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TOWARDS SAFER CITIES: UNRAVELLING SAFETY PERCEPTIONS IN MALAYSIAN COMMUNITIES ACROSS 46 LOCAL AUTHORITIES

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Abstract

Urbanization has significantly impacted public safety, making it a major concern in Malaysia. To address this, the Safe City Program was introduced in 2004, playing a vital role in reducing crime and enhancing community security. Over the past 20 years, Malaysia's crime index has declined by 3.0%, reflecting the program's effectiveness. This study evaluates the program's impact on Malaysians' perceived safety through a demographic survey. A total of 10,076 respondents from 46 Local Authority areas across 13 states and three Federal Territories participated. ANOVA and post-hoc analysis revealed that individuals who are married, earn over RM10,000, are in their 40s, Malay or Muslim, highly educated, and residing in Terengganu, Kelantan, Putrajaya, or bungalow-style homes feel the safest. The findings highlight the Safe City Program's success in fostering security and well-being among Malaysians.

Keywords: Safe Cities, Safety Perception, Fear of Crime, Crime, Public Safety

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INTRODUCTION

The Safe City Program (SCP), led by PLAN Malaysia in collaboration with local authorities, was introduced in 2004 following a Ministerial Council directive. By 2005, it had been disseminated to 38 local authorities in Peninsular Malaysia. From 2006 to 2008, the Federal Department of Town and Country Planning monitored its implementation, setting guidelines for CCTV specifications, bollards, railings, and crime prevention lighting (Jabatan Perancangan Bandar dan Desa Semenanjung Malaysia, 2010). In 2009, the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) launched the National Key Result Areas (NKRA), prioritizing crime reduction. This led to the NKRA LAB, focusing on street crime reduction through SCP and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) under clause NKPI 1.2.1. During GTP 1.0 (2010–2012), SCP was further expanded, with 151 local authorities adopting its measures (Jabatan Perancangan Bandar dan Desa Semenanjung Malaysia, 2010).

In 2011, the Cabinet Ministers and the National Council for Local Government endorsed the CPTED Implementation Guide, integrating it into the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG) Secretary General's Circular No. 3 for planning approvals at one-stop centers (OSC). The Safe City Monitoring System was implemented in 35 local authorities and 215 police stations, reinforcing commitment to urban and rural safety. According to Jabatan Perancangan Bandar dan Desa Semenanjung Malaysia (2010), 496 CCTV cameras were installed across 25 local authorities, strengthening the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) Basic Services Sector (PBS) under GTP 2.0 (2013–2015, NKRA Reducing Crime). Additionally, initiatives such as blackspot whitening, CPTED enhancements for housebreaking prevention, car park safety audits, and an expanded Safe City Monitoring System further improved crime prevention efforts.

From 2020 to 2025, the government allocated RM40 million to enhance blackspot whitening efforts, reinforcing its commitment to crime reduction through the Safe City Program (Jabatan Perancangan Bandar dan Desa Semenanjung Malaysia, 2010). This study evaluates the program's success by analyzing Perceived Safety across 46 local authorities in Malaysia. Unlike previous studies, this research offers a nationwide assessment of safety perception with direct reference to the Safe City Program, addressing a critical gap in understanding public safety in Malaysia. However, most previous evaluations of the Safe City Program have been localised, focusing on single cities such as Putrajaya, Shah Alam, Kuala Lumpur and other selected urban centres. These local case studies provide useful insights but do not allow comparison across different socio-demographic groups, geographic settings, and housing environments involved in the program. As perceptions of safety are shaped not only by crime statistics but also by neighbourhood conditions, social

cohesion, personal security experiences, and lifestyle patterns, a broader and more representative national assessment is needed to understand how Malaysians actually feel about safety in their everyday environments.

Therefore, the novel contribution of this study lies in providing the first nationwide empirical assessment of safety perceptions involving 10,076 respondents across 46 Local Authorities. This extensive coverage enables a more equitable comparison of Perceived Safety across states, income levels, age groups, and residential forms, strengthening the evidence base for targeted safety planning, CPTED implementation, and policy adjustments under the Safe City framework. This nationwide approach provides a more comprehensive and comparative understanding of safety perception, which has not been examined at this scale in prior Safe City research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Unveiling Malaysia's Crime Landscape

In Malaysia, crime documentation is categorized into indexed and non-indexed crimes, with indexed crimes being frequently reported and supported by sufficient evidence, serving as significant indicators of the country's crime situation (PDRM, 2008) and evaluating crime rate trends. Indexed crimes encompass two types: property and violent, with violent crimes further divided into seven categories, including murder, rape, armed robbery, unarmed robbery, and assault. Property crimes are subdivided into six categories: theft, motor vehicle theft, motorcycle theft, theft of vans/trucks/heavy machinery, snatch theft, and burglary (PDRM, 2023). Non-indexed crimes encompass criminal cases beyond those listed under indexed crime categories, with their occurrence frequency not utilized for crime trend assessment (PDRM, 2008). These crimes, including fraud, insurance fraud, forgery, counterfeit money, and breach of trust, fall under commercial crimes (YDH Tan Sri Dato' Seri Musa, 2008). Over ten years, crime indices in Malaysia allow the observation of trends to determine if the crime index is rising or falling, as illustrated in Figure 1.

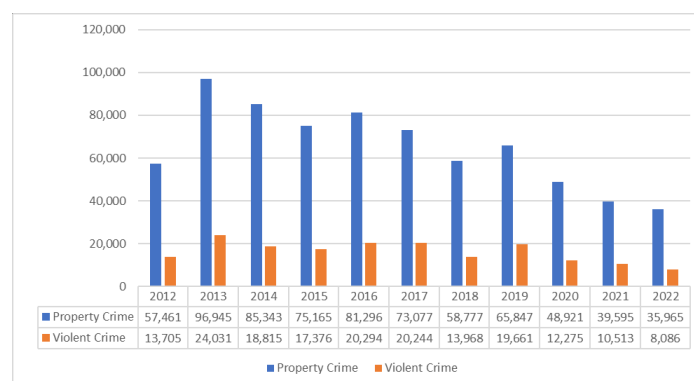


Figure 1. Indexed Crime Trends in Malaysia from 2012 to 2022
Source: PDRM (2023)

Figure 1 depicts the total number of indexed crimes over a decade, comprising 718,392 property crimes and 178,968 cases of violent crimes. Indexed crime has steadily decreased from 2012 to 2022, reflecting a consistent 10-year trend. This decline signifies the effectiveness of government and Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) initiatives in managing indexed crime cases. Meanwhile, Figure 2 illustrates index crime statistics across 46 local authorities in 14 states over the same 10-year period in Malaysia.

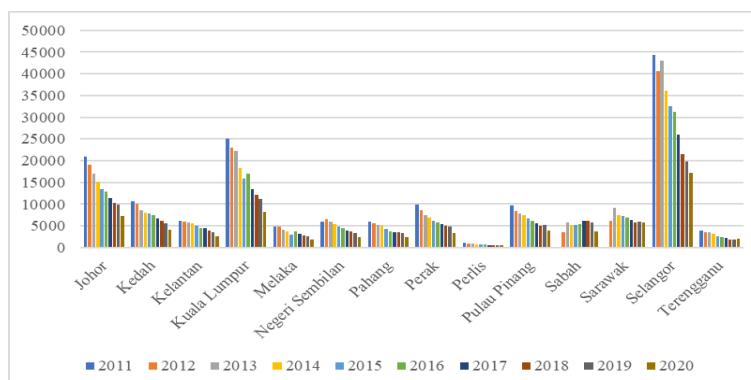


Figure 2. Crime Index Statistics in Malaysia States for the Years 2011 – 2020
Source: PDRM (2021)

Referring to Figure 1 and 2, comparing indexed crimes plays a crucial role in assessing the safety and security level of the Malaysian population. As crime decreases, people's safety levels improve. However, attention must also be given to non-indexed crimes, as they impact population safety. For example,

cybercrime has emerged as a serious issue, with 11,367 cases recorded in Kuala Lumpur from January to July 2023 alone (Metro, 2023). Additionally, crimes not investigated for legal reasons should be considered, as they reflect the level of security and efforts to combat crime among the population. Therefore, relevant authorities must continue monitoring the development of both indexed and non-indexed crimes to ensure the safety and well-being of the population are maintained and enhanced.

