

How to Inculcate Sustainable Development Values among Malaysian Citizens?

Fong Teng, Farzana Quoquab, Jihad Mohammad and Nomahaza Mahadi
International Business School, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 54100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Abstract: Sustainable development value is a set of values that support sustainable development goal. These sustainable development values are freedom, equality, tolerance, solidarity, shared responsibility and respect for nature. Such values are important for the developing country like Malaysia to ensure that the country is committed towards sustainable development. This concept first highlighted in the millennium declaration for sustainable development goals in order to achieve development, peace, human rights and environmental welfare. This issue became very crucial since the nation is progressing towards achieving Vision 2020. Although, these values have been declared 10 years ago, these values are relatively new to developing country perspective. Therefore, the average citizens of the developing countries are not fully aware of the notion of sustainable development value. So, the question is how to inculcate such values among Malaysian citizens? This study attempts to answer this research question. Qualitative methodology is utilized in order to gain in-depth understanding of the issue. The 16 in-depth interviews were conducted in this regard. The interviews were then transcribed and analyzed to understand the best ways to create awareness among Malaysians on the topic of sustainable development value. It is expected that consumers, academicians and practitioners will be benefitted from this research.

Key words: Sustainable development values, Malaysian citizens, sustainable development awareness, Malaysia, regard

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development Value (SDV) refers to a set of values that shape and guide human thought and behavior towards sustainable development (Leiserowitz *et al.*, 2006). These values are freedom, equality, solidarity, shared responsibility and respect for nature. Although, sustainable development values have been declared >10 years ago, little is known about the nature of such values.

Sustainable development values are important for Malaysia to ensure that Malaysia is committed towards sustainable development while achieving Vision 2020. In February 28, 1991, the fourth prime minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad presented a working study entitled: The Way Forward at the inaugural meeting of the Malaysian business school and also Malaysia's Vision 2020. The study presented on the thoughts of the future of Malaysia as a nation and its commitment towards sustainable development. In support of this view in outlining the Vision 2020, it has been stated as follows: we must also ensure that our valuable natural resources are not wasted. Our land must remain productive and fertile our atmosphere clear and clean our water

unpolluted, our forest resources capable of regeneration, able to yield the needs of our national development. The beauty of our land must not be desecrated for its own sake and for our economic advancement.

As such it is clearly evident that, in order to achieve Vision 2020, it is necessary to create awareness and to inculcate the sustainable development values among Malaysian citizens. However, there is a lack of proper understanding about sustainable development concept among the general citizens of the country. Indeed it is utmost necessity to understand how to create the awareness of sustainable development and how to inculcate such values? This is the gap that this study attempts to fill as the topic on SDV is comparatively new in Malaysia. It is needless to say that exploring the ways to create awareness among Malaysian on sustainable development value is worthwhile to investigate. Table 1 depicts briefly the highlighted research gaps, research objectives and questions and methods utilized in this study.

Sustainable development value: The concept of Sustainable Development Value (SDV) begins after World War II based on a study from a US National Academy of

Table 1: Research gap, research objectives and questions and methods utilized

Research motivation	Research questions	Research objectives	Methods
Sustainable development value was introduced in developed country through the millennium declaration These values need to introduce in developing countries	How to inculcate sustainable development values among Malaysia citizens?	To identify ways to create awareness on sustainable development value among Malaysian communities	In-depth interviews

Table 2: Definition and facets of sustainable development value

Sustainable development value dimension	Definition
Freedom	Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice. Democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people best assures these rights
Equality	No individual and no nation must be denied the opportunity to benefit from development. The equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured
Solidarity	Global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice. Those who suffer or who benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most
Tolerance	Human beings must respect one or another in all their diversity of belief, culture and language. Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed but cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations should be actively promoted
Respect for nature	Prudence must be shown in the management of all living species and natural resources in accordance with the precepts of sustainable development. Only in this way can the immeasurable riches provided to us by nature be preserved and passed on to our descendants. The current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption must be changed in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendants
Shared responsibility	Responsibility for managing worldwide economic and social development as well as threats to international peace and security must be shared among the nations of the world and should be exercised multilaterally. As the most universal and most representative organization in the world, the united nations must play the central role

