

Family-friendly Neighborhood in the Malaysian Perspective: A Review of Literature

Siti Fatimah Hashim* and Raja Norashekin Raja Othman,
Habsah Hashim and Na'asah Nasrudin

Abstract--- *The increasing number of dual-earner families nowadays, to cope with the higher cost and standard of urban living has resulted in several issues concerning communities in the urban neighborhoods. Families need care services for their children and dependents which range from hiring a fulltime maid, to sending children to nearby babysitters or far away care centers. Due to the lack of public facilities and other reasons like seeking for quality care, many families opted for private care services. Although the family-friendly cities initiative has been incorporated in the planning profession, there are limited studies discussing the family-friendly neighborhood indicators, especially in Malaysia. Therefore, this paper aims to look at this issue through a review of the literature. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) was adopted for the review of the recent research articles/papers. It was performed in two main journal databases: via (i) Web of Science (WoS) and (ii) Scopus to retrieve high impact journal articles. The results of the study showed that a number of recommendations were presented for the reference of future scholars in the 31 selected articles after going through the process of Identification, Screening, Eligibility, and Included. This study is significant because making neighborhoods family-friendly could improve the quality of life for communities in urban areas.*

Keywords--- *Family-friendly Indicators, Urban Neighborhood, Quality of Life.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Modernization and the greater participation of women in the employment sector especially in cities has caused more dual-earner families. Therefore to manage home and family and care for children, ailing family members or aged parents become more challenging. The United Nations stressed that the family is a basic building block of the community and this fact has been recognized globally¹. In Malaysia, the formulation of the National Urbanization Policy in 2006 shows the Government's commitment to create a balanced growth not only in terms of economic development but also the social aspect. To ensure that urban development is able to "create a liveable environment that could realize a community environment and a peaceful life", the National Urbanization Policy recognises that there should be a balance in all aspects of development, namely physical, economic, social and environment². Without extended families and kinship support enjoyed by families in the rural areas, parenting and care giving job is a daunting task for families in the urban neighborhoods. Past studies show that "social facilities especially public childcare centers are insufficient.

Siti Fatimah Hashim, Student of Doctoral Program, Center of Postgraduate Studies, Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia. E-mail: fatimah.phdresearch17@gmail.com*

Raja Norashekin Raja Othman, Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA Selangor Branch, Puncak Alam, Malaysia

Habsah Hashim, Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA Selangor Branch, Puncak Alam, Malaysia. Responsive Environmental Development Research Group, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.

Na'asah Nasrudin, Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA Selangor Branch, Puncak Alam, Malaysia. Responsive Environmental Development Research Group, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.

Community programmes are also limited and are not effectively implemented at the neighbourhood level”³. Therefore, the objective of this study is to review the literature of family-friendly neighborhood based on adaptation of four themes and four sub-themes for each theme related to family friendly neighborhood. As presented in Table 3, the four themes are Family-friendly Community / Environment, Social Capital, Urban Neighborhood and Quality of Life.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The important role of family units as the base or foundation of society can't be denied. Similar to Bronfenbrenner⁴, Madan⁵ placed families as "the middle of our social systems", while Etzioni⁶ viewed families as the institution that shape the values and integrity of the new generation. Besides caring for children, some families also has to care for elderly parents/grandparents or ailing family members. Many researchers have focused on the issue of balancing work and family as well as how conflicts can affect the emotional and physical health of the family (Narayanan and Savarimuthu⁷, Leineweber et al.⁸, Griggs et al.⁹, Ferguson et al.¹⁰, Ahmad¹¹). This systematic study is based on key research questions: What are the Malaysian family-friendly indicators at the neighborhood level? The main focus of the investigation is on family-friendly adaptation practices in the urban neighborhoods. According to Cochrane Collab (n.d.) as cited in Siddaway et al.¹² a systematic study is a special study of the literature that can enhance and add to the knowledge.

III. METHODOLOGY

Methodology of this study consists of five main steps in the process used in the current research, namely PRISMA; A systematic review process; Resources; Inclusion and Exclusion of criteria; and abstraction's data and analysis.

