

FACTORS INFLUENCING RESIDENT'S DECISION TO RESIDE IN GATED AND GUARDED

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Abstract

Gated communities are residential areas developed with restricted access with strictly controlled entrances and surrounded by a close perimeter of wall or fences. Developers, conscious of the need to fulfil the requirement of living in modern and sophisticated lifestyle and gated properties become the trend and mushroomed over the past decade. Nowadays, it is obvious that gated and guarded communities become almost a dominant feature of Malaysia housing development projects. The focus of this paper is to identify the factors contribute resident's decision to reside in gated and guarded community and to study social interaction among gated communities' residents. 150 questionnaires were distributed to the residents of selected gated and guarded community area in order to achieve the objectives and analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and descriptive analysis. The result was tabulated and presented in charts and graphs for a clear and better understanding. The five main factors contribute to resident decision to reside in gated communities were identified and ranked; there are privacy, security, location, lifestyle and prestige. Besides, the residents are feeling neutral towards the facilities and services provided in their gated and guarded residential area. A comprehensive improvement towards the facilities and services is needed to reach higher satisfaction from the residents.

Keywords: Gated communities, Resident's decision, Security, Privacy.

1. Introduction

In Malaysia, the development of gated and guarded communities has grown tremendously. Gated properties are growing rapidly among the other residential industry. It shows that the demand of gated and guarded communities is increased due to the lifestyle changes within Malaysian people [1]. It is a great attraction in urban area for a better level of safety and security. Undoubtedly, this type of housing development becomes almost a dominant feature of Malaysian housing development project. In Malaysia context, gated communities are identified with a cluster of houses surrounded by gates or fences or walls and access by controlled guard or security elements such as security guard, 24-hour patrol services, central monitoring systems and closed circuit television cameras [2]. The implementation of gated communities' development in Malaysia requires strategic planning and application. It can be categories into two types of development which is vertical development (condominiums and apartments) and horizontal development (bungalow, semi-detached and terrace houses) [3].

Generally, gated communities are designed for the safety and security purposes [4]. According to Town and Planning Department, there are several common characteristics related to safety should be implement to the development of gated communities such as guard services, installation of safety and security systems and security control at the main entrance. Guard services are provided within residential area and normally stationed at the main entrance. Usually it controlled by armed guards and equipped with security system such as CCTV and central monitoring systems [5]. They only allow registered residents and approved visitors to enter the residential area. Most of the gated community housing areas, safety devices include video cameras, intercom system and CCTV are installed for the purpose of security to monitor the resident's movements as well as to observe the public access to communities area [6]. To create a safe environment within the communities' area, the developer created the security control at the main entrance. Guard house are places at the main entrance to control the resident's movement and the public access. The residents are provided with an entrance pass card or vehicle stickers to allow them enter the communities' area.

2. Gated and Guarded Development in Malaysia

Gated communities are housing concepts that response directly to the safety and security issues in order to enhance safety for family development. There are few characteristics that show the differences with other housing schemes as described in Table 1.

The main reason of residents in choosing gated properties in Malaysia is security [1]. The increasing number of crime has created fear among the urban residents and they started to search for the place that offers them a better security to ensure their life and properties are safe. Gated properties have a better security controls compared to the other housing development scheme. There common safety features or characteristics in gated properties such as fences, guard services, safety and security systems, intercom systems, and security control at the main entrance. Security elements that provided by the developer is the main strength to help people choose gated properties as a main alternative. A common element for security

purposes is surrounded by wall or fence to create a secure and protected feeling and also gives them a sense of privacy to the residents.

Table 1. Characteristic of gated communities within Malaysia.

Characteristics	Features
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surrounded by fences and wall • Physical security – guard, closed-circuit television (CCTV), central monitoring system • Alarm security system
Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privatization of public space • Private roads • Private amenities
Facilities and amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents own and share the facilities and amenities provided – recreational park, swimming pools, golf course, sport center • All facilities are maintained by management corporation
Limitation of access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited public access – controlled by security guard • Access or pass card needed
Term and regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents are restricted by specific rules • Requires to pay management and maintenance fee
Luxury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically housing designed with luxurious lifestyle • Housing type – bungalow, semi-detached, town house and double/three story terrace • High class facilities- sport center, swimming pool, club house, golf course
Land title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strata title • Individual title
Types of development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landed properties • High-rise properties • Mixed housing development
Management corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established under Commissioner of Building of local authorities • Have been agreed in Deeds of Mutual Covenants (DMC) • Private governing body

Besides security, privacy and prestige also among the main reason that attracts buyers to reside in gated communities in Malaysia. Community's area or compound was gazette as private and only available for residents with gated community. Some gated offer prestige and luxurious lifestyle and facilities for resident such as gold course, clubhouse, sport centre and exclusive hall. However, residents are responsible and required to pay for the maintenance fees managed by the Management Corporation or Joint Management Body as agreed in the Deeds of Mutual Covenants (DMC). Even charged, most of the residents feel that the charges are still reasonable, commensurate with the comfort and privacy lifestyle.

