



Student Awareness and Involvement in Green Practices through a Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Research on green practices is crucial in the education system as it promotes environmental preservation and sustainability. However, community awareness and involvement in implementing green practices remain insufficiently discussed in depth. Thus, this study focuses on a systematic literature review (SLR) of past research related to student awareness and involvement in green practices in Malaysia. In addition, the study identifies research design trends, methodologies, and instruments used, while analyzing main findings and identifying research gaps to propose recommendations for future research. A descriptive document analysis design was employed based on a systematic literature review using the Google Scholar search engine. Research articles meeting the selection criteria were selected within a five-year period from 2021 to 2025. The article selection process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flow chart process. Subsequently, the analysis encompassed aspects of research background, problem statements, methodology, and past study findings. The results identified nine articles that met the selection criteria. However, these articles focused on key keywords such as green practices, awareness, and involvement. Findings indicate that students' level of knowledge regarding green practices is high, and students are aware of the importance of sustainability. Nevertheless, a gap exists between students' knowledge and practice, where the knowledge they possess does not necessarily translate into green practice actions. Furthermore, the need for contextual interventions such as composting practices, hands-on activities, and green campus programs showed positive impacts on student involvement. Policy support elements and physical environment infrastructure were also found to play vital roles in fostering a sustainable culture. Overall, these findings demonstrate that students in Malaysia possess high awareness of environmental issues, although their involvement in green practices remains non-comprehensive. As quantitative research approaches dominate current studies, it is recommended that longitudinal, qualitative, and community action approaches be expanded to identify new issues related to dynamic green practices in Malaysia.

Keywords: Green Practices, Awareness, Involvement, Systematic Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

Environmental sustainability is increasingly becoming a priority in global and national educational discourses following the significant impacts of climate change, natural resource exploitation, and widespread pollution. Education is regarded as a strategic medium to nurture proactive, responsible, and responsive citizens capable of taking action regarding sustainability issues in this modern era. At the international level, UNESCO (2017), through the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) framework, emphasizes the need to develop students' competencies in making sustainable decisions, thinking systemically, and acting collaboratively to address global challenges.

In the context of Malaysian education, various efforts have been mobilized to embed sustainability values into the education system. The Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013–2025, developed by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2013), recognizes sustainable education as a key component in building holistic human capital, while the National Education Policy underscores the importance of shaping student character in

alignment with environmental values. Initiatives such as the Sustainable School program (Sekolah Lestari), Green Campus, and sustainability-infused Geography curricula have been established to stimulate student involvement in green practices. However, these initiatives still require comprehensive empirical evaluation to assess their success and effectiveness.

This situation raises an important question in this study: to what extent do students truly possess awareness regarding the importance of environmental sustainability and actively engage in green practices, rather than merely holding theoretical understanding? Therefore, the need to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of green educational approaches in shaping student awareness and involvement is highly emphasized.

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

Environmental awareness and student involvement in green practices represent crucial elements in fostering a durable sustainability culture within educational institutions. In supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4 and SDG 13), various initiatives have been implemented by educational institutions in Malaysia to encourage students to adopt sustainable lifestyles, such as the Sustainable School program, Recycling Campaigns, No Plastic Days, tree planting, green campus programs, as well as water and energy conservation activities in schools and higher education institutions. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these efforts requires a thorough evaluation based on empirical evidence and prior research findings. Systematic reviews regarding student awareness and involvement in green practices remain limited and sparsely debated. Thus, this study was conducted using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to evaluate research patterns, outcomes, and gaps related to student awareness and involvement in green practices.

Objectives of the Study

This study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To provide a systematic literature review of research related to student awareness and involvement in green practices in Malaysia.
2. To identify trends in research design, methodologies, and instruments used in previous studies.
3. To analyze major findings and identify research gaps to provide recommendations for future research.

AKAP Model

The focus of this study centers on two main pillars: student awareness and involvement in green practices in Malaysia. One model addressing these two pillars is the AKAP (Awareness–Knowledge–Attitude–Practice) Model, introduced by Evenson in 1997 (Vecchio et al., 2023). This model is a theoretical framework frequently utilized in research related to behavior change, particularly in health, environmental, and sustainability education contexts. Vecchio et al. (2023) argue that this model posits that awareness leads to increased knowledge, which subsequently influences attitudes and ultimately drives practice rooted in values and understanding.

The AKAP Model functions in this study to explain the sequential relationship between students' awareness of environmental issues and the green practices they execute. The awareness level involves students' sensitivity toward issues such as pollution, climate change, and the importance of natural resource preservation. This awareness serves as the initial trigger for enhancing students' knowledge regarding actionable measures, such as 3R practices (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), composting, and prudent energy usage.

