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Theme
Religion, Culture and Governance

Guest Editor
M. Moniruzzaman

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Good Governance in Malaysia: Assessing Public Perceptions on the Implementation of National Transformation Policy, 2011-2016

Norhaslinda Jamaudin*

Abstract: The attainment of good governance is often perceived to bring political stability which in turn, facilitates sound and effective government administration. In the case of Malaysia, good governance serves as the core element in public policy reforms. This can be seen through the implementation of National Transformation Policy (NTP) which was introduced in 2010. The NTP comprises of two major plans, namely Government Transformation Plan (GTP) and Economic Transformation Plan (ETP). Since its inception, the NTP has brought unprecedented changes in policy management through the establishment of the National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) and National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs). The NTP has been commended due to its inclusiveness which is in line with good governance practices. The NTP addresses fundamental policy issues in areas such as public transportation, socio-economic improvement, public sector performance and political stability. This study has revealed that the implementation of NTP has been reasonably accepted by many, despite nuances on the policy outcomes. The NTP embraces good governance principles as the study confirmed the positive association between these two. This transformation agenda seems to be the genesis of Malaysia's road to good governance. However there is still a long way to go to fully achieve the goal.

Keywords: Good Governance, National Transformation Policy, Policy Reforms, Malaysia.

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Abstrak: Pencapaian tadbir urus yang baik mampu menjamin kestabilan politik dan pengurusan pentadbiran yang lebih efektif. Oleh itu pengurusan sektor awam di Malaysia melihat tadbir urus yang baik (Good Governance) sebagai salah satu elemen terpenting dalam pembaharuan dasar. Ini dapat dilihat melalui pelaksanaan Dasar Transformasi Negara(NTP) yang telah diperkenalkan pada tahun 2010. NTP merangkumi dua dasar utama iaitu Dasar Transformasi Kerajaan(GTP) dan Dasar Transformasi Ekonomi(ETP). NTP telah membawa perubahan positif dalam pentadbiran sektor awam dan ini dapat dilihat melalui penetapan Bidang Keberhasilan Utama Negara (NKRAs) dan Bidang Keberhasilan Ekonomi Negara (NKEAs). Lembayung dasar ini adalah holistik dan merangkumi semua aspek penting dalam usaha kerajaan untuk mencapai tadbir urus negara yang baik. Diantara inisiatif- inisiatif yang dilaksanakan ialah pembaharuan dalam pengangkutan awam, penambahbaikan pembangunan ekonomi dan sosial ekonomi rakyat, mengukuhkan prestasi sektor awam dan kestabilan politik. Kajian ini mendapati pelaksanaan NTP telah diterima baik oleh semua dan menepati ciri-ciri tadbir urus yang baik. Hasil kajian menunjukkan kolerasi yang positif diantara NTP dan tadbir urus yang baik(Good Governance). Oleh itu dapat dirangkumkan bahawa agenda pembaharuan ini membentuk asas yang penting untuk mencapai kelestarian tadbir urus yang baik pada masa hadapan.

Kata Kunci: Tadbir Urus yang Baik, Dasar Transformasi Negara, Pembaharuan Dasar, Malaysia

Introduction

Improving public sector performance is vital. However, this process is often difficult and challenging. In this regard, different structural, behavioral, and policy management have been introduced and directed towards enhancing public sector performance in Malaysia. These reforms were embodied in four Outline Perspective Plans (OPPs) which are the New Economic Policy (NEP), National Development Policy (NDP), National Vision Policy (NVP), and the recently introduced National Transformation Plan (NTP).

Decades of reforms have significantly changed the social, economic and political landscape of Malaysia. The ultimate goal is to transform Malaysia into a high income and competitive nation, which remains as a primary goal under the NTP. To spearhead the national transformational agenda, the NTP was launched as an aspiration to achieve vision 2020

based on the philosophy of 1Malaysia and the slogan of ‘people first, performance now’ (GTP, 2011). The NTP espouses quality governance by promoting effectiveness, accountability, fairness and representation within government administration. In line with the new governance principles, this paradigm promotes a wide range of principles and embellishes important values that distinguish good governance from bad governance (Siddiquee, 2013). The concept of good governance has been developed by United Nation agencies and other institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and UNDP to disseminate the holistic elements of governance anchored in pluralist engagement, participative democracy to empower stakeholders while enhancing accountability and legitimacy of the government (UNDP, 2014). Some perceive good governance as an essential ingredient for progress and economic growth, while others look at it as a tool for capitalism which aims to increase third world countries’ dependency on rich countries (Farazmand, 2016). In a counter argument Khan (2016) contends that good governance does not necessarily lead to economic dependency as the relationship between these two is indiscernible (Khan, 2016).

