

## IMPORTANCE OF ENCLOSURE AT *SERAMBI* IN MALACCA TRADITIONAL MALAY HOUSE.

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**Abstract:** Malaysia is well-known to its tropical climate. Most of the buildings in Malaysia are mostly affected by the tropical design architecture and it can be seen especially in traditional Malay houses. This shows the existence of vernacular architecture in Malaysia. Vernacular houses are designed mainly to understand and have a deep respect to the nature and its surrounding [1]. Spaces in traditional Malay houses are separated into few main spaces, which are *Serambi*, *Rumah Ibu*, *Selang* and *Rumah Dapur*. The highlighted part is *serambi*. *Serambi* is well-known as a place to have a chat or maybe discussion either informal or formal. It also can be a place to chill in the evening [2]. *Serambi* can be divided into two types, fully enclosed and semi enclosed. A research is carried out to identify the importance of enclosure at *serambi* in Malacca traditional Malay house. The importance of enclosure will be analyzed based on the social aspects toward the respondents. The aspects that included are their design thought, thermal condition, comfort, modesty, security and opinion on usage of *serambi*. A survey will be conducted throughout the research. This is to prove the best type of *serambi*, either fully enclosed or semi-enclosed. The results are expected to be on the *serambi* with fully enclosure as it works the best in all of the social aspects mentioned earlier. This will prove the main objective of this research, which is the importance of enclosure at *serambi* in Malacca traditional Malay house.

**Key words:** *Malacca traditional Malay house, serambi, fully enclosed, semi enclosed.*

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, vernacular and Malay architecture are already well-known in architectural world. Specifically, the Traditional Malay Houses. It creative and aesthetic design also meets the environmental and social need [1]. Most of the traditional Malay houses have same common spaces. Depends on the region and state, the spaces vary due to the occupants need. All of traditional Malay houses have one common space that can be highlighted. The space known as *serambi*. Its design varies due to the state or region and be seen in two types; fully enclosed and semi-enclosed. The enclosure might play a major role in *serambi*'s design, which effects the opening of the *serambi* either it is too many open areas or not. So, what are the importance of having enclosure at *serambi* in Malacca tradition Malay house?

The enclosure at *serambi* need to comply with the occupants' social needs. The main social aspects that need to be concern are occupants' thought on the *serambi* design, thermal condition, comfortability, modesty, security and their opinion main usage of *serambi*. Thus, these social aspects are needed in order to determine either enclosure at *serambi* in Malacca traditional Malay house are beneficial to the occupants or not.

Based on the problem statements discussed, the main research questions of this study are as follows:

- i. What are the importance of having enclosure at *serambi* in Malacca traditional Malay house?
- ii. Does enclosure at *serambi* in Malacca traditional Malay house give any benefits to the occupants in term of social aspects?

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To answer the above questions, we have to define the Malay traditional house itself by reviewing existing literatures. The literatures must be related to issues on passive design strategy. Thus, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- i. To study the importance of enclosure at *serambi* in Malacca traditional Malay house to the occupants.
- ii. To identify the best *serambi* in Malacca traditional Malay houses, either fully enclosed or semi enclosed.

### LITERATURE REVIEWS

To make sure this research achieves its finest, research methodology is the most important thing involved in all the chapter in this research. First and foremost, the problem statement in this research needs to be detailed up to get more information regarding related title in this research. After determining the problem statement, the aim and objective of the research were determined. This chapter will help to understand the integration and the evolution from a basic theory into a reality.

Next, after completing the aim and objective of this research, the field survey is also conducted at Kampung Durian Daun and Kampung Seri Tanjong. Then, a personal interview with owner of the Malacca Traditional Malay house to gain their personal opinion about the usage, historical background of the Traditional Malay house, and also the aspects that might be needed to be highlighted in order to acknowledge the importance of enclosure at *serambi* in Malacca Traditional Malay house.

