

AN ASSESSMENT AVAILABILITY OF PHYSICAL FACILITIES PROVISION
THAT SUPPORT AVAIBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSON WITH
DISABILITIES AT UNIVERSITI TUN HUSSEIN ONN MALAYSIA

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DEDICATION

This research is especially dedicated to my supervisor,

PROF. MADYA DR. ROZILAH BINTI KASIM

Thanks for patience, continuous guidance and support

To my co supervisor

PROF. DR. MOHD IDRUS BIN MOHD MASIRIN

Thanks for help and support in this research

To both of my parents,

my father, NG HOCK and my mother, TEO YIK LAN

Thanks for the spiritual support

To my beloved friends,

Thanks for everything



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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of availability and accessibility physical facilities for Person with Disability (PWDs) in higher education institutions (HEIs) shall comply with the standard provision like American Disability Act 1990 (ADA 1990) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) respectively in wide ranging civil rights laws that prohibit, under certain circumstances, discrimination based on disability. In Malaysia, the provision that supporting physical facilities for PWDs are Person with Disabilities Act 685, Malaysia Standard (MS) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Information on difficulties facing by PWDs and views from stakeholders/facility managers are needed to improve the accessibility and availability physical facilities PWDs in HEIs. The consideration of equal accessibility to outdoor environments is still lacking. Discrepancies between the provided physical facilities and provision cause the problems with poor accessibility. The purpose of this study is to assess the physical facilities for PWDs in UTHM. This study has three objectives, first, to determine the physical facilities provision that supports availability and accessibility for PWDs at UTHM. Second, is to evaluate the difficulties encountered by PWDs to access the physical facilities. Third, to access the Stakeholders' view on the means through which the physical facilities for PWDs can be addressed. Thus, this study adopted qualitative method with documents review, observation with checklist, measurement, and photography. Besides that, interview and focus group discussion which involved 18 PWDs and 10 stakeholders in UTHM help to explore the daily difficulties faced by PWDs and to know how the stakeholders addressed the difficulties facing by person with disabilities in UTHM. Additionally, upgrading of existing PWDs facilities need to be undertaken by the facilities management department as it is the main demand from the stakeholders. Finally, the knowledge and awareness on the rights and needs of PW Ds facilities need to be enhanced either from the stakeholder and the facility managers.



ABSTRAK

Keberkesanan ketersediaan dan akses kemudahan fizikal untuk Orang Kurang Upaya (OKU) di institusi pengajian tinggi (IPT) hendaklah mematuhi perundangan seperti Akta *Disability American* 1990 (ADA 1990) dan Akta Diskriminasi Kurang Upaya 1995 (DDA 1995) yang melindungi hak-hak OKU, di bawah keadaan tertentu, larangan diskriminasi berdasarkan kecacatan. Di Malaysia, perundangan yang menyokong kemudahan fizikal untuk OKU adalah Akta Orang Kurang Upaya 685, Malaysia Standard (MS) dan Reka Bentuk Pembelajaran Universal (UDL). Maklumat mengenai kesukaran yang dihadapi oleh OKU dan pandangan daripada pihak pengurusan/pengurus kemudahan amat diperlukan untuk meningkatkan ketersediaan dan akses kemudahan fizikal OKU di IPT. Percanggahan antara kemudahan fizikal yang disediakan dengan peruntukan perundangan menyebabkan masalah OKU untuk mencapai kemudahan fizikal OKU. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menilai kemudahan fizikal untuk OKU di Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM). Objektif kajian pertama ialah memastikan keteradaan dan akses fasiliti fizikal OKU di UTHM. Objektif kajian kedua ialah menilai masalah yang dihadapi oleh OKU UTHM. Objektif kajian ketiga ialah mengakses pandangan para pemegangtaruh ke atas penyelesaian masalah OKU di UTHM. Ahi Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif dengan kajian semula dokumen, pemerhatian dengan senarai semak, pengukuran, dan fotografi. Selain itu, temu bual dan perbincangan kumpulan fokus yang melibatkan 18 OKU dan 10 pihak berkaitan/ pengurus fasiliti dalam UTHM ditemubual untuk meneroka masalah harian yang dihadapi oleh OKU dan mengetahui bagaimana pihak berkaitan menangani kesukaran yang dihadapi oleh OKU dalam UTHM. Selain itu, penambahan fasiliti OKU sedia ada perlu diusahakan oleh pengurusan fasiliti kerana ia merupakan permintaan utama dari pihak pemegangtaruh. Akhir sekali, pengetahuan dan kesedaran tentang hak dan keperluan fasiliti OKU perlu dipertingkatkan samada dari pihak pemegangtaruh dan pengurus fasiliti.



