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(USBET) 2023**

**SUSTAINABLE BUILT  
ENVIRONMENT**

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ENVIRONMENT**

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# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SAFE CITY PROGRAMME IN TAMAN SUNGAI CHUA, KAJANG, SELANGOR

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## ABSTRACT

*Safe City Program was launched in Malaysia two decades ago. It aims to realise a safe living environment for city dwellers. However, little evidence is found to assess its effectiveness, and decision-makers lack evidence in furthering such urban policy. Taking the case study of Taman Sungai Chua, Kajang, Selangor, this study intends to fill in such a gap by assessing residents' perception of the effectiveness of the safe city programme. The method used in this study is questionnaire surveys involving 122 respondents. The survey items largely related to the physical aspects of a residential area, i.e., built environment, and layout design. The collected data were analysed through descriptive statistical analysis. The findings showed that the level of security in the Sungai Chua housing area as a place to live is at a moderate level. The gridiron layout design has influenced the occurrence of crime. Suggestions to sustain the safe city program in Taman Sungai Chua include building defensive boundaries, i.e., installing fences around the house, limiting the gridiron housing layout design – high level of access to restricted access; and increasing surveillance qualities, i.e., placing guard houses, installing closed-circuit television (CCTV) and lights for good lighting at night. This study has contributed a case evident in assessing the safe city programme in Malaysia. This finding would add insights for the decision-makers and residents in dealing with crime in residential areas.*

**Keywords:** *Crime prevention, gated and guarded housing, housing layout, Malaysia, safe city programme*

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## INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is becoming increasingly urban, with 78.2% of the population living in urban areas in 2022, a sharp increase of 28.4% from the last three decades which is 49.8% in 1990 (World Bank, 2023). Rapid urbanisation has brought economic development on one hand. However, conversely, the agglomeration of the population in urban areas also causes social problems, such as violent and property crime. Violent crime refers to any crime where the victim is harmed by or threatened with violence, such as murder, rape, robbery, and assault. Property crimes are instances where the victim's property is stolen or destroyed, without the use or threat of force against the victim, i.e., breaking-in, and snatch theft. Both crimes show a declining pattern but still exist during the COVID-19 period (refer to Figures 1 and 2), and data after COVID-19 is not available on the DOSM website. From the observation, as long as there are people, settlements and urbanisation activities, there will be crime cases.

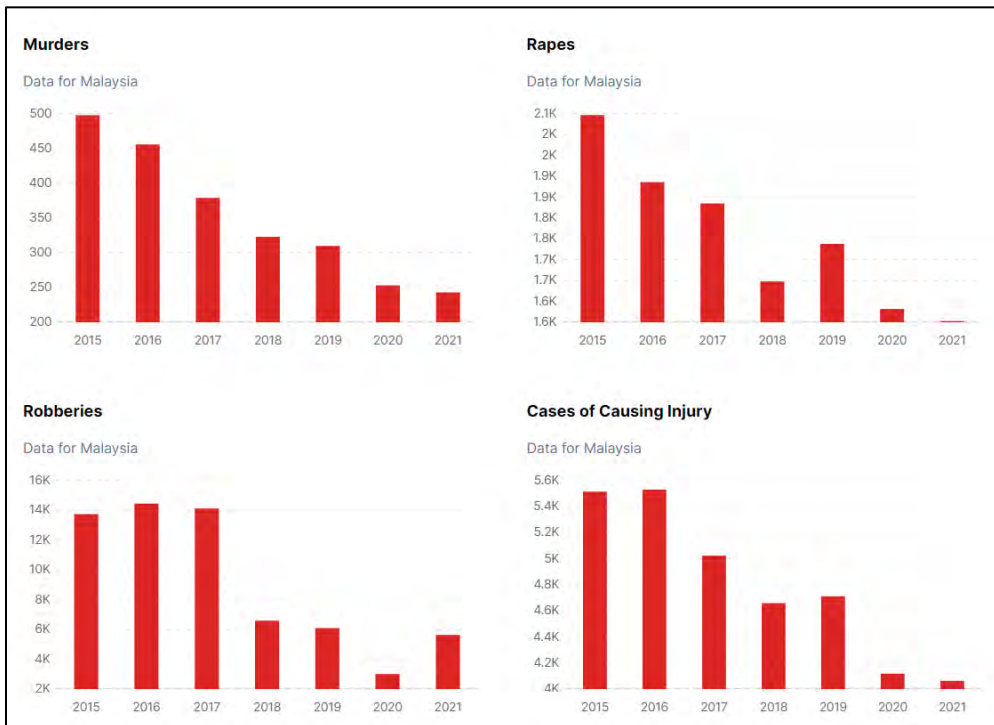
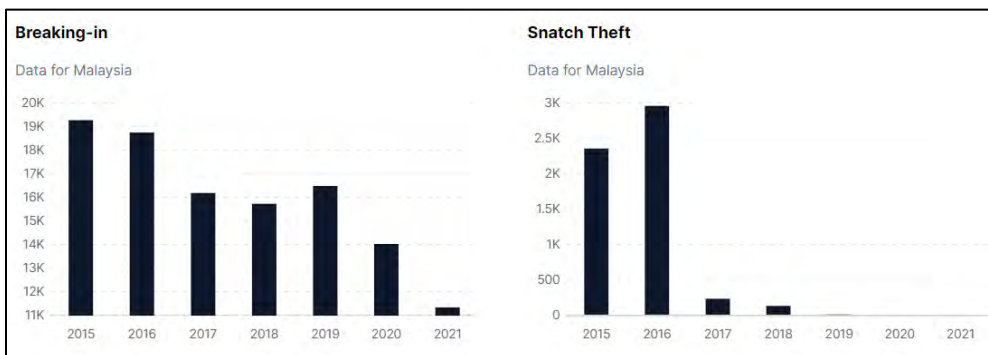


