

'THIRD PLACE' ENVIRONMENT IN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL DESIGN IN
MALAYSIA

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Specially dedicated to *Dad* and *Mom* and *the rest of the family*.

Thank you Allah S.W.T. for everything.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is focused on the subject of 'Third Place' in a smaller scope or institution such as a residential school. Within a residential school there is a global issue that relates to the student's social behaviour which is social detachment towards the surrounding community. The concept of 'Third Place' should be emphasised in a residential school design to avoid such issues. 'Third Place' has been defined by Ray Oldenburg as a public area or gathering space. It acts as a tool of escapism or rejuvenation of oneself from 'First Place', which is a home and 'Second Place' as the working place or learning space. It is not reserved for anybody and dominated by pedestrians and cyclists. Human scale is preserved so that vehicular elements do not overshadow pedestrians. The study relates to the eight components of a 'Third Place' and how to integrate it into a residential school design as architectural elements. Research methods suitable to identify these components are through observation and secondary data obtained from literature review which produce qualitative data collection. Case studies of 'First Place', 'Second Place' and 'Third Place' include dormitories, schools and famous squares. The successfulness of these case studies influences the data outcome and leads to understanding of the components within architectural interpretation. This thesis will give basic architectural interpretation of 'Third Place' alongside 'First Place' and 'Second Place' as design strategies. The strategies introduced are for implementation of these concepts into design consideration and it can be a basic guideline to achieve the function and essence of the 'Third Place'. The implementation of the design strategies will be shown in the design prototype provided. Successful implementation of the concept may result in a decrease of social detachment among teenagers living within residential school that experiencing lifestyle similar to a 'total institution' environment.

ABSTRAK

Subjek utama tesis ini adalah 'Third Place' dalam skop yang lebih kecil atau satu institusi seperti sekolah berasrama. Dalam sebuah sekolah yang dilengkapi dengan asrama terdapat isu global yang berkaitan dengan tingkah laku sosial pelajar iaitu detasmen atau terasing dari sosial masyarakat sekitar. Konsep 'Third Place' harus ditekankan didalam reka bentuk sekolah berasrama untuk mengelakkan isu-isu tersebut muncul. 'Third Place' telah ditakrifkan oleh Ray Oldenburg sebagai kawasan awam atau ruang perhimpunan. Ia bertindak sebagai tempat mengasingkan diri atau merehatkan diri dari 'First Place', yang merupakan rumah dan 'Second Place' sebagai ruang tempat bekerja atau belajar. Ia tidak dikhaskan untuk sesiapa sahaja dan dikerumuni oleh pejalan kaki dan penunggang basikal. Skala manusia dipertengahan agar elemen kenderaan tidak melebihi atau melampaui pejalan kaki. Kajian ini adalah berkaitan dengan lapan komponen 'Third Place' dan bagaimana untuk mengintegrasikan konsep tersebut ke dalam rekabentuk sekolah berasrama sebagai elemen senibina. Kaedah penyelidikan yang sesuai untuk mengenal pasti komponen ini adalah melalui pemerhatian dan data kedua yang diperolehi daripada kajian lepas dan menghasilkan koleksi data kualitatif. Kajian kes 'First Place', 'Second Place' dan 'Third Place' termasuk asrama, sekolah dan dataran terkenal. Keberkesanan konsep ini di dalam kajian kes akan mempengaruhi data dan memberi petunjuk untuk memahami komponen tersebut melalui senibina. Tesis ini akan memberikan interpretasi 'Third Place' dalam asas senibina bersama 'First Place' dan 'Second Place' sebagai strategi reka bentuk. Strategi yang diperkenalkan adalah untuk menerapkan konsep-konsep ini di dalam rekabentuk senibina dan ia boleh menjadi satu garis panduan asas untuk mencapai fungsi dan intipati 'Third Place'. Pelaksanaan strategi reka bentuk akan ditunjukkan dalam prototaip rekabentuk yang disediakan. Kejayaan pelaksanaan konsep itu boleh menyebabkan penurunan masalah keasingan sosial di kalangan remaja yang tinggal di sekolah berasrama yang diibaratkan sebagai kehidupan yang terkongkong.

