

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FENG SHUI IN HOUSE BUYING SELECTION AMONG MALAYSIANS

Geh Cha Liang, Atasya Osmadi*

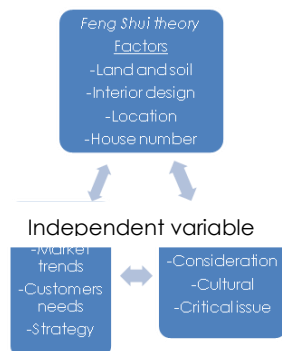
School of Housing Building and Planning, Universiti Sains Malaysia,
Penang, Malaysia

Article history

Received
27 April 2015
Received in revised form
15 June 2015
Accepted
15 July 2015

*Corresponding author
a.osmadi@usm.my

Graphical abstract



Abstract

Feng Shui can give positive effects that can bring harmony, success and zest for living comfort. This study seeks to examine the influence of Feng Shui theory on house buying selection. Survey questionnaire is done to meet the objective. Statistical Package for the social science software (SPSS) is used to do the reliability analysis and descriptive analysis. The Feng Shui factor that can influence respondents on house buying selection is ranked according to their mean value. The finding of this research reveals the house location is the most important factor for house buying selection.

Keywords: Feng Shui, house buying

Abstrak

Feng Shui dapat memberikan kesan yang positif yang boleh membawa keharmonian, kejayaan dan semangat untuk kesejahteraan hidup. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji pengaruh teori Feng Shui dalam pemilihan membeli rumah di kalangan rakyat Malaysia. Soal selidik dilakukan untuk mencapai objektif kajian. *Statistical Package for the social science software* (SPSS) digunakan untuk membuat analisis kebolehpercayaan dan analisis deskriptif. Faktor Feng Shui yang boleh mempengaruhi responden sewaktu pemilihan membeli rumah disenaraikan mengikut nilai min mereka. Penemuan kajian ini mendedahkan lokasi rumah adalah faktor yang paling penting dalam pilihan membeli rumah.

Kata kunci: Feng Shui, pembelian rumah

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This research will determine whether the buyers will consider Feng Shui as a factor to buy a house. Feng Shui has evolved from being rural superstition into a powerful urban force [1]. Practicing Feng Shui among Chinese society has become a trend. Today, all the public housing development in Hong Kong will ask for a consultation from a Geomancer to determine the design aspect and site location of the development [1]. Nowadays, people use Feng Shui as part of their consideration either in buying a house or shop lot even a tomb. Sia Mal Kong found that building which

consist good Feng Shui are easier to be sold out especially is residential houses. When people buy a house, several factors will be considered in choosing the house. The factors are growth potential, resale value and location [2]. With these three considerations, the influence of Feng Shui on a buyer's decision in selecting a house is understandable. Sandy (2008) stated the prices of Feng Shui design units sell for 7.7% more than comparable units not designed with Feng Shui [3].

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework consists of independent variable as depicted in Figure 1. Issue of Feng Shui factor can be divided into four categories that is the land and soil, the location, interior design and house numbers are independent variables. While the dependent variable is identified as developers and buyers thought. This paper provides an overview of the critical problem for house buying selection based on Feng Shui theory in Penang, Malaysia. The research objectives had been achieved through literature review and a survey questionnaire. For measurement purpose, the questionnaire incorporates a 5 point Likert scale (1 - 'not critical' and 5 - 'most critical') [4]. For measurement purpose, the questionnaire incorporates a 5 point Likert scale (1 - 'not critical' and 5 - 'most critical') [4]. 49 Feng Shui factor had been listed in the questionnaire and divided into 4 categories that is Land, Location, Interior design and House number. After determining an adequate sample size to estimate the population prevalence with a good precision [5], a total of 100 copies of the survey questionnaires were assigned to the probable respondents by several ways included face to face, mail and e-mail. The response rate for this report was 34% (9 from Malays, 21 from Chinese and 4 from Indian) and considered to be acceptable in this area as it is the norm of 20-30% with most questionnaires in construction industry [6]. The finding of the research determines the ranking for each individual factor according to their group.

