

Analysis University Students' Awareness in Leisure and Environmental Activities During Pandemic Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

The world is currently experiencing a deadly infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), called corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19). In facing this pandemic, society needs to adjust their life pattern to suit the new norms. Quality of life is an indicator that affects human well-being. Leisure and environmental activities which involves the individual's interaction with the environment, social setting and health could influence the development of excellent human capital. The use of leisure time that directly benefits the individual's achievement could assist individual to achieve emotional, social and spiritual well-being. Thus, the main objective of this study was to identify the awareness of university students in leisure activities and environmental activities during the Covid-19 pandemic. This mix method study was conducted through survey to 100 undergraduate students in one of the public universities and it is also supported by the findings from interviews to 9 students. The questionnaires involving frequency of involvement, involvement factors, perception of non-involvement and the impact of student involvement in leisure and environmental activities. For qualitative study, semi-structured interviews session was conducted. Through the findings of the study, it is found that exposure to the importance to perform leisure and environmental activities should not be underestimated. Therefore, all parties should work together to ensure positive, prosperous, holistic self-development which contribute to a quality life.

Keywords – Society Awareness; Leisure and Environmental Activities; Pandemic Covid-19; Healthy Lifestyle.

INTRODUCTION

The occurrence of pandemic Covid-19 has led to the close of many educational institutions including schools and universities since December 2019. The pandemic has resulted in limitations of outdoor activities and movements in order to control and reduce the spread of the virus. Quality of life is an indicator that influences human well-being. The enforcement of the movement control order gives an impact and pressure to those who are active with outdoor activities. Participation and involvement in physical activities and sports can serve as a catalyst for the development of society holistically. The activities can develop the social interaction among the community and increase health quality. Previous studies have shown that participation in healthy leisure activities is one of the important components that can

enhance the physical, mental, emotional and social development of an individual (Cordes & Ibrahim, 1996; Lim, 2007). Leisure time is a part of human daily life, but its importance is rarely understood by the public (Kelly & Freysinger, 2000).

According to Ling (2011), leisure and recreation is referring to the free time used to perform fun activities which give individual satisfaction. Leisure is also an activity performed according to the circumstances, facilities and number of individuals involved. There is various type of leisure activities such as exercise, sports, fishing, picnic and gardening based on self-desire. The leisure activity is focusing on a specific activity that provides benefits to the individual. Besides, by doing the leisure activities, it can help to reduce the stress and optimizing the used of all body parts and make individuals healthier.

In higher institution, physical activity and sports during the leisure time should be seen as an important element. The use of leisure time especially for physical activities and sports is an important issue faced by students. However, activities that involve the environment also need to be cultivated in community life. Awareness and attitudes related to environmental issues are still at a low level and are seen to be critical such as the issue of global warming and environmental pollution. As these issues are often related, the need to create awareness among community is very essential. Implementation of leisure and environmental awareness in education is expected to provide knowledge to the community. According to Kollmus and Agyeman (2002), knowledge sharing will help in raising awareness, concern and can produce individuals who have more positive behaviors.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Health is very important in ensuring human well-being. Health refers to the body condition that does not suffer from any problems such as diabetes and is susceptible to other infectious diseases. There are various steps that a person can exercise in order to have a good level of health. A healthy lifestyle is the key to human well-being. A healthy person can certainly play an active role in the development of religion, race and country. The World Health Organization defines health as a physical, mental and social condition that is healthy, fit, intelligent and free from any disease based on social and community conditions (Samsudin, 2020). This definition emphasizes that health is underpinned by physical, mental and social factors that are healthy, functional, fit and not threatened by any disease that is harmful. In Malaysia, one of the common health problem that causes death is heart disease. A total of 172,031 deaths were recorded in 2018, with a total of 117,387 of them being medically confirmed deaths, while 54,644 were not medically confirmed. Ischemic heart disease remains the leading cause of death in Malaysia with 18,267 deaths or 15.6% of the number of medically confirmed deaths in 2018. Based on the report of Malaysia Causes of Death 2019, deaths due to ischemic heart disease increased 35.3% compared to 13,503 deaths in 2017. Meanwhile, pneumonia recorded the second highest cause of death in the country with 11.8% followed by Cerebrovascular diseases (7.8%), vehicle accidents (3.7%) and Chronic lower respiratory diseases (2.6%). The leading cause of death for men is ischemic heart disease with 12,510 deaths or 17.8% of total male deaths in 2018, while the leading cause of death for women is pneumonia with 6,033 deaths (12.8%) (BERNAMA, 2020). This is due to

Malaysians who do not practice a healthy lifestyle or fill their free time or leisure with beneficial activities such as leisure.

Leisure is free time used to perform fun activities and give individual satisfaction . Leisure activities may differ between individuals depending on factors related to one's interests, place of residence and way of life. The activities can be categorized as activities in the home, natural environment, education, culture, sports, attitudes and social activities. Leisure activities are usually filled with activities that do not burden the brain. There are also individual who like productive activities such as drawing and composing songs. According to Aristotle, leisure as pleasure, work, pleasure activities and as a complement to self-perfection.

