The Building Performance of Limas House; Dealing with Current Context

Widya Fransiska F Anwar*

*Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Sriwijaya, Indonesia

Email: widyafransiska@ft.unsri.ac.id

Abstract. The limas is one of the traditional building typologies in Palembang, the capital of Southern Sumatera Province, Indonesia. Currently, Limas is facing challenges due to change on social culture as well as the climate. This study aims to find out the performance of limas related to its capability in accommodating the changes of user activity and the climate. In order to achieve this aim, the study measured the thermal and visual performance of three Limas houses that are still used as place for living along as working area. Data were collected by field measurement and interview. The thermal and visual performance is observed by the building form, materials and openings. Analysis is done by using thermal and visual comfort simulation. The result is compared to the physical changes of limas buildings. The comparison shows layouts changes to fulfil the space needs for current activity. In general, the building performance of those three limas accommodates the user’s activity in current context but need some improvements for thermal and visual comfort. Paper suggests some actions of limas conservation that is responsive to climate and in accordance with user behavior.

1. Introduction

Over the years, traditional buildings reliability and existence always become a source for architectural learning. The local knowledge and wisdom might become the filter for modern architectural practice [1]. The used of local material and harmonization with the surrounding environment produced an adaptive architecture that well-suited with user behavior in the past time. The climate, rising temperatures and changes in lifestyle threaten this cultural heritage to its places and value [2, 3]. Therefore, in the conservation effort, it is necessary to pay attention to the effects of climate change on the durability of traditional buildings

Limas is one of the traditional building typologies in Indonesia. It is well known as regional identity and easily found in Palembang, the capital of Southern Sumatera Province. Limas house have stilt wooden structure and most of them are over 50 years old. Now, limas house is facing challenges due the change of climate and user’s social culture. Climate change meant here is the increase in surface temperature due to the increasing physical city development. Change in social culture is the lifestyle of current inhabitants that is different to the ones who lived in the past. In fact, limas still accommodates the activities of its users in current context. This paper assuming that the change on climate and culture lead to the change of the house, spatially and physically. Those changes will reduce the authenticity of the traditional value of limas if they are not well anticipated. Therefore, it is a need to find out the performance of limas related to today's climate issue and its capability in accommodating the changes of user behavior.

In order to achieve this aim, the study measured the thermal and visual performance of three limas houses that are still used as place for living and working. The observed limas were more than 50 years
old. These houses are still used and not abandoned. The measurement of *limas* included the dimension of the house, room and openings. The data from field measurement was analyzed by using thermal and visual comfort simulation.

2. The Architecture of *Limas*

Basically, *limas* is a traditional architecture house. As a place for living and social gathering, its length reaches up to 30 meters. Physically, it is built on the stilt structure, wooden panel and pyramidal roofs [4]. The specific characters of *limas* are the ornament on the roof named *simbar* and the split level at its main room named *kijing*. Some luxurious *limas* have wooden carving or paintings at their ornament and were owned by privileged family.

The spatial arrangement of *limas* follows a specific ordering system. The public zone starts from the terrace named *bengkilas bawah* (*bawah* means under) with a vertical transparent panel named as *pagar tenggalong*. The main room of the *limas* house is the *bengkilas tengah* and *bengkilas atas* (*tengah* mean middle, *atas* means upper). The levels between *bengkilas* are different. This difference or split level is known as *kijing* or *kekijing*. The dimension of split level is 15 to 40 cm of each *kijing*. At *bengkilas atas*, there is a room called *jogan* as guest room or working room. *Bengkilas* with its *kekijing* is a public space that is flexible in its use. The *bengkilas area* is the main room of the house that function as place for social such as family gathering or ceremony. This room serves as a living room in regular day. When there is an event, the *kekijing* become sitting area for the guests. The highest level at *bengkilas* is the sitting area for distinguished or person with higher status. The private area begins at *gegajah*. *Gegajah* room is between the bedrooms (named as *pangkeng*) that has same level with *bengkilas atas*. The back of the house is the semi-private area, named as *pelimpahan* which has similar function as family room. This room is connected to service area. The service area consists of kitchen, food processing room (named as *pawon* and *garang*) and wash room (named as *beraes*). Figure 1 show the architecture of *limas*.

