

THE VISUAL PATTERN OF INTEGRATED SPACES FOR CHOW KIT
AIDS/HIV COMMUNITY

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**THE VISUAL PATTERN OF INTEGRATED SPACES FOR CHOW KIT
AIDS/HIV COMMUNITY**

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Specially dedicated to my beloved family and friends.

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ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, AIDS is still being seen as a taboo. For the individuals whom are affected by it, they are being seen as ‘freak’ and stigmatization and isolation happened. The chosen site, Chow Kit, is located at the heart of Kuala Lumpur, portrays a strong sense of belongings and community attachment. However, this ‘AIDS/HIV carriers’ are being left out. Thus, a methodology in redesigning and reforming the conventional layout of the facilities is seen as a solution in engaging these AIDS/HIV carriers with the ‘normal’ communities. This contributes to the dissertation aim which is to bridge the gaps between AIDS/HIV carriers with the Chow Kit community through visibility of connected spaces. First, the perceptions and social behavioral needs of the AIDS/HIV carriers and public were understood through literature review, questionnaires and interviews in order to identify the relevant social activities for the community. Then, Space Syntax axial analysis was adopted for two purposes which are; firstly, to test the degree of visibility on the layouts of selected precedent study studies and secondly, to experiment new proposed layout and then further correlate between the visual integration and connectivity. The finding discovered that social activities provided in Malaysia cause disconnectivity and break of interaction between people. Different spaces and programmes required different degrees of visibility and accessibility (experimented with Space Syntax technique), and shall be arranged according to the social behaviour of the users within. This dissertation suggested a methodology that could contribute to break the binary and societal norm through architecture. It is believed that a clearer space arrangement and environments could allow better social engagement in responding to community attachments on both social and urban aspects.

ABSTRAK

Di Malaysia, AIDS masih dilihat sebagai pantang larang. Bagi individu yang dijangkiti, mereka dilihat sebagai individual yang 'aneh' dan ini menyumbang kepada pengasingan. Tapak kajian yang dipilih, Chow Kit, terletak di Kuala Lumpur, menggambarkan semangat komuniti dan tautan masyarakat yang tinggi. Walau bagaimanapun, 'pembawa AIDS/HIV' kerap dipinggirkan. Oleh itu, metodologi dalam merekabentuk dan memperbaharui susunatur yang konvensional dilihat sebagai penyelesaian dalam melibatkan komuniti AIDS/HIV dengan masyarakat umu. Ini menyumbang kepada matlamat disertasi ini iaitu untuk merapatkan jurang antara pembawa AIDS/HIV dengan masyarakat Chow Kit melalui ketampakan ruang-ruang yang terhubung. Pertama sekali, persepsi dan keperluan asas berdasarkan tingkah laku sosial pembawa AIDS/HIV dan masyarakat awam telah dikaji melalui kajian literatur, soal selidik dan temu bual untuk mengenal pasti aktiviti-aktiviti sosial yang relevan untuk masyarakat. Kemudian, analisis melalui *Space Syntax* telah digunakan untuk dua tujuan iaitu; pertama, untuk menguji tahap ketampakan berdasarkan susunatur kajian terdahulu yang dipilih dan kedua, untuk percubaan atas susunatur baru yang dicadangkan dan kemudian dikaitkan antara integrasi visual dan sambungan ruang. Kajian mendapati bahawa aktiviti sosial yang disediakan di Malaysia menunjukkan pengasingan dan tiada kesinambungan antara manusia. Ruang dan program yang berbeza memerlukan darjah penglihatan dan akses yang berlainan (bereksperimen dengan teknik *Space Syntax*), dan hendaklah disusun berdasarkan tingkah laku sosial pengguna. Disertasi ini mencadangkan kaedah yang boleh menyumbang kepada pemecahan norma binari dan masyarakat melalui seni bina. Ia dipercayai bahawa susunan ruang dan persekitaran yang lebih jelas boleh menyumbang kepada penglibatan sosial yang lebih baik antara masyarakat dalam kedua-dua aspek sosial dan bandar.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Static activities are fundamental to the social needs of people in streets, within an urban context. An analysis of such activities can offer insights into the processes of interaction between people and between people and their environment. (Mahdzar, 2008). Chow Kit, which is located at a sub-district in central Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia is known for illicit activities such as drug use and sex work. There many have negative perceptions of Chow Kit, with the area often linked to crime, prostitution, drugs and the large number of immigrants, and it is being labelled as a red-light district (Priya, 2013). Public tend to distant themselves from Chow Kit as well as neither mingle around the community nor with the community.

Communities include ‘social networks’ that comprise community groups or organizations, individuals, and the relations or ‘linkages’ among them (Dozier et al., 2010). Due to the illicit activities, these people are highly exposed to the risk to infection of AIDS. ‘Undesirable’ refers to individual which may be seen or identified as harmful to the community but yet harmless and sometimes very well-behaved (Whyte, 1980). This ‘Undesirable’ makes part of the existing neighbourhood and it should be emphasized in dealing with the social identity of a particular urban context, which is a tangible gap that should be enhanced.