After having a personal interview, the observation regarding this research was listed and to collect the data. A site visit and some photographs to the site were taken with the permission of the owner of the Traditional Malay house. Last but not least, all the data gained from all methods that have been stated above will be shown by graphic presentation such as graphic plans, graphic chart, and table.

Vernacular architecture can be defined as a term used to categorize method of construction. It used local resources such as hardwood timber to be used as the materials in construction. Yet, it evolves over time until now. What we are referring in this research are the Malay Vernacular Architecture. This style of architecture produced the popular Malay Traditional house in Malaysia. As the Malay Vernacular Architecture in Malaysia keep growing

during its golden time, each state had come up with their own design and style of Malay Traditional house. Each characteristic can be identified and compared due to a lot of common on each of the design. Based on the table below, each space from every Malay Traditional house from different states were compared.

Region in Malay Peninsula, Malaysia	States in Malay Peninsula, Malaysia	<i>Serambi (selasar)</i>	Main Entrance with <i>rumah terenggo</i> or roofed	<i>Rumah Terenggeh (Rumah Ibu)</i>	Second <i>Rumah terenggeh</i>	<i>Gajah Merpuzi</i> space	Female guest room	<i>Kedek .anak (selang)</i>	<i>Rumah dapur</i>	<i>Pelantar</i> (attached to <i>rumah dapur</i> )	<i>Kelang</i> (spaces below - exterior)
Central	Negeri Sembilan	✓	(Not all)	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
	Melaka	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓
	Selangor	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
	Perak	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern	Perlis	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Kedah	✓		✓				✓	✓		✓
	Pulau Pinang	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓
East	Terengganu	✓		✓				✓	✓		✓
	Pahang	✓		✓				✓	✓		✓
	Kelantan	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
Southern	Johor	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 1: Showing the existence of the spaces within a Malay Traditional house. [3] [4]

The *serambi* or also known as *anjung* to some people are the most front part of Malay Traditional Malay house. As common in vernacular architecture in Malay Traditional house, *serambi* work as the space to greet the visitors as it is a public area. The floor level of the *serambi* may differ from the other spaces in Malay Traditional house as it shown a specific meaning, which can be interpreted as privacy level to the visitors. As we all know, *serambi* can be seen in various Malay Traditional house in Malaysia. These can cause the existing of various design and style of *serambi* that may have been implemented and applied. In this research, two types of *serambi* styles are going to be exposed. The types are:

- i. Fully enclosed *serambi*.



Figure 1: Rumah Odang Januddin owned by Mr. Mohamad.

- ii. Semi-enclosed *serambi*.



Figure 2: Typical Malacca Traditional Malay house owned by Mr. Syed Alwi.

Enclosure is a physical characteristic that can be seen at *serambi*. The application of the enclosure varied from the style, design, needs and the class of the owner of the Traditional Malay house, which in this research, the chosen vernacular Malay house is the Malacca Traditional Malay house. The importance of the enclosure can be acknowledged based on certain aspects that can be identified from *serambi* and its surrounding. The design of *serambi* can be seen from its physical features. The highlighted feature is the enclosure. Enclosure works as the protective layer or may know as wall to the *serambi* space. Two types of *serambi*'s design are shown in this research. The first one is fully enclosed *serambi*(figure 1) and the second one is semi-enclosed *serambi*(figure 2).

Thermal condition represents the thermal feel inside the *serambi* space, either it is cool, intermediate, or warm. This thermal condition may affect the activity of the occupants during day or night. Thermal comfort is needed by the occupants of Malacca Traditional Malay house especially in *serambi* area as it is public area with the most usage. The thermal condition may be affected by the exterior surrounding of the space, which may relate to the design of the enclosure in *serambi*.