![Figure 1. The generic architecture of *limas* house](image-url)

3. The building performance of traditional buildings

Traditional building is rooted from the idea of vernacular architecture. The vernacular architecture emphasizes on the local construction using local natural resources to produce original local architectural works as a reflection of the culture, history and environment [5]. It is the local genius that is well adapted to the local climate. The building performance of vernacular architecture was in accordance with the life of past people. As the climate and social lifestyle are changed, the performance of traditional building in current context of life is questioning. The unsuited performance leads to the action to manipulate or change the architecture of the traditional building and further threatens its authenticity.

Building performance shows the sensitivity that can change the environment, inside and outside the building. The changes are resulted from the uncertainty scenarios of nature and user behavior or lifestyle [6]. By concerning the user behavior, building performance becomes an evaluation of understanding the
design solution that meet user’s requirement [7]. It is a further understanding on design adjustment for better internal environment [8].

The traditional building creates physical comfort to its users. In some cases, the traditional have good thermal performance throughout the years caused by its spatial layout and proven by calculation [9]. They also can create a good thermal and visual comfort from proper building orientation, adequate number of openings, suitable local materials and proper opening placement for natural lighting [10]. Traditional buildings also apply the low energy design principle by natural ventilation, orientation, form and solar shading [11].

4. Measuring the performance of traditional building
Traditional residential area is categorized as built heritage that must be sustainable economically, socially and environmentally. Measuring the environment performance of traditional building enables conservation efforts to achieve the sustainable built heritage conservation [12]. There are two aspects in measuring the building performance; the tools and the user of the building. There are many tools such as computer programs that can be used for measuring building performance. The tool should meet the objectives of practices of the study [13]. Users’ behavior determines the physical comfort performance of the building through the way they move and use the space in the building. Users have the ability to control the use of space in buildings to improve the performance of inner space conditioning such as temperature, air quality, lighting and even noise [7]. The ability of users to control the use of space make user behavior become the determinant of optimal building design, both in terms of convenience and use of energy [14]. User behavior is used to predict the performance of buildings especially for the purpose of saving energy and efficient simulation [15, 16]. User behavior can be assessed as culture, presence-action-interaction and satisfaction. Culture reflects the user behavior. User action in using light form 8 am to 8 pm is considered as user presence and action, while the difference action in using 5m² office plan for two or one user is considered as user interaction [13, 17]. Users satisfaction with the utility system or building appearance determine the performance of the building [18,19]. Besides those ways, there are also some measurable parameters had been used for assessing user behavior such as average indoor temperatures, average usage of perceived ventilation from user behavior of different characters [6].

5. Methodology
There are three limas houses being observed in this study. All of them are still used as place for living along as working area. Data were collected by field measurement and interview. The thermal and visual performance is observed by the building form, materials and openings. Analysis is done by using thermal and visual comfort simulation. The result is compared to the physical changes of limas buildings.

6. Result and Discussion
All of three observed objects are almost 100 years old and still used by the heirs of the first owner of the house. The first limas is owned by the family of Mr. Muhammad. The second one is owned by Mrs. Wak Da. The last one is owned by Mrs. Kikin. These three limas are located at 7 district Ulu, Palembang. The location is near the Musi River and Kenduru River, one of old area in Palembang. The limas of Muhammad dan Kikin are facing the southwest while limas of Wak Da is facing north east (Figure 2).

6.1. The spatial layout and current use of the observed Limas
The Limas of Muhammad is 9.26 meter in width and 16.3 meter in length (Figure 3). The house is facing the village path, oriented to the southwest. The owner did the renovation by adding the kitchen and bathroom at backside of the house. Renovation did not cause any significant change to the limas shape of this house. The house is used as a living place as well as a clothing store. The layout of the house is still same as the generic plan of limas house, except one of bedroom (pangkeng) was removed. From the interview and field observation, the rooms that has opening are the bengkilas bawah (terrace), bengkilas tengah, bengkilas atas (main room) and three pangkengs (bedrooms). Each room is equipped with artificial lighting for day and night usage. The electric fans are found in the bedroom and the main room.
Figure 2. The location of Limas Muhammad (1), Limas Wak Da (2), Limas Kikin (3)

