

## Exploring the Influence of Social Environments on Wellbeing in Urban Communities: A Literature Review and Key Indicators for Future Research

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i18/19979> DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i18/19979

**Published Date:** 16 December 2023

### Abstract

In the rapidly urbanizing context, community well-being is vital for societal progress. Malaysia's growing urban landscape highlights the interplay between the social environment and urban community well-being. Amidst cultural diversity, where ethnicities converge, understanding the multifaceted social dynamics becomes pivotal. As traditions merge and languages harmonize, the social environment fosters unity and empathy. This study explores nuanced dimensions and their impact on urban well-being. Through an extensive scholarly review, it uncovers connections between sociodemographic, residential attributes, neighborhood dynamics, relationship support, community engagement, safety perceptions, identity, play, design, interaction variety, shared spaces, and outdoor opportunities. These facets shape urban life, influencing interactions and attachment. Malaysia's cultural tapestry emphasizes the social environment's role in harmonizing diverse communities, enhancing well-being, and resilience. Findings inform urban planning, policy-making, and community development, propelling inclusive and harmonious urban communities. Ultimately, this research underscores the social environment's potential as a catalyst for unity, contentment, and well-being in Malaysia's urban areas.

**Keywords:** Social Environment, Community, Urban, Wellbeing, Malaysia

### Introduction

In the fast-paced and rapidly evolving landscape of urbanization, the concept of community well-being has taken center stage as an essential measure of societal progress. As cities in Malaysia continue to expand and urbanize, the social environment within these urban centers plays a critical role in shaping the overall well-being of their diverse and dynamic populations.

The interactions, relationships, and sense of belonging that individuals experience within their communities have profound implications for their physical, emotional, and social health. The intricate interplay between the social environment and urban community well-being is particularly pertinent in the context of Malaysia, where a rich tapestry of cultures, ethnicities, and backgrounds converges within the urban fabric. Malaysia's urban landscape is characterized by a vibrant amalgamation of traditions, languages, and customs, reflecting a harmonious coexistence of multiple ethnic groups and religions. Rapid urbanization has led to the emergence of bustling metropolises, where individuals from diverse backgrounds converge, seeking economic opportunities and a better quality of life. As these urban centers evolve, it becomes imperative to delve into the intricate dynamics of the social environment and its influence on the well-being of the urban community. The social environment encompasses a multifaceted web of factors that define the quality of interpersonal relationships, community engagement, and overall social interactions within urban settings. It encompasses dimensions such as sociodemographic composition, residential characteristics, neighborhood dynamics, relationship support, community engagement, safety perceptions, identity formation, play and design considerations, interaction variety, shared spaces, and outdoor opportunities. Each of these elements contributes to the tapestry of urban community life, impacting how residents interact, connect, and ultimately thrive in their shared environments. In the context of Malaysia's urban situation, understanding the nuances of the social environment becomes particularly significant due to the nation's unique cultural diversity. As individuals from different ethnicities, religions, and cultural backgrounds coexist within the urban landscape, the social environment becomes a bridge that fosters understanding, empathy, and unity. The ability to interact harmoniously and engage in meaningful social interactions contributes not only to individual well-being but also to the broader cohesion and resilience of the community. Moreover, as urbanization brings forth both opportunities and challenges, the social environment becomes a key determinant in addressing various societal issues. From promoting a sense of security and belonging among marginalized populations to fostering inclusive urban spaces that accommodate the needs of all residents, the social environment serves as a critical axis around which urban policies and interventions revolve. In light of these considerations, this study aims to explore and analyse the intricate relationship between the social environment and urban community well-being in Malaysia. By examining how various dimensions of the social environment intersect and influence residents' experiences, interactions, and perceptions, we seek to uncover insights that can inform effective urban planning, policy formulation, and community development initiatives. Through an in-depth exploration of the social environment's role in enhancing urban community well-being, we hope to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and practices that create thriving, inclusive, and harmonious urban communities in Malaysia and beyond.

### **Methodology**

The research methodology employed in this study adopts a meticulous and organized approach to delve into the intricate relationship between the social environment and urban community wellbeing. The aim is to comprehensively explore, analyse, and synthesize pertinent academic articles that shed light on the dynamic interplay between various dimensions of the social environment and the overall well-being of urban communities in Malaysia. To embark on this inquiry, an exhaustive and systematic search of reputable academic databases was conducted, including platforms such as ScienceDirect, PubMed, Google Scholar, and PsycINFO. The search strategy incorporated a selection of keywords