3.1 Prisma

PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) examines/review various types of literature at a predetermined time which allows the right terms for a period to be carried out in relation to family-friendly indicators and its relationship to quality of life in urban neighborhoods in Malaysia.

3.2 Resources

The review methods of the present study were conducted using two main databases, namely Scopus and Web of Science considering that both databases are robust and cover more than 256 fields of studies including environmental studies. Specifically, Scopus indexes a total of 49 journals related to social sciences, while Web of Science (Social Science Citation Indexed) indexes a number of 72 journals related to environmental studies. However, it should be noted that no database is perfect or comprehensive.

3.3 The systematic review process for selecting the articles

3.3.1 Identification

The systematic review process in selecting a number of relevant articles for the study consisted of three main stages. The first stage is the identification of keywords, followed by the process of searching for related and similar

terms based on the thesaurus, dictionaries, encyclopedia, and past researches. In this study, the thesaurus.com, collinsdictionary.com, and merriam-webster.com were used to search the keyword (synonym) of Family (71), Friendly (158) and Neighborhoods (109).

From the identification of similar terms' results, the similar terms selection were picked based on the suitability of the study aims to search strings data on Scopus and Web of Science databases. Accordingly, the search strings on Scopus and Web of Science databases were developed in October 2019 after all relevant keywords had been determined.

Most importantly, the current research work successfully retrieved a total of 216 articles from both databases. As stated previously, the similar keyword search were also done manually on other databases and that has resulted in additional 263 articles.

Therefore a total of 479 articles were retrieved in the first stage of the systematic review process. Table 1 shows the search string.

Table 1: The search string

Database Search String	
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY(("family-friendly" OR "family-supportive" OR "family-friendly neighborhood") AND ("child*" OR "dependent") AND ("neighborhood" OR "community" OR "environment") AND NOT ("medicine" OR "psychology"))
Web of Science (WoS)	TS= (("family-friendly" OR "family-supportive" OR "family-friendly neighborhood") AND ("child*" OR "dependent") AND ("neighborhood" OR "community" OR "environment"))

Source : Adaptation from Shaffril et al.¹³

3.3.2 Screening

The purpose of the first screening was to remove duplicate articles. In this case, a total of nine articles were excluded during the first stage, while 479 articles were screened based on several inclusion and exclusion criteria determined by the researchers in the second stage. The first criterion was the literature type in which the researchers decided to focus only on journals (research articles) because these are the primary sources that offer empirical data. Hence, this further implies that publication in the form of systematic review, review, meta-analysis, meta-synthesis, book series, book, chapter in a book, and conference proceeding were excluded. In addition, it should be noted that the review only focused on articles that were published in English. It is also crucial to note that a 9-year period (2010-2019) was chosen for the timeline. Most importantly, articles published in the field of social science were selected in order to increase the possibility of retrieving related articles. Overall, a total of 427 articles were excluded based on these criteria. Table 2 shows the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 2: The inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criterion	Eligibility	Exclusion
Literature type	Journal (research articles)	Journals (review), book series, book, chapter in book, conference proceeding
Language	English	Non-English
Time line	Between 2010 and 2019	<2010
Subject area	Social Science	Other than Social Science

Source: Adaptation from Shaffril et al.¹³

3.3.3 Eligibility

A total of 52 articles were prepared for the third stage known as eligibility. At this stage, the titles, abstracts, and the main contents of all the articles were examined thoroughly to ensure that they fulfill the inclusion criteria and fit to be employed in the present study in order to achieve the objectives of the current research. Consequently, a total of 21 articles were excluded because they were not based on empirical data and were found to be hard sciences articles that did not focus on family-friendly neighborhood in the urban area. Finally, a total of 31 remaining articles is ready to be analyzed. Figure 2 shows the flow diagram of the study.