Awareness on the importance to preserve and conserve the environment is fundamental to the change in community life practices towards the implementation of responsibilities to the environment. The results of previous studies show that the level of environmental awareness of Malaysian society is still at a low level when compared to developed countries such as Japan, Denmark and Germany. People are more sensitive to environmental issues, especially those who are close to them, but the awareness to be involved in overcoming the problem is too minimal (Zurina & Norjan, 2003). Therefore, the problems that arise related to the environment are still a current issue although it has long been debated due to the attitude of the community who take the problem lightly. Therefore, the need to build new elements needs to continue in order to lead to changes in practices to make the environment a conducive place to live.

Environmental issues also have a huge impact on the construction industry. Besides, there are some opinions stating that the construction industry is generally an unsustainable activity. According to Choi (2009), most construction projects fail to achieve sustainability goals due to failures in the sustainability planning process. This is supported by Zhang et al. (2000), Kaur and Aurora (2012) whose findings show that the construction industry contributes to environmental pollution. The main environmental impact that can be detected is from construction activities such as air pollution, water pollution, waste pollution and noise pollution. Chen et al., (2004) stated that waste from construction is a serious pollution problem that needs to be addressed where project developers need to be responsible to ensure related activities need to be in line with environmental policy and practiced through waste reduction.

In conclusion, leisure and environmental awareness are significant and need to be emphasized. This is because it involves health and the environment in particular. The community should use their free time with beneficial activities, especially by doing physical activities that can ensure the health of the people. This is because most Malaysians do not use their free time with beneficial activities. For the environmental awareness, the community should take care of the environment as best as possible. This is because the environment is an award that needs to be taken care of at our best level. Environmental awareness is an important value to be instilled in every individual in order to understands and has concerns about environmental management and pollution. Individuals who have been nurtured and nurtured with the values of loving the environment will be more sensitive and sensitive to

issues related to the environment.. The value of practice to jointly contribute to efforts to preserve and conserve the environment should be instilled in every individual and should be emphasized to produce quality human capital which in turn can ensure a comfortable life later on.

METHODOLOGY

A mix method approach that combined the use of quantitative and qualitative research was used in this study. Neuman (2000) argues that combining these methods produces better research as it complements the advantages and disadvantages of each. In this study, quantitative design was implemented in advance to get an initial overview of the issue investigated. Subsequently qualitative data serve to verify the findings with deeper insights.

In this study, a questionnaire and interviews were used to identify the awareness of the involvement of university students in leisure activities and environmental activities during the Covid-19 pandemic. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 undergraduates students in one university in Malaysia; out of them, nine were purposefully selected to participate in the interviews. Each of the questions in the questionnaire were developed by the researcher based on the similar previous research. The example of questions regarding students awareness in leisure and environmental activities during pandemic Covid-19 are shown as in Table I.

TABLE I. Examples of questions regarding students awareness in leisure and environmental activities during pandemic Covid-19

Awareness in leisure activities

No	Items
1	Do you know about leisure activity?
2	Everyone needs to perform leisure activity to stay healthy.
3	Leisure activity give lots of positive impact.
4	Leisure activity are more fun when perform in group.
5	Leisure activity should be done at least 3 times a week.

Awareness in environmental activities

No	Items
1	In my opinion, environment refer to the area that exists around individuals or groups of people.
2	In my opinion, MCO helps in educating the community towards a clean environment.
3	In my opinion, protecting environment is the main responsibility of community.
4	In my opinion, car-pooling is one way to save the environment.
5	In my opinion, the greenhouse effect gives bad impact to the environment.

The interviews question related to this research is organized by presenting semi-structured questions. The questions for the interview are done based on the same constructs as questionnaires. However, the questions are more open for researchers to focus on the key questions and the student is free to respond.

Additionally, a pilot study was carried out towards eight students to investigate the cronbach alpha for the reliability of the questionnaire. This number-between 5 to 10 people-was considered by Johnson and Christensen (2000) as sufficient for a pilot study. Overall, the reliability of questionnaire was 0.890.

In this paper, the means will be described based on three levels: range 1.00-2.49 (low), 2.50-3.49 (moderate) and 3.50-5.00 (high).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

TABLE II. Mean of questions regarding students awareness in leisure and environmental

No	Questionnaire	Mean	SD
1	Awareness in leisure activities	4.12	0.92
2	Awareness in environmental activities	4.45	0.81
TOTAL		4.29	0.87

activities during pandemic Covid-19

As shown in Table II, the result showed that students have better awareness in environmental activities rather than awareness in leisure activities. Mean for environmental activities was 4.45 ± 0.81 while for leisure activities was 4.12 ± 0.92 . Interestingly, average mean of student's awareness were in the high level 4.29 ± 0.87 even they are in the pandemic situation.

Based on these findings it is clearly imply that the majority of students are active in doing leisure and environmental activities. They often spend time to exercise at least three times a week because it gives a satisfaction and feels their life is more active and healthier. Overall, the findings indicate a variety of exercise and healthy life style practice by university students even though they need to control their movement and experienced some constraints.