In the realm of crime prevention, implementing the Safe City Program aligns with the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), which emphasizes interconnectedness and shared objectives. Specifically, the program's environmental component, alongside considerations of image and maintenance, surveillance, and supportive endeavours, collectively strives to cultivate social cohesion among community members (Lim, S. B., Kong, Y. C., Abdul Rashid, M. F., & Abdul Malek, J., 2020). This endeavour involves modifying the physical environment to facilitate meaningful interactions within the community. Positive interactions bolster neighbourhood morale and indirectly contribute to establishing natural surveillance mechanisms over residential areas, consequently mitigating crime rates (Zainudin & Abdul Malek, 2010). The emphasis on social factors is particularly evident in community surveillance initiatives, which constitute a primary prevention strategy to enhance the populace's capacity to detect and monitor criminal activities (Yahaya, 2006). This approach, often called Neighborhood Watch, entails informal collaboration among neighbours to safeguard their locality against criminal threats by assuming voluntary responsibility for the security of their homes and surroundings (Lab, 1988; Mohd Reduan, 1990). Central to the success of this strategy is the cultivation of vigilance and attentiveness, particularly within neighbourhood contexts. Consequently, community members are auxiliary eyes and ears for law enforcement agencies, emphasizing the importance of societal engagement and commitment in fortifying crime prevention efforts (Zainudin & Abdul Malek, 2010).

Environmental Factors and Perception of Safety

Gender, age, and income significantly influence fear of crime. Women generally reported higher fear levels than men, experiencing up to four times more fear when alone at home, walking at night, or in dark areas (Grabosky, 1995; Donder et al., 2005; Heinen, 2023; Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2023). Individuals experience five times more insecurity and are three times more fearful of physical assault, primarily due to physical vulnerability and limited self-defence skills. Age also plays a role, with fear increasing as individuals grow older. Additionally, income level affects fear perception, as higher-income individuals

can afford security systems, while lower-income groups experience double the fear when on the streets (Donder et al., 2005; Grabosky, 1995).

Strong community and neighborhood cohesion are essential for fostering safety and support, while their absence increases concerns about crime. Norcikeyonn Samuni (2021) highlights the need to strengthen community resilience and civic awareness to address these issues. In Kota Kinabalu, five key barriers hinder community participation in enhancing livability: low civic awareness, lack of knowledge, limited promotion of the Livable City program, time constraints, and absence of incentives. Additionally, a deteriorating physical environment—marked by vandalism, property damage, and uncleanness—can signal reduced security. Areas with litter and traces of recreational activities may also be perceived as potential crime hotspots, particularly in remote locations.

A sense of safety greatly influences individual behaviour, often leading people to prefer indoor activities or take precautions like installing security devices and improving lighting (Kitchen & Schneider, 2007). These measures impact Malaysia's quality of life, highlighting the need to restore confidence in public safety. For instance, well-lit and busy areas can reduce anxiety about going out at night, though fear may persist in secluded locations (Kitchen & Schneider, 2007). A 55.8% decline in fear of crime indicates the effectiveness of Malaysia's crime prevention policies, reassuring policymakers and safety-conscious individuals. Meanwhile, Malaysia's population grew by 0.9% from 2018 to 2021 (EPU, 2022).

Exposure to crime—whether through personal experience or media—strongly influences individuals' sense of security. Media platforms, including social media (Facebook, TikTok), television, newspapers, and magazines, play a crucial role in shaping public perception. Sensationalized crime reports often amplify fear (Stephen Farrall et al., 2007; Amar et al., 2006). In Britain, tabloid readers show heightened anxiety about crime, whereas broadsheet readers exhibit less concern (Grabosky, 1995). However, fear of crime is not solely linked to victimization; other factors, such as perceived environmental risks, physical ability, age, gender, and socioeconomic status, also shape emotional responses (Navarrete-Hernandez et al., 2023).

