

Research Note/Nota Penyelidikan

**How Do Young Adolescents Spend Their
Waking Hours at Night**

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ABSTRACT

This study, conducted in 1997, sought to find out what young adolescents were doing at night; whether they were at home and if not, where they were and what they were doing during specific times of the night. The study raised two research questions, viz. what are the types of home environments of the adolescents? And is there enough space for all the members of the family? The sample consisted of 1842 young adolescents from low and middle-income families in the Klang Valley who were still attending school. The children lived mostly in less satisfactory housing in terms of the physical structure be it walk-up flats, high-rises, long houses or squatter houses. The study shows that on a normal evening during school term, most of the children were inside their houses. Only a small proportion remained outside, even till the late hours of the night. Children in the single bedroom flats and long houses slept later as compared to those in the other types of houses. During weekends, many of the children stayed out late in the evening, especially so among those from families living in bungalows, while it was least among children from families living in squatter houses.

Key words: Adolescents, social problems, home environments

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini yang dilakukan pada 1997, bertujuan meneliti apa yang dilakukan oleh para remaja pada waktu malam; sama ada mereka berada di rumah, atau sekiranya tidak, apa yang mereka lakukan pada waktu tertentu sebelah malam. Dua soalan penyelidikan diajukan, iaitu, apakah jenis persekitaran perumahan yang dialami mereka? Dan apakah terdapat ruang yang mencukupi bagi semua ahli keluarga mereka? Sampel kajian terdiri daripada 1842 responden yang masih bersekolah, dan berasal daripada keluarga berpendapatan rendah dan menengah di Lembah Klang. Tempat tinggal para remaja tersebut didapati tidak memuaskan dari segi struktur fizikal sama ada flat naik tangga, rumah pangsa, rumah panjang ataupun rumah setinggan. Kajian ini mendapati pada

sebelum malam hari biasa semasa penggal persekolahan, kebanyakan remaja itu berada di dalam rumah. Hanya sejumlah kecil berada di luar rumah, bahkan sampai larut malam. Remaja yang tinggal di flat satu bilik dan di rumah panjang tidur lebih lewat daripada mereka yang tinggal di rumah jenis lain. Pada malam hujung minggu, ramai remaja berada di luar sehingga lewat malam, khususnya remaja daripada keluarga yang tinggal di rumah banglo, manakala remaja yang tinggal di rumah setinggan paling sedikit bilangannya yang berbuat demikian.

Kata kunci: Remaja, masalah sosial, persekitaran perumahan

INTRODUCTION

Some of the problems facing society today can be attributed to activities involving children especially those in their adolescent years. Drug addiction, gangsterism, vandalism, prostitution and other anti-social activities are usually initiated amongst children in their teens, often due to the physical and social environments they are living in. It was felt that many children would stay out late in the night due to their parents not being around to provide supervision to them or that their homes were not suitable or too congested for them. There was perhaps too little space for too big a family.

This study – funded by Majlis Kanak-kanak Malaysia (Malaysian Children's Council) – was conducted in 1997 in Kuala Lumpur, with the objectives to find out what children were doing at night; whether they were at home and if not, where they were and what they were doing during specific times of the night. It tried to answer two research questions, viz. (1) What are the types of home environments of the adolescents?; and (2) Is there enough space for all the members of the family?

Nine secondary schools in Kuala Lumpur were selected for the study. They were from the areas of Sentul, Dato' Keramat, Jalan Pekeliling Flats, Jalan San Peng Flats, Wangsa Maju and Taman Melawati. The sampled schools were from neighbourhoods consisting of low and middle-income families. However, it is true that, even though the majority of the children from each school come from the respective local neighbourhood, a sizable minority come from other areas. Children chosen for the study were those in Forms I to form V.

A questionnaire was prepared by the researchers for the adolescents involved in the study to answer the questions posed for the research. The questionnaire was then administered to the students. The data were coded and analysed using SPSS – X.

FINDINGS

The research samples comprised of 1842 young adolescents who were still attending school and their ages ranged from 13 to 17 years old. These respondents from Form I – numbered 1002 (54.4%), Form II – 227 (12.3%), 18 (1%) from Form III, 457 (24.8%) from Form IV, and 138 (7.5%) from Form 5. There were few Form III students involved because of the incoming Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) Examination and they were not encouraged to participate by their teachers.

The respondents comprised of 1361 (73.9%) Malays, 365 (19.8%), Chinese, 90 (4.9%) Indian and 26 (1.4%) others.