3.4 Data abstraction and analysis

The first phase within the theme development process was the compilation of data. In this phase, the researchers carefully analyzed a group of 24 selected articles to extract statements or data that answers the research question. Subsequently, in the second phase, the researchers created and converts raw data into useable data via the identification of themes, concepts, or ideas for a more connected and related data.

Eventually, the process has resulted in a total of four main themes namely Family-Friendly Community, Social Capital, Urban Neighborhood and Quality of life. This process eventually resulted in 17 sub-themes. Within the scope of this review, the researcher developed the themes to be consistent with the findings while a record was kept during the entire process of data analysis by making remarks of any thoughts, puzzles or ideas that can be associated with the interpretation of the data.

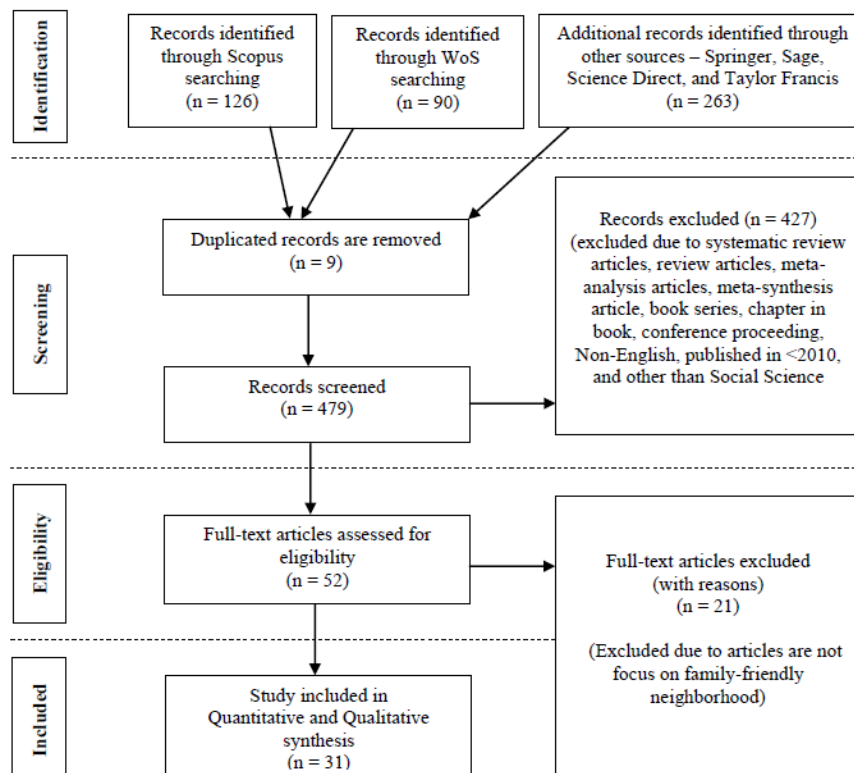


Figure 2: Flow Diagram of the study (adaptation from Moher et al.¹⁴)

IV. RESULTS

The analysis produced a total of four themes and four sub-themes for each themes related to family-friendly neighborhood.

As presented in Table 3, the four themes are Family-Friendly Community / Environment, Social Capital, Urban Neighborhood and Quality of Life. More specifically, it should be noted that five previous studies focused on Family-Friendly Community / Environment (Gür, M.¹⁵; Silverman et al.¹⁶; Mildred E.W. and Rukus, J.¹⁷; Rukus, J. and Mildred E.W.¹⁸; Provi Drianda, R.¹⁹), Social Capital (Lehning et al.²⁰; Osborne et al.²¹; Pew Research Center²²), Urban Neighborhood (Clark, A.L.²³)and Quality of Life (Boelsma et al.²⁴).