Knowledge acquired formally through curricula and informally through experience, media, or community plays a key role in shaping positive attitudes toward sustainability. This attitude encompasses cognitive dimensions (believing green practices are essential), affective dimensions (feeling environmental responsibility), and conative dimensions (desire to act). When these attitudes are ingrained, students tend to translate values and understanding into concrete practices, such as participating in green campus programs, segregating solid waste, or conserving water and electricity.

However, results from the systematic literature review indicate that the logical chain between awareness, knowledge, attitude, and practice does not occur linearly and automatically. Instead, mediating factors such as infrastructure facilities, school culture, peer influence, and institutional policies determine the extent to which practices can be realized consistently. For instance, several articles in the SLR, namely studies by A. Rahaman and Abdul Rahim (2021) as well as Mapa and Chong (2021), showed that although students possess good knowledge and positive attitudes, their green practices remain at a moderate level due to environmental constraints and a lack of systematic encouragement.

The AKAP Model in this study serves not only as a theoretical framework explaining the process of student green behavior formation but also as a foundation for evaluating the effectiveness of sustainable education programs in educational institutions. It provides scope to identify the intervention levels requiring emphasis whether at the awareness level, knowledge enhancement, attitude formation, or practice reinforcement. Thereby, more practical, strategic, and holistic green education approaches can be developed, aligning with the principles of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) advocated by UNESCO (2017).

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive document analysis design was utilized based on a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) analysis. This SLR aims to synthesize and analyze past research concerning student awareness and involvement in green practice implementation across all educational institution levels, including primary, secondary, and higher education. The database utilized in this section was Google Scholar, with searches conducted from January 2026 through June 2026. The study search strategy followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) guidelines.

PRISMA Guidelines

This SLR systematic review was conducted guided by PRISMA, which serves as a benchmark for high-quality literature reviews due to its rigorous, detailed process involving large volumes of data. The advantage of PRISMA lies in its transparency, consistency, and high standards in reporting qualitative research through standardized processes guided by Page et al. (2020). This process is systematic, adhering to clear procedures to yield reproducible results usable by other researchers.

PRISMA assists authors in identifying research outcomes relevant to study objectives through three sequential processes: identification, screening, and eligibility (Gillath & Karantzas, 2019). These three phases encompass comprehensive search strategies based on keywords, database selection, and varied search techniques to identify appropriate articles or references. Furthermore, focus is accorded to criteria for selecting suitable articles for inclusion in this SLR.

Systematic Search Strategy

Three main phases constitute the systematic search strategy: identification, screening, and eligibility. The primary database utilized for literature retrieval was Google Scholar. The database search was executed on June 15, 2026. The search string was systematically constructed using Boolean operators (AND, OR) to combine key parameters aligned with the review objectives:

("green practices" OR "environmental sustainability") AND ("awareness" OR "knowledge") AND ("involvement" OR "practice" OR "participation") AND ("students" OR "school" OR "university") AND "Malaysia"

Identification

In the first phase, article searching from prior studies was performed using the Google Scholar database, accessible via standard web browsers. This database was selected due to its accessibility and free usage. This study utilized Google Scholar as the primary search database because the platform maintains extensive, comprehensive coverage of academic literature. Yasin et al. (2020) asserted that Google Scholar successfully

retrieves approximately 96% of primary articles used in systematic literature reviews, demonstrating its reliability as an academic search source.

Additionally, Google Scholar indexes diverse publication types including journals, conference proceedings, dissertations, and academic reports relevant to the research scope. Hence, utilizing Google Scholar is adequate and appropriate to support this systematic literature review, particularly when accompanied by systematic screening procedures and explicit inclusion/exclusion criteria. Initial filtering was executed manually using database search limits (publication year, language, and document type).

Retrieved data were exported to Microsoft Excel 365 for further title and abstract evaluation. Records failing to meet specified criteria such as publication within the last five years (2021 to 2025) or lack of relevance to green practices were systematically excluded. A total of 9,460 article matches were retrieved for the search query 'green practices', of which 5,740 records were published prior to 2021. Utilizing the 'sort by relevance' feature on Google Scholar, 3,645 articles unrelated to the study topic were rejected. The remaining records carried forward to the next screening stage totaled 75 articles.