The limas of Wak Da and limas of Kikin are located next to Kenduruan river, a tributary of Musi River (Figure 4 and Figure 5). Limas of Wak Da is 10.2 meter in width and 14.46 meter. This has no additional room. The spatial layout is similar to the generic layout of limas. Therefore, this house still has limas appearance. The change was found in spatial layout. Due to the business of wedding organizer and rental caterer utensil, two of bedrooms are changed. One becomes the storage of equipment and the other one was merge with the living room. The rooms that have openings are bengkilas (main room) and pangkeng (bedrooms). The bengkilas bawah (terrace) is opened since the pagar tenggalong (transparent wall) has been removed. Rooms are equipped with artificial lighting for night usage.

Figure 3. The plan of limas Muhammad. Figure 4. The plan of limas Wak Da. Figure 5. The plan of limas Kikin

Limas Kikin is the smallest one among the three observed limas (Figure 5). It has 8.10 meter in width and 6.6 meter in length. This limas is located next to the Kenduruan River and facing the street. Therefore, the front side of the house is transformed into a small shop for selling food and snack. The shop has different roof structure and use masonry for wall structure. The layout of limas is not changed, except the bengkilas area. Because of the small shop function, the bengkilas area is used for kitchen and food processing area at one side and living room at the other side. The public and services zone has no clear border at this area. Because of the small shop, the bengkilas area has limited natural lighting. The rooms with openings are only at bedroom and family room. The artificial lightings are found at bengkilas area for day and night usage, and bedroom for night usage.
6.2. User behavior on thermal and visual comfort

Physically, traditional buildings have a passive design for low energy use [20]. Traditional buildings are designed to receive a lot of solar energy with little use. Therefore, the principle of zero energy building design has been applied to traditional buildings [21]. In current context, the climate is not same as in the time when the limas house was built. Therefore, the user might change their behavior and activity to fulfill their comfort. As limas was built when there was no electricity, the rooms depended on natural lighting from windows. In current context, when the electricity is available, the artificial lights are used in each room and use at night. The lights are also use for daily activity only if the natural lighting is insufficient for detailed work.

The current activities in limas influence the resident to make some changes on their house. The limas of Muhammad is also used for selling clothing products. The cloths and the show case were positioned at public area (bengkiloas tengah). For visual comfort, the artificial lights were placed at the ceiling. The lights were used at day and night. For day use, the lights were on along with the natural lighting from window. Similar to this, the limas of Kikin also use the front area of the house for selling the snacks and drinks. The transparent pagar tenggalong were replaced by a masonry wall. Therefore, the natural lighting was blocked by the wall. The artificial lights were placed at the bengkiloas tengah that was used for kitchen and public area. The lights were use at day and night. On the other hand, the resident of limas of Wak Da had different behaviour. The user drastically removed the wall of bengkiloas bawah (terrace). The windows were opened at day for natural lighting. The artificial lightings are placed at all rooms and only used at night. The natural lighting is sufficient for resident’s activities.

For thermal comfort, the limas of Muhammad and Kikin have electric fans inside the bedroom and the living room. The average usage of fan was in the noon and afternoon. The field measurement had done in October 2017. The measurement was conducted in the morning from 09.00 am to 01.00 pm, and evening at 03.00 pm to 06.00 pm. All of the residents turn on the light after 05.30 pm for night use. The average range of temperature was 26°C to 27°C at 09.00 am and increased to 29°C to 30°C at 01.00 pm. The illumination value was range from 60 to 80 lux. In the evening, the average range of temperature reached 29°C to 30°C at 03.00 pm and decreased to 28°C at 05.00 pm. Table 1 shows the result of temperature and illumination measurement of the three Limas.

| Table 1. Temperature and illumination measurement of the observed limas. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Temperature | 09.00 am – 01.00pm | Temperature | 03.00pm – 06.00pm |
| Muhammad    | 27o to 29 °C | 60 lux at living room | 28o to 29°C | 48 lux at 05.30 pm |
|             | 68 lux at bedroom |                |           |
| Wak Da      | 26o to 30 °C | 80 lux at living room | 28o to 30°C | 50 lux at 05.30 pm |
|             | 68 lux at bedroom |                |           |
| Kikin       | 27o to 29 °C | 60 lux at living room | 28o to 29°C | 45 lux at 05.30 pm |
|             | 68 lux at bedroom |                |           |