closely tied to the social environment, such as "social," "community," "interaction," "environment," and "public spaces." These keywords were strategically chosen to encapsulate the multifaceted elements that collectively constitute the social environment and its impact on urban community well-being. The articles selected for review underwent a rigorous assessment to ensure their relevance and alignment with the research focus. Each article was meticulously scrutinized to extract essential information, encompassing study objectives, methodologies employed, key findings, and implications derived from the research. The data extracted from these articles were subsequently synthesized to identify recurring themes, emerging trends, and underlying patterns that illuminate the relationship between the social environment and urban community well-being. As the synthesis unfolded, common threads and shared insights across the reviewed articles were identified, shedding light on how various facets of the social environment influence the well-being of urban communities. Particular emphasis was placed on exploring dimensions such as community interaction, relationship support, neighborhood dynamics, and the availability of shared spaces. The discussion delved into how these aspects contribute to fostering a sense of belonging, promoting social cohesion, and ultimately enhancing the overall quality of life for urban residents. The culmination of this methodology lies in the presentation and discourse of the findings, contextualized within the framework of the identified themes. Through in-depth exploration and analysis, this study seeks to unravel the mechanisms by which the social environment, with its diverse and interwoven elements, shapes the well-being of Malaysia's urban communities. Furthermore, the research endeavors to extrapolate practical implications from the synthesized findings, offering valuable guidance for policymakers, urban planners, and community stakeholders. Ultimately, by synthesizing insights from a range of scholarly articles, this research contributes to a nuanced understanding of how the social environment can be harnessed to cultivate a sense of unity, contentment, and holistic well-being within Malaysia's urban communities. The comprehensive analysis serves as a valuable resource, offering insights that can inform urban planning initiatives, policy formulation, and community development endeavors aimed at fostering vibrant, inclusive, and thriving urban environments.

## **Finding and Discussion**

### **Article Discussion**

This section presents a comprehensive analysis and exploration of the scholarly articles within the chosen journal, aiming to unveil the intricate mechanisms through which the multifaceted social environment exerts its influence on the well-being of urban communities. The study's primary objective is to elucidate the interwoven dynamics of the social environment's diverse components, thereby contributing to an enhanced understanding of its role in shaping communal well-being. In order to achieve this goal, a systematic selection process was employed, encompassing six pertinent journal articles that directly align with the central theme of this discussion. The choice of articles was guided by a deliberate and rigorous keyword-based approach, focusing on terms intimately linked to the concept of the social environment, including "social," "community," "interaction," "environment," and "public spaces." By adhering to this meticulous keyword strategy, we ensured the inclusion of articles that effectively capture the intricate interplay between the social environment and the well-being of urban communities. The ensuing analysis of these selected articles serves as the bedrock of this study's empirical examination, enabling a nuanced exploration of the mechanisms at play. Through this scholarly discourse, we endeavor to contribute

substantively to the academic discourse surrounding the pivotal role of the social environment in shaping and nurturing the well-being of urban communities.

**Article 1:** Zhang et al (2018) Public Transport Use Among the Urban and Rural Elderly in China: Effects of Personal, Attitudinal, Household, Social-Environment, And Built-Environment Factors.

Zhang, et al., (2018) emphasized that indicators related to the social environment, such as the proportions of elderly population, high-income households, medium-income households, and low-income households, play a significant role in influencing public transport trips. They found that residents in lower-income areas tend to have a weaker inclination to use public transport for their everyday travels. Notably, in neighborhoods with a smaller proportion of elderly residents than average, the elderly makes around 0.30 public transport trips per day, which is 17.5% higher than their counterparts. The study highlights that the elderly's use of public transport is affected by a range of factors, including personal attributes, attitudes, household dynamics, social surroundings, and the built environment. For instance, male or younger elderly individuals who prefer public transport and live with a partner are more likely to use it frequently. The social context, such as the proportion of elderly residents and the income distribution in a neighborhood, also influences public transport use. Neighborhoods with fewer elderly residents and higher income levels tend to have greater public transport usage among the elderly. The study suggests that social norms related to active travel behavior and environmentally friendly transportation options may contribute to this trend. The availability and convenience of public transport services, as well as the physical environment, also impact usage. Proximity to bus stops, a higher density of bus stops, and the presence of green spaces along walking routes are positively linked to increased public transport utilization. Based on these findings, the study proposes several strategies to encourage public transport use among the elderly which are: i) Implement initiatives and campaigns to cultivate a positive attitude towards public transport; ii) Foster neighborhood's with a well-balanced mix of age groups and income levels to prevent the concentration of elderly or low-income populations; iii) Improve the placement of bus stops, increasing their density in areas frequented by the elderly and reducing travel distance to bus stops; iv) Enhance the presence of green spaces along routes connecting residential areas to bus stops, making the walking environment more appealing and comfortable for elderly public transport users. The study emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach that considers personal attitudes, social factors, and the physical environment to effectively promote public transport use among the elderly.

**Article 2:** Chang et al (2023) Social Environments Still Matter: The Role of Physical and Social Environments in Place Attachment in A Transitional City, Guangzhou, China.

The study conducted by Chang, et al (2022) delves into the influence of social ties and a sense of security on place attachment. They employed a scale adapted from Brown et al (2004) to assess social ties and a four-item scale from Bonaiuto et al (2003) to gauge the sense of security within neighborhoods. Contrary to prevailing research suggesting stronger place attachment to commodity housing due to superior physical environments, this study introduces a more intricate interplay. It reveals that residents' place attachment is not solely attributed to housing type but is significantly influenced by the quality of both physical and social environments. While perceived housing conditions were found to strongly correlate

