



ACCESSIBILITY OF SHOPPING MALLS FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PwDs) IN
COMPLIANCE WITH MALAYSIAN STANDARDS

BY

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ABSTRACT

This research discusses the issue of accessibility, connectivity and usability in the facilities used by persons with disabilities (PwDs) in Malaysian shopping malls and the significance of the latest Malaysian Standards (MS 1184:2014), the Universal Design and Accessibility in the Built Environment-Code of Practice in evaluating shopping malls. The study identifies whether the provided facilities accord with the latest Malaysian standards (MS 1184:2014). The sampled shopping malls comprised Ikea in Damansara, Suria Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC) in Kuala Lumpur and Alamanda in Putrajaya. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews with the visually impaired, hearing impaired person, and wheelchair and crutches users to determine their perception on the level of accessibility of these buildings. Access audit and site observations were also carried out to assess the buildings' accessibility, connectivity, mobility and reachability. The results show that Suria KLCC scored 80.35% for compliance with the design requirements, followed by Ikea with 74.11%, and Alamanda with 70.58%. It is hoped that the research can benefit people from all walks of life as well as generate more ideas to improve the accessibility of shopping malls for the PwDs.

خلاصة البحث

يناقش هذا البحث القضايا المتعلقة بطرق الوصول واستخدام المرافق من قبل ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المراكز التسوق الماليزية كما تناقش أهمية أحدث المعايير الماليزية ذات الرقم (MS 1184:2014) والمتبعة في التصميم الشامل وقانون بناء البيئة في تطوير مراكز التسوق. إن هذه الرسالة تهتم بتحديد مدى تطبيق مراكز التسوق في ماليزيا للمعايير الماليزية ذات الرقم (MS 1184:2014) والمتبعة في التصميم الشامل وقانون بناء البيئة. اختير في هذه الدراسة ثلاثة مراكز تجارية لتعتمد دراسةً تطبيقيةً لتطوير وصول واستخدام المرافق من قبل ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في مراكز التسوق، وهذه المراكز هي (إكيا) في منطقة دمنسارا ولاية سيلنغور- ماليزيا مركز تسوق كوالالامبور في ماليزيا ومركز (ألماندا) التجاري في مدينة بوترجايا الحديثة. تم تطبيق أسلوبي الكمية والنوعية في مناهج البحث كما أن المعلومات المستخدمة في هذا البحث قد أخذت من خلال المقابلات مع ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة من المكفوفين والصم والبكم ومن مستخدمي الكرسي المتحرك ومن مستخدمي العكازات لمعرفة مدى رضاهم عن مستوى الوصول والاستخدام للمرافق في تلك المراكز. أظهرت نتائج البحث أن مركز تسوق كوالالامبور قد حقق نسبة 88.35% من مطابقته للمعايير العالمية الخاصة بالتصاميم المحددة لذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة ومركز (إيكيا) نسبة 74.11% ومركز (ألماندا) التجاري نسبة 70.58%. ومن المأمول أن يتم الاستفادة من البحث الذي أجري بطريقة أو بأخرى لتحسين حياة ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة، فضلا عن توليد المزيد من الأفكار لغرض تحسين طرق الوصول واستخدام المرافق من قبل ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في مراكز التسوق.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ADA	American with Disabilities Act
DBKL	Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur
DSM	Department of Standards Malaysia
DSWM	Department of Social Welfare Malaysia
ICF	International Classification of functioning
IDEA	Centre of Inclusive Design and Environmental Access
JKMM	Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat Malaysia
KAED	Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design
KLCC	Kuala Lumpur convention Centre
KUDU	KAED Universal Design Unite
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MS	Malaysian Standards
MWFCD	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
NCLG	National Council of Local Government
NCSU	North Carolina State University
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
PwDs	Persons with Disabilities
QL	Qualitative Method
QN	Quantitative Method
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SWD	Social Welfare Department
UBBL	Uniform Building Bylaws
UD	Universal Design
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WDU	World Disability Union
WHO	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter investigated the needs of persons with disabilities (PwDs) to propose standards to reshape the attitudes of society and institutions towards disability. To this end, the fundamental elements of universal design are explored in the context of the architectural issues affecting PwDs in Malaysian shopping malls based on combining guidelines from the Malaysian Standards (MS) and Universal Design (UD) principles. This chapter introduces readers to the fundamental aspects of the research, namely the research background, research statement, aim and objectives, research questions, research methods, scope and limitations, and the significance of the research. The findings would be particularly useful for the rights of PwDs for local government, transport planners, professionals in the building industry and those involved with improving the built environment and accessibility.