Facilities and amenities in the gated and guarded community is one of the great attractions to the potential home buyers. Typical facilities and amenities offered by the developers in gated and guarded communities in Malaysia are such as golf

courses, club houses and recreation area [7]. According to Adnan et al. [2], only the residents in these communities can share the common facilities and amenities provided. Thus, the outsiders are banned to access to all the facilities provided in the gated and guarded community. The variety of facilities and amenities offered by gated communities may affect the degree of interaction with the non-gated community, which contribute to major implications for social integration and exchange [1].

Shamsudin [1] states that a gated-guarded community is a symbol of wealth, luxury lifestyle and upper class group. Good impression on the image of gated and guarded community can increase the probability purchase intention of people as such impression will create of good feeling in the mind of prospective house purchasers. High privacy and exclusive environment is the main force of higher income group to prioritized gated and guarded housing scheme. This indicates that gated and guarded is something valued by people in which they are willing to pay. The fact proved that prices and rents of properties in gated communities are at a high premium compared to non-gated properties.

3. Factor Contribute to Resident's Decision to Reside in Gated and Guarded Communities

There are some reasons influence residents to reside in gated and guarded community such as security control, privacy, facilities and amenities, luxurious lifestyle and location as shows in Table 2.

Table 2. Factors contribute to resident's decision.

Factors	Elements
Security	✓ Increasing of crime
	✓ Offer better security for their life and property
	✓ Updated security system
Privacy	✓ Isolated from public
	✓ Surrounded by wall and fences – can create a safe environment and secure housing scheme
Facilities and amenities	✓ Private facilities provided – swimming pool, sport center, club house
	✓ Share common facilities
Luxurious lifestyle	✓ Status of wealthy and well educated
	✓ High income
	✓ Willing to stay in the same class of level
Location	✓ Near to the city, work places, school but normally not in heavy polluted area
Prestige	✓ Social class and prestige
	✓ Elevated social status
	✓ Rich and famous

According to Mutalib [7], security services are the most significant factors for home buyers to choose gated and guarded communities. Snatch thefts, assaults and rampant break-ins in urban areas make house buyers are now more concerned about their personal security [8]. Tan argue that buyers are willing to pay more to live in gated communities because of the security features provided. As mentioned by Said and Martin [9], physical security such as installation of security devices can be

considered as an attractive and motivational factor to reside in gated communities. All these factors emphasize the influence on residents' satisfaction and the perception on this housing scheme.

4. Results and Discussion

150 sets of questionnaire survey forms were distributed randomly among the gated communities' residents in Klang Valley area. The purpose of distributing questionnaire survey forms is to identify the main factors influencing respondent to choose gated and guarded properties as their first priority. Figure 1 illustrates the mean index of each factor influencing respondent to choose gated properties.

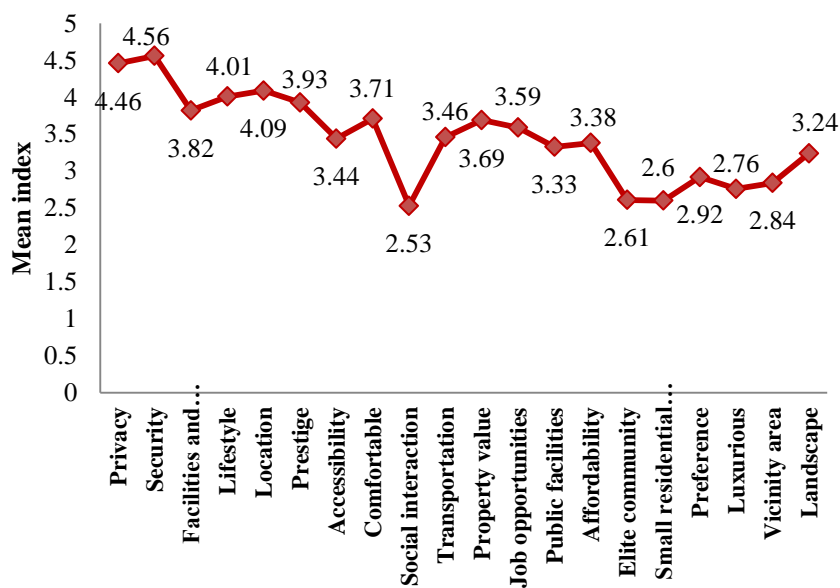


Fig. 1. Mean index of each factors influencing respondents to choose gated and guarded communities.

