

## Reinventing Lohas: Assessing Housing Features Preferences for Retirement Homes

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### Abstract

There is an increasing demand for housing options that cater to the needs of older adults. Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability" (LOHAS) retirement homes that offer sustainable living options and amenities designed to support healthy living and lifestyle. There is an increasing demand for housing options that cater to the needs of older adults. Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability" (LOHAS) retirement homes that offer sustainable living options and amenities designed to support healthy living and lifestyle. This study aims to assess the housing feature preferences of older adults and identify the key features that are important for LOHAS retirement homes. Previous research on senior housing preferences has uncovered several interesting trends. Indeed, a significant portion of the elderly population, particularly those aged 85 and over, still aspire to remain in their own homes for as long as feasible. Furthermore, studies have found that young-old seniors (aged 60-74) are more likely to own a retirement home that supports their overall health and well-being within a senior-friendly neighborhood. This study aims to assess the housing feature preferences of older adults and identify the key features that are important for LOHAS retirement homes. This study used a quantitative approach including a survey. The survey includes 3 main attributes consisting of physical, location and financial. The findings reveal that financial loans or mortgages have a significant impact on LOHAS retirement homes ownership.

**Keywords:** Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability, Preferences, Retirement Home, Sustainable Home.

### Introduction

Malaysian Labor Law has implemented the retirement age in Malaysia as 60 years. In the year 2020, the number of Malaysians aged 60 years and above is estimated to 1.4 million and

increase to 3.3 million. At present, this percentage is expected to be 9.8% from the population (PMC, 2000). Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS) is a concept that focuses on health, the environment, personal development, social equity and sustainable living (Abdul Ghani et al., 2015). House buyers today are fully aware of their knowledge of choice of properties about environmentally-friendly neighborhoods and eco-friendly design. In regards to housing features, communities are well concerned with sustainable lifestyle especially for the aged population. LOHAS concept has two main features, namely physical terms and legal terms. Focusing on the physical terms are that barricades and walls surround for example the gated community that only the residents have the eligibility to access. It is supervised and controlled by security guards with the help of video camera surveillance and Closed Circuit Television (CCTV). The area is private, where the interior streets, provided facilities, amenities, and services are exclusively for the residents' use. In terms of management, a professional property manager is appointed to manage and maintain the excellent conditions of the gated community. Hence, it is under the strata law to provide a conducive living for the residents (Teck-Hong, 2011). LOHAS development concepts are coming up in the neighborhoods over the major cities in Malaysia such as Johor Bahru, Klang Valley and Penang. In reality, there are many property developers in Malaysia doing their utmost to build a greener approach by incorporating innovation and ecologically friendly designs in their developments to create a harmony with nature environment where the families can genuinely enjoy a well-balanced and sustainable lifestyle. As the population ages, there is an increasing demand for housing options that cater to the needs of older adults. One popular trend is the LOHAS retirement homes that offer sustainable living options and amenities designed to support healthy living. Understanding sustainable and liable housing for the elderly is essential because of their unique requirements. Housing needs to accommodate safety, mobility, and accessibility as the world's population ages in order to promote independence and quality of life (Van Hoof et al., 2020). Sustainable design lowers living expenses and energy use, which is important for people on fixed incomes. Isolation is fought by elements that enhance both physical and mental well-being, such as communal areas and natural sunlight. This deficiency creates obstacles for upcoming research as well as impeding stakeholders' comprehension of the complex relations between environmental sustainability, ageing, and residential environments. From the findings, policies and urban planning are informed by an understanding of these demands, which promotes age-friendly surroundings. Accessibility for all is guaranteed by universal design principles, which benefits the community at large. In general, this kind of research is in favour of sustainable living in the face of demographic change, better life quality, and healthy ageing.

