

A STUDY ON PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING TOWARDS
BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI) PROJECTS IN
MALAYSIA

BY

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
B2B	Business-to-business
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CAS	Chinese Academy of Science
DFTZ	Digital Free Trade Zone
ECRL	East Coast Rail Link
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IT	Information Technology
MCKIP	Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OBOR	One Belt One Road
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise

ABSTRACT

There are two problem statements in this study. Firstly, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects typically involve large corporations and business people which neglect the farmers, grassroots, students and small and medium enterprises. Secondly, BRI presents unclear and hysteria image to the public as no one really know what the initiative really is. Moreover, this study aims to examine the public understanding towards BRI projects in Malaysia and assess the public perception towards the involvement of Malaysia in BRI.

As for methodology, quantitative research is used in this study. Internet survey on Google Forms will be distributed to public in Malaysia. The survey reached to a sample of 200 respondents. The data collected will be further analysed. The results show that the respondents in Malaysia have low level of understanding towards BRI projects in Malaysia. Despite of that, majority of the respondents have positive perception towards the BRI projects in Malaysia.

Several parties are the key drivers to obtain better understanding and perception of the public towards BRI projects in Malaysia. Firstly, the government needs to have a clear framework and regulations on BRI projects. The organizations should promote more on the BRI projects. Moreover, the media also plays an important role in increasing public understanding and perception towards BRI projects in Malaysia. The media needs to have efficient flow of information. Lastly, education institutions and universities should take part in engaging students and academics. With more exposure of BRI projects, universities can now collaborate with other international universities.

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH OVERVIEW

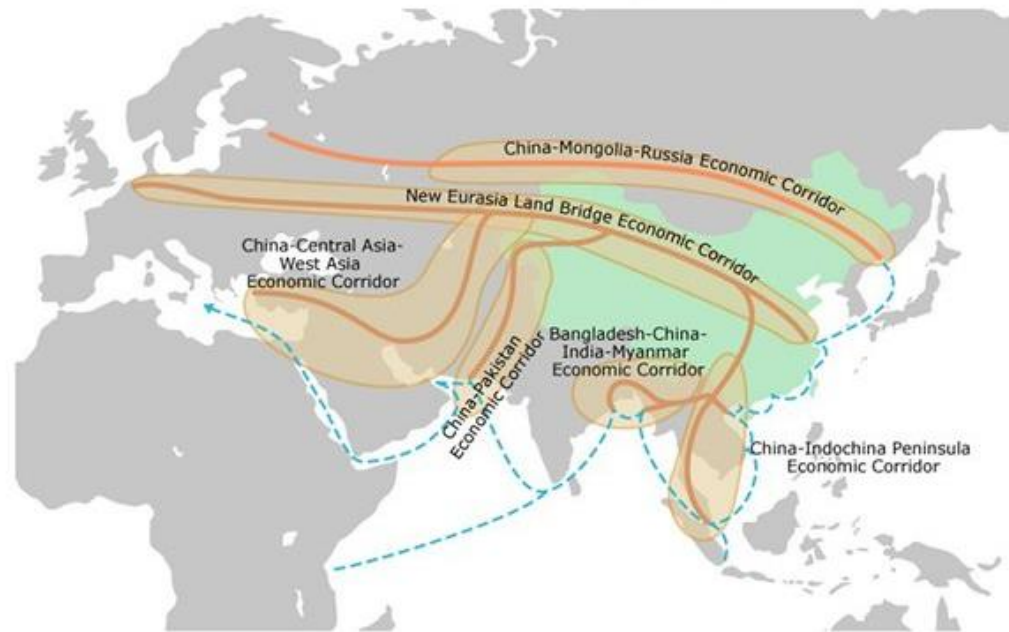
1.0 Introduction

Chapter 1 explains the overview of this study and the research problems. There are also two research objectives to be achieved in this study. Research significance and organizations of the study will be discussed.

1.1 Overview on Belt and Road Initiative

According to Cai (2017), the president of China Xi Jinping announced an ambitious initiative related to foreign policy and economic in the year of 2013. It is called as the 21st century Maritime Silk Road and Silk Road Economic Belt, which is popularly referred as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The land-based route is from China to Europe, and the route that passes through Southeast Asia, Africa, Middle East and reaches Europe is called sea-based (Damuri, Perkasa, Atje, & Hirawan, 2019). The vision of this initiative is to create and enhance the physical, policy and financial conditions that will stimulate global trade, investment and economy (HSBC Bank Malaysia Berhad, n.d.). Thus, integration and cooperation between countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe will also increase. Massive infrastructure developments have been promoted by the Chinese government to support this idea (Damuri et al., 2019). This initiative consists of two parts which are the land-based and sea-based.

Figure 1.1: The Six Economic Corridors Spanning Asia, Europe and Africa



Adapted from: Hong Kong Trade Development Council Research. (n.d.). *The Belt and Road Initiative*. Retrieved from <http://china-trade-research.hktdc.com/business-news/article/The-Belt-and-Road-Initiative/The-Belt-and-Road-Initiative/obor/en/1/1X000000/1X0A36B7.htm>

Six economic corridors are to be established in BRI that connects China and other countries as described in Figure 1.1. The six economic corridors include China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor, New Eurasian Land Bridge Economic Corridor, China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor, China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor, China-Indochina Peninsular Economic Corridor, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (Hong Kong Trade Development Council Research, n.d.).

Today, more than 60 countries around the world which represent more than half of the world's population have signed on projects or expressed their interests in this initiative (Gill, 2017; Chatzky & McBride, 2019). According to Gill (2017), the participating countries in BRI cover more than 4.4 billion people and bring about over \$21 trillion to global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) once it is completed. According to Lau (2017), the GDP of these regions will grow to 80 percent by 2050 if the BRI initiative is used. This will help 3 billion people which represents 62 percent of the world's population to grow into middle class.

The economies of the countries that are involved in BRI are mutually complementary (National Development and Reform Commission People's Republic of China, 2015). In order to enhance both development and cooperation between China and the global partners, it focuses on five aspects which include policy coordination, connecting infrastructure, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people bonds (Baker Tilly, n.d.). Firstly, policy coordination is an important aspect. It can be defined as intergovernmental consultations which jointly build development plans, measures and mechanisms to facilitate cross-national and regional cooperation. In addition, it also helps to resolves problems arising from cooperation through this aspect (Hong Kong Trade Development Council Research, n.d.).

The second aspect would be on facilities connectivity. Countries along the Belt and Road will make the efforts to build large scale networks of sea and land infrastructure facilities such as transportation, pipelines, power grids and telecommunication facilities (Baker Tilly, n.d.). Furthermore, steps will also be taken to facilitate unimpeded trade. Steps such as resolve investment and trade issues, remove investment and trade barriers and enhance economic integration (Hong Kong Trade Development Council Research, n.d.). Financial integration such as bilateral currency swap arrangement is able to lower the risk of exchange rate and transaction costs involved for trade. China has signed the bilateral currency swap agreements with countries involve in BRI which include Malaysia. BRI also focuses on people-to-people bond by promoting cultural exchanges, academic exchanges, and dialogue exchanges. This would not only encourage bonds and understanding between one another, at the same time, it can urge trust and support of the people (Baker Tilly, n.d.).

The first Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation was held on the 14 and 15 of May 2017 in Beijing. This forum was served as a summit of the participating members of Belt and Road Initiative. Many countries from Southeast Asia, Central Asia and Europe attended the forum. Bilateral agreements were the most important results of this event (Bendarzsevszkij, Klemensits, Polyak, & Zoltai, 2018). President Xi Jinping highlighted the achievements of the BRI so far. From the past three years since this initiative was developed, China had strengthened

policy connectivity with several states and groups which includes aligning BRI with development strategies of ASEAN, Turkey, Vietnam, Mongolia, Poland, Kazakhstan, Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union and the United Kingdom. President Xi Jinping also highlighted several more high-profile projects under BRI which include the acceleration in building Jakarta-Bandung high-speed railway, China-Laos railway, Hungary-Serbia railway and Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway. In addition, China also cooperated with relevant countries to upgrade the Gwadar and Piraeus ports.

According to Shannon (2017), some of the projects have faced some issues. The total trade between China and other BRI participating countries in year 2014 to 2016 exceeded the amount of \$3 trillion and the investment of China in these countries exceeded \$50 billion. These figures were raised by the formation of financing mechanisms needed to carry out the vision of BRI which include China's Silk Road Fund and multilateral Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

Therefore, President Xi Jinping pledged to boost the funding of the projects. According to One Belt One Road Europe (2017), President Xi Jinping had made a promise that China would take the extra initiative to develop One Belt One Road (OBOR) projects in the future. He would further develop OBOR by adding an amount of RMB 100 billion to the Silk Road Fund and granting loans of RMB 380 billion through Bank Chinese development. China has also pledged to grant RMB 60 billion to humanitarian programs along the routes of OBOR, particularly in the health and housing sectors. Moreover, innovation will be emphasized. China called various delegates to cooperate in the innovation of nanotechnology and artificial intelligence. President Xi Jinping insisted that OBOR should not be a competitor. It should be considered as a tool to increase international cooperation between countries in order to generate trade and lower poverty rate. In this forum, China has signed various agreements, particularly with states in Europe to form new partnerships in education, health and tourism sector. "Belt and Road News Alliance" and "Belt and Road Action Plan for Banking Cooperation" are the new cooperation tools that were launched in this forum.

According to Mu (2019), the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation was held from 25th to 27th April 2019 in Beijing, China. The theme for this forum is “Belt and Road Cooperation, Shaping a Brighter Shared Future.” It is a platform to promote high quality cooperation in BRI. Leaders from 40 countries attended the forum to exchange views on topics such as strengthening connectivity and promoting sustainable development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 2019). According to Lin (2019), this forum is a platform to support infrastructure connectivity in order to stimulate economic growth and to have a high quality and reliable infrastructure which focus on sustainable growth.

Following after the participation in the second Belt and Road forum, the “Malaysia-China Belt and Road Economic Cooperation Forum 2019” was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (Official Portal of Ministry of Finance Malaysia, 2019). The participation of Dr Mahathir in the second Belt and Road forum has attracted Chinese investors to invest in Malaysia. According to Khidhir (2019), matters on the reasons why Chinese investors would want to invest in Malaysia were being discussed during the forum. Official statistics have shown that China imported US\$34.4. billion worth of goods from Malaysia. Malaysia hopes to get more investments from China through BRI. In order to get this result, Malaysian entrepreneurs, particularly the local Chinese business sectors play a major role. This is because the local Chinese business sectors have the advantage of communicating with Chinese entrepreneurs due to their common cultural values. Thus, the local Chinese business sectors and Chinese entrepreneurs will have an ease to communicate and work along with each other. According to “Malaysia benefits from BRI, seeks more cooperation with China: Officials” (2019), Malaysian Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng aimed to facilitate the entry of businesses from China to Malaysia, particularly in high technology companies and services on innovation. Malaysians are also keen to learn robotics, cloud computing, artificial intelligence with the Chinese experts.

1.2 Participation of Malaysia in Belt and Road Initiative

According to Ying (2017), Malaysia's former Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak paid a five-day visit to China on May 13, 2017 for the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. He said that the BRI would give tremendous benefits to Malaysia in multiple areas such as infrastructure, social facilities, business opportunities, connectivity and living standards. He witnessed the signing of nine Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) which worth RM31.26 billion (US\$22.7 billion) in several sectors. These MoUs range from sectors in infrastructure, financial market, agriculture, construction and investment. One of the projects include a RM15 billion investment Robotic Future City on a 1000-acre site in Johor Baru. Sabah and Sarawak will also receive benefits from this visit to China. A factory that produces methanol and derivatives in Sarawak will be built at a cost of RM2 billion. In Sabah, the Shore which is worth RM572.96 million will be developed under the cooperation agreement. Furthermore, Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation, Hangzhou Municipal Government and Alibaba (China) Company Limited have signed MoU on the development of Digital Free Trade Zone (Bernama, 2017). With this initiative, Malaysia would become a digital economy hub in Southeast Asia.

According to Liow (2017), one of the MoUs signed between the Malaysia's Ministry of Transport and China's National Development and Reform Committee is on the development of infrastructure and economy. The development of basic infrastructure includes ports, railways and airports. Through this MoU, it encourages knowledge and technology transfer to Malaysia's local transportation industry. Moreover, another MoU aimed to promote economic development and information sharing. At the same time, it encourages the implementation of local supply chains and promotes cross-border e-commerce.

In the early March 2017, East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) was first introduced to the public. It is considered as one of the most important projects in BRI which aims to connect Malaysia's East Coast Economic Region (Pahang, Kelantan, Terengganu) to Kuala Lumpur. The first phase of the project will start from Wakaf Bharu, Kelantan to Integrated Transport Terminal (ITT) Gombak. The second phase of the

project will extend from ITT Gombak to Port Klang. The estimated time needed for this end-to-end journey would be about four hours. Through ECRL, it will bring convenience and accessibility to the passengers. Besides, it also changes Malaysia's logistics industry as it creates a channel across Peninsular Malaysia which links Kuantan Port to Port Klang. This allows the logistics transporters to have faster and more efficient options.

As we are moving forward towards fourth industrial revolution, one of the projects namely Robotics Future City was signed during the Belt and Road forum. Its visions are to create high-income opportunities for the region and develop the country's robotics industry. Johor Corporation will be partnering with Siasun Robot Investment which is a listed organization under the Chinese Academy of Science (CAS) that owns a huge robotic base in China. The development of 404ha piece of land to build an integrated hub will be witnessed through this partnership. Manufacturing, research and development for the robotics industry and developing talents will be covered.

There was also a business-to-business (B2B) MoU signed between Malaysia and China. AirAsia, China Everbright Group and Henan Government Working Group joint venture and signed a MoU to establish AirAsia (China). The first foreign low-cost carrier in China will be developed through this partnership. It will be based in Zhengzhou, China. Aviation academy, aviation infrastructure, repair, maintenance and overhaul facilities will also be invested by AirAsia (China).

In April 2019, Malaysia's Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad attended the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. Dr Mahathir held discussions with President Xi Jinping and a Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang on the issues of mutual interest. Malaysia has expressed full support for BRI as the country stands to gain benefit from the huge infrastructure projects ("The Belt and Road Initiative is great: Malaysia PM Mahathir," 2019). Dr Mahathir also witnessed the signing of Memoranda of Understandings (MoUs) on several projects. According to Bernama (2019), the Memorandum of Understandings were on strengthening palm oil trade between China and Malaysia and the RM44 billion East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project. There will also be a signing of agreement on the revival of

Bandar Malaysia which is a major project in Kuala Lumpur with an estimated value of RM200 billion (“The Belt and Road Initiative is great: Malaysia PM Mahathir,” 2019). Under the MoU, an additional 1.9 million tonnes of palm oil from Malaysia will be purchased by China over the next five years. Dr Mahathir also hoped that Malaysia could take the advantage of the revival of ECRL to sell more palm oil to China.

After winning the general election in May 2018, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad vowed to renegotiate or cancel the “unfair” Chinese projects which were authorized by former premier Najib Razak (“East Coast Rail Link proceed, Malaysia China slash costs,” 2019). The ECRL project which was previously signed by former premier Najib Razak was suspended by Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in July 2018. Dr Mahathir added Malaysia will be impoverished if the project continues. Furthermore, Malaysia and China have agreed to continue with the ECRL project at a cost of RM44 billion after months of negotiation. China agreed to slash cost of more than 30 per cent off the initial cost. The cost will be reduced by RM21.5 billion from the initial cost of RM65.5 billion. The new route is 648km which is 40km shorter from the initial route. The revised route will be from Kota Bharu to Port Klang. Thus, it will not only lessen the burden of Malaysia’s financial position, at the same time, it will benefit Malaysia in whole. Subsequently, Malaysia has also reinstated the Bandar Malaysia project with a revised value of RM140 billion.