4.1 Main Findings

According to Figure 2, there were a total of 31 articles associated with the study. From these, 10 articles were selected to form the sample of the study. The main finding of this study is the derivation of 4 themes and 17 sub-themes such as the following:

- a. Family-Friendly Community / Environment [Sub-themes: Government / NGO / Private organization (GI), Public Facilities (FC), Dual-Earner Family (FD), Maintain a good and strong social relationship with the surroundings (SR), and Others (OT)];
- b. Social Capital [Sub-themes: Relationship and networking (RN), Ability to get support (AS), Level of trust in the community (LT), Cooperation in neighborhood (CN), Sense of belonging (SB)];
- c. Urban Neighborhood [Sub-themes: Environmental Factor (EF), Economic Factor (EC) and Social Factor (SF)];
- d. Quality of Life [Sub-themes: Sustainable Development Goals (SD), Well-Being (WB), Affordability (AF) and Liveability (LA)].

4.1.1 Family-Friendly Community / Environment

A family-friendly community is a community where families enjoy affordable housing, childcare, playgrounds, quality schools, and a safe neighborhood. Based on Table 3, there are 6 studies that have been done under the Government / NGO / Private organization (GI) sub-theme, 7 studies under the Public Facilities (FC) sub-theme, 8 studies under the Dual-Earner Family (FD) sub-themes, 6 studies under Maintain a good and strong social relationship with the surroundings (SR) sub-theme and 2 studies under Others (OT) sub-theme.

4.1.2 Social Capital

Social capital is an asset that has a positive impact on the family and social wellbeing, as well as strengthening the neighborhood, improving the quality of life and also an important step in assessing changes in the neighborhood environment.

Based on Table 3, there are 6 studies that have been done under the Relationship and networking (RN) sub-theme, 7 studies under the Ability to get support (AS) sub-theme, 6 studies under the Level of trust in the community (LT) sub-theme, 5 studies under the Cooperation in neighborhood (CN) sub-theme and 4 studies under the Sense of belonging (SB) sub-theme.

Table 3: The main themes and the sub themes

Researchers / Research Title	Family-Friendly Community / Environment					Social Capital					Urban Neighborhood			Quality of Life			
	GI	FC	FD	SR	OT	RN	AS	LT	CN	SB	EF	EC	SF	SD	WB	AF	LA
Gür, M. (2019) ¹⁵ <i>Inversion of urban transformation approach in Turkey into family-friendly transformation</i>	/	/	/	/		/	/		/		/		/		/	/	/
Silverman et al. (2019) ¹⁶ <i>There goes our family friendly neighborhood: residents' perceptions of institutionally driven inner-city revitalization in Buffalo, NY</i>		/	/				/		/		/	/			/	/	
Mildred E.W. and Rukus, J. (2013) ¹⁷ <i>Planners' Role in Creating Family-Friendly Communities : Action, Participation and Resistance</i>	/			/		/		/				/			/		/
Rukus, J. and Mildred E.W. (2013) ¹⁸ <i>Crime rates and collective efficacy: The role of family friendly planning</i>		/	/	/		/		/		/	/	/	/		/	/	
Provi Drianda, R. (2018) ¹⁹ <i>Exploring the Notion of the Family Friendly City</i>	/	/	/			/	/			/	/	/	/		/	/	
Boelsma et al. (2018) ²⁴ <i>"Special" Families and their "Normal" Daily Lives: Family Quality of Life and The Social</i>	/	/	/	/		/		/		/		/		/		/	

<i>Environment</i>																	
Clark, A.L. (2018) ²³ <i>Home Economics: Reimagining How the Home Can Support Single-Mother Families</i>		/		/	/		/	/			/			/	/		
Lehning et al. (2017) ²⁰ <i>“Friendly” Initiatives: An Emerging Approach to Improve Communities for Vulnerable Populations</i>	/		/			/	/	/	/	/		/	/		/	/	
Osborne et al., (2017) ²¹ <i>The unheard voices of youth in urban planning: using social capital as a theoretical lens in Sunshine Coast, Australia</i>	/		/		/		/	/	/		/			/			/
Pew Research Center (2015) ²² <i>Raising Kids and Running a Household: How Working Parents Share the Load (In Close to Half of Two-Parent Families, Both Mom and Dad Work Full Time</i>		/	/	/			/		/		/						/