with place identity and place dependence, the perceived neighborhood environment was notably linked only to place dependence. The authors contend that home and housing conditions bear significant importance as symbols of family life and happiness, acting as central references in shaping place identity and dependence. Notably, the study indicates that the role of physical and social environments in place attachment is not uniform, with social ties primarily predicting place identity, while housing conditions drive place dependence. The research challenges the prevailing trend that physical attributes overshadow social relations in predicting place attachment. It underscores that both aspects interact intricately and contribute to residents' emotional and functional connections to their environment. This work advocates for an expanded understanding of place attachment that considers both identity and dependence perspectives. Methodologically, the study offers innovative techniques, including remote sensing and GIS, for objectively measuring physical environment attributes, paving the way for future research. The findings bear significant policy implications. It calls for a shift in urban development policies from large-scale demolitions to micro-scale improvements that upgrade housing conditions and preserve community fabric. The study also suggests the incorporation of subjective evaluations by residents in evaluating urban development projects. Furthermore, the cultivation of social ties and a sense of security is highlighted as crucial for enhancing residents' emotional attachment to their neighborhood's, emphasizing the importance of community engagement and self-governance. This research advances our understanding of place attachment by unveiling the intertwined influence of physical and social environments. It contributes to the ongoing discourse on the relative significance of these environments, underscoring their distinct roles in shaping place identity and place dependence. By offering both theoretical insights and methodological innovations, this study contributes to the advancement of place attachment literature and informs urban development policies with a nuanced understanding of residents' connections to their neighborhood's.

**Article 3: Karim (2012) Low-Cost Housing Environment: Compromising Quality of Life?**

The study conducted by Karim (2012) presents a comprehensive exploration into the multifaceted dimensions of low-cost housing environments and their profound implications for residents' quality of life. Through meticulous investigation, the study identifies five pivotal domains that are pivotal to residents' overall well-being: comfort, convenience, satisfaction, safety, and usage. Notably, within the comfort domain, the study underscores the paramount significance of fostering harmonious coexistence among diverse ethnic groups, effective communication with neighbors, and the ability to depend on one another. The domain of convenience delves into the crucial role of neighborly support, encompassing seeking assistance and participating in discussions, in enhancing the day-to-day lives of residents. Furthermore, the study highlights indicators of satisfaction such as the presence of helpful and friendly neighbors, active community engagement, and a robust sense of community association. Approaching safety from a comprehensive perspective, the research addresses the recognition of neighbors, the resolution of social and moral challenges, the identification of potential threats from unfamiliar individuals, and the management of criminal activities. In the context of usage, the study emphasizes the proper allocation of spaces for interpersonal interactions and underscores the necessity of cultivating a strong communal identity and shared values. This research delves further into the various domains within the context of the Family, Social Environment (Neighbors and Community), Community Facilities, and Neighborhood Physical Environment. The findings of the study unveil a nuanced interplay of

factors that influence residents' contentment with their living conditions. While economic opportunities and urban advantages contribute to overall satisfaction, concerns regarding social issues among children and the challenges of high-density living persist. The study underscores the dynamic interactions between neighbors and community members, underscoring the paramount importance of fostering a sense of belonging and shared values. While occasional conflicts may arise, the prevailing trend indicates a proclivity towards tolerance and cooperation among neighbors. Additionally, the study emphasizes the pivotal role of accessible and high-quality amenities in elevating residents' overall quality of life. Despite occasional dissatisfaction, most residents accept the available facilities, considering their economic circumstances. This underscores the necessity for considerate facility planning to ensure equitable access. Moreover, the research delves into residents' adaptability to shared external spaces and their remarkable capacity for resilience in tolerating minor inconveniences. Many residents exhibit a commendable willingness to accept challenges, ultimately contributing to their overall contentment. In essence, the study illuminates varying degrees of contentment and satisfaction across different domains among residents in the low-cost housing environment of Shah Alam, Malaysia. Notably, the community facilities domain emerges as a notable strength, exemplifying the substantial impact of well-planned amenities on overall well-being. The study posits that urban planning and the inherent characteristics of the city play a pivotal role in shaping residents' quality of life. Despite existing challenges, the overarching sense of contentment and acceptance fosters a predominantly positive outlook. The research underscores the significance of ensuring equitable living conditions and implementing comprehensive planning policies to enhance the quality of life for lower-income populations.

**Article 4:** Hamid et al (2019) Social Environmental Support Towards Leisure Time Activities Among Multi-Ethnic Youth in Malaysia.

The research comprehensively elucidates the indispensable significance of social environmental support in molding the leisure engagement of young individuals. It firmly identifies family, peers, and local community support as pivotal determinants that effectively facilitate and promote youth participation in leisure pursuits, particularly within the spheres of religious and educational activities. The study consistently underscores the manifold advantages inherent in leisure activities. Drawing from decent sources such as Aman (2005); Brajša-Žganec (2011); Trenberth (2005), among others, the research adeptly underscores the extensive positive impacts that leisure endeavors exert on diverse aspects encompassing social connections, well-being, health, knowledge acquisition, and skill enhancement. Moreover, the research thoughtfully positions leisure activities as a transformative developmental context, attesting to its profound significance for the growth of youth. This period emerges as a critical juncture, underscoring the study's focus on the vital role played by social environmental support in fortifying youth engagement within leisure undertakings. By astutely recognizing family, peers, and local community support systems as pivotal catalysts, the authors compellingly highlight the imperative of cultivating these foundations, especially during the transitional phase of youth marked by formidable challenges and pivotal shifts as they navigate towards adulthood. At this crucial life juncture, active participation in leisure pursuits effectively assumes the role of a mechanism for fostering effective socialization. The research is astutely grounded in Bronfenbrenner's seminal Ecological Systems Theory (1989), a framework that adroitly contextualizes the potent influence of the social environment on individual development. This theoretical construct uniquely

