

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL
SYSTEMS KNOWLEDGE
ATTRIBUTES
AND MODERATING EFFECT
OF RELIGIOSITY TOWARD
PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL
ATTITUDES AND HOUSEHOLDS'
FOOD WASTE PREVENTION
BEHAVIOUR**

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Hotel and Tourism Management)

Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management

January 2023

ABSTRACT

Like many other countries, Malaysia is facing the household food waste issue, and it is expected to exacerbate in years to come continuously. The efforts to improve the quality of environmental situations, coupled with detrimental impacts of food waste that worsen from time to time, demand new ways of thinking about the antecedents of food waste prevention behaviour. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the role of environmental systems knowledge attributes on households' food waste prevention behaviour, with pro-environmental attitudes as a mediator and religiosity as a moderator between the linkages. In answering and validating the research objectives, questions, and hypotheses, a quantitative approach with descriptive analyses and hypotheses testing was employed as the methodology. A survey questionnaire among Malaysian households from several states was undertaken with a total of 935 respondents, with 918 data found usable. The findings demonstrated that environmental systems knowledge attributes with its underlying dimensions of human-environmental system knowledge and geography-environmental system knowledge not only influence the pro-environmental attitudes, but it acts as a precursor or predictor of the households' food waste prevention behaviour. Additionally, pro-environmental attitudes played a significant mediating role in the intended relationship between environmental systems knowledge attributes and Malaysian households' food waste prevention behaviour, whereas religiosity played a moderating role in the relationship between environmental systems knowledge attributes and households' pro-environmental attitudes. The findings also proved a convergence between Environmentally Responsible Behaviour Theory and Behavioural Learning Theory (Operant Conditioning) that is applicable to provide a viable and useful theoretical framework for examining households' food waste prevention behaviour. To summarize, this study certainly offers fresh insight into the current works of literature on food waste prevention behaviour. It specifically provides consumers, non-governmental organizations, and relevant authorities with an in-depth understanding of Malaysian households in terms of what types of information or knowledge should be imparted to motivate them to act environmentally responsible and, most importantly, the formation of food waste prevention behaviour.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful and Compassionate. Without His kindness and benevolence, it would be impossible for me to accomplish this dissertation. From Him, I owe the strength and patience to embark on this challenging but sweet journey.

Alhamdulillah, it took me a smooth couple of years to finish this piece of knowledge. Throughout the years, there were remarkable and amazing people who have provided me with great assistance, physically and mentally. This was never a 'one man's work'; therefore, it is my honour to acknowledge these people.

My warm and sincere gratitude goes to my main and co-supervisors, Dr. Muhammad Izzat Zulkifly, and Dr. Norhidayah Abdullah, for their continuing support in completing my dissertation and for having read and commented on every draft of my writing.

Specifically, to Professor Dr. Hj. Mohd Salehuddin Mohd Zahari, I am intensely indebted to him for his useful guidance and advice in overcoming various hiccups and bumps during my Ph.D journey. He is a man beyond an ordinary supervisor, and I truly appreciate his continuous encouragement. Thank you for believing in me from the first time we met and for being a mentor, *Mu'allim*, and also a friend.

To all the staff and lecturers of the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, I fondly remember and truly appreciate your knowledge, assistance, and teaching. Thank you to Professor Ir. Dr. Anni Faridah, Associate Professor Dr. Juwaidah Sharifuddin, and Dr. Norrina Din, who have provided valuable comments to improve the quality of the research.

Last but definitely not least, my heartiest thanks go to my family, my wife, and my three princes. I am grateful for the love, support, encouragement, patience, and understanding throughout the period of this study. Your prayers and du'a made it possible to complete this thesis. This one is especially for you!

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

This chapter is set as starting point and foundation, which begins by introducing the background of the study that touches on the environmental issues from a general perspective and specifically related to food waste. The associated background in the Malaysian context is delineated to understand the matters on hand better. In the next section, the problem statement pertains to the issues related to environmental system knowledge, religiosity in relation to pro-environmental attitudes, and households' food waste prevention behaviour are discussed. The research objectives together with related questions, are then addressed in the following sections. The succeeding sections outlined the scope of the study and definitions of operational key terms for a better grasp, while the final section displays the chapter summary.

1.2 Background of The Study

Out of many matters in the fast-paced global development, environmental issues are one of the concern matters in today's world (Farhud, 2017; Liu et al., 2015; McInnes, 2018). This is due to its downsides, such as the loss of national expenditure and the diminishment of natural resources, which have resulted from the numerous devastating activities of humankind (Soni & Joshi, 2017; Stern, 2011). For example, in the United States, it is reported that the country had an estimated loss of expenditure amounting to \$1.83 trillion (approximately MYR7.66 trillion) from environmental catastrophes from the year 1980 until 2020 (NOAA, 2020).

According to Guven et al. (2019), Khalil et al. (2011), and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) (2013), the global environmental issues are governed by many perspectives ranging from their types such as deforestation, biodiversity losses, pollution, and climate change, just to name a few. In this context, two major reasons for deforestation are caused by rapid growth in population and urban sprawl, impacting forest destruction by cutting down trees to make way for more homes and industries (Soni & Joshi, 2017). Moreover, it is disclosed that at least 80,000 acres (32,300 ha) of forest have been