### TEENAGE PERCEPTION ON INTERIOR DESIGN OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy

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# **DEDICATION**

# Dedicated to;

My lovely ummi and abah, Puan Rodiah Ismail and Encik Ismail Zakaria, My siblings and lifelong friends, Nadia, Majdi, Mun'im and Najihah,

for your never-ending love, du'as, support and trust.

Lecturers and researchers.

May Allah bless you.

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Thank you. May Allah bless.

#### **ABSTRACT**

In a world where technology has taken over our daily activities, the public library is still the place for the community of all ages to look for books and references for formal or informal studies. Public libraries are one of the successful spaces designed for people of all ages as they encourage visitors to behave and interact positively in the environment. Thus, teenagers as library users who are at the verge of becoming adults, need a more positive environment around them to observe and learn. However, only a few studies on public libraries and teenage visitors have been conducted. One of the issues is the lack of space designed specifically for teenagers, and the too formal ambience for the group in the public library. The study determined the physical characteristics of interior design in public libraries that would significantly affect teenage behaviour by identifying their design preferences and perceptions. The research utilized a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative data collection to identify the interior design characteristics of public libraries in Malaysia that affect teenage behaviour. Case studies were conducted on three public libraries in Selangor. Data on the characteristics were collected through observation, photographs and annotated sketches. Next, to verify teenage perception and preferences on the interior design characteristics of public libraries, online questionnaire survey forms were forwarded to teenage online groups using the snowball technique. 70 respondents answered the survey within the time allocated. In addition, semi structured interviews were conducted on 13 teenage visitors of public libraries through random sampling to further investigate their perceptions and preferences of public library interior design. Finally, the third objective is to determine the relationship between interior design characteristics of public libraries in Malaysia and teenage behaviour, and the data for the analysis were from the triangulation of the collected data. Statistical methods were used to analyse quantitative data while qualitative data were analysed through content analysis by systematically evaluating the texts and answers in a table form. The main output of the research showed that all the characteristics listed, namely bright colours, natural day lighting, informal and interactive furniture arrangement and furnishings are imperative in designing a better public library for a better learning environment for teenagers as agreed by the respondents. The findings contribute to the possibility of future studies on the interior design of public libraries for teenagers specifically in Malaysia. Hence, this research hopefully provides insights on the needs of teenagers with regard to space in public libraries. This enables architects and expert designers to strike a clearer balance between creating functional and inspiring buildings with exciting architectural features and enjoyable internal design spaces for teenagers as well as users of all ages.

