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Research Management Unit
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Embracing New Horizons: A Fresh Start for 2025



As we stand at the threshold of a new year, I welcome you to RMU4U Third Edition (January 2025). The start of a new year symbolizes renewal, an opportunity to recalibrate our aspirations and refresh our collective commitment to academic excellence, research endeavours, and impactful scholarly contributions.

The year 2024 saw significant progress within our academic and research community. It was a testament to the passion, perseverance, and creativity of all members of the UiTM Kedah family. As we reflect on those accomplishments, let us also look ahead with determination to elevate our efforts in research, publication, and innovation. Let 2025 be the year we chart new pathways for discovery and collaboration, bringing our work to greater heights.

This year, I encourage all of us to reaffirm our scholarly goals by setting clear, measurable targets for research outputs, impactful writings, and knowledge sharing, aiming to contribute meaningfully to society both locally and globally. Let us strengthen research collaborations by building networks across disciplines, faculties, and institutions to foster cross-disciplinary solutions to real-world challenges. At the same time, we must focus on innovation by exploring new ideas, embracing digital tools, and pioneering creative solutions that align with global trends and local needs. Above all, let us support each other by sharing expertise, mentoring the next generation, and collaborating to overcome challenges, creating a thriving research ecosystem where everyone uplifts one another.

Let this be a year where we balance ambition with reflection, passion with purpose, and innovation with impact. The Research Management Unit (RMU) remains steadfast in supporting your research journey through resources, platforms, and opportunities for growth.

As we embark on this new chapter, I wish each of you the strength to pursue your aspirations and the resilience to overcome any obstacles. Together, let us make 2025 a year of breakthroughs, achievements, and shared successes.

Here's to a productive and inspiring year ahead.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Roshima Said

Acting Rector, UiTM Kedah



A Message from the Chief Editor

Dear Readers,

I am pleased to announce the return of the RMU4U Bulletin with Volume 3, showcasing a diverse array of academic inquiries and professional perspectives across multiple themes. This edition continues our commitment to facilitating intellectual exchange and presenting research that engages with contemporary issues.

In this volume, the Law & Policy theme stands out with the highest number of contributions, featuring 14 papers that explore significant aspects of governance, justice, and societal well-being. These papers highlight the role of legal frameworks and policies in addressing current challenges and contributing to societal development.

Highlighted works include topics such as "Enhancing Access to Justice: The Role, Challenges, and Future of Small Claims Courts in Malaysia" and "Environmental Public Interest Litigation: Broadening Locus Standi to Safeguard Collective Interests," which examine the evolving landscape of legal rights and public interest. Additional discussions, such as "Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Islamic Banking and Finance in Malaysia" and "Balancing Nature and Faith: Protection and Conservation of Water Resources from the Perspective of Islamic Law," shed light on the interplay between ethics, faith, and law in addressing societal challenges.

In addition to the focus on Law & Policy, this issue covers a range of topics that contribute to understanding innovation and societal change. Articles such as "AI-Driven Recommendations in Mobile Shopping Apps, Podcasts, Animations & Gen Z: Revamping Organizational Behavior Learning, and The Role of Social Media in Shaping Islamic Entrepreneurship" explore the intersections of technology, education, and culture in today's world.

This edition represents the collaborative work of our contributors, whose insights and expertise have shaped the content of this bulletin. We encourage readers to engage with these ideas and consider their implications for further research and practical applications.

I would like to thank the authors, reviewers, and editorial team members who made RMU4U Bulletin Volume 3 possible. We hope this publication serves as a resource for understanding key issues and inspires further exploration.

