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Views of Village Development and Security Committee toward Sustainable Rural Development

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to identify the perception of rural administrators, which is Village Development and Security Committee towards sustainable level of Vision Village Movement Village. This study also keens to know factors that affect it. A total of 235 respondents from three states (Selangor, Pahang & Negeri Sembilan) were involved. Data collection process for this study had been conducted for two months. Overall, the respondents highly perceived their village sustainable development. From the Pearson Correlation employed it can be concluded that age and period of staying in the VVM village had significant and positive relationship with perception towards sustainable level.

Key Words: Village development and security committee (VDSC); Vision village movement (VVM) and sustainable level

INTRODUCTION

Development strategy in Malaysia has started since, 1957, whereby this strategy emphasized on planned development. Rural development is one of the focuses placed in this strategy in which Village Vision Movement (VVM) is the planned program initiated by the government to initiate rural development in this country. VVM had been launched by ex prime minister of Malaysia, Tun Mahathir Mohamed in 1996. The main focus of VVM is to cultivate consciousness and development regarding the attitude of rural community in parallel with the government effort to create more attractive, competitive, knowledgeable and developed village. VVM has the ability to create positive attitude and paradigm among the villagers towards development (Balwi, 2005). Efforts to develop rural community were carried out by the government for more than half a century. In their way to cultivate competitive and successful rural community, commitment of village administrator, which is Village Development and Security Committee (VDSC) is highly needed. Rural Economy Development Program for rural community implemented by the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (MMRD) for example, requires high commitment among VDSC.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a range of electronic technologies, which are flexible, adaptable, and capable of transforming organizations and redefining social relations. ICT nowadays is an effective catalyst used by majority of the countries in the world to

bridge the gap between the rich and the poor and the urban and rural community in term of technology changes and development initiatives especially for the purpose of information seeking. ICT can improve rural community economically, socially and educationally and can empower rural poor people and community to lead their own development (Ngcobo & Herselman, 2007; Shibliq & Fielden, 2008). Rural community should be taught the importance of environment since their conciousness towards environment is degrading (Hazell & Lutz, 1998). Sustainable economic and social development in rural areas depends upon creating social and institutional networks, which embed changes within society (Day, 1998). While, Hopkins and McKeown (2002) suggested that education is an essential tool for achieving sustainability in rural life along with the agricultural skills and interests of the rural community (Adil *et al.*, 2005). All these aspects can be concluded into four dimensions, which must be emphasized to support rural sustainable development. These are leadership, attractiveness, education and spiritual, but if the responsible authority, which is VDSC fail to accomplish their tasks, it is difficult to achieve these four significant dimensions (Bahaman *et al.*, 2009). This study was conducted to measure the level of VVM village sustainable development in the eyes of VDSC members. This study also analyzed the factors that influence the perception of rural administrators towards their village sustainable development based on the relationship between selected variables and perception towards VVM village sustainable level.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the purpose of data collection, trained enumerators had been hired. This study had successfully collected 235 questionnaire forms from three states in Malaysia. The questionnaire form was distributed to the respondents and self administered method in filling the questionnaire form was applied. An average of 30 min had been taken by the respondents to complete the questionnaire. Pre-test for this study has been conducted on February, 2008 at the nearest VVM grade A village at Kajang area, which was Sungai Ramal Dalam Village. A total of 13 VDSC members involved in the pre-test. The data collection process was completed in two months starting April, 2008 until May, 2008. To ease the data collection process, the research team had contacted VDSC chairman to determine the date for data collection process. For the analysis, SPSS was used, where descriptive analyses such as frequency, standard deviation and mean were used. For determining any relationship between independent and dependent variables, Pearson Correlation was used (Cohen, 1988).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents profile: Are women given more important roles in village administration matters as demanded by the department of Women Development? Are the VDSC members receive higher education level? Do government staff have more interests in village administration matters? Where do they come from? Table I will provide answers for all of these questions. Data gained revealed that women still are not the main actor of village administration, only 14.0% respondents were women. The majority of respondents stayed in central zone (38.3%), followed by southern (31.9%) and only 29.8% respondents represented east coast zone. Nearly half of the respondents lived in VVM grade C village (46.4%). Results gained concluded that respondents who work on their own are involved in village administration matters more than other job groups (43.8%). There is a possibility that this group of respondents were less tied to the work schedule compared to those who work in public and private sector. More than two fifth of the respondents were among those who had SPM (Malaysia Certificate Education)/SPMV (Malaysia Vocational Education Certificate)/Certificate (44.7%). Table I also signals that only minority of respondents had pre university and university level of education (13.6%). More than three quarter of respondents (78.3%) were members of VDSC.