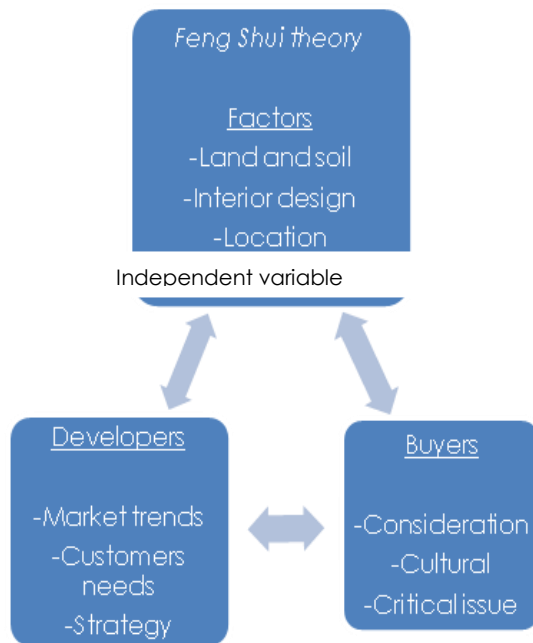


Figure 1 Theoretical framework

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Reliability Test

In statistic, Cronbachs' Coefficient Alpha is a tool to examine the internal consistency of the scale and to determine out whether the items in the set were correlated to one another [7] For Cronbachs' Coefficient Alpha values which greater than 0.7 are considered sufficient [8]. For this survey, the result of Cronbachs' Coefficient Alpha was 0.790 and this had proven that the factors have high internal consistency and reliability (as shown in Table 1).

Table 1 Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.790	49

3.2 Descriptive Analysis for Land and Soil

From SPSS analysis, the mean for all the Feng Shui factors that affect people on house buying selection had been calculated and they were ranked according to their mean value. The higher mean value, the higher the rank and vice versa. The 1st ranking of the group land and soil was sand (mean=3.18), 6 respondents (18%) had rated this factor as a critical problem and 28 respondents (82%) had answered this factor marked it as neutral. From the survey, sand had ranked as the 1st ranking. This is because sand in Feng Shui theory is a soil that plant cannot survive, dust are consider very inauspicious. The sand can cause soil erosion and this had lead danger to human lives so even for people who no knowledge on Feng Shui theory are afraid staying house that have sand. From construction knowledge, building built on top of the sand can cause settlement to the building and this will lead cracking defect in future. The sand is a main critical problem for respondents whose buying house.

The 2nd ranking was desolate soil with the mean of 3.17, 12 respondents (3 5%) had answer this factor as critical problem and 16 respondents (47%) had answer this survey question with neutral for home selection. The 3rd ranking was owned by the hard soil with natural luster (mean=2.97), in this question, 5 respondents (15%) had rated this issue as a critical problem.

The 4th, 5th and 6th rank of the group was soft soil but with moisture condition (mean=2.85), land with irregular shape (mean=2.82) and sand (mean=2.64) respectively. Following by the 7th ranking is the house facing directly to the open space is with the mean of 2.64. The 8th rank was the house sits on higher land in front and lower at the back (as shown in Table 2).

The last factor ranked was the house facing directly an open space, total of 6 respondents (18%) answered this as the no critical problem and another 6 respondents (18%) answered it as least critical

problem and the rest of the respondents marked it as neutral. In Feng Shui theory, it encourages people choosing a land with a lake view or big grass field in front of the house. This can welcoming for "Chi" in to the house will bring the homeowner fortune. The big field view can let people feel the freedom and relax. So in the nutshell, the respondents hard rated it as the last factor that affect house buying selection.

