

THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN TRADITIONAL  
MALAY MEDICINE SETTING IN MALAYSIA

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THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN TRADITIONAL  
MALAY MEDICINE SETTING IN MALAYSIA

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my father, who taught me that the best kind of knowledge to have been that which is learned for its own sake. It is also dedicated to my mother, who taught me that even the largest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Kampong Bharu located next to the Kuala Lumpur City Centre, the Kampong Bharu community was founded by the British colonial government in the late 1800s as a 'Malay Agricultural Settlement'. Kampong Bharu today sits in the middle of Kuala Lumpur with its unique characteristic of a rural Malay village. Due to the modernization and rapid development around and inside Kampong Bharu, the Malay living environment of Kampong Bharu starting to change into a monotonous urban environment. The relationship between people and nature, as well as their ancient practises, particularly in traditional Malay medicine, was gradually destroyed by this rapid shift. Based on the study made, the action to reconnect humans and nature in the building can improve the health and well-being of the users of the building, this approach is also known as Biophilic. By developing a platform for communities to communicate and reviving the connection between people and nature, progressive actions must be done to stop this heritage culture and knowledge from being lost and forgotten by future generations. As a result, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the significance of the natural environment in Traditional Malay treatment setting in Malaysia. This study has several goals, the first of which is to investigate and determine the environment and space requirements for traditional Malay medicine training facilities in Malaysia. The second objective is to explore the impact of Biophilic approach in training facilities and finally to propose an ideal space for traditional Malay medicine training facilities based on data analysis findings. In addition, the design attribute and finding from this research can be used as a reference for future study on adaptation and design guide for Biophilic design in the context of Traditional Malay setting.

## ABSTRAK

Kampong Bharu yang terletak bersebelahan dengan Pusat Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur, masyarakat Kampong Bharu telah diasaskan oleh kerajaan kolonial British pada akhir 1800-an sebagai 'Petempatan Pertanian Melayu'. Kampong Bharu hari ini terletak di tengah-tengah Kuala Lumpur dengan ciri uniknya seperti kampung Melayu luar bandar. Oleh kerana pemodenan dan pembangunan pesat di sekitar dan dalam Kampong Bharu, persekitaran kehidupan orang Melayu Kampong Bharu mula berubah menjadi persekitaran bandar yang membosankan. Hubungan antara manusia dan alam, serta amalan tradisi mereka, khususnya dalam perubatan tradisional Melayu, secara beransur-ansur dimusnahkan oleh peralihan yang pesat ini. Berdasarkan kajian yang dibuat, tindakan menghubungkan semula manusia dan alam dalam bangunan tersebut dapat meningkatkan tahap kesihatan dan kesejahteraan pengguna bangunan tersebut, pendekatan ini juga dikenali sebagai Biophilic. Dengan membangunkan platform untuk komuniti berkomunikasi dan menghidupkan semula hubungan antara manusia dan alam semula jadi, tindakan progresif mesti dilakukan untuk menghentikan budaya dan pengetahuan warisan ini daripada hilang dan dilupakan oleh generasi akan datang. Hasilnya, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menilai kepentingan persekitaran semula jadi dalam tatacara rawatan Melayu Tradisional di Malaysia. Kajian ini mempunyai beberapa matlamat, yang pertama adalah untuk menyiasat dan menentukan persekitaran dan keperluan ruang bagi kemudahan latihan perubatan tradisional Melayu di Malaysia. Objektif kedua adalah untuk meneroka kesan pendekatan Biophilic dalam kemudahan latihan dan akhirnya untuk mencadangkan ruang yang ideal untuk kemudahan latihan perubatan tradisional Melayu berdasarkan penemuan analisis data. Selain itu, atribut reka bentuk dan dapatan kajian ini boleh digunakan sebagai rujukan untuk kajian masa depan mengenai penyesuaian dan panduan reka bentuk untuk reka bentuk Biophilic dalam konteks latar belakang Melayu Tradisional.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

T&CM	-	Traditional and Complimentary Medicine
MAS	-	Malay Agriculture Settlement
VGA	-	Visibility graph analysis

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Traditional Malay medicine

Traditional and Complimentary medicine(T&CM) is holistic health care knowledge, skills, and practise that is acknowledged and respected for its role in illness prevention and treatment. It is founded on indigenous thoughts, beliefs, and experiences passed down through the generations (Park & Canaway, 2018). Traditional medicine exists and is widely utilised in many nations, despite the widespread use of modern treatment. Traditional medicine has gained popularity in the recent decade. People are now more willing to seek out information about the practice of Traditional Malay medicine.