Thank you for being part of this endeavor. Let us continue to learn and exchange ideas

Warm regards,

Dr Azyyati Anuar
Chief Editor, RMU4U E-Bulletin





WATER POLLUTION IN MALAYSIA: PENALTIES UNDER THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT 1974

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Water pollution is a significant issue in Malaysia and has serious implications for biodiversity, humans, and the economy. The country's growing industry, urbanisation, and agricultural activities have increased river, lake, and other water body pollution, negatively affecting the environment and the people. The Environmental Quality Act 1974 is the most important legal tool that Malaysia has employed, particularly in regulating wastewater. This Act is a set of rules that enforce control mechanisms against water pollution by establishing water quality standards, liability of offenders, and stringent punishment by way of penalty for an infraction of the law. Court decisions have also influenced how Malaysia's water pollution laws are enforced.



OVERVIEW OF WATER POLLUTION IN MALAYSIA

Some sources of water pollution in Malaysia are oil spills, plastic waste disposal, untreated sewage, industrial effluents, and agriculture run-off. Domestic wastewater, the entry of agricultural chemicals and untreated or inadequately treated industrial steel into rivers have resulted in pollution. This has left many areas prone to health issues like water-borne diseases and degraded aquaculture, tourism, the ecological niche, and the continuation of life around bodies of water, as many people depend on the water bodies for drinking purposes, tourism, fishing, and agricultural activities.

Malaysia's main environmental pollution legislation is the Environmental Quality Act 1974. It applies to the prevention, reduction and control of pollution in the whole environment, including releasing pollutants into lakes, rivers and other bodies of water. The Act allows the Department of Environment far-reaching authority to regulate and supervise water quality, set pollution discharge limits and impose sanctions.

Certain sections in the Act specifically cover water pollution and control measures. For example, section 11 authorises the Department of Environment to regulate the release of contaminants into water bodies. Industries should have a license to discharge their effluent before releasing wastewater into rivers or other bodies of water. Under section 21, the Minister has the power to regulate the emission, discharge, and deposit of pollutants, which are necessary with the condition.



PENALTIES FOR CAUSING WATER POLLUTION IN MALAYSIA

Offences under the Environmental Quality Act 1974 for causing pollution are punishable by different penalties. These penalties are intended to prevent future deterioration of Malaysia's water resources and to act as a deterrence to possible polluters. According to section 25, pollution in inland waters, including rivers, canals, and lakes, is restricted and prohibited without a license. Anyone who breaches this section faces a maximum fine of RM100,000, a maximum imprisonment sentence of five years, or both.

The Act, via section 34B and section 27, further prohibits garbage or scheduled wastes from being discharged into Malaysian waters and the discharge of any oil or oil-containing mixture. Violations of both sections are criminal offences punishable by conviction to a maximum fine of RM500,000, a maximum imprisonment of 5 years, or both.



Taken together, these sections prohibit the unauthorised disposal of waste, oil or contaminants into water in Malaysia, underscoring the importance of compliance with the laws to safeguard the environment. The penalties are proportionate to the seriousness of these offences and are a powerful deterrent against potential offenders.

Despite providing a relatively solid legal foundation for pollution control, the Environmental Quality Act 1974 has been put to the test in several court cases. A truck driver was fined up to RM100,000 by the Johor Bahru Session Court in November 2023 for illegally disposing of scheduled waste in Sungai Kim Kim, Pasir Gudang, Johor, in 2019, thereby creating pollution. The offender was charged under section 25, and the court imposed the maximum fine on him. The same court had also ordered a company, a party to the same case, to pay a fine of RM40,000 for each of the eight charges, amounting to RM320,000. On appeal in June 2024, the High Court raised the punishment to RM80,000 for each charge, for a total of RM640,000 for breaking the Environmental Quality Act 1974. The case reaffirmed that companies and industries should be responsible for polluting the environment and highlighted the need for strict industrial waste rules.

Conclusion

The Environmental Quality Act 1974 is an essential legal tool in Malaysia's fight against water pollution, providing a framework for legal regulation of water quality and a system of sanctions to discourage violations. With heavy fines and imprisonment terms, the Act comes with tough penalties to prevent that from happening in any inland water in Malaysia. These stringent regulations show Malaysia's dedication to sustainable water usage and the maintenance of aquatic habitats for future generations.



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