Screening

The study subsequently employed a keyword-based systematic search strategy. Precise keyword selection during this phase was critical to identifying articles satisfying research objectives. Article searches involved general keywords such as 'green practices', 'education', 'awareness', and 'involvement' on Google Scholar. Using general keywords ensured the search process captured diverse studies directly related to the core focus. These keywords were selected as they represent key elements: green practices in educational contexts, alongside student awareness and involvement levels toward environmental sustainability. Furthermore, general keywords facilitated broader coverage of relevant articles across various educational institution types (schools, vocational colleges, universities). This approach aligns with systematic search methods emphasizing objective-aligned keywords. A total of 39 matching records were excluded for failing keyword criteria. Following this filtration, 36 article records advanced to the eligibility phase. Table 1 outlines the screening criteria utilized.

Table 1: Criteria Used for Article Screening

Criteria	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Language	Malay and English	Languages other than Malay and English
Publication Year	2021 to 2025	2020 and prior
Population & Setting	Primary, secondary, TVET, or tertiary students in Malaysia	Non-student populations, general public, or studies conducted outside Malaysia
Relevance	Must contain results or data on green practices, education, awareness, or involvement	Green practices in building construction, green technology production, sustainable neighborhoods, and delivery
Thematic Focus	Empirical data on student green awareness, knowledge, attitude, or involvement	Green construction technology, industrial manufacturing, sustainable architecture, or commercial delivery
Document Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles and primary empirical studies	Dissertations, theses, magazine articles, book chapters, abstract-only/citation records

Eligibility

Eligibility represents the third phase, where authors manually examined retrieved articles to ensure all post-screening records conformed to established criteria. Thirty-six articles reached this phase. Essential information including titles, abstracts, and main contents was scrutinized to confirm alignment with inclusion parameters

and suitability for addressing study objectives. Twenty-seven articles were excluded for failing predefined criteria. Through qualitative content analysis, key themes were identified across nine articles pertinent to environmental awareness and green practices in education. The final article count evaluated for quality assessment was nine articles (see Figure 1).

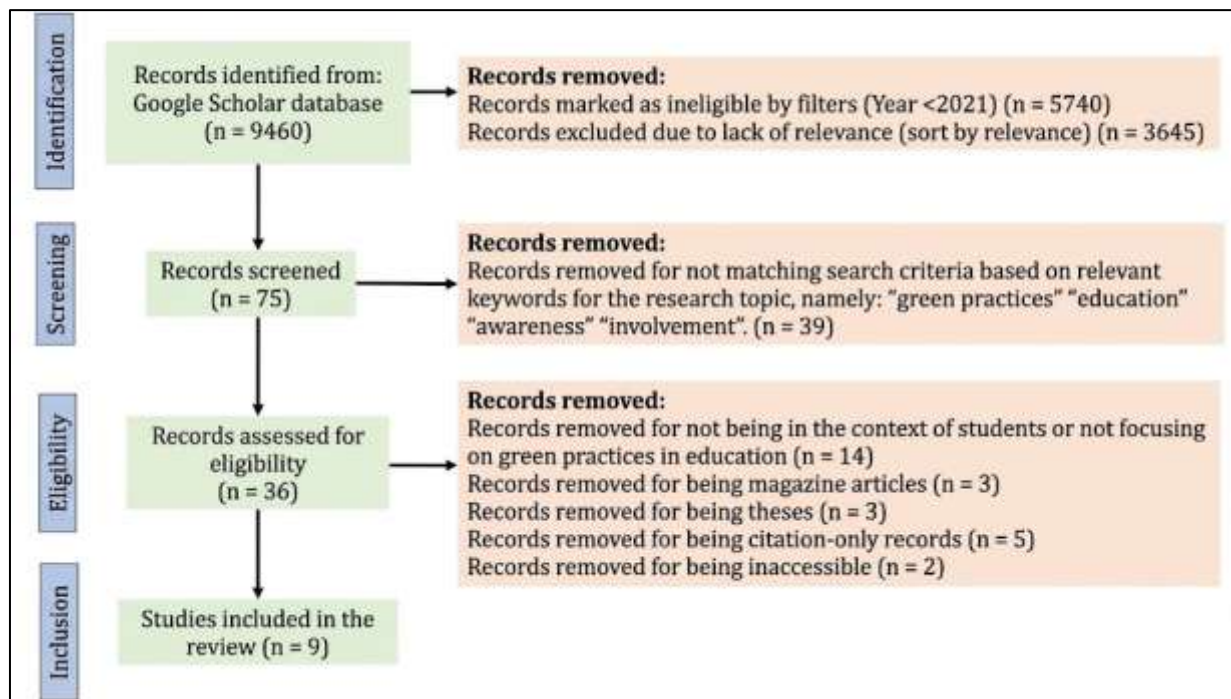


Figure 1: Article Screening Process Using the PRISMA Method

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The studies analyzed in this review demonstrate profound concern through nine articles focusing on educational institution students across secondary schools, vocational colleges, polytechnics, and universities. These studies employed diverse methodological approaches to understand the dynamics between environmental knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