A weak social environment in urban communities can contribute to feelings of insecurity, potentially leading to various phobias (polyphobia) among residents (Sparks et al., 2001). Phobias, characterized by persistent and irrational fears, often result in avoidance behaviours and can negatively impact psychological well-being. These fears stem from perceived social threats, creating an unhealthy state of anxiety (Malek et al., 2015). The loss of well-being and security in urban settings may heighten these fears, affecting individuals' mental health and overall quality of life.

Crowe (2000) examines crime from a social perspective, attributing it to factors such as lack of opportunities, societal problems, and environmental deterioration or 'disorder,' which act as situational triggers for criminal behaviour (Birkbeck & Lafree, 1993). From a psychological standpoint, crime is not merely a societal issue but also a product of individual choices shaped by personal beliefs. Some individuals may resort to crime as a means of problem-solving, often influenced by underlying mental pathologies that drive dysfunctional behavior (Crowe, 2000). Additionally, from an environmental perspective, crime is shaped by actual conditions, with each criminal act motivated by different incentives.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative approach utilizing a survey questionnaire distributed to Malaysian citizens. The questionnaire gathers demographic data and measures Perceived Safety (POS). Each construct is assessed using a five-point Likert scale, a reliable tool for evaluating respondents' perceptions. The scale consists of five response options: 1 - Very Unsafe, 2 - Unsafe, 3 - Less Safe, 4 - Safe, and 5 - Very Safe, providing a comprehensive understanding of safety perceptions. The Perceived Safety (POS) tool in this study is adapted from the British Crime Survey (BCS), also known as the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). The BCS is a well-established research tool used in the UK to measure crime rates and public safety concerns, providing critical insights for policymakers, law enforcement, and researchers. By adapting this tool to the Malaysian context, this study aims to comprehensively assess POS among Malaysian citizens.

The respondents were selected from 46 Local Authorities involved in the Safe City Program between 2017 and 2022. The study employs a stratified random sampling approach based on population distribution within Local Authority areas to ensure broad representation. The sampling process is conducted in two stages, covering 10% and 7% of the population, with at least 1% representation from each Local Authority. The sampling frame ranges from 10,403 (7%) to 14,890 (10%), ensuring a sufficient sample size in accordance with Krejcie and Morgan's sampling guidelines (See appendix 1). This approach enhances the study's validity and reliability.

Data collection was conducted through both face-to-face interactions and QR code distribution to maximize respondents' engagement. This process took place from June to July 2023, yielding responses from 10,076 participants. With a sampling frame of 10,403, the response rate reached 96.8%, while a larger sampling frame of 14,890 resulted in a response rate of 67.6%. Additionally, a pilot study involving 219 respondents was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The findings align with the works of

Radhakrishna (2007) and Bolarinwa (2015), affirming the instrument's effectiveness in measuring the study construct. Therefore, the sample size used in the pilot study was deemed sufficient to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument.

The Perceived Safety construct (Alpha = 0.91) has yielded reliable and valid results. Each item exhibits correlations with the respective constructs exceeding 0.3, and the internal consistency values are above 0.8, which is considered satisfactory and good according to DeVellis (1991). These findings validate each item as a measure of its dimension and emphasize their practical implications in constructing the dimension for the respective construct. This, in turn, enhances our understanding of public safety, making the research's impact tangible and relevant.

RESULTS

Demographics Analysis

This research includes a diverse group of respondents based on gender, ethnicity, religion, age, marital status, education, employment sector, and household income. The gender distribution is nearly equal, with males (49.4%) and females (50.6%). Malays form the majority (73.9%), and Islam is the predominant religion (78.4%). Age-wise, 34.1% are in their twenties, and 31.6% are in their thirties, highlighting a youthful population. Marital status shows a mix, with 54.6% married and 40.9% single. Education levels are high, with 69.4% holding university or college qualifications. Employment varies, with 32.6% in the public sector and 27.9% in the private sector. Household income levels vary, with 31.5% earning between RM2001–RM4000 while 27.2% earning below RM2000, illustrating economic diversity among respondents.