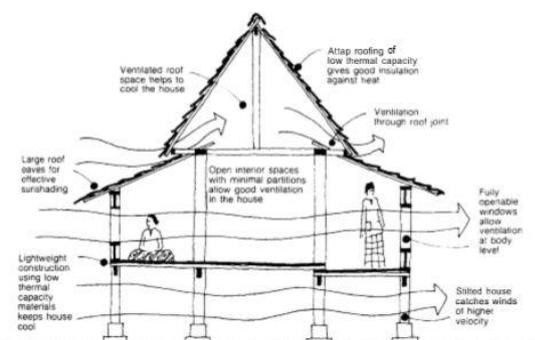


Figure 3: Cross-section of Malay Traditional house showing air-flow effects the thermal condition of the interior. [3] [4]

Comfort can be defined as a state of being chill with no pressure and relaxed. When comfort is achieved,

it may affect the mood of the occupants from negative to positive. Yet, comfort level for each person are differ from the other. Achieving the best comfort level in certain space is important as it may boost the feeling of the occupants in such a positive way and give the best productivity to the person in the space.

*Serambi* privacy level needed to be concerned as the space may switch from public space to semi-private or private space. Modesty is the best word to describe this privacy level. Modesty comes from the Latin *modestus*. The definition of modesty is “keeping due measure” which mean knowing the correct measure of yourself, which in this research, is related to the privacy level of the *serambi*. Which in Islam preaching, a person needs to take care of their modesty. For example, revealing certain parts of your body can be considered inappropriate, so the person needs to take care of their own modesty as it may symbolize their honour.

Security means safety, which specific measures are taken to achieve the state of being free from danger and harm. In this research, the security level refers to the surrounding of the *serambi* area, whether it have high security level from exterior harm such as wildlife attack or criminal activity. The *serambi*'s design effects the security level of the space especially when it comes to physical feature such as enclosure.

## METHODOLOGY

Traditional Malay house have few main spaces, this is shown in figure 1. This section focuses on the social aspects of the respondents toward the *serambi*. It discusses how the comfort of the occupants as a respondent are measured indirectly through a set of questions related to some selected key criteria. It also discusses on the development of questionnaire and data collection which includes pilot survey and fieldwork. However, it is hoped that the questions selected should be able to represent the overall result that is referred to the respondent. The set of question is based on the main aspects that needed to be looked at thoroughly during this research as those aspects mainly help to determine the importance of *serambi* in Malacca Traditional Malay house. Those aspects are the design of the *serambi*, it's thermal condition, comfort level, privacy level in term of modesty and lastly, the security level.

## METHODOLOGY USED

### i. INFORMAL INTERVIEW

The method chosen is by collecting the data from the respondents throughout a simple informal interview which guided by questionnaire prepared related to *serambi* in the Malacca's traditional Malay house. The collected data will include the type of the "serambi"; either it is fully enclosed or not, their thought on *serambi's* design, respondents' opinion on usage of *serambi*, and social aspects question that refer to thermal condition, comfortability, modesty and security.

### ii. GRAPHIC TABLE

Graph table are created based on the result of the survey. This may vary to pie chart, graph table and etc. The data collected will be presented and compared between the fully enclosed and semi-enclosed *serambi*. Concluded result of the comparison will determine the best type of *serambi* to be used, which will prove the importance of enclosure at *serambi* in Malacca traditional Malay house.

## SELECTION OF CASE STUDY

### i. Rumah Odang Januddin

This house is owned by Mr. Mohamad, a retire school teacher. It is chosen as it representing the *serambi* with full enclosure. This Malacca Traditional Malay house already aged for more than 100 years old, which might be the best-case study to be chose as it shown either the old vernacular architecture is working perfectly fine or not. For a little background explanation, a fully enclosed *serambi* is a symbolic for man or family with higher class in that village or area. Higher class can be considered as either wealthy, or with higher position in the village. This Traditional Malay house is located at Kampung Durian Daun, Masjid Tanah, Melaka and had been passed for over 100 years to the family bloodline.

This Malacca Traditional Malay house are made up from very popular hardwood in Malaysia, which is *Cengal*, that are commonly well-known for its strength and beautiful wood grain.