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LIST OF GLOSSARIES

- ‘Third Place’ - a communal space, a place to rejuvenate oneself from home and working environment
- ‘Second Place’ - a working area, working environment where people go to gain something (profit, salary, etc)
- ‘First Place’ - a place with sense of belonging, a place where people returns to
- Residential School - a school complex serves all daily life necessity of a human being, a boarding school
- Community - a group of people who live in the same area (such as a city, town, or neighborhood)
- House - a physical structure, a building that serves the occupants as a shelter or as a ‘home’
- Home - a place for the dwellers to use as a residence, may it be permanent or semi-permanent
- Communal Space - a social space that is generally open and accessible to people, a place for public to gather
- Dweller - a person, or a group, to live or stay as a permanent resident; reside
- Workplace - a physical location where someone works, as in office buildings, sites, etc.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The introduction of ‘Third Place’ by Ray Oldenburg touches the aspect of socialism in a broad context which involve the community. The concept of ‘Third Place’ is related with the concept of ‘First Place’ and ‘Second Place’ entirely and as a whole cycle. However this thesis study touches on a smaller scale of a community that exist in an institutional system or community. The main target is an educational institution and the target group should be consisting of young adults that have the capability of experiencing life and can think for themselves.

Making the scope smaller, the target group school should be high schoolers that live their everyday life in the circle of the institution itself, relates back to the interrelationship between ‘First Place’, ‘Second Place’ and ‘Third Place’. Therefore the study is focusing on the concept of ‘Third Place’ within a secondary residential or dormitory school.

1.2 Background of Study

The implementation of the ‘Third Place’ itself is more towards creating a friendly public environment to the community, despite the individual’s background. In studies, those who cannot achieve social interaction at the fullest satisfaction can succumb to ‘frantic scheduling syndrome’, which can be a threat towards a healthy

social life (Ray Oldenburg, 1989). Further explained by Oldenburg, every place that has its own community gathering place or communal space can be considered having a potential ‘Third Place’.

This communal space is not a specific place for a specific event or activities. It is an interaction place between the community and a circulation path to their house or other places, act as a communal space. In order to explain the concept of ‘Third Place’, one needs to understand the separated main social spaces for humans in three different categories:

- ‘First Place’ is defined as the home and the ones living in it
- ‘Second Place’ is defined as the workplace, and
- ‘Third Place’ is defined as a main knot, tying the community together through interaction

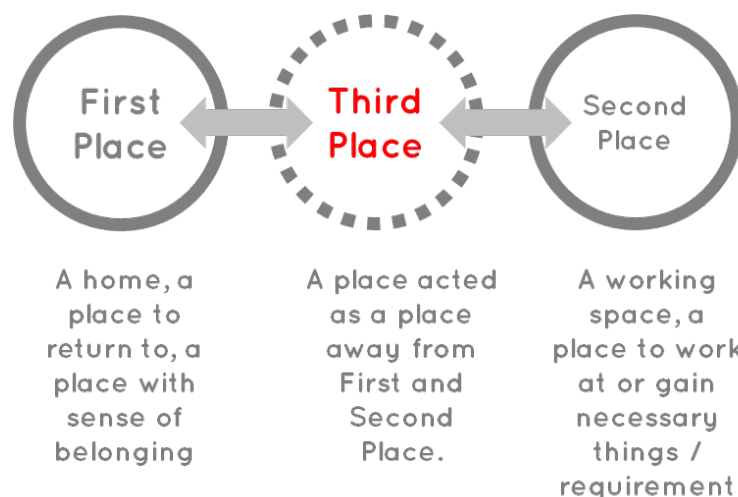


Figure 1.1: Explanation of The Concept of Places (Source : author)

This environment of ‘First Place’, ‘Second Place’ and ‘Third Place’ does not only occur within the working society, but also occurs within a smaller society, such as a residential school. Existing as their own community or society, a residential school also requires a ‘First Place’ and ‘Second Place’. The dormitories can be defined as ‘First Place’ and the classrooms can be considered as ‘Second Place’. Within this circle of smaller society, the ‘Third Place’ should play an important role in order to create a balanced community living.

The concept of ‘Third Place’ is defined by Oldenburg as an escape place between ‘Second Place’, working environment and ‘First Place’, their homes. The place is not reserved for anybody. It is dominated by pedestrians and cyclists, where human scale is preserved, vehicles do not overshadow pedestrians.

1.1.1 ‘First Place’

First Place is seen as a home, a place or space that a person feels the sense of belonging and where the individual goes back to. A place or an accommodation that can be a transition space such as college, hospitals, boarding schools (dormitories) and even a prison can be considered as a permanent space to be called ‘home’ (Terkenli, 1995). Psychologically, a home influence the mental state of its occupants in a sense of behaviour and emotions due to the human’s habit towards the space (Boutruche, et al, 2008).