According to Ho (2019), Dr Mahathir aimed to lure more foreign direct investment (FDI) and getting Chinese investors to buy more palm oil during the second Belt and Road forum. FDI has been an important and strong force in the economic development of Malaysia. FDI flowing into Malaysia only grew 3 per cent annually over the last decade, achieving RM39.2 billion per year. In 2018, Malaysia netted only RM33 billion. But in 2019, Malaysia is likely to see a bounce back in FDI growth. This is led by the inflow of IT companies and industries from China. Moreover, the Chinese investors have positive attitude about Malaysia after the visit of Dr Mahathir who showed his support for BRI. The visit to China boosted the Chinese investors’ confidence to invest in Malaysia. The revival of projects signalled that both Malaysia and China are committed to strengthen their long-term

relationship and to achieve economic goals. Based on Malaysia's perspective, participation at the BRF shows that the country will hold on to the massive global trade opportunities in the BRI projects which amount up to RM21 to 25 trillion in investments. Therefore, it is important for Malaysia's government to bring in more investments to boost economic activity due to the slow economic growth of the country. China has been one of the top trading partners with Malaysia for the past ten years. The total bilateral trade in 2018 was RM445 billion. 73500 jobs have been created for Malaysians through Chinese investments in construction, banking, property, manufacturing and infrastructure. At the end of 2018, China's accumulated FDI in Malaysia reached RM170.4 billion. With the revival of some projects and clear direction on the FDI policy of China, Malaysia's economy is expected to boost. RHB Investment Bank has projected Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to boost from 4.5 per cent to 4.8 per cent. In addition, a bounce back of ringgit, return of portfolio funds and high economic growth have been projected by some research organizations.

1.3 Problem Statement

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects involve mega projects such as East Coast Rail Link (ECRL), Digital Free Trade Zone (DFTZ), and Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park (MCKIP). Projects in BRI typically involve large corporations and businesspeople which neglect the farmers, small and medium-sized enterprises, students, and grassroots. According to Careem (2017), when BRI first launched, it may seem attractive to all types of businesses under small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). However, the effect of the initiative is yet to be seen, which aims to benefit SME directly or indirectly. Opportunities cannot be seen for SMEs but rather only on large companies, construction companies and service industries along the proposed routes.

According to Ang (2019), BRI has been defined as the “project of the century”. BRI presents an unclear and hysteria image to the public as no one really knows what the initiative really is. An official statement of how a BRI project is created and the list of companies that are involved have never been released by the Chinese government. As a consequence, these have given all Chinese interest groups such as private companies, non-profit organization and local governments a chance to claim that their projects are under BRI. All investments and projects that are related to China have been associated with BRI, whether or not they have government’s supports. Therefore, it is necessary to study the public understanding and perception towards BRI projects in Malaysia.

1.4 Research Objectives

This study attempts to understand how the Malaysians perceive the involvement of Malaysia in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) related projects. Specifically, this study aims to:

1. Examine the public understanding towards the BRI projects in Malaysia.
2. Assess the public perception towards the involvement of Malaysia in BRI.

1.5 Research Significance

The results of this study will be beneficial to several parties. First of all, contribution to the literature. The data and results given will provide the future researchers with information on the public understanding and perception towards the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Malaysia. Data gathered will help the academics and students to analyze for future studies.

In addition, the results of the study will provide insights to the policy makers of the country. It helps the government to develop clear framework and regulations on the BRI projects. This study will help organizations and trade associations in promoting BRI and helping small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to facilitate linkages.

Moreover, the results of this study will also provide information to relevant parties such as media and education institutions. This study will provide real and truthful information to the media which ensures efficient flow of information to the public. Also, it will expose more BRI researches and collaboration between universities.

1.6 Organization of Study

This study attempts to understand how the Malaysians perceive the involvement of Malaysia in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) related projects. It aims to examine the public understanding towards the BRI projects in Malaysia and assess the public perception towards the involvement of Malaysia in BRI.

Chapter 2 introduces the literature review on the outlook of Malaysia's economy which describes Malaysia's economy, foreign direct investment (FDI) and labour aspect. This chapter also describes on the infrastructure aspect as well as economic integration.

Chapter 3 describes the research methods used in this study. It covers research design, sampling design, data collection, research instrument and data processing technique. In Chapter 4, results from data collection will be analysed. The results are relevant to the research objectives. As for Chapter 5, it discusses on the implications, limitations and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The study discusses on the outlook of Malaysia's economy, infrastructure and economic integration. As for Malaysia's economic outlook, it discusses on the factors that contribute to the economic development of Malaysia. This chapter also explains on the infrastructure aspect such as railway. Economic integration and globalization will be discussed as well.

2.1 Malaysia Economic Outlook

According to Fazidah (2013), Malaysia's economy is oriented by the market economy. Every parts of Malaysia play an important role in fostering economic development. In 2012, Malaysia's economy was ranked third largest in South East Asia and 28th largest in the world. The purchasing power parity with GDP was \$222 billion with an increase rate of 5 per cent to 7 per cent from 2007 to 2008 and the GDP per capita of Malaysia was US\$14,700 in 2010. In addition, the nominal GDP in 2009 was US\$383.6 billion and the nominal per capita GDP marked at US\$8,100 in 2007. It can be found that Malaysia's economy is driven by numerous sectors. For example, agriculture and manufacturing sector.

Export was also one of the key factors that helped the economic development of Malaysia in areas such as electronics. Malaysia is progressing towards the development of strong knowledge base in areas of technology, research and development. Several factors affect the country's GDP such as unemployment, FDI, export and import and others. According to Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (n.d.), the total imports in Malaysia based on the products has increased from RM836.42 billion in 2017 to RM877.74 billion in 2018.

According to Hamood, Pandurengan, and Kalam (2018), foreign direct investment (FDI) refers to a type of investment that involves insertions of overseas funding to a project in another country. In other words, FDI is a type of investment where country A transfer funds to country B for long term participation. It typically involves joint venture, technology transfer, acquisition and collaboration in expertise. According to Ang (2008), foreign direct investment (FDI) is the key factor to the strong performance of Malaysia's economy. The elements that made Malaysia an attractive country for FDI include continuous economic growth, well-functioning financial framework and well macroeconomic management (Hamood et al., 2018). Malaysia's government introduced a policy on the investment incentives in 1968 which led the country to free trade zone. Also, the provision of export was compensated through the open policy in 1980s. Thus, these policies created huge attractiveness of FDI into Malaysia. In 2000, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita increased four times higher than the GDP per capita in 1970. The industrial sector contributed largely to the country's real GDP. Manufacturing sector is one of the important factors which contributed a huge portion from FDI, and also the shift of international companies' location to Malaysia contributed in the substantial FDI growth in Malaysia. The FDI in Malaysia showed an upward trend from RM129 billion to RM270 billion within 2001 to 2009 respectively. According to Yousop, Ong, Ramdhan, Ahmad, Abdullah, Nasrul, Kamdari, Ong (2018), FDI in Malaysia recorded an increase net inflow of RM47.2 billion compared to RM39.4 billion in 2015. This was assisted by the increase of net inflow in equity and investment fund shares. The growing market orientation and policy shift of the country may be attributed by the upward trend of inflow FDI (Mithani, Ahmad, & Saifudin, 2008).

According to Liu & Shu (2003), China is rich with the amount of labour. The wage rates in China is relatively low compared to countries in East Asia such as Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. The manufacturing industry in China has international competitive advantage, particularly in its labour costs. A negative relationship may exist between labour costs and the number of exports. The lower the labour costs, the more a country exports, especially in the labour-intensive sectors.

2.2 Infrastructure

Infrastructure refers to physical structure or facilities which are provided to the public users (Hamood et al., 2018). For example, water supply, roads and telecommunication. Some countries captured the attractiveness of FDI by developing high quality infrastructure. This will lead to better economic growth of the country. Moreover, some countries take loans to develop better transportation and telecommunication in order to attract FDI to its country. It can be seen that infrastructure and FDI have a positive relationship. According to Wong (2005), when the host country has better infrastructure, it is more attractive to FDI. A good infrastructure will ease the production activities and distribution of goods. Malaysia is taking the effort to develop better infrastructure and telecommunication which are said to be very important in attracting more foreign investors (Sulong & Harjito, 2005). According to Wheeler & Mody (1992), the quality of infrastructure clearly dominates the economy of a developing country.

China has the largest high-speed rail infrastructure in the world (Li & Hilmola, 2019). The high-speed railway will increase the capacity of railways to transport. This results in better customer experience at an affordable price and enhances passenger transportation growth. Therefore, it is still early to assess the effectiveness and implementation overall of the BRI program. However, the program can be said that it will change the railway system of the BRI participating countries. Moreover, it is possible that it will bring significant efficiency improvements by implementing modern technologies and new management system.

2.3 Economic Integration

According to Yew, Yong and Tan (2010), the regional integration is known to be the cause of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow into countries that are within the regional trade area (RTA). There will be an increase in FDI inflows into the member countries due to the liberalisation of trade and investment. According to Marinov (2014), regional economic integration is said to be one of the main things in developing international economic relations. One must take into consideration

the aspects such as trade policies, stage of economic development and economic structure when assessing the integration costs and benefits for developing countries. In developing countries, the integration process starts as a political effort and goal which leads to unsatisfactory economy results.

According to Lee, Chong and Sia (2019), globalization is well known in attracting recognition. It acts as a driver to the improvement of growth. Several studies explained that globalization indicates countries are increasing interactions between people, exchanging information, transforming technology, and converging cultural activities (Dreher, 2006; Lee and Lin, 2016). This shows that the countries are becoming more united into the international economy. Thus, the economy will be improved through a greater amount of transnationality.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology that will be used in terms of research design, sample used, sample size, sampling technique, data collection methods and data processing. This research is conducted to study the public understanding and perception towards Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Malaysia. It strives to provide a better understanding of how much the public understands on BRI projects in Malaysia and their perception towards it.

3.1 Research Design

Quantitative research is used in this study. This study has employed strategy such as surveys and collected data from pre-determined samples which resulted in statistical data (Williams, 2007). Quantitative research has been chosen as numerical data were required to conduct this research. Primary data will be used in this study. This study is able to get more accurate and real-time data as primary data are relevant to the research topic. The data collected are current and less expensive. To investigate this study, the data will be collected through various methods such as surveys, questionnaire and interviews. The method that will be used in this study is Internet survey on Google Forms as can be seen in Appendix 3.1. Google Forms is conducted by sending the forms to various social networks at no cost. Through Internet survey, data can be gathered easily from people in Malaysia as long as they are connected to the Internet. This shows that there is no geographical constraint in the data collection process.

3.2 Sampling Design

The target population for this study are the public in Malaysia regardless their nationalities. This study targets respondents from any age groups in Malaysia. The research instrument will be distributed to the respondents via Google Forms. Thus, sampling location is not applicable.

This study is conducted through Internet survey. The target respondents are those who have heard about BRI before. The questionnaire will include a qualifying question to screen the respondents who are qualified or disqualified from answering the survey. Respondents must have heard before about BRI to be qualified for the survey. Public that have heard before about BRI are targeted because they would have some understanding and perceptions towards BRI projects in Malaysia which will be valuable for the study. They would also have some understanding on how to answer the questions in the Internet survey.

There are two types of sampling technique which include probability and non-probability (Zikmund, 2003). Non-probability method will be applied in this study. Non-probability sampling is used because it is useful and convenient in selecting a sample (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). The types of non-probability sampling are convenience sampling and snowball sampling. According to Acharya, Prakash, Saxena and Nigam (2013), convenience sampling is commonly used by researchers where respondents who meet the criteria are recruited in the research. The sample is selected based on the convenience of the data collector. This approach is used because samples selected can be accessible easily. For example, selecting friends or family as our sample is easier than targeting individuals that we do not know (Taherdoost, 2016).

The second type of non-probability method that is used include snowball sampling. In snowball sampling, the data collector will ask the respondent to provide details of another potential respondent (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). Snowball sampling is useful when there are little population or when the population is unknown. Thereby, it helps to increase the sample size of the research (Taherdoost, 2016).

An appropriate sample size has to be larger than 30 respondents and less than 500 respondents (Halim & Ishak, 2014). Therefore, the survey reached to a sample of 200 respondents to produce accurate and valid results. After receiving 200 respondents for the study, data screening is required to filter qualified and unqualified samples. Thus, only the data from qualified samples will be used and analysed.

3.3 Research Instrument

The questionnaire is established to examine the public understanding and perceptions towards BRI in Malaysia. The methodologies used in this study is web-based questionnaire. Web-based questionnaire is distributed to respondents through the Internet. Web-based questionnaire is widely used due to the growing use of Internet and low data collection cost needed (Ebert, Huibers, Christensen, & Christensen, 2018). It helps to reduce the risk of selection bias when using the Internet to conduct the survey. In 2018, statistics have shown the percentage of Internet users in Malaysia was 87.4% (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2018). By using web-based questionnaire, the survey can be conducted in a quicker and inexpensive manner. Thus, the survey can be conducted anytime, anywhere (Ilieva, Baron, & Healey, 2002). Moreover, self-administered questionnaire is adopted for this study. The respondents have to complete the questionnaire themselves without the presence of interviewer. It not only eliminates interviewer bias but it also saves time on administration (World Health Organization, 2008).

A set of questionnaires which consists of 3 sections was designed. The instrument is developed in English Language, Malay Language and Chinese Language. The use of three languages made it possible for all participants to fully understand the instrument. Participants may choose the language they prefer to read to better understand the instrument. The questionnaire is suited to the cultural and social context of the public in Malaysia.

Questions are set in closed-ended. It allows only a limited number of answers from the list of options given. Close-ended questions are being used because it creates a greater precision and easier to analyse than open-ended questions. Questions in Section A are made up of forced-choice questions (Rada, 2019). Section A consists of demographic information of the respondents such as gender, nationality, age, education level and occupation. There is one filter question in the form of forced-choice format with “yes” or “no” choice. Section B focuses on the public understanding towards Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Malaysia. It consists of 6 questions using multiple-answer questions and response options. There are two multiple-answer questions and four response options. For the four response options questions, “I don’t know” is also an option for the participant (Lavrakas, 2008). Section C consists of six questions using Likert scale and one question using forced-choice format. It aims to focus on the public perception towards Belt and Road Initiative projects in Malaysia.

In Section A, nominal scale and ordinal scale are used in this study. Nominal scale can be placed into categories but it is not meant to rank order according to categories (Stephanie, 2014). Two of the questions in Section A are ordinal scale, two are nominal scale and one presents two response options which are “yes” or “no”. Questions using ordinal scale are age and education level and questions using nominal scale are gender and occupation. In Section C, questions are conducted by using interval scale. Five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 is used for Section C, where 1 represents Strongly Disagree and 5 represents Strongly Agree.

3.4 Data Processing

A pilot test is used to test the questionnaire on a small sample before it is tested on a bigger sample (Sincero, 2012). The questionnaire was self-administered on 21st of August 2019 to 26th of August 2019 via convenient sampling. 10 respondents are chosen to test on the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. By doing pilot test, there would be lesser possibility of unreliable and invalid results. Feedbacks have also been acquired from the respondents to identify ambiguities and potential problems of the questionnaire (Williams, 2003). The study had to address to all the

problems such as errors found in the questionnaire (Bajpai, 2011). Suggestions and corrections received from respondents were incorporated to create the final questionnaire. The actual survey was conducted from 29th August to 3rd October 2019. Completed questionnaire are obtained via Google Forms in order to conduct further analysis. The respondents who underwent the survey came from anywhere in Malaysia as the questionnaire are distributed through the Internet.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the findings for this study. Firstly, it presents the demographic of the respondents, followed by the public understanding towards Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Malaysia. Then, it analyses on the public perception towards BRI projects in Malaysia.