1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Removing barriers and providing access are among the fundamental needs of PwDs to achieve social equity in access to public facilities, amenities, services and buildings; public transport facilities; education; employment; information, communication and technology; cultural life; recreation, leisure and sport. Apart from accessibility, disabled persons should also have access to health and rehabilitation (Laws of Malaysia, Act 658, Persons with Disabilities Act Malaysia, 2008). The cited laws recognise that improved accessibility enhances the value of buildings and its built

environment. Thus, it creates cities that facilitate a better quality of life and opportunities to participate in all aspects of life.

The built environment needs to be accessible to all users. The needs of PwDs in development cannot be ignored (Jayasooria, Krishnan, & Ooi, 1997). However, access and facilities provided for disabled groups are often unable to meet their needs (Soltani, Abbas, & Awang, 2012). In Malaysia, Bylaws 34A of the Uniform Building Bylaws makes it mandatory for all public buildings to make available facilities for disabled persons. In Sep. 20th 1990, an amendment was made to the Uniform Building Bylaws (UBBL) at the 35th National Council of Local Government (NCLG). The amendment, introduced section 34A in UBBL, making it compulsory for buildings to provide access to enable disabled persons to get into, out of and within the buildings. Previous studies revealed that Malaysian development policies and regulations are lacking in the provision of user-friendly built environments which include barrier-free and disabled-friendly environments despite being requirements in the building code and legislation (Tan, 2008). More studies which highlight PwDs' satisfaction and perception on accessibility in the built environment need to be conducted to assess the buildings from the perspective of PwDs.

However, despite legislation Malaysia has practised limited enforcement regarding accessibility regulations. One of the concerns was the local authorities' role in having their mechanisms to create an accessible built environment (Hussein & Yaacob, 2012). The current legislation is not enough for local authorities to monitor whether the built environment industry complies with minimum standards for accessibility for PwDs in Malaysia. The local authorities must strive harder to create its mechanisms to create an accessible environment based on universal design values

(Ch'ng, 2010). The government has focused on the role of local authorities to spearhead the motivation for a more accessible Malaysia. This study addresses the gap in the implementation of such regulations.

Numerous scholars have highlighted the issues of accessibility and PwDs in various countries including Malaysia. Among the main issues according to Azlinariah (2007) were constant complaints by PwDs about accessibility provisions in public buildings being inconsistent regarding the continuity between one place to another which inevitably affects the convenience of PwDs while accessing public buildings. One example is the interconnection from public transportation hubs to the main entrance of buildings. Some public buildings do not provide proper pathways with guiding blocks or curb cuts or ramps that enable PwDs to access the building from a bus or taxi stop smoothly and safely.

This research assesses the current accessibility of selected shopping malls in Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur by combining compliance to existing standards and PwDs feedback on the accessibility of the buildings using the universal design approach.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The world is experiencing an ageing population as most countries around the world including Malaysia have experienced improved life expectancy as shown in Figure 1.1. This renders accessibility in the built environment increasingly relevant to Malaysia, to prepare for the ageing population and PwDs. By the year 2050, the population over 65 years in Malaysia would be 15% (Abdul Rahim, 2014). The increased number of PwDs in Malaysia increases the demand for the provision of

access and facilities in and outside buildings, especially in government institutions (Sanmargaraja & Seow Ta Wee, 2012). Besides, the lack of a comprehensive database of the specific problems faced by people with disabilities in Malaysia poses a significant challenge (See and Hashim, 2011). Obviously it is in the interests of the shopping malls to be as accessible as possible in order to attract more and more people. Shopping malls also should allow people with a disability to access the entire shopping centre and enable everyone to enjoy the range of shops and services.

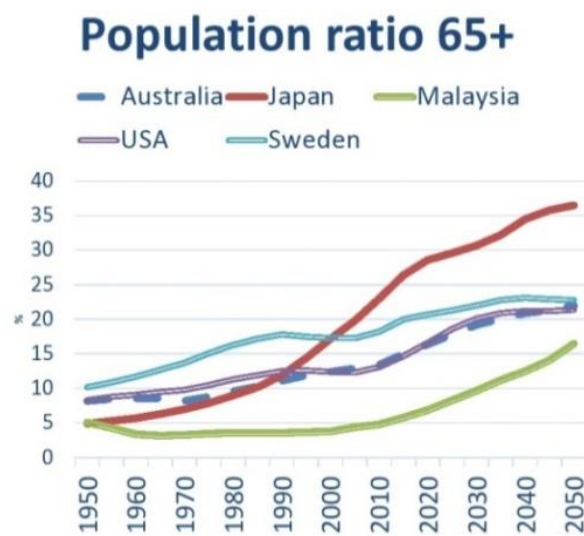


Figure 1.1 Population Ratio
Source: (Satoshi Kose, STUD, 2014)

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This research assesses how the shopping malls are accessible to PwDs and to investigate the problems that PwDs are facing in the sampled facilities of shopping malls. To address this aim, the research examines the implementation of requirements and the guidelines of accessibility issues for the PwDs in Malaysia to improve the built environment for the PwDs.

In line with the research aim, two research objectives are outlined as follow: