House Buyers Preferences among Young Urbanites in Malaysia

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Housing preferences are basically correlated with the status of one's financial economy. The increase in housing demands due to change of lifestyle has increased recently. However, current research only focusing on small samples in Kuala Lumpur city area. Therefore, this paper reports the trend of house buyers among young urbanites in several big cities in Malaysia including Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Johor Bahru among 400 respondents. All the data gathered are analyzed using Statistical Package for The Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 22 For Windows and for each research question are discussed in the discussion parts consisted of descriptive statistics. Findings identified proximity to public transportation is the highest preferences in the new housing thus suggesting a more 'transit-oriented development' friendly in the new development in the future. This research will benefit housing developers and extend the existing framework on housing preferences in Malaysia.

Keywords: Housing preferences, M40 & T10, Urbanity

1. INTRODUCTION

Housing preferences are normally correlated with the status of one's financial economy. Buying a house is also considered as the top bucket's list for each Malaysians (Abdullah et al., 2012). The increase in housing demands due to change of lifestyle has increased recently. At the same time, rapid growth in the urban area has caused a high migration from the rural area to the city areas. According to the United Nation, (2019), almost 50% of the world's population now residing in the city areas. Based on the census from the Department of Statistics Malaysia, (2015), almost 75% of Malaysians currently living in urban cities throughout Malaysia. The United Nations estimated that by 2050, 80% of the population will be living in the city areas in Malaysia and will be called an urban population (United Nation, 2019). This will increase the needs of housing, especially in the urban areas, especially among the young urbanites. In this research, the term 'young urbanites' is used to describe the people of a certain age (25 -40 years old), at the start of their careers both on the business and the housing market. While Zairul, (2017) labels them as young starters.

The needs to own a house and access to affordable housing have always become the main topics by the government of the day. Several programs to support first homeownership have been planned and implemented to support young urbanites who grappling with financial to secure the house to live (Jabatan Perumahan Negara, 2018). House ownership has been categorized as the biggest investment one's need to put in their life, further some authors associate house ownership with a status of living, stability and financial status (Diaz-Serrano, 2009; White, 2017). Several studies have attempted to identify housing preferences in Malaysia but not focusing towards young urbanites in the city centre (Kam, Lim, Al-Obaidi, & Lim, 2018; Khan, Mahamud, & Kamaruddin, 2012; Zainon, Mohd-Rahim, Sulaiman, Abd-Karim, & Hamzah, 2017). Therefore, the needs to attempt the preferences among house buyers in the urban areas in Malaysia is crucial. This article will help the housing developers to make a decision not only on the location but also the potential needs from the potential house buyers in Malaysia.

Since 1957, the housing provision has been part of the national development's plan called the Malaysian Plan to ensure the rakyat's will benefits from the country's development and prosperity. Undoubtedly, customer's satisfaction in the neighbourhood plays an important role to ensure the stability of the government and to create a progressive development country such as Malaysia (Suffian, 2013). Under the 5 years Malaysia Plan, the government has put several plans with the help of the private developers to

spur the economy through new housing policy and incentives to support the nation's economy and recently under the new housing policy, the government is focusing towards improving accessibility and affordability of housing, improving housing and transportation coordination, good quality housing for all, quality and cohesive neighbourhood, and finally strengthening institutional capabilities to deliver the policy (Jabatan Perumahan Negara, 2018). Therefore, a lot of studies need to be done to ensure the National Housing Policy can be achieved within a stipulated time.
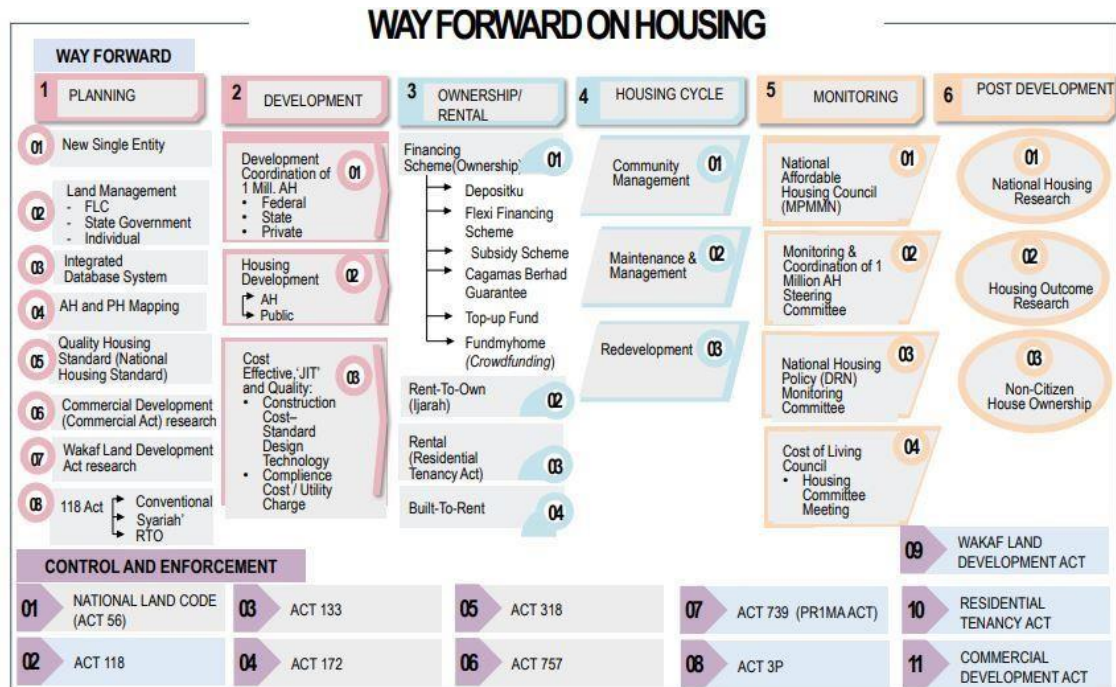

Figure 1: A way forward for Malaysian housing under National housing Policy 2018: Source (Abdul Halim, 2019)

The preferences among young urbanites have shown dissimilarity compared to the previous generation as reported by Kam, Lim, Al-Obaidi, & Lim, (2018) and limited of option in the housing market has caused the lack of accessibility to the current market (Daud, 2017). Under the recent national housing policy, the way forward on housing is to focus on the lifecycle chain of the housing development through 1) planning, 2) development, 3) ownership/rental. 4) the housing cycle, 5) monitoring and 6) post-development. This serves as a catalyst towards national housing drive capable of owned, thus reliable quality and meet the community's elements (Abdul Halim, 2019). Nevertheless, there is no survey has been done to support the needs of young urbanites on future housing preferences, especially in the city centre.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
As mentioned, the numbers of overhang properties have increased, with the first half of the year mainly denominated by units priced between RM200,000 and RM300,000, which are commonly perceived as "affordable". According to the National Property Information Centre (Rasid, 2019), the six-month period saw 32,810 residential units worth RM19.76 billion unsold, 1.5 per cent more than the 32,313 unsold units worth RM19.86 billion recorded in the first six months of 2018. This is despite a fewer number of new launches in this year's first half, which saw 23,591 units came to the market, almost halved the number of units launched in the same period last year units in the property sector raises questions that related to issues of social well-being of the buyer (Rasid, 2019). Therefore, it is important for the developers and the authorities to ensure the houses built are according to the demand from the potential house buyers which mainly the young urbanites in the city centres.

Currently, the trend of a declining phenomenon in the housing market has become severe. Despite high demand from the potential house buyers, several issues have been identified such as weaken purchasing power and the increase of cost of living in the urban areas. (Thanaraju, Khan, Juhari, Sivanathan, & Khair, 2019) Furthermore, the term affordability touches interconnected elements that cover a range of issues on both the demand side (housing needs, demographics, household income, quality housing) and the supply side (authority requirements, design, cost, sustainability and procurement). Therefore, this paper interested to see what the trends and priority are given when choosing a house of their dream.

Despite the high investment in the housing, there are not many options given to the purchasers. This has created some dissatisfaction post-occupancy among house buyers (Roslan, 2011). Furthermore, looking for a home comes with different expectations, there are so many factors to be considered before purchasing a house (Abdullah et al., 2012). Therefore, in this research, the preference of house buyer's will be presented and thus giving a direction towards housing developers and policymakers to build housing that able to meet the demands and needs among the young urbanites in Malaysia.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this paper has three Respondents were chosen among young professionals in Malaysia to the analysed demographic distribution of the respondents such as age, marital status, number of children, ethnicity, job category, the highest level of education, monthly income, household income, current homeownership and the length of stay in current home comprised of 400 respondents. Demographic distribution of the respondents is one of the important elements in this study because it may be one of the factors influencing the result of the study

Table 3.1 shows the distribution of frequency and percentage of the respondents by age. Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire, there were 76 respondents or 19% less than 25 years and followed by 175 respondents or 43.8% between 26 to 30 years. Then, the respondents for 31 to 35 years comprised of 101 respondents with 25.3% of the overall respondents. While the respondents who more than 36 years showed 48

respondent or 12%. This illustrated that the highest number of respondents between 26 to 30 years and the lowest allocated by the respondents for more than 36 years.

Table 3.1: Number of Respondents based on Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 25 years	76	19
26-30 years	175	43.8
31-35 years	101	25.3
More than 36 years	48	12
Total	400	100

Table 3.2 shows the distribution of frequency and percentage of the respondents by marital status. Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire, there were 218 respondents or 54.5% are single. It was followed by 178 respondents or 44.5% are married. Then, the respondents are divorced are 4 respondents or 1%. This illustrated that the highest number of respondents are single and the lowest allocated by the respondents are divorced.

