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### **THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF THE SOCIETY TOWARDS THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE LEVEL OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE SOCIETY TO PRESERVE THE ENVIRONMENT**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*Day by day, Malaysia will be announced with the issues regarding our environmental pollution through newspaper, social medias, television and more media platform. The government have tried their best to promote and raise the awareness to the public but at the end of the day, only the public can change the mentality by taking action towards all the environmental issues. Therefore, this research is conducted in order to find the level of awareness towards the environment and to identify the level of action taken by the society to preserve it nowadays. This study involved 662 respondents and the respondents were gained from on online survey through Google Survey Form. The form has been distributed to social medias and from that platform, we gained all the respondents and used that as data collection. At the end, we knew that Malaysia still have a very high level of awareness towards the environment but as for the level of action taken to preserve it is still low. Therefore, Malaysia needs to do something to make sure the next generation will be able to experienced all the green environments that we have today.*

*Keynote : awareness, environment, Malaysian, level*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Awareness of environmental problems arises from concerns over matters such as drinking water quality, breathing effects in polluted air, extinction of wildlife and plants as well as global warming. This increasingly serious environmental problem has raised public awareness that the importance of preserving the environment from contaminated (Grove, 2002).

What is certain, the immediate impact of environmental pollution is more easily understood than other environmental issues such as biological diversity, forest ecology, greenhouse effect or policy, regulatory and legal matters. People have a better understanding of the environmental problems that are happening around them rather than complex global issues.

In the past decade, the importance of environmental education is seen as an important medium in strengthening awareness among Malaysians. Environmental education is improved in the curriculum in primary and secondary schools. At the same time, training is scheduled for teachers and appropriate teaching materials provided to assist this effort.

Nowadays, internet facilities have given the community a new dimension of environmental awareness and action. Previously, only traditional media such as television, radio and newspapers provided information and information on the environment to the community. In research, most audiences open and see 84% of the press page (Courtland & William, 2002). The Internet allows environmental issues to be collected, communicated and discussed. Indirectly, it affects people's awareness of environmental issues.

Humans are physically and emotionally dependent on nature and on the contrary ecosystems and species depend on human action. Regardless of whether a person feels close to nature or not, they are interconnected with nature where nature's well-being affects the well-being of human life (Tan & Norzaini, 2011).

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

According to Medicine and Net (2018), environment can be defined as the sum of the total of the elements, factors and conditions in the surroundings which may have an impact on the development, action or survival of an organism or group of organisms. Based on studies by Thomas (2013), society having the deliberate unawareness which is people do not find an environmental topic to be important, and do not seek out more information on the problem.

Even when the issue begins to turn into a point of intrigue, individuals deliberately disregarding the realities. As for light pollution starts to become a topic of interest, people may find that changes to address light pollution are too radical and stressful to address. Scientists and practitioners can potentially address this kind of unawareness by framing their arguments in ethical and emotional terms. Recently, Chia (2019) stated that there have been issue about river pollution happened in Johor. The Johor Government had to closed all 111 schools in the Pasir Gudang after almost 1,000 people including school children have been the victim to gas poisoning over the past two weeks. The gases are caused by the illegal dumping of toxic chemicals into the Sungai Kim Kim river by factories in the industrial estate. 2.43 tonnes of chemical waste was dumped into the Sungai Kim Kim river under a bridge in Kota Masai. A total of 13 schools were instructed to close after the students in two more schools suffered health issues from inhaling the gas. They believed chemicals that contain traces of heavy metals were used to dissolve metals.

#### RESEARCH QUESTION

- a) What is level the awareness of Malaysian towards the environment's programme conducted by law?
- b) What is the level of action taken to preserve the environment?

#### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- a) To identify the awareness of Malaysian towards the environment's programme conducted by law
- b) To study the level of action taken to preserve the environment