4.1 Demographics

The first section of the questionnaire aims to collect information about the demographic of the respondents. A total of 200 respondents participated in this study.

Table 4.1: Total Number of Respondents Based on Gender

Gender	Total Number of Respondents
Female	133
Male	67
Grand Total	200

Figure 4.1: Total Number of Respondents Based on Gender

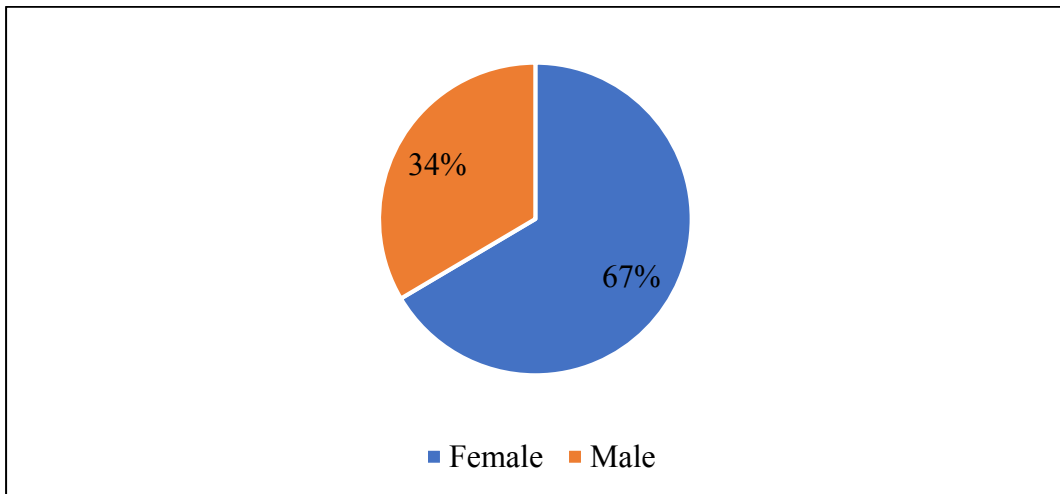


Table 4.1 shows a statistic of total number of respondents based on gender. Out of 200 respondents, 34% of the respondents are male and 67% of respondents are female.

Table 4.2: Total Number of Respondents Based on Nationality

Nationality	Total Number of Respondents
Malaysian	185
Non-Malaysian	15
Grand Total	200

Figure 4.2: Total Number of Respondents Based on Nationality

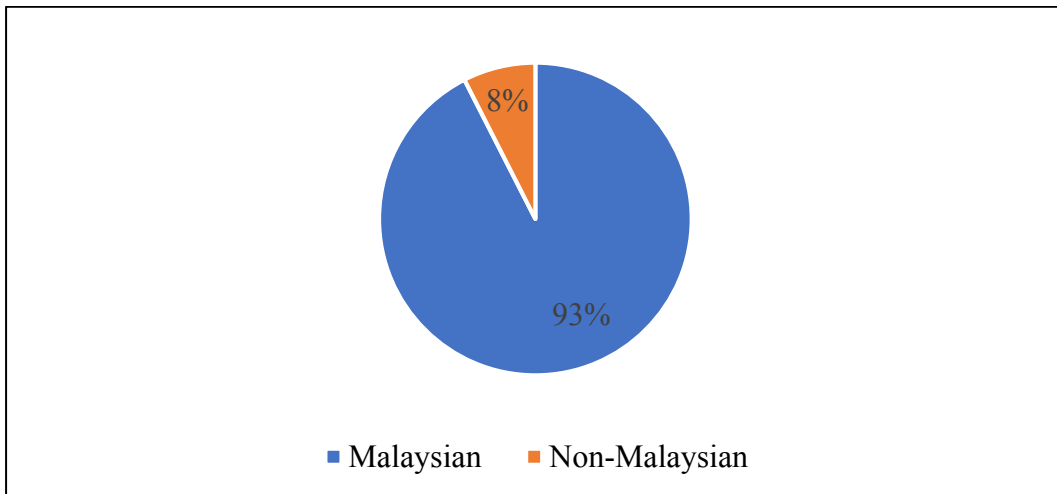


Table 4.2 shows the total number of respondents based on nationality. As can be seen from the Figure 4.2, 93% of respondents was Malaysian and 8% of respondents was non-Malaysian.

Table 4.3: Total Number of Respondents Based on Age

Age	Total Number of Respondents
20 and below	22
21-30	107
31-40	22
41-50	34
51-60	10
61 and above	5
Grand Total	200

Figure 4.3: Total Number of Respondents Based on Age

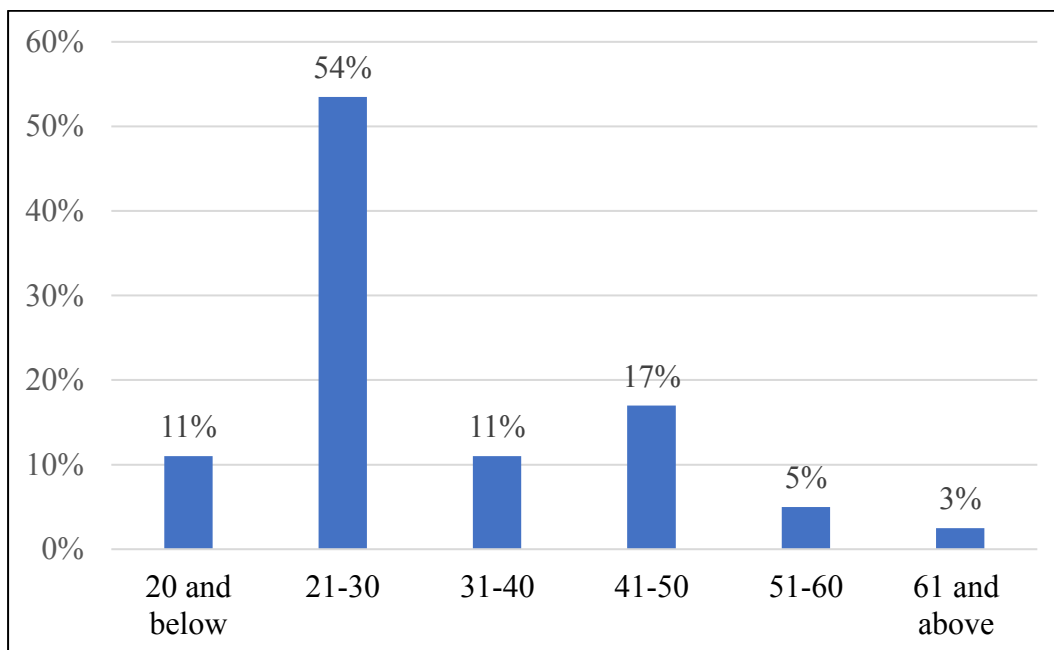


Table 4.3 is the total number of respondents collected based on different age groups. The highest number of respondents collected (54%) were from the age group of 21 to 30. This is because the research adopted convenience sampling method. It is less time consuming and able to reach individuals at ease. In contrast, the lowest number of respondents collected (3%) were from the age group of 61 and above as this study has difficulty in reaching this age group.

Table 4.4: Total Number of Respondents Based on Education Level

Education Level	Total Number of Respondents
Postgraduate	32
Pre-university / Diploma / Certificate	42
Secondary	9
Undergraduate	117
Grand Total	200

Figure 4.4: Total Number of Respondents Based on Education Level

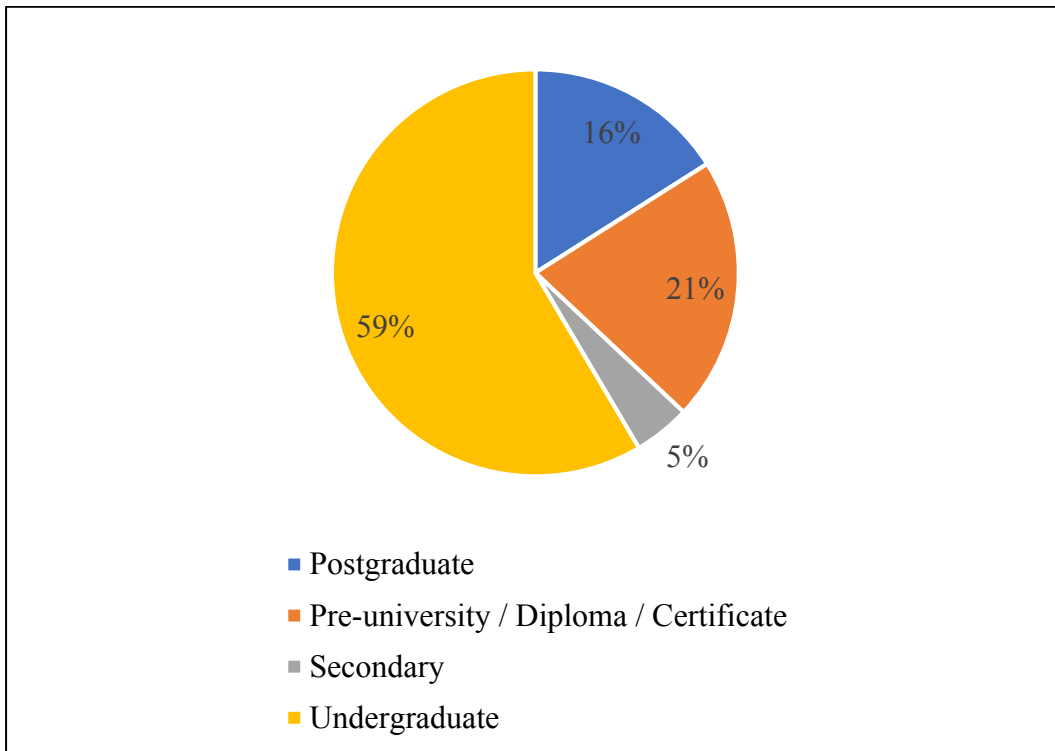


Table 4.4 shows the total number of respondents by education level. According to Figure 4.4, only nine of the respondents (9%) have their education up to secondary level. On the other hand, majority of the respondents have their education up to undergraduate level, which is 59% out of 100%.

Table 4.5: Total Number of Respondents Based on Occupation

Occupation	Total Number of Respondents
Public Servant	4
Retired	7
Student	104
Unemployed	4
Private Employee	66
Self-employed	15
Grand Total	200

Figure 4.5: Total Number of Respondents Based on Occupation

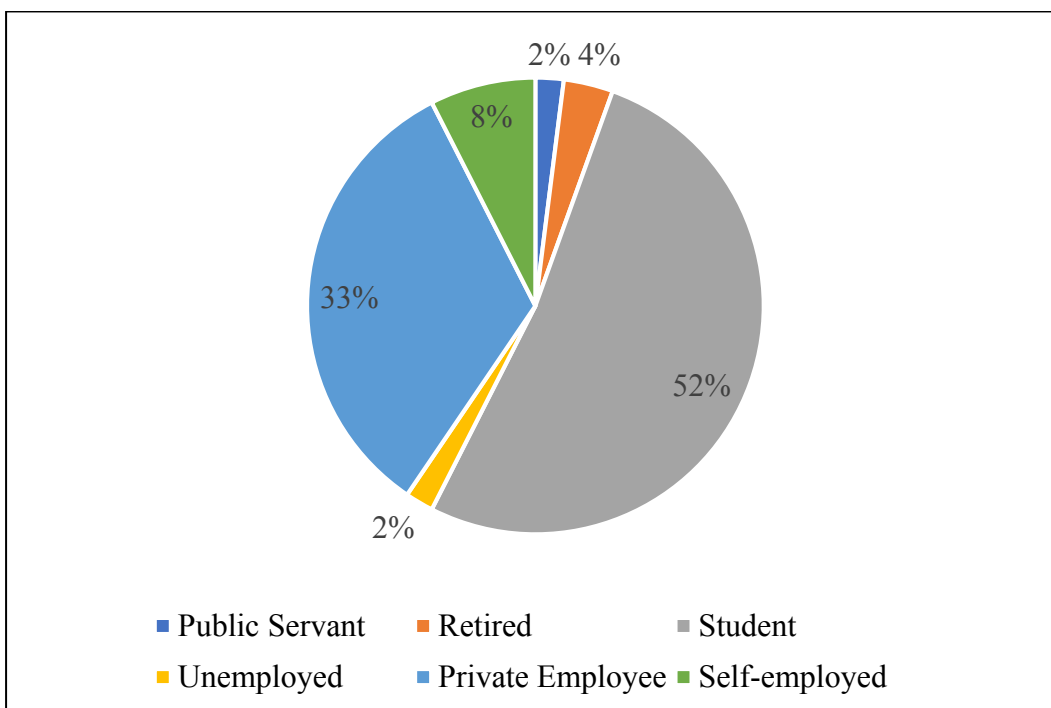


Table 4.5 depicts the total number of respondents by occupation. Figure 4.5 shows that the highest number of respondents are students, which amount to 52% of the total respondents. There are two occupations which recorded a low number of respondents. Public servants and unemployed respondents recorded 2%.

Table 4.6: Knowledge about Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

Have you heard about Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) before?	Total Number of Respondents
No	100
Yes	100
Grand Total	200

Figure 4.6: Knowledge about Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

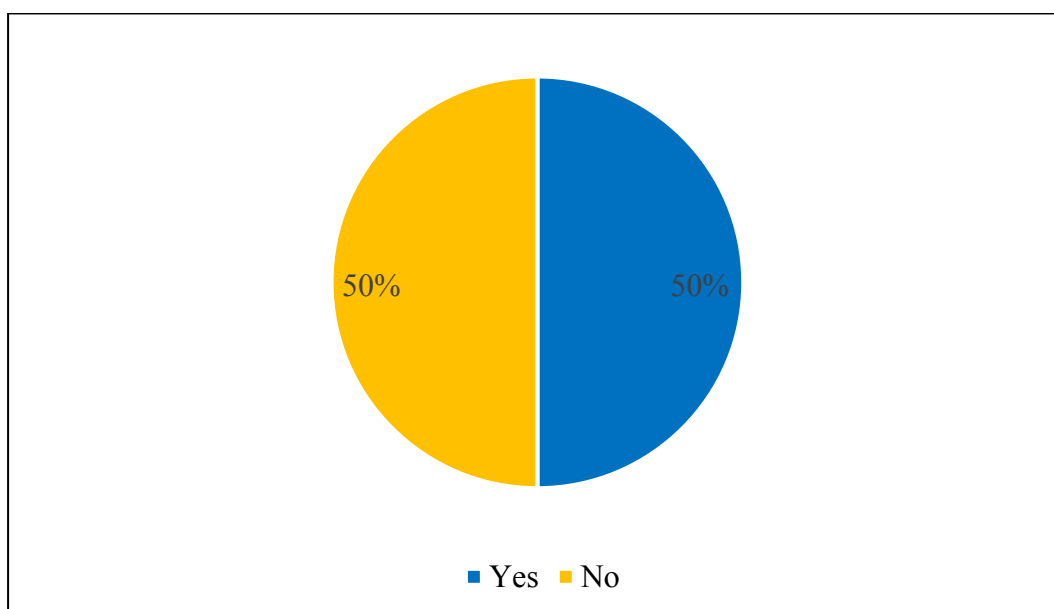


Table 4.6 shows the awareness of the respondents to Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). According to Figure 4.6, there are an equal number of respondents have heard and have not heard BRI before, which is 50% for each. The reason why a large percentage of respondents have not heard of BRI before is because they might not be exposed to BRI related news or projects in their own field. It may also due to insufficient of information provided by the authorities.