In dealing with AIDS/HIV relating matter, health care facilities, where patients and people to be able to receive treatment and counseling, will vary as different individuals will portray different behaviours. Behaviours spread through social networks rapidly and unpredictably which cause people to be unaware of its impacts (Hallsworth, M. and Halpern, D., 2017). Thus it is essential to investigate and study the social issues and the user's behaviours as well as in the term of community engagement. Spatial layout can reflect and embody a social pattern (Hillier, 2014). With that, a comprehensive level of understanding can be achieved in order to propose effective architectural solutions to bind the social, architecture and environmental aspects together. Therefore research on the socio-culture of the people and attributes on community engagement are conducted, along with the analysis of visual pattern of integrated spaces. These are tested with Space Syntax analysis tool which is method of analysing the inter-visibility connections within buildings, in both spatial configuration and levelling wise.

1.2 Problem Statement

AIDS in general is not a new term and yet, still pretty much distant themselves when they encounter it. In term of architecture, it has not been meaningfully expressed in Malaysia. A conversional method of locating AIDS facilities in a hospital is unable to reach out to more people regarding this disease, thus isolation and stigmatization occur. The present health care centre with no community engagement has resulted in the disconnectivity of urban development at Chow Kit as well as social exclusion within the community onto this marginalized population.

Thus, a comprehensive level of understanding on the aspects of urban, social and architecture issues shall be achieved. These aspects shall be identified, analysed and synthesized in helping in design decision making. Therefore, research on the socio-culture of targeted users, and the physical and space environment qualities as

well as the visual patterns of selected case studies and precedent studies are conducted. By analysis the visual pattern will allow the designers to understand a particular spatial area better before designing a holistic building. 'Conservative Use of Space' is labelled for spaces that are being used to reflect and reproduce a given social pattern by the control of co-presence (Hillier, 2014). AIDS/HIV carriers should be able to share the same environment with others without any fears of judgements or prejudices.

The dissertation looks into the three criteria; urban, social and architecture issues, in order to achieve a sustainable community through learning means (programmes) as well as the urban intervention on public spaces. The bridging of social chasm within urban community is idealized and these will lead to the improvement of social living environment among the communities. Thus, through exploration on architectural approach, it will encourage thrive of Chow Kit as well as Jalan Sultan Ismail.

1.3 Research Aim

The dissertation aims to bridge the gaps between AIDS/HIV carriers with the Chow Kit community through visibility of connected spaces.

1.4 Research Objectives

Based on the research aim, there are three main objectives and are outlined as follow:

- i. To identify the relevant social activities for the community based on perceptions and social behavioral needs
- ii. To apply and measure the degree of visibility of selected precedent studies by using Space Syntax Visual Graph Analysis (VGA)
- iii. To correlate the visual integration and connectivity of spatial configurations by using Space Syntax Visual Graph Analysis (VGA)

1.5 Research Questions

Consequently, the research questions can be derived as follow:

- i. What are the relevant social activities based on the perceptions and the social behavioral needs of the AIDS/HIV carriers as well as public?
- ii. How would Visual Graph Analysis (VGA) help to determine the spatial arrangement and levelling to curb the privacy needed by the carriers?
- iii. What is the correlation between the visual integration and connectivity of the proposed spatial levelling and arrangement between spaces?

1.6 Research Methodology

The methods used for this dissertation are aimed to set a clear direction in solving and achieving the research aim. The research framework is divided into four different stages in order to achieve the research aim. It includes the research background study and issues identification, formulation of social activities, comparison on selection of case studies and precedent studies and finally proposes experiments and measure to conclude the findings and overall view of research.

Chapter 3 – Methodology will further discuss on the adopted methodology as well as data collection, analysis and synthesis. Three steps of research methodology used are as follow:

- i. Conduct questionnaire and interviews to understand and identify the relevant social activities for the community based on perceptions and social behavioral needs along with literature reviews
- ii. Apply Space Syntax software to measure the degree of visibility of the spatial levelling and arrangement between spaces of selected case studies and precedent studies
- iii. Adapt Space Syntax software to correlate the visual integration and connectivity of spatial levelling and arrangement between spaces.

To achieve research objectives in relevant to research questions, research methods comprise of three tasks are developed and summarised in Table 1.1. Three research questions that are highlighted are addressed as followed.