Good governance is based on six indicators: rule of law, voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality and control of corruption. This generic model of governance presumably serves as the determinant factor that leads to effective governance. In the case of Malaysia, good governance is largely accepted as the final end in itself and this can be materialized through the implementation of NTP. The integration of good governance as the core of government policy is notable (The Sun Daily, 2017). In this regard, some believe that the transformational agenda is the key for good governance practice and with its spillover effect, the initiatives under NTP would bring large benefit to people (Zarina, 2018). The benefits could be translated into effective control of corruption, abuse of power and mismanagement (Achariam, 2015).

According to Barisan Nasional (BN) government that introduced the NTP, the policy proves to be a success as Malaysia’s score in Worldwide Governance Index (WGI) has slightly improved in all six governance indicators (World Bank, 2017). As reported, the implementation of NTP has successfully improved government effectiveness by providing better living conditions and higher quality of life (PEMANDU, 2015). However, it was argued that the policy inadequately addressed the

structural problem in governance (Siddiquee, 2014). Such contradiction has generated substantial attention to whether the transformation agenda has created a visible change in policy reforms, let alone quality governance. As such, substantial interest has been devoted to probe into the recipients' perception as their perception matters to evaluate the implementation of NTP in the context of good governance practices. Guided by good governance framework, this study endeavors to a) assess public perception on the implementation of NTP; b) examine visibility of good governance principles in the government transformational agenda within the period of 2011 to 2016; and finally c) analyze the relationship between the NTP and good governance practices in the context of policy reforms in Malaysia.

Good Governance

Governance is a highly contested concept as it can be contextualized into different dimensions. These dimensions include network governance, corporate governance, inclusiveness and sound governance. In general it could be defined as 'the act of governing' on the basis of direct and control, decision-making and system (structure and process) (McGrath & Whitty, 2015). There does not seem to be a consensus as to what governance means but scholars have agreed on the defining features of good governance, as suggested by Salahuddin et al. (2016):

the defining feature of governance is formed on three major components namely process, content and delivery. The *process* of governance involves values such as transparency and accountability, and *content* involves values such as justice and equity. But governance is more than this, for it also involves *deliverables*: a government must ensure that the citizens, especially the poorest, have their basic needs fulfilled and have a life with dignity. It is only when all three conditions are fulfilled that governance becomes good governance (p. 247).

The governance paradigm has undoubtedly gone beyond institutions, civic actors, processes and policy contents to include policy outcomes, stakeholders' interest and the empowerment of the public in the policy process. In a broader sense, governance exists in a polycentric network and constitutes of a complex network which comprises of official, market, civil society and hybrid agencies (Scholte, 2012). The essence of governance, therefore, includes justice, fairness, equity, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and participation by engaging

everyone in policy decisions (Vap Kioe Sheng, 2014). Its proponents argue that the fulfillment of these criteria would accelerate performance of the government leading to good governance practices. However, some argue that due to its complex nature, in practice, governance might encounter significant coordination and accountability issues which in turn, may lead to major shortfalls in effectiveness and legitimacy (Scholte, 2010).

The focus on good governance started in the late 1980s when the term “good governance” was casually mentioned by the World Bank report in 1989 (McGrath and Whitty, 2015). This robust governance framework serves as the final ends that can be associated with specific outcomes (World Bank, 2016). In this regard, reform agenda must embrace good governance paradigm as it considers as the best practice to facilitate progress and economic development which is fundamental for developing countries (UNDP, 2012). However, this is not always the case as some scholar viewed positive linear relationship of good governance and development is scanty as a government may experience economic growth but still suffers deficit in governance (Salahuddin, et al, 2016). Although governance is perceived as a vital precondition for economic growth, empirical evidence reveals that country may experience economic growth despite bad governance (Khan, 2016). Despite these arguments, good governance is crucial to grow trust and support among the public (Ishtiaq & Steinar, 2016).

