

APPENDIX E: Transcript of Interviewee 1

If talking about lift only, in general I think, or more specifically, is not insufficient. Due to the fact that, one of the thing is the waiting time is too long, and then the second thing would be, even though they try to use the odd and even numbers, but you will realise that people are a bit annoying that sometimes you have to walk down one floor, walk up one floor, sometimes you need to wait for a long time and definitely it is not a sufficient way, or the efficiency is not there. But also come back to another aspect in terms of the developer side point of view. From the developer side point of view, lift is a very expensive equipment, unlike anything else that you can simply install. One lift sometimes costs around half a million, and then lift has to come along with other additional space like lift lobby, and a staircase around it. So it will take up extra space, and when they consider about the occupancy rate, the numbers of students that are going to use in this building and they realise that they cannot afford that/ afford the essential space is being for a lift, and that's why it is it is a win-win situation, where I provide something that is just enough, and if not enough, will need to think about another way for example the odd and even numbers lift, and encourage students to use the staircase as a way of green technology or green energy or for a better and much more healthier life as a good exercise, and that's how we get to it. Talking about the staircase, the staircase is always in a way, the first thing come about is fire escape. In terms of the basic criteria, compliances with the fire requirement, I think the Architect of this building has complied with the regulation. But talking about the good experience about staircase, no. Our staircase is much more means that to walk up and down. It never ever want to spend or think that staircase could be upgraded to a better quality and feel good to walk on it. The location of the staircase is merely to fulfill the fire escape requirement. They never think that more staircase needed in some other places. Therefore, staircase is not for luxury or satisfaction use but just to meet the fire escape requirement, and enough for students to use from one level to the other. The other thing that I personally is lacking is escalator. We do not have escalator because during the peak hour, sometimes escalator is much more efficient than the lift. Maybe one of the thing the developer have come along is the cost plus the maintenance. Nowadays if you see from the public media, the escalator has become a very dangerous, sometimes it

jams, someone get killed, hands get chopped off. These may be why we do not have an escalator.

And another area that I think is not sufficient is toilet where they might on the certain consideration they separate the male and female toilet to be the very far end. And to the end user and the staff want to use, it is very inconvenient. The male has to walk to another side if they are near to the corner of female toilet, so it's not a very good design/ But they might consider safety, as they might think that with female toilet on one side and male toilet on the other side, they won't mix around, the crime can be prevented. That might be one of the consideration but i think as a university, the occupants is not a kid, they are adults, they should be mature enough to think about what is the consequences from their behave. So I think that the decision making is not very ideal.

Another thing to add is insufficiency is the double height volume, from second to third floor. Usually when you have a double height volume, you would like to have a natural sunlight come into the centre and we define it as a light caught or air well. But here on top it is just a floor and you do not have the pressure or pleasant of natural lighting into that area and you realised that they rely on the artificial light and also the lighting is at the minimum, it is a normal fluorescent light and that area is almost an death space.

Another factor would be the noise, and that area is just unbearable. It is in peak hour or peak time, when all the students come to that area, you typically cannot speak to anyone because of the noise. That is something that I think the designer has to be much more sensible.

Another aspect is the walking path within the building. You will realise that there is no designated walking path for the user. One of the factor would be, they just say "OK I have this much space and I put in my space" the rest you just be the walking path which in many of the good designer would think how to walk from one point to another, how can you using the materials, the size of walkway and any other kind of feature so they walking in a building is good. For example, in 10th floor, you have many opened space, columns of no direction, just column, sometimes if you could

think carefully, it can be placed logically and strategically, so the column can form a column net, but that is something that we do not consider. Then of course we have something on the 10th floor, we have natural sunlight from above. What about the landscape? So you realise that this building is almost a concrete jungle, you go anywhere there has solid wall, of course they will put some good sensors but lacking colour. Human particularly in Malaysia, we have plenty of green and the green has become part of our memory in our mind, if we have the opportunity, not talking about lower ground, but a large part of open space, why not design some greenery or landscape? When you walk up, you feel good. One of the things they fail to look at it, they thought that open space is good. But in a real sense, when you walk in the 10th floor, you don't feel comfortable because the thing is so open, everyone can see everybody. It becomes a psychological effect that people feel uncomfortable, because it is like a fish tank, people look at you for enjoyment, so you don't feel there is privacy while walking in that space. The space is like "ok you just want to be there, just for certain purposes", but you won't put a chair and table and start to study there, because it's too open, no privacy is provided. Sensible people will be willing to spend a bit of money on it.

At the staircase you have some balcony at 5th/ 6th floor and you realise that the balcony is so dry. They just want to keep it nothing there, it's all clear, and you just see the modern technology like concrete, steel, glass and what else? I think those are the areas that probably we can have some green plant because first is when you see green, it's good to your eye and mind, and also we get two things if proper type and height of green is chosen: first is cut off the extra sunlight come into the room, because too much sunlight is no good. Just like when you go out, you want to put on sunglasses, because too much sunlight, and that is not comfortable. And plus heat, so the heat goes in the building, you need to generate more air-cond to cool down the building, that is not a good proportion.

The third thing is of course any natural plant will take the carbon dioxide, they give us oxygen. So if you are near to the natural environment, you feel some plant around your building, you will be able to let the plant to set the level as same height to you, then all the green will give you free oxygen, that is something that we can do it but because of the consideration like the maintenance, keep on watering, dark area to

attract mosquitoes. But we need this green building, we are pushing them away and enclosing ourselves into a concrete, steel, glass. And there is something we can improve.

And talking about the staircase itself, I work in an industry, sometimes you never know that staircase, people are very particular on number. The number has play one of the magic, like you won't have level 4 right? But level 3A. But there is something they manage to take note to it. But one thing is whether they miss out something or overlook, if you go to some of the level, particularly on level 3,4,5,6,7,9, you walk, every half flight is 14 steps. If you're talking about Feng Shui, it's definitely a no-no. No 4. And then that's why if you are the one that know the psychological of the Chinese culture, this is something that is not good thing. If someone particular about this, they will feel a bit uncomfortable, and then they feel very discourage, and eventually they don't feel like working in the environment and they don't feel good. So, I don't know, you can just stretch it a bit become 13, 13 is best. Or you can compact it make it 15. And then if you have done that like 13,13, that's perfect. I don't know why, they don't put that into consideration. And this has become something that's permanent. And then that's why, I don't know, you will realise that/ observe that all of the lecturer's turn out rate is very fast, means they work here for few years then go away. But I'm not the Feng Shui expert, but good environment not just come from the outside, but also the physical things happened around. I would say some of the fundamental Feng Shui is not observed. And that's why they might have some bad thing observed.

Whatever being provided is just for fundamental/ basic requirement, they never go beyond that. Except one area is the main entrance. That one I agree is good. People walk in and there is water features at the side. That's impressive. But other than that, you walk around the building and see that, ok it's just meet the basic requirement. I don't think they want to spend some money to upgrade it, maybe at the initial stage, but UTAR is a non-profit organisation, they just build the basic. But a building or we call it as a magnetic effect. If you have a good design, people will come here happily, eventually it become like something that attract people. I'm not involved in the design or management process of this building but as a professional, we deal with a lot of good design, I think that it would happen, but it's not easy, because somehow

if you want to try to pursue the client that good design, please think about it, then the person may say that money, do we have the money, if not money, then ended up with this kind of thing, all the standard things, that's enough. But you forget one thing, why people go to IKEA than go to normal roadside perabot, why? Because people see more things, you see something in the Facebook, internet, people taste and requirement are getting better and better. Therefore, something you provide some basic, but that's not enough. I think that having better taste and design definitely is more productivity. Because if I in a place that's provided with better equipment, table and chair, then I will love to be there and love to work more longer. Here I have to bring in my lighting, chair, artwork, at least I say that this is the space that won't let me so boring. So, this is a building with 10,000 people and 200 staff, it's not easy to make everyone happy. So they give you the basic, you can do whatever you want.

In terms of the overall, it meets the requirement. It's just like a car, you want a car that can go everywhere, it saves the petrol, energy efficient... a Kancil! Are you happy with Kancil? That's the thing. Always remember you can't spend money on every corner, so they did some good job - at main entrance and MPH. At least there is a balance. You can see that not all the spaces here are terrible. I think that if I were to say that, make more possible design to invite sunlight into the building. If you are sitting here you don't know outside is raining, morning, night time. This is not a natural environment. So we try to make the environment more close the nature environment. If possible, to have some green to incorporate into the building. Some of the corner should be designed a bit so it is much more pleasant. If you walk around the building, you realise that the only thing is just sit on the floor. Can we have simple plan or wood, so people can sit there to have some chitchat. Of cause they turn some of the corner into study area, but from a psychological view, should put nice furniture around to make people happier, and some of the important space like 10th floor, main entrance, MPH they should upgrade on it, so at least when you walk there you will feel that oh it is an oasis. For example when you come in you feel like cold jungle, why not to have some landscape, tall trees, you can touch and rub on the surface of the trees. It is very amazing, but somehow you don't have that, and that's my perspective. I think that having a green plant or landscape is much more prudent than you put in some expensive material. Of cause if you say a much more higher grade instead of a normal tile, you talk about marble, granite floor, of

