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PURCHASING HOUSE PREFERENCES AMONG PERSON WITH DISABILITIES (PwD) IN KUALA LUMPUR

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ABSTRACT
In Malaysia, disabled people have often been ignored and manipulated especially on their rights and full participation within community. Being aware of this scenario, the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia as one of the responsible government agencies has always implemented programs and strategies in protecting this vulnerable group. Therefore, this paper identifies the preferences in purchasing a house in accordance to the type of disabilities which are visually impaired and physically challenged people on the related issues in terms of design, price and location of a house. A total of 400 respondents in Kuala Lumpur were involved in the questionnaire survey. It was found that about 60.5% respondents have a priority in choosing a desirable location as the key principle in purchasing a house which constitutes for a safe neighbourhood and proximity to working place, service and facilities. Overall, housing provision for disabled people should afford the same standard of comfort, choice and accessibility. Hence, further research is needed to determine the appropriate criteria that encourage independent living which suit their capability and satisfy their needs.

Keywords: Purchasing house, preference, disabled people

INTRODUCTION
Home ownership or the ability to own house has been a goal for every Malaysian including the disabled communities. According to Coates, Anand & Norris (2015), owning a residential property provides sense of secutry which leads to happiness, productive and fulfilling of one live. Moreover, home ownership will be able to create stability and improve the quality of life of the disabled communities. As Malaysia approaches developed nation status and becomes a high-income economy by 2020, the housing industry needs to be adaptive to demand for special groups. To date, there has been little research on the person with disabilities (PWD) preferences in purchasing housing especially in Malaysia. This study aims to explore the factors that have led to the failure of purchasing houses and further explores several options based on their fondness of a dream house. Emphasis is placed on the housing prices, design scales and preferred location of the settlement (Selva, 2015; Shahrom & Zainol, 2015; Hemingway, 2014; Salfarina, 2011; Hashim, 2010).

LITERATURE REVIEW
According to the Population and Housing Census (2000), 'handicap' refers to persons who experience losses, changes or abnormality either physically, body structure, nervous system, functions of an organ and mental or physical disability. It may happen before or after childbirth either on temporary or permanent. The condition either fully or partially hinders the social and community needs of an individual in terms of the cultural and physical environment (Denison, 2000; Tah, 2013).

In 2015, a population based national survey on physical disability have been conducted conclusively by Department of Social Welfare Malaysia (DSW) to determine a national figure and since then Malaysian government has adopted this figure to further ascertain the prevalence of disability. Disabled people are not a homogenous group and in Malaysia the government recognises seven categories namely, visually impaired, hearing impaired, lack of physical effort, learning issue, speech disabilities, mental disabilities and less effort wide.

A total of 365,677 disabled community have registered with Department of Social Welfare in 2015. It can be seen that the percentage of learning disabilities is majorly contributing to the disabled society around 35.43% representing 129,550 of people. It is also important to note that the speech disabled people constitute the smallest proportion of 0.5% for about 1,827 people (Department of Social Welfare Malaysia, 2015).

When it comes to finding secure on housing availability, disabled people confront a frustrating array of barriers whether physically or financially. Thus, a matter of the utmost importance has formed the fulcrum of public discussion in every developing nation on how the housing issues can be revamped accordance to the needs and preferences of persons with disabilities (PWD) (Okojie, 2014; Selva, 2015). With countless inconvenient situations on a daily basis, they are much disempowered leaving dissatisfaction behind and just accepting the way it is as the choices are very limited and consume load of money (Ravindran, 2013; Selva, 2015).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The overall approach is focusing on quantitative method for data collection and analysis process. In this study, the questionnaire surveys are distributed specifically to 400 disabled people within the society, club, working area, special event and occasion in selected areas at Kuala Lumpur for four months from December 2018 until March 2019. As the population form is heterogeneous, thus, they are purposively selected for intensive study prior to their category of disabilities and then constitute further analysis on their preferences in purchasing a house. The design of questionnaire has been structured into six sections specifically, section A for respondent's profile, section B for home ownership, section C for housing preferences in terms of price, section D for housing preferences in terms of location, section E for housing preferences in purchasing a house in terms of design and lastly, section F that is more focused on personal monthly expenditure.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The preferences in purchasing house are classified into three categories namely price, location and design as highlighted in the Table 4.1 below. The categories reflected the priorities by different types of disabled community in Malaysia and a majority of them about 242 respondents (60.5%) chose a desirable location as the key principle that constitute good quality of environment as well as proximity to facilities and services. In this context, price rank as the second most preferable option by 109 respondents due to the reason it will affect their economic fundamentals like income household stability and affordability purchasing power. Though, design rated as the least appealing option but still 65 of them chose it as their main reason to buy a house.

