



The Challenges of Green Management Implementation in Primary Schools: A Case Study in Kluang District, Johor

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Abstract

As part of effort to fight against environmental issues, many educational institutions, including primary schools, start to practice green management in the aspects of administration, teaching and learning, and co-curricular activities. However, the implementation of green management at schools is full of challenges. Therefore, this research was conducted to find out the challenges faced by the primary schools in the implementation of green management. A total of five schools in Kluang district that practice green management were selected and the teachers who were involved in green management in the selected schools were interviewed. The interview data were analysed using open coding technique. The findings from the interview indicated that, in general, the challenges faced by schools in the green management implementation can be classified into five main aspects, namely insufficient awareness among pupils, lack of facility, inadequate financial resource, inadequate human resource, and increasing workloads. In addition, there are several suggestions proposed for improvement in green management implementation in order to increase its efficiency, such as environmental friendly building design, seek support from outsiders, promotion of green management, and policy formulation.

Keywords:

green management, primary school, challenges, case study

1 Introduction

The issues related to environment pollution have gained more and more attentions from the society as the adverse effect from the pollution is getting more extreme and directly impacted the society. The recent tragedy of Sungai Kim Kim toxic waste dumping case happened in Pasir Gudang, Southern part of Malaysia, was an example of immediate effect from pollution. The main cause of the tragedy was the due to illegal dumping of chemical substances into Sungai Kim Kim by factories nearby. In that incident, a big number of students, teachers and residents around the polluted site were hospitalized for inhaling toxic chemical gasses and it also caused the closure of schools around that area (Shah & Devi, 2019).

Environmental pollution does not only affect our health and social activities, but also result in the global warming and brings about devastating damage to the ecosystem (Sern et al., 2018). The most appalling impact of global warming is the increase of sea level, causing the sink of several islandic countries, such as the Maldives, Tuvalu, and Kiribati (Letman, 2018). Apart from that, extreme winters and summer weather, worsening drought, more frequency of powerful tropical storm, and reduction of crops yields are also caused by global warming (Mousavi et al., 2011).

Industrial and human activities are actually the major culprit of depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation. Everyone has to confront the serious consequences if pragmatic action is not taken to diminish its negative impacts. There are many ways to deal with the environmental issues, such as promoting awareness towards environmental protection (Iizuka, 2000), reducing the consumption of non-renewable energy (Nadimi & Tokimatsu, 2017), and more importantly, practicing eco-friendly or green management in any organization (Singh et al., 2011). In brief, green management can be defined as the management of an organisation with the aim of preserving and conserving the environment (Pillania, 2014).

Green management is appropriate and very relevant to be implemented in schools, especially in primary schools, because environmental awareness among pupils can be enhanced via green management. The environmental awareness should be instilled to children at the young age in order to allow them to understand the importance of environment protection and how pollution affects flora, fauna and human life (Maleficio, 2018). Within the context of Malaysia, some schools have already taken initiative to integrate green elements in their school management. Some schools, however, do not apply green management yet in the schools due to several factors, such as small number of students and lack of supports from parents. Although green management at schools is beneficial to all quarters, its implementation might be full of challenges. Therefore, this research was conducted to find out what are the challenges faced by schools during the implementation of green management.

2 Green Management in Schools

There are many different terms are used interchangeably with green management. Some researchers (e.g., Karataş (2015)) replace "green management" with "eco-friendly management", whereas others (Banerjee, 2002) use "corporate environmentalism" to represent green management. Although the terms differ, the ultimate goal behind every term is identical – to contribute to the environment preservation and conservation. The term "green management" is more widely used within scientific community. In general, green management can be conceptualised as a process of planning, coordinating and implementing strategies to achieve sustainability in environmental development through continuous development and improvement integrated with organisational goals (Loknath & Azeem, 2017).

Green management is not applied in industrial- and business-based organisations, but also applicable to educational institutions. Similar to other organisations, school consumes big amount of electrical energy, water supply, papers and etc. Inefficient management of a school will induce financial burden because the school has to fork out the limited financial resources to pay for the bills of electricity, water, paper and so on. Although the use of electricity, water and papers is a must for daily operation in a school, it can be efficiently managed in order to reduce its consumption. For example, reuse the used papers, print both sides of paper, and maximise the use of natural light are the simple actions can be taken to reduce the consumption of paper and electricity.

