

Eco Reconnect: Innovative Insights on Park Environments and Mental Health at Maya Park, Eco Ardence

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ABSTRACT

The innovative concept of EcoReConnect emerges as a transformative digital platform and geo – triggered content that integrates ecological restoration and smart technology, specifically designed for Eco Ardence, to reestablish meaningful connections between park users and the natural environment placing the right information at their fingertips. EcoReConnect is a web-based tool aimed at enhancing public access to Maya Park’s green spaces, while promoting mental health and overall well-being. The importance of urban green spaces in supporting mental health is becoming more widely acknowledged. Research has shown that time spent in nature contributes to psychological restoration, stress reduction, and emotional healing. Despite this, the potential of urban parks in Malaysia remains underutilized due to limited access and a general lack of awareness about their therapeutic benefits. To bridge this gap, innovative approaches that combine accessibility, public health awareness, and environmental education are essential. EcoReConnect responds to this need by offering an engaging digital platform that raises awareness about the mental health benefits of urban green spaces and improves access to relevant, real-time information ultimately strengthening the relationship between visitors and Maya Park.

Keywords: Green Space, Innovative, Mental Health, Park Environment, Park Visitor

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly urbanized and digitized world, people are becoming more disconnected from nature. With a shift that poses serious risks to mental health and well-being, urban parks have evolved into essential sanctuaries for mental, emotional, and physical healing. The innovative idea of EcoReConnect emerges as a transformative platform that merges ecological restoration, digital innovation for the park users specifically at Eco Ardence to reestablish meaningful connections between park users and park environments with the right information on their fingertips.

Urban green spaces are essential for promoting mental health and wellbeing, especially in places that are urbanizing quickly (Hartig *et al.*, 2014; Jimenez, 2021). Stress reduction, mood enhancement, and psychological repair have all been demonstrated to be facilitated by exposure to natural settings (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Ulrich, 1991). However, there is still a lack of knowledge and information readily available in Malaysia on the therapeutic advantages of urban parks (Tedong & Zainol, 2022). Maya Park, Eco Ardence, is a vital urban green area that provides chances for leisure, rest, and emotional recovery for the people of Shah Alam and Setia Alam. However, obstacles including lack of reliable information and environmental problems like waste management restrict the park's potential influence. With the innovative idea of EcoReConnect web-based format and augmented reality (AR), this platform was designed to bridge the gap by strengthening the link between nature and well-being, improving community access, and offering educational resources at the same time encourage physical activity and exploration.

EcoReConnect incorporates several functions to educate park visitors with the park's layout and amenities, a virtual park tour provides interactive maps and images. The Green Knowledge Hub offers research-based insights, articles, and infographics about the advantages of being in nature for mental health (Berman *et al.*, 2012; Keniger *et al.*, 2013; Van den Bosch & Sang, 2017). Additionally, the platform has a storytelling and visitors feedback area that enable visitors to create and share their own park activities like walking clubs or photography groups and how nature has helped them heal emotionally. A forum or a photo – sharing gallery would also help cultivate a stronger community around the park. Also, this enables visitors to create and share their own park activities, like walking clubs or photography groups. Evidence-based practices including mindfulness, stress management, and nature therapy are discussed in a special section devoted to mental health tips (Berto, 2014; Bratman *et al.*, 2015). Thus, EcoReConnect could also incorporate user surveys to collect anonymous feedback on stress levels and well-being after a park visit. The data analyzed can be shared anonymized with the community to demonstrate the platform's value. The website correspondingly provides event notifications which connect users with events held in parks, promoting inclusivity and social interaction. Congruently, interactive mini games and quizzes also offered to enhance park users' engagement, encourage learning, and create a more enjoyable experience. EcoReConnect illustrates how digital innovation can boost the beneficial effects of green spaces by coordinating empirical findings with real world applications. Through technology-based participation, it encourages healthier lifestyles, improves park visitors access, and fortifies the educational function of urban parks. On the other hand, the platform can ultimately be modified for use in other parks around Malaysia, acting as a scalable model that combines sustainable urban living, public health promotion, and environmental education. Consequently, park management should commit to a maintenance schedule and ongoing development to keep the content fresh, accurate, and secure. This prevents the platform from becoming outdated, which could diminish public trust and engagement.

METHODOLOGY

The development of innovation was based on a study to assess the impact of park environment on mental health and well-being at Maya Park, Eco Ardence among park users. The innovative idea of EcoReConnect was created to address actual user needs from a quantitative survey comprising 372 respondents. This website provides access to all the information, offering data at the fingertips. Three primary features create the framework of the platform: Quizzes, which promote knowledge testing and introspection on mental health and environmental awareness; Mini Games, which offer interactive and captivating activities to improve user experience; and Data and Information, which offers resources and content based on research. This method creates a useful tool for teaching, park users' involvement, and raising awareness of mental health issues by fusing digital innovation with empirical research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the findings, most park visitors strongly believed that park design, accessibility, greenery, and low noise levels all improve mental health outcomes like stress reduction, relaxation, emotional healing, and psychological restoration. These results are consistent with global research showing the healing power of natural settings (Hartig *et al.*, 2014; Van den Bosch & Sang, 2017). EcoReConnect interprets these findings into a digital platform, directly addressing the knowledge gap and enhancing park access. By providing interactive educational resources, the platform empowers users to understand the health value of green spaces, easy to access the information and encourages active engagement at Maya Park. The integration of users features such as storytelling and event updates also fosters a sense of belonging and social support, reinforcing the role of urban parks as therapeutic environments. This method creates scalable models for additional parks in Malaysia by presenting technology support public health and urban development initiatives.



Figure 1 EcoRecConnect Website

Figure 1 shows the EcoReConnect website, an easy-to-use online resource created to improve public access to Maya Park. With the interactive elements, user-friendly navigation, and thorough information on the park's benefits for mental health and wellbeing, park visitors can simply explore resources at their fingertips.

Table 1 Key Aspects of Nature's Impact

Stress Reduction (Beyer's et., al 2014)	Spending time in nature has been shown to lower cortisol levels and heart rate, leading to a profound sense of calm.
Mood Enhancement (M. Hunter, 2019)	Exposures to natural environments can reduce negative emotions like anger, fear and sadness, while increasing feelings of happiness and vitality.
Cognitive Restoration (Ulrich, 1983)	Nature helps alleviate mental fatigue, improves focus, and enhances problem solving abilities through what's known as attention restoration theory.
Social Connection (S. Curtis, 2010)	Green spaces provide accessible venues for social interaction, community events and collective activities combating loneliness.

CONCLUSION

EcoReConnect demonstrates how integrating digital innovation and environmental psychology research can improve community well-being. The platform enhances accessibility to Maya Park, increases knowledge on the advantages of urban green areas for mental health, and encourages sustainable, healthier lifestyles by bridging the gap between empirical evidence and real-world implementation. Long-term expansion of EcoReConnect to additional urban parks around Malaysia could help create inclusive, health-promoting, and ecologically sustainable cities. Urban parks are becoming essential resources for promoting mental health which emphasizes the value of reestablishing people's connection to nature using easily accessible digital technologies.

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