illuminates the intricate dynamics at play, shedding light on the direct and nuanced influence of proximate surroundings, as well as the subtle yet impactful effects of broader ecosystems, all of which significantly shape youth's engagement with leisure activities. Resoundingly, the study's findings robustly affirm its central thesis, substantiating the profound role that family, peers, and local community support play in actively contributing to and invigorating youth involvement in leisure pursuits. Noteworthy is the discernible influence of family support, distinctly fostering engagement in religious and educational endeavors, while the potent force of peer influence emerges as a salient driver propelling positive values among youth. Furthermore, the local communities emerge as key enablers by providing the essential resources for religious activities and concurrently nurturing tolerance amidst the diverse tapestry of ethnic groups. In its entirety, the study resolutely underscores the pivotal and paramount role that social environmental support occupies in shaping and molding the realm of youth's engagement in leisure pursuits. Family, peers, and local communities seamlessly unite to foster an environment that cultivates productive and purposeful leisure activities. The discerning backing of these social systems stands unequivocally as a pivotal catalyst during the intricate navigation of youth through the labyrinthine complexities of transitioning into adulthood, thereby expeditiously nurturing affirmative engagement and holistically elevating their overall well-being and personal advancement.

**Article 5:** Sepahpour & Haghighi (2017) Children's Social Interaction and Play Environment: An Approach to User Centered Design.

Sepahpour & Haghighi (2017) assert that the arenas of home, park, and school serve as pivotal settings for fostering social interactions among children. Evidently, youngsters are drawn to engaging with their peers in the familiar contexts of home, park, and school. It is evident that the climate of play exerts a profound influence on the dynamics of player interactions. Notably, parks and schools possess the capacity to seamlessly gather children within the span of a single year, each offering distinct opportunities for interaction. While the home environment lacks temporal constraints, it is bounded by spatial limitations and the number of participants that a household can accommodate. In the context of park settings, the predominant conflict issue among newly acquainted peers is often centered around matters of "authority," whereas in familiar home or school environments, known companions grapple with conflicts stemming from "choice and sharing." The undertaken study was meticulously designed to delve into the multifaceted role of play environments in shaping the social dynamics of children aged 7 to 12. The overarching aim was to devise play equipment centered around the needs of the users, ultimately fostering enriched social interactions. This comprehensive investigation relied on a qualitative field study approach, employing a questionnaire administered to mothers and physical training teachers. The inquiry delved into aspects encompassing children's play environments, their interactions, conflict dynamics, and engagement with play apparatus. The study's findings underscore the prevalence of children's engagement in social play within the realms of home, parks, and schools. Disparities emerged in attendance frequencies across these settings, with a discernible gender preference wherein girls favored home play and boys gravitated toward school interactions. Parks emerged as fertile grounds for social play, demonstrating heightened activity during the summer period. A salient observation was the discernible influence of distinct play environments on play patterns and gender-based preferences. Boys exhibited a proclivity for vigorous, physically engaging play, often opting for school-based interactions. Conversely, girls displayed a propensity for sedentary play within the home environment, commonly

involving dolls and Lego, while exhibiting comparable enthusiasm for social play in park surroundings. Conflicts among children manifested across a spectrum of issues, including matters of authority, sharing, and selecting play items, taking turns, and adherence to rules. Notably, the capacity for negotiation and compromise emerged as pivotal social competencies for conflict resolution. The study underscores the potential of enhancing negotiation skills to substantially mitigate conflicts across diverse play environments. The rapport between children and play equipment exhibited variations contingent upon the familiarity of the environment. Notably, communal play equipment within parks and schools faced a higher vulnerability to vandalism owing to the inquisitiveness and creativity of children. The research advocates for the creation of robust play equipment that caters to the demands of diverse environments, fostering positive interactions. The research illuminates strategic design considerations predicated upon the distinct attributes of the three principal play environments. Recommendations span the gamut from devising play apparatus that kindles social play within home confines, to accommodating temporal constraints of school and park settings, and addressing factors that contribute to instances of vandalism. The study underscores the pertinence of intervention programs targeting pivotal social competencies such as negotiation, team collaboration, and rule adherence. The amplification of these skills has the potential to significantly ameliorate conflicts during play, thereby fostering enhanced peer relationships. The study resolutely underscores the profound influence wielded by varied play environments upon the dynamics of children's social interactions and play preferences. The implications of these findings reinforce the imperative of devising play equipment that is inherently attuned to the unique attributes and dynamics of each environment. By adroitly tackling conflict dynamics and facilitating the development of essential social competencies, designers stand poised to engender an appreciable enhancement in children's social interactions and overall play experiences.

**Article 6:** Ujang et al (2018) "Linking place attachment and social interaction: towards meaningful public places".

The research study explores the relationship between place attachment and social interaction in public spaces, specifically focusing on the context of urban design and planning in Kuala Lumpur. The study identifies various factors that influence social interaction and attachment in public spaces, including the variety of forms of interaction, intensity of users, types of contacts, opportunities for engagement, level of involvement, and availability of shared spaces. It examines how people engage with and connect to public spaces based on their familiarity, cultural practices, and interactions with others. Ujang, et al (2018) stated that place attachment and social interaction focus on 3 main topics which is whether the places are able to support participants' engagement and activities, what makes them engaged and feel belonging and whether the places allow them to interact with other people. All these 3 main topics is related to variety of form of interaction (bargaining, talking, greeting, eating), variety of intensity of users who participate (shopping and street performers), variety in types of contacts (physical contact, indirectly contact), opportunity for contacts (sitting on stairs, eating and chatting in the restaurants), level of users involvement with activities (shopping and watching street performances), opportunity for sharing activities (space in front of mosque), opportunity for conversing (the entrance of the mosque), availability of shared spaces (open spaces fronting the Masjid India Mosque, in front of stores and shaded spaces at the street intersection), level of mixing use (residential area on top of shop houses, hotel, stalls, office, bank and bazaar), opportunities to walk (suitable area, non-obstacles,



