PERCEPTION OF FLOOD VICTIMS TOWARDS HOUSING RECONSTRUCTION AFTER 2014 FLOOD IN KUALA KRAI, KELANTAN

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ABSTRACT

Housing reconstruction in the aftermath of a disaster is critical assistance that is provided after emergency aid. The government and agencies are compelled to rebuild houses for the community made homeless by the disaster. Nevertheless, inadequate attention has been given to the post-reconstruction stage to ascertain if the project was built according to occupants' needs. Previous studies have highlighted numerous issues that had occurred within the completed post-disaster housing which have caused living difficulties among the occupants. In view of the foregoing issues, this study explored residents' perceptions, housing modifications and their preferences for the reconstructed houses in Kuala Krai, the most severelyhit district in Kelantan during the disastrous 2014-flood. Across the district, there are two types of housing reconstruction, namely Rumah Kekal Baru (RKB) and Rumah Kluster (RK). RKB was built on the beneficiaries' own land, and RK was a relocation scheme. Kampung Manek Urai Lama was chosen as the case study for RKB, and Laman Seri Ehsan in Kampung Telekong was the case study that represented RK. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data for this study, while visual research was accomplished to assess housing modifications and adaptations. 18 respondents were selected through purposive sampling from which only informative samples with related experiences were selected. A qualitative analysis software, Atlas.ti Version 8 was utilised in this study. The analysis revealed that residents were pleased with the house replacement, but were not pleased with the conditions of the house. It was discovered that certain housing necessities and local traditions were not considered in the original house design. These shortcomings were found to be the major reasons that forced the residents to modify their houses even with meagre financial resources. Unfortunately, a majority could not afford to improve their houses to meet their needs. This study discovered that "one-size-fits-all" house design is not feasible to be adopted especially in poverty-stricken community. Therefore, with an emphasis on the beneficiaries' well-being, this research recommends the adoption of a core house approach, participatory approach and a comprehensive evaluation when designing and planning for better future housing in a post-disaster context. The outcome of this research could facilitate a better pre-disaster planning and post-disaster recovery that would involve various parties including the government, authorities, consultants, academicians and the rescue department. Finally, this research has demonstrated that it is important to evaluate post-disaster housing outcomes as they offer opportunities to recognise and subsequently overcome the issues that had previously led to housing that did not fulfil the occupants' needs.