The Perceived Safety Levels and Differences by Demographics

The Perceived Safety (POS) measurement assesses respondents' sense of safety in their environment during both daytime and nighttime. It evaluates their ability and frequency of leaving home based on their perceived security. This measure captures perceptions of crime risks, including theft, assault, or harassment, and considers how safe individuals feel engaging in outdoor activities. By analysing respondents' comfort levels outside their homes at different times, the POS measurement provides valuable insights into their daily security experiences. Utilizing a five-point Likert scale, it offers a detailed understanding of these perceptions. The descriptive findings of POS are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Level of Perceived Safety among Malaysian Citizen

No.	Perceived Safety (POS)	Scale	Frequency	Percentage
1	The Level of Safety in Residential Areas	Very Unsafe	119	1.2
		Unsafe	212	2.1
		Less Safe	1327	13.2
		Safe	6681	66.3
		Very Safe	1737	17.2
2	The level of feeling safe staying at home	Very Unsafe	58	0.6
		Unsafe	159	1.6
		Less Safe	1148	11.4
		Safe	7032	69.8
		Very Safe	1679	16.7
3	Feeling of safety when leaving home	Very Unsafe	52	0.5
		Unsafe	164	1.6
		Less Safe	1153	11.4
		Safe	7276	72.2
		Very Safe	1431	14.2
4	The frequency of leaving home at night within a week	Every day	1646	16.3
		Once or twice	3487	34.6
		3 to 4 times	2526	25.1
		5 to 6 times	1859	18.4
		Never go out	558	5.5
5	The level of feeling safe when going out at night	Very Unsafe	274	2.7
		Unsafe	448	4.4
		Less Safe	2161	21.4
		Safe	6265	62.0
		Very Safe	941	9.3
6	The level of feeling safe when alone at home during nighttime	Very Unsafe	201	2.0
		Unsafe	365	3.6
		Less Safe	2314	23.0
		Safe	6397	63.5
		Very Safe	799	7.9
7	The frequency of leaving home during daytime within a week	Every day	5037	50.0
		Once or twice	555	5.5
		3 to 4 times	1166	11.6
		5 to 6 times	3228	32
		Never go out	90	0.9
8	The level of feeling safe when going out during the daytime	Very Unsafe	29	0.3
		Unsafe	73	0.7
		Less Safe	821	8.1
		Safe	7579	75.2
		Very Safe	1574	15.6
9	The level of feeling safe when alone at home during daytime	Very Unsafe	29	0.3
		Unsafe	182	1.8
		Less Safe	900	8.9
		Safe	7383	73.3
		Very Safe	1582	15.7

Source: Author

A nationwide survey across various residential areas in Malaysia indicates a strong sense of safety and well-being among Malaysians. The study found that 66.3% of respondents feel safe in their residential areas, with 69.8% expressing security in their homes. Safety perception remains high, with 73.3% feeling secure when alone at home during the day and 63.5% at night. Additionally, 62% feel safe going out at night, while 75.2% feel secure during the day. Notably, 34.6% reported going out at night once or twice a week and feeling safe while doing so.

Relationship Between Demographics and Perceived Safety

The study analysed the relationship between respondents' demographic characteristics and Perceived Safety (POS). Findings indicate a significant difference in POS based on gender ($t(10023.26) = 6.18; p = 0.00$), highlighting gender's crucial role in shaping safety perceptions. Men reported higher POS ($M = 27.66, SD = 3.59$) than women ($M = 27.23, SD = 3.43$). This disparity may be influenced by social factors, the physical environment, risk perception, and physical ability to defend against crime. As noted by Eva Heinen (2023), women experience higher anxiety levels than men and are twice as likely to alter their travel behavior due to safety concerns.