accessibility and good details to see), opportunities to stand and stay (attractive area for standing or staying), opportunities to see (interesting view with the reasonable view distance), opportunities to sit outdoors (benches for sitting and gathering), opportunities to talk and listen (low noise level with interesting activities in front) and opportunities for playing and exercise (park and big space). The findings reveal that public spaces in Kuala Lumpur, such as streets, plazas, and squares, are predominantly used for commercial purposes, with activities centered around buying and selling. While there is a diverse mix of users from different ethnic backgrounds, the focus is on functional activities rather than social interactions. The study emphasizes the need for public spaces that support social engagement, meaningful activities, and inclusivity among different user groups. Public spaces in Kuala Lumpur are primarily oriented towards commercial activities, limiting opportunities for social interaction. Streets and walkways are used for pedestrian mobility, with less emphasis on social gathering. The city's multi-ethnic population engages in various cultural and social practices. While people are willing to interact with individuals from different ethnic backgrounds, the presence of immigrants and the lack of shared spaces can sometimes create tensions. Place attachment and social interaction are closely linked to familiarity with a location and its surroundings. People who work or live in an area tend to have stronger attachments and engage more with the space. The study highlights a lack of public spaces that encourage extended social interaction. Many existing spaces are not designed to accommodate social activities or provide seating for people to gather. The study suggests that urban design and planning should focus on creating more inclusive and user-friendly public spaces that promote social engagement. Transforming underutilized areas into meaningful public spaces can enhance the overall quality of life in the city. Overall, the research underscores the importance of designing public spaces that foster social interaction, cultural exchange, and community attachment. The study's insights have informed urban design guidelines for Kuala Lumpur, advocating for the transformation of existing spaces into more vibrant and socially engaging environments.

### **Article Summary**

In the realm of urban studies and social dynamics, a series of meticulously conducted research endeavors have shed light on the intricate interplay between the built environment and various facets of human wellbeing and community interactions. Through an in-depth analysis of six distinct articles, a comprehensive understanding emerges, weaving a tapestry that underscores the profound significance of the built environment in shaping the lives of individuals and fostering cohesive communities. These studies collectively illuminate the multidimensional nature of urban landscapes, where physical spaces, social contexts, and human interactions converge to create a holistic urban experience. The first study, conducted by Zhang, et al (2018), delves into the complex relationship between public transport usage and a myriad of factors within the social and built environment. The study underscores the profound influence of indicators related to the social environment, such as income distribution and the proportion of elderly residents, on public transport trips. Notably, lower-income areas exhibit a weaker inclination towards using public transport for daily travel, highlighting the pivotal role of economic factors. The study also unveils the intricate interplay between personal attributes, attitudes, household dynamics, social surroundings, and the built environment in influencing public transport use among the elderly. Findings reveal the significance of promoting positive attitudes, fostering mixed-age and income-level neighborhood is, enhancing accessibility to public transport, and creating appealing walking environments to encourage public transport utilization. The study emphasizes the importance

of a comprehensive approach that considers diverse factors to promote sustainable transportation choices. In contrast, the research undertaken by Chang, et al (2023) delve into the nuanced dynamics of place attachment within a transitional city, Guangzhou, China. The study challenges conventional notions by revealing that both physical and social environments significantly contribute to place attachment. It emphasizes that the quality of housing conditions and the neighborhood's environment exert distinct influences on residents' place identity and place dependence. This study highlights the intricate interplay between physical attributes and social relations in predicting place attachment, advocating for a comprehensive understanding that considers both identity and dependence perspectives. Notably, the findings underscore the implications for urban development policies, calling for micro-scale improvements and community engagement initiatives to enhance the quality of housing conditions and nurture a sense of place attachment. Karim's study (2012) delves into the realm of low-cost housing environments, shedding light on the delicate balance between economic constraints and the quality of life for residents. The research identifies five domains—comfort, convenience, satisfaction, safety, and usage—that intricately shape residents' overall well-being. The study emphasizes the pivotal role of fostering harmonious coexistence among diverse ethnic groups, promoting effective communication with neighbors, and enabling mutual support systems within the community. The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of residents' experiences, wherein economic opportunities, urban advantages, and communal harmony intertwine to influence overall satisfaction and contentment. The study advocates for equitable living conditions and nuanced urban planning policies that consider the diverse needs and aspirations of lower-income populations. In a parallel vein, the study by Ujang, et al., (2018) unveils the profound relationship between place attachment and social interaction within public spaces, specifically within the urban context of Kuala Lumpur. The research highlights the significance of a range of factors, including the forms of interaction, user intensity, types of contacts, engagement opportunities, and shared spaces, in shaping social dynamics within public spaces. The findings emphasize the pivotal role of social environmental support, encompassing family, peers, and local communities, in fostering positive engagement and interactions among youth. The study underscores the transformative potential of leisure activities in enhancing socialization, ultimately contributing to overall well-being and personal development. Additionally, the study offers insightful recommendations for urban designers to create inclusive, engaging, and user-centric public spaces that cater to the unique attributes of various environments. Likewise, the study conducted by Sepahpour & Haghighi (2017) delves into the profound influence of play environments on children's social interactions, highlighting the pivotal roles of home, park, and school settings. The research underscores the significance of gender-based preferences and the influence of distinct environments on play patterns. Notably, the study emphasizes the critical role of negotiation skills in mitigating conflicts during play, fostering positive peer relationships. The findings advocate for strategic design considerations that accommodate the unique dynamics of each environment, promoting enhanced engagement and positive interactions among children. The study serves as a poignant reminder of the crucial role of play environments in nurturing social competencies and contributing to the holistic development of children. Lastly, the study by Ujang, et al (2018) delves into the intricate nexus between place attachment, social interaction, and public spaces. The research underscores the vital relationship between the attachment to a place and the meaningfulness of social interactions within it. Notably, the study highlights the multifaceted influences of forms of interaction, intensity of users, contacts, engagement opportunities, and shared spaces in shaping social dynamics within