In Islamic perspective, a ‘home’ is called ‘maskan’, a derivation of the word ‘sakana’ and ‘sakinah’. Sakana means to calm down, to rest or to be tranquil and sakinah means calmness, tranquillity or serenity¹. Therefore, a house provides a retreat, sanctuary and a break from the demands and pressure of the outside world, which can be seen as the ‘Second Place’(Oner, 2011). Within the home, or the ‘First Place’ a person can have a chance to concentrate on physical, mental and even spiritual recuperation. In the holy Quran also have been aforementioned about the importance of a ‘home’.

“It is Allah Who made your habitations (houses) homes of rest and quiet for you... “ (An-Nahl 16: 80)

“My Lord, build for me a house with You in the garden and deliver me from Pharaoh and his doing, and deliver me from the unjust people... “ (At-Tahrim 66: 11)

¹ Retrieve from Islamic website that explains ‘home’ in terms of words and spiritual essence. Words are translation from Persian / Arabic language, adapted to explain the meaning of ‘home’

1.1.2 'Second Place'

'Second Place' can be defined as a workplace. Seen as a physical location and space for someone to work. This physical space can be a home office, a large office building or even a factory. Not only that of a working environment, a workplace also serves as an important social space aside from home, 'First Place' (Jackson, 2004). In relation to the workplace and its surrounding community, emotions within it is an important element to be considered (Weiss, 2002). Any events that happened within the workplace ('Second Place') by far have a significant impact on its occupants, explained Weiss. Further argument from Weiss is that the outcome of that emotional disturbance within the workplace affects the individuals, groups and even society in a sense of behavioural and attitude.

Within this environment, there is a negative phenomenon exist known as occupational stress, which defined as a stress that involving work². This phenomenon can occur when there is a dispute or discrepancy within the workplace environment demands and the worker's capability of completing those demands, whether in perfection or completeness of those errands (Henry, 2008). Several factors that leads to this phenomenon are (Colligan, 2006):

1. excessive workload
2. isolation
3. extensive hours worked
4. lack of autonomy
5. difficult relationships among coworkers and management
6. management bullying
7. harassment
8. lack of opportunities or motivation to advancement in one's skill level

² Retrieved from NIOSH Publication (1999). The title *Stress at Work*. U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, identifying work environment can lead to individual stress.

In order to diminish or minimize the negative affect of this phenomenon on the community, an individual requires a place to rejuvenate oneself, such as the 'First Place' which serves as a home. Even within the 'First Place', a similar dispute can exist between family members. Therefore, between these two realms of 'First Place' and 'Second Place', a third realm should exist to balance out the emotional disturbance of an individual, or a group of individuals.

'First Place' is seen as a home, a place or space that a person feels the sense of belonging and where the individual goes back to. A place or an accommodation that can be a transition space such as college, hospitals, boarding schools (dormitories) and even a prison can be considered as a permanent space to be called 'home'. Psychologically, a home influence the mental state of its occupants in a sense of behaviour and emotions due to the human's habit towards the space.

The 'Second Place' are considered as a place to do work or to learn, such as the classrooms, laboratories and libraries for a residential school settings and environment.

1.1.3 'Third Place'

'Third Place' are more commonly address as common area, or public spaces. It is a social space that are open to the public and accessible to everyone. Generally acknowledge that pavements, squares, parks and pocket spaces are public spaces. A new concept have been widely used recently that enhance the quality of the public space, known as 'shared place'.

However, these terms are actually derived from a singular phrase which is 'gathering place'. The concept of 'gathering place' has long been introduced within Islamic values. The most recognisable 'gathering place' in Islam is the 'jamatkhana', a term use to indicate a place of gathering (Mohamed, 2007). Derived from a direct meaning of 'jama'a', which means gathering and 'khana', a Persian word describe a house or a place. The term also designate a space for social gathering, where the meeting place are enhance with conversation of educated people and also their apprentices as mentioned by Mohamed.



Figure 1.2: Jamatkhana in Nizamuddin, Jamatkhana Mosque, India. (Source: GLIN, 2015)

Other than a ‘jamatkhana’, another popular gathering place is the ‘souq’. Translated as a bazar in the context of Malaysia, the ‘souq’ refers to an open-air market introduced in the Middle East. Others recognise it as a commercial quarters (Ayto, 2009). The concept of the ‘souq’ is actually a “*network of merchants, bankers, and craftsmen*” (Daryae, 2012). The pathways between buildings are created to be commercial area.



