ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING QUALITY IN CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPMENTS IN SRI LANKA: A HOLISTIC APPROACH

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Degree of Master of Science in Project Management

Department of Building Economics

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and the dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a Degree or Diploma of any other University or institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published written by another person except where the acknowledgment is made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

The provision and need for quality housing is one of the most significant issues and a growing concern facing Colombo's rapid urbanization and increasing demand for housing. Condominium housing today has become a popular readymade solution to fill the void to meet with growing demands for accessible housing in the context of scarcity of land, infrastructure facilities and resources. However housing quality is given a lesser priority when meeting with quantity demands of the mid-income market which constitutes to a majority of condominium developments in the city.

Quality is a fundamental aspect in the assessment of condominiums to enable livable and sustainable environments for dwellers. The significance of quality recognition lies in the totality of attributes that define and govern human perception of the built environment. A holistic approach to define the physical components of the built environment that is reflective of user evaluations is important to enable sustainable housing designs. The aim of the research is to facilitate an overall framework capable of assessing the components of the built environment. It is however not intended as a measurement tool based on technical evaluations but one that is formulated through people's perception of quality elucidated through stakeholder opinions. The assessment identifies physical components of quality attributes that are most important for the respondents and define a set of subcomponents and value attributes relative to the housing complexes evaluated.

The literature survey identified various tools and techniques used for quality evaluations and establish the housing quality indicator (HQI) as suitable and flexible model which can cover an objective assessment of housing quality evaluations through an overall perspective. The criteria established under the HQI were used for an expert opinion survey to derive a set of quality indicators that are most suitable for mid-income condominium evaluations. From the review of literature and the expert study on opinions of developers, professionals and academics in the housing industry, a list of quality variables have been identified in relation to the main criteria established under the HQI model. The evaluation of the final framework draws on quantitative and qualitative attributes that indentifies physical performances and values reflected on the built environment. The usability of the conceptual model was re-established through final survey findings to test the developed model on selected schemes for evaluation purposes. Three key elements used for the further development of the model consisted of the conceptual framework re-established through the expert study, the questionnaire survey as a data gathering instrument and RII indices adopted for criteria assessments and comparisons.

The framework recognizes different facets relative to mid-income group's housing needs and the findings highlight attributes of Location, Accessibility, Neighbourhood, Sustainability though found significant to the respondents are the least prioritized by developers. Findings revealed that higher importance was placed by developers on basic amenities, unit size and internal arrangements that have direct impact on sellability.

The findings of this study demonstrate that housing is more than mere shelter, but a combination of several factors forming a pattern that is extremely diversified. It confirms that housing quality reflects on the built environment, on people's values and expectations. Quality improvements rely on the stakeholder evaluations on important attributes that define built quality in condominiums. It relies on the importance placed on environmental surroundings, and the socio-cultural recognition of the user group as well as the provision of amenities and functional housing units that promotes the health, convenience and emotional well-being of the occupants. To the mid-income group, identity and visual characteristics too played an important role in defining residential environments. The research aims to revalidate the importance of a holistic perception in evaluating built quality in condominium developments.

Keywords: ***Condominium assessments, built quality, holistic perceptions***

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