The environment problems can be mitigated by implementing green management and the success of green management is partially influenced by the awareness of people towards environment protection. As we know, environmental problems are attributed to pollutions which are mainly caused by human activities. If the awareness of people is elevated, the human activities that are harmful to the environment will be substantially reduced (Ahmad et al., 2013). In this sense, awareness is regarded as an individual's perception on the importance of environmental issues (Lauwrens, 2019). Determination of environmental awareness is closely related to the knowledge, feelings, views and intentions of an individual towards environment. A high awareness means someone has positive attitude and stronger intention to preserve and conserve environment. A person with a high awareness also tends to support green management as its ultimate goal is to protect the environment. In short, awareness is an important element to ensure the green management can be efficiently implemented in an organisation.

Green management is a crucial strategy to make sure the development of economy and social is sustainable without jeopardising the environment. The practice of green management is not only limited to industrial organisations, schools as a place of dissemination of knowledge must also fully support the green management at school. Green management can be implemented in many aspects, such administration, teaching and learning, as well as co-curriculum and sports. As

an administrator in school and classroom, teachers play an important role in planning, directing, implementing, monitoring and controlling activities that involve green management. The success of green management may bring about a positive impact on the environment, and also to improve the quality of life of the people and future generation.

3 Research Methodology

The present research adopted case study design using qualitative approach. Five primary schools of Kluang District, Johor, that practice green management were involved in the data collection process. The participating schools host over 400 to 900 pupils. In every school, there is a teacher or coordinator who is assigned to take care of the green management in school. The coordinator is in charge of execution of green management policies at school, planning, coordinating and organising activities, such as seminar, gardening projects, competition, teaching and learning projects, related to environment protection.

The coordinators from the participating schools were interviewed concerning the activities to enhance pupils' awareness towards environment protection, actions taken to reduce wastes, energy, water and paper consumption, challenges of green management implementation, and suggestions for improvement in green management. The interview was scheduled from 3rd March 2019 to 14th March 2019 depending on the availability of the participating schools and interviewees.

The interview data were analysed using open coding technique. Within the process of open coding technique, it required thorough reading and re-reading of interview data, and then the common concepts were captured. After that, those identified concepts were grouped into conceptual categories according to their similarities.

4 Findings and Discussion

Green management at school is important to ensure the environment quality is not jeopardised by administrative and teaching and learning activities and the pollution can be minimised. However, there are several challenges faced by schools when it comes to implementation of green management. The challenges of green management implementation were identified through conceptual categories that emerged from the interview transcription. There are five major aspects have been identified which are explained as followed:

A. Insufficient Awareness among Pupils

According to Wu and Wu (2014), awareness (perceived risk and benefit) has a strong relationship with attitude with regards to green management strategies and the likelihood to implement green management strategies. In line with Wu and Wu's statement, it can be asserted that the success of green management depends greatly on the awareness of school community which is composed of administrative

staff, teachers and pupils. The administrative staff and teachers have sufficient level of awareness concerning environmental protection. However, the awareness of pupils is not adequate especially those in Standard One (age seven) to Standard Three (age nine). This can be a great challenge for the school because those pupils do not understand clearly the purpose of green implementation. If Lack of Facility

The implementation of green skill requires well-developed facilities and spaces. According to Abdul Razak et al. (2017), one of the challenges for schools that practice green management is limited spaces. Without sufficient spaces, it is difficult for school to conduct activities, such as they do not understand, it will be difficult to gain full cooperation from those students. Examples of feedback from respondents are shown as follows:

"Cabaran dalam pengurusan hijau, pertamanya adalah kesedaran murid-murid masih pada tahap yang baru (rendah)"

[Challenge in green management, firstly, the awareness of pupils is still at low level]

"Saya rasa kesedaran murid berada pada tahap sederhana. Sebab masih ada murid yang membazir kertas terutamanya dalam pendidikan seni visual."

[I think the pupils' awareness is at medium level. Because there are still some pupils wasting papers especially in the subject of Art and Visual Education.]

"Cabarannya adalah muridnya ramai, jadi untuk mendapatkan pemahaman mereka ia makan masa..... untuk meningkatkan kesedaran mengambil masa sikit lah..."

[its challenge is that there are many pupils, it takes some time to make them understand... it is quite time consuming to enhance awareness.]

"kesedaran murid masih perlu dipertingkatkan dan ditambahbaik..."