#### **ABSTRAK**

Di dunia di mana teknologi telah mengambil alih aktiviti harian kita, perpustakaan awam masih menjadi tempat bagi masyarakat pelbagai peringkat umur untuk mencari buku dan rujukan bagi kajian formal atau tidak formal. Perpustakaan awam adalah salah satu ruang yang berjaya direka untuk orang ramai dari semua peringkat umur kerana ia menggalakkan pengunjung untuk berkelakuan dan berinteraksi secara positif dalam persekitaran ini. Oleh itu, remaja sebagai pengguna perpustakaan yang hampir menjadi dewasa, memerlukan persekitaran yang lebih positif di sekeliling mereka untuk diperhatikan dan belajar. Walau bagaimanapun, hanya beberapa kajian mengenai perpustakaan awam dan pengguna dari golongan remaja telah dijalankan. Salah satu dari isu-isunya adalah kekurangan ruang yang direka khusus untuk remaja, dan suasana yang terlalu formal untuk golongan ini di perpustakaan awam. Kajian ini menentukan ciri-ciri fizikal reka bentuk dalaman di perpustakaan awam yang akan memberi kesan ketara terhadap tingkah laku remaja dengan mengenal pasti persepsi dan pemilihan reka bentuk yang istimewa bagi mereka. Penyelidikan ini menggunakan kaedah campuran kuantitatif dan kualitatif untuk mengenal pasti ciri-ciri reka bentuk dalaman perpustakaan awam di Malaysia yang mempengaruhi kelakuan remaja. Kajian kes telah dijalankan di tiga perpustakaan awam di Selangor. Data mengenai ciri-ciri tersebut telah dikumpulkan melalui pemerhatian, gambar dan lakaran beranotasi. Seterusnya untuk mengesahkan persepsi remaja dan keutamaan mengenai ciri reka bentuk dalaman perpustakaan awam, borang kaji dan soal selidik dalam talian telah diedarkan kepada kumpulan remaja dalam talian menggunakan teknik bola salji. 70 responden menjawab kajian dalam masa yang diperuntukkan. Di samping itu, wawancara separa tersusun telah dijalankan dalam kalangan 13 pelawat remaja perpustakaan awam melalui persampelan secara rawak untuk mengkaji lebih mendalam tentang persepsi dan keutamaan mereka dalam reka bentuk dalaman perpustakaan awam. Akhirnya, objektif ketiga adalah untuk menentukan hubungan antara ciri-ciri reka bentuk dalaman perpustakaan awam di Malaysia dan tingkah laku remaja, dan data untuk analisis adalah dari triangulasi data yang dikumpulkan. Kaedah statistik digunakan untuk menganalisis data kuantitatif manakala data kualitatif dianalisis melalui analisis kandungan dengan menilai secara sistematik teks dan jawapan dalam jadual. Hasil utama penyelidikan menunjukkan bahawa semua ciri-ciri yang disenaraikan, iaitu warna yang terang, pencahayaan semula jadi, susunan perabot tidak formal dan interaktif adalah penting dalam mereka bentuk dalaman perpustakaan awam untuk persekitaran pembelajaran yang lebih baik untuk remaja seperti yang dipersetujui oleh responden. Dapatan ini menyumbang kepada kemungkinan kajian masa depan mengenai reka bentuk dalaman perpustakaan awam untuk remaja khususnya di Malaysia. Dengan itu, kajian ini sememangnya memberi pandangan mengenai keperluan remaja berkenaan dengan ruang perpustakaan awam. Ini membolehkan arkitek dan pereka yang pakar untuk mewujudkan keseimbangan yang lebih jelas antara mewujudkan bangunan yang berfungsi dan inspirasi dengan ciri seni bina menarik, dan ruang reka bentuk dalaman yang menyeronokkan untuk remaja serta pengguna dari semua peringkat umur.

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#### CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter looks into the background of study, statement of the problem, research gap, research aim, research questions and research objectives. Research framework is presented in a diagram as a guide for this research. Other than that, a brief introduction on the methods and instruments used in this research is also stated in this chapter. Last but not least, the significance of research; expected research outcome and overall thesis structure are summarized as an introduction to this whole research.

### 1.2 Background of Study

Architecture and human behaviour are two major elements that help in shaping the community including the physical, social, cultural and environments. Buildings and spaces are some of the major elements that influence human behaviour and interactions between one another where it can also affect mood, health and safety. So far, a large number of studies and research have been made on the interface between architecture and human behaviour as a whole (Gary T. Moore, 1979), such as study on architecture shaping human behaviour by Mats Lieberg (1995), David Harrison and Neville A. Stanton (2000), Dan Lockton (2011) and Erin Morgan (2012).

The Salk Institute neuroscientist who discovered neurogenesis in the early 1990s, Fred Rusty Gage said in his AIA Convention keynote address:

"As neuroscientists, we believed that the brain is the organ that controls behaviour, that genes control the blueprint, the design, and structure of the brain, but the environment can modulate the function of genes, and ultimately the structure of our brain. Changes in environment change the brain and therefore they change our behaviour. Architectural design changes our brain and behavior."