While past studies have come up with mixed results, government all over the world has set the achievement of good governance as the ultimate ends in government administration. Governance is not only about the betterment of public service delivery but also goes beyond it and entails the establishment of rules, independence of judiciary, public voice and public-private partnership (International Framework on GG, 2014). In this light, the World Bank developed the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) as a benchmark in good governance practices. This value-loaded framework is anchored by six indicators and was developed based on three main facets; a) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; b) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and c) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them (Kaufmann et al., 2010). The first facet on the process was measured using two indicators; voice

and accountability, and political stability/ absence of violence/terrorism. The second facet comprises of government effectiveness and regulatory quality, and finally, the third facet is represented based on rule of law and control of corruption principles.

Accordingly, the inclusion of stakeholders' interest especially vulnerable people is highlighted in voice and accountability indicator. In general, accountability reinforces integrity of decision making process and credibility of public institution to act in the best interest of the whole community. Meanwhile, in regards to political stability, people's perception of the likelihood of violence and destabilize government due to conflicts and political chaos is measured while the other two indicators emphasize the quality of policy formulation and implementation and public sector agencies commitment to achieve the intended outcomes and credibility of public institutions to provide quality of public services. The last facet focuses on the enforcement of law and integrity of regulatory agencies such as court and police in upholding law. The establishment of rule of law requires fair legal frameworks. It calls for strengthening internal rules and independence judiciary that enforce rules impartially. On the same dimension, control of corruption is used as an indicator of the effectiveness of law enforcement. This is to oversee whether political interest is above the law or guided by the law.

Notably, all six indicators are tied together in one value-chain and expected to bring improvement in the quality of governance. The interdependency of these indicators signifies the need for government to embrace good governance in a holistic manner for the benefits it promised. Conceptually, good governance is a people-centric model as the outcome largely benefits society with improvement not only in quality of public service delivery, but also accountability and transparency in administration. Increases in government's transparency therefore would enhance the credibility and integrity of political institutions. As confirmed in the study done by Jamaliah et al (2016), transparency and accountability of government administration could be invigorated with the presence of good governance. However, this is not always the case as other studies revealed that there are some countries that have scored high in government effectiveness but recorded a low score in the control of corruption (Khan, 2016). The mixed outcomes of good governance practices are expected as there are many other determinant factors. Nevertheless, good governance is a concept that must not be accepted

as the sole doctrine in pursuance of development, hence one size fits all notion is misnomer.

Policy Initiatives: National Policy Initiatives: National Transformation Policy (NTP)

In Malaysia, the notion of good governance has long been embedded and incorporated in four Malaysia's Outline Perspective Plans (OPPs) namely New Economic Policy (NEP), National Development Policy (NDP), National Vision Policy (NVP) and National Transformation Policy (NTP). The NEP was the first national planning policy. It was introduced in 1970 under the second Malaysian Plan. It focused on unity, integration and poverty alleviation through economic development and after 20 years, the NEP succeeded in reducing poverty from 49.3 percent in 1970 to 15 percent in 1990 (INTAN, 2006, p. 191). The re-structuring of economy and society was successfully done, despite slight failure in achieving 30 percent Bumiputra equity.

The core components of NEP were also encapsulated in the National Development Policy (NDP, 1991-2000) and National Vision Policy (NVP, 2001-2010). The former was introduced under 6th and 7th Malaysian Plan which aimed to overcome imbalances of socio-economic development among three major ethnic groups in Malaysia and to alleviate poverty. The NDP still emphasized on socio-economic development as one of the key factors that influenced social unity (INTAN, 2006). To achieve this target, privatization policy was introduced in 1983 to elevate economic growth via public and private partnership and since then, the government has privatized more than 400 projects (Hussain, 2005). Apart from that, other issues like hard core poverty, balance socio-economy, national integration and science and technology-based development were also highlighted in the NDP. The successive plan, the NVP was introduced under 8th and 9th Malaysian Plan, aimed to boost Malaysian economic status to a higher level through economic liberalization and knowledge-based economy in corresponding to advancement of ICT in globalized era (EPU, 8TH MP, 2001). In addition, efforts to eradicate poverty, to increase Bumiputra ownership and cooperation with corporate sector were continuously pursued under the third national policy (Kurus, 2003)

The quest to be a strong and competitive nation is vigorous and this can be translated in the implementation of the first three OPPs, namely the NEP, NDP and NVP. From the 2nd Malaysian Plan until the

9th Malaysian Plan, reforms were made to improve policy structure, to strengthen political institutions, and to boost public sector. Efforts to enhance accountability and transparency has also been finely ingrained and implanted in previous policy reforms. Laudable improvement in socio-economic development, social justice and economic opportunities via strategic economic planning and privatization policy re-emphasizes another notable landmark of good governance indicators. Taken together, the achievements of these policies over the last four decades project a paradigmatic shift towards inclusive and good governance system in Malaysia.

