DESIGN FOR OUTDOORS IN A HOT & DRY CLIMATE

A Study of Outdoor Thermal Comfort
in Dubai, United Arab Emirates

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

M. Sc. in Sustainable Design of the Built Environment
Faculty of Engineering

Supervisor: Prof. Bassam Abu-Hijleh
June 2009
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ABSTRACT

With the growing interest on sustainability, design consideration for thermal comfort in the outdoors is seen as an important factor enhancing the quality of life in the urban setting. The topic has received significant interest and several studies have been made in mostly temperate and tropical climates. However, not much investigation into the matter has been done in hot-arid climates characteristic to that of the middle-eastern countries. The study then aimed to understand the relationships between the several factors (air temperature, solar radiation, relative humidity, wind speed, clothing and activity) affecting thermal comfort, determine the actual comfort zone for Dubai UAE through field measurements and interview surveys, and recommend design considerations to achieve thermal comfort.

The findings of the study show that majority of the sample population in Dubai reported overall thermal comfort for the three seasons observed. Solar radiation has most direct influence on thermal comfort outdoors thus it is recommended that shading be of primary consideration during summer. It was also found that relative humidity is an amplifying factor for air temperature. Wind should be accounted for its cooling effect thus high wind speeds are encouraged during summer while protection from this must be provided during winter. Contrary to the common notion that middle eastern climate is very harsh and that thermal comfort could only be achieved in a controlled indoor environment, the study shows that with proper design consideration of the findings in the study, it is possible to achieve thermal comfort for outdoors in Dubai for longer periods of the year.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank God for making everything and anything possible. She also like to thank the following:

- Prof. Bassam Abu-Hijleh for his continuous guidance throughout the dissertation and the entire course
- The staff and professors in BUiD, especially Lynn Randall, Dr. Ahmad Okeil, Dr. Gisela and the librarians for all their support throughout the entire course
- The LWD Architects family, especially Colin Doyle and Morten Hansen, for their support, respect and patience
- All her friends and housemates who are constant reminders of a balanced and healthy life everyone should aspire for
- Jeffrey Lopez for the listening ear and critical mind as she went through the research process
- Queency Cadag for an introduction to John Creswell’s book and guidance through the research process in the confines of her home.
- Red Ventura for rubbing off his unrelenting positive attitude in life
- Hyden Restificar, Mabuhay Fabros and Jerico Bisnar for the fun company and for just being funny most of the time
- Friends from the University of the Philippines Alumni Association in the UAE, especially Grace Casas and Marietta Morada for the research materials and briefing on statistics

She would also like to express deep gratitude to Lars Waldenstrom for his continuous guidance, words of wisdom and motivation. Most of all, the author would like to thank her parents and brothers for their support, comforting words, inspiration and love.
DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the shiny happy people of Dubai.
May you continue living a full life – both indoor and outdoor.
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