CONTENTS

TITLE	i
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ABSTRAK	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF SYMBOLS	xviii
LIST OF APPEDIXES	xix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background of Research	1
1.2 Problem Statement	4
1.3 Research Question	6
1.4 Research Aims and Objective	7
1.5 Research Scope	7
1.6 Research Methodology	8
1.6.1 Stage 1	8
1.6.2 Stage 2	8
1.6.3 Stage 3	9
1.6.4 Stage 4	9
1.6.5 Stage 5	10
1.7 Structure of the thesis	12
1.7.1 Chapter 1: Introduction	12
1.7.2 Chapter 2: Literature review	13



1.7.3	Chapter 3: Research design and methodology	13
1.7.4	Chapter 4: Qualitative data analysis	14
1.7.5	Chapter 5: Qualitative data analysis	15
1.7.6	Chapter 6: Recommendations and conclusion	15

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction	16
2.2	Facility Management understandings	17
2.2.1	Definition Facility Management	17
2.2.2	FM Practice PWDs provision in HEIs	19
2.3	Type of person with disabilities	26
2.3.1	Classifications of disabilities	27
2.4	Models of disability	30
2.4.1	Medical model of disability	31
2.4.2	Expert/professional model of disability	31
2.4.3	Rights-based model of disability	31
2.4.4	Tragedy/charity model of disability	31
2.4.5	Religious/moral model of disability	32
2.4.6	Economic model of disability	32
2.4.7	Customer / empowering model of disability	32
2.4.8	Rehabilitation model of disability	33
2.4.9	Social model of disability	33
2.5	Existing standard, policy and guidelines for PWDs	36
2.5.1	Malaysian Standard Code of Practice on Access for Disabled Persons	36
2.5.2	Malaysian Standard 1183:1990, Code of Practice for Means of Escape for Disabled Persons	36
2.5.3	Malaysian Standard 1331:2003, Code of Practice for Access for Disabled Persons Outside Buildings (First Revision)	36
2.5.4	Disabled Persons Act the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008	36
2.5.5	Universal design and barrier-free environment Universal Design	37



2.6	Higher education institutions in Malaysia	38
2.6.1	The Role of HEIs	38
2.7	Existing framework/ model to evaluate the facilities for PWDS in HEIs	42
2.8	Theoretical framework development	46
2.9	Research framework	47
2.9.1	Document review	50
2.9.1.1	Specification document review	55
2.10	Summary	70

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHOD

3.1	Introduction	71
3.2	Research Design	72
3.3	Preliminary stage	72
3.3.1	Development of research objectives and questions	73
3.4	Middle stage	74
3.4.1	Research Approach	74
3.4.2	Research framework design to evaluate the facilities provisions for PWDS in UTHM	74
3.4.3	Research Flow	75
3.4.4	Research strategy	77
3.4.4.1	Case research approach (qualitative)	77
3.4.4.2	Rationales for the choice of single case research	79
3.4.4.3	Case Institutions	81
3.4.4.4	Rationales for the choice	83
3.4.5	Methods of data collection	84
3.4.5.1	Qualitative method	84
3.4.5.2	Document review	85
3.4.5.3	Interview	86
3.4.5.4	Observation	88
3.4.6	Methods of data analysis	91
3.4.6.1	Thematic Analysis	91
3.5	Final stage	93



