Teenagers Lifestyle and Greenhouse Effect

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ABSTRACT
Practicing green lifestyle or saving the environment is no more alienated issue these days. The practices adopted in life, no matter how small they are, might significantly give a new definition on how to be a good environmental and energy saving practitioner. Over the decades, concerns are parked on the responsibility of the youth to ignite the idea hence, portrayed it through practices. This paper is aimed to identify the teenagers travelling and at home practices that relate to greenhouse effect. A total of 198 teenagers were involved in this study. The findings show that majority of the teenagers give positive feedback for the at home practices. However, travelling practices indicate a different result altogether.

INTRODUCTION
The climate change, global warming along with greenhouse effect are among the most talked about issues concerning to environment. These issues have been debated and discussed over years particularly concerning the best and fast mode to overcome it. The green lifestyle of the teenagers could be one of the solutions to curb this pressing problem since environmental protection should be everybody’s concern. Each individual in the society including teenagers need to play their roles. It is simply because humans naturally are the main cause of this predicament. More than 100 global scientists agree that global warming plays a large role in the climate change that is wreaking havoc on our environment. It is their conclusion that human activities are major contributing factors, along with other natural phenomena such as global warming related to the burning of fossil fuels such as gas, oil, and methane (Picillo, B., 2006).

Thus, the need to educate the society specifically teenagers in this case is timely so that the problem of greenhouse effect is not further worsening, as human beings and environment are interdependence. Because of its long-term effects, it could bear drastic consequences for future generations. Hence, the education of young people therefore plays a crucial role in grappling with the problem of reducing greenhouse emissions (Lenzen, M. and J. Murray, 2001). Teenagers need to be guided, taught and trained on how best to execute green lifestyle. Home and travelling practices are two areas which are crucial in term practicing green lifestyle.

Literature Review:
There is no solid definition of greenhouse lifestyle since the interpretation varies concerning the cultural aspects over countries. The way people live has affected the environment in many possible aspects. Consequently, certain practices in life or commonly known as lifestyle has contributed significantly towards the environment. A difference in lifestyle, i.e. how people choose to live, be transported and choose our provisions, can have a dramatic impact on the environment (Christensen, P., et al., 1997). Green lifestyles include a collection of practices by which people today try to address an interrelated set of environmental problems: climate change and rising sea levels, air and water pollution, peak oil, and the increasing size of landfills, among others (Lorenzen, J.A., 2012). Thus, teenagers need to continually be reminded on how to go green and practise the green lifestyle. To practice green lifestyle, teenagers especially should be aware on how they can contribute to keep the greenhouse effect at bay through lifestyle thus, circumvent the greenhouse effect.

Educating the people to green lifestyle should start young. Society and parents should first show good practice of green lifestyle to be emulated by the teenagers. At the world level, the World Future Energy Summit (WFES)’s effort must be encouraged. Their “Young Future Energy Leaders” (YFEL) is very interesting. YFEL...
focuses on raising the awareness of students and young professionals in the fields of renewable energy and sustainability (WFES 2011).

Another way of educating the teenagers is to get them involve in competition such as essay writing competition. Rishika Das Roy, a student in Kolkata has been contributing in her own small way to persuade her friends to cut on their lavish lifestyle and prevent themselves from adding to carbon on earth (International, A.N., 2008). Rishika recently won the International Climate Champions contest for writing an essay on the ecology of Sunderbans. Selecting teenagers to promote green lifestyle among teenagers are another diligent way to get the teenagers to practice green lifestyle. In short, teenagers need to have sufficient knowledge over the issue of environment and later we can expect them to practice the green lifestyle.

Increasing urbanization means the demand for transportation is also increasing. People need transportation to get into one place to another faster. They rely on vehicles so much. In the developing world, people have become accustomed to travelling long distances to visit family, go on vacation, and drive to work. Partly because of sprawling suburbs, and partly because cars are fast, easy and conveniently located in our driveways, people also drive to many places that they could easily get to via other means to and it is among the main contributor for the greenhouse effect (Professionals, I.S.o.S. 2008). Thus, the number of the vehicles in our roads and highways has increased drastically. According to the statistic, the number of vehicles in Malaysia has increased between 2002 to 2011 from 12,068,144 to 21,401,269 (Statistik Kendaraan 2013). The increase of the number of the vehicle undeniably contributes to the greenhouse effect. Transportation-related activities account for nearly half of the total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Washington (Earth Day Forecast 2013).