In Malaysia, the safety and effectiveness of traditional Malay medicine is a major concern that needs to be considered by the authorities because this medical technique already widely used by the public. Traditional Malay medicine is one of the branches of traditional and complimentary medicine offered under the Ministry of Health starting from 2007 to the present. In January 2006, the Federal Territory of Putrajaya Hospital, Sultan Ismail Hospital, and Kepala Batas Hospital in Penang received approval from the Malaysian Cabinet to open T&CM facilities. The execution of the Pioneer Project intends to incorporate complementary and alternative medicine within the current public healthcare delivery system.

Medical and health practises have long been linked in the Malay community. Knowledge and experience are passed down from generation to generation, either in writing or orally. Herbal plants, in general, are a major source of traditional medical systems because they have the capacity to cure certain conditions.(Mat Piah, 2015). According to a detailed analysis of MSS1292 Kitab Tib, 258 different varieties of flora



are employed to treat various ailments. Even more intriguing, the plant chosen is indigenous to the area. Locally, this species of flora can be seen planted around the house compound. Traditional Malay massage and acupuncture are used to treat chronic pain and stroke, while herbal oncology is used to enhance allopathic therapy and postnatal massage is used to relieve muscle cramping and fatigue following childbirth (Raja Ikram Raja Rina & Abd Ghani Mohd Khanapi, 2015).

Malay massage is a combination of pressing, kneading, stroking using hands. The massage technique used depends on the masseuse's judgment of the patient's body needs. A mixture of natural plants and oils are also used during the massage process. Malay massage is divided into two types of massage, which are wellness and therapeutic. For the purpose of wellness, the massage that is carried out can reduce anxiety, increase immunity in the body, improve sleep and reduce stress. This technique also includes body relaxing massage, body refreshing massage, and massage to launch blood circulation.

While therapeutic massage is used to cure diseases and reduce pain experienced by patients. Among the diseases that usually use massage alternatives for healing are sprains and back pain. Therapeutic massage is used specifically to correct joint ailments, sprains, nerve ailments, muscle ailments etc. Based on the authenticity of the traditional Malay sequencing technique, the treatment process and sequence are usually carried out on a raised floor that is made of wood known as *pangkin*.

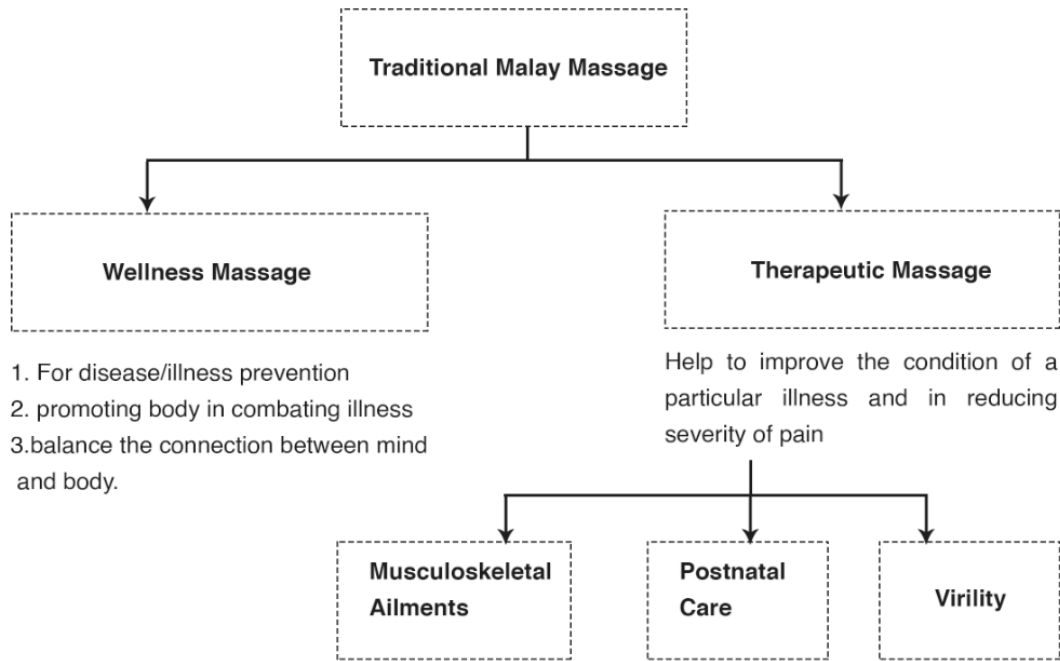


Figure 1.1 Type of Malay Massage

Among the skills that must be present in traditional Malay medicine is the preparation of herbs. This process is divided into several steps and procedures such as identifying, finding, harvesting, preparing, consuming, and storing herbs. Usually, a tree will be used on each part such as roots, fruits, leaves and so on. Due to a loss of the family and community support that made Malay Confinement possible in the first place, many Malays who give birth in the city today are unable to fully observe the traditional Confinement rituals. However, many Malay women continue to follow traditional customs (Raja Ikram Raja Rina & Abd Ghani Mohd Khanapi, 2015). To fit increasingly urban lifestyles, some have been modified.