In term of VDSC experience, do they have enough experience to administer their village? Are the younger generation dominating administration matters in their village or are the “veteran” group dominating it? How long they have stayed in the VVM village? Do they earn high income every month? Table II provides answers for these queries. Results presented conclude that the “veteran villagers” still dominate village administration based on the

Table I: Respondents profile (n=235)

Respondents profile	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	202	86.0
Female	33	14.0
Zone		
Central	90	38.3
Southern	75	31.9
East coast	70	29.8
Village grade		
Grade A	57	24.2
Grade B	69	29.4
Grade C	109	46.4
Job category		
Public sector	57	24.3
Private sector	33	14.0
Work on their own	103	43.8
Unemployed	32	17.9
Level of education		
Primary school	55	23.4
PMR/SRP/LCE	43	18.3
SPM/SPMV/MCE/Certificate	105	44.7
Pre-University/University	32	13.6
Position in VDSC		
Chairman/ Vice chairman	19	8.1
Secretary	17	7.2
Treasury	15	6.4
Members	184	78.3

Table II: Respondents profile

Respondents profile	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	S.D
Age (n=235)			52.61	10.38
≤45 years	67	28.5		
46-55 years	79	33.6		
≥56 years	89	37.9		
Income per month (n=213) (Value in Ringgit Malaysia)			1663.08	1239.85
≤RM1,000	85	39.9		
RM1,001-RM2,000	86	40.4		
≥RM2,001	42	19.7		
Period of staying in VVM village (n=221)			37.10	15.10
≤25 years	57	25.7		
26-45 years	91	41.2		
≥46 years	73	33.1		
Period of holding A position in VDSC (n=209)			7.33	6.09
≤5 years	106	50.7		
6-10 years	62	29.7		
≥11 years	41	19.6		

Table III: Overall perception of VDSC members towards VVM village sustainable level (n= 235)

Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
			3.78	0.34
Low (1 – 2.33)	-	-		
Moderate (2.34 – 3.66)	73	31.1		
High (3.67 – 5)	162	68.9		

respondents age mean score recorded, which was 52.61 years. More than one third of respondents (37.9%) were

Table IV: Perception towards cleanliness and attractiveness aspects (n= 235)

Statement	Absolutely not agree	Not agree	Not sure	Agree	Absolutely agree	Mean
Overall mean for cleanliness and attractiveness aspects						4.08
VDSC organization encourage all the villagers to bring more attractiveness to the VVM village	-	1.7	6.4	68.1	23.8	4.14
I'm emphasizing on this village attractiveness	0.9	-	8.5	66.4	24.3	4.13
I take some initiative to enhance this village attractiveness	-	0.9	6.8	73.2	19.1	4.11
I involve in majority of the program conducted for this village cleanliness and attractiveness	-	0.9	8.9	68.5	21.7	4.11
I'm angry with those who do not care about this village cleanliness	1.7	6.4	10.2	59.6	22.1	3.94

Table V: Perception towards economy aspects (n=235)