Table 1 shows the type of housing these children were living in. Those living in detached or semi-detached houses were 4.8%, while 24.8% were living in 3 – 4 bedroom terrace houses. These types of housing could be considered as providing physically comfortable living environments and were relatively less congested. The rest were living in 3-bedroom flats (10.6%), 2-bedroom flats (40.1%), 1-bedroom flats (2.8%) and 1-2 bedroom long houses (2.1%). These types of housing are usually very congested with many families living in a confined space with little community amenities provided. Another 13.6% of the children were living in the squatter areas where the physical environments were poor. However, the houses were spread out and many could be expanded with added rooms in case of increase of occupants, a situation that is not possible for those living in the flats.

Table 2 gives the average number of children living together and average number of occupants in each type of housing. The average number of children in each of the 1842 families was 4.0 and number of occupants 6.5.

TABLE 1. Types of housing

Types of Housing	N (%)
Bungalow	88 (4.8)
3-4 room terrace houses	456 (24.8)
3-bedroom flats	195 (10.6)
2-bedroom flats	739 (40.1)
1-bedroom flats	52 (2.8)
Long house	38 (2.1)
Squatter house	250 (13.6)
No information	24 (1.3)
Total	1842 (100)

Source: Field work 1997

TABLE 2. Average number of children and family size
(Total no. of children = 7338; Total no. of occupants = 12038)

Housing	Average no. of children	Average no. of occupants
Bungalow/3-4 (88 units)	3.7	6.8
Terrace house (456 units)	4.0	6.6
3-bedroom flats (195 units)	4.2	6.6
2-bedroom flat (739 units)	4.0	6.4
1-bedroom flat (52 units)	3.5	6.0
Long house (38 units)	3.9	7.0
Squatter house (250 units)	4.3	7.0
No information (24 units)	—	—
Total	4.0	6.5

Source: Field work 1997

The smallest average number of children at 3.5 and the smallest average number of occupants at 6.0 were those living in the 1-bedroom flat. But it must be realised that all the occupants of the household had only 1-bedroom and the living room to share among themselves, especially at night.

The biggest family with the most number of children and occupants were those living in the squatter areas. This should be expected as families living in these areas came from the lowest social strata. As mentioned, it is possible to enlarge the houses and increase the number of rooms in these houses with increase of occupants.

Tables 3 to 17 show where the children were in the evenings until they went off to sleep for the night, Tables 3 to 5 shows the regular activities of these children on a normal day from Monday to Friday during a school term.

Table 3 shows what normally happened from 7.00-8.00 p.m. among these children. The majority of these children (95.3%) would be at home, most of them were involved in various activities such as doing homework, watching TV, helping the mother, etc. As expected most of them had not slept at this time. A small percentage (2.4%) would be out of the house.

Table 4 shows the situation of the children's activities at 9.00 – 10.00 p.m. The proportion of children inside the house had decreased slightly to 94.9%

while those who had gone out of the house had increased from 2.4% to 3.9%. Only a small proportion (3.3%) had slept by this time.

Table 5 shows the children's activities at 11.00 p.m. An average of 95.6% was in the house by this time and 82.1% had already slept. However, amongst those living in the 1-bedroom flats and the long houses, the percentages of those already sleeping were only 75.0% and 78.9%, whereas 85.2% and 84.0% have slept in the bungalows and squatter houses respectively. An average of 2.4% was still outside the house. The highest proportion still outside the house were those living in the bungalows (3.4%) and lowest in the squatter houses (0.8%).

Tables 6 to 8 show the activities of the children on Saturdays and Sundays of a regular weekend. On an average, 84.3% of the children was in the house and 13.2% outside at 7.00-8.00 p.m. (Table 6). The percentages of children outside the house vary from only 10.0% in the squatter home compared to 24.5% in a 3-bedroom flat.

Similarly, Table 6 shows the situation at 9.00-10.00 p.m. As expected more children were now in the house (88.6%) and only 9.9% outside. The highest proportion of those outside were those living in the bungalows (17.0%) and the lowest in the long houses (2.6%) and the squatter areas (7.6%). The situation at 11.00 p.m. shows that an average 75.1% was already asleep. However, only 67.3% and 68.4% were asleep in the long houses and the 1-bedroom flats whereas in the bungalows and squatter houses, the percentages were 78.4 and 79.6 respectively. Even at this late hour, 3.7% were still outside the house.

