

Conference Paper

Residential Strategies Towards Mental Health Issues Due To The COVID-19 Global Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

House is actually a safe and comfortable place for its residents. Moreover, since the COVID-19 outbreak was declared as a global pandemic, especially a national disaster in March 2020, houses in essence and function have become an important concern. Starting from the "stay at home" policy, as much as possible reducing outside activities and even working from home makes people spend almost all of their time at home. This raises a new problem, the mental health of residents. This paper provides an overview of residential interior design strategies to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic by paying attention to the mental health of the occupants. The method used is a literature review by reviewing various literatures and findings in the field. Based on the results of this paper, it is known that there have been changes in aspects and strategies in the interior of the house in adapting to the pandemic to support the physical and mental health of residents.

Keywords: COVID-19, house, interior design, mental health

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on mental health caused by various problems and anxiety (Nasrullah & Sulaiman, 2021). The problem comes from Indonesia's government implementation of a 'stay at home' policy. Based on the calculation results Committee for Handling COVID-19 and Indonesian National Economic Recovery starting in March From 2020 to March 2021, there are around 1,456,811 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Amount that a lot and a sharp increase makes the government have to issue new policies. As written in the Indonesian Government Regulation Number 21 of 2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Restrictions in the context of Acceleration Handling of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) is set on March 31, 2020, and Regulations Minister of Health No. 9 of 2020 concerning PSBB Guidelines for the Acceleration of Handling Covid-19 was set on April 3, 2020, the Government issued PSBB policies, including: 1) School and workplace holidays; 2) Restrictions on religious activities; 3) Restrictions on activities in public places/facilities; 4) Restrictions on socio-cultural activities; 5) Restrictions on transportation modes; and 6) Restrictions on other activities related to defense and security aspects. This 'hose quarantine or stay at home' policy has made people have to stay at home for a long period of time without meeting and interacting directly with other individuals (Emily & Syenny, 2021) and also considered to prevent the outbreak of the disease and to ensure physical health (Paria Akbari et al, 2021). Following this recommendation as a preventative measure can leads negative psychological effects. Brook et al (2020) revealed that there are several psychological impacts when a pandemic occurs that is felt by the community such as post traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, confusion, frustration, insomnia, and feeling powerless. Boredom, hopelessness, isolation and unhappiness also being the after effect. Inadequate residential environments can also lead to poor mental health (L.Marais et al, 2013).

Mental health is a fundamental component that needs to be maximized for a better quality of life. Good mental health enables people to realize their potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their communities (Nasrullah & Sulaiman, 2021). WHO describes the relationship between mental health and housing that can help during the COVID-19

pandemic into two important principles, by improving the quality of home environment and reducing psychological stress. In the past, mental health was underestimated because psychologists focused on physical health (E. Diener, 2009), but recently happiness, serenity, sympathy, attachment, and feelings of love for each others in order to increase positive emotions are more considered (M. Bagheri and AA Shahroudi, 2018). In addition, the main environmental indicators that affect the comfort of the occupants to improve their mental health such as view, daylight, air, and acoustic quality (Paria Akbari et al, 2021) are also getting more attention. On the other hand, the relationship between activities in the home that can improve mental health such as maintaining plants, indoor and outdoor sports, maximizing the function of the kitchen (Paria Akbari et al, 2021) which provide cooking and baking, having an open space in the form of a balcony, backyards, or public spaces (Emily and Syenny, 2021) are also starting to become residents' preferences. Furthermore, old concepts such as green space reappeared in an effort to improve the comfort and mental health of residents, as well as new concepts in the form of essentiality and spirituality according to Indonesia Trend Forecasting (ITF 2021) as described by Ratna Andriani N. et al, 2021 which also offers the same.

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that more attention is needed to mental health impacts during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the 'stay at home' policy. Previous research has been conducted on similar topics, but in different environmental conditions and countries. Research on the impact of mental health during home quarantine in Indonesia is very rare, both in terms of qualitative and quantitative, especially in the architectural aspect. The current research aims to explore changes in aspects of the interior residential when facing the COVID-19 pandemic and to find out the problems and obstacles caused to residents during the 'stay at home' period. This study also provides a description of space planning strategies in the house to facilitate various activities that provide occupant with mental health. This research is expected to provide a residential study that pays attention to mental health so that it can be considered by interior designers and architects in particular in planning and building houses related to pandemic conditions.

Material and Methods

The method used in this research is a qualitative approach method. This qualitative approach seeks to understand, examine, and interpret the meaning (Aldila et al, 2021) in the COVID-19 pandemic situation that change aspects of life and affect mental health according to the researcher's own perspective. Literature studies were also carried out in order to understand the meaning maximally. The data collection technique is extracting information based on several written sources such as books, articles, journals, magazines, and documents in accordance with the problems studied, to strengthen the arguments in this study (Nasrullah & Sulaiman, 2021). Literature reviews only based on written works, including research results, both published and unpublished (Embun, 2012).

