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# POST-OCCUPANCY EVALUATION OF COMMUNAL SPACES: USAGE PATTERNS AND RESIDENT SATISFACTION IN THREE LOW-COST FLATS

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## Abstract

Low-cost flats in Malaysia provide only minimal communal facilities, with likely impacts daily life and satisfaction. Despite their importance to residents' social interaction and well-being, few studies assess how specific communal spaces of the low-cost flats are used and rated. This paper evaluates usage and residents' satisfaction across three low-cost flats. A mixed-method design was used. First, semi-structured interviews with the Joint Management Body (JMB) identified various communal spaces and their typical uses. Survey with residents then measured frequency of use and satisfaction of the communal spaces. Descriptive statistics and cross-comparisons classified spaces into high/low use and high/low satisfaction categories. Findings suggest that everyday community life is anchored in informal (emergent), unscheduled areas. Open yards, corridors, and parking are heavily used for casual play and socialising. Where provided, formal communal space (programmed) such as multipurpose hall and surau achieve the strongest combination of use and satisfaction. With flat without an indoor hall, the parking lot became the default gathering space resulting to high use but low satisfaction due to heat, limited seating, and safety concerns. High-use/low-satisfaction spaces emerged as priority future improvements. Low-cost, basic upgrades matter, ensure at least one dedicated indoor communal room and humanise informal outdoor areas with shade, seating, lighting, and maintenance. It implies that combining management insights with

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Citations

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