(Fred Rusty Gage, 2003)

Nowadays, public spaces allocated for teenagers that can create social interaction have decreased along with the development of cities (Day and Wagner 2010, Madanipour 2010). Although teenagers can appear to be less tolerated in public spaces, a good public space or buildings with good interior design characteristics can help them behave accordingly with each other (Vivoni 2013). Juhnevica & Udre (2010) stated that the needs of users, interior space planning and physical interior environment design should be at the centre of the planning process, not only by looking at the exterior of the building.

Public libraries, as a part of public spaces give free services to early literacy and are accessible to all ages from children to adults (Richard, 2010). The public library is specifically chosen because it is an example of a successful space design for teens (Loh Chin Ee, 2016). Teenagers aged between 17 and 20 begin to formulate their own opinion and need positive interaction with adults (Tracy Logan, 2013). It can be seen that the public library is an important building for the future as it is a place for knowledge acquisition, communication and interaction between users of all ages. In an interview done by Amy Frearson, Francine Houben (2013) agreed with this statement that the public library is the most important building for everyone.

Architecture and interiors of libraries have changed across time. New forms, colours and concepts are employed in recent projects and interior solutions in different libraries all around the world (Sufar et al, 2012). Moreover, Latimer (2007) points out that "user space needs to be well planned, welcoming and attractive as the role of the physical library and the needs of users change in the 21st century". These days, library designs are too formal and youths are not that attracted to go to the library for their further learning outside school or college. Concern on this problem between spatial design and learning behaviour of teenagers also suggest the use of design thinking to help the educators in a more effective learning environment. (Loh Chin Ee, 2016).

However, only a few of the smaller scope of research focusing on relationship between interior design characteristics of public library and teenage behaviour in Malaysia specifically, has been done. Shannon Bowman (2013) indicated that there are only a few available sources on the study of youth needs in planning and space design. They are poorly understood and under-researched. When it comes to the public library scenario in Malaysia, it is very different and far from the libraries in developed countries. This includes the interior design quality, comfort and satisfaction level, user experience and the characteristics of the physical design of the interior environment (Sufar et al, 2012).

Therefore, this study aims to determine the characteristics of interior design in public libraries in Malaysia that influence and affect the behaviour of most teenagers in learning environments. This study is expected to uncover and obtain a clearer view of the issues concerning the problem statement by looking at teenage preferences, needs and perception on public library interior design. The importance and interest of the study is to show that such issues as interior design can be important in creating appropriate and friendly places for library users especially teenagers.

#### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

Teenagers are a group of young people who are at the age of entering a new phase of life towards adulthood. This is the period of time when not only are their bodies being developed, but also their cognitive thinking, mood, action and behaviour. Teenage behaviour is affected by several factors, such as the surroundings, family, friends as well as places they go to. Therefore, it is important to identify settings that influence their activity behaviours positively, for a better public library design in the future by looking at their perceptions, preferences and experiences. It is also desirable to understand more on their needs and expectations in regards to the public library design to improve their learning environment.

# 1.4 Research Gap

The research gap for this thesis is based on the assessment of current and past researches done on teens and public libraries. The researches that are studied are then analyzed and compiled into their respective fields of focus to find out what should be revised in the future and anything that has not been covered yet. The research gap is the focus of study for this research which is on the interior design characteristics of public libraries in Selangor that affect teenage behaviour. Previous studies done can be referred to in Table 1.1 below:

Table 1.1 Studies on public library design and teenagers.

Year	Author	Topic	Findings
2010	Sandra Feinberg, James R. Keller	Designing Space for Children and Teens in Libraries and Public Places.	<ol> <li>Space requirement for children and young adults.</li> <li>Space design in public libraries for children and teens.</li> </ol>
2011	Mohammad Moslemi Haghighi, Mahmud Mohd Jusan	Exploring Students Behaviour on Seating Arrangements in Learning Environment.	1) Seating arrangement linking with school cultural context can produce a better classroom design based on students' performance.
2012	Suhaila Sufar, Anuar Talib, Haris Hambali	Towards a Better Design: Physical Interior Environments of Public Libraries in Peninsular Malaysia.	<ol> <li>Physical interior environments to be emphasized in providing a better library design: lighting, furniture, space planning, materials and finishes (colour).</li> <li>Ambience, aesthetics and ergonomic factors affect users' emotion and mood.</li> </ol>
2013	Marzena Siestrzewitow ska	Public Spaces for The 21st Century Youth—Needs and Expectation.	1) Public libraries as one of the public spaces needed for the youth.