#### **DESTRUCTION OF NATURE BY HUMAN**

According to David Attenborough (2013), he stated that humanity as a plague on the Earth that needs to be controlled by limiting population growth. Some human activities can cause damage to the environment. Human impact of the environment or anthropogenic impact on the environment includes changes to biophysical environment and ecosystems, global warming and crisis of ecological. The term anthropogenic designates effect or object resulting from human activity. This term first used by Russian geologist Alexey Pavlov. Some deep ecologist such as the radical thinker and polemicist, Pentti Linkola said that human overpopulation as a

threat to the entire biosphere. According to 15,000 scientists around the world (2017) stated that issued a second warning to humanity which asserted that rapid human population growth is the “primary driver behind many ecological and even societal threats”. As we know, every year more and more plastic and trash enter the ocean, threatening the lives of the animals that call it home. Sea turtles, who happen to be some of the most beloved and endangered species on the planet are particularly at risk because of destruction of nature by human. Although all this cause by humans, Malaysia has made a campaign to rescue the turtles. This campaign called “Save Sea Turtles”. They encourage people to use metal straw. Other than that, they forbid the use of plastic at shopping complex. Plastic is very dangerous to animal because when animals eat these plastic pieces, the toxins are absorbed into their body and passed up the food chain. It takes up to 200 years to decompose plastic straw and stirrers. It will effect and cause damage to our world. Plastic straws are infrequently recyclable, requiring special facilities, and they almost always end up in a landfill, or worse the ocean.

## **KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF MALAYSIAN SOCIETY ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

According to Jamilah. (2011), she stated that physical development has a negative impact on the country's landscape. Furthermore, the community is still lacking in environmental responsibility. Her research was conducted to see the knowledge, attitude and environmental practices as well as actions taken by the community in preserving the environment. A questionnaire was distributed to 100 people and the findings showed that the level of knowledge of the public on environmental issues was high but the practice practiced to conserve the environment was still low. He also suggested that mass media play a crucial role in disseminating information on environmental issues across the country.

## **CLIMATES CHANGE**

According to Markey (2019), a Democratic senator from Massachusetts and the resolution's lead Senate author he said that climates change is not a joke. Based on observation, Global climate change effects on the environment for example rivers have shrunk, ice on rivers and lakes is breaking up earlier, plant and animal ranges have shifted and trees are flowering sooner. Effects that scientists had forecast in the past would result from global climate change are now occurring such as loss of sea ice, accelerated sea level rise and longer, more intense heat waves.

Climates change will give our world long term effects. The effects are temperature will continue will be rise, more droughts and heat waves and sea level will rise. All of these effects can cause damage to us. The temperature rise has not been, and will not be, uniform or smooth across the country or over time because of human-induced warming is superimposed on a naturally varying climate. It will give bad effects to country have desert climate country, such as Africa. Extreme heat can cause various diseases. For example, heat stroke, heat cramps, heat fatigue, heat syncope and heat exhaustion. Sometimes, extreme heat can causes death and can cause damage to body organs such as heart, brain and kidney. This shows extreme heat very dangerous. Other than that, droughts in the Southwest and heat waves which is periods of abnormally hot weather lasting days to weeks everywhere are expected to become more intense, and cold waves lack intense everywhere. Summer temperatures are expected to continue rising, and a reduction of soil moisture, which worsen heat waves, is expected for

much of the western and central U.S. in summer. This will give effects to aquatic species such as fish, whales, turtle and marine mammals. They will die. Human will lack of food supply and did not have enough water supplies. Next, sea level will rise. Began in 1880, global sea level has risen by about 8 inches since reliable recorded. It is expected to rise another 1 to 4 feet by 2100. This is the result of added water from melting land ice and the expansion of seawater as it warms. In the next several decades, storm surges and high tides could combine with sea level rise and land subsidence to further increase flooding in many regions. In 2100, sea level expected will rise because the oceans take a very long time to respond to warmer conditions at the Earth's surface.

### **LEVEL OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND USE OF GREEN TECHNOLOGY**

According to Sabri & Yong (2006), they point out that the increasingly serious environmental pollution problem has shifted ecological movements from being marginalized and putting environmental concerns on the mainstream. The practice of green technology has long developed in the West but is still foreign to Malaysians. Their study was conducted to assess the level of environmental concern and the practice of using green technology practiced among Malaysians and their study found that the level of environmental concern among the respondents was high. There is a positive correlation between the level of environmental concern and the practice of using the technology but unfortunately the practice of using green technology among Malaysians is still low.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