### **Literature Review**

The evolving preferences of retirees regarding housing features as the number of retirees continues to grow, particularly in Malaysia where an aging population is expected by 2030. The number of retirees keep growth from year to year. Retirement can be defined as primarily rationalized by describing it as a reward for a lifetime of service (Atchley, 1974). In other word, it is the ending of working period as people stop their profession permanently. Malaysia will be ageing population less than 10 years from now which by 2030 (Tai & Sapuan, 2018). Malaysian Labor Law has implemented the retirement age in Malaysia is at 60 years. In the year 2020, the number of Malaysians aged 60 years and above is estimated to 1.4 million and increase to 3.3 million. At present, this percentage is expected to be 9.8% from the population (PMC, 2000). Besides, any man or woman who exceeding the age of 55 years can be classified

as elderly and consisted as retirement group. Retirement is often viewed as a reward for a lifetime of service, leading individuals to plan for their retirement lives, including the choice of a suitable home. However, practitioners face challenges in finding housing that caters to their changing physical conditions as they age. Due to entering retirement group, some of practitioners have planning their retirement life which one of it is the house for they spend their retirement life.

As soon they will grow older, they need a house that suitable with their physical condition. Year by year, the trends in housing features keep changes among the behavior people satisfaction through the generation. Some of practitioners prefer housing development that implement on the safety features, lifestyle of health sustainability and technology features as we live in modern era. All of this trend of house features needs to meet the needs with the condition for elderly. Safety housing development that developer carry out is housing features with gated and guarded community concept (Tahir & Abdul Malek, 2018). The research delves into the intersection of retirement planning and housing, addressing the increasing need for residences that align with the safety, health sustainability, and technological preferences of the elderly. One of the significant challenges faced by retirees is the lack of housing options that consider their changing needs. The article explores the emergence of Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS) concepts in housing, focusing on environmentally-friendly neighborhoods and eco-friendly designs. Furthermore, the need of technology, particularly smart home concepts, is discussed, highlighting the potential benefits for the elderly in terms of health monitoring and lifestyle management. The research intends to assess these evolving preferences to provide valuable insights into designing housing developments that meet the diverse needs of retirees in Malaysia.

### **Retiree**

The concept of retirement in Malaysia involves individuals drawing pensions and transitioning from paid employment. The government has increased the retirement age from 56 to 60, aiming to provide public servants with better financial security for retirement. By 2030, Malaysia is projected to have 14% of its population as senior citizens, aged 60 or above. This demographic shift necessitates thoughtful planning for housing provisions to meet the evolving needs of the elderly. Developers are adapting housing features to align with safety, health-conscious lifestyles, and technological aspects. However, proposed increases in the retirement age, such as raising it to 65, have faced public resistance. It is crucial to determine a reasonable retirement age that aligns with individuals' career life endings (Yassin et al., 2018; Krishnan et al., 2018; Tahir & Abdul Malek, 2018; Mario et al., 2017).

### **Housing Features for Retiree**

The trends in housing features keep changes among the behavior people satisfaction through the generation. Some practitioners prefer housing development that implements on the safety features, lifestyle of health sustainability and technology features as we live in the modern era. All of these trends of house features need to meet the needs of the condition for elderly. For instance, the safety housing development that developers carry out is housing features with gated and guarded community concept (Tahir et al., 2018). The safety housing development concept considers numerous elements that are important for secure gated community housing which focus on the elements of fencing, lighting, guardhouse and environment which provide security in protecting the community. For Lifestyle of Health and

Sustainability (LOHAS) is a concept that focuses on health, the environment, personal development, social equity and sustainable living (Abdul Ghani et al., 2015). House buyers today are fully aware of their knowledge of choice of properties about environmentally-friendly neighborhoods and eco-friendly design.

Retirees' preferences for housing features related to the Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability are influenced by various factors. The timing of retirement is a crucial factor influencing retirees' psychological well-being change patterns (Wang, 2007). Preferences for housing features are also impacted by different lifestyle orientations, which can influence consumers' choices for interior public spaces in high-rise buildings (Nguyen et al., 2022). Additionally, the "soft" features of sustainable housing, such as non-technological components and neighborhood design, play a significant role in impacting occupants' health and well-being (Prochorskaite et al., 2016). Furthermore, housing quality is crucially linked to health and sustainability goals, particularly in informal housing and settlements where housing quality is poor (Nix et al., 2020).