3.5.1	Summary of data collection and data analysis procedures	94
3.6	Summary	95

CHAPTER 4 AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF PHYSICAL FACILITIES PROVISION THAT SUPPORT PWDs

4.1	Introduction	96
4.2	Research Objective 1: To determine the physical facilities provision that support availability and accessibility for PWDs at UTHM.	96
4.3	Research flow	96
4.4	Method or Instruments Used	98
4.4.1	Observation	98
4.5	The result checklist of physical facilities provision that support availability and accessibility for PWDs at UTHM	100
4.5.1	The evidence photos Availability PWDs facilities in UTHM (main campus)	101
4.5.2	Accessibility PWDs facilities at UTHM	136
4.5.3	Analysis on Specifications of PWDs facilities provision at UTHM	137
4.6	General discrepancies facilities PWDs in UTHM	142
4.7	Summary	149

CHAPTER 5 STAKEHOLDERS' DIFFICULTIES AND VIEWS ON

5.1	Introduction	150
5.2	Research methodology flow to evaluate the physical facilities provisions for PWDs at UTHM	150
5.3	Research Objective 2: To evaluate the difficulties encountered by PWDs to access the physical in UTHM	152
5.3.1	Method or Instruments Used	152
5.3.2	Interview Survey	152
5.3.2.1	Interview Conducted with Staff with Disabilities	153
5.4	Data Analysis and Discussion	154

5.4.1	Theme 1: Difficulties in Accessing Physical Arrangement vs. Connectivity	156
5.4.2	Theme 2: Difficulties on Facilitate to Support Connectivity	158
5.4.3	Theme 3: Difficulties Experience/Barrier Sanitary/Toiletries	159
5.4.4	Theme 4: Difficulties in Communication with Staff UTHM	160
5.5	Research Objective 3: To access the Stakeholders' view on the means through which the physical facilities for PWDs can be addressed	162
5.5.1	Method or Instruments Used	162
5.5.2	Interview Survey	162
5.6	Theme	167
5.6.1	Theme 1: Barrier of Physical Environment	167
5.6.2	Theme 2: Budget and Financial	169
5.6.3	Theme 3: Lack of Knowledge Malaysian Standard and Universal Design PWDs	169
5.6.4	Theme 4: Lack of Awareness and Right of PWDs	169
5.6.5	Theme 5: Lack of Trained Staff	170
5.6.6	Theme 6: Lack of Assessment specification	171
5.7	Summary	171

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1	Introduction	172
6.2	Summary of findings	172
6.2.2	Research objective 1: To determine the physical facilities provision that supports availability and accessibility for PWDs at HEIs.	173
6.2.2.1	Summary of findings for Availability of Physical Facilities for PWDs	173
6.2.2.2	Summary of findings for Accessibility of Physical Facilities for PWDs	174

6.2.3	Research objective 2: To evaluate the difficulties encountered by PWDs to access the physical in UTHM.	176
6.2.4	Research objective 3: To access the Stakeholders' view on the means through which the physical facilities for PWDs can be addressed.	177
6.3	Limitation of the study	177
6.4	Contribution of the research	178
6.4.1	To the new knowledge	178
6.4.2.	To practical knowledge	179
6.4.2.1	HEIs	179
6.5	Recommendation for the research	179
6.5.1	Recommendation for Action:	179
6.5.2	Recommendation for Further Studies	180
6.6	Overall conclusion	180