The NTP which was introduced in 2011 manifested a new brand of transformational agenda. The NTP came to light as part of government's elegant way to invigorate performance of public sector. The NTP is focused on government performance under the slogan of '1Malaysia, People First, Performance Now'. This measure helped the government to bridge the discrepancies in policy planning and intended policy outcomes through the setting of Key Performance Indicator (KPIs). The NTP was introduced by Malaysia's 6th Prime Minister Najib Abd Razak as part of government's attempt to improve Malaysia's social, political and economic development. In this regard, the NTP is heralded as an instrumental catalyst to improve public service delivery through GTP and to reshape public-private sector collaborations via ETP. It is aimed to produce a product and deliver based on seven National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) and the 12 National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs).

The GTP comprises of seven National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) tackling social underpinnings namely, Reducing Crime, Fighting Corruption, Assuring Quality Education, Raising Living Standards of Low Income Households, Improving Rural Development, Improving Urban Public Transport and addressing Rising Cost of Living. Meanwhile, ETP was set to accelerate economic growth via collaboration between the public and private sector. It focused on Oil, Gas and Energy (OGE), Financial Services, Palm Oil and Rubber (POR), Wholesale and Retail (W&R), Agriculture, Tourism, Electronics & Electrical, Communications Content and Infrastructure, Healthcare, Business Services and Education. The private sector is seen as the driver in leading Malaysia towards high a income nation in year 2020. The policy promotes more conducive economic environment and the development

of robust economic growth is reinforced through the establishment of New Economic Model (NEM).

To steer the process, Strategic Reform Initiatives (SRIs) in six prominent areas have been introduced. These areas include public finance reforms, competition, standards and liberalization, human capital development, public finance, public service delivery, reducing government's role in business and narrowing disparities (PEMANDU, 2015). The setting of SRIs is fundamental to further accelerate the achievement of GTP and ETP. The overall progress of these initiatives is under the purview of Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU). PEMANDU was established in September 2009 to oversee the implementation of NTP. PEMANDU facilitates as well as supports the delivery of NKRA, NKEAs and Ministerial Key Result Areas (MKRAs). The implementation of this strategic benchmarking system is imperative in order to fulfill the aspirations and expectations of the people and overseeing major transformations in the country (PMO, 2010).

The road to transformation is accepted ubiquitously and NTP is seen as a successful policy in promoting change. Transformation has been evident under NTP as it addresses the critical policy junctures as outlined in GTP and ETP. With this transformation, the government will become more inclusive which places effective and good governance on its track.

NTP and Good Governance

As discussed, the NTP has become another milestone set by government which espouses the importance of good and inclusive governance in Malaysia. According to former Prime Minister of Malaysia 1Malaysia concept, Government Transformation Program and the Economic Transformation Programs are essential to good governance which reflects that good governance has always been the core of government policies since 2009 (The Sunday Daily, 2017).

The NTP was set in three time horizons. The first phase of GTP 1.0 was set from 2010-2012 and the overall performance of GTP 1.0 was good. The country has seen a 15% and 40 % reduction in the crime index and street crimes respectively. Moreover, the initiative to raise the living standards of low-income households has met its target with

the reduction in the number of extremely poor households by 21,060 households or 53%. This implies effective re-distributional strategies employed through the implementation of GTP 1.0 (Government of Malaysia, 2011). Other achievements include providing 35,000 rural households with clean water supply, providing 24 hour electricity to 27,000 rural households, building or restoring over 16,000 houses for the rural poor, and upgrading over 750 km of rural roads nationwide which affected the lives of over 2 million Malaysians (GTP Annual Report, 2010). The initial stage of GTP 1.0 is, therefore, considered a success.