Table 2 Descriptive analysis for land and soil

Type of land and soil	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
Sand	3.1765	.38695	1
Desolate soil	3.1765	.71650	2
Hard soil with natural luster	2.9706	.57658	3
Soft soil but with moisture condition	2.8529	.70205	4
Land with irregular shape	2.8235	.67288	5
Landfill soil	2.6471	1.12499	6
Land without flora and fauna	2.6471	.73371	7
The land that the house sits on higher in front and lower at the back	2.4706	.78760	8
The house is directly facing open space	2.4706	.78760	9

3.3 Descriptive Analysis for the Location

From the analysis had shown that facing graveyard (mean=4.03) having highest rank, compare with other factor in this group, 23 respondents (68%) had rated this as a critical problem and 6 respondents (18%) had rated it as the most critical problem. Facing grave yard had been ranked 1st as it will affect people on house buying selection. In Feng Shui theory, a house that is located near to or facing a gravesite has bad Feng Shui could also affect future investment because of the difficulty in disposing of it at a good resale price. In fact, there are documented cases where the resale price of the property plummeted after a gravesite was built nearby or expanded. Yin Yang is an ancient Chinese philosophy. In simple translation it means the 'existence and interaction of two complementary and opposite forces or states' (day and night, cold and hot etc.). Too much of either yin or yang is undesirable. Excluded on Feng Shui theory, graveyard can give people a horror environment, in long term this will affect the potential psychological effect to human beings.

The 2nd ranking factor that will affect respondents in house buying selection was facing prison

(mean=3.74) with 18 respondents (53%) answered it as critical problem and 6 respondents (18%) had answered it as the most critical problem. The 3rd ranking factor was near the industrial area (mean=3.62) with 22 respondents marked it as critical problem. These are top 3 ranking Feng Shui factor that have potential to affect people on the house buying selection. Factor in facing cross-road (mean=2.61) and facing T-junction (mean=2.50) are lowest 3rd and 2nd rank that has least critical problem for house buyers. And the last ranking factor was the house on hill top (mean=2.35) with a total of 16 respondents (47%) rated it as the least critical problem (as shown in Table 3).

Table 3 Descriptive analysis for the location

Location	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
Facing graveyard	4.0294	.57658	1
Facing prison	3.7353	.93124	2
Near industrial area	3.6176	.55129	3
Facing hospital	3.5588	.95952	4
Beside electric sub-station	3.3529	.48507	5
Near microwave relay stations/radio base station	3.0000	.60302	6
Facing tall building	3.0000	.60302	7
Facing chimney	3.0000	.60302	8
House on low-lying areas that are landlocked by surrounding hills	2.8235	.38695	9
Located opposite the gap between the building	2.8235	.38695	10
House on steep slope	2.6765	.47486	11
Located on dead end street	2.6471	.98110	12
Facing cross-road	2.6176	.69695	13
Facing T-junction	2.5000	.99240	14
House on hill top	2.3529	.98110	15

While the last ranking factor of this group was house on hill top. Although in Feng Shui theory, house on hill top is a bad sign, as the house lacks support and its occupants are known to feel insecure and lonely. In addition, the occupants are exposed to the full effect of nature's forces and are more vulnerable to ill earth, in particular those associated with the lungs and the skin. But many respondents had ranked it as the least critical this is because now the house environment under the mountain is getting polluted

for example with sound, air and water pollution while instead getting polluted environment it is best to stay at the hill top to enjoy the cool freeze air and clear crystal water. So from respondents thinking, house at hill top is not a critical problem for home buying selection. Many of the mountains have been explored for housing developments for example Cameron Highland and Kampar Height.

3.4 Descriptive Analysis for Interior Design

The analysis had showed square smaller main door (mean=3.35) stand on the 1st ranking factor that can affect people on house buying selection which have 12 respondents (35%) marked it as a critical problem. From the analysis, smaller main door had been vote as rank 1 critical issue in interior design. The main door is usually defined as the door that is most frequently used by residents to get in and out of the house. In Feng Shui terms, doors should be of the same size, but the main door should slightly bigger. Even in the design field, the smaller main door will make the house improper ratio.

