

# **OPEN SPACE AS AN INFLUENTIAL FACTOR IN HOUSING PRICES IN KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA**



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## PREFACE

This book addresses the issue of how the provision of open space can be considered as an influential element in the house price. Literatures globally suggest that there is a significant value of open space in relation to house price in which the elements reflect more on the management parts such as the aspect of cleanliness and good maintenance of the open space. Apart from that, in term of the planning aspect, strategic location is essential in planning for open space. This research is a perceptual study reflecting the thoughts and opinions of the 200 respondents who were the house owners in four selected neighbourhoods, namely Taman Melawati, Bandar Baru Bangi, Subang Jaya and Shah Alam. The key question pertaining to the survey is whether the relationship between open place and house price exists locally and its character of the pattern and the intensity. Thus, the aim of this work is to study and examine the relationship between open space and house price in the selected four areas in terms of its pattern and strength. In order to obtain reliable data, this study applied mixed methods by using literature reviews, structured close-ended questions in questionnaire survey, an analysis of a GIS technique and site observation. The analysis covers the areas of the house price (transacted and offered price) in relation to the present housing market in those areas, compared with the views of the house owners, and how they perceived the importance of open space in house price. The findings indicate that the management aspects (cleanliness and maintenance) are the key micro factors perceived by the house owners when they decided to purchase their property. This demonstrates a positive correlation between open space and house price, reflecting the findings of the literatures. However, the regression analysis results show the strength is in moderation ( $R^2$  between 0.15 and 0.28). Consequently, the rate of house price change is rather small, which is slightly different from the secondary data of house price in those areas. In overall, this study has achieved its aims and also provided responses to the questions and finally achieved its objective of the inquiry.

M.zainora Asmawi  
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# CHAPTER 1

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## INTRODUCTION

This research is mainly about a residents' perceptual study of how the provision of open space could influence the house price in four selected neighbourhoods located within the area of Klang Valley. This chapter one addresses the pertinent aspects as the introductory framework of the study.

## THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Of special worry was an urgent demand for green areas in the necessary areas within the urban fabric which provides important services to the environmental quality of the areas, including providing higher quality of life (QoL), preserving wildlife habitat and raising environmental quality especially in great cities like Kuala Lumpur. The importance of urban green spaces has been long known as they provide several benefits to the population in term of healthy environment as well as providing higher quality of life (Bedimo-Rung et. al., 2005). Furthermore, as indicated by Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp (n.d), the benefits of green spaces have been highlighted in a more rational and convincing way by integrating the benefits into social, economic, ecological and community planning benefits. In fact, history shows urban land use planning and the urban land market are co-existed in current economic and decision-making process that eventually fluctuate the market price of housing stock. Economic arguments can help to make a decision about the trade-off between preserving environmental quality and developing housing and business surfaces, provided the benefits of environmental quality are adequately quantified.

There is an increasing awareness that urban environmental quality is highly favoured by the existence of accessible, protected and well maintained green spaces within cities, for instance, parks, green provisions, fields and others. In recent years, several urban sustainability initiatives have made a serious attempt to offer a more rigorous basis for green space planning. As a result, many initiatives and concepts such as urban planning with nature, garden city planning, brownfield-greenfield planning, urban green networks design, urban landscape ecology, planning and so forth have been merged (Beer et. al., 2003; De Sousa, 2003; MacHarg, 1971; Jim, 2004; Pauleit, 2003; and Tjallingii, et. al., 2003).

In relation to the economic growth of the nation, it is greatly noticeable that nowadays there is an increasing trend in the Malaysian housing price. Research shows that the house price movements are very much influenced by both fundamental macro and micro factors such as real income growth, interest rate, supply and demand of housing units, location, house design and others. However, there are not many studies undertaken to investigate the relationship between the provision of open space and house price in the Malaysian context. At the international level, many studies on open space and house price were conducted with a mixed of findings, ranging from positive (see Mahan et. al., 2000; Heimlich and Anderson, 2001; Bolitzer and Netusil, 2000) and negative pattern of relationship (see Weicher and Zerbst, 1973).

## RESEARCH PROBLEM

Over the years, the loss of green space to give way to other developments is significantly taken place in Kuala Lumpur and its neighbouring areas such as Nilai and Seremban. As human has a tendency to pave over a lot of undeveloped areas which certainly involve more green areas, it is important to note that the populations are losing more than a few trees and shrubs on the ground which are some of the important human resources. This situation raises the question on the importance of green space for the key players in the housing industry within Kuala Lumpur. Besides that, the questions on how much importance green area to economic matters, including the factor for house pricing becomes one of the factors for implementation in planning and development decision. This includes residential areas in the developed townships.

Within the context of urban planning implementation policies, the issue of provision of green areas is normally associated with: the requirement mentioned in any proposed plan or development plan; and the State Planning Authority should reserve the green areas as part of open spaces under section 62 and 204D, National Land Code 1956, i.e. common planning practice requires a 10% of the total development areas. In general, the current practice shows that the Department of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) Federal has set a policy of 10 percent for open spaces for each development application. However, the 10 percent policy is merely a base reference only. In a common circumstance, the 'general approach' implemented by Negeri Sembilan and Kelantan is based on the basic 10 percent provision of open spaces for all types of residential development. The general approach is applied in total (stand-alone) or as a continuous policy as set by the DTCP.