Tables 9 to 15 show the activities of these children in the last week-end and the last Monday before the study was conducted. This was done as it was felt that the events would still be fresh in the children's minds and thus any data collected would be more reliable.

Table 9 showed the activities the children were involved in at 7.00 p.m. on the Saturday. An average of 15.8% of the children was still outside the house at this time. However, the highest proportion of children outside their homes came from the bungalows (27.3%) and the lowest from the 3-bedroom flats (9.2%).

At 9.00 p.m. the number of children outside their homes was still relatively high at 14.7% (Table 10). However, by 11.00 p.m. 70.1% have already slept while 3.9% still outside the home (Table 11). Table 12 shows where the children were at 7-8 p.m. on Sunday. An average 12% was outside the homes, however the highest proportion of children outside their homes was those from the bungalows (17.0%). Similarly, Table 13 shows that at 9.00 p.m. the highest percentage of children outside their homes were those from the bungalows. At 11.00 p.m., the pattern was again evident when 6.8% of children in the bungalows were still outside their homes (Table 14).

Tables 15 to 17 show the pattern of the children's activities on the Monday. Table 15 shows that at 7.00 to 9.00 p.m. 90.0% were in the house and 5.6% outside. By 9.00 p.m. the pattern is still similar with 91.9% inside the

TABLE 3 – 5. Night activities of respondents, Monday to Friday

Type of Housing	Table 3: Monday to Friday 7-8 pm Activities					Table 4: Monday to Friday 9-10 pm Activities					Table 5: Monday to Friday 11 & above Activities				
	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total
Bungalow	–	83 (94.3)	5 (5.7)	–	88 (100)	9 (10.2)	75 (85.2)	3 (3.4)	1 (1.1)	88 (100)	75 (85.2)	9 (10.2)	3 (3.4)	1 (1.1)	88 (100)
Terrace	11 (2.4)	420 (92.1)	12 (2.6)	13 (2.9)	456 (100)	18 (3.9)	417 (91.4)	16 (3.5)	5 (1.1)	456 (100)	378 (82.9)	59 (12.9)	8 (1.8)	11 (2.4)	456 (100)
3 Bedroom flat	–	192 (98.5)	1 (0.5)	2 (1.0)	195 (100)	6 (3.1)	180 (92.3)	6 (3.1)	3 (1.5)	195 (100)	161 (82.6)	25 (12.8)	6 (3.1)	3 (1.5)	195 (100)
2 Bedroom flat	9 (1.2)	692 (93.6)	18 (2.4)	20 (2.7)	739 (100)	17 (2.3)	676 (91.5)	35 (4.7)	11 (1.5)	739 (100)	599 (81.0)	98 (13.3)	22 (3.0)	20 (2.7)	739 (100)
1 Bedroom flat	1 (1.9)	45 (86.5)	1 (1.9)	5 (9.6)	52 (100)	4 (7.7)	47 (90.4)	1 (1.9)	–	52 (100)	39 (75.0)	12 (23.1)	1 (1.9)	–	52 (100)
Long House	–	36 (94.7)	2 (5.3)	–	38 (100)	2 (5.3)	35 (91.2)	1 (2.6)	–	38 (100)	30 (78.9)	7 (18.4)	1 (2.6)	–	38 (100)
Squatter house	2 (0.8)	241 (96.4)	5 (2.0)	2 (0.8)	250 (100)	5 (2.0)	235 (94.0)	9 (3.6)	1 (0.4)	250 (100)	210 (84.0)	36 (14.4)	2 (0.8)	2 (0.8)	250 (100)
Total	23 (1.3)	1709 (94.0)	44 (2.4)	42 (2.3)	1818 (100)	61 (3.3)	1665 (91.6)	71 (3.9)	21 (1.2)	1818 (100)	1492 (82.1)	246 (13.5)	43 (2.4)	37 (2.0)	181 (100)