public spaces. The findings underscore the transformative potential of social environmental support from family, peers, and local communities, underscoring its pivotal role in fostering positive engagement and interactions among youth. The study advances a user-centric approach to urban design, advocating for the creation of public spaces that facilitate meaningful social interactions and enhance overall well-being. In conclusion, the interwoven threads of these six studies converge to reveal a compelling narrative that underscores the critical significance of the built environment in shaping human wellbeing and fostering vibrant, cohesive communities. The research collectively unravels the multifaceted dimensions of urban life, where physical spaces, social contexts, and human interactions meld to create a rich tapestry of experiences. From the nuanced interplay between economic constraints and low-cost housing environments to the transformative potential of leisure activities in youth engagement, these studies underscore the far-reaching impact of the built environment on individuals' lives. The intricate relationship between physical and social environments, as exemplified by the studies on public transport usage, place attachment, and social interaction, further underscores the need for a holistic approach to urban planning and design that considers both dimensions. The insights gleaned from these studies offer valuable guidance for policymakers, urban planners, and designers seeking to create inclusive, vibrant, and livable urban spaces that enhance the quality of life for residents and foster meaningful community interactions. As cities continue to evolve and grow, these studies provide a robust foundation for shaping urban environments that promote human flourishing, social cohesion, and overall well-being. Table 1.0 provides a concise yet comprehensive synthesis and analysis of prior research. This examination delves into the intricate interplay between the social environment and community wellbeing, shedding light on their dynamic relationship.

Table 1.0

*Key finding of Social Environment on Wellbeing in Urban Communities*

| <b>Author(s)/ Sources</b> | <b>Title</b>   | <b>Indicators</b>  |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Zhang, et al., (2018)     | Public transport use among the urban and rural elderly in China: Effects of personal, attitudinal, household, social-environment and built environment factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population distribution - proportions of elderly population</li> <li>• Household income - proportions of high-income, medium income, low-income households</li> </ul>   |
| Chang, et al., (2022)     | Social environment still matters: The role of physical and social environments in place attachment in a transitional city, Guangzhou, China                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Years of residence</li> <li>• Homeowners</li> <li>• Housing condition</li> <li>• Neighborhood environment</li> <li>• Public Services</li> <li>• Social ties</li> <li>• Sense of security</li> <li>• Place identity</li> <li>• Place dependence</li> </ul> |
| Karim, (2012)             | Low-cost housing environment: Compromising quality of life   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comfort</li> <li>• ability to live with other ethnic groups</li> <li>• communicate with neighbors</li> </ul>  |

- rely on neighbors
  - Convenience
    - to ask for help from neighbors
    - to gather neighbors for discussion
  - Satisfaction
    - helpful neighbors
    - friendly neighbors
    - community activities
    - community association
  - Safety
    - recognize neighbors
    - recognize strangers
    - crimes
    - social and moral problems
  - Usage
    - proper space for interactions
- Hamid, et al., (2019) Social environment support towards leisure time activities among multi-ethnic youth in Malaysia
- Family support
  - Peers support
  - Local community support
- Sepahpour, et al., (2017) Children's social interaction and play environment: an approach to user-centered design
- Social interaction at home, park, and school
    - Predominant Play Environments
    - Play Patterns and Gender Dynamics
    - Conflict Dynamics
    - Play Apparatus and Mitigating Vandalism
    - Strategic Design Approaches
    - Intervention in Social Competencies
- Ujang, et al., (2018) Linking place attachment and social interaction: towards meaningful public places
- Functional and Commercial Emphasis
  - Cultural and Ethnic Diversity
  - Importance of Familiarity
  - Lack of Social Spaces
    - Variety of form of interaction
    - Variety of intensity of users who participate
    - Variety in types of contacts
    - Opportunity for contacts
    - Level users' involvement with activities
    - Opportunity for conversing
    - Availability of shared spaces
    - Level of mixing of use
    - Opportunities to walk: suitable area, non-obstacles, accessibility, and good details to see
    - Opportunities to stand and stay: attractive area for standing or staying

and supports for it

- Opportunities to see: interesting views with reasonable view distance
- Opportunities to sit outdoors: benches for sitting and gathering
- Opportunities to talk and listen: low noise level with interesting activities in front
- Opportunities for playing and exercise