Additionally, this study aimed to understand the factors influencing Perceived Safety (POS) across different demographic groups. To achieve this, we conducted a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on various demographic factors. The results revealed significant differences between POS and Age Group ($F(4, 10071) = 3.54, p = 0.00$), Ethnicity ($F(3, 10072) = 19.17, p = 0.02$), Religion ($F(4, 10071) = 11.68, p = 0.00$), Marital Status ($F(3, 10072) = 8.36, p = 0.00$), Education Level ($F(3, 10072) = 34.59, p = 0.00$), Employment Sector ($F(4, 10071) = 3.32, p = 0.00$), Income Level ($F(5, 10070) = 9.51, p = 0.00$), Residential Area ($F(45, 10030) = 29.51, p = 0.00$), and Residence Type ($F(9, 10065) = 42.91, p = 0.00$). Further analysis using the post-Hoc HSD test revealed significant differences in Perceived Safety (POS) across various demographic factors. Age-wise, individuals in their 40s reported the highest POS ($M = 27.57, SD = 3.33$). Ethnicity also showed variations, with Malays exhibiting the highest POS ($M = 27.58, SD = 3.31$). Marital status was another key factor, with married individuals reporting the highest POS ($M = 27.49, SD = 3.33$). Education level significantly influenced POS, with university/college graduates feeling the safest ($M = 27.61, SD = 3.50$). Employment status also played a role, where unemployed individuals reported the highest POS ($M = 27.65, SD = 3.95$). Income level showed clear differences, with those earning above RM10,000 demonstrating the highest POS ($M = 28.26, SD = 3.55$). In terms of residential factors, Putrajaya residents reported the highest POS ($M = 32.92, SD = 3.19$), while individuals living in

detached houses (bungalows) felt the safest ($M=28.51$, $SD=3.84$). These findings highlight the demographic and environmental factors influencing POS.

DISCUSSION

The findings emphasize the significant role of age in shaping Perceived Safety (POS), particularly among individuals in their 40s and 50s. Notably, those in their 40s report a higher POS than those in their 50s, suggesting that financial stability may influence safety perceptions. A small percentage of individuals in their 40s earn above RM10,000 (6%), with others earning between RM9001–RM10,000 (6%), RM6001–RM8000 (18%), and RM2001–RM4000 (29%). At this stage, many have established careers, gained professional recognition, and developed essential skills, contributing to greater confidence and well-being. This aligns with Garcia, Mangold, & Johansson (2024), who found that improved socioeconomic conditions correlate with higher perceived safety. Their research suggests that better economic stability within a neighborhood enhances individuals' sense of security, reinforcing the link between financial well-being and POS. This indicates that policies aimed at improving livelihood stability, professional development, and neighbourhood-level socio-economic support may indirectly enhance community safety perceptions. Local Authorities could leverage this insight by integrating livelihood enhancement and community capacity building into Safe City planning strategies.

Ethnicity also plays a pivotal role in safety perceptions, with Malays reporting higher POS, potentially due to their strong social ties and community connections. With 73% of respondents being Malays, cultural factors emphasizing close family and friendships may contribute to this heightened security perception. Regarding marital status, the study identified significant differences in Perceived Safety (POS) between single and married individuals, with married respondents reporting higher POS. This may be attributed to emotional support and shared life experiences that enhance feelings of security. Financial stability also plays a role, as marriage often leads to combined financial resources. The study found that 5% of married respondents earn more than RM10,000 or RM9001–RM10,000 monthly. Additionally, married individuals were more likely than single respondents to earn between RM4001–RM6000, reinforcing the link between financial stability and a stronger sense of security. These findings imply that community cohesion and family-oriented neighbourhood development may serve as soft security mechanisms. Therefore, Local Authorities could strengthen neighbourhood networking programmes, social participation platforms, and community-based surveillance systems to enhance collective efficacy and trust.

The correlation between income levels and education is significant in Perceived Safety (POS). ANOVA analysis reveals that respondents with

university or college education report higher POS than others. Higher education provides access to stable job opportunities with benefits like health insurance and retirement plans, fostering financial and job security. Cross-tabulation analysis further supports this, showing that individuals with higher education earn greater incomes. The t-test results confirm that those earning over RM10,000 have higher POS values. A stable financial position reduces concerns about basic needs such as food, housing, and healthcare, minimizing insecurity. Additionally, financially stable individuals can invest in home security measures like alarms and CCTV, enhancing their sense of safety. This suggests that safety outcomes are not solely determined by physical security infrastructure but are also influenced by socio-economic empowerment. As such, Safe City interventions should be planned in parallel with social development strategies, including targeted upskilling, economic resilience programmes, and inclusion-based urban planning.