Source: Field work 1997

TABLE 6 – 8. Night activities of respondents, Saturday and Sunday

Type of Housing	Table 6: Saturday & Sunday 7-8 pm Activities					Table 7: Saturday & Sunday 9-10 pm Activities					Table 8: Saturday & Sunday 11 pm & above Activities				
	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total
Bungalow	2 (2.3)	71 (80.7)	14 (15.9)	1 (1.1)	88 (100)	6 (6.8)	66 (75.0)	15 (17.0)	1 (2.2)	88 (100)	69 (78.4)	14 (15.9)	4 (4.5)	1 (1.1)	88 (100)
Terrace	14 (3.1)	367 (80.5)	60 (13.2)	15 (3.3)	456 (100)	126 (27.6)	283 (62.1)	38 (8.3)	9 (2.0)	456 (100)	352 (77.2)	75 (16.4)	17 (3.7)	12 (2.6)	456 (100)
3 Bedroom flat	1 (0.5)	144 (73.8)	47 (24.5)	3 (1.5)	195 (100)	8 (4.1)	163 (83.6)	20 (10.3)	4 (2.10)	195 (100)	144 (73.8)	39 (20.0)	9 (4.6)	3 (1.5)	195 (100)
2 Bedroom flat	22 (3.0)	614 (83.1)	80 (10.8)	23 (3.1)	739 (100)	34 (4.6)	612 (82.8)	81 (11.5)	12 (1.6)	739 (100)	541 (73.2)	150 (20.3)	26 (3.5)	22 (3.0)	739 (100)
1 Bedroom flat	3 (5.8)	42 (80.8)	7 (13.4)	– (100)	52 (100)	2 (3.8)	44 (84.6)	6 (11.5)	– (100)	52 (100)	35 (67.3)	14 (26.9)	2 (3.8)	1 (1.9)	52 (100)
Long House	–	31 (81.6)	7 (18.4)	– (100)	38 (100)	2 (5.3)	35 (92.1)	1 (2.6)	– (100)	38 (100)	26 (68.4)	8 (21.1)	4 (10.5)	– (100)	38 (100)
Squatter house	9 (3.0)	212 (84.8)	25 (10.0)	4 (1.6)	250 (100)	5 (2.0)	225 (90.0)	19 (7.6)	1 (0.4)	250 (100)	199 (79.6)	44 (17.60)	5 (2.0)	2 (0.8)	250 (100)
Total	51 (2.8)	1481 (81.5)	240 (13.2)	46 (2.5)	1818 (100)	183 (10.1)	1428 (78.5)	180 (9.9)	27 (1.5)	1818 (100)	1366 (75.1)	344 (18.9)	67 (3.7)	41 (2.3)	181 (100)

Source: Field work 1997

TABLE 9 – 11. Night activities of respondents, Saturday

Type of Housing	Table 9: Saturday; 7– 8 pm (Last 3 days activities)					Table 10: Saturday 9–10 pm (Last 3 days activities)					Table 11: Saturday 11 pm & above (Last 3 days activities)				
	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total
Bungalow	–	61 (69.3)	24 (27.3)	3 (3.4)	88 (100)	7 (8.0)	62 (70.5)	16 (18.2)	3 (3.40)	88 (100)	54 (61.3)	20 (22.7)	10 (11.4)	4 (4.5)	88 (100)
Terrace	–	377 (82.7)	61 (13.4)	18 (3.9)	456 (100)	13 (2.9)	36.8 (80.7)	58 (12.7)	17 (3.9)	456 (100)	319 (70.0)	105 (23.0)	12 (2.6)	20 (4.4)	456 (100)
3 Bedroom flat	1 (0.5)	172 (88.2)	18 (9.2)	1 (2.1)	195 (100)	5 (2.6)	145 (74.4)	41 (21.0)	4 (2.1)	195 (100)	146 (74.9)	38 (19.5)	6 (3.1)	5 (2.7)	195 (100)
2 Bedroom flat	3 (0.4)	599 (81.1)	114 (15.4)	23 (3.1)	739 (100)	13 (1.8)	603 (81.6)	97 (13.1)	26 (3.5)	739 (100)	508 (68.7)	170 (23.0)	29 (3.9)	32 (4.3)	739 (100)
1 Bedroom flat	–	38 (73.1)	12 (23.1)	1 (3.8)	52 (100)	3 (5.8)	41 (78.8)	6 (11.5)	2 (3.8)	52 (100)	38 (73.1)	11 (21.2)	1 (1.9)	2 (3.8)	52 (100)
Long House	–	29 (76.3)	9 (23.7)	–	38 (100)	1 (2.6)	28 (73.7)	8 (21.1)	1 (2.6)	38 (100)	25 (65.8)	10 (26.3)	2 (5.3)	1 (2.6)	38 (100)
Squatter house	–	196 (78.4)	50 (20.0)	4 (1.6)	250 (100)	7 (2.8)	198 (79.2)	41 (16.4)	4 (1.6)	250 (100)	185 (74.0)	49 (19.6)	11 (4.4)	2 (2.0)	250 (100)
Total	4 (0.2)	1472 (81.0)	288 (15.8)	54 (3.0)	1818 (100)	49 (2.7)	1445 (79.5)	267 (14.7)	57 (3.1)	1818 (100)	1275 (70.1)	403 (22.2)	71 (3.9)	69 (3.8)	1818 (100)