From the result of questionnaire data analysis, the three major reasons respondents reside in gated and guarded as their current living home were security (min index 4.56), privacy (min index 4.46) and location (min index 4.09). This showed that the residents were concerned on safety environment, privacy of living place and good location when chosen gated and guarded scheme. Security (4.56) is the main reason encourages resident to reside in gated communities. Security has been the key driving factor that encourages the communities to reside in gated and guarded. Increasing number of crime in urban areas, communities are more concern about the security and they need to protect their family from the threats. Developer provides several security control methods to ensure the communities are in the best secure place to live. The residential area is fenced up with only one entrance, guarded 24-hour daily by professional and registered security guard. Besides that, the entrance is installed with CCTV and intercom system is provided.

Normally developer or management has outsourced the security tasks to the security company. It engages a team of professional security guards, who are in-charged for guarding the entrance and patrolling the neighbourhood every few hours. Basically, each gated communities have recruited four to six professional security guards to control the residential area. Mostly the management will appoint and recruit Nepalese, former police with experience. CCTV system also installed at the entrance and sometimes at the porch of every unit houses and it can be monitored by the owner. For the residents that reside in the gated communities, they are given an electronic access card and car sticker. The residents need to scan their card at the entrance for their entry and exit from the area. In the other hand, to enter the communities' area, the visitors required to register at the security guard house and ask for the owner permission before they are permitted to get into the residential area. Visitors will be given a visitor pass and they are required to display the pass. For the utilities company such as Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB), Syarikat Bekalan Air and the rubbish collectors, they are allowed to get into with the permission of the security guard. Normally this utilities company will arrange specific workers for each gated communities and it will remain the same person. The security guard will monitor the situation from the security guard house in order to prevent the outsiders to break into illegally.

The second factors that encourage residents to choose gated communities are privacy (4.46). Gated communities' development creates a sense of privacy, exclusively and private neighbourhood sense of belonging to the residents within the gated residential area. It is give a comfort to the occupants or the residents. As claimed by Tan, gated-guarded community is a symbol of upper class, wealth and luxury [10]. Good impression on the image of gated can increase the probability purchase intention of people such as impression will create of good feeling in the mind of purchaser [11]. High privacy and exclusive environment is the main reason of higher income group to choose gated housing scheme [12]. Although the price of gated and guarded community in Klang Valley is expensive, it does not obstruct the desire of residents to own the house. This feedback is similar with researched done by Jurunilai Bersekutu, they argued that the privacy is the main factor attract people to reside in gated properties [13]. This indicates that gated and guarded is something valued by people afford and willing to pay. Other main factors highlighted in Fig. 1 shows that location, lifestyle, facilities provided also contribute to the factors of resident's decision to choose gated properties. It can be concluded that the residents are being attracted by the 'package' of features offered by the developers which similar to the argument of Blakely and Snyder [4] and Mutalib et.al [7].

5. Conclusions

In the conclusion, it can be summarized that the demand of gated communities in Malaysia, especially in Klang Valley are still increased drastically. Developers are more alert and acting fast in catching up the market trend. The development of gated communities' schemes in Malaysia now seems to be part of the features of housing industry. It is undeniable that most of these schemes comprise of the high cost residential types that will be attractive to developers due to higher returns and the increasing demand from the market, especially in the urban area like Klang Valley. Today, property developer reinvesting themselves in response to needs of an increasingly affluent population, keeping pace with the rapid changes in trend

and consumer preferences in order to thrive. Therefore, developers are actively involved in the gated communities' development in Malaysia. The desire for gated communities is increasing due to safety concerns and issues. Communities nowadays are getting more and more attracted to the residential development that offer security control methods due to the increasing numbers of crime rate. Security is the most factors encourage people to reside in gated communities that play an important role in create the safe and comfort environment for the residents. Gated developments potentially reduced the numbers of crime in residential areas. However, the implementation of the gated concept should be applied with the standard and appropriate guidelines and laws in order to standardize the development and protect the rights of residents. In order to improve the existing concept, local authorities and authorities' involved must cooperate with the community. The successful of this sustainable development concept can promote bottom up decision making process in Malaysia.

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