ABSTRAK

Pembinaan semula rumah selepas bencana merupakan suatu bantuan kritikal selepas bantuan kecemasan. Kerajaan dan agensi terdorong untuk membina semula rumah bagi komuniti yang kehilangan tempat tinggal disebabkan oleh bencana. Walau bagaimanapun, amat sedikit perhatian diberikan kepada pasca-pembinaan semula bagi menentukan sama ada projek itu dibina mengikut keperluan penghuni. Kajian lepas telah menunjukkan terdapat pelbagai isu yang timbul dari perumahan pasca-bencana yang mengakibatkan kesukaran penghuni untuk menjalani kehidupan. Berdasarkan isu tersebut, kajian ini meneroka persepsi penghuni, pengubahsuaian rumah dan pandangan mereka terhadap perumahan yang dibina semula di Kuala Krai, iaitu daerah yang paling teruk terjejas di negeri Kelantan semasa banjir buruk pada 2014. Di seluruh daerah, terdapat dua jenis rumah yang dibina semula iaitu Rumah Kekal Baru (RKB) dan Rumah Kluster (RK). RKB dibina di atas tanah persendirian milik benefisiari, manakala RK merupakan skim penempatan semula. Kampung Manek Urai Lama dipilih sebagai kajian kes bagi RKB, dan Laman Seri Ehsan di Kampung Telekong merupakan kajian kes yang mewakili RK. Temubual separa berstruktur telah dijalankan bagi mengumpul data untuk kajian ini manakala kajian visual dijalankan bagi menilai pengubahsuaian dan adaptasi perumahan. 18 orang responden telah dipilih secara persampelan bertujuan dan hanya sampel yang berinfomatif dan mempunyai pengalaman berkaitan sahaja telah dipilih. Perisian analisis kualitatif, Atlas.ti Versi 8 telah digunakan dalam kajian ini. Analisis menjelaskan bahawa komuniti berpuas hati dengan pembinaan semula rumah, namun mereka tidak berpuas hati dengan keadaan rumah tersebut. Kajian menemukan bahawa beberapa keperluan perumahan dan tradisi tempatan tidak diambil kira dalam reka bentuk rumah asal. Kekurangan ini dikenal pasti sebagai punca utama yang memaksa penghuni mengubah suai rumah mereka, walaupun dengan sumber vang terhad. Namun, majoriti tidak dapat menampung kewangan kos pengubahsuaian rumah bagi memenuhi keperluan mereka. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa reka bentuk rumah yang merupakan one-size-fits-all tidak sesuai dilaksanakan terutama dalam komuniti yang hidup dalam kemiskinan. Oleh itu, dengan mengutamakan kesejahteraan benefisiari, kajian ini mencadangkan pembinaan rumah teras (core house), penyertaan benefisiari dan penilaian komprehensif dalam mereka bentuk dan merancang perumahan yang lebih baik pada masa akan datang dalam konteks pasca-bencana. Dapatan kajian ini dapat memudahkan perancangan pra-bencana dan pemulihan pasca-bencana yang lebih baik yang melibatkan pelbagai pihak termasuk pihak kerajaan, pihak berkuasa, perunding, ahli akademik dan pasukan penyelamat. Akhirnya, kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa adalah penting untuk menilai sesebuah projek perumahan pasca-bencana kerana ia memberi peluang bagi mengenal pasti dan seterusnya memperbaiki isu-isu yang menyumbang kepada perumahan yang tidak menepati keperluan penghuni.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This research is conducted to explore the perception, housing modification and housing preferences of the 2014 flood victims in the district of Kuala Krai, Kelantan, Malaysia. It is intended to offer design considerations in planning for a post-disaster housing in Malaysia with the aim to gain some insights on how to improve the next project. This introductory chapter portrays the overall structure of the research. It begins by clarifying background of the problem and justification of the study. Next, it describes the research objectives, scopes and limitation of the research. Subsequently, the chapter summarises methodology undertaken, follows by justifying the significance of the research. Finally, the thesis structure is presented at the last section of this chapter.

1.2 Background of Problem

Magnified by climate change, disasters around the world are increasing yearly in terms of frequency and intensity which not only generating rise in losses and impacts but also impede development. Additionally, recurring minor disasters, mostly at the same areas, make long-term recovery difficult therefore prohibit progression. The impact of disaster is even more severe in rural areas of developing countries where mortality and economic losses are significantly higher as compared to developed nations (Barakat, 2003). There is a common consensus that natural disasters and its negative impacts is unavoidable, nevertheless, systematic and effective efforts could be made to reduce the impacts (Moe & Pathranarakul, 2006). These efforts must be holistic which comprise a well-balanced planning during predisaster as well as post-disaster.

As outlined in Shelter After Disaster (Davis, 2015), there are three phases of disaster relief in the aftermath of a disaster, namely Phase 1 - Immediate relief period (the day of impact to day 5), Phase 2 - Rehabilitation period (day 5 to 3 months), and Phase 3 - Reconstruction period (3 months onward). Although the time frames may vary from one disaster to another, but these three phases are considered as the most crucial response in assisting the affected communities for recovery. Housing reconstruction following a major disaster is seen as the most urgent assistance needed after distribution of immediate emergency aid such as food, clothes and emergency shelter. Driven by this concern and steered with good intention, local and international agencies were compelled to take part in reconstruction process, beginning with needs assessment of the affected communities to physical rebuilding. Besides guidelines and models sketched for post-disaster housing reconstruction (PDHR), there was a lot of research that studied theoretical aspect to put forward the practical methods of PDHR. To date studies on post-disaster housing reconstruction have mostly focused on policies, stakeholder advanced and vernacular construction, context and cultural consideration, construction methods and approaches, aids and resource, as well as evaluative learning. Above all, Lettieri, Masella, & Radaelli (2009) contend that learning is frequently being disregarded hence further studies should be conducted in order to employ this learning into the disaster management.