Figure 1: Examples of violent crime in Malaysia (2015-2021) (DOSM, 2022)



**Figure 2: Examples of property crime in Malaysia (2015-2021) (DOSM, 2022)**

In the residential areas, iron fences and security equipment are built around homes, and security guards watch over and control the houses of dignitaries, wealthy people, shops, and offices. But the level of safety in Malaysia's low- and middle-income housing areas is still a worry, to the point where people feel afraid and unsafe in their homes (Shuhana et al., 2013).

To counter the crime and safety issues, PlanMalaysia developed safe city program guidelines in 2004 and a revised version in 2009 (FDTCP, 2004, 2010). These are guiding principles and not mandatory for property developers to follow, and they are subject to local authorities' judgement. For instance, when the Kajang Municipal Council (MKPJ) adopted the Safe City Programme in 2009, it achieved a 91.30 per cent overall implementation rate in the Kajang area. According to Dewan Negeri Selangor in Mesyuarat Kedua Penggal Kelima 2014, discussed the Safe City Programme, the District police headquarters (IPD) Kajang has focused on lighting, separating pedestrian paths, safety mirrors, signs, and guarded parking for motorcycles in 48 places where crime is most likely to happen.

However, not all Kajang areas are achieving a high safe city implementation rate, especially in the case of Taman Sungai Chua, Kajang, criminal activities are becoming more widespread, and robbery cases are also increasing recently (Nawawi, 2022). From the preliminary literature review, the Taman Sungai Chua residents perceive the current crime and safe city program status has not been reported/ assessed thus far. Therefore, this study aims to provide case evidence to assess the residents' perception of the effectiveness of the safe city programme in Taman Sungai Chua and to suggest recommendations for sustaining the safe city programme. The following sections explain the literature review regarding the safe city programme and its measurements, followed by methodology, findings, discussions, and a concluding remark.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Safe City and Crime Prevention**

From the review, the authors found that most researchers used the term “crime-free cities” to describe what a safe city is. Safety is part of the bigger ideas of making sustainable and resilient cities (Lim et al., 2020). In other words, the safe city concept is a micro concept that focuses on security to build a sustainable and liveable city at a macro level (Jalaluddin & Mohd, 2015; Shuhana et al., 2013). “Safe, resilient, and sustainable” cities are the goal of both the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11. A safe city is one where people can live together and live their daily lives without fear of crime and violence. To keep and improve the “safety scenarios” of people who live in crime-free cities, it is thought to be important to keep the fairness of people’s lives from one generation to the next, going from high crime to medium crime to low crime and then to living, working, and playing in a crime-free city.

According to Cozens et al., (2005), Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is considered one of the approaches that sees social interaction as one of the most important factors in its success. This means that it could help make cities safer and more sustainable in the future. People are more likely to communicate if there are clear lines between public and private space, even if it’s just a glance or a nod. Proposal of making spaces for people to meet and talk to each other, use spaces that aren’t being used, and encourage stakeholders to think about the urban environments as a whole. By doing this, it can slowly build and keep safe cities full of life.