The research highlights a significant disparity in Perceived Safety (POS) across residential areas, influenced by the involvement of Local Authorities (PBT). Respondents in Putrajaya report higher POS, reflecting increased public confidence in security, attributed to proactive local authority efforts. This contrasts with earlier findings by Anuar, Bookhari, & Aziz (2012), which highlighted areas needing improvement. However, by 2023, enhanced safety initiatives have significantly improved public perceptions. Insights from in-depth interviews with government agencies such as PDRM, JKM, Plan Malaysia, AADK, and JIM emphasize the importance of an integrated Safe City Program (PBS). Collaboration among authorities has strengthened security measures and fostered a greater sense of safety. Community engagement is crucial for urban security. Norcikeyonn Samuni (2021) stresses that local authority-supported participation enhances community confidence and social functionality. Similarly, studies by Zainudin & Abdul Malek (2010), Talha (2008), and Wang et al. (2019) affirm that community-driven initiatives are more effective in crime prevention than environmental factors, promoting mental well-being through social cohesion and physical activity. This demonstrates that Local Authorities that actively implement visible safety improvements and foster strong inter-agency collaboration tend to achieve higher public confidence. Therefore, Local Authorities with lower POS scores may adopt benchmarking and replication of best practices from high-performing cities such as Putrajaya, particularly in street surveillance, nighttime illumination, maintenance quality, and community safety governance.

The Perception of Safety (POS) varies significantly across different housing types, including cluster homes, terraced houses, urban houses, apartments, semi-detached houses, condominiums, and "Zero Lot Boundary" homes. Single-family homes (bungalows) report the highest POS, likely due to the financial stability of their residents. Higher income levels enable individuals

to afford such residences and invest in security measures like CCTV and alarms. Understanding this correlation between income and residential security can provide valuable insights for urban planning and sociological research. This supports the need for differentiated CPTED strategies tailored to different residential forms. For example, apartment-based settings may prioritize surveillance, lighting, and controlled access, while landed housing zones may emphasise perimeter visibility, neighbourhood watch coordination, and defensible space design.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is based on self-reported perceptions, which may be influenced by personal experience and media exposure rather than actual crime rates. Although the sample is large, certain groups may still be underrepresented, indicating possible non-response bias. In addition, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to observe changes in safety perception over time. Future research may employ longitudinal tracking or combine perception data with crime statistics and built environment indicators to provide a more integrated understanding of urban safety.

CONCLUSION

The findings emphasize the need for age-specific urban safety policies, given the significant impact of age on Perceptions of Safety (POS). Notably, individuals in their 40s report higher POS than those in their 50s, likely due to financial stability gained through career advancement. Income analysis shows a substantial percentage of individuals in their 40s earning above RM10,000, reflecting professional success and stability. This financial empowerment boosts confidence and well-being, reinforcing the importance of tailored urban safety policies to further support and protect this age group.

The study highlights the influence of social and cultural factors on safety perception. Ethnicity plays a key role, with Malays reporting higher Perceived Safety (POS), likely due to their strong community bonds and predominant representation. Marital status also impacts POS, as married individuals feel more secure, possibly due to emotional support and financial stability. Education is another crucial factor, with higher educational attainment linked to greater perceived security. This is attributed to better job opportunities and financial stability, reinforcing the connection between income and education. These findings emphasize the need for education-focused policies to enhance urban safety, making it a priority for policymakers and researchers.

Geographic variations in Perceived Safety (POS) are evident, with Putrajaya residents reporting higher safety levels than those in other Local Authorities (PBTs). This highlights the importance of collaborative efforts by

local authorities in enhancing security and community well-being. Additionally, community leaders and their initiatives play a crucial role in crime prevention and urban safety. Their effectiveness highlights a key focus area for policymakers, community leaders, and NGOs in strengthening safety measures and fostering secure living environments.