			2) Well designed space for various activities has significant effects on social behaviour of youth.
2013	Vivian Howard	What Do Young Teens Think about The Public Library?	<ol> <li>Overall teens attitude towards public library design and services through frequency of library use.</li> <li>Staff, promotion and marketing and books collection.</li> </ol>
2014	Hui Lin, Natalie Pang, Brendan Luyt	Is the Library a Third Place for Young People?	1) Ambience of library creates conducive environment for young people to stay and study diligently as well as for entertainment (social, study and information).

Based on the previous studies done on public library design and teenagers and analytical review on the literatures in chapter 2, the research gap is addressed. In the Malaysian context, teenagers aged between 17 and 21 years old are at the period of entering university after graduating from high school at the age of 17. They started to study for Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM), entering matriculation or foundation studies and to degree studies at 20 years old whom require broader assignment materials from public libraries. Thus, this study focuses on teenagers in this age group specifically since they are at the age when they encounter independent study at university, different from the learning environment at school. Therefore, public libraries are a good place for them to experience this new learning environment while engaging themselves with the society, different than in university libraries where they only meet with the same age of group most of the times.

### 1.5 Research Aim

The aim of this research is to determine the physical characteristics of interior design in public libraries that significantly affect teenage behaviour to create a better learning space for teenagers in Malaysia.

### 1.6 Research Questions

Based on the issues mentioned, the following research questions on the relationship between interior design characteristics of the public library and teenage behaviour will be addressed:

- (a) What are the interior design characteristics that affect teenagers most?
- (b) What are the teenagers' perceptions on interior design characteristics in public libraries?
- (c) How do teenagers behave in public libraries with different interior designs?
- (d) What is the relationship between interior design characteristics of public libraries and teenage learning behaviour?

These questions entail three research areas to be identified; (1) interior design characteristics of public libraries by conducting observations in case studies and by referring to previous studies on similar areas; (2) teenagers' preference on the interior design characteristics in relation to their learning behaviour in selected public libraries in three chosen new towns in Selangor which is Kajang and Bangi, and Shah Alam, and; (3) the relationship between interior design characteristics of public libraries and teenage behaviour by applying appropriate research methods which is data triangulation from the data collected that can link them.

# 1.7 Research Objectives

Thus, three research objectives are constructed to achieve the research aim:

- i. To identify the interior design characteristics of public libraries in Malaysia that affect teenage behaviour.
- ii. To verify teenage perception and preferences on interior design characteristics of public libraries in Malaysia.
- iii. To determine the relationship between interior design characteristics of public libraries and teenage behaviour.

### 1.8 Research Framework

The research framework for this study acts as a tool to guide the researcher in accomplishing this study. The framework includes stages from the very beginning to the very end of the study which are the aim and objectives, research methodologies, case studies, findings and analysis, and conclusions. The framework further demonstrates the aim of the research which is to determine the physical characteristics of the interior design in public libraries that significantly affect teenage behaviour to create better learning spaces for teenagers in Malaysia. The research procedure for this study is illustrated in Figure 1.1:

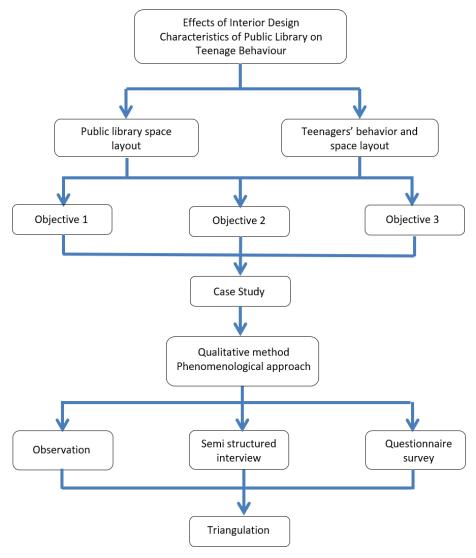


Figure 1.1 Research procedure.