To find out the findings, researchers have conducted several research methods to obtain the information needed for the study. The information in this study is obtained in the following way. For collecting data, this method will be focusing on the questionnaire that will be distribute to the respondents. The questionnaire is divided into three parts which is part A, part B and part C. Part A will be focusing on the background or be known as respondents' demographics. The questions in part A will be sex, age, ethnics, region, occupation and a few questions related to the research. In section B and C, the researcher will focus on the questions that will answer the research questions which is for part B is the level of the awareness towards the environment and part C will be questioning about the level of action taken by the society to preserve it. There are 10 items to be answered by the respondents for both part B and C to find out the level of the awareness towards the environment and the level of action taken by the society to preserve it. As for data analysis, Krejcie & Morgan (1970) came up with a table for determining sample size for a given population for easy reference and it will be done by analyzing all the data collected through questions that have been given to respondents in quantitative form (Ridzuan, Ridzuan and Ridzuan, 2018). Quantitative method emphasizes objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through questionnaires or even surveys. Quantitative method is suitable to be used for our research because the researcher wanted to find out the level of acceptance towards the face negotiation within the society in their daily life. Once all the data is collected, the data that has been identified will be presented in the form of a table. Each study findings will be supported by scientific references to reinforce the data provided by the respondents on the acceptance of face negotiation theory among local communities (Abdul Rauf Ridzuan et al., 2015).

## **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

### **a)Profile of the respondent**

The profile of the sample is discussed in terms of seven characteristics: sex, age, ethnicity, region, occupation and three general question which are, is the environmental situation in Malaysia is in a state of concern, do you think the environmental education is important to educate the early generation to be aware towards the action need to be taken to preserve the environment and do you think Malaysia will have the chance to save the current environmental situation in this country if people is taking their action towards this issue? Table 1 above shows the profile of respondents from SNS multi-ethnic users in Malaysia. Based from the findings, most of the respondents who answered the questionnaires are female (63%), aged between 20-29 (72%), Malay ethnic (76%), from central region (44%) and students (81%). Most of the respondents agree that the environmental situation in Malaysia is in a state of concern (92%), they also agree the environmental education is important to educate the early generation to be aware towards the action need to be taken to preserve the environment (99%) and they answered yes if Malaysia will have the chance to save the current environmental situation in this country if people taking their action toward this issue (98%)

**Table 1: Demographic of Respondent (n=662)**

<b>Profile</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Sex		
Male	245	37.0
Female	417	63.0
Age		
13-19	135	20.4
20-29	460	71.9
30-39	9	1.5
40 and above	9	1.5
Ethnicity		
Malay	500	75.5
Chinese	78	11.8
Indian	45	6.8
Others	39	5.9

<b>Region</b>		
Southern	113	17.0
Northern	151	22.9
East Coast	82	12.4
Central	293	44.3
East Malaysia	23	3.4
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	538	81.3
Government sector	70	10.6
Private sector	54	8.1
<b>The environmental situation in Malaysia is in a state of concern</b>		
Yes	610	92.2
No	52	7.8
<b>The environmental education is important to educate the early generation to be aware towards the action need to be taken to preserve the environment</b>		
Yes	657	99.3
No	5	0.7
<b>Malaysia will have the chance to save the current environmental situation in this country if people taking their action toward this issue</b>		
Yes	651	98.4
No	11	1.6

### **b)The level of awareness of the society towards the environment**

Table 2 showed that the items for I am aware of the 3R Programme (Reuse, Reduce, Recycle) was the highest (M=3.60) for the level of awareness of the society towards the environment. It is because according to Rizalman Hammim (2015) he stated that, environmental practices, such as the 3Rs will help reduce the measure of waste produced by the society. He also stated that MPMA president Lim Kok Boon said the MPMA-Lotte Chemical Titan 3Rs Awareness Program 2014 was set up to promote and create awareness with the 3R idea and how it can play a significant job in the preservation and conservation of nature. The respondents also rate the items I am aware that straws are not provided from food and beverages stores as the lowest (M=2.63) for the level of awareness of the society towards the environment. The items for I



know that we have to separate the trash/rubbish to specific/recycle bin (e.g: blue, brown and orange) and I do concern to avoid wasting domestic sources (e.g: electric,water) shared the same rate(M=3.50). Furthermore, for the items I am aware that no more plastic bags used to pack items that I have bought had the (M=3.20). while the rate of items I am aware that The Life of River programme is to educate the society to preserve the river in our country (M=3.40). On the other hand, rating for the items of I do believe government has encourage the citizens regarding the use of Green Technology (e.g: hibrid cars) is (M=3.30). However respondent also rate the level of awareness of the society towards the environment for items I know that citizens are encourage to use-friendly products(M=3.80). Last but not least, with the items of I know that public transport are made to lesser the use of vehicles on the public road has the level of awareness of the society towards the environment (M=3.54).

