A Conceptual Overview of Socio-spatial Pattern for Housing Affordability of Urban Area in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

In every country, the ability to own a house is very important for the housing market. Housing affordability is to ensure housing provided affordable for each high-income, middle or low-income groups. This research is carried out in order to develop a socio-spatial pattern of housing affordability model across spatial geographical location in an urban area, especially for the middle and low-income group. A hope of creating a contribution to a new advancement of knowledge and interpret more sense of awareness towards the issue on the geographical location of housing affordability is the essence of this research.
KEYWORDS: Socio-spatial Pattern, Housing Affordability, Middle and Low Income

INTRODUCTION

Housing affordability has been an important issue for many developing and developed countries around the world, and Malaysia having noexclusion from the problem discussed. The affordability problem pertaining to housing market is one of the most controversial issues in most developed and developing countries [1]. Both, the increasing of prices and the lack of supply and demand of housing does play a prominentpart of housing affordability, and this provision of adequate housing is essential in a growing economic nation. Added further by [2] there were few differences in the locations of greatest housing affordability between housing tenures, and this is provenwith the spatial mismatch of location and affordable houses.

This research is more focusing on the socio-spatial pattern of the housing affordability within an urban area. This research will evaluate the socio-spatial pattern differences of housing affordability modeling based on questionnaire and survey. The targeted population is urban dweller, together with middle and low income group. In order to identify the suitable variables in term of housing affordability and geographical location related to the situation in Malaysia, this studyfocusesof studying the socio-demographic background of the middle and low income, household income, home ownership, and thought on housing policies and schemes that are closely related to the research. The essential of knowing the housing policies and schemes provided by the government is also part of the research, regarding to strategy, action, achievement, and issues associated tohousing affordability.

The finding of the research would contribute various mapping through the result of socio-spatial pattern and differences of housing affordability for the middle and low income group in an urban area. At the same time, the result wouldshow that geographical location does matter for affordable housing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Socio-spatial is an impact of social processes within urban structure. Thisis a new term which better known as "New Urbanism" that is defined as urban space and society interact. Karl Marx has developed a concept of uneven development, which has applied the explanation of urban development process [3]. Marx has termed 'general law of capitalist accumulation' as a conflict of capital-labour, which has influenced inreviving urban sociology. Social activities interaction is not solely happen among individual, but the interaction also relies on space as created by urban development process.

The national economy also contributed by the housing sector because it opened job opportunities and creates a variety of industry sectors including production, finance, insurance and maintenance [4]. Therefore, the housing sector has lays animportant role to the economy of the country in term of employment, capital market, consumption and financial wealth thus stimulating in the business cycle [5]. Rapid urbanization has caused an increase in population in all cities around the world. Housing affordability has become an issue with the ever rising housing prices especially in area with the phase of rapid urbanization.

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Spatial Geographic Location

The provision of adequate housing is essential in a growing economic nation. The important aspect of provision is how affordable housing is to the people. A recent research by [6] has concluded housing price is heavily dependent on location. [7] found that location is a major factor in the cost of housing and transportation;in particular, the distance between residential neighborhoods and employment centers. [8] found that there is a relation to the role of location in the housing market. Therefore, spatial geographical location is being one of the main problems on houses increasing price,which consequently makes a life inurban area as severely unaffordable.

This problem has been occurring for many years, where all the higher house prices will be always located nearby an eye of a city or a central business district. Meanwhile, theaffordable housing prices or even lower prices are usually within the outskirt of an urban area or in a rural area.

Housing Affordability

There is numerous definition offered in the literature for housing affordability, but the exact definition of housing affordability is inconclusive. The term of housing affordability basically implies on the capability to afford a house. Housing affordability is a normative phrase and has beendefined relatively and differently, depending on the various perspectives. This may be attributed to the statement that housing affordability is a contested matter, in which different groups would struggle to inflict their own definition and clarification to the problem [9]. According to [10], one of the key factors for socioeconomic stability and development of a country could depends on the housing affordability's country and [11] mention housing affordability is not the same as willingness for an individual to own an accommodation.

Households have to balance their housing costs, on the one hand, and their non-housing expenditures, on the other, given a limited income [12], [13], [14], [15], [16] [17]. The housing affordability can be influenced by various factors such as allocation for the house payment or mortgage payment, family size and population, housing price, government policies and household income. [15] have best stated of the inconclusive nature of affordability as; affordability is jumbled together in a single term ofnumber of disparate issues: the distribution of housing prices, the distribution of housing quality, the distribution of income, the ability of households to borrow, public policies affecting housing markets, conditions affecting the supply of new or refurbished housing, and the choices that people make about how much housing to consume relative to other goods.

From various perspectives and context that have considered, the term of housing affordability has been concluded as the ability of an average household of willingness to own and sustain an average home (housing-related costs) without being financially distressed after thepurchase and own a socioeconomic stability.