4.2 Awareness on Belt and Road Initiative

Table 4.7: Awareness of Respondents to BRI by Age

Age	Yes	No	Grand Total
20 and below	10	12	22
21-30	40	67	107
31-40	13	9	22
41-50	27	7	34
51-60	7	3	10
61 and above	3	2	5

Figure 4.7: Awareness of Respondents to BRI by Age

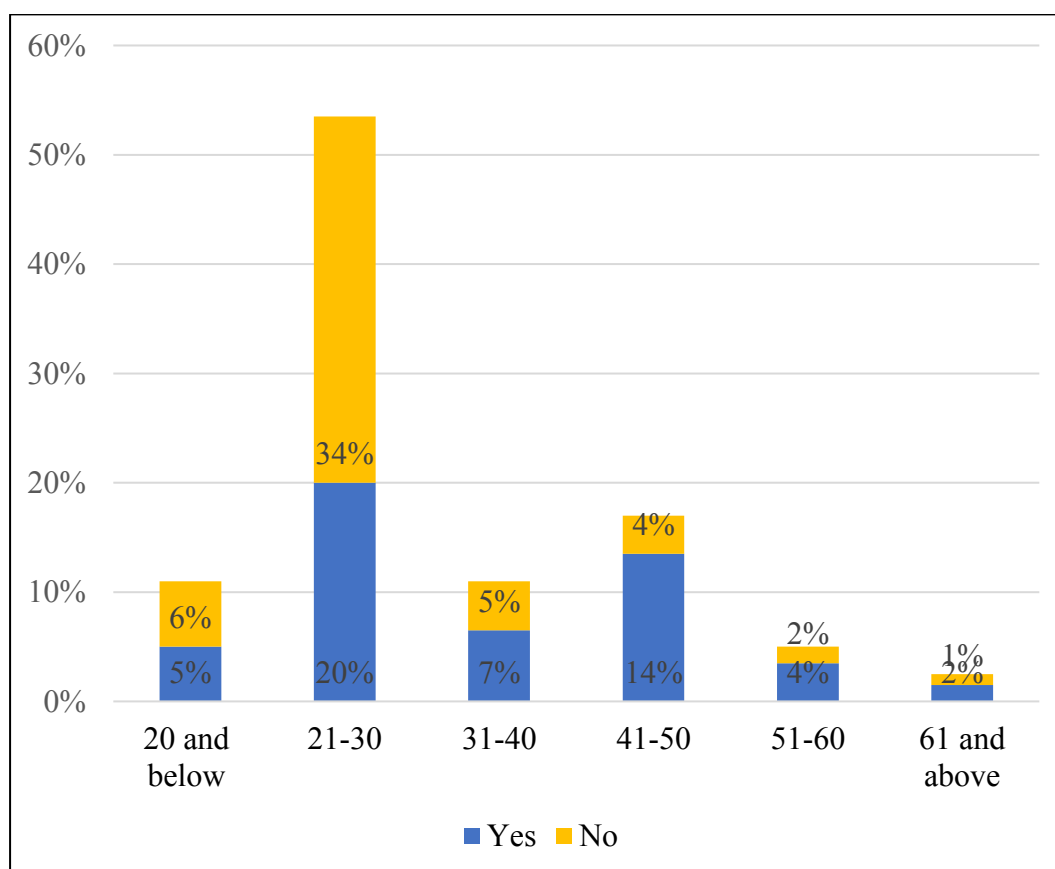


Table 4.7 shows the results on the awareness of respondents to BRI by age. Based on the graph, the highest number of respondents that have heard and have not heard of BRI before are from the age group of 21 to 30. The percentage of respondents that have heard and have not heard of BRI before are 20% and 34% respectively. This age group are the individuals who have the most access to social media, seminars and talks compared to other age groups. According to Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (2018), the highest population of Internet users were adults in their 20's which accounted for 30%. By contrast, the age group of 61 and above has the lowest percentage of respondents that have and have not heard of BRI before, which are 1% and 2% respectively.

Table 4.8: Awareness of Respondents to BRI by Education Level

Education Level	Yes	No	Grand Total
Postgraduate	22	10	32
Pre-university / Diploma / Certificate	18	24	42
Secondary	5	4	9
Undergraduate	55	62	117

Figure 4.8: Awareness of Respondents to BRI by Education Level

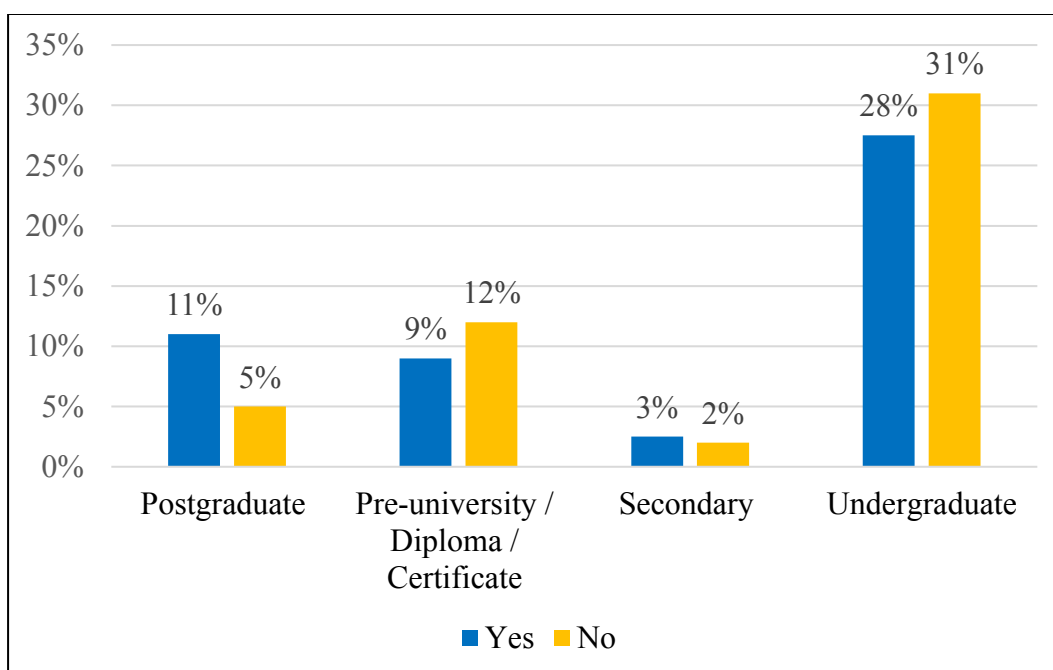


Table 4.8 shows the results on the awareness of respondents to BRI by education level. According to Figure 4.8, it can be seen that majority of the respondents that are from undergraduate level have heard and have not heard of BRI before. The percentage of respondents have heard and have not heard of BRI before at the undergraduate level are 28% and 31% respectively. According to UNESCO (n.d.), the gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education in Malaysia was 45.13% in 2018. There were also 2,847,346 of Malaysia population in the tertiary level of education. Respondents who are in undergraduate level might have already heard of BRI before through lecture class, talks and seminars as the syllabus are up-to-date on the

current issues. In contrast, the lowest percentage of respondents that have heard and have not heard of BRI before are at the secondary level, which are 3% and 2% respectively. This may due to absence of information and knowledge from the government or organization.

Table 4.9: Awareness of Respondents to BRI by Occupation

Occupation	No	Yes	Grand Total
Public Servant	2	2	4
Private Employee	26	40	66
Retired	3	4	7
Self-employed	4	11	15
Student	64	40	104
Unemployed	1	3	4

Figure 4.9: Awareness of Respondents to BRI by Occupation

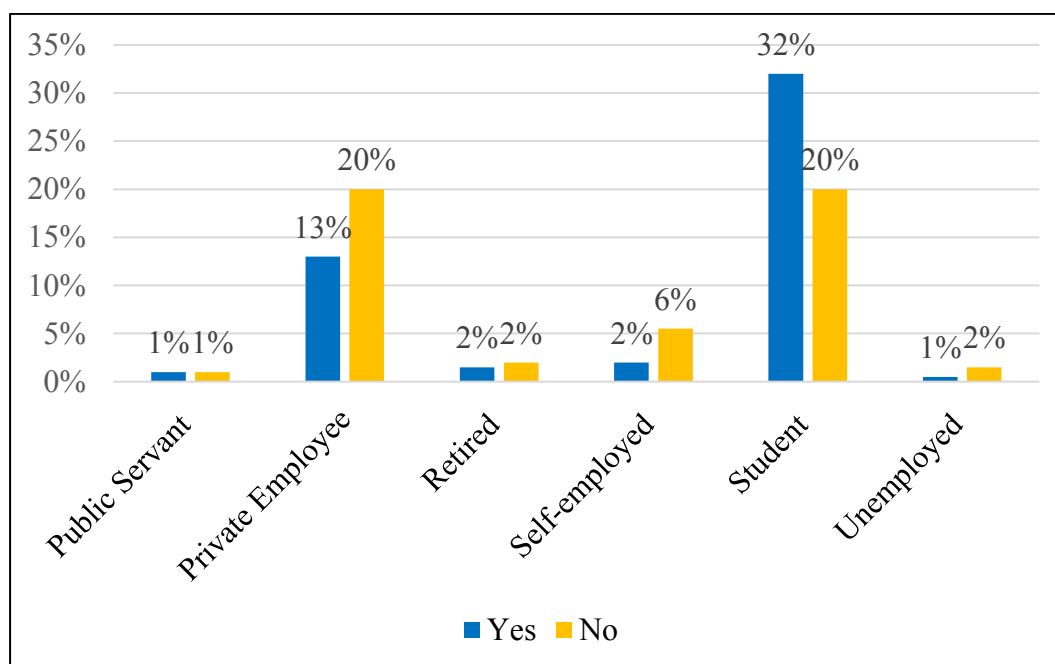


Table 4.9 depicts the results on the awareness of respondents to BRI by occupation. Based on the graph, 32% of the respondents that have not heard of BRI before are from students. The reason may be due to the lack of information from schools, institutions, government and public sectors or students are from fields that are not related to BRI such as medical. Moreover, there are two occupations that have the same percentage (20%) of respondents that have heard about BRI before, including private employees and students. Private employees might have heard of BRI from private organizations that have business relations with BRI. Students that have

heard of BRI could be because they are studying fields that have connection with BRI. For example, business and infrastructure fields.

Table 4.10: Respondents that Have Not Heard of BRI by Age

Age	Total Number of Respondents
20 and below	12
21-30	67
31-40	9
41-50	7
51-60	3
61 and above	2
Grand Total	100

Figure 4.10: Respondents that Have Not Heard of BRI by Age

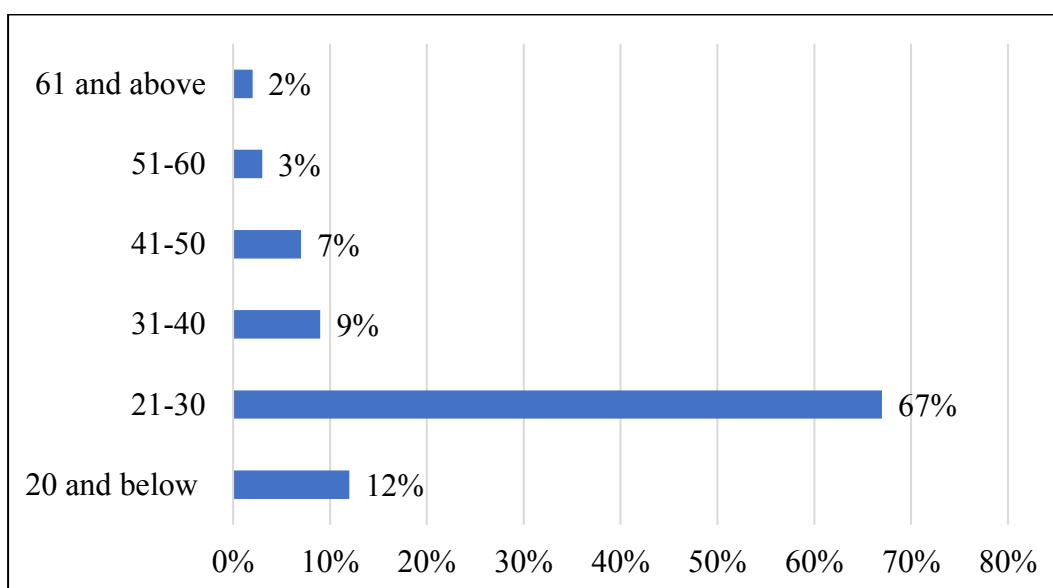


Table 4.10 depicts the total respondents that have not heard of BRI before by age. It can be seen that the age group of 21 to 30 has the highest percentage of 67% which have not heard of BRI before. It is then followed by the age group of 20 and below with the percentage of 12%. These results revealed that the respondents in Malaysia have low knowledge and awareness on BRI. According to Annamalai & Muniandy (2013), students in Malaysia read very little. Therefore, they are not keeping up with the current issues. According to Sman (2018), the education system

in Malaysia is exam-oriented which is bad for the country’s future development and its people. Thus, the involvement is inefficient.

Table 4.11: Respondents that Have Not Heard of BRI by Education Level

Education Level	Total Number of Respondents
Postgraduate	10
Pre-university / Diploma / Certificate	24
Secondary	4
Undergraduate	62
Grand Total	100

Figure 4.11: Respondents that Have Not Heard of BRI by Education Level

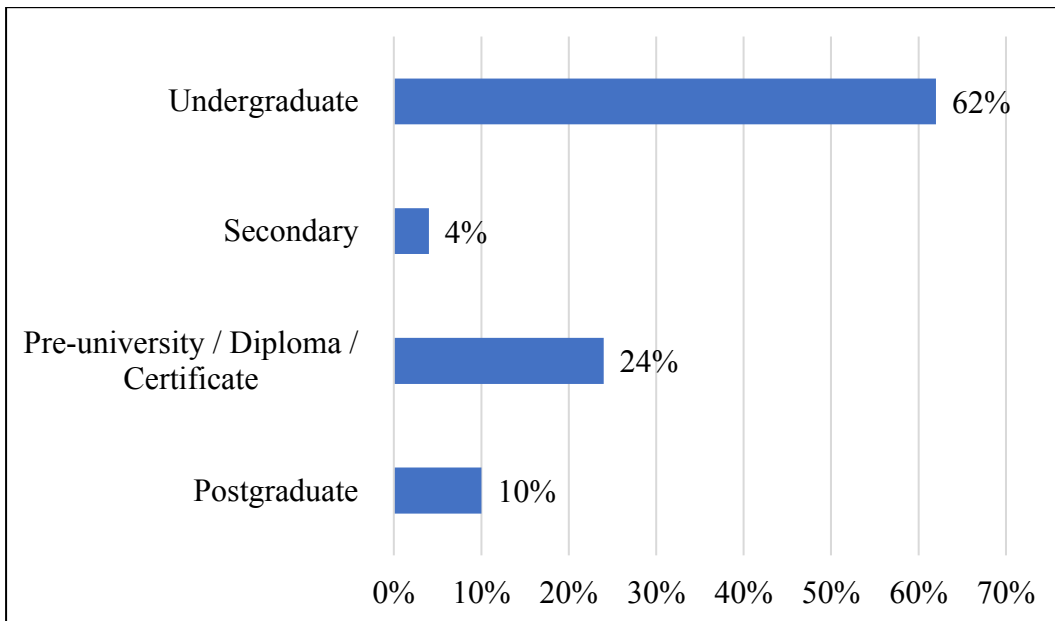


Table 4.11 shows the total respondents that have not heard of BRI before by education level. Undergraduate level recorded the highest percentage (62%) because they are not related to the field which has connection with BRI. For example, medical and psychology.