Source: Field work 1997

TABLE 12 – 14. Respondent activities on Sunday Night

Type of Housing	Table 12: Sunday; 7– 8 pm (Last 3 days activities)					Table 13: Sunday 9–10 pm (Last 3 days activities)					Table 14: Sunday 11 pm & above (Last 3 days activities)				
	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total
Bungalow	5 (5.7)	65 (73.9)	15 (17.0)	3 (3.4)	88 (100)	3 (3.4)	66 (75.0)	15 (17.1)	4 (4.5)	88 (100)	61 (69.3)	17 (19.3)	6 (6.8)	4 (4.5)	88 (100)
Terrace	6 (1.3)	368 (80.7)	64 (14.0)	18 (3.9)	456 (100)	23 (5.0)	366 (80.3)	51 (11.2)	16 (3.5)	456 (100)	339 (74.3)	83 (18.2)	15 (3.3)	19 (4.2)	456 (100)
3 Bedroom flat	10 (5.1)	163 (83.6)	18 (9.2)	4 (2.1)	195 (100)	12 (6.2)	153 (78.5)	24 (12.3)	6 (3.1)	195 (100)	149 (76.4)	32 (16.4)	8 (4.1)	6 (3.1)	195 (100)
2 Bedroom flat	19 (2.6)	604 (81.7)	80 (10.8)	36 (4.9)	739 (100)	28 (3.8)	605 (81.9)	76 (10.3)	30 (4.1)	739 (100)	525 (71.0)	149 (20.2)	38 (5.1)	27 (3.7)	739 (100)
1 Bedroom flat	3 (5.8)	41 (78.8)	6 (11.5)	2 (3.8)	52 (100)	3 (5.8)	43 (82.7)	4 (7.7)	1 (3.8)	52 (100)	38 (73.1)	10 (19.2)	3 (5.8)	1 (1.9)	52 (100)
Long House	–	34 (89.5)	3 (7.9)	1 (2.6)	38 (100)	2 (5.3)	33 (86.8)	2 (5.3)	1 (2.6)	38 (100)	31 (81.6)	4 (10.5)	2 (5.3)	1 (2.6)	38 (100)
Squatter house	7 (2.8)	205 (82.0)	33 (13.2)	5 (2.0)	250 (100)	10 (4.0)	210 (84.0)	25 (10.0)	5 (2.0)	250 (100)	189 (75.6)	50 (20.0)	7 (2.8)	4 (1.6)	250 (100)
Total	50 (2.8)	1480 (81.4)	219 (12.0)	69 (3.8)	1818 (100)	81 (4.5)	1476 (81.2)	197 (10.8)	64 (3.5)	1818 (100)	1332 (73.3)	345 (19.0)	79 (4.3)	62 (3.4)	1818 (100)

Source: Field work 1997

TABLE 15 – 17. Respondent activities on Monday Night

Type of Housing	Table 15: Monday; 7– 8 pm (Last 3 days activities)					Table 16: Monday; 9–10 pm (Last 3 days activities)					Table 17: Monday; 11 pm & above (Last 3 days activities)				
	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total	Slept	Inside House	Outside House	No information	Total
Bungalow	4 (4.5)	78 (88.6)	2 (2.3)	4 (4.5)	88 (100)	3 (3.4)	76 (86.4)	5 (5.7)	4 (4.5)	88 (100)	68 (77.3)	13 (14.8)	3 (3.4)	44 (4.5)	88 (100)
Terrace	15 (3.3)	385 (84.4)	34 (7.5)	22 (4.8)	456 (100)	32 (7.0)	376 (82.5)	25 (5.5)	23 (5.0)	456 (100)	367 (80.5)	57 (12.5)	8 (1.8)	24 (5.3)	456 (100)
3 Bedroom flat	13 (6.7)	167 (85.6)	9 (4.6)	1 (3.1)	195 (100)	14 (7.2)	168 (86.2)	7 (3.6)	6 (3.1)	195 (100)	165 (84.6)	20 (10.3)	4 (2.1)	6 (3.1)	195 (100)
2 Bedroom flat	29 (3.9)	632 (85.5)	43 (5.8)	35 (4.7)	739 (100)	37 (5.0)	631 (85.4)	40 (5.4)	31 (4.2)	739 (100)	583 (78.9)	104 (14.1)	21 (2.8)	31 (4.2)	739 (100)
1 Bedroom flat	3 (5.8)	43 (82.7)	4 (7.7)	2 (3.8)	52 (100)	2 (3.8)	45 (86.5)	3 (5.8)	2 (3.8)	52 (100)	44 (84.6)	5 (9.6)	1 (1.9)	2 (3.8)	52 (100)
Long House	–	36 (94.7)	1 (2.6)	1 (2.6)	38 (100)	2 (5.3)	34 (89.5)	1 (2.6)	1 (2.6)	38 (100)	33 (86.8)	2 (5.3)	2 (5.3)	1 (2.6)	38 (100)
Squatter house	9 (3.6)	223 (89.2)	9 (3.6)	9 (3.6)	250 (100)	18 (7.2)	216 (86.4)	11 (4.4)	5 (2.0)	250 (100)	203 (81.2)	35 (14.0)	7 (2.8)	5 (2.0)	250 (100)
Total	73 (4.0)	1564 (86.0)	102 (5.6)	79 (4.3)	1818 (100)	108 (5.9)	1546 (86.0)	92 (5.1)	72 (4.0)	1818 (100)	1463 (80.5)	236 (13.0)	46 (2.5)	73 (4.0)	1818 (100)