REFERENCES

181

APPENDIX

188



LIST OF TABLES

1.1	Research approach and tools	11
2.1	Summary of definitions of facility management	18
2.2	Type of disabilities	29
2.3	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health	29
2.4	Standard, provision and legal for PWDs	37
2.5	List of public universities in Malaysia	38
2.6	Number of Disabled Student's enrolment by disability type in public HEIs for 2012-2015	40
2.7	Statistics on PWD's as at June 2016	41
2.8	Existing studies Facilities for PWDs in HEIs	43
2.9	Theoretical framework	47
2.10	Specification space allowance	55
2.11	Specification car park	57
2.12	Specification pathway	57
2.13	Specification ramp	59
2.14	Specification Kerb Ramps	60
2.15	Specification guiding block	60
2.16	Specification handrail	62
2.17	Specification staircase	63
2.18	Specification lift	64
2.19	Specification doorways	65
2.20	Specification signage	67
2.21	Specification toilet	69
3.1	Research strategies and their corresponding questions	77
3.2	Details of interview	88
3.3	Access auditing score	89
3.4	Compliance Rating	89



3.5	Details of observation/ measurement/photography	90
3.6	Summary of the research objectives and their corresponding types of data, data collection and analysis procedures	94
4.1	Details of observation	98
4.2	Results for disabled facilities at main building and infrastructure	99
4.3	Availability PWDs Facilities at UTHM (main campus)	102
4.4	Comparison of the measurement for physical facilities PWDs between Malaysian Standard and facilities provided by UTHM	136
4.5	Summary of Accessibility analysis of selected facilities provided in UTHM	143
5.1	Summary of the Difficulties encountered by PWDs to access the physical in UTHM	155
5.2	Summary of Stakeholders' view on the means through which the physical facilities for PWDs can be addressed	166



LIST OF FIGURES

1.1	Research Plan	10
2.1	Cluster of support services	24
2.2	Model of Disabilities	35
2.3	Model of Social	35
2.4	Theoretical research framework	48
2.5	Space allowance for wheelchair	55
2.6	Forward reach without obstruction	56
2.7	Down reach without obstruction	56
2.8	Space allowance for walkers(s) with crutches	56
2.9	Space allowance for wheelchair	57
2.10	Parking spaces	58
2.11	Minimum clear width for single wheelchair	58
2.12	Minimum clear width for two wheelchairs	58
2.13	Minimum clearance for 90° turn	59
2.14	Minimum clearance for 90° turn for 2 wheelchairs	59
2.15	Grading level differences at vehicle driveway	60
2.16	Types of guiding block	61
2.17	Diverse arrangement of guiding blocks	61
2.18	Stairs and crosswalk	62
2.19	Handrails	62
2.20	Stairs	63
2.21	Allowance in lifts	65
2.22	Slide Door	65
2.23	Doorways	66
2.24	Outsides of door	66
2.25	Direction graphics signage	67



2.26	Maps and information panels for disabled	68
2.27	International recognized symbol	68
2.28	Water closet	69
3.1	Overall design of the research	72
3.2	Research flow to improve the availability and accessibility physical facilities provisions for PWDs at UTHM	76
3.3	(4) types of case study design	79
3.4	The research's single case, with multiple embedded units of analysis	81
3.5	Picture UTHM	82
3.6	List of lecture room in UTHM (Source: Facility Management Office, UTHM 2017)	82
3.7	Triangulation by method (Braun & Clarke, 2006)	84
4.1	Research flow	97
4.2	Qualitative Data Collection Structure to evaluate the facilities provisions for PWDs at UTHM	98
4.3	Step and Gradient Ramp	138
4.4	Door & Entrance	138
4.5	Passing and Turning Space	139
4.6	Side dox Flooring	139
4.7	Wheelchair seating spaces in auditorium	140
4.8	Photo- electric sensor	140
4.9	Water Set	141
4.10	Flooring	141
5.1	Research frame work	151
5.2	Qualitative Data Collection Structure to evaluate the facilities provisions for PWDs at UTHM	152
5.3	Interview Survey to evaluate the difficulties access facilities provisions for PWDs at UTHM	153
5.4	Theme Difficulties Faced by PWDs	154
5.4	Buildings UTHM PWDs facilities attributes from interview	155
5.5	Qualitative Data Collection Structure to access the Stakeholders' view on the means through which the physical facilities for PWDs can be addressed	162
5.6	Framework interview to 10 stakeholders	163