Statement	Absolutely not agree	Not agree	Not sure	Agree	Absolutely agree	Mean
Overall mean for economy aspects						3.67
Every household in this village have their own transports like bicycle, motorcycle and car	-	1.7	14.0	57.9	26.4	4.09
Agriculture, industry and services are the main activity of the villagers provide job opportunity to villagers	0.4	3.0	14.5	68.5	13.6	3.92
Entrepreneurship/commercial activities increasing numbers of rural entrepreneurs	-	3.0	23.8	62.6	10.6	3.81
Agriculture, industry and services are the main activity of the villagers	2.1	4.7	18.7	62.1	12.3	3.78
Establishing strategic cooperation with numbers of government and private agencies	-	3.0	23.4	66.4	7.2	3.78
The villagers economy status has been developed out from the poverty level	0.9	9.4	22.6	57.9	9.4	3.66
There are numbers of entrepreneurship courses conducted in this village for the purpose of enhancing this local economy status	3.4	6.0	30.2	52.8	7.7	3.55
There are new/unique sources and products that can be commercialized	0.9	8.9	37.4	47.7	5.1	3.47
There are zero unemployment rate in this village	1.3	17.4	33.6	39.1	8.5	3.36
There are undeveloped land in this village	4.7	16.6	32.3	37.4	8.9	3.29

Table VI: Perception towards leadership aspects (n=235)

Statement	Absolutely not agree	Not agree	Not sure	Agree	Absolutely agree	Mean
Overall mean score for leadership aspects						3.90
I'm satisfied with the VDSC members relationship	-	0.4	4.7	74.5	20.4	4.15
VDSC leaders take care of members charity	-	0.9	7.7	70.6	20.9	4.11
Team spirit in this village VDSC is high	-	0.4	11.1	67.7	20.9	4.09
The way of this village VDSC administration can be accepted by any party	-	1.7	10.6	65.5	22.1	4.08
Generally i'm satisfied with the this village VDSC leadership	-	2.1	8.5	68.9	20.0	4.07
There are cooperation between VDSC and government/private/NGO agencies	-	1.3	9.8	69.4	19.6	4.07
VDSC is alert on changing of government policy	-	1.3	10.2	71.1	17.4	4.05
Members opinion are accepted by all VDSC members in any discussion or meeting	-	1.3	9.4	75.7	13.6	4.02
VDSC has initiative to overcome issues regarding social problem, family problems, drugs addict problems and community unity problem	0.9	3.4	8.5	72.3	14.9	3.97
All VDSC members have equal chances of attending training and courses	2.1	3.4	10.6	70.2	13.6	3.90
There are scheduled program/activity conducted by VDSC for the purpose of changing the mindset and attitude of the villagers	0.9	1.7	14.0	73.2	10.2	3.90
There are effective information dissemination to the villagers	0.9	3.8	14.9	69.4	11.1	3.86
This village leadership provides complete and useable village profile and action plan	0.4	1.7	23.8	60.0	13.6	3.85
There are management of emergency issue such as unexpected programs that must be conducted instantly	0.9	1.7	24.7	63.8	8.9	3.78
There are complete and useable village activity schedule	1.3	4.3	20.0	65.5	8.9	3.77
There are unhealthy relations in VDSC organizations	9.4	36.2	28.1	22.1	4.3	2.76

among those whose age were 56 years and above. More than four fifth of the respondents gained income less than RM2,000 per month. Majority of the respondents had stayed in the VVM village for a period of 26-45 years (41.2%). Mean for staying period in VVM village was 37.1 years, while mean score for holding a position in VDSC was 7.33

years. Slightly more than half of the respondents held the VDSC position for ≤ 5 years.

Sustainable level: To know the sustainable level of VDSC members, seven aspects have been measured, which were attractiveness, economy, leadership, ICT, education, cleanliness and health and spirituality. Respondents were

Table VII: Perception towards ICT importance (n= 235)