Figure 4: Perspective of Rumah Odang Januddin.



Figure 5: Closed up Perspective of Rumah Odang Januddin.

### ii. Typical Malacca Traditional Malay House

This house is owned by Mr. Syed Alwi, head of discipline board in Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Hang Kasturi. It is chosen as it representing the *serambi* with semi enclosure. This Malacca Traditional Malay house also already aged for more than 100 years old, which can be the best comparison to the *Rumah Odang Januddin*. As for the informations, a semi-enclosed *serambi* is a symbolic for man or family with standard or lower class in that village or area. This can be considered as normal villagers. This Traditional Malay house is located at Kampung Seri Tanjong, Masjid Tanah, Melaka and had been passed for over 100 years to the family bloodline.

This Malacca Traditional Malay house are made up from very popular hardwood in Malaysia, which is *Cengal*, that are commonly well-known for its strength and beautiful wood grain. According to Mr. Syed Alwi, this *serambi* is commonly used as bedroom for the boys during their youth time.



Figure 6: Perspective of Typical Malacca Traditional Malay house.



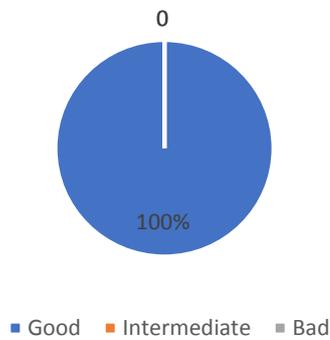
Figure 6: Closed up Perspective of Typical Malacca Traditional Malay house.

## FINDINGS

According to the study, enclosure at *serambi* in Malacca traditional Malay house effects to the occupants in social aspects term. The main aspects that analyzed are their thought on *serambi's* design, thermal condition, comfortability, modesty and security. Respondents' opinion on having a *serambi* also taken to show the multi-usage of *serambi*. These aspects will show which type of *serambi* work better based on the respondents' feedback from the survey done. The purpose is not mainly to determine which one work better, but to know the importance of enclosure at *serambi* in Malacca Traditional Malay house. As for the types, semi-enclosed *serambi* and fully enclosed *serambi*. These two types are compared based on the aspects given in the survey form to determine the efficiency level from each of the aspects, either they are on the same par or differ from each other

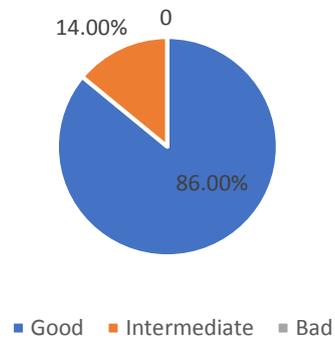
### 1. DESIGN OF THE SERAMBI

Design of Serambi(fully enclosed)



Pie chart 1: Design of *serambi* (fully enclosed).

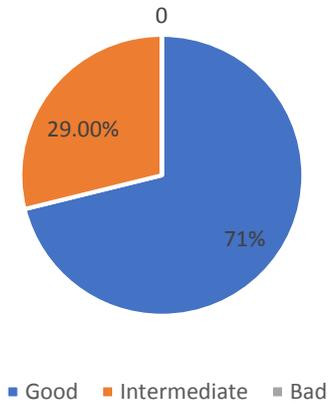
Design of Serambi(semi-enclosed)



Pie chart 2: Design of *serambi* (semi-enclosed).

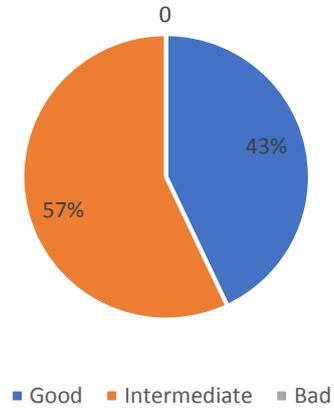
## 2. THERMAL CONDITION IN THE SERAMBI AREA

Thermal condition in the *serambi* area(fully enclosed)



Pie chart 3: Thermal condition in the *serambi* (fully enclosed).