As such, the aim of this research is to study and examine the relationship between open space and house price in the area of Klang Valley. Evident elsewhere indicates the relationship exist either in a positive or negative pattern. As mentioned before, there is mixed evidence on the relationship between open space and house price. Some studies have observed a positive relationship, whereas others find negative or no significant effect. This leads to the second hypothesis on the influence on the strategic location of open space for the house price.

The followings are questions pertaining to the study of the perception of house buyers in the selected four neighbourhoods:

- i. What are the fundamental elements of open space desired by the house buyers?
- ii. What is the major macro and micro factors from the perspective of house buyers?
- iii. What is the pattern of relationship established between open space and housing price in the selected areas?
- iv. What is the effect of open space on house prices in the selected areas?

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this work is to study and examine the relationship between open space and house price in the selected four neighbourhoods located within the areas of Klang Valley in terms of its pattern and strength.

This leads to the objectives which are:

- i. To determine the elements of open space which influence the house price;
- ii. To determine the major macro and micro factors from the perspective of house buyers;
- iii. To discover the relationship between open space and housing price in the selected neighbourhoods in Klang Valley areas; and
- iv. To investigate the effects of the provision of open space for the housing price in the selected neighbourhoods in Klang Valley areas.

## SCOPES OF STUDY

Generally, the term 'open space' encompasses a wide range of land uses, including urban parks, forests, golf courses, sport fields, undeveloped land and agricultural land at the urban fringe (Brander and Koetse, 2007). For the purpose of this research, the types of open space that involved are: neighbourhood park; playground; and playground lot. It is important to stress here that the word 'open space' refers to recreational park used by public located within neighbourhood areas, in which the type of house involved in the primary search is double-storey terraced houses only. Another type of landed properties such as bungalow and semi-detached houses was not involved in this research. This, however, could limit the results of analysis as it might give different pattern of relationship between open space and house prices.

The scopes of study cover the aspects of the provision of open space, house price and GIS application (Figure 1.1). The scope begins with the provision of open space in terms of its availability, location, size, hierarchy, facilities provided and maintenance within the residential areas. Referring to the guidelines of open space and recreation by the Department of Town and Country Planning (2015), the research only focused on three selected types of open space (Table 1.2).

**Table 1.1:** *Types of open spaces involved in the research*

Type	Size (hectare)	Population size	Walking distance (meter)	Function
Neighbourhood park	2.0	3,000-12,000	400 m	Recreation area in the neighbourhood area for recreation activities, sports and social activities for local residents.
Playground	0.6	1,000-3,000	150 m	Recreation area to accommodate 3 sub-neighbourhood for active recreation activities, sports activities for the use of children and adults
Playground lot	0.2	300-1,000	50 m	Active recreation in a sub-neighbourhood area for children

Source: Department of Town and Country Planning (2005)

**Figure 1.1:** Scopes of study

Next, the scope covers the macro and micro factors influencing the house price whereby only essential ones were selected. It is acknowledged that there are numerous factors involved in determining the house price, particularly the macro factors, ranging from banks' policies, demographic pattern and economic condition. However, this research could not cater for such large context due to certain research constraints such as time limitation and difficulty in getting economic data. The application of GIS in planning open space is considered as an important tool to support the textual data that are qualitative in nature. By using this tool, the result could be displayed in the form of a mapping system demonstrates the spatial relationship between open space and house price. In this regards, the contingent valuation and regression technique were used to determine the relationship of the open space and house price. It is important to note here that the study areas focused on the selected residential areas located within the area of Klang Valley where major developments are concentrated within this area.

## BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

This research able to attain several benefits includes:

- i. Raising awareness on the importance of open space for housing price to related parties such as developers;
- ii. Contributing new findings and knowledge in the study of the importance of open space as a micro factor that can affect the housing price; and
- iii. Reinforcing the collaboration of related fields, i.e. urban planning, property management and GIS technology in the study related to housing price.

## LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

There are several limitations of which the research faced:

- i. Time constraint which limits the researchers from covering the whole areas of Klang Valley where only selected neighbourhoods were studied. However, it is hoped that this research could further pave the future way to expand its scope of study in much bigger context of the study area;



- ii. Data availability constraint as several data is rather difficult to be collected from various key players in the housing industry;
- iii. The sampling size is rather small due to time limitation. However, we manage to focus on suitable areas to see the pattern of relationship between open space and house price in the context of different area within Klang Valley;
- iv. The primary analysis presents the opinion and views of the 200 respondents (house buyers of double-storey houses) of selected areas, thus, the results and evident represent the local scenario without having direct connection with the actual scenario in the industry of real estate in Malaysia; and

## CONCLUSION

This introductory chapter on the selected topic of the influence of open space on house price outlines the overall framework and the contents of the research. It discusses the context of study, objectives, scope of the study, its' significance as the basis of the following discussion of this report. Generally, this chapter has been able to provide an overview of what triggers the commencement of the research, why it is studied and the organization of the study. The justifications of the research lead to the requirement of discussing the pertinent fundamental aspects of the topic, i.e. open space and house price. As such, cross-reference of discussion could be seen in related chapters, involving the theoretical and the practice in the local context. The following chapter is about the literature review to research in accordance with the aim and objectives.

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