Results and Discussion

Physical Environment Factor towards Mental Comfort

Preferences for healthy housing in each countries due to social, economic, and cultural condition can have different results. Evenmore little research has been done on the preferences of the occupant due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Zarrabi et al, 2021). However, research in the field of mental health and residential, such as view, noise, natural light, and open spaces have been studied. This are considered as indicators that improve the quality of housing.

Previous research by Mahsa Zarrabi et al, 2021 and Paria Akbari et al, 2021 evaluated that the comfort aspects of mental health in terms of the physical environment in the form of view quality, air quality, acoustic quality, and daylight quality are the most influential. This shows that residen-

tial needs to accommodate these aspects, such as the presence of balconies, terraces, wide windows for sunlight to enter, the presence of elements of gurgling water as an aspect of acoustic quality, and the existence of a small garden for outside views. Furthermore, studies on activities that are popular during this pandemic are also studied in terms of supporting mental health friendly homes space planning. Activities such as cultivation and physical exercises provide peace of mind so that mental health can be achieved.

Green Space and Public Open Space Concept

The meaning of the concept of Green space is an approach to building planning that seeks to minimize various harmful effects on human health and the environment (Sri R. and Christianto R., 2014). This concept is actually operated by taking into account environmental factors. In terms of mental health, the green space concept provides a system that adapts to nature such as wide openings for better air quality and views. Furthermore, the concept of public open space in question is the existence of open space in the house as a social media for occupants. The space does not need to be too large, but comfortable enough for occupants to relax as an important element in overcoming mental health disorders during this pandemic. These two concepts can be combined harmoniously into aspects of forming a comfortable space, for example, having a large window with a garden view with a patio is enough to provide happiness for residents.

Essentiality and Spirituality Concept

This concept is a new idea proposed by Indonesia Trend Forecasting 2021. The concept of Essentiality here is interpreted as the focus of life on basic things. With the Covid-19 pandemic, people are in a condition where the main priority of life is the basic things in meeting the needs of life (Ratna A.N, et al, 2021). In this concept, the house as a source of energy must give the impression of being happy and accommodate the basic necessities of life, namely healthy living which is applied to residential interiors with a combination of art deco, pop art, and retro styles to present a cheerful feel with the formation of curves and bright colors. Furthermore, Wasista, 2021, stated in the results of his research in Bali that the use of white paint and other bright colors is starting to be widely used by local residents as a form of purity, peace, and hope in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

Furthermore, the concept of spirituality as a concept of returning to nature with public awareness of loving the earth, cultural preservation, and a lifestyle that is not excessive (Ratna A.N., 2021). In this concept the application of ethnic nuances, natural and exposed materials is presented in the interior of the dwelling. The goal of this concept is the attainment of equanimity and inner harmony. The colors carried are earthy colors such as green and brown.

These two concepts have contradictory aspects of the physical environment and psychological environment where essentiality is more about curved shapes with bright colors and conveys the impression of a healthy spirit of life, while spirituality is more about the formation of basic structures with warm colors from nature. However, it can be concluded that both have the same mission as can be seen in the picture below.



Figure 1. Common Goals Essentiality and Spiritual Concept diagram

It can be seen that although they have contradictory characteristics, these two concepts have a common goal, namely the achievement of safe and comfortable housing and providing positive vibes facing the COVID-19 pandemic..

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant changes towards house strategies to maintain the mental health of residents. It is undeniable, the main problem during the 'stay at home' period is where residents feel confined, isolated, have no social life, and yearn for the freedom to do outdoor activities. On the other hand, residents also have anxiety problems about the outside world so that maximizing the function of space in the house to complements all the needs of residents needs to be prioritized. Aspects of the physical environment such as daylight, view, water, and acoustic quality remain the main preferences for occupant comfort. However, concepts such as green space, open space, and essentiality and spirituality that present a calm and peaceful atmosphere and present natural ambience in the house are starting to become things that residents apply. In addition, the existence of spaces that accommodate secondary occupants' favorite activities during the Covid-19 pandemic such as cultivating, exercising indoors and outdoors within the scope of the house, seeing the scenery and chatting with house's occupants also needs to be considered as a means of maintaining Mental health of residents. This research is only a literature study of the phenomena encountered in the field at this time so that in the future further research can be continued by evaluating the condition of houses in Indonesia, especially in terms of geographical location and studies of occupant behavior related to local culture so as to find concrete results that can be used to consideration and as an opportunity for designers and architects in designing mental health friendly homes.

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