[Pupils' awareness still need to be strengthened and improved.]

recycling programme. The outcomes of the analysis indicate that lack of space is considered one of the challenges faced by schools in green management implementation.

"Masalah dari aspek pengendalian barang kitar semula, tempat kami tak cukup besar. Kami hanya terhad pada tempat tertentu sahaja."

[problem with handling recycling materials. The place is not spacious enough. We are limited to certain places only.]

"Respon daripada ibu bapa pun ok, cuma kita takut bila dia bagi kita barang, kita tak ada ruang untuk simpan barangan kitar semula..takut sekolah jadi tempat longgokan sampah pula."

[Respond from parents are quite satisfactory, however, we are afraid that we do not have adequate space to keep the recycling materials given by the parents.. the school might become a dumpsite.]

"Kekurangan sumber merupakan masalah utama."

[lack of resources is the main problem.]

"kalau ingin memperbesarkan program kitar semula, kami tak dapat buat kerana tak ada tempat"

[if we want to enlarge the scale of the recycling program, we are incapable of doing so because we do not have enough place]

"...nak buat projek itu, kawasan lapang sekolah kurang..."

[...want to run the project, (but) insufficient empty space at school]

B. Inadequate Financial Resource

Another barrier for green management practice can be attributed to the lack of financial resources or funding. Lack of funding, either from public or private sources, is regarded as the major reason that jeopardises the execution of any program (see Bourelle (2001)). In the context of green management, continuous funding is a crucial element to ensure the schools have sufficient financial support to conduct programmes related to environmental protection. Based on the interview from some of the participating teachers, lack of financial support is the major challenge faced by the schools that implement green management.

"...ada kekangan sikit (sedikit) dalam mengadakan suatu program. Contohnya, kos untuk membeli tong dan cat. Tapi kami cuba usahakan kewangan adalah terhadap..."

[...there are some constraints in organising programme. For example, money is needed to buy the bucket and paints. But we try to get the financial support.... Financial source is limited...]

"Kami ada masalah besar tentang kewangan. Setakat ini hanya satu NGO mambantu. Ibu bapa tidak sudi mengeluarkan duit untuk buat aktiviti....."

[We have major problem in finance. So far there is only a NGO help out. Parents are not willing to provide financial support to organise activities.]

"Dari segi finiancial ada juga lah masalah. Macam kita nak buat program pun perlukan kewangan juga."

[There is problem in terms of financial aspect. We need money if we plan to conduct programmes.]

C. Inadequate Human Resource,

Human resource or manpower is a critical issue in any organisation because it impacts many aspects, such as productivity, safety, and relationship (Thibodeaux, 2020). In green management, organising any activities or programmes in school require manpower. When there are more people to work on a programme, it can be completed faster. That means, more programmes can be organised without long working hour. In the present research, however, inadequate of human resource is considered a challenge especially green management

implementation, as stated by the participating teachers.

"Kekurangan tenaga manusia merupakan cabaran utama. Walaupun kami minta murid-murid uruskan program kitar semula, tetapi mereka kurang inisiatif"

[lack of human resource is a major challenge. We ask pupils to manage the recycling programme, however, they are lacking initiative.]

"Sesetengah guru memberi komitmen yang baik, tapi ada juga guru yang kurang terlibat kerana mereka pun ada kerja lain."

[Some of the teachers are committed. But some of them are reluctant to get involved because they have other tasks.]

"Sokongan daripada guru-guru lain kurang sikit (sedikit) sebab mereka pun ada kerja lain.."

[support from teachers is not that encouraging because they have their own work to do.]

D. Increase of Workloads

The findings of the present research also reveal that green management implementation increases teachers' workload and this is regarded as a great challenge for the schools. This finding is consistent with the research outcome discovered by Ogura (2010). Ogura asserted that workers who are involved in management tend to have longer working hour as well as more workload and responsibility. Within the context of green management implementation in schools, when the teachers' workload is escalated, they might be reluctant to get involved in green management because their schedules have already been fully occupied with teaching tasks, co-curriculum activities, and managerial works.

"Disebabkan tempat terhad, barang kitar semula perlu dihantar ke kilang kitar semula dengan segera, ini akan menambah beban kerja."

[due to limited spaces, the recycling materials have to be sent to recycling company immediately. This will increase the workload..]