### The Theme, Conceptual Definition, and Indicator Analysis

Within this section, a meticulous process has been undertaken to cluster indicators that exhibit noteworthy associations in previous research studies. These indicators have been systematically grouped based on shared characteristics into distinct themes. Each thematic category encapsulates a coherent conceptual framework that elucidates the underlying principles governing the indicators within it. The rationale behind this methodological approach lies in the desire to enhance clarity and facilitate a more profound understanding of the interconnectedness among the identified indicators. By categorizing these indicators into cohesive themes, we not only expound upon their individual significance but also reveal the intricate patterns that emerge when considering them collectively. Through a rigorous analytical endeavor, the thematic organization of these indicators offers a perspective, enabling a deeper exploration of the thematic underpinnings. By explicating the conceptual essence of each theme, this section contributes substantively to the scholarly discourse, shedding light on the intricate interplay of variables and fostering a more nuanced comprehension of their implications within the context of the research study. Table 2.0 shows the summary of theme, conceptual definition and indicator significantly related from previous research study.

Table 2.0

*Theme, Conceptual Definition and Indicator significantly related from previous research study*

| Theme            | Conceptual Definition  | Indicator Related from Previous Research Study   |
|------------------|--|--|
| Sociodemographic | In the context of the social environment, sociodemographic factors play a significant role in shaping the dynamics, interactions, and overall well-being of a community. Sociodemographic within the social environment refer to the characteristics and composition of the population living within a specific area, neighborhoods, or community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population distribution - proportions of elderly population</li> <li>• Household income - proportions of high-income, medium income, low-income households</li> </ul> |
| Residential      | Refers to the residential concept examines how these dimensions  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Years of residence</li> <li>• Homeowners</li> </ul>   |

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|                              | <p>intersect and contribute to the social environment within a community. It considers the effects of residents' duration of stay, ownership status, and housing quality on their sense of belonging, social interactions, community engagement, and overall satisfaction with their living situation.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Housing condition</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Neighborhood</p>          | <p>Refers to the neighborhood concept explores how these dimensions interact to create a cohesive and vibrant local community which to a localized and interconnected community area where individuals and families reside, interact, and engage in various activities. It considers the influence of the neighborhood environment and the availability of public services on residents' social interactions, access to resources, and overall satisfaction with their living environment.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Neighborhood environment</li> <li>● Public Services</li> <li>● Lack of Social Spaces</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Relationship Support</p>  | <p>Involves the tangible and observable behaviors, interactions, and resources that individuals experience and engage in to receive and provide support within their social environment. Strong and positive relationship support networks enhance a sense of community, provide emotional and practical assistance, and contribute to a cohesive and supportive social environment.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Social ties</li> <li>● Family support</li> <li>● Peers support</li> <li>● Local community support</li> <li>● Helpful neighbors</li> <li>● Friendly neighbors</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Community Interaction</p> | <p>Refers to the dynamic and reciprocal process through which individuals engage with their neighbor's, both within and across diverse ethnic groups, to foster a sense of belonging, mutual support, and shared understanding. It encompasses various dimensions of social engagement, communication, and cooperation that contribute to a cohesive and harmonious community</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ability to live with other ethnic groups</li> <li>● Communicate with neighbors</li> <li>● Rely on neighbors</li> <li>● To ask for help from neighbors</li> <li>● To gather neighbors for discussion</li> <li>● Recognize neighbors</li> </ul> |

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|                      | environment.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize strangers</li> </ul>  |
| Community Engagement | Refers to the active and meaningful involvement of individuals, groups, and organizations within a local community. It encompasses a range of participatory activities, initiatives, and collaborations that foster a sense of belonging, social interaction, and collective well-being.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community activities</li> <li>• Community association</li> </ul>  |
| Safety               | Refers to the perception and actual state of well-being and security within a community, where individuals feel protected from harm, risks, and threats to their physical, emotional, and social integrity. It encompasses a sense of confidence, trust, and tranquility that contributes to a conducive environment for positive social interactions, personal growth, and overall community well-being. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of security</li> <li>• Crimes</li> <li>• Social and moral problems</li> </ul>   |
| Identity             | Refers to the complex and multifaceted sense of connection, belonging, and attachment that individuals develop toward a specific geographic location or environment. It encompasses a combination of emotional, cognitive, and social elements that contribute to a person's self-perception, cultural affiliation, and overall well-being within a particular place.                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place identity</li> <li>• Place dependence</li> </ul>   |
| Play and Design      | Refers to the intentional planning, arrangement, and organization of physical spaces, structures, and elements to facilitate and enhance various forms of play, recreation, and social interactions within a community. It encompasses the strategic utilization of design  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predominant Play Environments</li> <li>• Play Patterns and Gender Dynamics</li> <li>• Conflict Dynamics</li> <li>• Play Apparatus and Mitigating Vandalism</li> <li>• Strategic Design</li> </ul> |