The government has remained steadfast in its determination for transformation and this can be seen through persistent improvement in national policies via the launch of GTP 2.0 in 2013 and GTP 3.0 in 2016. There are many success stories reported in the provision of basic needs. These positive outcomes can be attributed to the government's persistent efforts in providing relief to public through initiatives such as Bantuan Rakyat 1 Malaysia (BR1M), Bantuan Khas Awal Persekolahan (BKAP1M), Klinik Rakyat 1 Malaysia (K1M), Kedai Rakyat 1 Malaysia (KR1M) and Menu Rakyat 1 Malaysia (MR1M). Moreover, the government has opened over 334 K1M which so far, has provided treatment for 15.8 million health cases with the payment of only RM 1 each. The government also introduced a scheme to sell 272 types of Malaysian products at low prices through opening 185 KR1M stores nationwide. Malaysians, particularly those in the rural areas have enjoyed improvement in public facilities such as roads, supply of clean water and electricity which has benefitted over 5 million people. Meanwhile people in the urban areas enjoyed improved urban public transport facilities such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service and additional 38 trains to reduce the waiting time for Komuter services. Other successful initiatives include enhancing economic capacity among low-income group through the 1AZAM program and the drastic reduction of crime rate which saw the declining of crime rate up to 40 percent within the last 5 years (NST, 2015). However, in the control of corruption, the CPI score had declined from 52 in 2014 to 49 in 2016. As a result, Malaysia ranked 55th in 2016 compared to 50th in 2014 on Corruption Index (TIM, 2015). This shows that the steps undertaken through GTP were inadequate to reduce corruption. More proactive

actions are needed to pave the way for greater transformation and good governance.

The NTP is also navigated towards economic transformation. ETP is a plan introduced to accelerate private sector-driven growth via various economic programs. It is based on three long-term achievements until the year 2020. First, to achieve a per capita income of US\$15,000; second, to create as many as 3.3 million jobs; and third, to generate US\$444 billion in investment by 2020. To materialize this, the government announced 149 investment opportunities through Entry Point Projects (EPPs). Other initiatives include the MRT public transport project to connect Sungai Buloh to Kajang. This project has created employment opportunity for approximately 2800 Malaysians. Meanwhile, programs like the Small Retailer Transformation or TUKAR have benefited 2000 Bumiputra retail entrepreneurs amounting to 48 billion ringgit (PEMANDU, 2015). These output achievements could be regarded as a milestone in Malaysia's economic transformation plan.

Due to a broad policy targets, PEMANDU has identified five main indicators to measure the overall achievement of GTP and ETP. These five indicators are the provision of basic amenities such as water and electricity, per capita income of Malaysians, investment value, job opportunities, and eradication of poverty. Firstly in the provision of basic amenities, reports claimed that such initiatives have created massive improvement in providing basic amenities and as a result, 5 million people in rural areas enjoy better water and electricity supplies. Next, on economic performance, a steady increase in GDP from 2010 onwards has been recorded, with total investment value rising up to 228 billion in 2014. This can be translated into the rise on new job opportunities with the creation of 1.5 million new jobs and increased of per capita income from US\$ 7,059 in 2009 to US\$ 10, 426 in 2014. The improvement in the economic performance and job opportunities has contributed to substantial decreased in poverty rate from 3.8 percent in 2009 to less than 1 percent in 2015 (PEMANDU, 2015). Table 1.1 shows Malaysia's score in Gini Coefficient (GC), mean monthly household income and incidence of poverty.

Table 1.1: Economic Report on GC, Mean of Monthly Income and Poverty

Year	Gini Coefficient	Mean Monthly Income Household	Poverty Rate
2009	0.441	4025	3.8
2012	0.431	5000	1.7
2014	0.401	6141	0.6
2016	0.399	6598	0.4

Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia

As shown in Table 1.1, there is a sharp decline in the incidence of poverty, with substantial increase of the mean monthly household income in Malaysia from RM 4025 in 2009 to RM 6598 in 2016. On average, income per month has increased by RM 2573 within 8 years. This data is supported with significant improvement of the Gini Coefficient score from 0.441 in 2009 to below 0.4 within the eight year time period. These indicators and various international reports have been referred to as a benchmark to assess BN government's performance. The stellar performance shown in the report has invited massive reactions from many parties on whether the achievements are visible and felt by people on the ground.