6.3. Thermal and visual performance

The explanation of limas performance in the current context consists of two parts: thermal and visual performance. The first performance is aimed at knowing the thermal comforts in the limas house based on the room temperature. The second one intends to know the visual comfort in each space at limas house based on daylight level. The daylight level indicates the degree of illumination of incoming natural light. The analysis was done by using ecotec software v.5 with daylight factor of 10.000 lux for Indonesia [22] with brightness of openings 0.9. The result of the calculation is indicated by two pole of colors, extend from yellow to blue. The yellow pole means a high amount of illumination and temperature. The blue pole represents a small amount of light and temperature. Figure 6 and 7 show the performance of thermal and visual comfort of the three limas house. For visual comfort, the result was compared to the standard of illumination for visual work to examine the performance [22].
Figure 6. Thermal Comfort Performance

Figure 7. Visual Comfort Performance

Table 2. Illumination standard for visual work

| Visual Work                                           | Illuminance (lux) |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Regular vision                                       | 100               |
| Rough work with big details                          | 200               |
| Ordinary work, medium details                        | 400               |
| Heavy work with small details like drawing or sewing with a machine | 600               |
| Heavy work with small details, longer time like sewing by hand | 900               |
| Heavy duty work, very small details such as jewelry craftsmen | 1300-2000         |
| Extreme heavy work, very small details like fixing a watch | 2000-3000         |

Source: Satwiko, 2008
Figure 9 shows the thermal comfort in the three observed Limas. The calculation was set at 12 noon, October 21st, 2017. The result shows the indoor temperatures on the objects are relatively same, indicated by the color of blue. The indoor temperature of the three houses is in the average 32°C. There is no significant difference in thermal comfort of all objects. Figure 10 shows different explanation of visual comfort performance among three houses. The first object is Muhammad’s house. The visual comfort is range from 280 to 2240 lux. The area with highest illumination is the bengkilas bawah (terrace). The lowest range of illumination is 280 lux, located at bengkilas tengah (living room), bengkilas atas and gegajah (main room). The backside of the house receives more natural light since many windows located there. The pangkeng (bedrooms) get high light intensity at area under the window (280 to 1440 lux). The second limas is Wak Da’s House. The visual comfort is range from 24 to 4074 lux. The area with highest value of illumination is the bengkilas bawah (terrace), ranged from 3174 to 4074 lux. The lowest one is same as Muhammad’s house. However, the pangkengs (bedrooms) of Wak Da’s has lower range of illumination value, 24 to 924 lux. The area under the window has purple color, indicated low natural light. The last limas was Kikin’s. The visual comfort is ranged from 0 to 1440 lux. Its bengkilas bawah has lowest value of illumination. The pangkengs have 240 to 1440 lux of illumination with highest value at area under the windows. By comparing on the standard of illumination in Table 2, the small and detailed work can be done under the windows and terrace for all limas houses.

7. Conclusion
The three limas houses are still used as residence. In general, the formation of limas house does not change drastically. Building form of building, roof structure and spilt level are clearly showed. However, additional functions have been found. The change of user activities resulted in changes in spatial layout. It is the response on the residents’ business activity and the increasing number of family member. Related to the building performance, the indoor temperature in limas is relatively the same as the average temperature in Palembang, ranged from 26° to 32° C. It implies that the indoor temperature in limas house is relatively hot for daily activities. In present time, with high density of buildings in the city, the existing openings of limas house is not enough to cool its inner space. Similar to this, the existing opening of the three limas accommodates lighting for ordinary activities with non-detailed work. The detailed work can be done near the openings that have better visual performance than other areas. Therefore, the residents tend to achieve better performance by adding electrical fan or air conditioner as well as artificial lighting. The paper suggests to not changing the openings of limas since it will reduce the authenticity of architectural value. However, the action will bring consequences on incremental of electrical cost. Further study on to what extent the electrical devices used in limas for fulfilling the user demand should be conducted in the future.