Apart from land transportation, aviation industry also contributes to the environmental problem. Though growth rapidity of the aviation industry has brought forward many variety economic and social benefits, like any other human activity, aviation has adverse environmental consequences that attract mounting public concern (Nicell, J. and J. Cornish, 1996). Thus, there are demanding needs to find alternative ways in order to reduce this problem. Travelling behaviour of the society should constantly be checked and improved when people started taking actions to reduce greenhouse effect. Low carbon society for example is one of initiative can be promoted by policy makers or government to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases. In simple terms, low carbon society (LCS) is a society that consumes sustainable and relatively low-carbon energy as compared to our present day practice to avoid adverse climate change. Hence, conscious efforts need to be taken by community, industry, institution and government to change their behaviour towards energy consumption and supply (Lorenzen, J.A., 2012).

Consumers also contribute to greenhouse effect. The rapid growth of the global economy is always linked to the increasing of consumers’ consumption worldwide. The environmental deterioration caused by over consumption and utilization of natural resources from the consumers is always a concern from the public (Mei, O.J., et al., 2012). For instance, meat and dairy consumption contribute about 18-30% of global greenhouse gas emissions (Greenpeace, I.,). This evidence clearly a wake-up call for humans to be aware that our daily consumption directly and indirectly has contributed to the greenhouse effect. For this reason the society need to be aware of their contribution to the greenhouse effect through consumerism. For this reason, we should promote the green consumerism and green consumption as the ways to promote awareness among the members of society. A study found that government initiative has the most significant influence on green purchase intention among Malaysian consumers (Mei, O.J., et al., 2012). Thus, there are more challenging tasks ahead to get the Malaysian to have sense of volunteerism to green consumerism.

**Background of Study:**

There are several studies on the knowledge and level of awareness of the teenager regarding to this issue. (Leiserowitz, A., et al., 2013) investigated what American teens in middle and high school understand about how the climate system works, and the causes, impacts and potential solutions to global warming. Overall, in Understanding of Climate Change section, generally, American teens about the same or less than American adults about how the climate system works and the causes, consequences, and solutions of climate change. However, American teens have better understanding than adults on a few important measures, for example: 77% of teens understand that the greenhouse effect refers to gases in the atmosphere that trap heat, compared to 66% of American adults.

In Malaysia, (Mei, O.J., et al., 2012) investigated the factors that influence the green purchase intention and to determine the relationships between the factors (determinants) and green purchase intention among the Malaysian consumers. The researchers have found that the most powerful antecedent in affecting the green purchase intention of Malaysia consumers is government initiative followed by environmental knowledge, peer pressure and environmental attitude.

In one of the studies on home practices, residents also try to produce a minimal amount of waste by recycling several objects between them: from used clothing, books and magazines, to pieces of furniture and extra cars (Chitewere, T., et al., 2006). They engage in discussions about their resource use and alternatives to chemical pollutants and non-renewable resources.
Another study including three groups of people found that it is evident from the interviews that many practices are shared by those trying to live more sustainably (Lorenzen, J.A., et al., 2012). People buy less and try to extend the life of what they have. Individuals recycle (cans, plastic, glass, newspaper, junk mail), they use cloth bags, compact fluorescent (CFL) or light-emitting diode (LED) light bulbs, and they avoid kitchen paper products.

With some gaps in the body of knowledge from various researches and studies, the researchers of this study were of the opinion to conduct an investigation specifically on teenagers. More precisely, this study will determine to what extent are the teenagers practice the green lifestyle at home and while travelling.

**Methodology:**

In this study, a survey was conducted to 198 teenagers from several states in Malaysia. The survey consisted of two sections whereby the first section seeks the personal information such as gender, race, age, occupation, income, residential area and state. The second section is geared towards finding the information on the teenagers’ lifestyle and its connection with the greenhouse effect. This too, is divided into two parts.