# 1.9 Scope of Research

This research is focusing on how teenagers behave according to each space and their perception on the interior design characteristics of each public library chosen in Selangor through their experience and perspective. The interior design characteristics of public libraries refer to the colour, layout, seating arrangement, materials and lighting (Morley, 2013; Houben, 2013). Their perception and preferences on interior design characteristics of public libraries that affect their behaviour is addressed and understood further through a phenomenological approach by using qualitative methods.

The targeted users for this research are older teenagers aged between 17 and 21 because they are at the age that marks the transition into adulthood (Karen B. Owen, 2002) who begin to formulate their own opinions and are in need of positive interaction with adults (Tracy Logan, 2013). Therefore, at this age, the space that can affect them positively, that is the public library needs to be taken into consideration in order to improve their learning environment and experience as a preparation from school students to university students that require more independent studies. Moreover, the public library is said to be the best example of a successful space design for teens (Loh Chin Ee, 2016).

Table 1.2 Research objectives, methods and instruments to analyse.

Aim: to determine the physical characteristics of interior design in public libraries that significantly affect teenage behaviour to create a better learning space for teenagers in Malaysia.

Research Objectives RO 1: To identify the interior design characteristics of public library in Malaysia that affect teenage behaviour.	<ul><li>Methods</li><li>Observation through case studies</li></ul>	<ul><li>Instrument</li><li>Camera</li><li>Fieldwork journal</li><li>Logbook</li></ul>
RO 2: To verify how the interior design characteristics of public library in Malaysia affect teenage behaviour.	<ul><li>Semi-structured interview</li><li>Questionnaire survey</li></ul>	Online questionnaire survey form
RO 3: To determine the relationship between interior design characteristics of public library and teenage behaviour.	Data triangulation	Content analysis

The research is conducted at public libraries located in three new towns in Selangor, Malaysia. The public library, as a part of public spaces (Siestrzewitowska, 2013) is specifically chosen since it is a place that can affect the teenagers positively.

It is also a place that is accessible to all (Tracy Logan, 2013). These will help to improve the learning and education environment for teenagers as well as create awareness for users and designers in designing a public library that can cater to their needs and comfort especially in relation to the interior design characteristics that affect their behaviour most.

The public library chosen will have similar characteristics in terms of their location, which is near the schools and housing areas and is easily accessible for all ages especially teenagers. The other characteristic is the facility of the library itself that provides reading areas for all ages. The characteristics of interior designs of public library in Selangor can also be compared thoroughly to be applied to other public libraries in future for teenagers' use. However, the effectiveness and functionality of the interior design in existing public library are yet to be observed and analysed thoroughly.

### 1.10 Significance of the Study

The study adds to the knowledge on teenagers' sensibilities to the physical characteristics of interior design in public libraries that they experience in the learning environment. The study exposed that sensibility to physical characteristics of interior design is one of the factors that should be understood by designers and researchers when discussing public libraries for teenagers' use in order to encourage positive behaviour. The interior design characteristics of public libraries around them that can be seen, touched and felt such as colour, lighting, texture and furniture arrangement will affect their behaviour in learning or interacting with each other.

Significantly, this study identifies that not only children and elderly need better designed public places, but also teenagers. This adds new knowledge of planning and designing the interior of public libraries by taking consideration of the colour scheme, openings for better views as well as the furniture arrangements since teenagers are at the age of exploring and experiencing new things before approaching adulthood.