Table 3.2: Number of Respondents based on Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	218	54.5
Married	178	44.5
Divorced	4	1
Total	400	100

Table 3.3 shows the distribution of frequency and percentage of the respondents by a number of children. Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire, there were 243 respondents or 60.8% no children and followed by 100 respondents or 25% have less than 3 children. Then, the respondents for 3 to 5 children comprised of 55 respondents with 13.7% of the overall respondents. While the respondents who more than 5 children showed 2 respondent or 0.5%. This illustrated that the highest number of respondents have less than 3 children and the lowest allocated by the respondents more than 5 children.

Table 3.3: Number of Respondents based on Number of Children

Children	Frequency	Percentage
No children	243	60.8
Less than 3 children	100	25
3-5 children	55	13.7
More than 5 children	2	0.5
Total	400	100

Table 3.4 exhibits the findings based on the ethnicity of the respondents. Based on the data obtained, there were 306 respondents or 76.5% are Malay. It was followed by 43 respondents or 10.8% are Chinese and 42 respondents or 10.5% are Indian. Next, Bumiputera Sabah or Sarawak showed 7 respondents or 1.8% and other ethnicities such as Bugis and Siamese showed 2 respondents or 0.5%. The highest number of respondents are Malay and the lowest are other ethnicities.

Table 3.4: Number of Respondents based on Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percentage
Malay	306	76.5
Chinese	43	10.8
Indian	42	10.5
Bumiputera	7	1.8
Others	2	0.5
Total	400	100

Referring to Table 3.5, it shows the finding regarding the job category of the respondents. Based on the data obtained, there were 197 respondents or 49.3% are government employees. While private employees showed 203 respondents or 50.8% were. This illustrated that the highest number of respondents are private employees and the lowest allocated by the respondents are government employees.

Table 3.5: Number of Respondents based on Job Category

Job Category	Frequency	Percentage
Government Employee	197	49.3
Private Employee	203	50.8
Total	400	100

According to Table 3.6, the findings illustrated a number of respondents based on the level of education. Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire, there were 281 of them or 70.3% are bachelor's degree followed by 111 of them which represent 27.8% are Master's Degree. Besides that, 8 of the respondents with 2% are Doctor of Philosophy. Thus, it shows that the highest number of respondents are bachelor's degree and the lowest were PhD's.

Table 3.6: Number of Respondents based on Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor's degree	281	70.3
Master's degree	111	27.8
Doctor of Philosophy	8	2
Total	400	100

Next in Table 3.7, the findings on the monthly income of the respondents shown. Based on the data, there were 268 respondents or 67% have between RM 2501 until RM 3500 and followed by 48 respondents or 12% between RM 3501 until RM 4500. While 28 of them which represent 7% have income between RM 4501 until RM 5500 followed by 19 of them with 4.8% have between RM 5501 until RM 6500. Then, there were 8 respondents or 2% have income between RM 6501 until RM 7500 and followed by 29 respondents or 7.3% have income more than RM 7500. Hence, it shows that the highest number of respondents had income between RM 2501 until RM 3500 and the lowest are between RM 6501 until RM 7500.

Table 3.7: Number of Respondents based on Monthly Income

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
RM 2501-RM 3500	268	67
RM 3501-RM 4500	48	12
RM 4501-RM 5500	28	7
RM 5501-RM 6500	19	4.8
RM 6501-RM 7500	8	2
More than RM 7500	29	7.3
Total	400	100

Referring to Table 3.8, the findings on the household income of the respondents shown. Based on the data, there were 213 respondents or 53.3% have between RM 2501 until RM 4500 and followed by 64 respondents or 16% between RM 4501 until RM 6500. While 39 of them which represent 9.8% have income between RM 6501 until RM 8500 followed by 36 of them with 9% have between RM 8501 until RM 10500. Then, there were 48 respondents or 12% have income more than RM 10500. Hence, it shows that the highest number of respondents had income between RM 2501 until RM 4500 and the lowest are between RM 8501 until RM 10500.

Table 3.8: Number of Respondents based on Household Income

Household Income	Frequency	Percentage
RM 2501-RM 4500	213	53.3
RM 4501- RM 6500	64	16
RM 6501-RM 8500	39	9.8
RM 8501- RM 10,500	36	9
More than RM 10,500	48	12
Total	400	100

Table 3.9 exhibits the findings based on the homeownership of the respondents. Based on the data obtained, there were 126 respondents or 31.5% are Owner. It was followed by 95 respondents or 23.8% are rent and 166 respondents or 41.5% are family home. Next, government quarters showed 13 respondents or 3.3%. The highest number of respondents are family home and the lowest in government quarters.