The findings and discussion center around the three primary objectives of the study:

(a) To provide a systematic literature review of research related to student awareness and involvement in green practices in Malaysia. Findings indicate that most studies focused on student knowledge, awareness, and involvement levels concerning environmental sustainability across various educational institutions. Overall, a majority of studies reported that students possess high awareness and knowledge levels regarding green practice importance, such as recycling, energy conservation, and waste management (Haziqah et al., 2022; A. Rahaman & Abdul Rahim, 2021). Nevertheless, actual student involvement in executing green practices remains moderate and inconsistent (Mapa & Chong, 2021; Sanat & Khoiry, 2024). This scenario highlights a persistent gap between student awareness and practice despite numerous green education programs implemented across Malaysian educational institutions. A summary of these articles is provided in Table 2 below:

Findings for the second objective identifying trends in research design, methodology, and instruments used reveal that quantitative approaches were the dominant research design. Most researchers utilized survey methods via questionnaires as primary instruments to measure awareness, knowledge, attitude, and practice levels (Haziqah et al., 2022; Mohamad et al., 2022; Tajuddin & Wahid, 2025). Data analysis predominantly involved descriptive and inferential statistics such as ANOVA, Spearman correlation, and t-tests. Additionally, several qualitative studies and conceptual reviews were utilized to gain deeper insight into sustainability issues (Tang & Azman, 2024; Zainal et al., 2023). Employing diverse methodologies provided a comprehensive overview of factors influencing student green awareness and involvement.

Table 2: Summary of Study Findings from Screened Articles

No.	Author(s)	Study Title	Design	Sample	Research Focus	Main Findings & Implications
1	Yusoh et al. (2022)	The Effect of Green Practice Activities on the Understanding of Green Technology Topics	Experimental design with pre- and post-tests to evaluate green activity intervention effectiveness.	Secondary school students in Geography subject.	Measure impact of green activities on understanding green technology.	Significant increase in student understanding post-intervention. Implication: Government and educational institutions should strengthen regulations emphasizing green practices in PdP.
2	Haziqah et al. (2022)	Level of Green Practices Among UKM Undergraduate Students	Quantitative design via online questionnaire with descriptive and inferential analysis (ANOVA, Spearman correlation).	350 UKM undergraduate students across various programs and academic years.	Evaluate knowledge, attitude, and green practice frequency among university students.	High knowledge and attitude levels, but green practice frequency remains moderate. Implication: Reinforce green awareness policies and facilitate practical daily application.
3	Zainal et al. (2023)	Issues and Challenges in Enhancing Sustainable Diet Practices Through Climate Change Education	Conceptual review study based on current literature survey.	No sample data (literature analysis).	Analyze educational challenges in enhancing low-carbon diet practices in schools.	Lack of teacher understanding and environmental barriers hamper climate education effectiveness. Implication: Strengthen climate awareness policies and provide teacher training.
4	Tang & Azman (2024)	Enhancing Environmental Awareness Through Public Awareness Programs	Qualitative case study design using expert interviews as primary data source.	Three experts (professors and agricultural industry specialists).	Examine public awareness program impact via composting on school student understanding.	Composting as a hands-on approach demonstrates strong potential to boost waste management awareness. Implication: Promote experiential programs like composting in school green curricula.
5	Mohamad et al. (2022)	Awareness of Plastic Bottle Waste Management Among Vocational	Quantitative design using questionnaires with descriptive	Vocational College students across Malaysia.	Evaluate VC student awareness regarding plastic bottle	Student waste management awareness is at a moderate level; practices remain low despite positive attitudes.