Skilful architects and expert planners will strike a clearer balance between creating functional and inspiring buildings with exciting architectural features and enjoyable internal spaces for users.

### 1.11 Expected Research Outcome

This research is expected to study and identify the different types of interior design characteristics of public libraries in Selangor through case study that affect teenage behaviour, based on direct observation done. All characteristics listed, which are colour, lighting, seating arrangement and furnishing are imperative in designing a better public library for a better learning environment. In order to understand more on teenage behaviour, their perception and preferences on physical characteristics of interior design are studied through interviews and questionnaire survey form. The relationship between interior design characteristics of public library and teenage behaviour can be achieved through analysis and data triangulation by making a scoring system to determine the best public library with best interior design based on teenage preferences.

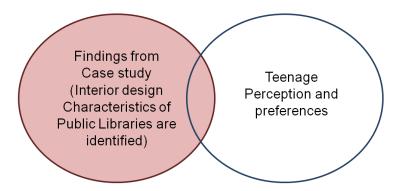


Figure 1.2 The relationship between interior design characteristics of public library and teenage behaviour.

#### 1.12 Thesis Structure

This study will be divided into five chapters.

- (a) Chapter 1 acts as the introduction of the study and defines the research framework as a whole. It includes research questions, research aim and objectives, research gap, research framework, scope of research, its significance and expected research outcome.
- (b) Chapter 2 will then define the background study and literature reviews from books, articles, journals and internet sources done based on the topic chosen. The area of study includes the study on interior design characteristics of public library, teenager behaviour and public library design for teens. The literature review is analysed and summarized to gain further understanding on the subject matter.
- (c) Chapter 3 will further explain the research methodology taken to accomplish how the data are collected and how they are analyzed.
- (d) Chapter 4 discusses, describes and illustrates the case studies of three public libraries chosen.
- (e) Analysis and findings that are discovered in this study will be discussed in Chapter 5, as well as the conclusions of this research as a whole and whether or not the objectives have been achieved, the limitations discovered during the study and also whether this study can be further continued in the future.
- (f) The last chapter, Chapter 6 will conclude on the whole study with the discussion of the overall findings whether they answered the research objectives and research questions of this research including the implications as well as the relationship.

The structure of the thesis can be seen in the Figure 1.3.

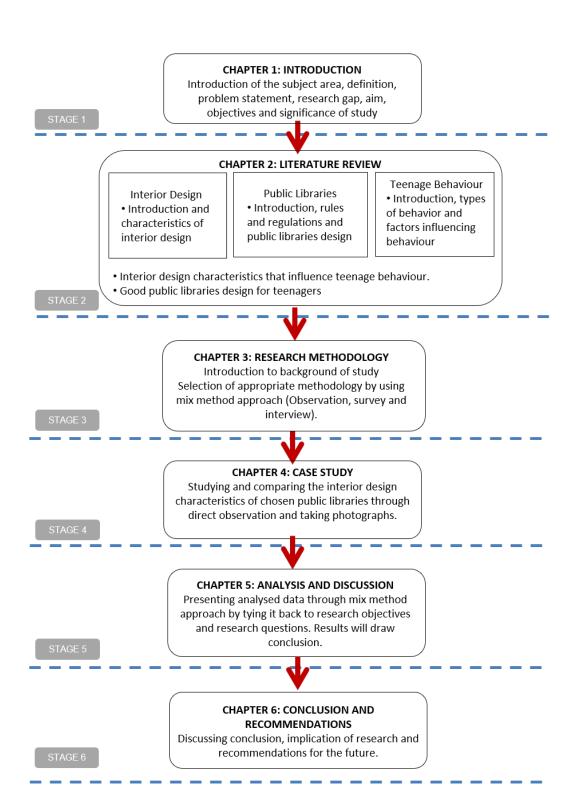


Figure 1.3 Structure of thesis.

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