4.3 Public Understanding towards Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Projects in Malaysia

This section is to identify the public understanding towards Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Malaysia. Only 100 respondents participated in this section after answering the qualifying question from Section A.

Table 4.12: Source of Information about BRI Projects

Source	Electronic Media (Social Media, Website, Radio)	Printed News and Magazines	Seminar / Forum / Lecture	Family Members	Friends
Total Number of Respondents	74	36	26	17	15

Figure 4.12: Source of Information about BRI Projects

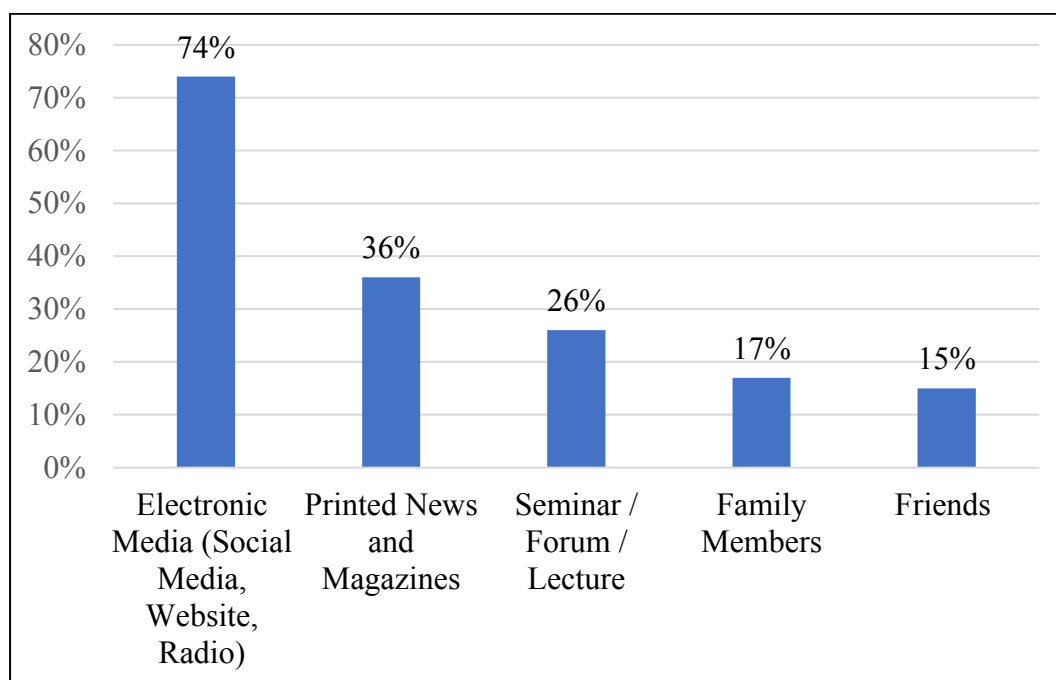


Table 4.12 shows the total number of respondents responded to the source of information about BRI projects. Electronic media recorded the highest percentage (74%) as the source of information about BRI projects. This is because electronic media is easily accessible by everyone at anytime, anywhere. In contrast, friends as the source of information about BRI projects showed a low percentage (15%).

Table 4.13: Source of Information Affects the Degree of Government Participation

	Electronic Media (Social Media, Website, Radio)	Printed News and Magazines	Seminars / Forum / Lectures	Family Members	Friends
The government should continue with the current projects.	40	18	16	10	9
The government should increase participation in more BRI-related projects.	32	15	10	6	4
The government should not continue with the current projects.	2	3	0	1	2

Figure 4.13: Source of Information Affects the Degree of Government Participation

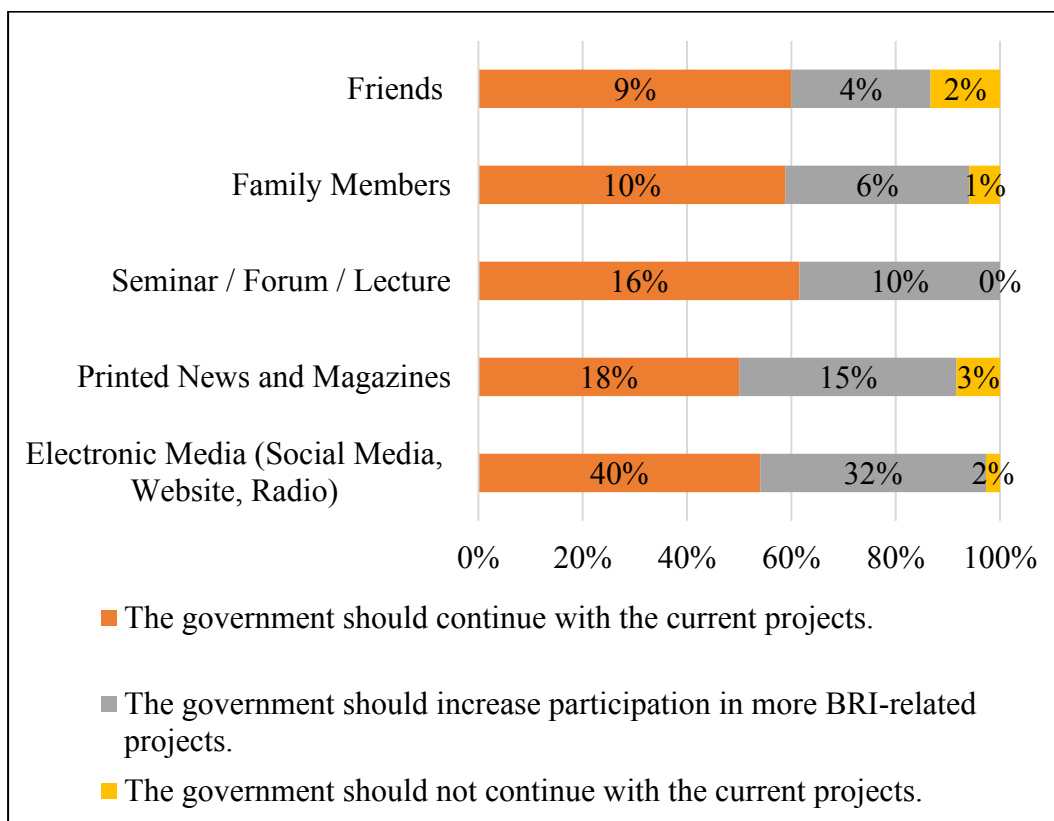


Table 4.13 shows the results of how source of information affects the degree of government participation in BRI projects. 40% of the respondents that chose electronic media as a source perceived that the government should continue with its current projects. In addition, 32% of the respondents that chose electronic media as a source perceived that the government should increase its participation in more BRI-related projects. Electronic media might have positive reviews and positive influence on the BRI projects. Therefore, these results revealed that the respondents are able to see the potential in BRI projects. Printed news and magazines recorded a 3% which is the highest among other sources, perceived that the government should not continue with the current projects. This is because of some scandals or negative news that have been released to the public by the media. Seminar, forum and lecture has no record in perceiving the government should discontinue the current projects. It may due to there is no open dialogue involve. Therefore, it is informative and neutral discussion. As a result, those respondents that have heard

of BRI before will perceive it as a good activity. This may due to the neutral stand of institutions or organizations.

Table 4.14: Knowledge on Participation of Own Country in BRI

Do you know if your country is one of the participating countries in Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?	Total Number of Respondents
I do not know	16
No	5
Yes	79
Grand Total	100

Figure 4.14: Knowledge on Participation of Own Country in BRI

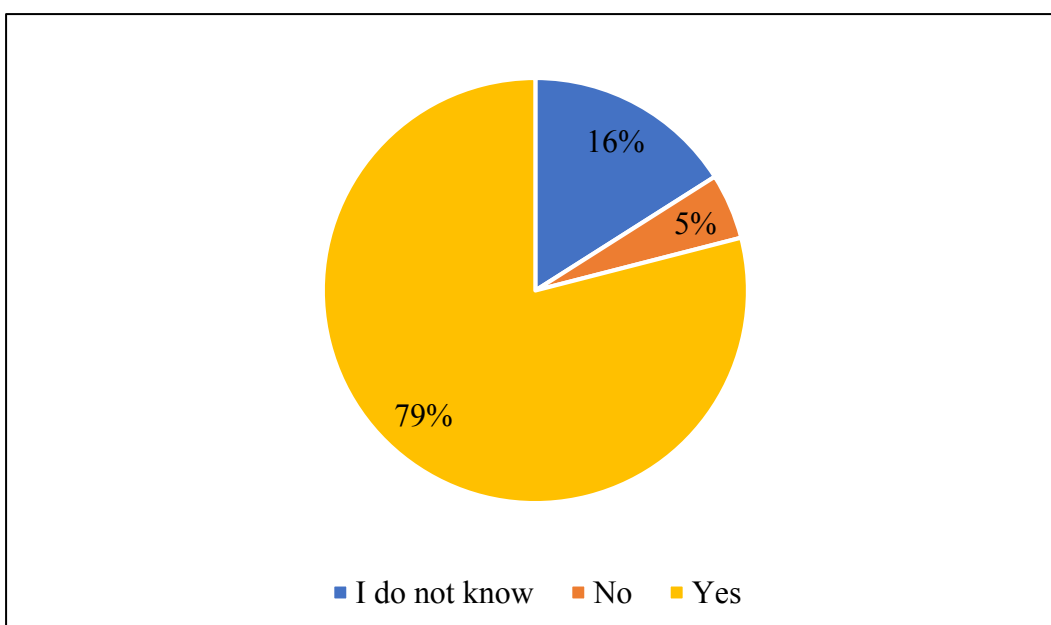


Table 4.14 shows the knowledge of the total number of respondents on participation of own country in BRI. According to the pie chart, majority of the respondents (79%) are aware that their country is one of the participating countries in BRI. 16% of the respondents revealed that they do not know whether their country is one of the participating countries in BRI and 5% of the respondents revealed that their country

is not one of the participating countries in BRI. These results showed that the public awareness on BRI is still lacking.

Table 4.15: Knowledge on Participation of Own Country in BRI by Nationality

Nationality	Do you know if your country is one of the participating countries in Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?		
	I do not know	No	Yes
Malaysian	15%	3%	74%
Non-Malaysian	1%	2%	5%
Grand Total	16%	5%	79%

Figure 4.15: Knowledge on Participation of Own Country in BRI by Malaysian

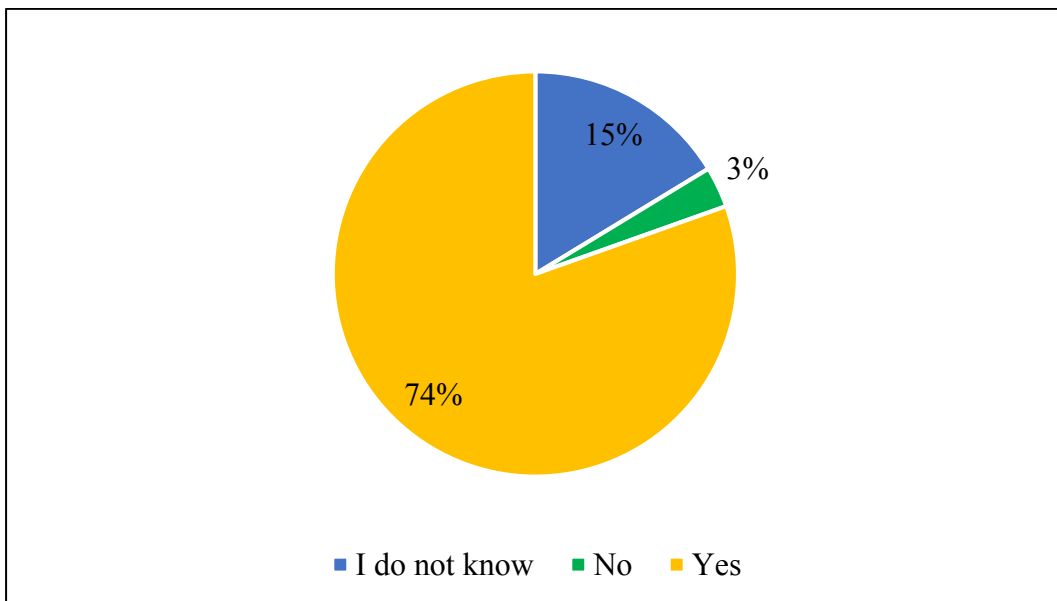


Figure 4.16: Knowledge on Participation of Own Country in BRI by Non-Malaysian

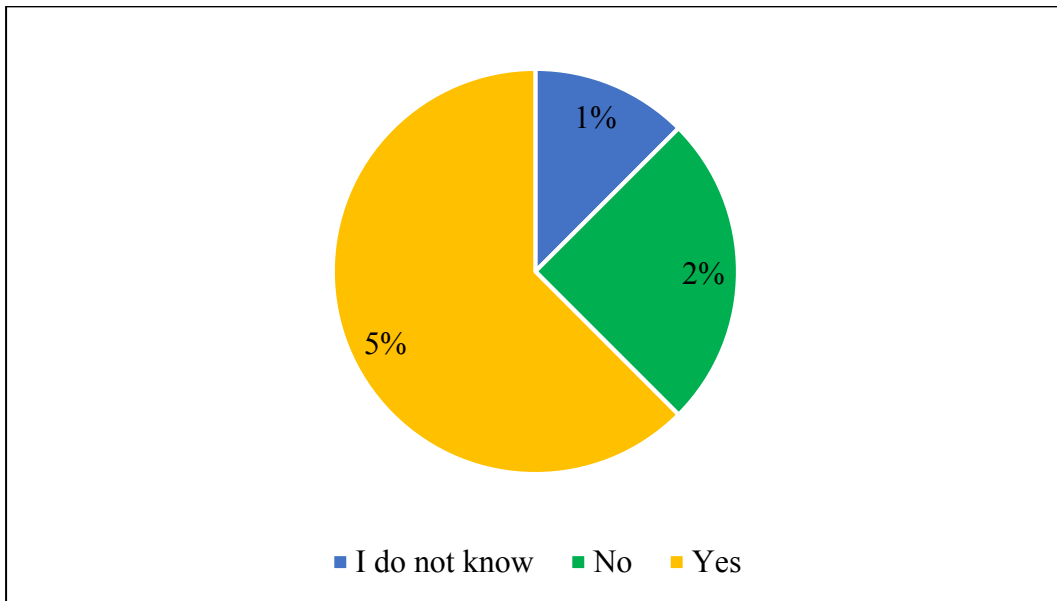


Table 4.15 depicts the knowledge of the respondents on whether their own country is one of the BRI participating countries by nationality. Malaysian recorded 74% on “Yes” and 15% on “I do not know”. For non-Malaysia, there are 5% of the respondents showed that they know their country is one of the participating countries in BRI and 1% showed that they do not know.