Table 3.9: Number of Respondents based on Home Ownership

Homeownership	Frequency	Percentage
Owner	126	31.5
Rent	95	23.8
Family Home	166	41.5
Government Quarters	13	3.3
Total	400	100

Descriptive statistics described the data collection and summary of the data in the simple and easy way such as a table, figure, frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The demographic data presented earlier provide some description of the results presented in the next section.

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Generally, over 50% of the respondents, chose very important about "Accessibility to public transport" (57.5%) and followed by "Sustainable design (eco-friendly)" (53.5%). The respondents chose important about "Quietness" and "Aesthetical values" (40.3%) and followed by "Places of worship" (39.3%). As seen in Table 4.1, the respondents showed various reactions towards the importance concerning the preference over new housing development. The highest mean showed respondents important about "Accessibility to public transport" (with a mean of 4.455, SD=0.751). While the lowest mean showed the respondents moderate important about "Having a swimming pool" (with a mean of 3.232, SD=1.16).

Table 4.1: Frequencies and percentages for the importance concerning the preference of new housing development

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Accessibility to public transport	4 (1%)	3 (0.8%)	30 (7.5%)	133 (33.3%)	230 (57.5%)	4.455	0.751
Proximity to workplace	2 (0.5%)	2 (0.5%)	44 (11%)	143 (35.8%)	209 (52.3%)	4.387	0.74
Proximity to shop	2 (0.5%)	1 (0.3%)	36 (9%)	153 (38.3%)	208 (52%)	4.41	0.705
Having a garden/yard	4 (1%)	32 (8%)	83 (20.8%)	148 (37%)	133 (33.3%)	3.935	0.973
Having a swimming pool	25 (6.3%)	90 (22.5%)	120 (30%)	97 (24.3%)	68 (17%)	3.232	1.16
Quietness	5 (1.3%)	17 (4.3%)	76 (19%)	161 (40.3%)	141 (35.3%)	4.04	0.908
Aesthetical values	4 (1%)	11 (2.8%)	87 (21.8%)	161 (40.3%)	137 (34.3%)	4.04	0.871
Inclusive utility bills service	8 (2%)	15 (3.8%)	68 (17%)	156 (39%)	153 (38.3%)	4.077	0.937
A laundry area	11 (2.8%)	17 (4.3%)	80 (20%)	156 (39%)	136 (34%)	3.972	0.979
Facilities for social purposes (multipurpose hall)	14 (3.5%)	30 (7.5%)	93 (23.3%)	141 (35.3%)	122 (30.5%)	3.817	1.059
Security services	3 (0.8%)	8 (2%)	48 (12%)	134 (33.5%)	207 (51.8%)	4.335	0.821
Places of worship	10 (2.5%)	18 (4.5%)	70 (17.5%)	157 (39.3%)	145 (36.3%)	4.022	0.971
Natural lighting/ventilation	3 (0.8%)	7 (1.8%)	54 (13.5%)	149 (37.3%)	187 (46.8%)	4.275	0.816
Pet-friendly	26 (6.5%)	46 (11.5%)	124 (31%)	97 (24.3%)	107 (26.8%)	3.532	1.186
Design for ageing/universal design	5 (1.3%)	10 (2.5%)	73 (18.3%)	150 (37.5%)	162 (40.5%)	4.135	0.885
Sustainable design (eco-friendly)	3 (0.8%)	4 (1%)	47 (11.8%)	132 (33%)	214 (53.5%)	4.375	0.787

The summary showed perception among young urbanites towards new housing development in Malaysia. The study conducted among the young urbanites from the main city in Malaysia such as Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Johor and Penang covering government and private sector staffs. Housing ownership among young professionals has been a controversial issue due to the increasing house price, contract basis employment status and insecure relationship. According to the input obtained from the questionnaire, majority of them stated that the new housing development must have certain characteristics and proximity to transportation hub was the most priority, therefore, gives identification towards more holistic transit-oriented development especially in the urban areas. The result of importance concerning the flexZhouse is 0.906. Every questionnaire item is said to be valid because of the Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.6. So, the data in this study can be classified as good and adequate for this research means.

5. CONCLUSION

This study had successfully reported the housing preferences among young urbanites in the city areas (Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Penang and Johor Bahru). From the results, it can be concluded that elements such as close distance to public transportation and proximity to a workplace are among the popular options for the respondents. This also supports the fourth thrust in the national housing policy that called for improving coordination between housing and public transportation for a quality living (Jabatan Perumahan Negara, 2018). This result shows the needs for new development to emphasize more integrated transit-oriented development (TOD) in a new housing development. The local authority needs to include this aspiration in the new submission for development approval in order to ensure the needs of the future house buyers will be addressed. This is hoped to reduce the issues of abandoned projects as well property overhangs due to failure in meeting future house buyers demands especially the young urbanites.

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