In this regard, the general policy outcomes have disclosed the improvement in delivery system and productivity in many sectors. Descriptive data derived from various reports signals policy success in the implementation of national transformational agenda. For some, these achievements signify good governance practices as the policy's initiatives have increased people's quality of life, living standard and met their basic. It can be argued that government's effectiveness has been well translated through the increment of service delivery which includes water and electric supplies, BR1M, K1M, KR1M, BB1M and many more. This is further supported by a report from UNDP on Human Development Index (HDI) which states that Malaysia's achievement in education, health, income and in providing decent standard of living has been remarkable. As shown in Table 1.2 Malaysia HDI's score has increased from 0.774 in 2010 to 0.789 in 2015.

Table 1.2: Malaysia's HDI score

Year	Index	Rank
2010	0.774	57
2011	0.776	61
2012	0.769	64
2013	0.773	62
2014	0.779	62
2015	0.789	59

Source: UN Development Program (UNDP)

However, it is worth noting that the improvement of Malaysia performance in both economic and government transformation programs may not be necessarily translated into good governance practice. Therefore, it raises concerns on whether the NTP truly supports and upholds good governance values. Table 1.3 presents Malaysia scores on WGI, which is a perceptions-based measurement of governance based on percentile rank range from 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest), from 2010 until 2016.

Table 1.3: Malaysia's score on WGI

Year/Indicators	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1. Voice and Accountability	36	37	35	34	33
2. Political Stability and Non-Violence/terrorism	44	47	58	57	37
3. Government Effectiveness	77	79	83	77	76
4. Regulatory Quality	70	73	76	74	75
5. Rule of Law	65	64	74	69	71
6. Control of Corruption	64	67	67	63	62
Compute Mean Value	59.3	61.6	65.5	62.3	59

The scores show Malaysia's achievement in World Governance Index (WGI). Malaysia's score in the WGI is still at the average level.

The computed mean values show significant improvement in WGI from 2012 to 2014 with increase score by +6.2 percent. However, the score has decreased by -6.5 to 59 in 2016. The decrease in the mean score from 61.6 in 2013 to 59 in 2016 implies moderate performance, thus, placing Malaysia in quite satisfactory category. Comparatively, among these six indicators, Malaysia has the highest score on government effectiveness compared to others. Despite the claim by BN government, the attainment of good governance is not much reflected in WGI score. The WGI results reported for Malaysia do not entirely illustrate outstanding government's achievement as recorded in the NTP's annual report. Many initiatives have been put forward, but increase in the quantity of services are much less interpreted and perceived as good governance practices. A mere concern on resource allocation, quantity of service and enactment of laws in this context may not be enough as good governance transcends the said criteria. Quantity over quality, concern on policy impact, rather than policy outputs, let alone engaging and empowering citizens matters to invigorate path towards good governance.

These are the results supported by documentary evidence and government statistics. However, how do the people perceive about the implementation of the NTP and how do they as beneficiaries evaluate the achievements? The following section provides answers to these questions.

Methodology

The relationship between NTP and good governance is not much grounded in the reports and not much evidence in public perception. As such, empirical analysis is required to measure the relationship and to assess public perception on the achievement of NTP, let alone good governance. Assessment of public perception is best conducted through survey questionnaires. Hence, in this study, a closed-ended questionnaire is used to assess public opinion on the implementation of NTP, to determine the visibility of good governance practices in the implementation of NTP, and to measure the correlation between NTP and good governance. Correlation analysis allows the study to measure the association between these two variables and to understand the extent to which NTP embodies the characteristics of good governance practices as proclaimed by the previous government. A total of 29 self-

constructed items with four different sections namely demographic data, perception on the NTP, good governance and the outcome of NTP were developed. Items were measured using a dichotomous scale and the Likert scale which ranged from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. By employing convenience sampling methods, the study managed to collect data from 119 respondents.

Internal reliability test was conducted to determine the quality of instrument used in the study. The alpha value score is 0.954 and 0.944, for the second and third constructs respectively. As the Alpha value for both constructs are above 0.8, it can be concluded that the instrument developed is highly reliable (Nunally, 1965).