Table 4.16: Responses to BRI-related Projects

	Bandar Malaysia	DFTZ	Kuantan Port	Melaka Gateway	Kuala Linggi International Port	The Shore	ECRL	Forest City	MCKIP	Robotic Future City	Methanol and Methanol Derivatives Plant	Samalaju Industrial Park Steel Complex
Total Number of Respondents	32	34	23	37	8	6	74	48	54	5	10	2

Figure 4.17: Responses to BRI-related Projects

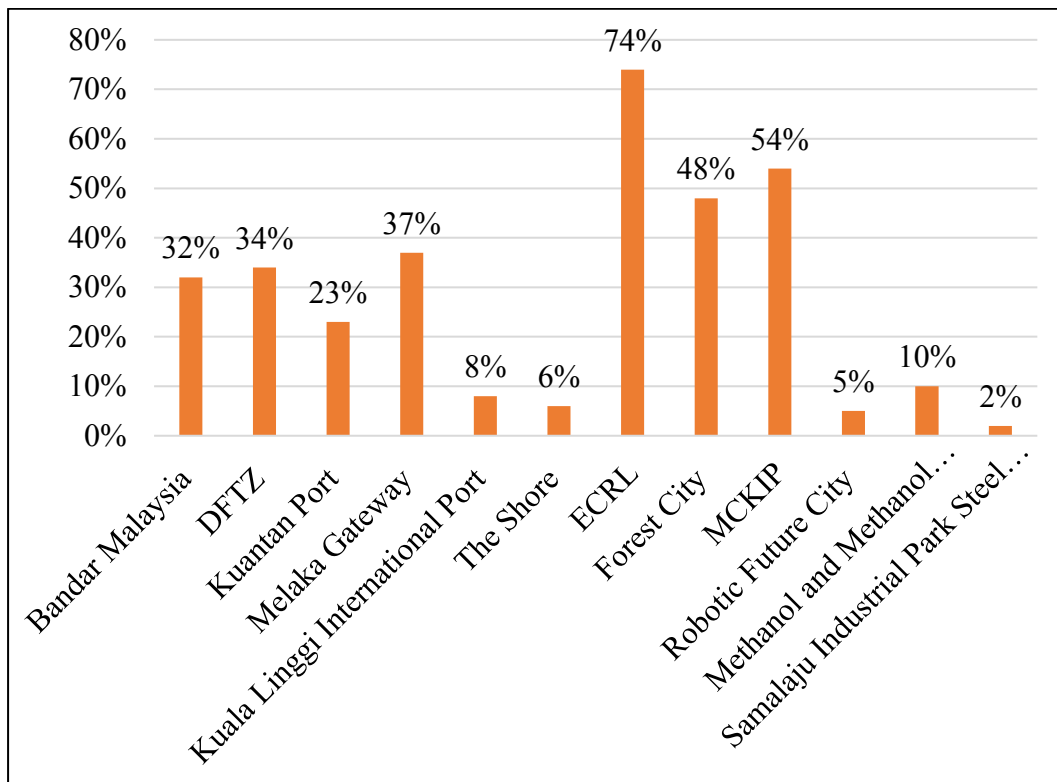


Table 4.16 shows the responses of respondents towards BRI-related projects that they have heard before. It can be seen that East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) recorded the highest percentage (74%), followed by Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park (MCKIP) and Forest City, with the percentage of 54% and 48% respectively. After the general election in 2018, there were many news about these BRI-related projects. Thus, it increases the exposure and awareness of the projects to the public. Melaka Gateway recorded 37% high may due to the legal suit involved in the project (Yatim, 2019). After the general election in 2018, the new government has cancelled the project. The developer was informed on the cancelation of “port operating license for the integrated deep-sea Melaka Gateway and cruise terminal jetty”. The developer appealed on the decision made by the government and seek for damages. According to Murali (2018), the project was left hanging due to the disputes on freehold status and the possible impact to the environment near Portuguese Settlement. The Transport Minister had issued a letter on 20 May 2019 in which the minister authorized the appeal letter dated 14 November 2018 (Yatim, 2019). Hence, the developer is allowed to have cruise jetty license and deep sea port license, as

well as the development on the project. Digital Free Trade Zone (DFTZ) recorded 34% because of the involvement of Alibaba in Malaysia. Moreover, Bandar Malaysia recorded 32% which is considered low among the other projects may due to the scandal of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (Zainul, 2019). Respondents only focus on the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) which have caused the Bandar Malaysia project to have low percentage. MCKIP is linked with Kuantan Port but respondents are unclear with the objectives of the projects which led to a low percentage (23%).

Table 4.17: Responses to the Location of DFTZ

Responses to Location of DFTZ	Total Number of Respondents
I do not know	52
KLIA Aeropolis, Selangor	27
Port Klang, Selangor	19
Subang Airport, Selangor	2
Grand Total	100

Figure 4.18: Responses to the Location of DFTZ

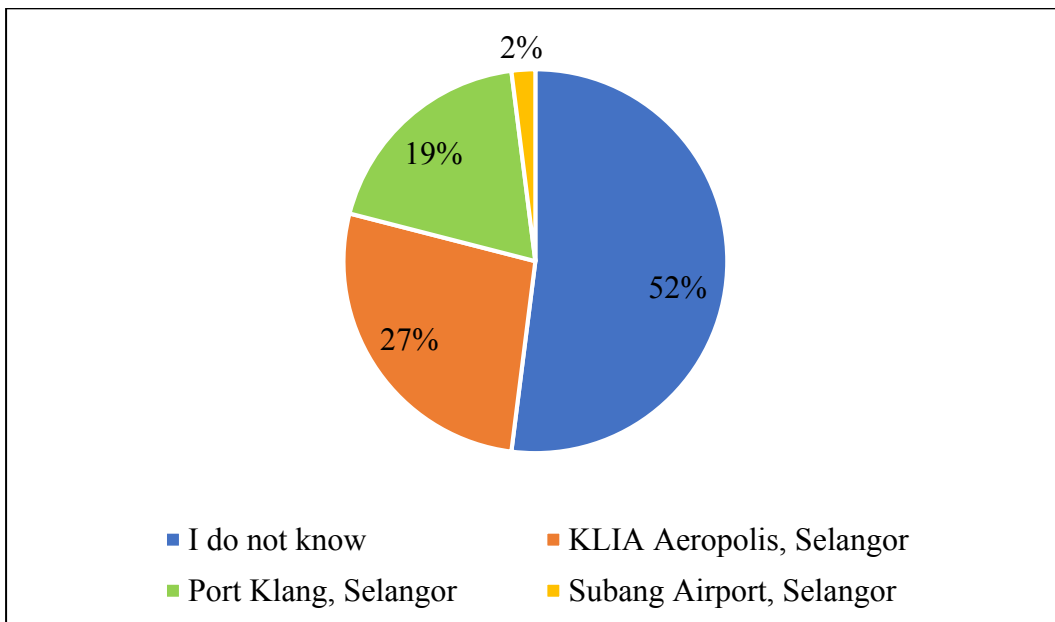


Table 4.17 shows the total number of respondents on the location of Digital Free Trade Zone (DFTZ). 52% of the respondents do not know the location of DFTZ and 27% of respondents have the knowledge of the location of DFTZ, which is at KLIA Aeropolis. 19% of the respondents responded on Port Klang and 2% on Subang Airport have shown that they do not have the knowledge on the location of DFTZ. There may be too many contradict information that will confuse the public.

Table 4.18: Responses to the Location of DFTZ for Respondents that Have Heard Before about DFTZ

Responses	Total Number of Respondents
Correct	44
Incorrect	27
I do not know	29

Figure 4.19: Responses to the Location of DFTZ for Respondents that Have Heard Before about DFTZ

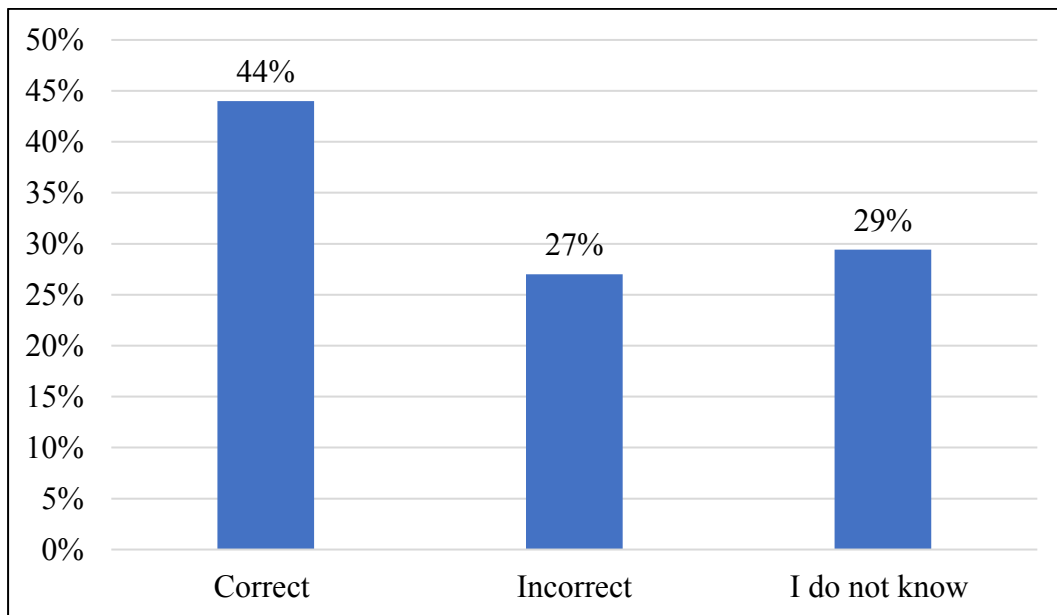


Table 4.18 depicts the responses to the location of DFTZ for respondents that have heard about DFTZ. The graph illustrates 44% of respondents that have heard of DFTZ before have answered correctly towards the location of DFTZ. The graph also shows the respondents that have heard of DFTZ before but do not know about the location of DFTZ and respondents who answered incorrectly are 29% and 27% respectively. In short, 29% of the respondents have heard about DFTZ but they do not know about the location of DFTZ.

Table 4.19: Responses to the Revised Route of ECRL

Responses to Revised Route of East Coast Rail Link (ECRL)	Total Number of Respondents
Gombak to Kota Bharu	17
I do not know	42
Port Klang to Kota Bharu	21
Port Klang to Tumpat	5
Putrajaya Sentral to Kota Bharu	15
Grand Total	100

Figure 4.20: Responses to the Revised Route of ECRL

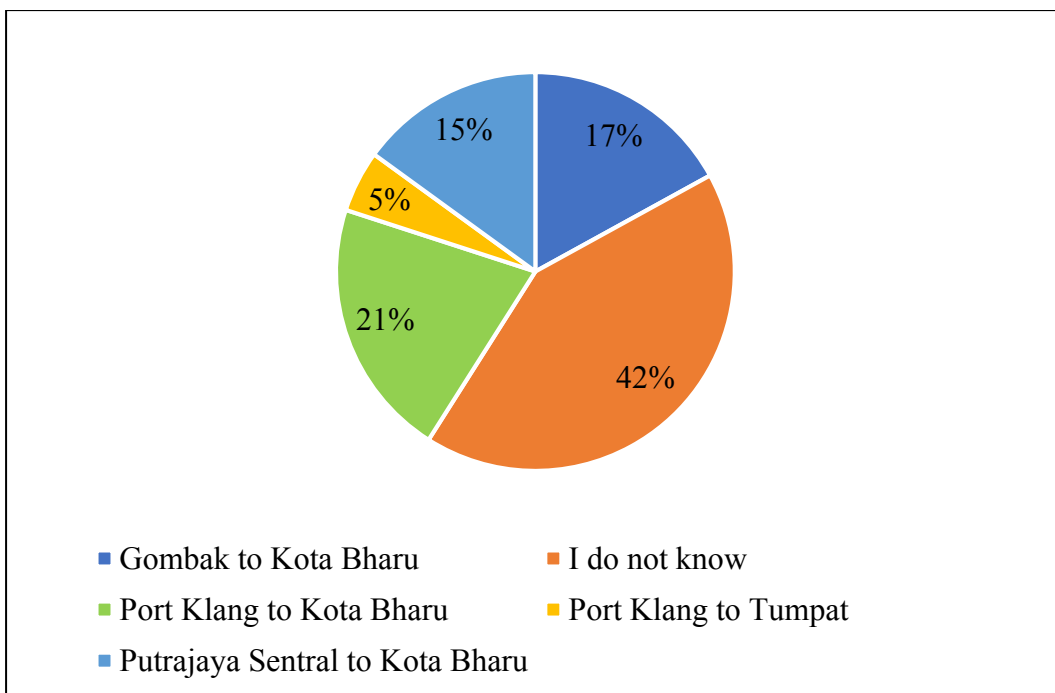


Table 4.19 depicts the responses to the revised route of East Coast Rail Link (ECRL). Out of 100 respondents, 42% of respondents do not know the revised route of ECRL. This shows the majority of the respondents do not have the understanding towards ECRL project. The pie chart also illustrates 21% of respondents are aware that the revised route of ECRL is from Port Klang to Kota Bharu.

Table 4.20: Responses to the Revised Route of ECRL for Respondents that Have Heard Before about ECRL

Responses	Total Number of Respondents
Correct	26
Incorrect	38
I do not know	36

Figure 4.21: Responses to the Revised Route of ECRL for Respondents that Have Heard Before about ECRL

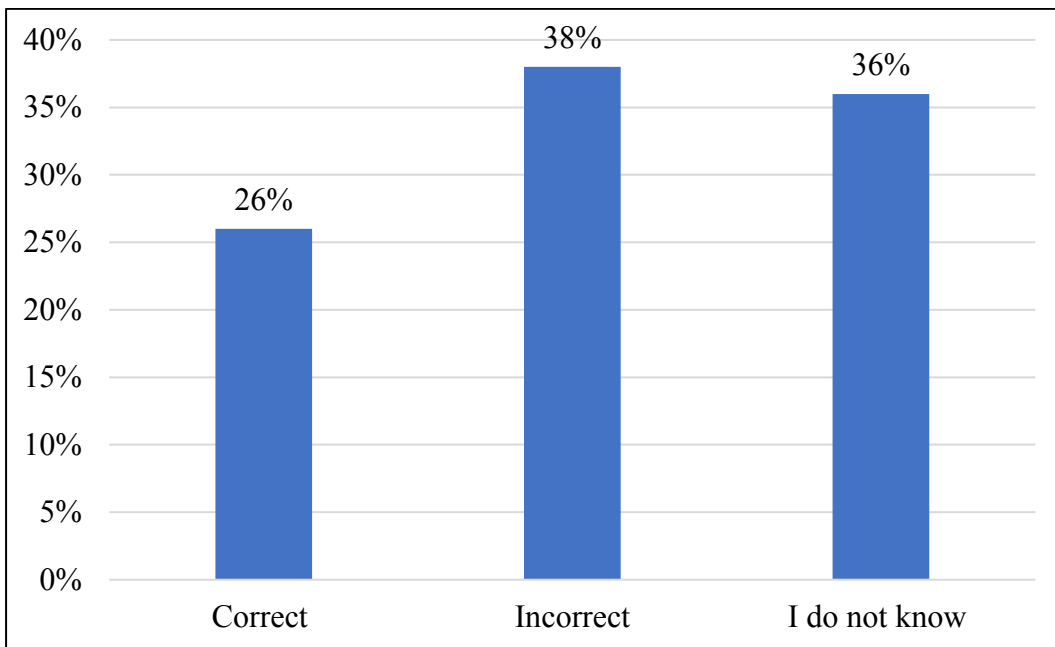


Table 4.20 shows the responses to the revised route of ECRL for respondents that have heard before about ECRL. The graph illustrates 38% of respondents who have heard about ECRL answered incorrectly on the revised route of ECRL and 36% of respondents recorded that they do not know the revised route of ECRL. In contrast, only 26% of respondents that have heard about ECRL answered correctly on the revised route of ECRL.