Figure 1.2 Herbal preparation process

Nowadays the primary Traditional Malay medicine providers are the homes or centres of the traditional Malay healers and hospitals. However, the scope of T&CM services in government integrated hospitals are limited to Malay Massage and Malay Postnatal Treatment(Raja Ikram Raja Rina & Abd Ghani Mohd Khanapi, 2015) . Even though most of the Malay community is not interested in learning from these traditional healers, traditional Malay healers are nevertheless acknowledged as one of the primary sources of traditional Malay medicine. It is important to reintroduce the traditional Malay medicine into our modern society especially in Kampong Bharu as to preserve this knowledge from loss.

## **1.2 About Kampong Bharu**

The Kampong Bharu community, which is located near the Kuala Lumpur City Centre, was established by the British colonial government in the late 1800s as a 'Malay Agricultural Settlement' on a riverside area strategically removed from Kuala Lumpur's old city center, where many of the city's early economic activities took place. Ethnic Malay families were relocated here and given special land rights to establish a new settlement. Kampong Bharu today sits in the middle of Kuala Lumpur with its unique characteristic of rural Malay village.

After independence, based on the new economic policy, the city of Kuala Lumpur became the focal point for investment from the Malaysian government and became a symbol of Malaysia's modernity. This caused development in the Kuala Lumpur area to develop rapidly, and many business complexes, skyscrapers, and luxury condominiums were built. After several years, in the end only Kampong Bharu still maintains the authenticity of the way of life and becomes a symbol of the uniqueness of Malay culture and the local community. But based on modernization, Kampong Bharu began to try to be developed in several stages because of the impression that Kampong Bharu is an informal development (Farnese et al., 2017).

Since the early Mandailing's settlement, Kampong Bharu has a rich history and was once a major centre for tin mining. Unfortunately, the government agency Perbadanan dan Pembangunan Kampong Bharu's present rehabilitation plan has other massive master plans in mind for the 300-acre urban hamlet, including the joining of several land parcels to create larger plots of land for towers (PKB, 2019).

### **1.3 Problem statement**

Based on observations, the uniqueness of the living environment in Kampong Bharu is the dependence of the traditional Malay way of life. The symbiosis between man and nature is very important in traditional Malay life. The arrangement of physical components in the exterior environment of the Malay house, also known as the Malay home garden, serves as an illustration of such concepts. The Malay home garden is designed to showcase sustainable and practical elements, such as food, beauty and decor, home protection, and medical value, in addition to aesthetic considerations. Due to the modernization and rapid development around and inside Kampong Bharu, the Malay living environment of Kampong Bharu starting to change into a monotonous urban environment. This rapid change slowly eliminated the connection between humans and nature, and their traditional practice, especially in traditional Malay medicine practice. The tradition and knowledge of traditional Malay medicine slowly forgotten as the people slowly adapted to modern medication and lack of knowledge transfer process between generations in Kampong Bharu

### **1.4 Research Aim & Objective**

The aim of this research is to develop strategies for analyzing ideal space for traditional Malay medicine training facilities and investigate the importance of natural environment in traditional Malay medicine setting in Malaysia.

- (a) To identify the requirement that contributes to the efficiency of traditional Malay medicine treatment facilities.
- (b) To explore the impact and application of Biophilic design in training facilities  
Spatial layout
- (c) To propose an ideal space for traditional Malay medicine training facilities based on data analysis findings.

## **1.5 Research Question**

This research is founded on the following questions:

- (a) What are the design elements that contribute to the efficiency of the traditional Malay medicine training and learning environment?
- (b) Does the Natural environment enhance the learning environment for training facilities?
- (c) What is the ideal space for designing traditional Malay medicine training facilities?

## **1.6 Research Methodology**

Identifying the research problem, data collection, data analysis, and finally conclusion are the four stages of the fundamental research framework. Primary data will come from a semi structure interview to reveal the current state of traditional Malay medicine practice and facilities. Other source for primary data also from current literature reviews, journal articles, books or reading material, and internet-based publications. While secondary data from case studies will supplement the primary data with the information based on real application and impact of biophilic strategy in the building design and its user.