Figure 1.3: Souq in Aswan, Egypt. (Source: BILAE, 2015)

The ‘souq’ emphasize the pathway towards a destination, be it a mosque, public area or government’s building. It helps the journey to become more meaningful and more intimate. The commoners there tend to be more friendly due to the importance or benefits of their business. As for a residential school, ‘Third Place’

are more towards to communal spaces, such as the sports field, club houses, activity rooms or even the café.

1.1.4 Residential School

Commonly known as ‘boarding schools’ in Malaysia, this type of school follows which has been introduced by British boarding schools (Bamford, 1967). It is a school that prepare all necessary requirements for the students to carry out their daily routine, where the reason is that the students will live there for the entire school year. In the arguments between sociologist, boarding schools for students aged 14 to 18 has been considered as a medium for them to socialize (Cookson Jr, 2009).

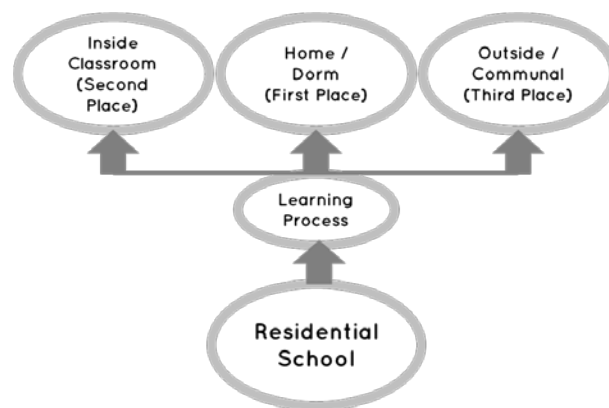


Figure 1.4: Relationship of ‘Concept of Places’ with residential school
(Source: author)

In Malaysia, a typical boarding schools refers to a complex or compound that consist of educational buildings and several (separated) residential buildings, more commonly known as dormitories. These dormitories are located within the boundaries of the school. Generally, the students are required to ask for permission to go out of the school’s boundaries from an authorized person such as the wardens. However, an issue has come out of this where a residential school has been seen as a ‘total institution’, whereas the students are becoming more socially detached within this environment (Goffman, 1961).

The main intention is to introduce the concept of ‘Third Place’ into the residential school environment. The concept shouldn’t just exist or implemented in a

working environment only, because students are still considered as people that have their own mental development. This thesis will prove the possibility of integrating 'Third Place' within a residential school educational environment.

1.2 Problem Statement

Referring to a typical residential schools, sociologists have studied that students, commonly teenagers have spent their entire youth within the boundary of a school. This concerns sociologist Goffman whereas this can be seen as a type of 'total institution' to the students, and will possibly lead to a social detachment from the community and the family institution. This issue can be derived from the settings of the school itself, where the environment of it only touches the aspect of 'living around the clock' with the same individuals or group, doing the same thing every day and this will apply pressure and stress to the students (Cookson Jr, 2009).

Other than the social issues of the students, there are also a debate within researchers about a classroom layout and arrangement that actually proven effective in distributing knowledge to the students (Rosenfield, 1985). The layout may also influence the socialization of students within the classroom itself, within a smaller scope of gathering space (Uzman 2003). Putting the two elements together, a problem statement can be derived according to the basic of residential school. The problem statement is that:

“the younger generations, commonly the teenagers are becoming socially detached within the atmosphere of existing residential schools”.

1.3 Thesis Statement

In order to emphasise the problem statement, a new approach towards designing a residential school must be implemented. A few new elements must be introduced in the school to apprehend the issues, not just as a whole design, but also a more detailed approach towards the educational built environment ('Second Place')

and also the residential environment ('First Place'). Thus, to complete the cycle of the 'concepts of Places', a communal area shall be introduced which is the 'Third Place'. The thesis statement is :

“introduce possible integration of ‘Third Place’ concept into residential or boarding school design in Malaysia through architectural elements”.

1.4 Aim and Objectives

Through the implementation of the concept of 'Third Place', the students can enhance their lack of social interaction between the community. The aim of this thesis dissertation is:

“to translate the components of ‘Third Place’ into architectural interpretation that enhance student’s social attachment to the community”.