Statement	Absolutely not agree	Not agree	Not sure	Agree	Absolutely agree	Mean
Overall mean score for ICT importance						3.34
VDSC encourage its members to enhance their knowledge and skills concerning ICT	-	5.5	20.0	63.0	11.1	3.80
Villagers are easy to get information regarding development happened outside Malaysia through ICT	0.4	3.8	35.3	56.2	4.3	3.60
Villagers able to get lot of information's through ICT devices provided	0.9	4.7	40.4	48.1	6.0	3.54
Majority of youth in this village know to use computer	1.7	9.8	37.9	46.0	4.7	3.42
There are courses/ trainings regarding ICT usage provided by VDSC	2.6	11.9	35.7	41.3	8.5	3.41
Possesion of at least a computer per home at the VVM village	3.8	8.9	35.7	46.0	5.5	3.40
VDSC and the community are able to join computer learning class conducted.	6.8	11.1	31.1	46.8	4.3	3.31
ICT accomodation used wisely by VDSC members and villagers	4.7	12.8	42.6	31.1	8.9	3.27
There are computer training regarding computer management and computer software	6.8	16.6	30.6	40.0	6.0	3.22
Internet used widely by villagers	4.3	13.2	49.4	31.5	1.7	3.13
ICT give negative impact to the villagers	7.2	23.4	29.4	35.3	4.7	3.07
This village has its own website	11.9	23.0	30.2	31.9	3.0	2.91

Table VIII: Perception towards education aspects (n=235)

Statement	Absolutely not agree	Not agree	Not sure	Agree	Absolutely agree	Mean
Overall mean score for education aspects						3.67
There are increasing numbers of this villagers son/daughter who gain the opportunity to continue their study at university level	-	-	11.5	70.6	17.9	4.06
There are long life education program such as reciting Yaasin, <i>fardu ain</i> class and others	-	1.3	8.5	73.2	17.0	4.06
Villagers are open to any program conducted to increase the education level of this village	-	0.9	10.6	76.6	11.9	4.00
There are information on villagers who are successful	0.9	3.0	21.7	66.8	7.7	3.77
Villagers education level is at good level	2.1	2.1	20.0	69.4	6.4	3.76
There are concept of one house/one degree in this village	0.9	5.1	29.4	54.0	10.6	3.69
There are contribution of succesful villagers to the village for conducting community, motivation and other beneficial programs	1.3	6.8	25.5	57.4	8.9	3.66
There are annual educational visit conducted by VDSC	0.9	9.8	29.4	52.8	7.2	3.56
There are no kids in this vilage who do not go to school	10.2	16.2	16.2	43.4	14.0	3.35
There are villagers who have illiteracy problem	10.6	30.2	30.6	25.5	3.0	2.80

Table IX: Perception towards health aspects (n=235)

Statement	Absolutely not agree	Not agree	Not sure	Agree	Absolutely agree	Mean
Overall mean score for health aspects						3.76
I'm emphasizing on the health care aspect to avoid any infectious disease in this village	-	1.3	8.5	66.8	23.4	4.12
I'm very satisfy with the level of cleanliness and health of this village	-	3.8	14.0	68.9	13.2	3.91
Septical toilet is used in this village	-	1.7	19.6	66.8	11.9	3.89
There are cleanliness campaign and tasks to beautify the road, alley, dieth and public places	-	5.1	14.0	70.2	10.6	3.86
There are rural clinics in this village for free treatment for the villagers	3.4	7.2	11.9	56.6	20.9	3.84
Total of the villagers that have cronic disease is low.	2.1	2.6	19.6	69.8	6.0	3.75
Ministry of health always conducting free health check and monitoring the village cleanliness for the villagers	0.9	12.3	16.6	56.6	13.6	3.70
The village drainage system has been serviced systematically	0.9	8.5	21.7	60.9	8.1	3.67
This village waste management has been managed systematically	0.4	8.9	22.1	60.9	7.7	3.66
This village have won "the most clean village" award at the state level	6.0	18.7	31.1	36.2	8.1	3.22

given five options of answer from absolutely not agree to absolutely agree. Majority of the respondents (68.9%) possessed high perception towards their VVM village sustainable level ($M = 3.78$; $S.D = 0.34$) (Table III).

To measure the perception of VDSC sustainable level in term of cleanliness and attractiveness aspects, five items had been measured. Based on the mean score presented in

Table IV, which was from 3.94 to 4.14 from a maximum 5.0, it can be concluded that VDSC members had a positive perception towards their village cleanliness and attractiveness. Majority of VDSC members agreed that their organization had encouraged villagers to bring more attractiveness to their village ($M= 4.14$) followed by those who emphasize on the village attractiveness ($M= 4.13$).