### **Safe City Program**

The Safe City Program in Malaysia was established in 2004 on the cabinet’s directive, which met on 28th January 2004 to make cities safer. From December 2009 to December 2010, steps were taken immediately to reactivate and expand the Safe City Program to 149 Local Authorities (PBTs) across the country. This was done to lower the national street crime rate by 20% (Lim et al., 2020). For example, in Kajang Municipal Council (MPKJ), the idea of effective environmental design can reduce crime and feelings of fear of crime and improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities (MPKJ, 2020). First, the safe city design used in Kajang City is based on the idea of natural surveillance, which means that there are clearer points of view from inside and outside the building. Second, natural access control stops people who don’t have permission from getting into a certain area or building (use of fence, hard and soft landscape, security card or other physical elements). The third principle is that an area should have clear boundaries that show who owns it. Fences, gates, landscaping, and other things make it clear where public and private areas begin and end. The fourth principle is that all parties (management, residents,



owners, and communities) should keep areas and buildings in good shape and run them to keep them from becoming places where crimes happen.

In Selangor, the number of violent crime cases reported from January to July 2021 was 2,296. This is an increase of 218 cases, or 10.49%, compared to the number of violent crime cases reported in 2020, which was 2,078 (refer to Table 1). On the other hand, a total of 7,041 property crimes were reported during the first seven months of 2020. However, during the same period in 2021, there were only 6,528 property crimes reported. This is a decrease of 513 incidents, or 7.29%, compared to the previous year (refer to Table 1). The reduction in property crime in 2021 could be due to the COVID-19 stay-at-home order, where, most of the time, people stay home, thus reducing the probability of crime.

**Table 1: Index Crime Statistics for the Period January – July 2020 / 2021  
Selangor (Dewan Negeri Selangor, n.d)**

<b>INDEX CRIME</b>					
<b>No.</b>	<b>Type of offence</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	<b>Violent Crime</b>	<b>Case</b>	<b>Case</b>	<b>Up/Down</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Murder	41	43	2	4.88
2	Rape	180	186	6	3.33
3	Gang and Armed Robberies	1	0	-1	-100
4	Group Robbery without Firearms	842	786	-56	-6.65
5	Individual Robberies And Armed With Firearms	1	0	-1	-100
6	Unarmed Individual Robbery	496	672	176	35.48
7	Accident	517	609	92	17.79
	<b>Total of Violent</b>	<b>2078</b>	<b>2296</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>10.49</b>
<b>Property Crime</b>					
1	Other thefts	1729	2615	886	51.24
2	Car thefts	860	586	-274	-31.86
3	Motorcycle thefts	2676	1579	-1097	-40.99
4	Van / Lorry / Heavy Machinery thefts	202	148	-54	-26.73
5	Burglary	1574	1600	26	1.65
	<b>Total of Property</b>	<b>7041</b>	<b>6528</b>	<b>-513</b>	<b>-7.29</b>
	<b>Total Overall</b>	<b>9119</b>	<b>8824</b>	<b>-295</b>	<b>-3.24</b>

## **METHODOLOGY**

The data collection method used at the site is through questionnaire surveys to know the resident's opinion of the effectiveness of the Safe City Programme in Taman Sungai Chua, Kajang, Selangor. Taman Sungai Chua was selected as a site study due to its increase in crime cases in recent years.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections: demographics, the effectiveness of safe city programme and recommendations. The surveys were conducted in the study area from 2nd January 2023 until 15th January 2023. A total of 122 questionnaire responses were collected randomly from the site through door-to-door visits.

With a simple random sample, the chances of getting picked are the same for every person in the population. The sample frame must comprise the whole population (Kumar, 2011). The sample size that has been issued is, according to the estimated number of housing identified, 439 houses in the study area. So, it is taken as the latest household estimate, meaning one house has five persons, a population size of 2,195. Based on Raosoft Calculator (Raosoft, n.d.), with a population size of 2,195, a confidence level of 95%, and a margin error of 5%, the sample size for this study is 122 people.

## FINDINGS

To answer the research objective for assessing the residents' perception of the effectiveness of the safe city programme in Taman Sungai Chua, this study's findings are divided into two sub-sections: demography and the effectiveness of the Safe City Programme.

### Demography

In the investigation, after the questionnaire was handed out to the participants, the findings from the respondents revealed that the demographic sector in the Sungai Chua residential area was comprised of 46.7% males, which corresponded to 57 respondents, and 53.3% females, which corresponded to 65 participants who make the majority of the respondent are female (refer to Table 2).

**Table 2: Respondent's Gender**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Male	57	46.7
Female	65	53.3
Total	122	100.0

Next, in terms of age, the group of residents in the Sungai Chua residential area with the biggest percentage is the one aged 21 to 30 years old, which accounts for 74.6% of the total responses, followed by the age group aged 18 to 20 years old, which accounts for 16.4% of the total responses. According to the survey findings, only 8.2% of people between the ages of 31 and 40 are the same as 10 respondents. The percentage is at its lowest between 41 and 50, where only 0.8% of people, or one responder (refer to Table 3).