Sub Theme

Family Friendly Community		Social Capital		Urban Neighborhood		Quality of Life	
GI	Government/NGO/Private organization	RN	Relationship and networking	EF	Environmental Factor	SD	Sustainable Development Goals
FC	Public Facilities	AS	Ability to get support				
FD	Dual-Earner Family	LT	Level of trust in the community	EC	Economic Factor	WB	Well-Being
SR	Maintain a good and strong social relationship with the surroundings	CN	Cooperation in neighborhood	SF	Social Factor	AF	Affordability
OT	Others	SB	Sense of belonging			LA	Liveability

Source : Adaptation from Shaffril et al.¹³

4.1.3 Urban Neighborhood

Neighborhood is generally defined spatially as a specific geographic area and functionally as a set of social networks and a local community located within a large-scale city, city, suburban or rural area. Based on Table 3, there are 7 studies that have been done under the Environmental Factor (EF) sub-theme, 6 studies under the Economic Factor (EC) sub-theme and 5 studies under the Social Factor (SF) sub-theme.

4.1.4 Quality of Life

The quality of life depends on social development where human beings bring dignified life, health, safety, happiness and hope. Based on Table 3, there are 2 studies that have been done under the Sustainable Development Goals (SD) sub-theme, 8 studies under the Well-Being (WB) sub-theme, 6 studies under the Affordability (AF) sub-theme and 4 studies under the Liveability (LA) sub-theme.

Therefore, the review of past literature of family-friendly neighborhood found that its focus was on Dual-Earner Family (FD), Ability to get support (AS), Environmental Factor (EF) and Well-Being (WB).

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this section, the implementation of family-friendly neighborhood is grouped into two categories. The first category refers to the positive adaptation strategy which is described as a sustainable strategy that is not dependent on the environment as well as can be practiced regardless of the environmental situation. Meanwhile, the second strategy refers to a negative adaptation strategy that is defined as a short-term solution and cannot be sustained due to its strong reliance on nature stability.

Urban neighborhoods need adequate facilities and services for families. The support system within easy reach of families is essential in the daily routine of families, without having to seek services far away. Facilities within the community offer significant support for families and “the physical place where people live is a significant dimension of community that often creates the foundation for other kinds of support and connections”²⁵.

“The analysis of work and family should be expanded to include community.... Work and family life are embedded in the contexts of the communities in which they operate”²⁶. Family-friendly community is defined as “communities where families enjoy housing at affordable prices, childcare, parks to play in, pedestrian pathways, quality public schools, and safe neighborhoods, among many other potential features that promote family well-being”¹⁷

The findings and systematic review process of this study have led to a number of recommendations that may be helpful for future studies in the Malaysian perspective that may focus in between of Dual-Earner Family (FD), Ability to get support (AS), Environmental Factor (EF) and Well-Being (WB) due to a small number of research on family-friendly neighborhood in Malaysia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researchers wish to acknowledge the generous support from the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) Malaysia under its Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS) for funding this research, and the continuous

support from University Teknologi MARA (UiTM's) Institute of Research Management and Innovation and the Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying.