Table X: Perception towards spirituality aspects (n=235)

Statement	Absolutely not agree	Not agree	Not sure	Agree	Absolutely agree	Mean
Overall mean score for spirituality aspects						4.05
I believe that the good and bad that happened to me was determined by God	1.3	0.4	7.2	52.8	38.3	4.26
There are number of religious activities conducted by VDSC and mosque committee for the villagers	-	-	5.1	74.0	20.9	4.16
I'm emphasizing the spirituality aspect to be cultivated among the community especially among the villagers youth	-	0.9	6.4	75.3	17.4	4.09
Conducting safety campaign and activity such as amalan gotong-royong and overcome crimes	-	2.1	8.1	69.4	20.4	4.08
I'm prioritizing others people charity matters	-	0.9	8.9	77.4	12.8	4.02
There are percentage of involvement from gender generations in the program conducted	-	0.4	15.7	75.3	18.5	3.92
There are document on scheduled planning/implementation of spirituality/religious program	0.4	1.3	20.9	69.8	7.7	3.83

Table XI: Relation between selected independent variables and perception towards sustainable aspect using Pearson Correlation

Independent Variables	r	p
Age	0.136	0.037
Period of staying in VVM village	0.134	0.047
Period of holding a position in VDSC	0.098	0.159
Income per month	0.065	0.347

Based on the mean score of 4.09 from maximum mean score of 5.0, it can be concluded that villagers were able to own their own transport like bicycle, motorcycle and car. Data presented also revealed that agriculture and entrepreneurship also had the potential to increase the economy status of the villagers (Table V). The result gained here is in line with studies done by Munasinghe (1994), Matsuoka *et al.* (1998) and Roseland (2000), where they emphasized on the economy aspects as one of the tools to achieve sustainable development.

To reveal perception on sustainable level from leadership aspects, 16 items had been measured (Table VI). There were three items recorded those high perception towards leadership aspects in VVM village, which were "I'm satisfied with VDSC members relationship" (M= 4.15), followed by "VDSC leaders take care of its member charity" (M= 4.11), while "team spirit in this village is high" recorded the third highest mean score, which was 4.09. Leadership aspects is highly needed for sustainable development as stressed by Uphoff (1992) and Shorthall and Shucksmith (1998) in their study that revealed that leadership aspect is important in order to create participative institution thus create positive relationship between leaders and local institution members. Result gained signals that there were healthy leadership and relationship among VDSC members in VVM village. A positive VDSC leadership proved to produce positive relationship among the VDSC members. This is based on the high perception recorded on items measuring VDSC members relationship, VDSC members team spirit, acceptance of VDSC way of administration and satisfaction on VDSC leadership, while items measuring unhealthy relationship in VDSC members recorded lowest perception.

Do the rural administrators admit the importance of ICT for their village development? For the purpose of knowing VDSC perception of importance of ICT, 12 items had been measured. From the mean score recorded (2.91 to 3.80 from maximum 5.0 mean score) ICT was perceived moderate to high in term of their importance for the development of their village among the VDSC members. Three statements that recorded the highest mean score were "VDSC encourage its members to enhance their knowledge and skills concerning ICT" (M= 3.80), "Villagers are easy to get information regarding development happened outside Malaysia through ICT" (M= 3.60) and "Villagers able to get lot of information through communication devices provided" (M= 3.54). The result gained here is in line with studies completed by Bhatnagar (2000), Singh (2006) and Mathur and Ambani (2005), where they emphasized on ICT as one of the mediums to achieve rural development. Results also indicated that statement of "This village has its own website" recorded the lowest mean score, which was 2.91.