Table 4.1 Preferences in Purchasing a House According to its Priorities

Variables	Components	Total	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Price	1	109	27.3
	2	179	44.8
	3	112	28.0
Location	1	242	60.5
	2	136	34.0
	3	22	5.5
Design	1	65	16.3
	2	69	17.3
	3	266	66.5

Source: Primary Data: Questionnaire Survey, December – April 2017

Based on the Figure 4.2 below, it was recorded a trend of high percentage towards the end for every preference in choosing a house location. This clearly delineated a strong demand of the respondents in having a house at safer neighbourhood; near to attractive places, shops, and restaurants; easily accessible by public transport; near to work place, school and local amenities; as well as fully equipped with disabled facilities. However, around 1% and 0.3% of the respondents did not find the significance in owning a house at safe neighbourhood and near to attractive places, shops and restaurants. Besides, at the lowest percentage of 0.3%, some of the respondents were giving the score of 2, 5 and 7 for the importance of easier accessible by public transport.

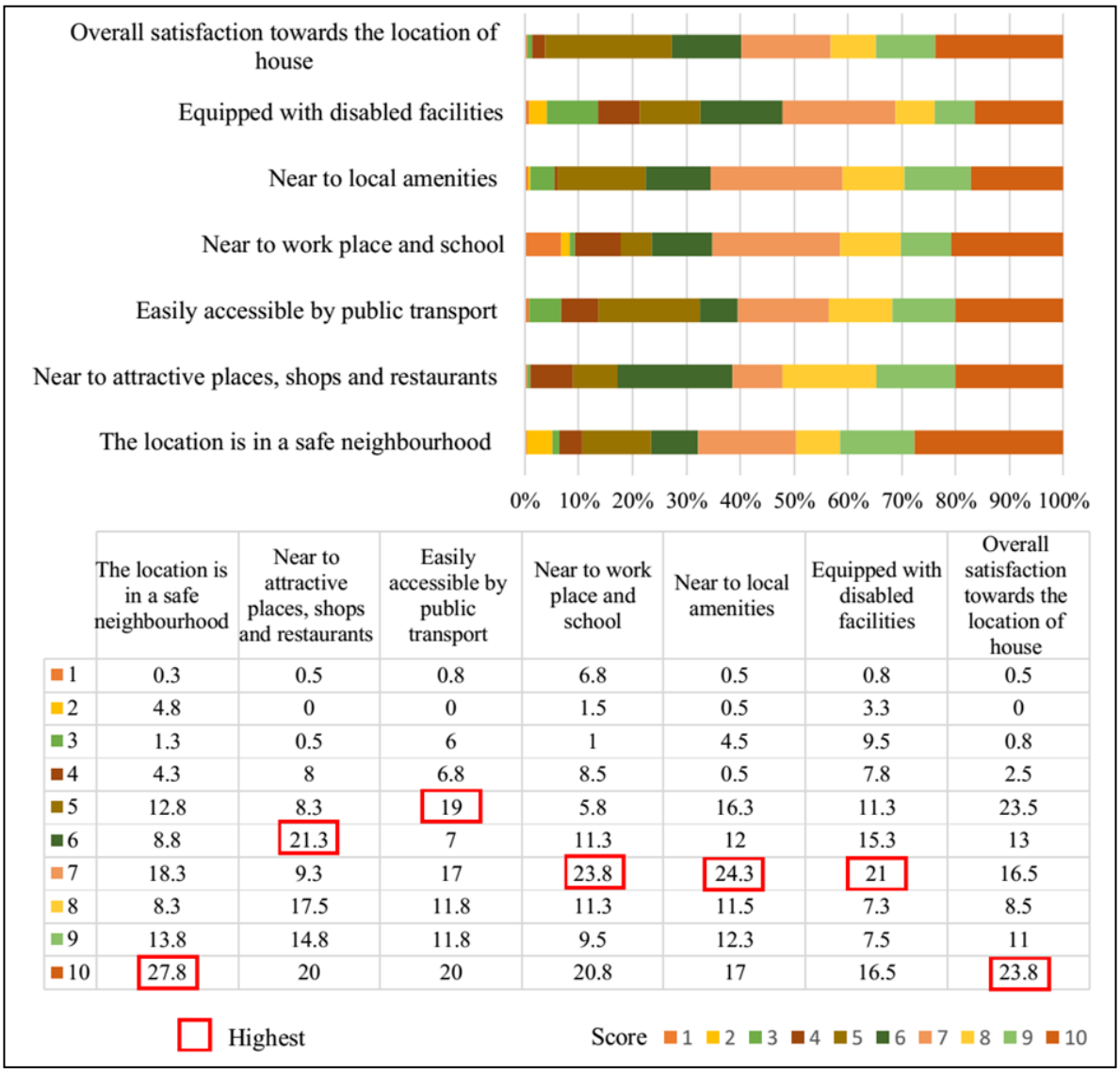
These perceptions were triggered mostly by the visually impaired people as they fully utilized on private car services like UBER and GRABCAR as their daily ride. Moreover, the preferences on choosing location that are near to work place and school equipped with disabled facilities were the most not preferable choices by 0.8% respondents. Also, it was recorded that location near to local amenities had the score of 3 and 6 of the smallest percentage from 1.8% respondents.

