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(INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDY)

RESCUE AND CARE FOR HOMELESS ANIMALS

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Abstract

Massive population of homeless animals is not a new phenomenon in Malaysia. Due to massive population of stray animals, Municipal Council has taken the actions to control the case of overpopulation. This kind of action has increasingly attracting public attention because of the cruel way of them to treat the homeless animals. This study is based on the 4 objectives which are to identify the situation of homeless animals, factors that caused the animals to become homeless, challenges faced by the homeless animals, and seek the solutions that can reduce the population of homeless animals in Malaysia. Data was collected by using qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative method was carried out through questionnaire with 27 respondents. While qualitative method was carried out through short and in-depth interview session with Kimmy, the person in charge of HOPE was analyzed using content analysis. Local authorities should opt for more humane ways when dealing with stray animals instead of taking drastic action such as shooting stray dogs. There are many proven ways to help control the population of stray dogs, including the trap-neuter-release-manage (TNRM) method. (Better ways to handle stray animals, 2019).

1. Introduction

Massive population of homeless animals is not a new phenomenon in Malaysia. Due to massive population of stray animals, Municipal Council has taken the actions to control the case of overpopulation. This kind of action has increasingly attracting public attention because the cruel way of them to treat the homeless animals. This is being judged by the community. Municipal Council has hired private dog or car catchers and then they will shoot or kill the caught animals directly. The homeless animal issues are published on social media every day. There are more and more animals are homeless in everywhere. The issues of homeless animals occur because the overpopulation of pre-existing strays, abandoned by its owners, lost and others. The homeless animals usually consisted of dogs and cats. This situation has reflected the human failure. Dog-catching teams are cruel, inhumane and do not follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). They always simply shoot, hit and kill the stray dogs.

2. Problem Statement

Incidents related to stray animals in Malaysia, the main problem is the local enforcement officers do not follow the standard operating procedure to humanely euthanize them. It is ethically wrong to kill dogs in such an inhumane way where dogs are subjected to an agonizing and slow death. (Address growing number of strays, 2017)

There is no statistics show the total number of the strays in whole Malaysia. Some authorities will send the homeless animals to animal shelter but some of them will kill them directly. Ampang Jaya Municipal Council (MPAJ) stopped sending strays to SPCA since 1994 and instead puts the animals to sleep on its own. Last year, MPAJ caught 1,548 dogs and this year, to date, have caught another 103 dogs. Without a proper neutering plan in place or a land to house the strays, dogs and cats will continue reproducing at a rate faster than they can be caught and put to sleep.

Next, Shah Alam City Council (MBSA) will hold the caught strays for a while at the temporary detention centre for animals for owners to claim them before sending to

Paws. Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) also has a group of in-house dog catchers and many of them have been bitten by strays numerous times. Last year, MBPJ caught more than 800 dogs and 200 cats. There are many Municipal Councils did not show how many homeless animals that they caught. It is a huge number for each year.

There is no enough space for some shelters to keep more strays because there is low adoption rate in the animal shelters. Shelter manager of Paws Animal Welfare Society (PAWS), Edward Lim said PAWS receive too many stray and do not have space already. Currently, PAWS has more than 500 strays in that shelter. The adoption rates had dropped over the years from more than 50% to below 30% and the strays were coming in faster than they were leaving. It showed that there is not enough space at the animal shelter due to large number of homeless animals. The similar situation will face by the other animal shelters. (Killing Is Not The Answer, 2019)

There are complaints regarding dog catchers poisoning the strays by tossing chicken laced with poison onto the streets for them to eat. When they die, dog catchers will collect the carcasses and drop them off at some local authorities that award a fee for every stray caught, dead or alive. Some even leave the dogs and cats caught in the trucks to starve to death before claiming the award. It show the cruelty and inhumane of people. (Killing Is Not The Answer, 2019)

Catch-and-kill is not the answer to reducing strays because killing is despicable and it does not really bring down the population of strays. The government needs to replace the action of catching the homeless animals then put them to sleep to neuter them after catching. This is the most proper way to control the overpopulation of the homeless animals. (Better ways to handle stray animals, 2019). PetFinder.my founder, Andy Koh said that decreasing the number of strays via neutering methods will only work if the community is tolerable and proper enforcement is in place. Trap-Neuter-Release-Manage (TNRM) founder and president, Stuart Tan suggested that dog pounds belonging to the local authorities be transformed into adoption facilities rather than just a holding ground before putting the animals to sleep. A neutering program can be carried out easily there and the animals will have a shelter while waiting for adoption or die naturally. (Kimmy, 2019) (Killing Is Not The Answer, 2019)

3. Research Questions

1. How is the situation of homeless animals in Malaysia?
2. What are the factors that cause the animals to become homeless in Malaysia?
3. What are the challenges of life experienced by homeless animals in Malaysia?
4. What are the solutions that can reduce the population of homeless animals in Malaysia?