Table 1.1: Summary of Research Aim, Research Objectives, Research Questions, Theories, Instruments and Data Analysis for Research

Research Aim		
To bridge the gaps between AIDS/HIV carriers with the Chow Kit community through visibility of connected spaces		
1	2	3
Research Objectives		
To identify the relevant social activities for the community based on perceptions and social behavioral needs	To apply and measure the degree of visibility of selected case studies by using Space Syntax Visual Graph Analysis (VGA)	To correlate the visual integration and connectivity of spatial levelling and arrangement between spaces by using Space Syntax Visual Graph Analysis (VGA)
Research Questions		
What are the relevant social activities based on the perceptions and the social	How would Visual Graph Analysis (VGA) help to determine the spatial	What is the correlation between the visual integration and connectivity

behavioral needs of the AIDS/ HIV carriers as well as public	arrangement and levelling to curb the privacy needed by the carriers?	of the proposed spatial levelling and arrangement between spaces?
Theories/ Principles		
Theory of social behaviour	Theory of spatial arrangement and Space Syntax	Theory of spatial arrangement and Space Syntax
Tools/ Instruments		
Online survey, unstructured interview, field visit, site observation, video and documentary	Precedent studies and visibility graph analysis	Visibility graph analysis
Data Analysis		
Perception and understandings of public and AIDS/HIV	Degree of visibility of selected case studies and precedent studies in Space Syntax	Correlation the visual integration and connectivity of spatial levelling and arrangement between spaces

1.7 Research Scope

The scope of the dissertation is focusing on the visual pattern of the integrated space which the aim is to bridge the gaps between AIDS/HIV carriers with the Chow Kit community through learning means and integrated spaces.

It will focus, seek, study and analyse the social behaviors of AIDS/HIV carriers as well as the public and its effects and later on to be translated into architectural design solutions, in referring to the urban context and development of Chow Kit, to be proposed for Design Thesis. Then, visibility of spatial layout on the spatial planning and levelling of existing AIDS healthcare centres based on case studies and precedent studies will be conducted. The principles and characteristics of the physical and space environments are needed to be understood in order to encourage the development of Chow Kit community as well as to the urban context. Lastly, the correlation the visual integration and connectivity of spatial levelling and

arrangement between spaces are conducted in order to recommend ideal spatial configuration according to the social behavioural needs and privacy settings.

However, in this dissertation, not all data on social behaviors of AIDS/HIV carriers are able to be collected due to the limited respondents that will be questioned and thus, literature review based on secondary sources such as journal and video documentaries are used to assist.

1.8 Significance of Research

The significance of this dissertation allows the exploration in architectural designing approaches in advocating direct and indirection interaction, in both within a building as well as the urban fabric. As AIDS is still a taboo topic in the context of Malaysia, the design is meant to be an alternative platforms which encourage public participation in order to increase the awareness as well as integration of public space within the context. Adopting the concept of continuous learning pattern, a designated spatial of facilities' guideline in the exploration in architectural building layout will be outlined, which can be applied to the Design Thesis.

1.9 Expected Findings

At the end of this research, it is expected to implement series of exposure in learning means (programmes) to cater for the AIDS/HIV carriers as well as the public based on the users' social behaviours and psychological aspects. The conventional layouts of AIDS healthcare centres will be redesigned and reposition for higher attitude and rethinking the human vertical walkability. The outcome of

the findings will be an alternative architectural design approach in arranging building layouts, which take into account of spatial visual pattern, spatial behaviour and environmental qualities.

1.10 Structure of Dissertation

There are a total of five chapters in this dissertation.

Chapter 1 : Introduction

Chapter 1 elaborates on the overview of the research dissertation. It outlines research background study, problem statements, research aim, research objectives, research questions, research methodology, research scope, significance of research, and expected findings of this research.

Chapter 2 : Literature review

Chapter 2 provides overview topic which covers issues on AIDS/HIV carriers and Chow Kit as well as the community engagement on the social and urban aspects. It also argues on integrated spaces on the aspect of experimenting the visibility on spatial layouts and configurations.

Chapter 3 : Research Methodology

Chapter 3 discusses the procedures in a form of research flowchart to list down the sequences needed to achieve the findings. It elaborates on the methodology chosen for this research with primary and secondary data which

includes the procedures in data and samples collection, summary of literature review, VGA analysis, and etcetera.

Chapter 4 : Analysis, Findings and Discussions

Chapter 4 presents the data that are collected from both primary and secondary data and then further discussions and analysis will be made. The analyzed data will be used to determine the relevant social activities as well as spatial configuration for the users within, which can be applied to the Design Thesis.

Chapter 5 : Conclusion and Recommendations

Chapter 5 concludes the findings and recommendations to the summary of the research findings and synthesises in relation to the research objectives. Various limitations and suggestions regarding this research will be outlined as well.

1.11 Summary

This dissertation is the author's attempt to understand the issues relating to AIDS/HIV carriers and Chow Kit as a whole in terms of urban, social as well as architecture. This will help in exploring an alternative and interactive spatial typology in emphasizing the learning means for a conventional AIDS healthcare centre in the tropical urban context of Malaysia. This will alter the fundamental of people's perceptions on AIDS healthcare, their lifestyles and the ways of healthcare utilization through the measure of degree of visibility. Visual pattern able to advocate direct and indirection interaction between the communities and thus, analysis shall be conducted.

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