METHODOLOGY

Research Framework

This study involves a great deal of understanding on housing affordability, as well as the middle-and low income group of an urban area, policies, and schemes related to property issue in Malaysia. The focus is mainly on the understanding the housing affordability in an urban. The aim is to develop a socio-spatial pattern of housing affordability model that will show the relationship between geographical location and housing affordability.

This attention is very important in order to ensure the socio-spatial pattern of housing affordability model is effective and workable, so thatthe finding will help indeveloping new policies and schemes for affordable housing in the future. In relation to those challenges, as well as achieving the main aimof this study, the research hence would involve a great sum of reading literature on housing affordability, policy reviews, as well as further understand on socio-demographic of urban area. In relation to this approach, the study, therefore, will embark on a) data collection; b) surveys; c) critical analysis and assessment and; f) formulation of guidance and socio-spatial pattern modeling.

Research Design

Research design that will be used in this study is Case Study. Case studies for situations capable touncover in-depth information about an individual's behavior and the social environment enable the researcher to understand changes in the behavior and environment [18]. The main function of the case study will be a Descriptive Case Study, which the research will undergo a descriptive theory before the research conduct, and this theory will be used as the guide forthe research. For this research, the case study will focus on the Northern Shah Alam.

This is because the Northern Shah Alam have several locations of the middle-and low income groups' household, which most of the new residential developments within 15 years are situated in this area.

This research will apply a mix method strategy which combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The idea of mixing moved from seeking convergence to actually integrating or connecting the

quantitative and qualitative data [19]. For example, the results from one method can help to identify participants to study or questions to ask for the other method [20]. Therewill be a descriptive statistic together with a simple percentage.

Data Collection

This study focuses on two methods, and the sources of data collection known as primary data and secondary data. Communication and questioning will be the method used throughout the obtained ofthe primary data, which are by survey and interviews. Questionnaires will aim to identifythe households' or individuals' housing affordability. Since the purpose of the research is to know the socio-spatial pattern, the questionnaires will only focus the middle and low-income group. The research will be within the jurisdiction of Majlis Bandaraya Shah Alam from Section U1 to Section U20 whilst embracing an in-depth study research on social-spatial of housing affordability in an urban area. The investigation would focuses on the relationship between variables whether it have an effect toward the respondents' housing affordability.

For this research, the target respondent is the middle and low-income level of household lives in the jurisdiction of the Northern Shah Alam. For sample frame, there is only a selected number of sections that will involve inthe survey. For the middle and low-income various sections from Seksyen U12, U11, U13, and U16 have been selected. The sampling unit will be more focusing on neighborhoods in the Northern Shah Alam, where there are many new and establish residential development such as Setia Alam, Denai Alam, the area of within Puncak Alam, Bukit Jelutong, Kampung Melayu Subang and much more.

Throughout the survey, the respondents will be categories intomiddle and low-income groups according to the types of houses they live in. The reason of the categorization is to differentiate the income groups by the houses value. Terrace houses (double and single storey) and also high rise apartments will be the representative of the middle and low-income group and Government agencies who knowledgeable about the policies and scheme of affordable housing.

This research will anticipate and examine the role of government policies and schemes and financial institution on housing affordability asthe secondary data sources. The data that can be collected for this research purposes would be gained from the National Housing Policy, the Malaysian Plan and other policy that are related to housing affordability. For this research, the data that will be selected from these policies are applicable to housing affordability. Other data will be from government agencies such as Syarikat Perumahan Nasional Berhad, PR1MA Corporation, Lembaga Perumahan Hartanah Selangor and National Property Information Centre.

Expected Finding

The finding from this research will contribute to a new advancement of knowledge and information,which is usable for policy makers in creating a new policy and scheme for affordable housing in Malaysia. The finding of this research will also act as an eye opener for developer and buyer in creating more sense of awareness towards the issue of geographical location of housing affordability. The benefits of the research will provide a detailed of understanding in socio-spatial pattern for an urban area on housing affordability, especially for the median income groups. Mapping it out could possibly outline a pattern on the housing affordability for every middle and low-income group as well as the strategic location.

In relation to this, the government has embarked on providing affordable housing for all in order to ensure the well-being of the nation is strengthened. Housing affordability is also a component of NKRAs Government Transformation Programs that stands to improve the socioeconomic growth of Malaysians through raising the standard of living and addressing living cost. With the objective of NKRA as to increase access to affordable housing, this research is very much relevant in the context of current policies in which to articulate the relationships that exist between housing affordability by spatial geographical location.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion from this research will assist in the formulation of national housing policy in the future. Atthe same time, that wouldenrich the nation in promoting good governance in terms of affordable housing price. Recommendation for future research is to do a more intensive survey for every income group level so that the social-spatial pattern of housing affordability model will give a clear view on every socio-demographic related with the term of housing affordability and spatial geographical location. The socio-spatial pattern of housing affordability model will be a very good contribution to the country especially on the location of affordability to own a house in Malaysia. At the same time, this will give a new meaning towards the term of affordable housing which the geographical location should be part of the term, and not solely focuses on housing price and household income.

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