		College Students in Malaysia	and inferential statistics.		waste management.	Implication: Strengthen green policies in TVET by reinforcing waste management practices.
6	Tajuddin & Wahid (2025)	Student Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice in Malaysia's Transition to a Low-Carbon Industrial Nation	Survey design; questionnaires analyzed via descriptive statistics and t-tests.	358 UTHM students from diverse academic backgrounds.	Assess student readiness toward sustainable development and low-carbon practices.	High knowledge, attitude, and practice levels; gender influence on KAP was insignificant. Implication: Enhance green regulations empowering low-carbon skills in TVET institutions.
7	Mapa & Chong (2021)	Student Knowledge and Recycling Programs at SM Datuk Peter Mojuntin	Survey design with Google Form questionnaires and qualitative observations.	320 Form Four students via simple random sampling.	Assess student awareness, knowledge, and involvement in recycling programs.	Students are aware of recycling importance but do not practice it consistently. Implication: Strengthen recycling programs via NGO and local authority partnerships.
8	Sanat & Khoiry (2024)	A Study on Green Campus Awareness and Practice at Polytechnic Malaysia	Survey design via questionnaires evaluating 17 awareness factors.	Students from 7 Malaysian polytechnics involved in UI GreenMetric evaluation.	Assess awareness and green campus practice implementation at polytechnics.	Awareness and practice levels are moderate; action plans proposed for institutional improvement. Implication: Strengthen institutional green policies and action plans in polytechnics.
9	A. Rahaman & Abdul Rahim (2021)	Recycling Knowledge and Practice Among Students of Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris	Survey design with questionnaires; SPSS correlation analysis.	376 UPSI students across diploma to master's levels.	Assess relationship between student recycling knowledge and practice levels.	Knowledge and practice levels are high, but correlation between them is weak ($r = 0.141$). Implication: Strengthen motivational campaigns to empower students to adopt sustainable lifestyles.

Findings for the third objective analyzing main findings and identifying research gaps for future study recommendations show that most research remains concentrated on student awareness and knowledge rather than continuous involvement measurement. There is a paucity of longitudinal studies assessing long-term student behavioral changes, alongside limited exploration of emotional factors, intrinsic values, and external community influences such as parents, NGOs, and local authorities (Zainal et al., 2023; Sanat & Khoiry, 2024). Furthermore, the majority of studies relied solely on quantitative approaches without integrating qualitative data capable of explaining students' authentic live experiences in carrying out green practices. Consequently, future studies are encouraged to utilize mixed-methods, action research, and longitudinal designs to gain deeper insight into factors

influencing sustainable culture formation among students. In addition, discussion emphasizes methodological trends, factors influencing green practices, and identified research gaps.

Regarding awareness of green practices, most studies indicate that students exhibit high levels of awareness and knowledge concerning environmental issues and green practices. Studies by Haziqah et al. (2022), A. Rahaman and Abdul Rahim (2021), as well as Tajuddin and Wahid (2025) found students possessed good knowledge and positive attitudes toward green practices and low-carbon development. Mohamad et al. (2022) revealed Vocational College students possessed moderate awareness of plastic waste management. Additionally, Mapa and Chong (2021) noted students understood recycling importance but lacked consistent practice. These findings underscore the persistent gap between awareness and actual execution among students.

Regarding student involvement in green practices, engagement in sustainability activities varied based on institution type and implemented programs. Sanat and Khoiry (2024) indicated polytechnic student involvement in green campus programs remained moderate. Conversely, Yusoh et al. (2022) demonstrated that hands-on activities in green technology topics enhanced student understanding and involvement more effectively. Tang and Azman (2024) similarly stressed that practical approaches like composting programs boost student awareness regarding waste management and environmental sustainability. This underscores that experiential learning approaches are superior in fostering active student participation.

Regarding influencing factors and research gaps, findings demonstrate that green education effectiveness is governed by institutional policy, infrastructure facilities, administrative support, and external community involvement (Mohamad et al., 2022; Sanat & Khoiry, 2024). Zainal et al. (2023) emphasized that green education must encompass lifestyle dimensions, critical thinking, and climate change education rather than focusing exclusively on physical actions like recycling. Methodologically, most studies favored survey-based quantitative approaches, while qualitative and longitudinal investigations remain sparse. Future research should adopt holistic, continuous frameworks to solidify student green awareness and involvement.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this Systematic Literature Review demonstrates that student awareness of green practices in Malaysia is high; however, actual involvement in practicing sustainable lifestyles remains inconsistent. Findings reveal that while students possess sound environmental knowledge, it does not automatically translate into concrete daily actions. Furthermore, practical and experiential learning approaches such as hands-on activities, composting, and green campus programs were found to be more effective in driving student involvement compared to purely theoretical methods. Theoretically, these findings support the AKAP Model emphasizing sequential linkages between awareness, knowledge, attitude, and practice. Practically, the review carries clear implications for educational institutions to strengthen policies, infrastructure, and green education programs systematically. Nevertheless, this review has limitations: most analyzed articles utilized survey-based quantitative methods with limited longitudinal or deep qualitative insights. Furthermore, primary reliance on Google Scholar may restrict access to specific published literature. Future research should embrace mixed-methods, action research, and longitudinal approaches to monitor behavioral shifts continuously while exploring external influences such as families, communities, and NGOs in embedding a sustainable culture among students.

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