5.8	Theme of the stakeholders view on the means through which the physical facilities for PWDs were addressed	167
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LIST OF SYMBOLS

CBR	Community based Rehabilitation
CRPD	Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DU	Disability Units
FM	Facilities Management
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
ICIDH	International Classification of Impairments. Handicaps
IEP	Inclusive Education Program
JKM	Social Welfare Department
MEB	Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Educational
MS	Malaysian Standard
MWFCD	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
NEP	National Education Philosophy
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
PEMANDU	Performance Management and Delivery Unit
PWDs	Person with disabilities
SEN	Special Education Need
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UN	The United Nations
UTHM	Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia
WHO	World Health Organization



LIST OF APPENDIXES

A	Interview Question	188
B	Buildings in Main Campus UTHM	191
C	Checklist for disabled facilities at main building and infrastructure	214
D	Availability Physical Facilities Score Point in UTHM	216
E	Students with Disabled	229



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) cannot refuse a student admission simply because the student has a form of disability, yet HEIs will not admit a student based only on the fact that he has a disability (Abidin, 2011). The number of students with disabilities who attend HEIs is increasing every year (Higher Education Statistic, 2017). In verse, HEIs has to make sure the availability and accessibility for PWDs to manage their social life, lectures, and at times - assignments as well based on the equality rights of PWDs to access all facilities (Law of Malaysia; Person with Disabilities Act 685, 2008). Education is important to everyone included PWDs. The lack of avail and access in HEIs limited mobility and burden social life of PWDs. Therefore, PWDs always suffer in poverty, political and social including the waived right to access equitable and quality education (WHO, 2011a). Availability and accessibility in the HEIs is often associated with PWDs, the lack of avail and access will dismiss the rights of PWDs towards accessing to the physical facilities and their discrimination of equal participation in the activities in HEIs.

The significant global scene was identified when states and the United Kingdom, the disability movement has been continuously involved through the American Disability Act 1990 (ADA 1990) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) respectively in wide ranging civil rights laws that prohibit, under certain circumstances, discrimination based on disability. The United Nations (UN) established the Human Rights Council in 1995. In 1999, through the World Health

Organization, the UN replaced the International Classification of Impairments, Handicaps (ICIDH) with the International Classification of Functioning and Disability (ICF), which was concerned with the function in participation and social integration of persons with disabilities. There was a shift from the medical model with its focus on the impairments, to the social model with the focus on social barriers and discrimination. In May 2007, the UN declared the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as the first international law for the protection and promotion of human dignity of people with disabilities in all societies, with signatories and ratification by many countries around the world. International Association of Universities, 2008 rules most of the developed countries to practice equity in HEIs to increase the enrolment for PWDs (Gale & Parker, 2013).

In Malaysia, Law of Malaysia, Person with Disabilities Act 685, 2008, Malaysia Standard - MS1184:2003 and MS1183:2003 and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), inclusive curriculum, the provision of supporting services as well as infrastructure. Meanwhile, MOHE with Educational Act, 1996 and Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (MEB 2015-2025), Chapter 4: Equality Policy and Practices, MEB 2015-2025 stress on equitable access education for all, therefore, seeks to provide students with disabilities with greater opportunities to access tertiary education. PWDs have equal opportunity in access to education from pre-school to higher education as has been stated in the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008. The strategies emphasize Special Educational Need (SEN) in the Policies and Action Plans for PWDs (Department of Special Education, 2011). This is stated in National Education Philosophy (NEP) reinforced in the Education Act 1996.