4. Purpose of the Study

1. To identify the situation of homeless animals in Malaysia.
2. To investigate the factors that caused the animals to homeless in Malaysia.
3. To explore the challenges of life experienced by homeless animals in Malaysia.
4. To seek the solutions that can reduce the population of homeless animals in Malaysia.

5. Research Methods

This study used qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain the data. Quantitative method was carried out through questionnaire with 27 respondents, while qualitative method was carried out through short and in-depth interview session with the person in charge of HOPE, Kimmy. Data from questionnaires were analyzed by using the Google forms, while short and in-depth interview was analyzed using analysis results from the transcription of the recorded conversation.

6. Findings

6.1 - Demographic data of respondents

This section will explain the demography background of 27 respondents which had been recorded using questionnaires. Demography background includes the information such as gender, age, ethnic, and occupation.

Demographic data of respondents		
Characteristics	**Total of Respondents**	**Percentage (%)**
Gender		
Male	3	11.1%
Female	24	88.9%
Age (in years old)		
Below 17		
17-20	7	25.9%
21-24	20	74.1%
25-28		
29-32		
33-36		
37-40		
Above 40		
Occupation		
Student	20	74.1%
Employee	7	25.9%
Employer		
Ethnicity		
Malay	18	66.7%
Chinese	8	29.6%
Indian		
Iban	1	3.7%

6.1.1 - Gender

Referring to the table above, based on 27 respondents, the percentage of 11.1% was recorded for 3 males. For females, this category recorded the percentage of 88.9% with a total number of 24 respondents.

6.1.2 - Age

Based on 27 respondents, the percentage of 74.1% was recorded for the age category of 21-24 years with a total number of 20 respondents, namely the highest compared to another age category. The lowest age category was 17-20 years which recorded the percentage of 25.9% with a total number of 9 respondents.
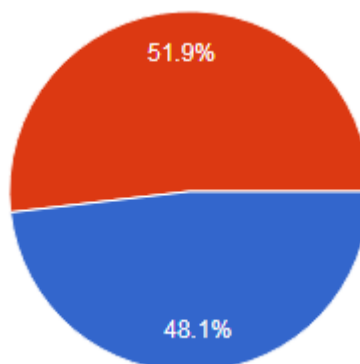
6.1.3 – Occupation

Referring to the table, there were 3 categories of occupation. Based on 27 respondents, the student category recorded the highest with the percentage of 74.1% and 20 people. The category of employee recorded 25.9% with a total number of 7 people.

6.1.4 – Ethnicity

Based on 27 respondents, the highest percentage of 66.7% with a total number of 18 Malays. The second highest is Chinese, it recorded 29.6% with a total number of 8 Chinese. The lowest is the category of Iban, which is the only 1 respondent.

6.2 – Pet Owner

Based on the pie chart below, red colour part belongs to pet owner and blue part belongs to non-pet owner. There are 14 respondents recorded of not pet owner with 51.9%. The rest percentage of 48.1%, it is recorded for pet owners with a total number of 13 people.

6.3 - Suitableness regarding to Municipal Councils hire catchers to catch and kill the homeless animals.

Based on the table below, there are 24 respondents said that it is not suitable for Municipal Council to treat animals like that. This is because animals are life and it is too cruel to treat the animals like that. It needs to do in a proper way. The proper way to control the situation of overpopulation of homeless animals is catch them and send to these animals to animal shelters. It is ineffective for the control of overpopulation of strays. There is only one person agrees that the action taken by Municipal Council to control the overpopulations of strays. There is one person said, maybe and another said not sure regarding to the above question.

Suitableness regarding to Municipal Councils hire catchers to catch and kill the stray animals & reasons.	Number of Respondents
Yes	**1**
Decrease population.	1
No	**24**
Catch animals and send to animals shelter	8
Animal is a life.	4
Show no respects to animals.	1
It is a harsh and cruel way to treat animals.	2
Killing cannot stop the increasingly of stray animals occur.	1
As humans, have feeling of humanity.	1
Maybe	**1**
Not Sure	**1**

6.4 – The Factors That Cause Animals Become Homeless

This study showed several factors that had been led to animals become homeless. Based on the 27 informants, there are 5 factors that led them to become homeless namely:

NO.	Factors that Cause Animals Become Homeless	Number of Respondents
1	Overpopulation of pre-existing strays.	11
2	Careless and irresponsible owners abandon the animals.	21
3	Missing pets that cannot be found by its owner.	2
4	Pets' selling and buying.	1
5	Pet rescue organizations in Malaysia are lack of supports from people and government.	1

The table concludes the answers in the questionnaires. Based on the table above, the highest factor is careless and irresponsible owners abandon the animals which involved 21 respondents. The second highest factor is overpopulation of pre-existing strays with a total number of 1 people. The following factor of missing pets that cannot be found by its owner is involved 2 respondents. There are two factors recorded only 1 respondent which are pets' selling and buying and pet rescue organizations in Malaysia are lack of supports from people and government.

6.5 – The Challenge Faced by Homeless Animals

Challenges faced by the homeless animals	Number of Respondents
Lack of basic needs : no proper shelter, food (starvation)	21
Bully or abused by human	8
Dangerous disease	3

Based on the table above, there are some challenges faced by homeless animals. They are tough to survive because lack of basic needs which are food and shelter. It recorded the highest number of respondents which is 21 people. The people even treat the homeless animals cruel. It is equal to abuse them. It is recorded 8 respondents which is the second highest. The homeless animals will probably suffer of dangerous diseases due to no people care them. (Kimmy, 2019). From my observation on that bathing event and adoption day, I saw many disabled animals which lost eyes, legs, and so on. It showed how cruel a human can be. The humans need education to become humane and have compassion.

6.6 - Suggested solutions to control the population of stray animals in Malaysia

Suggested solutions to control the population of stray animals in Malaysia	Number of Respondents
Catch and put under a suitable government organization and give them shelters.	1
Send to animal shelters and let people to adopt the stray animals.	13
Build volunteering organizations	2
Caring.	1
Educate young people before adoption.	1
Build a protection center.	2
Establish a law about protecting these homeless animals and make charity for them to eat and live.	1
Build a zoo for stray animals.	1
Build one organization specialize in taking care of homeless animals and build shelter to them.	1
Sterilization for stray animals to lower down the population.	2
Proper way to control and protect them.	1

There are many suggested solutions, which needs supports from government and NGOs relating to animal welfare. The most effective solution has been suggested is neutering the stray animals to overcome the problem of overpopulation homeless animals. It is supported by (Killing Is Not The Answer, 2019), (Kimmy, 2019) and (Better ways to handle stray animals, 2019).

6.7 –Education about the Humanity & Corporation and Assistance of Government for Animal Welfare NGOs

According to pie chart, it show the percentage of 96.3% with a total number of 26 people agree that to educate the young people about the humanity by caring and love the homeless animals and the government needs to assist or corporate with NGO likes animal shelters to help these homeless animals. There is only one person disagree with this.

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7. Conclusion

In conclusion, factors such as overpopulation of pre-existing stray, and careless and irresponsible owners abandon and make the animals missing are the starting point causes animals to become homeless. If the homeless animal problems are not addressed by concerned parties, there will be more and more homeless animals are in danger. Based on my observation, there are many homeless animals rescued by HOPE are disabled. It means that people abused the homeless animals or strays without having compassionate. It is a need to educate and nurture the young people to care and help the homeless animals. Moreover, the local enforcement officers need to control the homeless animals in a humane way by using neutering instead of culling. The control of overpopulation homeless animals needs public community and the relating authority corporate together to help them. Lastly, deep and comprehensive study needs to be done by concerned parties in drafting a plan of action to help these homeless animals and make their life better.

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Figure 1: Kimmy (Person In Charge of HOPE)

Figure 2: Dry the dogs by using towel

Figure 3: Photography session with all volunteers and committees

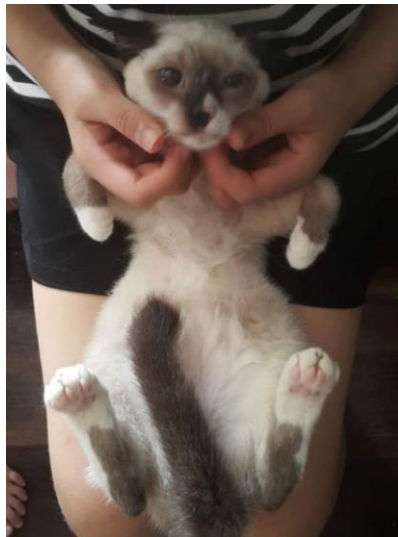**Figure 4: Bathing Dogs**

Figure 5: Pet the Dog

Figure 6: Pet the Cat

Figure 7: Dogs are welcoming the incoming people