Shepherd *et al.* (2009)

Sciences to collect aspirations and desire of people's around the world after World War II. At that point, the study only identified people's value not sustainable development value. The identified values are peace, freedom, development and environment. Peace was identified since the world was threatened by the nuclear arms race. Although, war has been sustain during the cold war and finally cease, peace was difficult to achieve especially in middle East and Africa. Desire for freedom also continued after World War II in the struggle to end imperialism and totalitarian oppression and to extend the human rights of women, indigenous peoples and minorities (Leiserowitz *et al.*, 2006). Economic development is the focus after the postcolonial world to ensure basic necessities is provided to the poorest two thirds of the world. A global value for nature and the environment finally emerged after a quarter of century (Leiserowitz *et al.*, 2006). However, these four values do not support the full range of values supporting sustainable development.

On 8 September, 2000 to mark the new millennium, the general assembly of the united nations adopted a set of fundamental values such as freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility known as sustainable development value. These sustainable development values underlie 60 millennium development goals regarding peace, development and environment, human rights, the vulnerable, hungry, poor

and Africa. These sustainable development value are important besides serving as international relation on guiding policy and underlie sustainable development goal, it also stress the importance of changing people's values so that attitudes and behaviors can contribute to sustainable development.

In short, Sustainable Development Value (SDV) refers to a set values that shape and guide human thought and behavior towards achieving sustainable development goals in the area of social, environmental and economic.

Sustainable development, its values and facets: Sustainable development values have been expressed by Earth Charter, World Summit on Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2004) and the Global Scenario group (Raskin *et al.*, 2002) but "only in the millennial declaration is there a specific set of declared values, identified as 'fundamental value's'" of sustainable development (Leiserowitz *et al.*, 2006). These fundamental values are known as sustainable development value and consists of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. Table 2 shows these SDV dimensions and its definition of each dimension that are highlighted by the Millennium declaration.

Evolution of sustainable development concept: The notion of sustainable development is built in the future. It

suggests for meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. To date, the definition given by World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 is widely accepted.

Sustainable development concept is originated due to the competing demands of development and environmental protection as early in year 1972 with stockholm conference on the human environment and the 1980 world conservation strategy of the international union for the conservation of nature (Leiserowitz *et al.*, 2006). Environmental protection and development are the identified key values of sustainable development (Leiserowitz *et al.*, 2006) but these values are different from peace, freedom, development and environment value which are people's aspiration after World War II. Therefore, the US national academy of sciences review the sustainability literature to clarify these differences began with the distinction between what advocates sought to sustain and what they sought to develop (Leiserowitz *et al.*, 2006).

In 2002, the world summit on sustainable development marked a further expansion of the standard definition with the widely used three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental (Kates *et al.*, 2005).

Need for sustainable development: Sustainable development is important as it serves as a guiding principle in creating programs and policies to improve the lives of the poor, equality, pollution, human rights and etc. The implementation on sustainable development is not easy and takes considerable amount of time and effort. Without the introduction of sustainable development there will not be any initiative and progress on sustainable development. There would be issue on large portions of the world natural resources continuously converted to human use, prompting concerns about the ability of the natural world's resource base to sustain such growth. To ensure implementation of global sustainable development, according to the original Rio deal to direct international and national plans and policies to ensure all economic decisions took into consideration on environmental impacts as follows:

- Developed countries would take the lead in changing production and consumption patterns (their economic model)
- Developing countries would maintain their development goals but take on sustainable development methods and paths

- Developed countries committed to support developing countries through finance, technology transfer and appropriate reforms to the global economic and financial structures or practices

Therefore, sustainable development value supports the sustainable development and helps to guide and achieve sustainable development goals.

