

Construction of Environmental Knowledge in Women's Everyday Life: An Exploration Study on a Chinese New Village in Malaysia

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The purpose of the study is to explore the process of women connecting their living environment, dynamically construct their daily environmental knowledge for survive and living. The study also draw the outline and characteristics of this environmental knowledge.

The study adapt the path of thick description and interpretation based on social construction and adult learning theories. The study chose Sungai Chua New Village in Selangor State of western Malaysia as the study field, selected 15 women that borned before 1957 (the year of Malaysia Independenece, age from 61 to 93) and different job careers of tin mine, rubber, agriculture and livestock as interviewees. Data is collected by deep interview, participatory observation and analysis of historic documents.

The results showed the environmental knowledge constructed through different age of women is a hybrid integration of science, experience, value and emotion. There are three type of this knowledge: scientific knowledge of earning a living, experiential knowledge of supporting daily life and interagral knowledge of maintaining life quality. The characteristic of scientific knowledge is utilitarian and efficiency-oriented and mechanical operational; experiential knowledge is learnbed by trial-and-error experience to find the solutons to live with the environment sustainably. interagral knowledge is co-constructed by social structure, demand of living and personal biography and shaped by two path of knowledge construction: "practice makes perfect" non-reflective path and reflective path. The study also found women can upgrade their ability of environmental adaption of through the strategies of imitating of the memory, hands-on work, collaborating and sharing, cultural connection and integration of multi-knowledge. The study suggests this kind of environmental knowledge with continuos adaption and multiple inclusiveness open more

opportunities for ESD.

Keywords: women, everyday life, environmental knowledge, construction of knowledge,
Sungai Chua New Village.