Previous studies have shown that PWDs encounter difficulties during application further education in HEIs. The lack avail and access in HEIs disadvantaged PWDs attendance, retention, survival and academic completion rates (Croft, 2010). Equity issues in HEIs have drawn the low enrolment and high quit graph of PWDs (Bauman *et al.*, 2005). The low enrolment and high quit rate PWDs in HEIs attract the attention of policymakers and HEIs stakeholders (Foreman *et al.*, 2001). Nevertheless, there has been evidence of discrepancies within such disability movements and legal reformations. Report shown there is no good coordination between department and faculties in universities focusing on admission and special education need (SEN) (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2011). This reflects that legal and policy statements have not enforced the availability and accessibility of



physical facilities for PWDs. However, in some countries such as the US, comprehensive studies have been made to continuously improve laws/amendments for better educational provisions and availability and accessibility facilities for PWDs in actual settings (Christ & Stodden, 2015). In Malaysia, there have been many studies regarding educational provisions and facilities for PWDs, particularly after the MS 1183: 2003 and related legislations were enacted. However, if there is no further action, these laws cannot ensure that the problems faced by students with disabilities will be solved (Abdullah, 2016). The government has tended to formulate or reform legislations and policies without taking into consideration sufficient empirical and comprehensive specification in providing the physical facilities PWDs. Known little about specific discrepancies between the legal essence and the actual situations with regard to educational provisions and facilities (Peter, 2013). There was unfortunately no comprehensive and empirical study focusing on existing availability and accessibility issues in education institutions. Additionally, there has been evidence reflective of no further concern by the state and others in society towards educational provisions and facilities for PWDs over the past decade (Peter, 2013).

The other government agency that looks into providing special education to students with disabilities is the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD). Through its Social Welfare Department (JKM), learning and skills training services are implemented in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based rehabilitation (CBR) centers (Yap, 2014).

In addition, NGOs and the private sector plays an important role too in this field of education as there are non-profit learning and care centers (example, Malaysian Care Community Services, Kiwanis Centre) that provide early intervention, learning, rehabilitation and training programs for children with disabilities.

A good building design in HEIs supposed to fulfill availability and accessibility to cater to all of the requirements needed for the purpose of the principal education for all. Building design must integrate all of the requirements according to the act and standard practices in Malaysia, i.e. functional, user, performance and statutory requirements in order to achieve the design goals (Watt, 2012).

Built environment needs to be accessible to the entire user either by the able bodies or by the disabled ones which is also called as the PWDs. The needs of PWDs in the development cannot be ignored (Jayasooria *et al.*, 1997). However, access and



facilities provided for this group are often unable to meet their needs (Soltani, *et al.*, 2012). As in Malaysia, it is a mandatory for all public buildings to provide accessibility facilities for the PWDs since the requirements to fulfill the Malaysian Standard Codes of Practice for Disabled Persons (MS) are stated in the Uniform Building (Amendment) By-Laws (UBBL) 1991. Yet, the implementation of these codes of practice is always questioned by the user who feels that access and facilities provided are always not fulfilling the PWDs needs. Complaints and comments are still viewed, written and heard in mass media, highlighting the issue. (Kamarudin, 2007 *et al.*, 2012)

1.2 Problem Statement

Scholars often argue the barrier of PWDs is not a person attributes but a lack of availability and accessibility physical facilities that bound social mobility PWDs (Schulze, 2010). PWDs who study and work in UTHM face the difficulties due to the noncompliance of the availability and accessibility built environment (Nur, 2011). The difficulties will lead to the poor achievement either in study or work performance.

Availability and accessibility for PWDs have improved but reluctance among architects & owners to invest in facilities for user friendly because effect cost or aesthetic quality. The stakeholders might overlook the need of the PWDs as they always categorised as minority and no worth in investment. Discrimination happen where local authority officers tend to conceive disability, medically rather than environmentally being impairment as the problem to be overcome rather than the social or environmental barriers (Harrison & Dalton, 2015).

The pressure of demographic and changing of cultural patterns leads Elderly in Japan & Singapore to be living apart from their families independently (Asiah, *et al.*, 2014). In Malaysia, the statistics of population for the PWDs and elderly are reported to be increasingly. But report showed the availability and accessibility still in lack (Kamarudin, 2007). The lack of availability and accessibility leads the PWDs live depending on families or assistant and live no life independently. In MOHE, report shown that more of the public universities with PWDs (Higher Education Statistic, 2017). In UTHM, the amounts of PWDs were unpublished since year 2012 until 2017 due to the lack awareness of the stakeholders in UTHM. (Refer Table 2.6) It reflected

the view of stakeholders addressing the difficulties of PWDs in UTHM. PWDs who study or work in UTHM did not assess their right as PWDs.