As the number of disasters increase annually, post-disaster housing reconstruction projects will observe an increment too, in terms of volume and scale (Ahmed, 2011). In addition, the problems and opportunities for sheltering and housing will continue to increase in forthcoming years (Davis, 2015). Housing reconstruction offers opportunity to recognise and subsequently overcome the contributing factors or issues that previously lead to weak housing (Ahmed & Charlesworth, 2015). Additionally, it is crucial for those involved in disaster relief to

manage risk by learning from disaster recovery and reconstruction process, to the greatest degree possible (Hayles, 2010). Barakat (2003) asserts that there is a distinct need to find ways to build better post-disaster housing in future. Similarly, more study is needed to assess the outcome of the longer-term development in communities that have been provided by international aid and expertise (Hayles, 2010).

Despite of the above, too many post-disaster housing schemes do not perform and serve beneficiaries accordingly. One of the reported project outcomes is housing reconstruction following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami in Aceh. The devastation state in Aceh had drawn attention from multiple international agencies and funds and reliefs were pouring in. These agencies had engaged in housing reconstruction project which was an area out of their usual expertise and experience, after they had received an unexpected amount of money from donors (Steinberg, 2007; Kennedy et al., 2008). From evaluation, it was learned that a few housing scheme had demonstrated exceptional outcome according to the residents. However, many others had failed to address construction necessities including quality and basic services such as water and sanitation. As a result, houses were rejected by the beneficiaries and some houses had remained empty. In addition, hundreds of poorly constructed houses had to be destroyed (Steinberg, 2007). Money and resources were already limited in this area and this adverse situation had made it worse by causing wastage in time, money and resources. In this respect, community perceptions and beliefs must be taken into account (Sanderson, Sharma, & Anderson, 2012) regardless during planning stage for reconstruction or after project completion.

In the case of Malaysia, the 2004 Tsunami is a turning point for the country's capability to execute rehabilitation and post-disaster housing reconstruction. Foong, Shiozaki, & Horita (2006) notify that it was the first time for Malaysia to manage disaster in great volume when more than 40 fishing villages along the coastline of northern west Peninsular Malaysia were destroyed and affected more than 4000 people. Subsequent to prompt response for evacuation and temporary residence, permanent housing scheme was planned accordingly and adapted *'Rumah Mesra Rakyat'* Housing Scheme which was fully financed by the Tsunami Fund and

developed by SPNB. Tsunami victims were offered a loan repayment scheme with subsidies from Tsunami Fund as well as National Budget.

In Malaysia, flood has produced the highest number of occurrences compared to other natural disaster. The most common is flood during the North-East Monsoon season that occurs every year in Kelantan, the study area for this research. Between November to March, this monsoon season has yielded heavy rain in Kelantan River Basin area, causing an increase in overflow rate for the Kelantan river tributaries (Syed Hussain & Ismail, 2013). The flood plain of the Kelantan River Basin consists of several districts including Kuala Krai, the case location for this study. Even though this river basin is highly prone to be flooded, people are still continued to reside in the area due to multiple of reasons including tradition, land ownership and financial constraint. As of 2013, the population in river basin has reached one third of the total population in Kelantan (Syed Hussain & Ismail, 2013). It is very common in developing countries where people cannot afford to move the entire family to geographically safe areas (Lindell & Prater, 2003). Evacuation during flood has become a custom for most of these people.

In 2014, a widespread monsoon flood had struck Malaysia, which forced more than 230,000 people to be evacuated and 17 people pronounced dead nationwide (IFRC, 2015). The disaster that took place between end of December 2014 and early January 2015 has left people shaken. The major flood was reported to be the most destructive in past few decades, making Kelantan one of the most-hit states. In Kelantan, 9 out of 10 districts were paralysed by the flood, and Kuala Krai had been identified as the most critically-affected district. The flood had severely inundated Kelantan, ruined a large number of houses and washed away thousands more. Most of these houses were made of timber owned by villagers in rural areas who work as rubber tappers, carpenters, farmers and the like. To this people, losing a house is close to losing everything they owned and constructing a new one, to some degree, is uncertain. Loss of house does not only mean a loss of physical possession but it also signifies a loss of income, stability, dignity and certainty.