The first part is about the teenagers’ perspective on their travelling practices and its relation to reducing the greenhouse effect. In this part, seven statements are included. As for the second part, another seven statements included are based on the teenagers’ buying practices which relate to greenhouse effect as well. The survey consists of the five Likert Scales from ‘Strongly Agree’ (5), ‘Agree’ (4), ‘Not Sure’ (3), ‘Disagree’ (2) and lastly ‘Strongly Disagree’ (1). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0 was used as computer software to analyze the collected data.

**Findings:**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the teenagers’ lifestyle with regard to the greenhouse effect. The data shown are based on the statements in the surveys where the representation of data is divided into two parts:

1. **Travelling Practices and Greenhouse Effect:**

   Fig. 1 shows that the majority of the teenagers dislikes car-pooling where 56 of them agree while the other 28 choose strongly agree. Only 26 disagree and 17 teenagers strongly disagree with the idea. However, it can be seen that 71 teenagers are not sure on this take.

   ![Fig. 1: I don’t like car-pooling](image1)

   Most teenagers agree that they prefer using motorbikes or cars to go to class even though the distance is not too far. This is represented by the number of teenagers who choose agree which are 51 teenagers and 44 for strongly agree. Only 32 teenagers strongly disagree and 26 of them disagree with the statement.

   ![Fig. 2: I go to class by motorbikes or cars even though they are not too far to cycle or walk](image2)
A shocking result was found with the statement of ‘I consider public transport as my last resort’ where 103 of them agree with the statement while only 35 disagree with it. This can be viewed in Fig 3.

![Fig. 3: I consider public transport as my last resort in travelling](image)

Referring to Fig 4, 76 of the teenagers did not plan their journey to cut cost. However, 34 of them strongly disagree with the statement while another 29 disagree. A total of 60 teenagers prefer not sure as an answer.

![Fig. 4: I don’t plan my journey in order to cut cost](image)

Fig 5 shows that 65 teenagers strongly agree that they do not turn off engine while stuck in a traffic jam. Another 49 choose agree and only 14 teenagers strongly disagree. 51 teenagers are not sure while the remaining 19 disagree with the statement.

![Fig. 5: I don’t turn off my engine while being stuck in a traffic jam for more than a few minutes](image)

From the overall finding on the traveling practices and the greenhouse effect, it can be concluded that a vast number of teenagers are still being ignorant on the fact that they are undoubtedly contribute to the greenhouse effect from their travelling practices. It is reflected by the refusal of using public transport as priority though extensive campaigns are executed in order to promote car pooling by the government. Only some of them are practicing the green lifestyle as being promoted by the government through media advertisement as well as embedment in Malaysian school syllabus. However, they alone should not be the one bearing the brunt. The increases of urbanization has indirectly spiked up the demand of transportation as well (Professionals, I.S.o.S. 2008). As teenagers, living in this fast pace world requires them to move and work fast particularly for those living in the urban area. Therefore, this might be the reason on why they refuse to walk even for the short distance. It can be simplified that for this Y generation, time matters more as compared to the preserving the environment.
The demands from the society and their hectic daily routine might cause them to neglect those energy saving practices that can help to reduce the greenhouse effect too. Though they are not to be blamed for the gas emission from the vehicles used directly, there are still questions on whether they are entirely equipped with the knowledge that billion of gasoline and tons of carbon dioxide can be saved annually just by practicing car-pooling. This is represented by significant number of ‘Not Sure’ chosen by the teenagers. Though understanding might be there, applying it in the travelling practices is still far-fetched. As mentioned by Das Roy, teenagers need to be equipped with information on this matter (International, A.N., 2008).

2. Home Practices and Greenhouse Effect:

Fig 6 shows significant difference between agree and disagree where majority of teenagers disagree with the statement. This is equivalent to 98 teenagers who disagree that they do not switch off fan/lights when they are not in the area. The result also indicates a small number of agree with 27 teenagers while the other remaining 35 are not sure.