There is always issues accessibility of built environment in Malaysia that legislation implementation and enforcement for PWDs are not well integrated and implemented (Yusof & Jones, 2016). PWDs and others who are with awareness right of PWDs have increasingly concern and questioned the effectiveness of these legislation and standards with disabilities in Malaysia as being unsatisfactory or ineffectual in their implementation and the design outcomes achieved due to the obvious lack of availability and accessibility. There are complaints to MOHE regarding the lack of availability and accessibility in universities that discriminated the right for PWDs to access the quality education (MOHE, 2017).

PWDs and stakeholders in UTHM shall aware and implement the Rights, Equality, Educational Provisions and Academic Buildings Facilities for Students with Disabilities in Higher Institution Malaysia need to priority to deliver educations for all. Equity aspiration means for PWDs occupy the friendly social and build environment with availability and accessibility physical facilities for PWDs.

Facility managers involved in service design on physical facilities for PWDs is very important to eliminating or mitigating barriers for PWDs. Facility managers well planned towards the physical environment for PWDs on spatial arrangements and finishes, lighting, acoustics, surfaces, handrails, ramps, steps, doorways etc. Besides that facility managers are very important to ensure the information such as accessible formats, tactile signage, clear notices and website for PWDs. Facility managers must be well verse in delivery efficiency communication with PWDs in writing, by telephone, face to face, and with assistive technology. Besides that, Facility managers must practice standard provision for PWDs. Management policies, procedures such as Malaysia Standards, Universal Design, Disabled Person Policy, and Person with Disabled Act 685 must be enforced by facility managers. The enforcement and implementation the regulations and rules that disadvantage some people must be audit and manage by facility managers. Facility managers must look into the matter and solve the negative attitudes such as prejudice, stereotypes and assumptions to PWDs.

The higher education system in Malaysia is one that has been molded by various historic, social and political factors. Among the developments and changes that have taken place over the last couple of years, limited attention has been placed on addressing issues of access, retention and participation of PWDs even though the

figure of enrollment PWDs in HEIs keep increasing as 140 PWDs from year 2012 to 2015 (Higher Education Statistic: Higher Education Sector, 2012 – 2015). This is notwithstanding the fact that they have been identified in various governmental policy documents as being historically disadvantaged and deserving of special attention.

It is within this context that some tertiary institutions in Malaysia have established so-called Disability Units (DU) to offer specialized services to their students with disabilities in order to facilitate access and integration of these students. Special Education Department, MOHE holds the primary responsibility to provide education for PWDs in Malaysia. The Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) in the Prime Minister's Department is tasked to oversee the implementation and to assess its progress in relation to the policies on education of PWDs. The question that arises is whether these units play a role in ensuring access and participation of PWDs or not and how they are viewed by different role players within the institution as well as students. UTHM shall have a Disability Units or related unit to handle the special need for PWDs. This study showed the actual compliance measurement and specification on seven (7) physical facilities PWDs in UTHM. In future, Centre of Excellent for Facility Management in UTHM shall look into the availability and accessibility physical facilities for PWDs and able to facilitate the facility managers or stakeholders to deliver the efficient physical facilities to PWDs.

1.3 Research question

More and more tertiary institutions, however, seems to focus on the mainstreaming and inclusion of students with disabilities. When faced with matters related to disability access and inclusion for staff and students, tertiary institutions are asking themselves the following questions:

- i) Do the physical facilities provisions in UTHM support PWDs?
- ii) Why do PWDs encounter difficulties to access physical facilities provision in UTHM?
- iii) How the stakeholders' view on the means through which the physical facilities provision for PWDs can be addressed in UTHM?

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