The research confirms the positive impact of the Safe City Program in Malaysia. Its successful implementation has enhanced local authorities' and communities' understanding and engagement. Collaboration between the government, NGOs, and the community has significantly improved safety and well-being, demonstrating the program's effectiveness and its potential as a model for future urban safety initiatives.

ETHICAL COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

This research was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical standards. Ethical approval was granted by the Universiti Teknologi MARA Research Ethics Committee (Ref:REC/07/2023(ST/MR/168)). Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents.

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Appendix 1: Sampling Details for Respondent Numbers

NO	State	Local Authorities	Total Population	Population (1%)	Respondents	
					10%	7%
1	Johor	Majlis Bandaraya Johor Bahru	1,177,700	11,777	1,177	824
		Majlis Bandaraya Iskandar Puteri				
		Majlis Bandaraya Pasir Gudang				
2	Melaka & Negeri Sembilan	Majlis Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah	409,400	4,094	409	286
		Majlis Perbandaran Alor Gajah	186,600	1,866	186	130
		Majlis Perbandaran Jasin	111,100	1,111	111	77
		Majlis Perbandaran Seremban	493,100	4,931	493	345
		Majlis Perbandaran Nilai				
3	Kedah, Pulau Pinang & Perlis	Majlis Bandaraya Alor Setar	270,400	2,704	270	189
		Majlis Perbandaran Kulim	245,300	2,453	245	171
		Majlis Perbandaran Sungai Petani	392,800	3,928	392	274
		Majlis Perbandaran Kubang Pasu	185,200	1,852	185	129
		Majlis Bandaraya Pulau Pinang	587,500	5,875	587	411
		Majlis Bandaraya Seberang Perai	687,100	6,871	687	480
		Majlis Perbandaran Kangar	224,600	2,246	224	157
4	Perak	Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh	653,900	6,539	653	457
		Majlis Perbandaran Manjung	173,700	1,737	173	121
		Majlis Perbandaran Taiping	197,400	1,974	197	138
		Majlis Perbandaran Teluk Intan	102,800	1,028	102	71
5	Selangor, Kuala Lumpur & Putrajaya	Majlis Bandaraya Shah Alam	1,636,800	16,368	1636	1145
		Majlis Bandaraya Subang Jaya				
		Majlis Bandaraya Petaling Jaya				
		Majlis Perbandaran Ampang Jaya	1,009,500	10,095	1,009	706

NO	State	Local Authorities	Total Population	Population (1%)	Respondents	
					10%	7%
		Majlis Perbandaran Kajang				
		Majlis Perbandaran Klang	774,500	7,745	774	542
		Majlis Perbandaran Selayang	679,500	6,795	679	475
		Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur	1,397,900	13,979	1,397	978
		Perbadanan Putrajaya	72,000	720	72	50
6	Kelantan & Terengganu	Majlis Perbandaran Kota Bharu	408,400	4,084	408	285
		Majlis Bandaraya Kuala Terengganu	167,700	1,677	167	117
		Majlis Perbandaran Kemaman	144,500	1,445	144	101
		Majlis Perbandaran Dungun	112,300	1,123	112	78
		Majlis Daerah Besut	108,900	1,089	108	76
7	Pahang	Majlis Bandaraya Kuantan	405,700	4,057	405	283
		Majlis Perbandaran Temerloh	118,600	1,186	118	83
		Majlis Daerah Maran	77,700	777	77	54
8 & 9	Sabah & Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan	Dewan Bandaraya Kota Kinabalu	301,100	3,011	301	210
		Majlis Perbandaran Sandakan	206,600	2,066	206	144
		Majlis Perbandaran Tawau	187,900	1,879	187	131
		Majlis Daerah Semporna	65,300	653	65	45
		Perbandaran Labuan	60,200	602	60	42
10 & 11	Sarawak	Dewan Bandaraya Kuching Utara	478,000	4,780	478	334
		Majlis Bandaraya Kuching Selatan				
		Majlis Perbandaran Padawan				
		Majlis Bandaraya Miri	191,400	1,914	191	133
		Majlis Perbandaran Sibu	187,600	1,876	187	131
		TOTAL	14,890,700	148,907	14,890	10,403

Source: Author

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