Demographic Data

A total of 119 respondents participated in the study with 39(32.8 %) males and 79 (66.4 %) females with one missing value (0.8 %). Out of the 119 respondents, 28 (23.5%) of them are aged between 18 to 29 years old, 78 (65.5%) respondents aged between 29 to 40, and 13 (10.9%) are aged 41 and above. Malay respondents constitute the largest group participating in the study with 100 (84 %) respondents, followed by 13 (10.9 %) Chinese, 1(0.8 %) Indian respondent and 4 (3.4%) others. In terms of job categories, 78 (65.5 %) respondents were working with private sector and 41(34.5%) of them were working with public sector. With regards to income level, a majority of respondents 62 (52.1 %) falls under B40 group with RM 3000 income per month. Meanwhile, 40 (33.6%) respondents were categorized as M40 with income earned above 3000 and 17(14.3%) earn more than RM 6000 per month. Knowing the fact that respondents' perception is likely to be influenced by their political inclination, this study has also included one item on the respondents' political affiliation. Out of 119 respondents 66 (55.5%) are Pakatan Harapan (PH) supporters and 53 (40.2 %) are supporters of Barisan Nasional (BN).

Findings and Discussions

Public's perception on the implementation of National Transformation Policy (NTP) was measured using 7 items. The overall perception towards the implementation of NTP is neutral (mode= 3.00) with the computed mean value of 3.183 (SD 0.925). This signifies mixed perceptions on the implementation of NTP. In this light, the analysis

on each item is pertinent to accurately assess public perception on the implementation of NTP. The breakdown of percentage is displayed in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Perception towards the implementation of NTP

ITEMS	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	MODE
NTP directed toward Vision 2020	27 (22.6%)	34 (28.6%)	58 (48.8%)	4
NTP was being implemented successfully	32 (26.9%)	47 (39.5%)	40 (33.6 %)	3
The implementation of NTP has elevated and placed Malaysia in a better position	34 (28.6%)	30 (25.2%)	55 (46.2%)	4
NTP is a comprehensive national plan	29 (24.4%)	34 (28.6%)	56 (47.0%)	4
NTP successfully improved people's living standard	43 (36.1 %)	38 (31.9%)	38 (32.0%)	3
NTP achieved its policy objectives and goals	43 (36.1%)	33 (27.7 %)	43 (36.2%)	2
I support the implementation of NTP	26 (21.9 %)	35 (29.4 %)	58 (48.7%)	4

There are seven items included to measure public perceptions on the NTP; a majority of respondent 58 (48.8%) agreed, meanwhile 27 (22.6%) disagreed, and 34 (28.6%) had neutral response. The mode is 4, this can be interpreted as majority of respondents agree that the implementation of NTP brings Malaysia closer towards Vision 2020. Similarly, more than 50 respondents agreed that the NTP is a comprehensive policy planning, thus capable of transforming Malaysia in a better place both economically and politically. With respect to improvement of living standard, the respondents think that the achievement of NTP in this context is far from satisfactory with 43 (36.1%) respondent disagreed on the statement and 38 (32%) respondents have chosen neutral and 38

(32%) more agreed. This is further supported with weak perception on NTP achievement in its policy objectives. 40 (33.6%) of the respondents agreed on the successful implementation of NTP based on policy target as outlined in the NKRA's, but 32 (26%) disagreed and 47 (39.5%) chose to be neutral. The overall response towards the implementation of NTP is positive with 50 (48.7%) out of 119 respondents support the implementation of NTP while only 26 (21.9%) showed their disapproval.

Public in general, have demonstrated mixed perception on the implementation of NTP. As a human behind the statistic, their perception truly reflects their observation and experience as the recipients of the policy. The public has given positive feedback and NTP is perceived as a holistic national policy which covers important policy dimensions ranging from welfare, security, transportation to economics and cost of living. These policy areas are close to people's heart and addressing these issues is a right move by BN government. However, the mixed perceptions indicate positive moves by BN government were not much grounded in public perception. This brings up the question of discrepancies between policy targets and its actual achievement.

The actual policy achievements in this context can be measured by the outcome. Their perception was based on what they truly felt on the ground. As believed by many, the implementation of NTP is considered as another success story for the BN, despite its challenges and mudslinging from opposition. On this note, it is essential for us to know whether such success stories are truly felt by people on the ground. The study, therefore, has developed 10 items to measure the policy impact of NTP.