	The location is in a safe neighbourhood	Near to attractive places, shops and restaurants	Easily accessible by public transport	Near to work place and school	Near to local amenities	Equipped with disabled facilities
1	1	0	1.5	0	0	0
2	0	0	0.3	0.8	0	0.8
3	0	0	4.5	0	1.8	0
4	0	1.5	0	1	0	2.3
5	2.3	0.3	0.3	1.8	5.3	4.8
6	3	5.3	1.8	1.5	1.8	2.3
7	0	4.5	0.3	3	0	2.3
8	17	17.5	12.3	10.3	18.3	12.5
9	17	13.5	18.3	16	9.8	10.8
10	59.8	57.5	61	65.8	63.3	64.5

Highest Lowest Score 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Source: Primary Data: Questionnaire Survey, December – April 2017
Fig 3: Percentages of preferences in choosing location of house

Pertaining to the Figure 4.3 below, about 27.8% of the respondents conveyed a high response of satisfaction with their current house located in a safe neighbourhood. However, 21.3% and 19% of them were neutral for the factors of location near to attractive places, shops and restaurants as well as easily accessible by public transport. It was recorded that the respondents were satisfied on the house location near to work place and school (23.8% of respondents); near to local amenities (24.3% of respondents); and equipped with disabled facilities (21% of respondents). In short, they were very satisfied on the overall components of house location with a great percentage 23.8% of respondents.