Table 4.21: Responses to MCKIP only allow FDI from China

Responses to MCKIP only allow FDI from China	Total Number of Respondents
I do not know	46
No	29
Yes	25
Grand Total	100

Figure 4.22: Responses to MCKIP only allow FDI from China

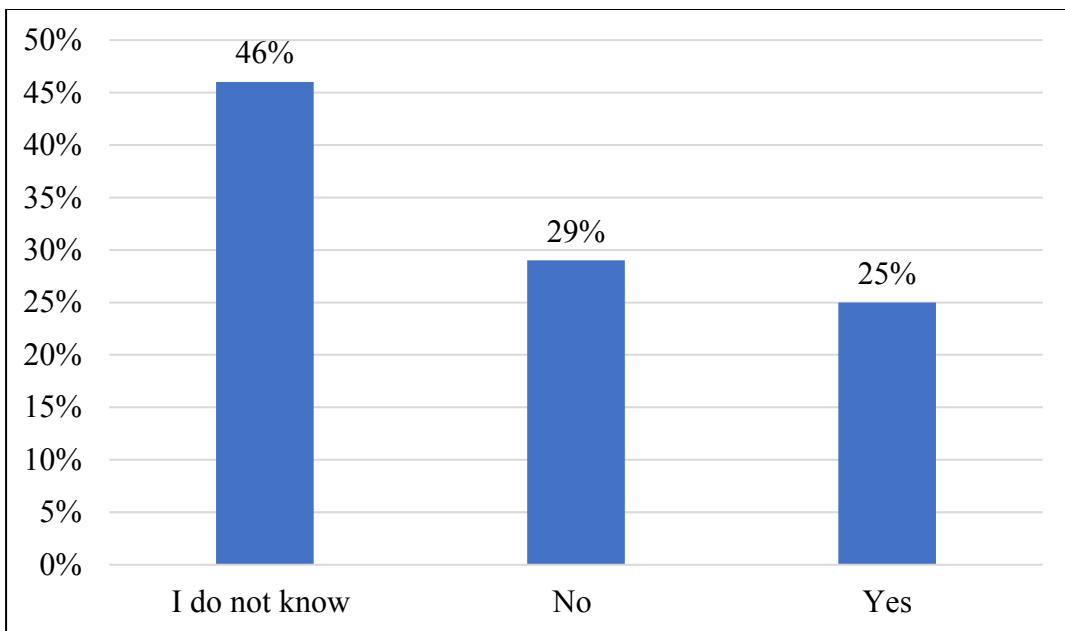


Table 4.21 shows the total number of respondents to MCKIP only allows foreign direct investment (FDI) from China. Out of 100 respondents, 46% of respondents do not know whether MCKIP only allow FDI from China. 29% recorded that MCKIP do not only allow FDI from China. Moreover, about 25% respondents believed that MCKIP only allow FDI from China. These results revealed that respondents in Malaysia are not conscious with the involvement of MCKIP in FDI.

Table 4.22: Responses to MCKIP only Allow FDI from China for Respondents that Have Heard Before about MCKIP

Responses	Total Number of Respondents
Correct	37
Incorrect	31
I do not know	31

Figure 4.23: Responses to MCKIP only Allow FDI from China for Respondents that Have Heard Before about MCKIP

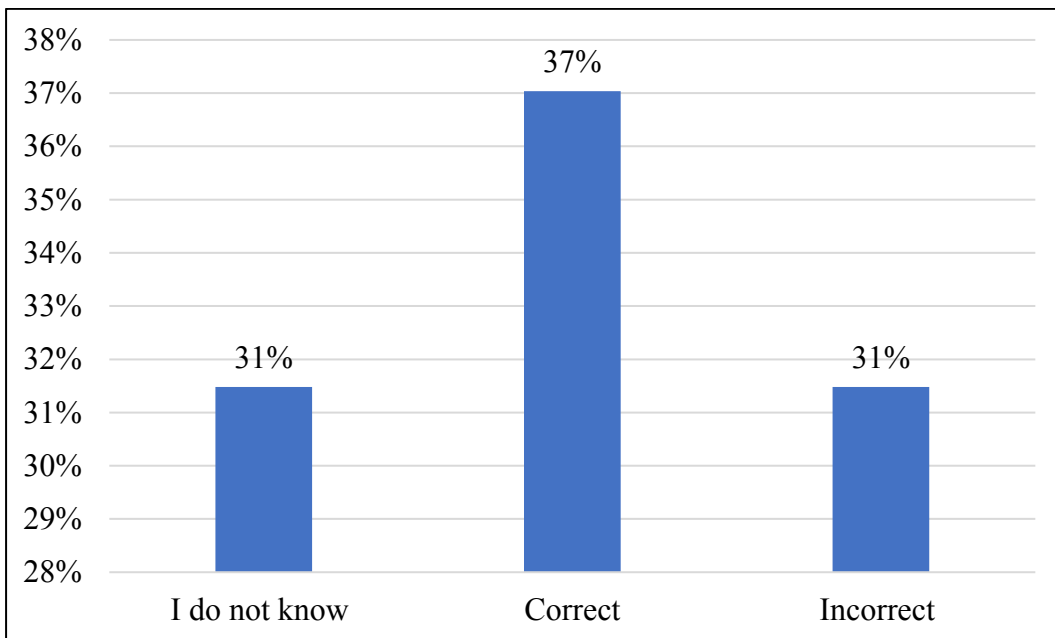


Table 4.22 depicts the responses to MCKIP only allow FDI from China for respondents that have heard before about MCKIP. Out of 100, 37% of respondents are aware that MCKIP do not only allow FDI from China. In contrast, equal number of respondents (31%) do not know and believe that MCKIP only allow FDI from China.

In short, these results clearly revealed that majority of the respondents that have heard about DFTZ, ECRL and MCKIP do not understand and have the knowledge on these projects. According to Carvalho, Sivanandam, Rahim and Tan (2019), the ECRL route is realigned between Kota Baru, Kelantan to Dungun, Terengganu and

between Mentakab, Pahang to Port Klang. The stations that have been cancelled include ITT Gombak, Telaga Papan, Jelawat, Bentong, Gombak Utara, Pengkalan Kubor and Wakaf Bahru. The ECRL route keeps changing due to political issues.

4.4 Section C: Perception towards Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Projects in Malaysia

This section is to identify the public perception towards Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Malaysia. Only 100 respondents participated in this section after answering the qualifying question from Section A.

Table 4.23: Perception towards BRI Projects in Malaysia

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park (MCKIP) encourages technology and knowledge transfer.	1	6	34	40	19
Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park (MCKIP) will increase foreign direct investment.	1	2	26	58	13
Digital Free Trade Zone (DFTZ) increases export of Small and Medium Enterprise (SME).	1	3	31	44	21
Digital Free Trade Zone (DFTZ) leads to intense competition in the local market.	1	4	32	45	18
East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) creates more job opportunities.	2	3	22	47	26
Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) stimulates the Malaysian's economy.	1	4	21	47	27

Figure 4.24: Perception towards BRI Projects in Malaysia

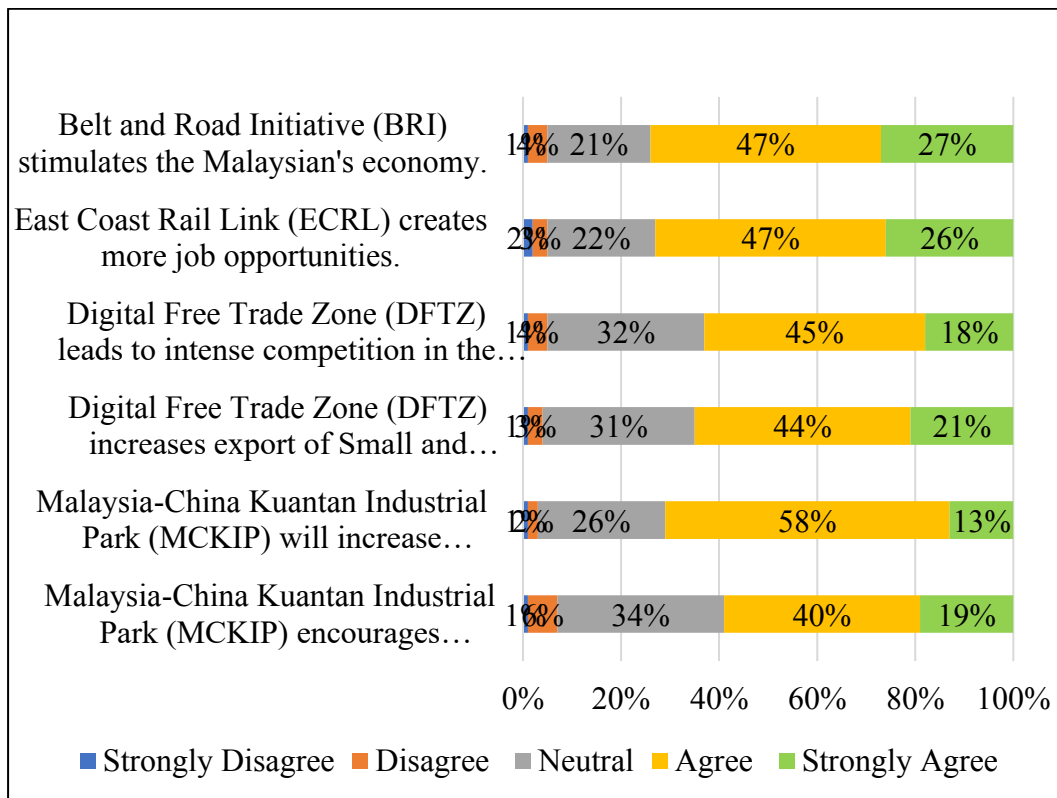


Table 4.23 shows the total number of respondents on the perception towards Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Malaysia. Out of 100 respondents, 27% of respondents strongly agree and 47% of respondents agree that the BRI will stimulate Malaysia’s economy. The graph also shows the respondents who strongly agree and agree that ECRL will create more job opportunities to the country, are recorded at 26% and 47% respectively. In addition, 18% and 45% of respondents strongly agree and agree that DFTZ will lead to intense competition in the local market respectively. 21% of respondents strongly agree and 44% of respondents agree that DFTZ will increase the export of Small and Medium Enterprise (SME). Moreover, majority of the respondents strongly agree (13%) and agree (58%) that MCKIP will increase foreign direct investment in Malaysia. Respondents in Malaysia also strongly agree (19%) and agree (40%) that MCKIP will encourage technology and knowledge transfer.

Out of the 100 respondents, about 6% of the respondents disagree that MCKIP will encourage technology and knowledge transfer and 2% of the respondents strongly disagree that ECRL will create more job opportunities.

According to Midoun and Ismail (2018), the free trade zone is an efficient tool to give the economy growth a push and connect different states in the country. The free trade zone can create products for exports, attract foreign currency and develop an economic bridge that can help the local companies. Moreover, industrial parks have given positive impacts to the business in a country (Noufal & Ramachandran, 2016). It is beneficial because it uses modern technologies and innovations. This brings economic and innovative potential, thus, creates international know-how. The free trade zone supports the modernisation and reconstruction of industries. It conditions the environment for the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and connects them with other world-class companies. Therefore, it creates job opportunities, labour productivity, ability to cooperate and the capabilities for research.

In short, although some of the respondents have low knowledge and understanding towards these BRI projects but they still perceive it as a good activity for the country's economy. This can be seen through the results as it shows high percentage of respondents strongly agree and agree that BRI projects are good activities for the country.

Table 4.24: Responses to the Degree of Government Participation in BRI Projects

Degree of Government Participation in BRI Projects	Total Number of Respondents
The government should continue with the current projects.	57
The government should increase participation in more BRI-related projects.	40
The government should not continue with the current projects.	3
Grand Total	100

Figure 4.25: Responses to the Degree of Government Participation in BRI Projects

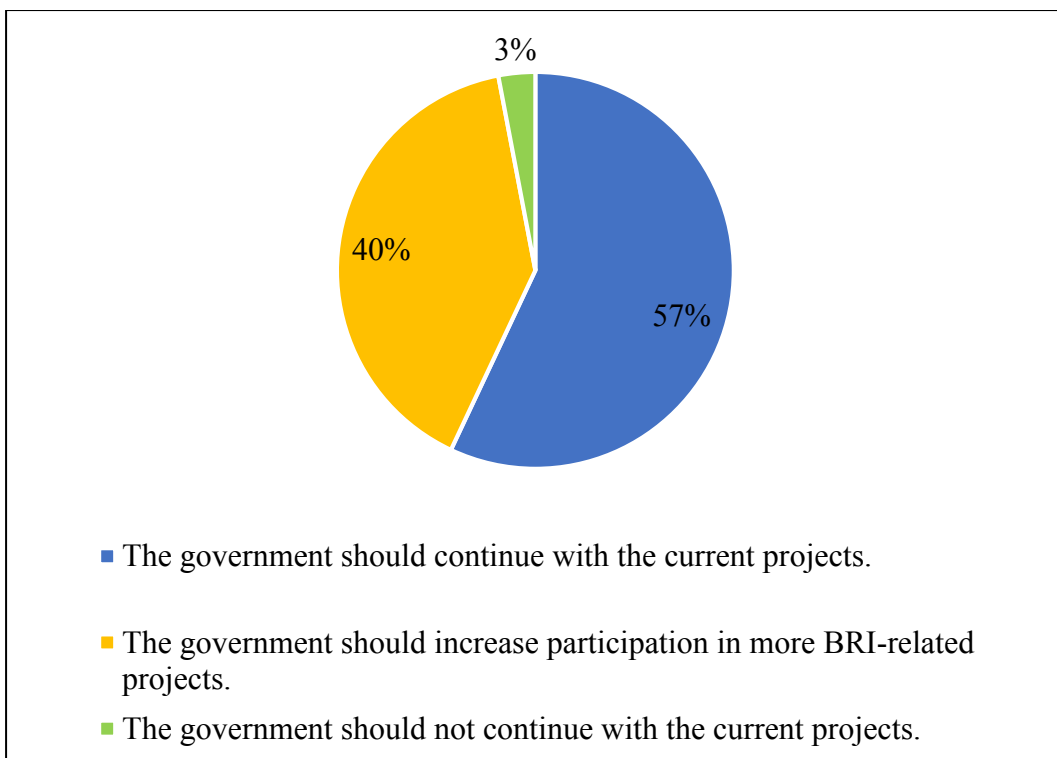


Table 4.24 shows the responses towards the degree of government participation in BRI projects. The pie chart illustrates 57% of the respondents believed that the government should continue with the current projects. There are about 40% of respondents believed that the government should increase their participation in

more BRI-related projects. In contrast, only 3% of the respondents have negative perceptions towards the BRI projects and feel that the government should not continue with the current projects. These results revealed that majority of the respondents feel that the government should continue and increase their participation in BRI projects as they perceive it to be good for the country's economy.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, all the empirical results of data collection are clearly shown in the form of figures and tables. It can be seen that out of the 200 respondents, there are only 100 respondents have heard about Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) before. Further analysis has been conducted from the 100 respondents that have heard about BRI before. The respondents in Malaysia have low level of understanding towards BRI projects in Malaysia. Although some respondents have heard of the BRI projects involved, but the responses that this study has received are not as it. The respondents might have heard of the BRI projects, but they do not seem to understand or have the knowledge on it. Despite of that, majority of the respondents have positive perception towards the BRI projects in Malaysia. They perceive it to be good for the country's economy.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Introduction

Chapter 5 explains the summary, implications, limitations and recommendations of this study. This chapter summarizes the objectives, methodology used and the results of the findings. Several parties will be discussed for the implications of the study. There are also a few limitations during the progress of the study. Recommendations will be explained for future studies.

