



ASEAN-Turkey ASLI (Annual Serial Landmark International) Conferences on Quality of Life 2016  
AMER International Conference on Quality of Life, AicQoL2016Medan  
25 – 27 February 2016, Medan, Indonesia

## The Effect of Mural on Personal Crime and Fear of Crime

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### Abstract

In recent years, the trend of 3D art mural has been gaining attention in Malaysia. This 3D art mural is believed some perception of safety among user from crime activities. However, an empirical study on the relationship between perceptions of safety on art mural is very hard to find. The main purpose of this study is to identify the perceptions of the safety of mural art in the alleys. The t-test value between victimization with 3D art mural show that there are significant differences in score for non-victimization ( $M=53.57$ ,  $SD=8.80$ ) and victimization ( $M=56.00$ ,  $SD=7.71$ ;  $t(292) = -2.03$ ,  $p=.04$ ).

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Peer-review under responsibility of the Association of Malaysian Environment-Behavior Researchers, AMER (ABRA malaysia)

*Keywords:* Crime; public art; mural; urban

### 1. Introduction

According to Merrick (1989), urban population growth around the world has increased rapidly since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Malaysia confronted an increasing number of inhabitants in urban areas that it is in direct relationship with crime rates (M. S. Siti Rasidah, 2012). Therefore, Malaysia faces many challenges to be a development country such as escalating crime rates (Wong, T. C., 2006). According to M. Hedayati Marzbali, A. A., (2011), the overall crime rate in Malaysia increased from 746 reported crimes per 100,000 persons in 2006 to 767 in 2007 and 2008, a rise of nearly 3%. Referring to M. S. Siti Rasidah (2012), the crime rate has a direct

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relationship with the population in urban areas. Lost space in an urban area such as back alleys often is a hotbed of crime and immoral acts. Thus, Malaysia government, non-governmental organization (NGOs) and communities strive to reduce crime by carrying out activities to improve surveillance on the environment. Therefore, in recent years, the public art such as 3D art mural has been gaining attention in Malaysia. In 2013 Shah Alam City Council (MBSA) has been running program to developing back alleys in Seksyen 7 Shah Alam. The objective of the program is to improve the environment in the alleys towards a more cheerful. It will directly increase the livable area that also can reduce crime activities(www.mbsa.gov.my). However, it is very hard to find the empirical study that mural art can reduce the sense of fear of crime. Hence, the main objective of this paper is to identify the perception of the mural on the sense of safety and fear of crime. Furthermore, the purpose of this paper is to assess the relationship between the perception of safety and mural art.

## 2. Literature review

The mural is a painting or drawing on the wall as a media or surface that is eternal(<https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mural>, n.d.). Art mural regarded as a public art involving sculptures and decorative facades which enhance an appearance of the environment and it also can reduce crime that installs a sense of pride and 'ownership' with the community (Erickson, 2015). Besides being able to beautify the environment, art mural used as an effective medium to deliver or send a message to the public (Adika Tirta, Arvino Prameswara, Aryo Dwinto Putra, 2012). Mural is derived from the word '*murus*' from the Latin meaning 'wall'. It has begun since 30,000 years BC through the discovery of prehistoric drawings found on the walls of caves in Altamira, Spain, and Lascaux, France with actions drawings and hunt of religious(Adika et al., 2012). Mural is differing with graffiti. Although it seems like similar, it is different. Graffiti refers to a form of the composition of colors, shapes and writing on a wall([wikipedia.org/wiki/Graffiti](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Graffiti)). Graffiti is more related to crime activities (Kanan, J. W., & Pruitt, 2002) and those concerned about graffiti may equate it with violent crime and the presence of gang activity. Many of the same factors that evoke fear of crime in residents also evoke fear of gangs, even though the magnitude may vary (Austin, 2007). These perceptions may increase the level of fear of crime and lower the level of perceived safety that residents experience when encountering an area that contains graffiti. The understanding of graffiti can refer to Figure 1.



Fig. 1. (a) hip-hop style graffiti; (b) message graffiti  
(Source: Austin, 2007)

What is a fear of crime?...It is can be described as a “wide range of emotional and practical responses to crime...individuals and communities may make”(Pain, 2000). It is a manifestation of a feeling that one is in danger. According to Pain (2000), fear of crime is not an inherent characteristic of the individuals but rather something that may come and go, dependent on and influenced by one’s experiences, especially as they relate to one’s position in society. Some studies have postulated that fear of crime is assumed to be signs or symbols of criminal victimization (Stephen, Emily, & Jonathan, 2007), as the frequency of one becoming a victim of crime will induce a higher feeling of fear of crime (Gray, Jackson, & Farrall, 2008). Nevertheless, individual understanding of the fear of crime differs as it depends on the situation in which one feels the fear of crime (Schneider & Kitchen, 2007), design and

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