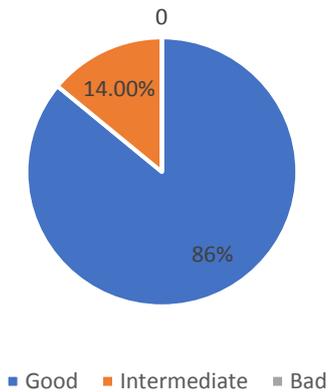
Thermal condition in the *serambi* area(semi-enclosed)



Pie chart 4: Thermal condition in the *serambi* (semi-enclosed).

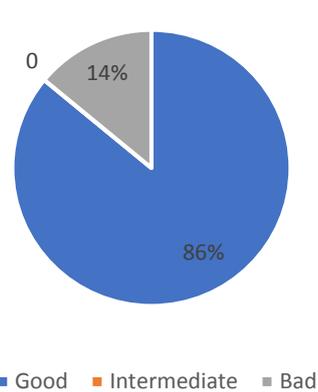
## 3. COMFORT LEVEL IN THE SERAMBI AREA

Comfort level in the *serambi* area(fully enclosed)



Pie chart 5: Comfort level in the *serambi* (fully enclosed).

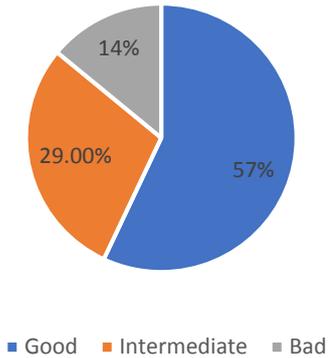
Comfort level in the *serambi* area(semi-enclosed)



Pie chart 6: Comfort level in the *serambi* (semi-enclosed).

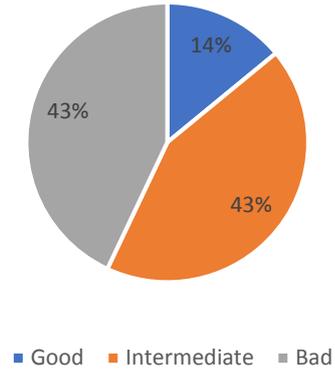
**4. PRIVACY LEVEL (MODESTY) IN THE SERAMBI AREA**

Privacy level (modesty) in the *serambi* area (fully enclosed)



Pie chart 7: Privacy level (fully enclosed).

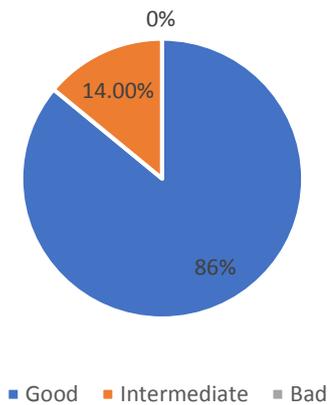
Privacy level (modesty) in the *serambi* area (semi-enclosed)



Pie chart 8: Privacy level (semi-enclosed).

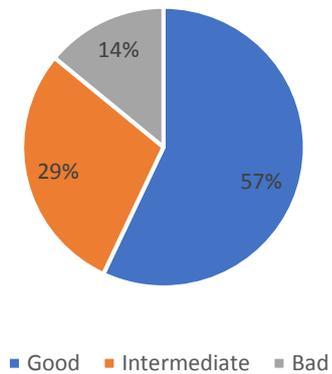
**5. SECURITY LEVEL IN THE SERAMBI AREA**

Security level in the *serambi* area (fully enclosed)



Pie chart 9: Security level in the *serambi* (fully enclosed).

Security level in the *serambi* area (semi-enclosed)



Pie chart 10: Security level in the *serambi* (semi-enclosed).