**Table 3: Respondent's Age**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
18-20 years	20	16.4
21-30 years	91	74.6
31-40 years	10	8.2
41-50 years	1	0.8
Total	122	100.0

College students comprise the largest percentage of inhabitants in the Sungai Chua residential area, accounting for 40.2% of the total replies. This number is comparable to 49 people. The rate of responders who work as field experts is the lowest, coming in at 2.5%, equivalent to three people (refer to Table 4).

**Table 4: Respondent's Employment Status**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Public Worker	9	7.4
Profesional Worker	3	2.5
Clerk	17	13.9
Labor	20	16.4
Social Worker	12	9.8
College	49	40.2
Unemployed	12	9.8
Total	122	100.0

### **Effectiveness of the Safe City Programme**

According to the findings of the research, it was discovered that as many as 120 respondents, 98.4%, believed that the layout design of a residential neighbourhood also influenced the level of safety (refer to Table 5).

**Table 5: The Effect of Design Layout**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	120	98.4
No	2	1.6
Total	122	100.0

The following inquiry concerns the level of security offered by the Sungai Chua neighbourhood where people live. According to a scale of 1 to 5, it was discovered that 45.9% of respondents believe that the residential area of Sungai Chua is

extremely safe, 34.4% believe that it is fairly safe, 18.9% believe that it is not safe, and 0.8% believe that it is very unsafe (refer to Table 6).

**Table 6: Respondent's perception of the level of security in Taman Sungai Chua**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Very safe	56	45.9
Fairly safe	42	34.4
Not safe	23	18.9
Very unsafe	1	0.8
Don't know	0	0
Total	122	100.0

According to the survey results, 27 respondents (22.1%) stated that the residential neighbourhood of Sungai Chua had been the scene of a crime or accident. In comparison, 95 respondents (77.9%) responded that this was not the case (refer to Table 7).

**Table 7: Crime and Accident Occurrence in Taman Sungai Chua**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	27	22.1
No	95	77.9
Total	122	100.0

When 95.9% of respondents (or 117) state that grazing rarely occurs in the study area, one may conclude that the study area is considered safe from grazing crime (refer to Table 8).

**Table 8: Grazing Crime Occurrence Rate**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Rare	117	95.9
Moderate	5	4.1
Total	122	100.0

Note: Rare refers to no to 2 cases, Moderate refers to 3 to 5 cases

When 11 respondents, corresponding to 9% claimed that robberies like this occurred occasionally, it is reasonable to argue that the problem had reached a concerning level (refer to Table 9).

**Table 9: Pirates Crime Occurrence Rate**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Rare	111	91
Moderate	11	9
Total	122	100.0

Note: Rare refers to no to 2 cases, Moderate refers to 3 to 5 cases

When asked about robberies, just two of the respondents, 1.6% mentioned that they occurred on occasion (refer to Table 10).

**Table 10: Robbing Crime Occurrence Rate**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Rare	120	98.4
Moderate	2	1.6
Total	122	100.0

Note: Rare refers to no to 2 cases, Moderate refers to 3 to 5 cases

9 out of 122 respondents, which is 7.4% of the sampling, claimed that burglaries only occurred occasionally, i.e., no to 2 cases, but this still makes the frequency of these crimes risky (refer to Table 11).

**Table 11: Burglary Crime Occurrence Rate**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Rare	113	92.6
Moderate	9	7.4
Total	122	100.0

Note: Rare refers to no to 2 cases, Moderate refers to 3 to 5 cases

The number of homicides has decreased to a safe level because none have ever occurred in this Sungai Chua residential neighbourhood (refer to Table 12).

**Table 12: Murder Crime Occurrence Rate**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Rare	122	100.0
Moderate	0	-
Total	122	100.0

Note: Rare refers to no to 2 cases, Moderate refers to 3 to 5 cases

When asked about the frequency of rape incidents, one respondent said that it occurs occasionally (refer to Table 13).

**Table 13: Violation Crime Occurrence Rate**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Rare	121	99.2
Moderate	1	0.8
Total	122	100.0

Note: Rare refers to no to 2 cases, Moderate refers to 3 to 5 cases

Road accidents were also noted by as many as six respondents, corresponding to 4.9%, who stated that they occurred at a rate considered moderate (Table 14).

