

# **EXPERIENTIAL CONTEXT OF RESIDENTS WITH GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK IN TAIPING**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Green infrastructure network is a composite of various green spaces linked by streets, waterways and drainages encircling and connecting urban areas, at all spatial scales. It facilitates residents' ability to recreate, socialise and perform other regular transactional activities. Despite such understanding, little is known about the relationships of green infrastructure network with urban residents' experiences and well-being. This study explores residents' experiential contacts with the properties and attributes of green infrastructure in Taiping, a town in Malaysia, and their effects to the residents' well-being. The town's green infrastructures consist of a town park, a large open playfield, various pocket and loose-fit spaces, neighbourhood open spaces, home gardens and green networks. Theoretical framework of this study was grounded by landscape perceptual theories which link diversity, naturalness and coherence of a green infrastructure to well-being of the residents. Data were gathered from the mixed-methods approach involving three strategies: survey questionnaire (n=335), semi-structured interview (n=33) and unobtrusive behavioural observation. Quantitative statistics and qualitative content analysis were used to analyse the data that were triangulated to examine the relationships. The findings suggest that the presence of diversity, naturalness and coherence in the green infrastructures facilitates the residents' experiential contacts affording them physical, cognitive and social well-being. The attributes encourage frequent use, in which the green infrastructure support physical-kinetic, leisure and social activities that fulfil the residents' nature and social interaction needs. Physically, the residents feel active, healthy and happy from engagements in the activities. The residents attain cognitive well-being through physical and visual experience with the green infrastructures which are dominated by matured greenery, plants, water and hills that relieve negative emotions affording relaxation, comfort and calmness. Socially, the green infrastructures allow more social encounters with other individuals resulting in satisfaction towards the community which induces friendliness and happiness for living in the town. Hence, the experience of the residents with the attributes suggests that different types of green infrastructure should be integrated as a network as to benefit the residents.

