

Fear of Crime in Malaysian Urban Parks—Who Feared the Most?

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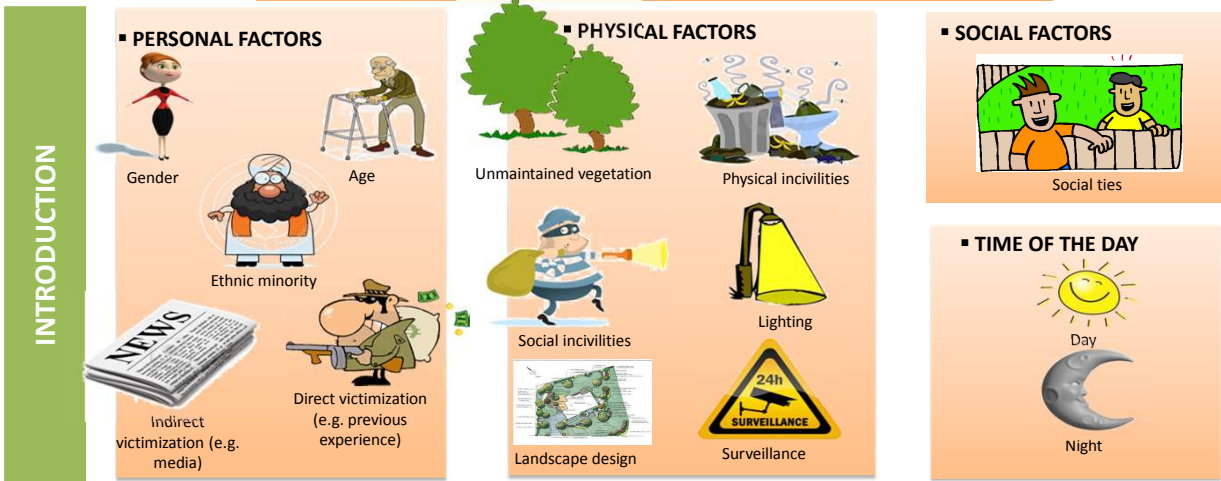


ABSTRACT

Although the many benefits of urban green spaces are usually stressed, these environments also provide some disservices. For example, encounters with natural threats may evoke strong fears or other negative emotions. However, very few studies have examined the negative emotions occurring in urban green spaces; particularly regarding social danger e.g. fear of crime. This questionnaire survey (N=139) was conducted in the city of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in an attempt to examine the effects of different age, gender and ethnic groups on fear of crime in urban park settings. Manipulation of the environmental and social cues were represented via photographs which were created using Adobe Photoshop 6.0 software. Respondents were requested to view a set of 12 manipulated photographs and rate their perceived threat for each photograph by using a seven point Likert scale. Using descriptive statistics the results revealed photo with the present of social disorder (e.g. graffiti, trash, low maintenance), high concealment and without the presence of others were considered the most fearful. While, photo without the presence of physical disorder, low concealment and with the present of others were considered less fearful. The results of the independent t-test revealed that female respondents were significantly more likely to feel fearful than male respondents ($p < 0.001$). No difference was found between different age and ethnic groups. The subsets of respondents in each age and ethnic group are too small to justify detailed analysis of the results.

Keywords: Victimization; personal safety; gender, ethnic; urban green space; photo manipulation

FACTORS EVOKE FEAR OF CRIME IN URBAN GREEN SPACES



INTRODUCTION

METHOD

METHOD	On-site survey
SITE	Urban parks in Kuala Lumpur
SAMPLE	Park users (N=139)
SURVEY TOOL	Questionnaire (Rating base on photos)
STIMULUS	Manipulated Photographs
ANALYSIS	Descriptive / T-test

CONCEALMENT	PEOPLE / DISORDER		PEOPLE / DISORDER	
	With People/With Disorder	With People/Without Disorder	Without People/With Disorder	Without People/Without Disorder
Low	1	2	3	4
Medium	5	6	7	8
High	9	10	11	12

RESULTS

Age	Gender		TOTAL
	Female	Male	
15-24	12	11	23
25-44	44	41	85
45-64	12	17	29
Over 65	-	2	2
Total	68	71	139

Table 1: Age and gender of respondents

Ethnic	Numbers
Malay	112
Chinese	16
Indian	9
Others	2
Total	139

Table 2: Number of respondents following different ethnic groups

Photo	Mean	SD
Photo 1	4.84	1.55
Photo 2	2.06	1.55
Photo 3	5.28	1.44
Photo 4	2.77	1.74
Photo 5	5.60	1.33
Photo 6	4.31	1.66
Photo 7	5.33	1.49
Photo 8	4.43	1.68
Photo 9	5.68	1.36
Photo 10	4.46	1.91
Photo 11	6.04	1.27
Photo 12	5.33	1.52

Table 3: Mean value of fear of crime for each photos

DISCUSSIONS

- Photo with the present of social disorder (e.g. graffiti, trash, low maintenance), high concealment and without the presence of others were considered the **most fearful**.
- Photo without the presence of physical disorder, low concealment and with the present of others were considered **least fearful**.
- Respondents rated **Photo 2** (Mean= 2.06 ± 1.55) as the least feared and **Photo 11** (Mean= 6.04 ± 1.27) as the most feared.
- Female respondents were significantly more likely to feel fearful than male respondents ($p < 0.001$).
- No significant difference for respondents from different age or ethnic groups.
- Photo with high concealment, with the present of physical disorder and absent of people were considered most fearful. This is consistent with Nasar and Fisher's (1992) typology and the disorder hypothesis (Crank et al., 2003; Millie & Herrington, 2005).
- The results presented here demonstrate that personal factors particularly gender was indeed a significant predictor of fear of crime in urban green spaces. This has also seen as consistent predictor with past research on fear of crime (e.g. Nasar et al., 1983; Westover, 1985; O'Brien, 2005).
- There are number of methodological issues inherent in this study, namely the small sample size (n=139), the uneven distribution of the sample across the age and ethnic groups.

References:

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