Studies on sustainable development value's and sustainable development: According to policy documents from UN and UNESCO, it is important to change people values so that attitudes and behaviors can contribute to sustainable development. Although, sustainable development value supports the sustainable development, little is known about to what extent the key values actually contribute to or hinders sustainable development (Shepherd *et al.*, 2009). Shepherd (2009) developed a measurement scale to measure the sustainable development value which underlies sustainable development. In this study, the developed scale captured the 6 constructs such as freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. Item generation for these values reflect values rather than specific behaviors. The developed measurement scale is proved reliable and demonstrates validity. The study also encourages researchers to continue investigate whether values differ across geographical regions and cultures and/or across different segments of society. In 2011, Tomas Torbjornsson develop a measurement scale to measure the student's attitudes towards three sustainable development values such as respect for nature, solidarity and equality which underlie sustainable development. The questionnaire was constructed to relate the sustainable development values to three sustainable development dimension with respect for nature related to the environmental, solidarity and equality is based on the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

According to Weaver and Olson (2006)'s, "paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished". Research paradigm is important as it shows how a research result could be affected and guided by a certain research paradigm. Present study followed interpretivist paradigm in order to gain in-depth understanding about the phenomenon.

Table 3: Interpretivist paradigm

Feature	Description (interpretivist paradigm)
Purpose of research	To identify ways to create awareness in sustainable development values among Malaysian communities
Ontology	Reality can be explored and constructed through human interactions based on knowledge, views, interpretations and experiences
Epistemology	Researcher and respondents are in an interactive mode of data collection through talking and listening, reading and writing
Methodology	Data collected during interviews session was taped using an audio recorder from a mobile application and e-mail using the prepared interview protocol to interviewees

Compiled by researchers

Data collection: This study considered qualitative approach and inductive inquiry. This method is chosen because qualitative approaches have a greater explanatory power and helps to gain deeper insights to the phenomenon of interest. It also allows interviewees to express more on their opinion in depth and detail on ways to create awareness on sustainable development value. The 16 in-depth interviews were carried out in this regard. Semi-structured interview technique was felt best to serve the purpose. Table 3 summarizes the objective, benefits and data collection method for choosing interpretivist paradigm for this research.

The interviews were conducted at University Teknologi Malaysia-International business school meeting rooms and coffee shops. A brief explanation of the objective of this study was shared at the beginning of the introduction sessions. The interview session require an approximately 45 min for each session. The interviewees were selected based on their profession due to their expertise and sensitivity towards the topic of sustainable development value which is categorizes under leaders opinion. Different age and culture are also selected as they have different view towards the topic of sustainable development value. For the 16 in-depth interviews, contacts were made either personally or thru snow-balling method.

Qualitative data analysis: Transcriptions were made after each individual interview sessions. After completion of each interview, the transcripts were reviewed by the participants. Such checking effort has been adopted in order to assure that what they wanted to say was described properly (Glesne, 2006). Only one interview was taped using an audio recorder from a mobile application to allow the researchers to transcribe interview conversation properly. According to Seale and Silverman (1997), transcripts may provide highly reliable record to which researchers can return.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interviewee’s profile: This study includes the demographic details of respondent for the qualitative interview and summaries in Table 4. All 16 interviewees

Table 4: Interviewee’s profile

Particulars of the interviewees	No. of interviewees
Gender	
Male	3
Female	13
Age group	
18-25	1
26-33	9
34-41	6
Race	
Malay	10
Chinese	5
Indian	1
Education qualification	
DBA/PhD	6
Masters	3
Undergraduate	5
Diploma	2

age ranged between 18-41 years. They are from several different industries such as entrepreneurs, education, law, marketing, secretarial and accounting. There are total 3 male and 13 female interviewees. The main respondents in this research are lecturers and PhD students ranging from University Technology Malaysia, University Kebangsaan Malaysia and University Malaysia Pahang. Working professionals were invited due to their expertise on the topic of sustainable development value that could be categorized under opinion leaders. In addition, they are also interested in sustainability of future generation and SDV attracted their attention. Participants for the interview are chosen based on their age range between 18-41 years of age. This age range was highly preferred as they financial independent, hence, their feedback was not constrain and influenced which provide more insight on ways to create SDV awareness in Malaysia.

