

## COMPLETION REPORT

### **Comparison of the Level of awareness towards river protection and rehabilitation between Malaysian and Japanese by means of contingent valuation method**

How Tion Puay(+1)

Senior Lecturer

River Engineering and Urban Drainage Research Centre

Universiti Sains Malaysia

The original objective of this research is to reveal the difference in the level of awareness in river protection and rehabilitation between Malaysia and Japan by taking Melaka River (Melaka, Malaysia) and Kamo River (Kyoto, Japan) as study case. However, the study has been hampered by COVID pandemic due to travel restrictions. Therefore, the original objective of the study has been modified to focus on local study of Melaka River in Malaysia and compare the findings with previous Japanese research work. In this study, a questionnaire survey was conducted to assess the river awareness and factor affecting the willingness to pay (WTP) for the improvement of water quality in Melaka. The questionnaire survey was conducted along Melaka River and within 3 km radius from the river mouth. The contingent valuation method was applied to explain the factors influencing the residents' WTP. This study found that although most of the respondents were aware of the river rehabilitation and beautification work, results showed that age is a significant factor in determining the WTP for the water quality improvement. Although not directly related to river awareness, Sakurai et al. (2015) also observed that age is a factor influencing the willingness to contribute to environmental conservation activities in Yokohama, Japan. This shows that age is a significant factor in determining one's awareness towards nature in both countries. This study also found that income is another significant factor that affects the WTP for water quality improvement in Melaka River. Factors such as education level, occupation, and awareness on river rehabilitation work were found to be insignificant to affect the WTP for water quality improvement in Melaka River, despite being initially hypothesized as important that will affect the WTP. Besides that, the number of household member and number of dependent members in the family also did not affect the WTP. It was also found that perception on river water quality also did not affect the respondent's WTP for water quality improvement. Respondent's resident building UNESCO status, duration of residence and distance of resident building to the nearest river front were found to be insignificant in influencing the willingness to contribute to the improvement of Melaka. This findings in this study can be used by stakeholders to obtain an insight on the public perception on river rehabilitation in Melaka River and promote public participation in river rehabilitation and beautification work in Melaka River. (Reference: Sakurai, R., Kobori, H., Nakamura, M. and Kikuchi, T., 2015. Factors influencing public participation in conservation activities in urban areas: A case study in Yokohama, Japan. *Biological Conservation*, 184, pp.424-430)

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