REFERENCES

- [1] United Nations. Report of the World Summit for Social Development: 6-12 March 1995 [Internet]. 1995.
- [2] Federal Department of Town and Country Planning. National Urbanisation Policy. *Jabatan Perancangan Bandar dan Desa*; 2006.
- [3] Habsah Hashim. Urbanization, Women's Roles and Fertility Trends. A Case Study of Middle Class Malay Women in Shah Alam. *Universiti of Malaya*; 2010.
- [4] Bronfenbrenner U. Making Human Beings Human : Bioecological Perspectives on Human Development. *Thousand Oaks, United States: SAGE Publications (CA)*; 2004. 336 p.
- [5] Madan GR. Sociology of Development (PB). First Edit. *New Delhi, Mumbai, India: Sunil Sachdev*; 2002. 526 p.
- [6] Etzioni A. The Spirit of Community: Right, Responsibilities and The Communitarian Agenda. *New York: Crown Publishers, Inc.*; 1993. 315 p.
- [7] Narayanan SL, Savarimuthu A. Work-Family Conflict, Family-Work Conflict as Predictors of Work-Life Balance among Women Employees Working in IT industries. *Int Conf Technol Bus Manag.* 2015;635–9.
- [8] Leineweber C, Baltzer M, Magnusson Hanson LL, Westerlund H. Work-Family Conflict and Health in Swedish Working Women and Men: A 2-year Prospective Analysis (The SLOSH Study). *Eur J Public Health.* 2013 Aug;23(4):710–6.
- [9] Griggs TL, Casper WJ, Eby LT. Work, Family and Community Support as Predictors of Work-Family Conflict: A Study of Low-Income Workers. *J Vocat Behav.* 2013 Feb;82(1):59–68.
- [10] Ferguson M, Carlson D, Zivnuska S, Whitten D. Support at Work and Home: The Path to Satisfaction Through Balance. *J Vocat Behav.* 2012 Apr;80(2):299–307.
- [11] Ahmad A. Job , Family and Individual Factors as Predictors of Work-Family Conflict. *J Hum Resour Adult Learn.* 2008;4(1):57–65.
- [12] Siddaway AP, Wood AM, Hedges L V. How to Do a Systematic Review: A Best Practice Guide for Conducting and Reporting Narrative Reviews, Meta-Analyses, and Meta-Syntheses. 2018.
- [13] Shaffril HAM, Samah AA, Samsuddin SF, Ali Z. Mirror-mirror on The Wall, What Climate Change Adaptation Strategies are Practiced by The Asian's Fishermen of All? *J Clean Prod.* 2019, 20;232:104–17.
- [14] Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG. Guidelines and Guidance Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement. *PLOS Med [Internet].* 2009;6(7).
- [15] Gür M. Inversion of Urban Transformation Approach in Turkey into Family-Friendly Transformation. *J Hous Built Environ.* 2019 Sep 15;
- [16] Silverman RM, Taylor HL, Yin L, Miller C, Buggs P. There Goes Our Family Friendly Neighborhood: Residents' Perceptions of Institutionally Driven Inner-City Revitalization in Buffalo, NY. *J Community Pract.* 2019 Apr 3;27(2):168–87.
- [17] Mildred EW, Rukus J. Planning for Family Friendly Communities: Motivators, Barriers and Benefits [Internet]. 2013.
- [18] Rukus J, Warner ME. Crime Rates and Collective Efficacy: The Role of Family Friendly Planning. *Cities.* 2013 Apr;31:37–46.
- [19] Provi Drianda R. Exploring the Notion of the Family Friendly City. In: IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science. *Institute of Physics Publishing*; 2018. p. 1–10.
- [20] Lehning AJ, Smith RJ, Kim K. "Friendly" Initiatives: An Emerging Approach to Improve Communities for Vulnerable Populations. *J Policy Pract.* 2017 Jan 2;16(1):46–58.
- [21] Osborne C, Baldwin C, Thomsen D, Woolcock G. The Unheard Voices of Youth in Urban Planning: Using Social Capital as a Theoretical Lens in Sunshine Coast, Australia. *Child Geogr.* 2017 May 4;15(3):349–61.
- [22] Pew Research Center. Raising Kids and Running a Household: How Working Parents Share the Load In [Internet]. 2015.
- [23] Clark AL. Home Economics: Reimagining How The Home Can Support Single-Mother Families. *TUFTS University*; 2018.
- [24] Boelsma F, Schippers A, Dane M, Abma TA. "Special" Families and Their "Normal" Daily Lives: Family Quality of Life and the Social Environment. *Int J Child, Youth Fam Stud.* 2018;9(4):107–24.
- [25] Bookman A. Starting in Our Own Backyards: How Working Families can Build Community and Survive

- [26] the New Economy. *New York and London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group*; 2004. 288 p.
Voydanoff P. *Work, Family, and Community: Exploring Interconnections. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. New York and Hove: Psychology Press, Taylor & Francis Group*; 2013. 191 p.