Creating awareness on sustainable development value: Based on the interview transcripts all 16 interviewees concluded that “Education is the best ways to create awareness on sustainable development value among Malaysian either through introducing in early education or higher education in public and private sector”. One of the interviewees suggested that “The best method to introduce SDV in primary and higher education is through educational text books and disseminating the information pertaining to SDV through research and publications in

Table 5: Ways to create awareness on sustainable development values

Education	Research and journal	Shopping mall event	Non-profit organisation	Government	Advertisement	Parent
Introduce at primary, secondary and tertiary education textbook	Introduce SDV in Economic, social and environmental journal to create awareness	Event at shopping mall nationwide to create awareness	Introduce SDV thru non-profit organisation such as church, non-profit organisation, buddhist association	Rule and policy Introduce by government ensure the private sector introduce and create awareness on SDV similar to corporate social responsibility	Government to advertise on SDV to create awareness thru newspaper, television and magazines	Parents and public sector played an important role to educate their children towards sustainable development value
Seminars	Introduce activity related to SDV at shopping mall nationwide to create awareness					

university level”. “Additional ways includes seminar, publication and research related sustainable development should introduce sustainable development value topic to create awareness.”

Aside from education, all 16 interviewee’s mention that “Parent and organisation is another form of creating awareness on sustainable development value as parent educate their own children and organisation sector incorporate or introduce these values in their organization”. Another interviewee also suggests that “Government plays an important role to ensure SDV awareness is created among nation and it can incorporate in vision 2020”. Some interviewee also highlighted that “advertisement, media and event organize by shopping mall management is another alternative way to create SDV awareness. These shopping mall events and advertisement and media manage to attract huge viewers and SDV is easily conveyed and inculcate upon viewers”. Finally, all interviewees also mention that “non-profit organization and local communities such as church, non-profit and religion association is another ways to create SDV awareness among Malaysian”. Table 5 summarizes the study findings in regard to create SDV awareness among Malaysians.

CONCLUSION

As it is mentioned earlier, sustainable development value is important to inculcate as it supports sustainable development goals. These values can guide policy makers towards Malaysia’s Vision 2020 plan to preserve the beauty of the land, to ensure valuable natural resources are not wasted and the lands must remain productive and fertile, atmosphere is clear and clean, water is unpolluted and the forest resources capable of regeneration, able to yield the needs of the national development. As such this study provides empirical support by identifying ways to create awareness on the topic of sustainable development values in Malaysia. Experts and interviewees suggested that the best method to create sustainable development values is through education. In this

instance, sustainable development values need to be introduced in primary, secondary and tertiary education levels.

As the topic of sustainable development value is new to Malaysia, the findings of this study may act as the guideline for the policy maker in Malaysia to revise the existing policies or to come up with new policies to introduce sustainable development values in Malaysia to ensure future sustainability in order to achieve sustainable development goals.

REFERENCES

Glesne, C., 2006. *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction*. 3rd Edn., Pearson Education, Boston, Massachusetts,.

Kates, R.W., T.M. Parris and A.A. Leiserowitz, 2005. What is sustainable development? Goals, indicators, values and practice. *Environ.*, 47: 8-21.

Leiserowitz, A.A., R.W. Kates and T.M. Parris, 2006. Sustainability values, attitudes and behaviors: A review of multinational and global trends. *Annu. Rev. Environ. Resour.*, 31: 413-444.

Raskin, P., B. Tariq, G. Gallopin, P. Gutman, A. Hammond, R. Kates and R. Swart, 2002. *Great Transition: The Promise and Lure of the Times Ahead*. Stockholm Environment Institute, Stockholm, Sweden, ISBN-13: 978-0971241817, Pages: 99.

Seale, C. and D. Silverman, 1997. Ensuring rigour in qualitative research. *Eur. J. Public Health*, 7: 379-384.

Shepherd, D.A., V. Kuskova and H. Patzelt, 2009. Measuring the values that underlie sustainable development: The development of a valid scale. *J. Econ. Psychol.*, 30: 246-256.

United Nations, 2004. *Implementation of the United Nations millennium declaration*. Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations General Assembly. <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/sgreport2004.pdf?OpenElement>.

Weaver, K. and J.K. Olson, 2006. Understanding paradigms used for nursing research. *J. Adv. Nurs.*, 53: 459-469.