The concept of sustainable housing encompasses resource usage, energy efficiency, socio-cultural and natural structures, economic requirements, and people's lifestyles (Sanei et al., 2022). It is evident that housing mode may serve as a mediation variable between one's green lifestyle and their level of health (Lu et al., 2020). Moreover, the suitability of the housing model with meeting needs, the quality of the health situation in housing, and the amount of home green space significantly influence the sustainability of housing (Nasrabadi & Hataminejad, 2019). Car-free housing has primarily been studied from the perspective of lifestyle politics, emphasizing the commitment to pursue a sustainable lifestyle (Berglund-Snodgrass, 2022).

In conclusion, retirees' preferences for housing features related to the Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability are multifaceted, encompassing psychological well-being, lifestyle orientations, sustainable housing features, financial considerations, and political perspectives.

Table 1

*Housing Features Preferences Attributes for Retirement Home*

Authors	Housing Features Preference Attributes	Description
Physical	Choong and Cham 2014 Md. Yassin et al., 2018 Tahir & Abdul Malek, 2018	The concept of retirement in Malaysia involves individuals transitioning from paid employment, with a focus on adapting housing features to cater to the evolving physical needs of the elderly. Developers are incorporating safety elements and health-conscious amenities in housing projects
Location	Krishnan et al., 2018	The government has increased the retirement age from 56 to 60, aiming to enhance financial security for public servants in their retirement. By 2030, Malaysia anticipates 14% of its population to be senior citizens, prompting the need for thoughtful planning in housing provisions to accommodate this demographic shift
Financial	Mario A. et al., 2017 Tahir & Abdul Malek, 2018	Proposed increases in the retirement age, such as considering raising it to 65, have encountered public resistance. It is deemed crucial to establish a reasonable retirement age aligned with individuals' career life endings to ensure financial well-being during retirement

**Methodology**

In order to determine many traits that retirees want in their homes, a preliminary study is conducted, which includes a review of the pertinent literature. Subsequently, the study employs a questionnaire survey to align with the elements that retirees have selected as desirable in their dream homes. The researcher needs to comprehend the criteria and how they affected the preferences for selecting the residential property in order to identify the qualities that have the greatest influence on selecting house characteristics. Following that, the questionnaire survey was created using the list of qualities found in the literature review. All of the questions were meant to be closed-ended, using a range of nominal and ordinal scales for measures. Because the sample for this study consists of respondents in Johor Bahru who are between the ages of 40 and 60, purposive sampling techniques were chosen. A total of 385 respondents have finished responding to the questionnaires. In order to investigate the scenarios and characterise the norm, descriptive analysis was used for data analysis (Walliman, 2017). The survey's results will be utilised to identify the most important and preferred characteristics among the selected retirement home amenities. Examining each feature in turn will highlight the important aspects to take into account while promoting a retirement home.

### Analysis and Discussion

Majority of the practitioners were females (59.2%) aged 40-45 years (40.5%). Approximately 31.7% of practitioners were between the ages of 46 and 50, while 27.8% were 51 and older. 52.5% of practitioners work in the public sector, while 34.8% work in the private sector, according to their occupation. Moreover, 1.5% of practitioners worked for others, such as housewives and retirees, while 11.2% of practitioners worked for themselves.

Table 2

*Rank Preferences of each housing features/ attributes.*

Housing Features	Items	Strongly Agree	Rank
Physical	Landed	369	1
	Built-up area	365	2
	Guarded Security	346	3
Location	Nearby with living convenience	381	1
	Has many facilities in the neighborhood	374	2
	Near to health care services	369	3
Financial	Cash Money	314	1
	Retire scheme	302	2
	Loan	302	3

According to the Relative Importance Index (RII) findings, practitioners in Johor demonstrate a clear preference for specific attributes within physical, location, and financial aspects when considering retirement homes. In the realm of physical housing features, the top priorities for practitioners include the presence of a security guard on duty around-the-clock (RII = 0.778), a preference for living in landed housing (RII = 0.683), and the desire for a home with a built-up size larger than 1,100 square feet (RII = 0.592). These results emphasize the significance practitioners place on security, the type of housing structure, and spacious living arrangements.