8. References
[1] M Rashid and D R Ara 2015 Modernity in tradition: reflections on building design and technology in the Asian vernacular Frontiers of Architectural Research 4 46–55
[2] M Pearson 2007 Climate change and its impacts on australia’s cultural heritage. A Paper for the Australia ICOMOS Extreme Heritage Conference 2007 1–9
[3] S McIntyre-Tamwoy 2008 The impact of global climate change and cultural heritage: grasping the issues and defining the problem Historic Environment 21(1) 2–9
[4] Amiwarti 2016 Tata ruang dan fungsi limas sebagai warisan budaya Sumatera Selatan Jurnal Deformasi 1(1) 43-54
[5] G Suharjanto 2011 Membandingkan istilah arsitektur tradisional versus arsitektur vernakular: studi kasus bangunan Minangkabau dan bangunan Bali Jurnal ComTech 2(2) 592–602
[6] P Hoes, M Trcka, J L M Hensen and B H Bonnema 2011 Optimizing building designs using a robustness indicator with respect to user behavior Proceedings of the 12th Conference of the International Building Performance Simulation Association 14–16
[7] P Hoes, J L M Hensen, M G L C Loomans, B de Vries, and D Bourgeois 2009 User behavior in whole building simulation Energy and Buildings 41(3) 295–302. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enbuild.2008.09.008
[8] S N Kamaruzzaman, M A E Zawawi, M Pitt and Z Mhd Don 2010 Occupant feedback on indoor environmental quality in refurbished historic buildings International Journal of Physical Sciences 5(3) 192-199

[9] M K Singh, S Mahapatra and S K Atreya 2009 Bioclimatism and vernacular architecture of north-east India Building and Environment 44(5) 878–888 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.buildenv.2008.06.008

[10] A Oikonomou and F Bougiatioti 2011 Architectural structure and environmental performance of the traditional buildings in Florina, NW Greece Building and Environment 46(3) 669–689. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.buildenv.2010.09.012

[11] A T Nguyen, Q B Tran, D Q Tran and S Reiter 2011 An investigation on climate responsive design strategies of vernacular housing in Vietnam Building and Environment 46(10) 2088–2106 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.buildenv.2011.04.019

[12] D C W Ho, X G Janet, E Liusman 2015 Measuring building performance for sustainable built heritage Surveying and Built Environment 24(1) 41-62

[13] D B Crawley, J Hand, M Kummert, B T Griffith 2008 Contrasting the capabilities of building energy performance simulation programs Building and Environment 43(4) 661-673

[14] Z Yu, B C M Fung, F Haghghat, H Yoshino and E Morofsky 2011 A systematic procedure to study the influence of occupant behavior on building energy consumption Energy and Buildings 43(6) 1409–17 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enbuild.2011.02.002

[15] G Zimmermann 2007 Modeling and Simulation of Individual User Behavior for Building Performance Predictions Proceedings of the 2007 summer computer simulation conference 913-920 California

[16] D Yan, W O’Brien and H Wianzheng 2015 Occupant behavior modeling for building performance simulation: current state and future challenges Energy and Building 107 264-278 http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.enbuild.2015.08.032

[17] S R Wu, P Fan and J Chen 2016 Incorporating culture into sustainable development: a cultural sustainability index framework for green buildings Sustainable Development 24 64–76 DOI: 10.1002/sd.1608

[18] S N Kamaruzzaman and N Zulkifli 2014 Measures for building lighting performance in Malaysian historical buildings: a systematic review Journal of Surveying, Construction and Property 5(1) 1-15

[19] S N Kamaruzzaman, C O Egbu, E M A Zawawi, S B A Karim and C J Woon 2015 Occupants’ satisfaction toward building environmental quality: structural equation modeling approach Environ Monit Assess 187 242 DOI 10.1007/s10661-015-4447-0

[20] J Laustsen 2008 Energy efficiency requirements in building codes, energy efficiency policies for new buildings International Energy Agency (IEA) 2(8) 477-488.

[21] J Marszal and P Heiselberg 2012 Zero energy building definition – a literature review A technical report of subtask A. Task40/Annex52 1–16.

[22] P Satwiko 2008 Fisika Bangunan (Yogyakarta: Andi)