5.1 Summary

The objectives of this study are to examine the public understanding towards the BRI projects in Malaysia and to assess the public perception towards the involvement of Malaysia in BRI. This study is conducted through Internet survey. The survey is distributed to 200 respondents in Malaysia. Based on the statistical results, majority of the respondents have heard of some of the BRI-related projects before, but only less than half of the respondents answered correctly on questions such as the location of Digital Free Trade Zone (DFTZ), revised route of East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) and whether Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park (MCKIP) only allow foreign direct investment (FDI) from China. Out of the 100 respondents, 44% of the respondents answered correctly on the location of DFTZ and 26% of the respondents answered correctly on the revised route of ECRL. In addition, 37% of respondents are aware that MCKIP do not only allow FDI from China.

As for the public perception towards BRI projects in Malaysia, majority of the respondents have positive attitude towards it. Majority of the respondents perceive that BRI is good for the country's economy. Results show that the respondents might not have heard or know about BRI, perceived it as a good activity. Thus, it is beneficial to the business and the country. More investments and opportunities will

be created through these projects. Majority of the respondents also agree that the government should continue and increase its participation in more BRI-related projects.

5.2 Implications of the Study

This research paper aims to study the public understanding and perception towards Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Malaysia.

Several parties act as the key drivers in order to gain better understanding and perception of the public towards BRI projects in Malaysia. The reason of involving different parties is because they target different audiences. First of all, the government needs to have a clear framework and regulations on the BRI projects. The government is able to ensure the accuracy and transparency of information for BRI projects. In Malaysia, the information flow on BRI projects are less effective. There are also too many unclear and inaccurate information regarding the projects. This will present an unclear and hysteria image and cause confusion to the public as they are unsure of what the projects are about.

Besides, the organizations need to promote more on the BRI projects in Malaysia. For instance, private organizations or trade associations. BRI projects typically involve large corporations and businesspeople. Private organizations can capture the opportunity to promote and involve into BRI-related projects. Thus, it helps to create awareness and understanding about BRI to the public. In addition, trade association also plays an important role. The associations can organize more talks and seminars regarding BRI projects in Malaysia. For instance, the organizations can help the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to facilitate linkages.

Moreover, media should also play its part in increasing the public understanding and perception towards BRI projects in Malaysia. Undoubtedly, media is effective in improving public awareness. The media has efficient flow of real information. The media also provides opportunities to educate the public on BRI projects in

Malaysia. Thus, media provides neutral attitude which results in positive public perception. In this research paper, results have shown that respondents who chose electronic media as the source of information perceived that the government should continue and increase its participation in BRI projects.

Last but not least, education institutions or universities should engage in strengthening the public understanding and perception towards BRI projects in Malaysia. With more researches being done in universities, it can help to engage students and academics into BRI. With more BRI researches being exposed, universities now can collaborate with other international universities to create more public awareness and understanding on BRI. As a result, students are also able to gain benefits through the BRI projects if they have the knowledge of it and perceive it as a good activity.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of this study is the limited information of literatures. The reason to this is because the BRI which was launched in 2013 is still considered as new in the whole world. Therefore, this study is not able to get the data on the public understanding and perception towards BRI projects in Malaysia. Despite of that, this study was required to access to literatures aspects on foreign direct investment, infrastructure and trade agreements.

Moreover, the limitation of the study includes possibility to survey fraud. As the results from data collection through online survey, this study may experience fraud during data collection. This study might get fake answers if the respondents do not have the free time to answer the survey. Therefore, the results will be less accountable and less accurate. In order to get reliable and accurate data, this study had to review the data collected before proceeding to the next stage.

In addition, this study was conducted as descriptive study rather than inferential study. Therefore, hypotheses were not tested in this study. Due to the projects are

still on-going or in progress, the public were not able to assess and evaluate the benefits and effects of the BRI projects.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

With the sample size of 200 respondents is insufficient to get a conclusive result. This study strongly advises the next researcher to increase the sample size. Although this study had 200 respondents, but only 100 respondents have heard of BRI before and proceeded to the questions on public understanding and perception towards BRI projects in Malaysia. The next researcher is suggested to increase the sample size of the study. With a larger sample size, it increases the accuracy and accountability of the data.

With the limitation of literatures available, the future researchers are encouraged to access more in depth into the BRI projects in Malaysia. The future researchers may access into a more specific topic related to BRI. This study encourages the future researchers to access into topics that target a particular population such as students.

As the BRI projects are still on going and in progress, the public were not able to evaluate the benefits of it. However, the public will be able to evaluate the benefits of BRI projects as time pass by.

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APPENDIX

A Study on Public Understanding Towards Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Projects in Malaysia

Greetings! My name is Lee Si Ying and I am currently pursuing my Bachelor's degree in International Business (Hons) at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). I am conducting this research for my Final Year Project on the public understanding towards Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Malaysia.

Participation of this survey is voluntary. All information will be kept PRIVATE and CONFIDENTIAL and will be used solely for academic purpose. The completion of this survey will take you approximately 10 minutes. Your participation would be appreciated and you will receive no direct benefits in this study. Please do not hesitate to email me at siyinggglee@utar.my, if you require any further information. Thank you.

您好！我的名字是李思颖，我目前正在拉曼大学攻读国际商务（荣誉）学士学位。我正在准备毕业论文的研究项目，目的是了解公众对马来西亚“一带一路”倡议（BRI）的理解与看法。

您所提供的信息将保持私密和保密，仅用于学术目的。完成此调查大约需要10分钟。您是自愿参与本问卷调查，您将不会在本研究中获得直接的好处。如果您需要任何进一步的信息，请不要犹豫，发送电子邮件至 siyinggglee@utar.my。谢谢。

Salam sejahtera! Saya Lee Si Ying, kini saya mengambil Ijazah Sarjana Muda dalam Perniagaan Antarabangsa (Kepujian) di Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). Saya menjalankan kajian ini untuk Projek Akhir Tahun saya mengenai persefahaman orang ramai terhadap projek "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) di Malaysia.

Penyertaan kajian ini adalah secara sukarela. Segala maklumat yang diberikan dalam soal selidik ini adalah SULIT dan hanya digunakan untuk tujuan akademik semata-mata. Masa untuk menghabiskan soal selidik ini akan mengambil lebih kurang 10 minit. Penyertaan anda amat dihargai tetapi anda tidak akan menerima sebarang manfaat langsung dalam kajian ini. Sila jangan teragak-agak untuk menghantar e-mel kepada saya di siyinggglee@utar.my, jika anda memerlukan maklumat lanjut. Terima kasih.

* Required

Section A: Demographics 基本背景 Demografiks

This section is to allow the researcher to understand basic background information of the participant of this survey for future data analyze.

本部分是为了让研究人员了解参与者的基本背景，以便进行未来的数据分析。

Bahagian ini bertujuan untuk membolehkan pengkaji memahami latar belakang asas peserta kajian ini untuk menganalisis data pada masa depan.

1. 1. Gender 性别 Jantina *

Mark only one oval.

- Female 女性 Perempuan
- Male 男性 Lelaki

2. 2. Nationality 国籍 Kewarganegaraan *

Mark only one oval.

- Malaysian 马来西亚公民 Warganegara Malaysia
- Non-Malaysian 非马来西亚公民 Bukan Warganegara Malaysia

3. 3. Age 年龄 Umur *

Mark only one oval.

- 20 and below 二十岁或以下 20 tahun dan ke bawah
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61 and above 六十一岁或以上 61 tahun dan ke atas

4. 4. Education Level 教育程度 Tahap Pendidikan *

Mark only one oval.

- Secondary 中等教育 Sekolah Menengah
- Pre-university / Diploma / Certificate 大学先修班 / 文凭水平 / 证书水平
- Undergraduate 本科生 Ijazah Sarjana Muda
- Postgraduate 研究生 Pascasiswazah

5. 5. Occupation 职业 Pekerjaan *

Mark only one oval.

- Student 学生 Pelajar
- Government 政府 Kerajaan
- Private 私人 Swasta
- Self-employed 自雇人士 Bekerja Sendiri
- Unemployed 失业 Tidak Bekerja
- Retired 退休 Pesara

6. Have you heard about Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) before? 您之前听说过“一带一路”倡议 (BRI) 吗? Pernahkah anda mendengar tentang "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI)? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes 有 Ya
- No 没有 Tidak

Section B: Public Understanding towards Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Malaysia 公众对马来西亚一带一路倡议 (BRI) 项目的理解 Persefahaman Orang Ramai terhadap projek "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) di Malaysia.

This section is to identify the public understanding towards Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Malaysia.

此部分是为了了解公众对在马来西亚进行与“一带一路”倡议 (BRI) 有关的项目之理解。

Bahagian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti pemahaman orang ramai terhadap projek "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) di Malaysia.

7. 1. How did you know about Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects? 您是怎么知道“一带一路”倡议 (BRI) 项目的? Bagaimanakah anda mengetahui tentang projek "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI)? *

You may choose more than one option.
Check all that apply.

- Friends 朋友 Rakan-rakan
- Family Members 家庭成员 Keluarga
- Electronic Media (Social Media, Website, Radio) 电子媒体 (社交媒体, 网站, 广播电台) Media Elektronik (Media Sosial, Laman Web, Radio)
- Printed News and Magazines 印刷新闻和杂志 Cetakan Berita dan Majalah
- Seminar / Forum / Lecture 研讨会 / 论坛 / 演讲 Seminar / Forum / Kuliah

8. 2. Do you know if your country is one of the participating countries in Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)? 您是否知道您所在的国家/地区是“一带一路”倡议 (BRI) 的参与国之一? Adakah anda tahu yang negara anda ialah salah satu negara yang mengambil bahagian dalam "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI)? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes 是 Ya
- No 不是 Tidak
- I do not know 我不知道 Saya tidak tahu

9. 3. Choose the following BRI-related projects that you have heard before. 选择您之前听过的以下与“一带一路”倡议 (BRI) 相关的项目。 Sila pilih berikut yang berkaitan dengan projek "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) yang pernah anda dengar. *

You may choose more than one option.
Check all that apply.

- Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park (MCKIP) 马来西亚-中国关丹产业园
- Forest City, Johor 柔佛森林城市
- Methanol and Methanol Derivatives Plant, Sarawak 砂拉越炼油厂及综合石油与天然气中心
- East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) 东海岸铁路计划
- Bandar Malaysia 大马城
- Digital Free Trade Zone (DFTZ) 数码自贸区
- Robotic Future City, Johor 柔佛机器人未来城市项目
- Kuantan Port 关丹港
- Melaka Gateway 马六甲皇京港
- Kuala Linggi International Port, Malacca 马六甲瓜拉宁宜国际港
- Samalaju Industrial Park Steel Complex, Sarawak 砂拉越州钢铁工业园项目
- The Shore, Sabah 沙巴综合产业发展项目

10. 4. Digital Free Trade Zone (DFTZ) is located at ____. 数字自由贸易区 (DFTZ) 位于 ____. Zon Perdagangan Bebas Digital (DFTZ) terletak di ____.*

Mark only one oval.

- Port Klang, Selangor 巴生港, 雪兰莪 Pelabuhan Klang, Selangor
- KLIA Aeropolis, Selangor 吉隆坡国际机场航空城, 雪兰莪
- Subang Airport, Selangor 梳邦机场, 雪兰莪 Lapangan Terbang Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah, Selangor
- I do not know 我不知道 Saya tidak tahu

11. 5. Which is the revised route of East Coast Rail Link (ECRL)? 东海岸铁路 (ECRL) 衔接? Yang manakah laluan yang terkini bagi Laluan Rel Pantai Timur (ECRL)? *

Mark only one oval.

- Putrajaya Sentral to Kota Bharu 布城到哥打峇鲁 Putrajaya Sentral ke Kota Bharu
- Gombak to Kota Bharu 刚拔到哥打峇鲁 Gombak ke Kota Bharu
- Port Klang to Kota Bharu 巴生港口到哥打峇鲁 Port Klang ke Kota Bharu
- Port Klang to Tumpat 巴生港口到道北 Port Klang ke Tumpat
- I do not know 我不知道 Saya tidak tahu

12. 6. Does Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park (MCKIP) only allow foreign direct investment from China? 马来西亚 - 中国关丹产业园 (MCKIP) 是否只是公开给中国直接投资者? Adakah Taman Perindustrian Malaysia-China Kuantan (MCKIP) hanya membenarkan pelaburan langsung asing dari China? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes 是 Ya
- No 不是 Tidak
- I do not know 我不知道 Saya tidak tahu

Section C: Perception towards Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Malaysia 公众对马来西亚一带一路倡议 (BRI) 项目的认知 Persepsi terhadap projek "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) di Malaysia.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by selecting the appropriate number.

(Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Neutral=3; Agree=4; Strongly Agree=5)

请评价您对以下每个陈述的认同度。

(非常不同意=1; 不同意=2; 中立=3; 同意=4; 非常同意=5)

Sila nilaikan sejauh mana anda bersetuju dengan kenyataan ini berdasarkan skala di bawah.

(Sangat Tidak Setuju=1; Tidak Setuju=2; Neutral=3; Setuju=4; Sangat Setuju=5)

13. 1. Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park (MCKIP) encourages technology and knowledge transfer. 马来西亚 - 中国关丹工业园区 (MCKIP) 鼓励技术和知识转移。 Taman Perindustrian Malaysia-China Kuantan (MCKIP) menggalakkan pertukaran teknologi dan ilmu pengetahuan. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree Sangat Tidak Setuju	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree Sangat Setuju

14. 2. Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park (MCKIP) will increase foreign direct investment. 马来西亚 - 中国关丹工业园区 (MCKIP) 提高外国直接投资。 Taman Perindustrian Malaysia-China Kuantan (MCKIP) menggalakkan pelaburan langsung asing. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree Sangat Tidak Setuju	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree Sangat Setuju

15. 3. Digital Free Trade Zone (DFTZ) increases export of Small and Medium Enterprise (SME). 数字自由贸易区 (DFTZ) 提高中小企业 (SME) 的出口。 Zon Perdagangan Bebas Digital (DFTZ) meningkatkan eksport Perusahaan Kecil dan Sederhana (PKS). *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree 非常不同意 Sangat Tidak Setuju	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree 非常同意 Sangat Setuju

16. 4. Digital Free Trade Zone (DFTZ) leads to intense competition in the local market. 数字自由贸易区 (DFTZ) 导致当地的市场有激烈的竞争。 Zon Perdagangan Bebas Digital (DFTZ) membawa persaingan yang sengit di pasaran tempatan. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree 非常不同意 Sangat Tidak Setuju	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree 非常同意 Sangat Setuju

17. 5. East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) creates more job opportunities. 东海岸铁路 (ECRL) 创造更多就业机会。 Laluan Rel Pantai Timur (ECRL) mewujudkan lebih banyak peluang pekerjaan. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree 非常不同意 Sangat Tidak Setuju	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree 非常同意 Sangat Setuju

18. 6. Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) stimulates the Malaysian's economy. "一带一路"倡议 (BRI) 刺激了马来西亚的经济。 "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) merangsang ekonomi Malaysia. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree 非常不同意 Sangat Tidak Setuju	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree 非常同意 Sangat Setuju

19. 7. Should the degree of government participation be increased in Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects? 是否应该在 "一带一路" 倡议 (BRI) 项目中增加政府参与程度? Perlukah kerajaan meningkatkan tahap penyertaan dalam projek "Belt and Road Initiative" BRI ini? *

Mark only one oval.

- The government should continue with the current projects. 政府应该继续目前的项目。 Kerajaan perlu menyambungkan dengan projek-projek semasa.
- The government should increase participation in more BRI-related projects. 政府应该增加参与更多与 BRI 相关的新项目。 Kerajaan perlu meningkatkan penyertaan dalam lebih projek berkaitan dengan BRI.
- The government should not continue with the current projects. 政府不应该继续目前的项目。 Kerajaan tidak perlu menyambung dengan projek-projek semasa.

Thank you for completing this survey! Have a nice day!