cause that one is a plus, but I think we are still part of the nature, if you cut yourself out of a nature, and you talking about this is a university, how can you make the user in the way is like they are within the nature, you don't see any green plant right? This is the thing that it is good to bring it back. But might not. 29:35 TBC

The author: Just now you mentioned the lift right, now they arrange in odd and even floor but before this they don't, so which one do you think it is better in terms of waiting time?

Of course there is an improvement in terms of system, efficiency and waiting time. People are more focused, now if I want to go odd number, I use one side of lift, and if I want to go even number I go this side. So efficiency is increased but in general it just a bit of improvement but it did not solve the overflow problem. You still can see that when school starts, when there are 8 or 10k people coming in, then you still hear people try to curse, the queue is so long, then the problem is not a happy solution. It still have room to improve.

The author: What kind of improvement do you expect?

You need more lift but now it is not able to achieve and that's why there is a campaign to encourage people to walk upstairs and saying that it can count your heartbeat, calories burnt and they give you a certificate, they try to make people feel that if I walk up the staircase I feel good. But in terms of exercise this is true, because when you exercise you feel better. Talking about walking up for youngster is ok, what about the professors, some of them are 60 or 70 years old. Do you think they can climb? Improvement is there but not big. Actually we need 6, and then another 4 = 10 lifts. But the best thing is we need 3 groups of lifts, now only has 2 groups. So another corner is always neglected. We think that the corner is not walking distance. Walking is time-consuming.

The author: But they cannot change it already right? You need to add in then you need to hack...

You need to think so many things, talking about vertical, 10 storeys and from floor to floor you will have the steel, stirrups. No. It can change, but what about the justification, what are the trade off you want to give for this change. Maybe, they build another building and then shift 30 or 40% of the students to the new block. And let say we use a number of 6k using 6 lifts, and that's good. It is one of the way. This thing it comes naturally, because now the economic is so bad, you can feel the pitch, student involvement may drop. By naturally, the student drop, the lift becomes more efficient.

The author: For the staircase, just now you mentioned the developer just fulfill the basics, but do you think that the angle, the steps, rise and going height is...

Ok lah but it is not comfortable. Now you are projecting about 30 degree, so if you want a comfortable staircase it should be 22 or 25 degree. But in a public building, we cannot afford this kind of achievement, we only can do that in a private building.

The author: and its double volume, so it is very tiring right?

Yes, and because of inclination is not so flat, so it is tiring. I totally agree with you and you got to have someone who is physically very strong. But normally for normal people, it is not. For me walking down is ok but walking up for me maximum is...

The author: how about other problems of the staircase like do you feel that the staircase is uneven?

I don't feel that, the bio law says that the steps between the same flight must be same, but this flight and another flight they don't have to be the same. I don't feel that, it is still acceptable.

The author: So you think that the staircase campaign is effective?

Well awareness is there but in certain case there is unhappiness of some. In mind, before that you feel that not happy but after the campaign, you realise that actually if I walk, it is good for my health, that's a psychological affect. Actually it works.

The author: So you climb the staircase now?

No. I won't. Because my age is different with yours. So we don't mind to walk down, but while walk up our knees may not able to support it. So the age gap anything above 40 or 80 plus might not be a good solution. But majority of the occupants in this building is 85% youngster. So still work. Talking about this kind of demography.

The author: So you think there is increase in the use of staircase?

Yes. People are psychologically to think differently by using the staircase. But still heard people cursing "the queue is long" then walk up. We have to understand human are we get used to certain thing after sometimes. So they make us to walk, after walking a few round, weeks or months, eventually you say, that's it, I accept it, I do it. This is how Asian country think. It achieve the goal.

The author: Can you talk more about the AV equipment? Like the microphone, loudspeaker, whiteboard, projection screen.