## 1.7 Thesis Framework

Figure 1.1 shows the framework of the thesis, which progresses from objectives to data collection, data analysis and finally expected outcomes.

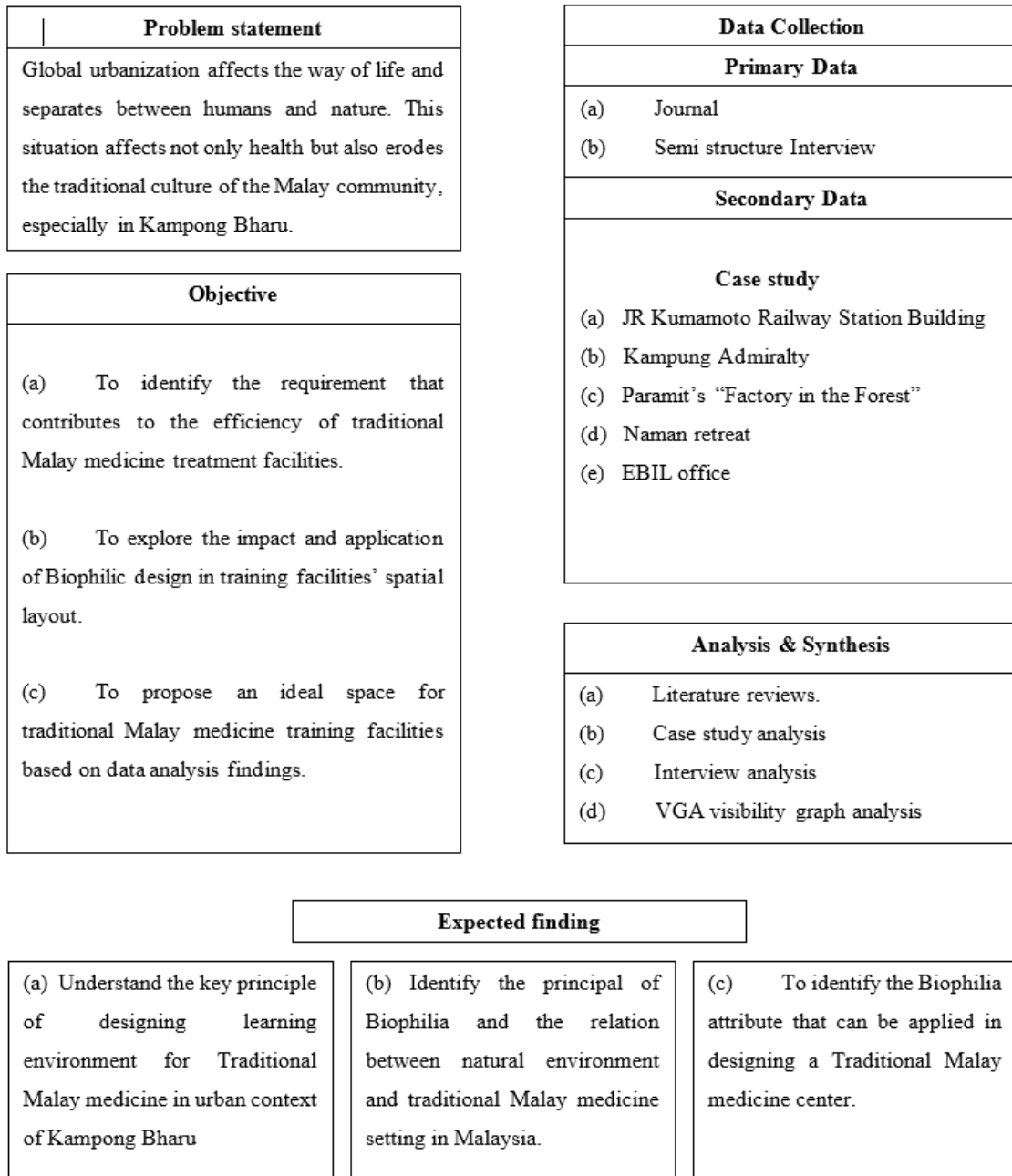


Figure 1.3 Thesis Framework

## **1.8 Significance of study**

This thesis will serve as a design guideline for architects, planners and local authority, to establishing a standard and framework for designing ideal space for training and learning center by biophilic approach with the goal to enhance knowledge transfer process between visitor, practitioner, apprentice and local communities about traditional Malay medicine. The research's findings contribute to a better understanding of the spatial experience and ideal learning environment for vocational related training Centre. The study further examines the spatial arrangement and visibility analysis on application of biophilic design in the building.



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