Moving on to housing location attributes, practitioners in Johor express a strong inclination towards homes that are in close proximity to medical facilities such as clinics, hospitals, and pharmacies (RII = 0.568). Additionally, they value homes with numerous nearby amenities (RII = 0.512) and those situated in areas that offer living conveniences (RII = 0.376). This underscores the importance practitioners attribute to accessibility to healthcare services, a variety of amenities, and overall convenience in their preferred housing location.

In the financial housing market, practitioners in Johor exhibit a keen interest in various means of financing their retirement homes. The top three preferences include purchasing homes with loans or mortgages (RII = 0.815), utilizing retirement plans (RII = 0.796), and making outright purchases with cash money (RII = 0.784). These findings highlight the diverse financial strategies practitioners employ, showcasing a mix of loan-based, planned, and cash-driven approaches in acquiring their desired retirement residences. Overall, the RII results indicate that practitioners in Johor possess well-defined and balanced preferences across physical, location, and financial dimensions when it comes to selecting retirement homes, reflecting a comprehensive approach to their housing choices.

Table 3

*Relative Importance Index for Housing Features*

Housing Features	Items	RII	Rank
Physical	Guarded Security	0.778	1
	Landed	0.683	2
	Built-up area	0.592	3
Location	Near to health care services	0.568	1
	Has many facilities in the neighborhood	0.512	2
	Nearby with living convenience	0.376	3
Financial	Loan	0.815	1
	Retire scheme	0.796	2
	Cash Money	0.784	3

**Results and Conclusions**

Relative Importance Index (RII) results for practitioners in Johor both shed light on the factors influencing the housing preferences of retirees in the region.

**Physical Features:** The RII results align with the emphasis on physical features discussed in the statement. Practitioners in Johor highly value the presence of a security guard (RII = 0.778), indicating a strong preference for safety and security in their housing choices. Additionally, the preference for living in landed housing (RII = 0.683) and a larger built-up size (RII = 0.592) reflects a desire for spacious and traditional housing structures. This concurrence suggests that the physical attributes emphasized in the statement are indeed significant factors influencing the housing preferences of retirees in Johor.

**Location:** In terms of housing location attributes, the RII results and the statement align closely. Practitioners in Johor prioritize living in homes close to medical facilities (RII = 0.568), demonstrating a keen interest in accessible healthcare services. The preference for homes with lots of nearby amenities (RII = 0.512) and those close to living convenience (RII = 0.376) reinforces the importance of accessibility and convenience in the housing location, echoing the statement's emphasis on sufficient infrastructures and amenities in the vicinity. Proximity and accessibility influence practitioners choose a retirement home and be one of the factors of housing features preference. Understanding proximity and accessibility's function in retirement housing development settings can be improved by doing so. This study specifically looks at the connection between retail store accessibility and housing development (Myungjun et al., 2015). Based on previous study, the preferences of homebuyers are significant in the housing market because they serve as the foundation for predicting housing demand. They were the proximity to retail and service facilities, accessibility, and the relative cost of the location (Nursyuhada et al., 2012). Additionally, the difficulty of elderly physical conditions has increased practitioners worry about the distance between their place of residence and amenities available in housing area. So that, having a house in retirement housing development gives practitioners the comfort of easy access to nearby amenities including shops, hospitals, public transportation hubs and among many others (Kenn et al., 2018).

**Financial**

The financial aspect of a house has a significant impact on how practitioners choose a house after retirement. From previous research, financial status in regard to purchasing a house has previously been defined as a mix of the cost of the house, mortgage loans, income and repayment conditions. (Julius C. et al., 2015). A long-term loan with a set repayment time for a house purchase is another definition of financing. Malaysians have been troubled by the steady rise in housing costs. For the obvious majority of the people, this issue has sparked a discussion about the causes, the solutions and the budgeted level (Puvaneswary et al., 2019). According to Yunilsom M. et al., (2020), in the housing development process, price is derived by combining a number of variables. On the other hand, the income of practitioners affects the cost of purchasing a house.

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**Author Contributions**

All authors contribute to carry out the research, wrote and revised the article. The conceptualised the central research idea and provided the theoretical framework with designed the research, supervised research progress as well as anchored the review, revisions and approved.

**Conflict Of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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