After the water receded, the provision of permanent house for the flood victims has been established by the government as the lead role. According to National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA), a total of 1295 permanent houses will be built in various villages across Kuala Krai. Most of the houses will be built on residents' own land. For households with no land grants, suitable location has been identified for relocation and resettlement. Meanwhile, other organisations have also focus on both temporary and permanent shelters (IFRC, 2015). Housing reconstruction is undeniably a major part of response after disaster especially in the long run. As suggested by da Silva (2010), besides being culturally and climatically suitable, post-disaster housing must be built durable and easy to maintain, allow for future living and be developed with the residents' participation. Apart from providing the basic accommodation needs, permanent housing reconstruction must deliver to meet various expectations embracing the built environment for a longer term recovery (N. Tas, Cosgun, & Tas, 2007). Failing to address these, residents may suffer from discontent. Constant dissatisfaction may cause the residents to suffer from various health condition including stress, delinquency, and pathological conditions (Dikmen & Elias-Ozkan, 2016). However, due to efficiency reason, most authorities developed standardised models of post-disaster housing based on their beliefs of what people need to have (Barakat, 2003). In the case of Kuala Krai, how do we know these housing provisions have met the residents' basic needs? Impacts of these housings towards the residents, especially in the long run is not known. In this subject, after project completion, the impact on end-users are much more

1.3 Statement of the Problem

(Shenhar, Levy and Dvir, 1997).

In project management context, a project is often assessed by the numbers of houses built and whether it is built within the stipulated time and budget, besides being compliant to specifications and related guidelines. However, despite of adhering to the aforementioned criterions, many projects had failed because the user's concerns were not met (Shenhar et al., 1997). In fact, various problems that

relevant to be assessed, irrespective the constraint it is facing before its completion

occur in the built environment are the consequences of neglecting the users' point of view (Francescato, Weidemann, & Anderson, 1989). From end-user's perspective, their happiness, satisfaction, comfort, freedom, security and quality of construction are among the components that emerged when assessing a house. Above all, their experience living in the house is often used as indicator to assess or describe whether the house is responding to their needs.

The above concern is similar in post-disaster context, but often coupled with great challenges where the disaster-affected communities' viewpoints were overlooked. After the completion of housing reconstruction project, the building actors and building donors including governments and agencies would often leave the site without being concerned about the impact of the house towards the occupants. At this juncture, they had failed to recognise their long-term responsibility towards the affected community. The community has to be the main focus of the housing reconstruction process hence should be given privilege to make decisions that will affect their lives (Jha, Barenstein, Phelps, Pittet, & Sena, 2010) whether it is before reconstruction or during occupancy period to accomplish the house life-cycle concern. Various studies on residents' response towards their reconstructed houses have revealed countless housing problems and challenges that lead to difficulties in their daily lives (see for example da Silva, 2010; Dikmen & Elias-Ozkan, 2016; Rahmayati, 2016b; Sanderson et al., 2012; N. Tas et al., 2007). It is essential to relate housing to what it does rather than just what it is. Therefore it is important to learn a lesson from previous experience to facilitate improvement for future housing reconstruction projects (Johnson, Lizarralde, & Davidson, 2004) and this can be done through evaluating the housing from the resident's point of view.

Nevertheless, all studies that examined this matter were undertaken in other countries of different social and cultural context than Malaysia. Even if the subject has been illuminated elsewhere in the world, it is not appropriate to presume the same views for Malaysia. There are a number of post-disaster housing schemes in Malaysia but studies on post-disaster housing have not been widely addressed and surprisingly, none of the research in this subject focuses on the evaluation of postdisaster house from the residents' perspective. Study about these affected community's perspectives and preferences are absent although it has been previously documented that the affected community are the most significant stakeholder in postdisaster housing context (Shafique & Warren, 2015) thus their viewpoint, particularly about the house, should not be overlooked.