**Table 14: Accident Crime Occurrence Rate**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Rare	116	95.1
Moderate	6	4.9
Total	122	100.0

Note: Rare refers to no to 2 cases, Moderate refers to 3 to 5 cases

In other senario, the incident of vandalism was reported by four respondents, all of whom stated that it occurred every so often (refer to Table 15).

**Table 15: Vandalism Crime Occurrence Rate**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Rare	118	96.7
Moderate	4	3.3
Total	122	100.0

Note: Rare refers to no to 2 cases, Moderate refers to 3 to 5 cases

Responding to the following inquiry on the nature of the reported crimes, 28.7% of respondents stated that lone perpetrators committed crimes. In the meantime, 71.3% of respondents stated the crimes committed were carried out by groups (Table 16).

**Table 16: Form of Crime**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Individual	35	28.7
Group	87	71.3
Total	122	100.0

According to Table 17, criminals tend to target those between the ages of 21 and 30 the most, accounting for 59% of all victims in this age range. The age group from 41 to 50 years old and older is the lowest group targeted by criminals, and only 4.1% appointed this group as the age group targeted by criminals.

**Table 17: Age Group Targeted By Criminal**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Below 21	26	21.3
21-30	72	59.0
31-40	14	11.5
41-50	5	4.1
Above 50	5	4.1
Total	122	100.0

## **DISCUSSIONS**

### **Residents Feel Uneasy About Their Surroundings**

According to the respondents who answered the survey, many types of crime cases have happened in Taman Sungai Chua. These crimes include grazing, robbery, theft, burglary, molestation, and accidents with injuries. Also, most of the people who answered said they feel unsafe in the Taman Sungai Chua residential area. Residents who feel unsafe in their immediate surroundings may also feel like they have to be on guard all the time, as explained in the challenges of safe city program by Lim et al., (2020). This could make it harder for them to deal with the stresses of daily life. People living in unsafe neighbourhoods may have to deal with things that make it hard to save money. They may also pick up bad habits that reduce the reserve they already have. For example, if someone worries about their safety, they might not spend as much time outside doing things, like working out and making friends nearby.

### **Unplanned City Designs Can Spawn Crime**

According to the questionnaire findings, it was also discovered that the residential area of Taman Sungai Chua is not based on the appropriate safe city design. As many as 120 respondents agreed that housing design has a high impact on creating the safety of a residential area. The relative susceptibility of property to crimes like burglary, criminal damage (vandalism), and car crimes is a big issue, as is the accessibility of dwelling layout (spatial configuration of open spaces), as explained by Cozens et al. (2005).

The gridiron layout design of Taman Sungai Chua has influenced the occurrence of crime. Suggestions to sustain the safe city program in Taman Sungai Chua include building defensive boundaries, i.e., installing fences around the house, limiting the gridiron housing layout design – high level of access to restricted access; and increasing surveillance qualities, i.e., placing guard houses, installing closed-circuit television (CCTV) and lights for good lighting at night.

## **CONCLUSION**

The quality of the Safe City Program being carried out in the area under investigation is one of the primary focuses of the suggestions offered. To a certain extent, the programme's implementation beginning in 2004 requires improvement to the current circumstances as it evolves yearly. Using closed-circuit television, motion-activated lights, GIS crime maps integrated into smartphone applications, and many other innovations is how residential neighbourhood safety has evolved. To determine which characteristics are most important in the study region, this research has considered every opinion and recommendation by the respondents involved. The limitation of this study could be the small sampling size, which could be hard to generalise to the whole Selangor or Malaysia population. This study did not include the Safe City Program's crime prevention strategies. Thus, in future studies, researchers could deploy a bigger sampling size, such as 400 samples and examine the crime prevention strategies or CPTED towards the effectiveness of safe city program such as the study by Lim et al. (2020) and Sakip & Abdullah (2012).

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Perkara di atas adalah dirujuk.

2. Adalah dimaklumkan bahawa pihak kami ingin memohon kelulusan tuan untuk mengimbas (*digitize*) dan memuat naik semua jenis penerbitan di bawah UiTM Cawangan Perak melalui Repositori Institusi UiTM, PTAR.

3. Tujuan permohonan ini adalah bagi membolehkan akses yang lebih meluas oleh pengguna perpustakaan terhadap semua maklumat yang terkandung di dalam penerbitan melalui laman Web PTAR UiTM Cawangan Perak.

Kelulusan daripada pihak tuan dalam perkara ini amat dihargai.

Sekian, terima kasih.

“BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA”

Saya yang menjalankan amanah,

**SITI BASRIYAH SHAIK BAHARUDIN**  
Timbalan Ketua Pustakawan

*nar*

*Setuju.*

*27.1.2023*

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