Meanwhile, in order to address the issues and to achieve the aim, several objectives have been generated based on the 'Concepts of Places' that touches the aspects of all three 'First Place', 'Second Place' and 'Third Place'. The objectives are:

1. To find out the architectural elements that relate to the concept of 'Third Place'
2. To study about madrasa pedagogy and introduce the concept into the school's learning environment.
3. To study about social comfortability of a residential (dormitory) building for the students based on Islamic point of view

1.5 Thesis Scope and Limitation

Within the research of the thesis dissertation, a few scopes are required to be identified. This thesis scope will introduce a more specific field of studies to be emphasised. Including the 'Concepts of Places', these are the other scopes to be researched upon:

1. 'Third Place' – a study upon the qualities of communal spaces that can be integrated within an educational institution
2. 'Second Place' – a study to find a most suitable learning built environment within an educational institution
3. 'First Place' – a study of an effective 'home' to be implemented to educational institution residential environment
4. Educational institution – a study focused towards a specific kind of school, which is the residential school
5. Islamic values – a study for an adaption of any Islamic values that can be integrated with above scopes

1.6 Research Methodology

The points that have been given are only for triggering the basic understanding of topics that are going to be covered during the thorough research. The method that used was observations on site including case studies and secondary resources from literature review. The observation on site provide appropriate information in identifying the needs and requirement of the neighbourhood. Identifying the needs and requirements of the neighbourhood can give an indication of how they socialize and behave, and whether this is actually influenced by the environment, or vice versa.

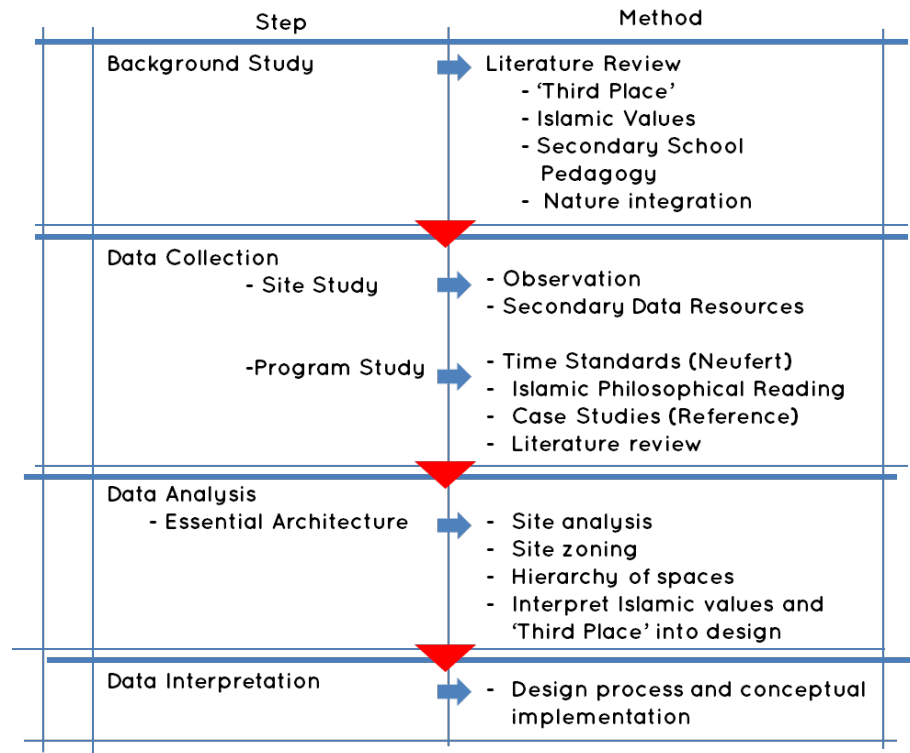


Figure 1.5: Research framework (Source: author)

Aside from the observation, a few literature reviews were done in order to understand more about what is the 'Concepts of Places' and also the residential schools. The main literature review taken into consideration is about the 'Third Place'. The book that was written by Oldenburg gives a more specific elaboration about the components of 'Third Place' and how can they be implemented.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study will show the 'Third Place' environment that exist, or can be created within an early stage of design. The study also relates the 'Third Place' within an institution such as an educational institution. This has not yet been furthered within any research of an educational institution.

The concept of 'Third Place' introduced by sociologist Oldenburg indeed exist unconsciously within the environment of the society, but with this thesis study

the concept can be implemented with a right approach through design. The significant studies of a 'Third Place' that can be integrated with the built environment design can produce a more effective impact towards the society or community using the environment or space.

1.8 Conclusion

By understanding the concepts of the places, mainly the 'First Place', 'Second Place' and 'Third Place' a design can be more meaningful towards of the user and occupants of the place. All three places represents a human daily life, from waking up within a 'First Place' until going to work to 'Second Place', and even a break in between which is 'Third Place'.

The good values of all three places, if can be realised within a design, the humanity within the community can be balanced out, and less stress will occur within it. However, a further study required to entirely understands all three places aforementioned. Basically, understanding each places separately through thorough research, mainly through literature reviews is the next step in this thesis.

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