It has become apparent that shortcomings on housing reconstruction must be addressed, in the same way merits must be modelled. Therefore, this research emphasized that assessing the residents' viewpoint is important in providing us input of the operational phase of the post-disaster housing after the construction phase has ended. It is essential to acquire the strengths and weaknesses of the house, which have not been dealt before, so that the next post-disaster housing project could learn from it and be build better. When the actual sources of problems are identified, then it will be viable to articulate necessary corrections and changes where possible. On the other hand, if evaluation is ignored, similar problems may be occurring in next project, valuable resources miss their targets and lead to wastage, and true meaning of success may be misinterpreted. For that reasons, this study attempted to explore residents' perception, modification and their preference towards the reconstructed houses, which took place across two types of housing reconstruction schemes after the 2014 flood in Kuala Krai, Kelantan.

The foundation of this present study is to learn how residents perceive their donated houses thus investigation will focus on of individual experiences, their stories about the daily life living in the house as well as their preferences of the postflood house, which consequently weighed against the researcher's observation on house modification. This outcome is an indication of what works and what does not. It emphasize on a broader picture of practical and sensible ground rules to be adopted or adapted when planning for housing reconstruction.

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to develop an understanding of project impacts towards the users, including the expected and unexpected impacts, with the intention to gain some insights on how to improve the next project. Therefore it investigates how residents perceived their house when they reside in its original form and their experience living in the house after modification. Based on statement of the problem, the research objectives have been formulated as follows:

- 1. To assess the residents' perceptions towards post-flood housing reconstruction in Kuala Krai
- 2. To evaluate modification carried out within the relocated and nonrelocated housing schemes
- 3. To recommend the key considerations in constructing post-disaster housing

1.5 Research Questions

Objectives of the research were derived from following Research Questions:

- 1. How the residents perceived the house in terms of its physical conditions and non-physical conditions?
- 2. How residents are adapting to new house setting? Why modifications were carried out?
- 3. What are the residents' preferences of post-disaster housing condition that can be adopted in constructing well-received post-disaster housing?

1.6 Scope of the Research

This research concentrates on the residents' experience and general perception towards the post-flood housing condition and qualities during the occupancy period. However, the study does not adhere to design performance or technical component of 'Post-Occupancy Evaluation' (POE) strategy. Even so, this study acknowledged that POE is also concerned with residents' perspective.

This study focuses on evaluation of post-disaster reconstruction project or the outcome of the project based on the residents viewpoint, and not the evaluation of the reconstruction programs or process. Subsequently, it is not an assessment of any institution even though role of specific organisations are mentioned throughout this study. Thus issues on management, policy, resources or other related subjects are excluded from the scope of this study.

The aim of the study is not to provide a technical step-by-step guide but instead to offer suggestion of design considerations on how to plan and prepare for a post-disaster housing.

This research is being carried out in the district of Kuala Krai, Kelantan within two post-flood housing reconstruction schemes namely the New Permanent House scheme or *Rumah Kekal Baru* (RKB) and Cluster House or *Rumah Kluster* (RK). For RKB, Kampung Manek Urai Lama was chosen as case study. Meanwhile, Laman Seri Ehsan in Kampung Telekong was chosen to represent RK.

1.7 Significance of the Research

This research emphasise on residents' perspective towards the permanent house constructed after the 2014 flood in Kuala Krai. Apart from acknowledging the house residents or beneficiaries as the most significant stakeholder in post-disaster context, this research will also reveal whether the house meets the user's needs and how users are adapting to satisfy their needs. This post-flood housing reconstruction is a recent development and large in terms of quantity. Thus, evaluating the development is integral to determine the current operative condition of post-disaster housing in Malaysia thus unfolding the potential for bettering the next post-disaster housing project. The outcome of the research present guidance for those related in disaster management when planning and designing future housing in disasterstricken area with the aspiration to promote continuous improvement and present wider benefits to communities. The findings could facilitate all parties in pre-disaster planning and post-disaster recovery including:

- i. Government as building actors and building donors such as JKR and Ministry of Housing
- Local Authority as decision maker and authority in approving a development project
- iii. Academics as a potential in research and development (R&D)
- iv. Consultants as development teams in managing the project on site
- v. Others Fire department, academicians and insurance companies