Table 4 Descriptive analysis for interior design

Interior design	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
Smaller main door	3.3529	.48507	1
Straight staircase	3.3235	.76755	2
Toilet facing the bed	3.2941	.46250	3
Irregular shaped floor plan	3.2059	.68664	4
Mirror ceiling	3.1765	.71650	5
Toilet above the main door	3.1471	.70205	6
Dark painted house	3.0294	.57658	7
Toilet facing main door	3.0000	1.04447	8
Glass door toilet	2.8529	.35949	9
Two doors facing each other	2.6471	.48507	10
Long straight corridor	2.5294	.50664	11
Door open outward	2.5000	.50752	12
Different size of door	2.3824	.73915	13
Toilet facing the living room	2.3824	.81704	14
Square shaped toilet	2.2941	.75996	15

The 2nd rank factor was straight staircase (mean=3.32) with 17 respondents (50%) answered it as critical problem for interior design. Straight staircase had been ranked number 2 that being critical for a house buyer. In Feng Shui theory, straight staircase causes the chi move up the stair quickly. In the construction field, straight staircase could have

more stairs and is taller than a staircase in the platform. As a result, a fall from the top of the stairs can be result in serious injuries. Straight staircases require more space as compared to curve or platform staircases. As a result, they are not an option in buildings with scarce space.

The 3rd rank factor was smaller main door (mean=3.29) with 10 respondents rated it as the critical problem in interior design. Different size of door and toilet facing the living room with the same means of 2.38 had been ranked at the lowest 2nd and 3rd rank (as shown in Table 4). The last ranking that the interior design will affect respondent on house buying selection was the square shaped toilet (mean=2.29) which have 12 respondents answered it as the least critical and 6 respondents had answered it as not a critical problem for interior design. The square shaped toilet had been ranked as the most no critical problems in interior design. In Feng Shui theory, Square shaped toilet is a sign of good Feng Shui so this is definitely not an issue for house buyer worries. Square shaped toilets are easier to design and require smaller space.

3.5 Descriptive Analysis House Number

The analysis had showed house number 4 (mean=3.18) having the highest rank could influence people on house buying which have 12 respondents had marked it as a critical problem. House with number 3 ranks the last which have the mean of 2.11, 6 respondents had marked it as the least critical and 12 respondents had marked it as not a critical for house number (as shown in Table 5).

House with number 4 ranked as the number 1 critical problem. Mostly Chinese don't like this number as this number brings the meaning of death. Most of the people like the number of 3 even in Indian vaatsu theory, number 3 is consider a lucky number. In Feng Shui theory, number 3 means grow.

Table 5 Descriptive analysis house number

House plate numbers	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
4	3.1765	.71650	1
8	2.8235	.38695	2
7	2.8235	.38695	3
1	2.4706	.78760	4
5	2.3235	.76755	5
2	2.3235	.76755	6
6	2.3235	.76755	7
9	2.2941	.75996	8
0	2.2941	.75996	9
3	2.1176	.91336	10

4.0 CONCLUSION

The study of the influence of Feng Shui theory on house buying selection is to identify how important of Feng Shui theory towards housing developments. The outcomes of this study are analyzed and hope to help the construction industry to raise the awareness in building favourable Feng Shui building. As unfavourable Feng Shui location, land, interior design, house number would influence the selling market.

The result from this research allows reappraisal on the existing of Feng Shui theory in real estate market. This issue is one of the most important topics to understanding Malaysians behaviour towards buying house in Penang. Not only buyers, but also to comprehend developer towards Feng Shui theory. This research on Feng Shui theory will determine its considerable use in real estate market. This work will provide new perspectives by which to view and reform the existing of Feng Shui theory in Malaysia.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank the funding bodies of this research: Universiti Sains Malaysia under USM Short Term Grant. No. 304/PPBGN/6313035.

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