identify the differences in student housing preferences between private university (IPTS) students and public university (IPTA) students;
3. To investigate the relationships between various variables of student profiles and housing preferences; and
4. To formulate a structural model reflecting off-campus student housing preferences.
1.4 SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The study area of this research will focus on the student of higher learning institutions' preferences in housing markets in Selangor. As revealed in the Ministry of Higher Education website, the total number of students in Selangor is 240,308. These students represent the demand in housing market. The limitation of this research is the time taken to do the survey which is set to be about two months having regards to the academic schedule of the universities.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research will be conducted in a number of research phases and utilize a variety of research methods to ensure the effectiveness and accuracy of data. Briefly, this research will involve five main phase namely preliminary study, literature review, data collection, data analysis, and finally the conclusion and recommendation regarding the issue.

1.5.1 First Research Phase: Preliminary study

Preliminary study involves a basic understanding of the research field and issues related to studentification and is more focused on student housing; identifying the background of problems, selecting the appropriate area as a case study, designing questions, aim and objectives of the research and determining the scope, approaches and methods that will be used for this research.

1.5.2 Second Research Phase: Literature review

The literature review for this research will include detailed reviews of empirical and theoretical literature which focus on the background of studentification with more emphasis on the students' residential areas or students' housing.
1.5.3 Third Research Phase: Data collection

Data will be collected using primary and secondary data collection methods.

a. Primary data

Conducting questionnaire survey
Two sets of structured questionnaires were distributed randomly among on-campus and off-campus students in selected public and private universities located within the State of Selangor. Prior to the questionnaire survey, a pilot study was conducted to gauge the effectiveness and validity of the questionnaire designed. The pilot study was carried out on 90 respondents comprising undergraduate students of Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam Campus.

b. Secondary data

Secondary data involves the collection of statistical figures on population of students in case study areas using official university websites. Relevant literature is collected from journals, proceedings, books, research and seminar papers, newspapers, and any other sources which are related to this research.

1.5.4 Fourth Research Phase: Analysis of Data

Data collected from the questionnaire survey was analyzed using quantitative techniques in the form of descriptive statistics involving the frequency and percentage distribution methods. The data collected was formulated and designed in table form. Since the questionnaire forms will also feature perception-based open-ended questions, qualitative analysis methods will also be employed to arrive at the findings.
1.5.5 Fifth Research Phase: Research Findings

In the last stage, the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses will be synthesized to conclude the findings of the empirical research on the study areas. Figure 1.1 below illustrates the research methodology taken in this research.

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Figure 1.1 Research methodology
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the six thrusts of the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) which was launched in 2007 was aimed at enhancing Higher Educational Institutions’ (HEIs) admission capacities and internationalization. This plan was executed to meet the global aspiration of becoming the regional education hub (Ministry of Education, 2013). In line with the National Mission 2006-2020, it is expected that 50% of 18 to 30 year-olds of the active population should gain access to HEIs by the year 2015. By 2012, there were approximately 1.3 million tertiary students in Malaysia (Ministry of Higher Educations, 2012). Thus, the past few decades have witnessed a rapid expansion of HEIs in Malaysia. There were 69 universities available as at 2010 as compared to only one university in Malaya in 1949: University of Malaya. The consequence of this mission has led to the phenomenon of studentification.

The term studentification was coined to describe the high concentration of HEI students moving into established residential areas and creating distinct social, cultural, physical and economic effects (Smith, 2005). This happens when every intake of HEI students produce a high percentage of students becoming off-campus students. Evidence from several studies showed that in Malaysia, the availability of student accommodation is often insufficient to accommodate the enrolled students (Thuraiya et al., 2014; Hilmy et al., 2013; Khozaei et al., 2012). As a result of inadequacy of student accommodation, high percentages of students need to look for dwelling places to proceed with their studies with relative peace of mind.

The obvious question here is: is every university able to accommodate the enrolled students? The idea of all university students living on-campus is no longer viable. Evidence from numerous studies reported that the numbers of students enrolling at tertiary institutions are far greater than the available
student accommodation (Thuraiya et al., 2014; Hilmy et al., 2013; Khozaei et al., 2012). Holloway et al. (2010) mentioned that housing the off-campus is a dilemma exercised by all universities across the United Kingdom. The University of Maryland 2011 Student Housing Market Analysis (2012) also reported that students have to rent from private housing within the locality of campuses because of the inadequacy of student accommodation provided by the university.

Findings from a study by Dasimah et al. (2010) on the negative effects of studentification showed off-campus students often bring side effects not only to the physical conditions of the rented house, but also to the local communities. Some of the effects are traffic congestion, air pollution, vandalism, noise pollution, "khalwat" (close proximity between members of the opposite sex), and not managing the garbage disposal. A house is one of the essential needs of living (Jiboye, 2009). As the off-campus students enter into new levels of learning, they are moving away from their hometowns to new places. This transitional period makes them find themselves in new housing conditions that can influence a student’s academic performance (Thomsen and Eikemo, 2010; Korevaar, 2004). Conditions such as house regulations, overcrowding, roommate incompatibility, tenant-landlord disputes or rising rents can impact a student’s academic performance.

As different groups of society have different preferences and needs, it is crucial to identify the off-campus student housing preferences as they are often taken as the economically challenged groups of people (Tan, 2012; Thomsen and Eikemo, 2010; Murray et al., 2004). With changing student population distributions unfolding in many cities of developed countries, many local authorities cooperate with universities and local governments to enable the development of student housing. Examples of such collaborations are Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) in Canada, House of Multiple Occupations (HMOs) in United Kingdom and other off-campus student lounges in Germany.

However, in Malaysia, student housing is still bound to the management of the universities; as such students only have the silent power to say what their preferences are. In addition, the development of off-campus student housing has still not been sought in partnership between the