In addition to quantitative data, qualitative data were also obtained through interviews of awareness in leisure and environmental activities. All the data were analyzed according to the answers through the development of a theme. Table III displays the qualitative data based on the theme for each activity.

TABLE III. The theme of students awareness in leisure and environmental activities during pandemic Covid-19

Awareness in leisure activities	Occupy the free time with beneficial activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is space to play sports with friends. • Can spend time with siblings. • Leisure helps to overcome the social
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		<p>problem among the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate values and keep the body healthy.
	Could overcome depression and stress problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports can reduce depression and stress. This is because, one can calm their mind and get out from the problems they faced. • Blood flow circulate well while doing the leisure activity. • Can think rationally.
	A platform to strengthen the relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer for gathering activities because it is livelier and more fun. • Allow sweating and could have fun when able to do activities with family. • Opportunity to meet friends while jogging in the afternoon.
	Get healthy and overcome obesity problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy to do leisure activity every evening because bored and can control body weight. • The body feel healthier, more energetic and more active. • Feel fun because there are no constraints in activities, even in a room. Prefer having Zumba with friends using You Tube.
Awareness in environmental activities	Inculcate self-awareness towards a good lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and encouragement to the community in maintaining and ensuring a healthy environment. • Taking harsh action against individuals who do not follow and violate environmental laws. • Bring a paper bag or other reusable bag that can replace a plastic bag when buying items.
	Effective strategy to avoid environment disaster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenient way for waste disposal. • Provide plenty of bins in places where many people perform leisure activities. • Place a camera in each place and individuals who commit offenses will be fined RM 500.00 or jailed for six months or both.

	A key for healthy life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out community service sentences to a certain period to anyone who is guilty and also impose fines according to the type of offense. • Fines the individuals who throw rubbish everywhere. • Provide tokens to those who successfully report environmental offenses along with solid evidence. • Shared responsibility for overcoming the problem of environmental pollution by supporting the relevant campaigns .
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Through the findings, it appears that students have awareness in leisure and environmental activities during pandemic Covid-19. The themes derived most of the respondents are a society that is sensitive and responsible in the leisure and environment issues. This is because most respondents know how to use their free time with beneficial activities such as exercise, cycling, reading books, and other beneficial activities. Besides, respondents are also aware of the benefits if they optimize their free time well such as keep the body healthy, strengthen friendships, improve skills and knowledge, and so on. However, there are some students who do not like to joint any activity during their free time because they prefer to sleep or just spend time sitting in the room without do anything. To help students like this, the responsible party should be wise in diversifying activities even if the environmental conditions are hit by pandemics. According to Shevaun et al. (2009), identifying and overcoming barriers to exercise participation is an important way to improve quality of life.

The themes also show that leisure activities can help to overcome depression and stress problem among students. Some of them know the science perspective about the blood circulation. They agree that their blood flow circulate well while doing the leisure activity. In addition, evidence suggests that exercise can helps in improve working-memory scores over time (Lachman, Neupert, Bertrand, & Jette, 2006). From the findings also shows that students enjoy to do leisure activity every evening because of bored and can control body weight. They feel fun because there are no constraints in activities, even in a room. What can be observed from the study conducted, many among the female students prefer having Zumba with friends using You Tube. They assume leisure give positive vibes to get healthy and overcome obesity problem. Although there was no average change in exercise beliefs for the intervention group, there were individual differences in change.

In addition to leisure, respondents are also concerned about environmental awareness which they know what to do to preserve this environment. Respondents also suggested a number of measures to ensure that the environment is always preserved and conserved such as replanting trees, disposal of garbage in the proper place, law enforcement, quality systems in disposal and irrigation, and more. Respondents also know the causes and effects of the

occurrence of a disaster and adverse event. This shows that most people are aware of environmental awareness especially university students. They assume awareness in environmental activities helps them in inculcate self-awareness towards a good lifestyle and become a key to live in healthy life style. From the health perspectives, environmental disaster increase risk for diseases, infection and other injuries as well (Haliza, 2014).

Overall, the findings indicated that awareness in leisure and environmental activities during pandemic Covid-19 exist among university students. Therefore, all parties must be responsible in fostering a leisure and a healthy environment culture. According to Logeswari et. al. (2020), initially, interest toward nature, feeling of oneness with nature, love and attachment toward nature is proven to be the best predictor of nature protective behaviour. Indirectly, hopefully they can take care of the environment well and contribute to conserve the environment. All parties should work together to ensure positive, prosperous, holistic self-development which contribute to a quality life.

CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper raised the question of students' awareness in leisure and environmental activities during pandemic Covid-19. The findings revealed that university students very knowledgeable about leisure and awareness of the environment. As we all know, leisure activities are very important, especially for students. This is because it can relieve stress inside. In addition, every student should also be aware of the environment so as not to become a thorn in the flesh against the pollution that occurs around. The main contributions and the novelty of this paper were summarized as follows: to maintain and increase the level of awareness in leisure and environmental activities, all parties must be creative and not curb healthy activities among the community. This also supports the students in moving them towards a more advanced in healthy life style, hence, it is necessary in order to trigger positive effects in students' emotion during pandemic Covid-19.

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