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يونيرسيتي إسلام انتارابغسا ملايسيا

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AUDIT AT PRIMARY SCHOOL - A STUDY ON USERS' SAFETY

By

SUHAILI BINTI SUID
(0115104)

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ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT

Schools, by nature of their occupancy and use, require higher standards of safety than other types of buildings. Users will demand that provision be made for a safe environment especially for school children. Thus, access audit is required in every school in order to produce safe school for all users. Access audit is a physical investigation or inspection of an already existing access, building or spaces. The ultimate goal of this study is to discover the optimum safety requirements for users in primary schools. Therefore, the objectives are to know the level of safety for primary school, to identify problems faced by users regarding access then give solutions to the problems in order to enhance the level of safety in primary schools. Two schools in urban area were selected and several problems had been identified regarding access provided inside and within the school's compounds. Mainly, users are facing access problems such as inappropriate width of main entrance and exit, no proper pedestrian walkways, signages, drop-off area for students and no proper access to parking areas. Thus, in order to improve safety condition of access in schools, there are certain guidelines such as appropriate width of main entrance and exit, proper pedestrian walkways with non-slippery materials, suitable materials for signages and proper access to drop-off area and parking areas should be taken into consideration. This would result in inviting, comfortable and safe environment for students, staff and other users and thereby creating a conducive learning environment at the schools.

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CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 1

1.0 Introduction

Access is a way of approaching or reaching to a certain place. It plays an important role in connecting people to a certain location. Besides, it acts as linkages between indoor and outdoor spaces. Furthermore, it also acts as an intermediate space to direct people to a certain place. The purposes of the access are to link and direct people to a different places or locations. The access relate to the human circulation which is the flow or movement of people. In this context, it relates with the concept of ergonomics. Ergonomics is the study of the interaction between people, equipment, and systems in their (work) environment. Besides, it is also defined as the study of how the workplace relates to human functions (Hyper Dictionary, 2003). Something is ergonomically design, if it is optimized to fit people. This means taking account of differences such as size, strength and ability to handle information for a wide range of users. Then the tasks, the workplace and tools are designed around these differences. The benefits are to improve efficiency, quality and job satisfaction (Kwaliteg's Web Site, 2003).

Another factor that relates to the ergonomics is access audit, which is a part of ergonomic. An access audit is a structured approach to accessibility, giving information which, if used intelligently, can point to improvements which will not surface using an ad-hoc approach, and opportunities which can reduce the overall cost

of improvements which may make them affordable (Dennis Fearns, 1995). Furthermore, it is the first "reasonable step" in consideration of maximum accessibility in which will determine the grade of safety of a building or space. The purpose of an access audit is to establish how well a building or a space performs in relation to access and ease of use by a wide range of potential users. It identifies good and bad practice, design and layout in regard to typical and disabled access, identifying obstacles to people with mobility and sensory impairments (Design Development Associates, 2003). In addition, the audit report will then seek to find solutions to access problems, with recommendations and relative costing.

Schools require higher standards of safety than other types of buildings. Thus, the access audit is designed to access the safety conditions in each public school. Ralph Sinnot (1985) stated that "it has not been found practicable to make recommendations for safety at different levels, in other words, to have grades of safety. However, it has been necessary to distinguish safety requirements that are specific for children and old people. It can generally be assumed that where design ensures the safety of children and old people, it will ensure the safety of other age groups."

1.2 Goal

The goal of this research is to discover the optimum safety requirements for users in primary school.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

- To study accessibility and users safety at different primary schools in urban areas
- To identify and evaluate the problems facing by users regarding to safety of pedestrian access provided at primary school
- To identify design solutions for optimum safety of users by proposing guidelines and recommendations.

1.4 Problem Statements

"At the very heart of every research project is the problem. It is paramount in importance to the success of the research effort, and it should be so considered by every researcher." (Paul D.Leedy, 1995)

From his interpretation, it can be concluded that research must begin with the problems that need to find the solution to solve the problems. After the problem had been identified then the research can be done successfully. The problem identification is the first requirement in the research process. This research is conducted in order to identify and evaluate the problems facing by the users regarding safety of pedestrian access provided at primary school. Therefore, several sub-problems had been recognized in this study;