"Sebab jadual kita telah penuh. Jadi kami susah nak mengagihkan masa kalau nak buat program kitar semula.... Kekadang kami terpaksa datang ke sekolah pada hari Sabtu."

[Because our schedule is fully occupied, it is difficult for us to allocate time to conduct recycling programme...Sometimes, we have to come to school on Saturday.]

"Kita pun ada kerja lain nak diuruskan. Kalau nak betul-betul fokus (kepada pengurusan hijau), susah sikit lah..."

[We need to handle other works as well. That is why it is a bit difficult to be focused on (green management)].

"Kekadang nak buat dengan lebih baik, tapi tak dapat dilaksanakan"

kerana pengurusan hijau hanya sebahagian kecil daripada tugas guru. Saya juga terlibat dengan pengajaran....”

[sometimes I wanted to do it better, but I am incapable of doing it because it is just a small part of teacher’s job. I am also involved in teaching...]

”kita kesuntukan masa sebab di sekolah ada banyak banyak program... masing-masing busy dengan schedule masing-masing”

[we are lacking time because there are many other programme in school...everybody is busy with their own schedule.]

5 Suggestions for Improvement

Improving the effectiveness of green management at schools is important to ensure the ultimate goal is achieved. There are many factors influence the effectiveness of green management. For instance, leadership is one of the determinants for green management effectiveness (Chen et al., 2014). Without a committed leader at school, the green activities will not be planned properly, executed efficiently, and monitored thoroughly.

Within the context of present research, several suggestions for improvement in green management have been proposed. Firstly, school building design should integrate green elements which optimises the use of natural light and natural ventilation. In addition, the design should also enable the rain water to be harvested for daily use in school. Environmental-friendly design will help reduce the consumption of electricity and water, and thereby the natural resources can be conserved.

Secondly, supports from teachers, students and administrative staff are undoubtedly essential in green management implementation. However, it is equally important to seek support from the community outside the school. For instance, school can approach parents, companies, government agencies, and non-governmental organisation (NGO) to request assistance in terms of professional advices, financial funding, and manpower support when needed. In most cases, parents and relevant agencies are willing to extend a helping hand.

Thirdly, schools have to be more proactive in promoting green management through proper channels. In order to gain supports from all quarters, teachers, pupils, parents and community should be well informed about the green management in schools and its positive impacts on the environment. If those people understand the purpose of green management, they will give full support to the schools. There are many ways to promote green management to pupils, parents and community, such as organising school open day, seminar and workshop involving parents and community.

Lastly, policies related to green management at school should be formulated by the authorities and apply to the schools. At the moment, there is not policy that stipulates schools to implement green management at schools. Without a clear

policy, green management might not be able to be implemented at schools consistently and systematically. Also, the school principals will not consider green management to be a primary responsibility. Therefore, it is imperative to establish green management policies at school in order to promote sustainable development in terms of economy, social and environment.

6 Conclusion

Several challenges related to green management implementation in primary school have been identified from the interview conducted in this research. One of the main challenges is that, in general, the school pupils are not aware of the importance of environment protection and conservation. Apart from that, the lack of facility, especially insufficient space in school, is also a challenge for the green management implementation. Another identified challenge is concerning financial resource. Schools are usually faced with financial shortage when it comes to organising program related to environment. On top of that, the green management needs people to execute and, therefore, having inadequate staff is another challenge for the green management implementation. This challenge is closely related to another problem, namely increase of workload. Since teachers are burdened with teaching tasks, co-curriculum activities, and administrative works, requesting them to get involved in green management will be substantially adding more workloads to the teachers.

Although the green management at schools is facing several challenges, its implementation can be regarded as satisfactory and supports from school managerial personnel, academic and administrative staff are encouraging. Nevertheless, there are still some rooms for improvement in green management. In order to improve the green management, the school buildings have to be well designed by integrating natural elements into the design. It is simply not enough to gain supports within the school community, school should work hard also to get the supports from outsiders. Besides, promotion of green management has to be more aggressive to enhance the awareness of pupils, teachers, and the society. Last but not least, green policies should be formulated by the relevant authorities to support and improve the implementation of green management at schools.

In conclusion, the purpose of green management implementation at schools is to protect the environment. School is not the only institution that is responsible for environmental protection. Efforts and supports from multiple quarters and people from all walks of life should work hand in hand with schools in order to make green management at school successful and thereby contributing the environment conservation and protection.

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