**Table 2. The level of awareness of the society towards the environment**

Items	Mean
I am aware that no more plastic bags used to pack items that I have bought	3.20
I am aware that straws are not provided from food and beverages stores	2.63
I know that we have to separate the trash/rubbish to specific/recycle bin (e.g: blue, brown and orange)	3.50
I am aware that The Life of River programme is to educate the society to preserve the river in our country	3.40
I am aware of the 3R Programme (Reuse, Reduce, Recycle)	3.60
I do believe government has encourage the citizens regarding the use of Green Technology (e.g: hibrid cars)	3.30
I know that citizens are encourage to use-friendly products	2.38
I know that public transport are made to lesser the use of vehicles on the public road	3.54

I do concern to avoid wasting domestic sources (e.g: electric,water)	3.50
Overall	3.22

**c)The level of action taken by the society to preserve the environment**

In terms of the level of action taken by the society to preserve the environment, Table 3 shows that the society did not contaminate the river with prohibited substance with the highest mean (M=2.86). To support the item above, Benjamin (2019) stated in article ‘Polluted River Nothing New’, The recent incident in Sungai Kim Kim is nothing new as it has been a dumping ground for chemical waste for the past 10 years, rendering many parts of the 13km river almost lifeless and Malaysian are still not aware about the importance of taking care the river. This results followed by they will always switch off the switch when not been used such as shower and charging phone (M=2.82). Thirdly, with the mean (M=2.63) show that public reduce the use of water and electric at home and office. In the other hand, the respondents also show that they will always practiced the concept of 3R which is reuse, recycle, reduce (M=2.53). Next, on the aspect of they will bring their own shopping bag when going for shopping with the mean (M=2.51). Also, in the aspect of, I will always separate trash or garbage according to the colour code such as blue trash bin only for paper waste the mean was (M=2.48) while the mean for I bring lunch box to work or class was (M=2.21). Lastly, in the aspect of I bring a metal straw all the time with me was (M=1.95).

**Table 3 : The Level of Action Taken by The Society to Preserve The Environment**

Item	Mean
I did not contaminate the river with prohibited substance (eg: trash)	2.86
I will always switch off the switch when not been used (eg: shower, charging phone)	2.82
I reduce the use of water and electric at home and office	2.63
I will always practiced the concept of 3R (eg: Reuse, recycle, reduce)	2.53
I will bring my own shopping bag when going for shopping	2.51
I will always separate trash/garbage according to the colour code (eg: blue trash bin only for paper waste)	2.48
I bring lunch box to work/class	2.21
I bring a metal straw all the time with me	1.95
<b>Overall</b>	<b>2.50</b>

### **CONCLUSION**

Overall result from the survey shows (**M=3.22**) which means it is more than average that people in today's life aware towards environment. Nowadays, there's a steaming trend of banning plastic-based disposable products to reduce the plastic waste pollution, especially plastic straws. In Malaysia Starbucks, McDonalds and Kenny Rogers also ban plastic. They did not provide plastic straw to their customers and their actions encourage public to use metal straw. According to Federal Territories Ministry Secretary-General Datuk Seri Adnan Md Ikhsan (2018), said the ban will be included in the conditions for business licenses from January 1, 2019. Overall result from the survey shows (**M=2.50**) which means the level of action taken by people nowadays to preserve environment is less. Dr Renard Siew (2016) said that he was

shocked that the environment was not identified as one of the 10 core cabinet portfolios in our country. Biodiversity is an intricate and interdependent web of life which humans are part of. For him, NRE has always been an important one in our country but public also have to cooperate with them. In this year there is water pollution in Kim Kim River, Pasir Gudang Johor. The population had initially been warned of methane poisoning, but subsequent analyses run by environmental and rescue agencies have found other toxic substances such as acrylonitrile, hydrogen cyanide and limonene. Short-term exposure can cause nausea, breathing difficulties, nose bleeds and irritation of the eyes and skin. Long-term exposure can lead to birth defects and cancer. This shows that bad environmental are so dangerous for us and we have to take care to our world. In a nutshell, the researchers show that we have to do more campaign or program to awareness of the importance of preserving the environment.

	<b>Mean</b>
<b>The level of awareness of the society towards the environment</b>	3.22
<b>The level of action taken by the society to preserve the environment</b>	2.50

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