	The location is in a safe neighbourhood	Near to attractive places, shops and restaurants	Easily accessible by public transport	Near to work place and school	Near to local amenities	Equipped with disabled facilities	Overall satisfaction towards the location of house
1	0.3	0.5	0.8	6.8	0.5	0.8	0.5
2	4.8	0	0	1.5	0.5	3.3	0
3	1.3	0.5	6	1	4.5	9.5	0.8
4	4.3	8	6.8	8.5	0.5	7.8	2.5
5	12.8	8.3	19	5.8	16.3	11.3	23.5
6	8.8	21.3	7	11.3	12	15.3	13
7	18.3	9.3	17	23.8	24.3	21	16.5
8	8.3	17.5	11.8	11.3	11.5	7.3	8.5
9	13.8	14.8	11.8	9.5	12.3	7.5	11
10	27.8	20	20	20.8	17	16.5	23.8

Highest

Score 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Source: Primary Data: Questionnaire Survey, December – April 2017
Fig 4: Percentages on levels of satisfaction with current house location

DISCUSSIONS

Design matters as it is one of the solutions to a more inclusive world in which people have equivalent participation, independence and opportunity (Imrie, 2014). The findings revealed that majority of disabled people were immensely desire for accessible dwelling spaces that entwined with the quality of designed environments. As a result, disabled community were constituting such a large percentage towards the provision of ramp, handrail, elevator, kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and all the possibilities that encouraged low physical impact to their daily routine. Even, some of the researchers recognised the significance of design as they clearly stressed out in which inadequate designed housing that failed to reflect diversity in the human body and experience can affect a dismissive feeling associated with home such as security, safety and comfort (Heywood, 2005; French, 2006).

Through this study, a huge number of disabled communities had the chance in highlighting their own voices to present opinion and experiences. However, it was interesting to note that different types of disabilities prefer a distinct choice of design in a house. For instance, the visual impaired person did not find a fundamental reason in having ramp, handrail and specialised design for bathroom, kitchen and bedroom if there was tactile paving or sensory trail to guide them. In contrast, a physical impaired person needs a special design house to match their height, capability and immobility to avoid any obstructions and accidents.

In short, this study is to integrate disabled people into society for more active participation leading to a normal life. For that reason, universal design truly complements the sentiments of basic principles in commuting between workplace, home and other destinations within a barrier free environment. The basic principles include equitable use, flexibility in use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort as well as size and space for approach and use. According to the findings received, most of them favoured to have a suitable location of living environment that was safe, attractive, accessible by public transport, near to working place, local amenities and equipped with local facilities. In spite of that, majority of the visual impaired extremely accentuated location that was near to working place as the most crucial one for shorter distance time travel. Plus, over a third proportion of the visual impaired people even reported, they preferred to hire a private taxi like UBER and GRABCAR rather than utilizing public transport as their main mobility between spaces due to irregularities in punctuality and long waiting time. A different point of view can be seen from the handicapped person as they were not concerned on the closeness location of a house due to the difficulty to use public transportation services in non – disabled friendly environment. As a matter of fact, they were more preferred in having safer neighbourhood for their family living instead of proximity to facilities. Although, they were mostly wanting for an optimum living environment, but each type of disability had their own personal view if they need to choose between the alternatives.

Based on the findings, disabled people were facing the unjust nature of unequal access and palpable lack of usability from the current dwelling house that promote the complexities of their body. The results of disabled people were documented, an average 20% to 30% of them satisfied with their current living environment and problems were noted at the various range of inability from the wheelchair people to use kitchen that were too high in place to reach, to the vision impaired people experienced difficulty in navigating places around due to lack of legible signage.

In these instances, people from different impairments may encountered disadvantages partly because of the design conception and location of their house. Evidence from this study highlighted the high incidence of housing problems and it underscored the need for attention. It also can be supported by the view of a researcher that stated “Research which has looked specifically at the housing needs of disabled people has shown that they do experience a multiplicity of difficulties with their home. It has also shown that any disabled person is likely to be living in unsuitable housing.” (Beresford, 2008).

CONCLUSIONS

From this conclusion, several lessons on the housing preferences can be drawn as the disabled people were more concerned on the design, location and price of a house. Surprisingly, regardless of their complexity in daily routine, the respondents were fairly satisfied with the current condition of their housing areas due to limited choices and provision for their needs. Without radical change, the situation is unlikely to improve and the urgency of developing appropriate housing accordance to disabled people must be recognised.

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