Source: Field work 1997

house and 5.1% outside. At 11.00 p.m., the proportion of those in the house had increased to 93.5% whereas only 2.5% were outside the house.

Table 18 shows that there were children doing part-time jobs among those involved in the study. However, most of these activities (39 out of 45) were done at the weekends and would thus cause less problems to their studies. However, this should not be interpreted as to the number of children who are working as most working children are also not schooling.

Table 19 shows the patterns of these teenagers' parents working hours. While 76.7% of the fathers had fixed working hours during the day, 1.6% worked only at night, 5.0% worked on shift and another 6.4% both during the day and night. The majority of the mothers (63.9%) were full-time housewives. The rest were working, mostly during the day (33.4%) or on shift duty (2.5%).

TABLE 18. Doing part-time jobs

Type of housing	Weekdays	Saturday-Sunday
Bungalow/Terrace N=544	2	4
3-Bedroom flat N=195	—	20
2-Bedroom flat N=739	2	10
1-Bedroom flat N=52	—	1
Long House N=38	1	—
Squatter house N=250	1	4
Total N=1842	6	39

Source: Field work 1997

TABLE 19. Parents' daily working hours

Working hours	Father (%)	Mother (%)
Day	1412 (76.7)	616 (33.4)
Night	29 (1.6)	3 (0.2)
Shift	93 (5.0)	46 (2.5)
Day and Night	118 (6.4)	0 (0)
None	191 (10.3)	1177 (63.9)
Total	1842 (100.0)	1842 (100.0)

Source: Field work 1997

DISCUSSION

This study shows some possible reasons why children are more easily exposed to and get involved in anti-social during their adolescence.

Today's families in urban areas are nuclear in nature with most families having only their parents as carers and protectors of the children in each family.

The children involved in this study stayed mostly in less satisfactory housing in terms of the physical structure be it walk-up flats, high-rises, long houses and squatter areas. The difference that houses in the squatters have is the homes were on the ground and could be easily expanded and number of rooms increased to accommodate an increase in occupants. It is also noted that in these squatter areas, there is usually a social structure with close bonds between the families who might be related or had come from a particular state to Kuala Lumpur.

The average number of children was 4.0 and the average number of occupants was 6.5 per household. The 1-bedroom flats had the least children while the squatter houses the most. However, the 1-bedroom flat are not expandable and thus become more congested. There is thus very poor distribution of space as, except for those living in the squatters, the families with the least space have relatively the most numbers of children.

On a normal evening during school term, most of the children are in the house. Only a small proportion is outside the house. However, even in the late hours of the night, a small proportion (about 2.5 – 3%) is still outside the house. The children in the 1-bedroom flats and the long houses also slept later as compared to those in the other houses.

During the weekend, many of the children stay out late in the evening. This is especially so among those in the bungalows and least in the squatter areas. This can be interpreted that with affluence the adolescents can afford to patronise the entertainment joints such as cinemas, clubs, etc. In the squatter areas, it is not only unacceptable if they are to come home late but they are in a less able position financially to do so. However, the increasing number of children living in the other houses being out late at night are exposed to various anti-social activities as was evident in urban centres in Malaysia.

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