As I said before, it meets the basic requirement, like a Kancil. Of cause we wish better car like Toyota, Honda, but the problem is, when you have a better quality equipment, people will steal. Stealing is another problem. They will think that, "wow this speaker worth about thousand ringit" they steal away. So how? Eventually, just go to the basic - "Oh this one only RM10 ah, just go to the pasar malam and buy" so people don't steal it. So it serves its purpose, of cause off and on, you realised that some quality is to bad.

The author: Will it affect your teaching process?

In some of the lecture hall yes. That one is because of the wall partition and the acoustic. When I speak, I can hear the noise from other side and it is quite irritating. I think that can be improved by modifying the wall, make it thicker, add more insulation. This is not a difficult problem. You just need to identify where are the source of problem. Another possible acoustic problem is because of the ceiling. Sometimes the wall is up to the ceiling, you never realise that inside the ceiling there is still empty space, so the sound is coming from top down. Then you look at it

physically and you open up and see, the wall just up to the ceiling or the wall punch through the ceiling, up to the slab above? So this one you really need to look at it, and if you identified the problem just extend it and seal it, so the problem stop.

The author: So mostly you are teaching in lecture room is it?

No we have our own studio, sometimes we also teach outdoor, this is our architecture they allow our students to go to the site, and we just deliver our lecture there. We have a mix of lecture hall, studio and outdoor. That would be better, because student have different kind of scenario and experience and that's the good thing about our programme. Flexibility and this kind of opportunity.

The author: So AV equipment not much complain right?

No, it's just ok lah, fulfill basic.

The author: How about the informal learning space? What I mean here is the opened area outside the lecture and tutorial room.

Actually I would say that, privacy is a major concern. Another thing is the lighting condition, all fluorescent, which is very tiring, it is not a good learning condition. So we will prefer to have some yellow light, more cozy, so that the feeling is much more comfortable, like you go to Starbucks, you have a much more enclosed space, sitting lounge. Another thing is that this area is very lacked of vending machine that sells drinks and food. If you want to buy anything, you go out. So they should provide some vending machine around so that at least the students feel tired, they don't need to go out, get a cup of coffee. It is not happened?

The author: Do you think that the space is enough? There is many opened space but there is no table and chair.

I think the essential question is have the space comfortable. If the space is comfortable, it is always not enough, but if the space is just basic then people know and feel that it is not a comfortable space, I'm going home, Starbucks and cosy place to study, so people are running away. The fault is design issue, are we comfortable,

it's not about are we enough, is are we having comfortable space for the student to feel that it is nice to sit in. Even if I'm sleepy here I want to study I'm so tired and sleepy and when I need to get a cup of coffee, go outside. I walked out, spend half an hour then come back. So the thing that is provided is not sufficient. The comfort level is not sufficient from the designer point of view.

The author: Any other thing you want to add on?

I think I add on quite a number of things already, the car park is another issue and headache.

The author: Do you know why UTAR height is only limited to 10th floor?

Because of planning control, that means if they want to develop a project, the planning department in MPKj will look at it. They will zone it according to the zoning, they might have already zone that UTAR this piece of land, what is the density, they also put in the height control because of the surrounding environment. They don't want to build another giant or monster compared to other building. That one is about the planning control. The next thing is cost. Everyone think that we should build 30 floors, but do we have money? This building's construction cost is around 100 million. Do we have more money? Building an institution, we cannot get loan from the bank, so they build from the cash of donors, cash from the fund raising, from the saving account you saved for past 10 years, so get 100 mil. And it takes years to get back the money, it is not a good investment. This are the thing that come out with the solution, formula or recipe for this building.

The author: UTAR is not the developer?

In this case yes, UTAR is the client and also the developer, means they will get architect to design to design, and they tell architect what kind of space requirement, and the architect will go to the authority and check. "OK, this is the land and how much area they can build" and they just do conclusion saying that "ok, 10th floor is the maximum, you cannot go beyond that". Because you want to build higher, can,

authority say pay me lor. You have to fork up another three to five million as a donation. Then they allow you to build high, but do we have money? Or do we need it? Are we simply throwing away the money to the authority because just to build a few floor higher? That is the question that unless you can access the top management then they can only tell you the exact answer. Or it is a political decision because UTAR is MCA, MCA will link to UMNO... so I don't know, don't ask me, I did not involve in the planning and construction.

The feedback of this professional like that, but don't quote my name ah.

The author: How many years have you be an Architect?

Oh, 30 years. So it's long...

The author: So what are your speciality?

My speciality is to produce good architect students.