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<th>Improvement of Living Environment and Management of Kost Private Rental Housing in Urban Settlement of Indonesia [an abstract of dissertation and a summary of dissertation review]</th>
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Diah Wasis Wulandari

Improvement of Living Environment and Management of Kost Private Rental Housing in Urban Settlement of Indonesia

Due to growing industrialization, the rate of urbanization and the percentage of total urban population in Indonesia have been increasing. Indonesia is facing the problem of an increasing backlog of houses. The high housing price led to the middle-to-low income earners’ choice of renting instead of buying. As the result, the accumulating informal housing has become the most affordable option, and rental housing has been taking a vital role in providing housing especially for the low-income group. Answering to the market demand, house owners develop a monthly private rental housing facility within their house, called a kost.

This dissertation mainly focused on kosts, fast growing private rental housing that have formed unique heterogeneous urban living environment in Indonesia. Kosts show potentials to overcome the lack of affordable and adequate housing in Indonesia. However, various issues have been developing due to its informal nature, which makes it important to examine its development, operation, regulation, and potentials before making further steps to develop proper planning solutions, and ensure the proper establishment of kost.

The purpose of this study is to examine the current kost planning, regulations, and living conditions, and to further clarify the appropriateness and impact of the current situation for its residents and environment, by optimizing the Architectural Planning Research and Environment Behavior Studies approaches through qualitative and quantitative research methods. This research aims to develop the basis of kost planning solutions, and to propose kost as an important part of further planning consideration to overcome the lack of affordable and adequate housing in Indonesia.

Kost neighborhood reflects a heterogeneous community consists of people from various profiles, culture, and background. New businesses and public facilities grow around kost and evolve the area into a livelier environment, although it tends to cause the area population becoming denser than it should. In addition, kost conditions vary greatly, and each kost reflects a housing facility with design personalization.

It was noticed that many kosts are still not fit to be considered healthy homes. The spatial organization and the lack of space also trigger the misuse of space and behavioral changes in tenants. Moreover, the undefined standard of operation and arrangement may hinder improvement opportunities to its quality of services by government. In this case, it is important to form a specific minimum requirements that incorporate all minimum requirements and guidance for easy reference for the public, as well as to provide easy access to them.

Being in the boundary of a private house and a rental facility, a kost is set up and operated informally following the owner’s preference. Without owner’s awareness on the quality and adequacy of kost, the existence of standards and regulations would not be effective. Therefore, rigorous efforts to educate the public and to increase compliance awareness are necessary as the basic steps for improvement.

Further, currently the planning and design requirements for kosts follow those for private house, while in fact kosts’ characteristics seem to extend over the private attributes. It may not be appropriate to grant the similar freedom to kosts as in the case of private houses. A new classification as well as specific minimum requirements and regulations that differentiate a kost from a private house may become suitable solutions to clarify kost status. Further, it is important to enhance residents’ awareness on the weight of kost regulation.

As most tenants tend to consider their kost neighborhood as temporary, this may lead into tenants’ lack of the sense of belonging and participation in the neighborhood activities. Increasing frequency of possible encounters may promote social interactions. Efforts to create the media that enhance and facilitate consistent interaction should be put into practice. In addition to the improvement of neighborhood information system, proper registration of new tenants should be strictly conducted to ensure the neighborhood safety and to have a complete database that may help to understand the residents’ profiles.

This research managed to reach interrelated conclusions through each part of the studies. The current conditions as well as various aspects and characteristics of kost were explored and explained. In addition, four main ideas of improvement approach that may improve the condition of kost and housing in Indonesia, i.e. attentions on space characteristics of kost, attentions towards the social environment of kost, public approach and education,
and attentions towards standards and regulations, were formed.

Based on these final conclusions, the approaches on standards and regulations and public approach and education seem to have more potential impact to various aspects. Therefore, three proposals, i.e. 1) a handbook of the minimum requirements of kost; 2) the formation of the Regional and Neighborhood Kost Owner Association, Self-builder Association, and Neighborhood Information System as knowledge providers; and 3) the establishment of the Neighborhood Kost Tenant Association as community builders, were developed based on these two approaches. The study results provide significant grounds to develop planning solutions, and ensure proper establishment of kost in further housing planning considerations and policies.

This dissertation is structured into eight chapters, with outlines as follows:

CHAPTER ONE: This chapter is an introduction chapter, which presents the background of housing conditions and issues in Indonesia based on literature review, clarifies the research purpose, and states kost problems which are to be discussed further in this research.

CHAPTER TWO: In this chapter, various literatures related to housing condition in Indonesia, housing finance policies and policy implementation, dwelling patterns, and profiles of different types of housing, as well as previous researches about kost are reviewed and studied to be the basis of further investigations. In addition, the concepts of affordable housing and temporary housing are examined in line with rental housing facilities. Moreover, the theories of Architectural Planning Research and Environment-Behavior Studies are described.

CHAPTER THREE: This chapter describes the research methods, site, procedure, as well as various research limitations and delimitations. Mixed-method research, which combined both quantitative and qualitative methods, was conducted. Quantitative method was used to measure different variables collected from statistical studies and numerical data acquired. Qualitative data and analysis were used to acquire better description of kost and understand the condition and phenomena, as well as various considerations, preference, and experience of the parties involved in kost.

CHAPTER FOUR: Before going further, it is necessary to clarify the basic characteristics of kost, thus this chapter aims to provide understanding towards kost development. The origin of the term, as well as its usage and context in the past, were studied. In addition, it examines the main characteristics and operation of kost, and describes its living and neighborhood condition. Further, it identifies the main challenges and issues of kost as a self-organized housing facility.

CHAPTER FIVE: This chapter aims to understand the nature of kost, to examine the implementation and impact of the current legal basis of kost, and to observe on what should have been considered while developing suitable planning solutions. Further, it clarifies the situation of kosts as private houses with public issues.

CHAPTER SIX: This chapter aims to understand the various patterns of spatial arrangement in kosts, and to address the impacts on the residents’ living space focusing on kost space planned by owners. The provision of space observed during site surveys are examined and compared to tenants’ preference, perception, and acceptance on the present kost facilities. Further, this chapter observes the appropriateness of considering a kost as a healthy home and examines its development, operation, regulation, and potentials before making further steps to develop planning solutions.

CHAPTER SEVEN: As the issues related to kosts affect the quality of the surrounding neighborhood in a small scale and the city in a large scale, this chapter aims to understand the social aspects of life in kost, and addresses the key issues occurred focusing on tenants’ attitudes, perception, and living experience. Further, it identifies various issues that may have led to the lack of interactions and tenants’ participation in the neighborhood activities, and proposes suggestions towards improvement.

CHAPTER EIGHT: Final conclusions of the dissertation followed by discussions, recommendations, and plans for future works are further described in this chapter.

Formal and informal rental housing may be a solution to overcome the lack of affordable and adequate housing. As the accumulating informal housing and rental facilities have become the most affordable option to the majority, they may be the best instruments to function at this moment. Therefore, it is important to examine optimization steps towards formal and informal rental housing, and propose them to be part of main considerations in housing finance, planning, and policy development. In addition, Indonesia’s housing development plan may have overlooked people’s participation in the reconstruction process, while it may work as the main drive to support law enforcement and development plan. In this case, it is important to specify the community characteristics, changes in society, and appropriate housing type for the residents. Further, minimum requirements of design, operation and arrangement that aim to achieve integrated development efforts for housing should be developed.