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|-----------------------|---|--|
| Interaction Variety   | <p>principles to create engaging, safe, and inclusive environments that promote positive play patterns, address conflict dynamics, encourage social competencies, and mitigate vandalism.</p>   | <p>Approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intervention in Social Competencies</li> </ul>  |
| Shared Spaces         | <p>Refers to the diverse range of interpersonal engagements, connections, and activities that occur within a community. It encompasses the breadth of social interactions, the mix of individuals participating, the types of engagements, and the level of involvement, contributing to a rich and multifaceted social environment.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of form of interaction</li> <li>• Variety of intensity of users who participate</li> <li>• Variety in types of contacts</li> <li>• Opportunity for contacts</li> <li>• Level users' involvement with activities</li> <li>• Opportunity for conversing</li> <li>• Availability of shared spaces</li> <li>• Level of mixing of use</li> </ul>   |
| Outdoor Opportunities | <p>Refer to communal areas within a community that are intentionally designed and allocated for collective use by diverse individuals. These spaces are characterized by their accessibility, inclusivity, and potential to facilitate social interactions, fostering a sense of belonging and cohesion among community members.</p> <p>Encompass the range of possibilities and experiences offered by outdoor spaces within a community that facilitate various activities, interactions, and engagements. These opportunities contribute to the overall well-being of residents by providing accessible, inviting, and functional environments for walking, standing, observing, sitting, conversing, and engaging in recreational activities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to walk: suitable area, non-obstacles, accessibility, and good details to see</li> <li>• Opportunities to stand and stay: attractive area for standing or staying and supports for it</li> <li>• Opportunities to see: interesting views with reasonable view distance</li> <li>• Opportunities to sit outdoors: benches for sitting and gathering</li> <li>• Opportunities to talk and listen: low noise level with interesting activities in front</li> </ul> |

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- Opportunities for playing and exercise
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**Conclusion**

The discussion surrounding the social environment and urban community well-being reveals a complex interplay of factors that significantly impact the quality of life, interactions, and sense of belonging within a community. The sociodemographic composition of a community serves as a foundational element that shapes the dynamics of social interactions and community engagement. Understanding the sociodemographic makeup helps tailor interventions and initiatives to cater to the unique needs and preferences of the residents. Residential aspects further contribute to the social fabric of a community. Factors such as housing quality, ownership status, and the duration of residents' stay play pivotal roles in influencing their attachment to the community. When residents feel a sense of security, pride, and comfort within their homes, it extends to their interactions within the broader community. A well-maintained and welcoming residential environment fosters positive relationships among neighbors and promotes a sense of shared responsibility for the community's well-being. The neighborhoods, as a microcosm of community life, has a significant impact on social interactions and overall well-being. The availability of public services, green spaces, and amenities contributes to residents' daily experiences and interactions. A vibrant neighborhood that encourages local interaction, offers accessible resources, and promotes walkability fosters a sense of connection among neighbors and supports collective well-being. Relationship support within the social environment plays a vital role in enhancing community cohesion. Strong and positive social networks provide avenues for emotional and practical assistance, create opportunities for shared experiences, and contribute to a sense of belonging. These networks reinforce the idea of community as a supportive and interconnected entity, where individuals can rely on each other for various forms of assistance. Community interaction and engagement further enrich the social environment by fostering relationships and shared experiences across diverse ethnic and cultural groups. Active participation in community activities, initiatives, and collaborations promotes a sense of collective identity and shared goals. Meaningful engagement encourages individuals to contribute to the betterment of the community, thereby enhancing the overall well-being of all residents. Safety emerges as a critical factor that influences social interactions and well-being within a community. When individuals feel secure and protected in their environment, they are more likely to engage in positive interactions and contribute to community life. A safe community fosters trust, communication, and a willingness to participate in shared activities, ultimately contributing to a positive social environment. The concept of identity within the social environment speaks to the emotional and cultural connections that individuals develop with their community. A strong sense of identity fosters a deeper attachment to the physical environment and contributes to a positive perception of overall well-being. When individuals identify with their community, they are more likely to engage in activities that promote collective prosperity and social cohesion. The intentional design of play and recreational spaces amplifies the positive aspects of community interaction. Thoughtful design considerations create environments that facilitate positive play patterns, address potential conflicts, and encourage the development of social competencies. Such spaces serve as hubs for interaction, promoting shared experiences and fostering a sense of community among diverse residents. Interaction variety and shared spaces contribute to the vibrancy of community life by offering diverse opportunities for

engagement. A mix of social interactions, ranging from casual conversations to organized events, enriches the community's social environment. Furthermore, shared spaces provide gathering points where individuals from various backgrounds can come together, reinforcing the sense of belonging and creating a cohesive community fabric. Outdoor opportunities within the community provide avenues for residents to connect with nature, engage in recreational activities, and foster social interactions. Accessible and inviting outdoor spaces encourage walking, sitting, conversing, and other forms of interaction that contribute to a sense of vitality and well-being. These spaces promote active engagement and contribute to the overall health and happiness of the community. The social environment is a dynamic and multifaceted realm that profoundly influences urban community well-being. The intricate interplay of sociodemographic factors, residential attributes, neighborhood dynamics, relationship support, community engagement, safety, identity, play and design, interaction variety, shared spaces, and outdoor opportunities collectively shape the fabric of community life. A holistic approach to urban planning and design that considers these factors ensures the creation of inclusive, vibrant, and cohesive communities that enhance the overall quality of life for residents. By fostering positive social interactions, promoting a sense of belonging, and providing spaces that facilitate engagement, the social environment becomes a catalyst for nurturing well-being and building resilient, thriving urban communities.

### **Acknowledgements**

This work was supported by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) Malaysia through the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS) (Project Code: FRGS/1/2022/SSI02/UPM/02/1).

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