**SUMMARISE OF THE DATA COLLECTED**

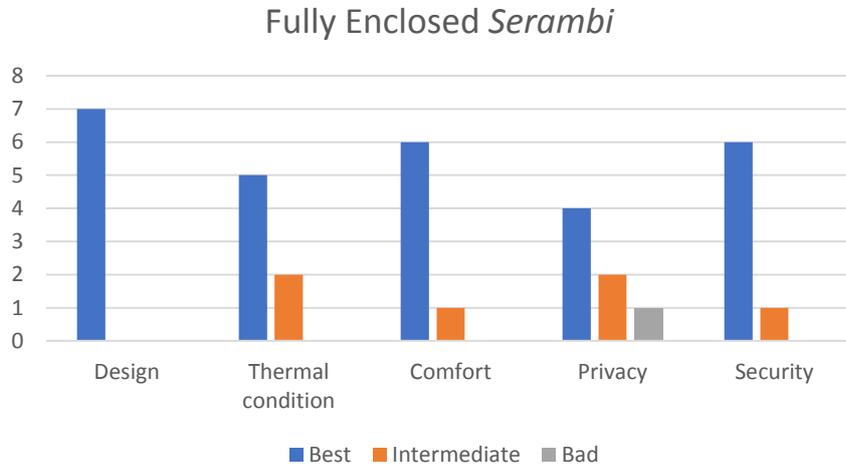


Table 2:  
Data collection for fully enclosed *serambi* in Malacca traditional Malay house.

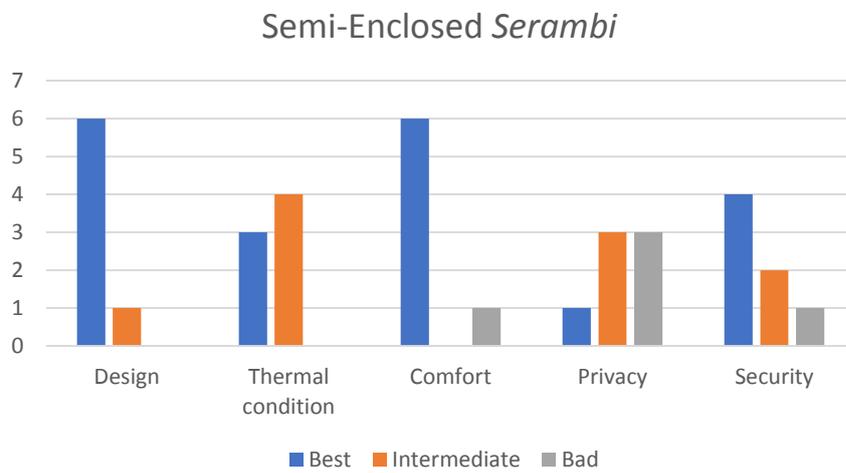


Table 3:  
Data collection for semi-enclosed *serambi* in Malacca traditional Malay house.

## CONCLUSIONS

As the conclusion, based on the data collected, we can see that these two types of *serambi* have their own benefits and advantages gained based on their design. Referring to Table 2 and Table 3, we can compare that *serambi* with full enclosure are the best as it received many positive feedbacks from the respondents throughout the survey. Based on each aspect, fully enclosed can be categorized as an all-rounder as it have good design, better thermal condition as it did not too exposed to the sunlight and glare, has a reasonable comfort level, better privacy level (modesty) as it have more enclosure to act as privacy features and high security level as the enclosure work as protective layer from any exterior harm and wildlife attack. Lastly, it is proven that fully enclosed *serambi* works better than semi-enclosed *serambi* throughout this research. Hence, this shown the importance of enclosure at *serambi* in Malacca Traditional Malay house. As for recommendation, we should implement modern passive design technology in the Malay Vernacular Architecture. This may boost the efficiency of the

green passive design that have been incorporated in Malacca Traditional Malay house, either the cross-ventilation application, ventury effects or stack effects. Fully enclosed *serambi* work the best as it can vary the design application from the enclosure features.

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