1.8 Research Methodology

To address the problem statement and research questions, case study methodology was employed and relevant to this research because it seeks to investigate present phenomenon which 'how' and 'why' being asked as the large part of the research questions (Yin, 2014). The first driving aim in this research is to evaluate 'how' residents perceived the house in terms of physical attributes and general comfort. To address this, semi-structured interview was conducted to collect data. To answer second questions, the research further examines the residents' adaptation patterns, focusing on 'why' residents are adapting in terms of structural modification. Semi-structured interview was employed to collect the required data. Apart from that, visual research question is addressed through semi-structured interview with the residents concentrating on their perspectives of a preferred postdisaster housing condition and setting. Analysis of all the findings from all the research questions is formulated to recommend the fundamentals in constructing well-received post-disaster housing.

1.9 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis incorporates six chapters which described as follows. The organisation of thesis is summarised in Figure 1.1.

The first chapter presents an overview of this research which begins with the background of the problem, thesis statement, the objectives, scope of the study as well as the significance the research. In the final part of the chapter, important terms are defined and report structure is illustrated as summary.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of disaster studies, disaster management and recovery through housing reconstruction. It follows with description of community's role and their perception of housing. Evaluation parameters are outlined as a result of intensive review of literatures.

Chapter 3 presents discussion to disasters in Malaysia and housing reconstruction research at national level. This chapter proceeds with flood occurrence in Kelantan. Ultimately, it elaborates on 2014-flood in Kuala Krai and housing reconstruction that follows.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology conducted for this research. Employing case study protocol, the research is designed to investigate the residents' perception and modification of their house which are. Chapter 4 also explains the data collection process which began with semi-structured interviews and follows by visual research.

Chapter 5 presents introduction to case study areas, which are Kampung Manek Urai and Laman Seri Ehsan. Thematic analysis is used to analyse data gathered from interviews and visual research. Themes were assembled from literature review and data collection. Apart from rich description, this analysis also comprises visual image collected from the fieldwork to present the type of adaptation constructed by the residents.

Chapter 6, which presents the housing reconstruction outcome, comprised the findings that will secure the answers to address the research questions. Based on the results, the researcher will interpret of what constitute a well-received post-disaster housing that support the victims' recovery process. The findings reveal the residents' perception towards their houses which demonstrated through their adaptation structurally.

The final chapter, Chapter 7 which is the concluding chapter consists of conclusion derived from analysis of results. The chapter will further outline the recommendation to be considered for improving future post-disaster housing reconstruction in Malaysia. Apart from that, limitations of the research were also illustrated, followed by recommendations for further researches.

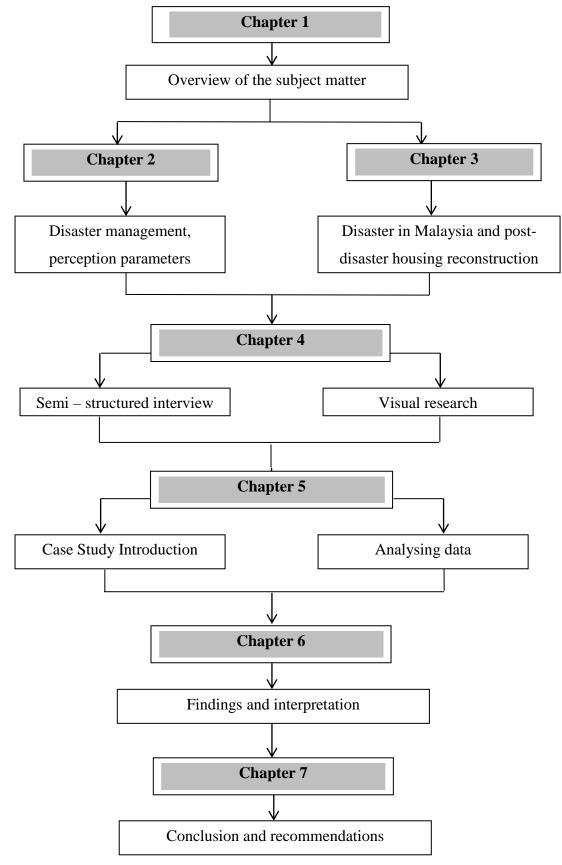


Figure 1.1 Organisation of the thesis

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