There are 10 items to measure education aspects. Table VIII reveals that statement of "There are increasing numbers of this villagers son/daughter, who gain the opportunity to continue their study at university level" and "there are long life education program such as reciting Yaasin, fardu ain class and others" recorded the highest mean score, which was 4.06. Enhancing educational VVM villagers educational level seems to be possible since more than four fifth of the respondents (88.5%) agree and absolutely agree that they were open to any program conducted to increase the education level of this village and this is pertinent with a study done by Sandhu *et al.* (2005), where he stressed rural community should be motivated to

participate more on educational courses as a key to achieve development. These three statements reflect the importance of education for sustainable development and this is in line with a study accomplished by Van Crowder *et al.* (1998), where he found that education plays an important role in preparing community to make productive contributions either to their places or country while Ng *et al.* (2006) stated that education will increase people's awareness of the economic, political, social, cultural, technological and environmental forces, which foster or impede sustainable development. Another important thing was to enhance educational level of VVM villagers because of the lowest mean score recorded by the statement of "there are villagers who have illiteracy problem" which was 2.80.

To measure perception towards sustainable level from health aspects, ten items had been measured. Table IX signals that the highest mean score recorded by the statement of "I'm emphasizing on the health care aspect to avoid any infectious disease in this village" (M= 4.12), while the highest percentage recorded by those who agreed with the statement of "there are cleanliness care and effort to beautify the road alley, ditch and public places" (70.2%). From the overall mean recorded (3.22 to 4.12 from maximum mean score of 5.0) it can be considered that perception of the VDSC members towards health aspects was ranging from moderate to high and this suits with studies done by Corvallan *et al.* (1999) and Rae (2006), while Berman (2000) in his study concluded that the importance of health sustainable development strategies and significant existing knowledge and experience should proceed vigorously.

From the result presented in Table X the highest mean score recorded by the statement of "I believe that the good and bad that happened to me was determined by God" (M= 4.26) followed by statement of "there are number of religious activities conducted by VDSC and mosque committee for the villagers" (M= 4.16), while the third highest score recorded by the statement of "I'm emphasizing the spirituality aspect to be cultivated among the community especially among the villagers youth" (M= 4.09). The spirituality aspect is highly recommended to be intensified as it has been proved by a study done by Ellor *et al.* (1999). Aspect on planning and implementation of spirituality and religiosity program should be emphasized in the VVM village since the statement of "there are document on scheduled planning/implementation of spirituality/religious program" indicates the lowest mean score of 3.83.

Relationship between selected independent variables and sustainable aspects: Correlation Pearson was applied to determine the relationship between sustainable aspects and selected independent variables such as age, period of staying in VVM village, period of holding a position in VDSC and income gained per year. Table XI indicates that there were significance relationship between sustainable aspects with two variables, which were age ($p= 0.037$) and period of staying in VVM village ($p= 0.047$).

The highest relationship occurred between sustainable aspects and age ($r = 0.136$); this means that there were significant and positive relationship. There is a possibility that the older members had more positive perception on sustainable aspects and this is pertinent with what had been done by Smith *et al.* (2004) and Hai *et al.* (2008). Table XI also indicates that there were significant and positive relationship between period of staying in VVM village and sustainable aspects ($r= 0.134$), while period of holding a position in VDSC ($r= 0.098$) and income per month ($r= 0.065$) seem to have positive and weak relationship with sustainable aspects and this is in line with a study done by Due (1987).

CONCLUSION

Generally, majority of respondents were male, possessed lower education, from lower income group and were among those who called "senior villagers". Overall, majority of the respondents studied have high perception towards the seven aspects of VVM village sustainable development. Based on the overall mean score of 4.08 from maximum 5.0, the cleanliness and attractiveness aspects were found to be the highest sustainable aspects perceived by the respondents. Thus, related agencies such as MRRD, DCD and INFRA can focus on the enhancing this aspect. Efforts to promote cleanliness and attractiveness in the VVM village should be intensified.

From the data gained, ICT aspects were the lowest aspects perceived by the respondents (based on the overall mean 3.33 from maximum 5.0). The importance of ICT aspects should be promoted among the VVM villagers. Computer courses, number of ICT centre and ICT tutors should be placed more at the VVM village. Results of the study reveal that two factors, which were age and period of staying in the VVM village have significant and positive relationship with perception towards sustainable development. Efforts must be doubled to encourage the younger generation and those who are new in the VVM village to get involve in the village administration matters. This is important to ensure the quality of future village leadership can be sustained thus contributing towards the VVM village development.

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