![Fig. 6: I don’t switch off fan/lights when I am not in the area](image1)

When asked whether they set their air-conditioner to very low temperature or not, 59 of them agree while 42 choose strongly agree. In Fig 7, only 26 strongly disagree and 24 teenagers disagree.

![Fig. 7: I set my air-conditioner to a very low temperature](image2)

From Fig 8, quite fair distribution of data is found where 44 of the teenagers agree that they don’t bother save water while bathing. Another 33 strongly agree while 45 of them disagree with the statement. Only 40 chose not sure.

![Fig. 8: I don’t bother save water while taking bath](image3)
Only 26 disagree with the statement of not plugging the electrical appliances when they are not in use while the other 52 strongly disagree with it. A total of 33 teenagers strongly agree and another 37 agree.

**Fig. 9:** I don’t unplug electrical appliances when they are not in use.

In Fig 10, 52 strongly disagree while another 35 disagree with the statement ‘I don’t grow plant in my residential area’. Besides that, 46 of them agree while 25 choose strongly disagree. Only 40 choose not sure as an answer.

**Fig. 10:** I don’t grow any plant in my residential area

From the result, it can be found that majority of the teenagers agree that they switch off the light/fan when not in the area. This signifies high energy consumption awareness on the practices at home in term of using the electricity. However, more than half of the respondents agree that they like setting the air-cond to low temperature. Understandably, explanation is drawn by referring to Malaysian climate and weather itself. With the condition full of humidity and hot climate, there is just a slight chance for them to bare the high temperature for the sake of practicing green lifestyle.

Nonetheless, it would be more prudent to claim that cultural setting does shape the teenagers environmental awareness. Though there is not much of a noteworthy difference in term of saving water while taking bath, it should be noted that the distribution of opinion is quite balance. This might indicate that probably some teenagers do not really understand the concept of environmental saving plus green lifestyle.

On a regular basis, awareness should start at home. Hence, the concept of green lifestyle might not be clearly understood by these teenagers. Some might perceive that environmental saving only involves saving trees and the environment, thus focusing solely of the outdoors elements without concerning the practices of neither saving water nor plug off electrical appliances at home. Though it might sound trivial, indubitably the matter is considered as worrisome.

**Recommendation:**

There are only two main practices were investigated namely the travelling and at home practices. With regards to the finding, it is clearly figured that there is a probability of the environmental concerns and green lifestyles have not yet been fully instigated among teenagers. Thus, some considerations are greatly required to be implemented in teenagers’ lifestyle

**Thorough Education On Real Concept:**

As mentioned, the real concept of saving the environment might not be fully grasped by the teenagers. Therefore, proper education and exposure should be executed to heighten environmental awareness and conservation (Lenzen, M. and J. Murray, 2001). Vital as it is, to expose the teenagers on its applications should
start especially at home through basic daily activities. One needs to understand that avoid buying plastic bags and recycle per say do not justify the real meaning of maintaining our environmental health. It is the core appreciation that matters the most. Teenagers thus, should be taught on the do’s and the don’ts particularly on fuel consumptions while travelling as well as how to handle electrical appliances at home.

Government Role:
The issue of saving the environment definitely circles around the government role. Malaysian government for example, as the matter of fact, has started a campaign on 2011 for all government offices to keep air-cond temperature not low than 24˚C. This campaign aims to extend nature a helping hand as well as to cut electricity bills. Therefore, same order can be applied to Malaysian household in order to reduce electricity bills, thus indirectly cut the energy consumption.

Conclusion:
Throughout this study, the researchers have investigated the home and travelling practice of teenagers with regard of green lifestyle. The findings from this study are very interesting. Beside travelling and home practices, it may seem that teenagers have not fully aware of the greenhouse effect and the results have strong indication that the idea to expose teenagers to the green lifestyle should be strengthened. Interestingly, for travelling practice, majority of them give positive results for travelling. Thus, it shows that teenagers are not totally unaware about green lifestyle but as discussed earlier, more and more efforts need to be taken in order to ensure green lifestyle can be embedded as trend among them.

REFERENCES


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