Table 1.5: The policy impact of NTP

ITEMS	YES	NO
Decreased in crime rate makes me feel more secured	47 (39.5%)	72 (60.5%)
Performance of public sector improved significantly	69 (58%)	50 (42 (%))
Government administration adhered and based on laws	59 (49.6%)	60 (50.4%)

I believe corruption among politicians has reduced in number	31 (26.1%)	88 (73.9%)
Corruption scandals among civil servants has decreased in number	36 (30.3%)	83 (69.7%)
Political stability is omnipresent	58(48.7%)	61 (51.3%)
Malaysian economy has improved	57 (47.9%)	62(52.1%)
Enough job opportunities offered to all Malaysian	57 (47.9%)	62(52.1%)
Public transportation services have improved tremendously	87 (73.1)	32 (26.9%)
Cost of living has slightly decreased after the implementation of NTP	39 (32.8%)	80 (67.2%)

As presented in table 1.5, it can be posited that the success of the NTP should not solely be measured based on output, as it should also be measured based on the outcomes. In policy studies, outcome indicates the impact of the policy beyond quantity of services (output) as reported. It is not just on how many actions have been put forward but the concern is on whether those actions yield real changes on the ground. For instance, the crime reduction initiatives by Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) have been highly praised due to decrease in the rate of crime. However, decrease in crime rate is not truly felt by many. The finding shows that 72 (60.5%) out of 119 respondents believed that decrease in crime rate does not make them feel any safer. Similarly, efforts undertaken to control corruptions have failed to restore confidence among the public as 88 (73.9 %) respondents feel that corruption is still rampant in Malaysia. Moreover, despite the government's initiative to overcome the high cost of living, dissatisfaction due to high cost of living remained high as 80 (67.2 %) out of 119 respondents believed the situation remained unchanged even after the government added poverty reduction as a new NKRA under GTP. Slight discrepancies between yes and no answer can be seen in item measuring on political stability with 58(48.7%) chose yes and 61(51.3%) chose no. Likewise, many believe that administration processes still adhered to law and regulation with 59 (49.6%) respondent agreed and 60 (50.4%) respondents who disagreed. Moving on, 57 (47.9%) out of 119 respondents believed that the economic improvement is visible after the implementation of NTP

and 62 (52.1 %) respondents answered no. However, the improvement in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and economic performance are much less evidence in unemployment rate. Many are still skeptical about it with more than 50 percent respondents answering no. On the other hand, 87 (73.1%) respondents agreed on a significant improvement in public transportation with small percentage 26.9% disagreeing. Lastly, transformation initiatives to improve public sector performance need to be strengthened as only 69 (58%) respondents agreed on better services provided compared to 50 (42%) respondents who disagreed.

Apparently, positive impact of NTP was actually agreed on certain policy areas such as adherence of law, performance of the public sector, political stability, economy and job opportunities. However the outcomes of NTP in other policy areas such as control of corruption, cost of living and crime reduction were unlikely felt by many. Thus the outcomes are far from satisfactory as public perception seems to be not as positive as reported.

Next, this study determines public perceptions on the visibility of good governance practices in the implementation of the NTP. Good governance is built based on six elements namely rule of law, government effectiveness, political stability, control of corruption, voice and accountability and regulatory quality. The computed mean value for all six items is 3.00 (SD 0.983). On average, the public does not completely believe in the idea that the NTP embraces good governance practices. The breakdown of public opinion is presented in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6: Perception on Good Governance

ITEMS	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	MODE
NTP embraced good governance practices	37 (31.1%)	28 (23.5%)	54 (45.4%)	4
NTP improved the quality of legal system in Malaysia (rule of law)	47 (39.5%)	29 (24.4%)	43 (36.1%)	2

Government's accountability improved after the implementation of NTP	47 (39.5%)	31 (26.1%)	41 (34.4%)	2
NTP improved government effectiveness in service delivery	30 (35.2%)	38 (31.9%)	51 (42.9%)	4
NTP improved Malaysia reputation in scandal of corruption	59 (49.6%)	27 (22.7%)	33 (27.7%)	2
NTP incorporated needs and demands of all races	25 (21.0%)	44 (37)	50 (42%)	3

Apparently, the integration of good governance elements in the implementation of NTP has been recognized by many with agreed percentage of 54 (45.4%). Still 37 (31.1%) respondents believed that good governance was not present in NTP, meanwhile 28 (23.5%) feels neutral about it. With respect to the quality of law, 47 (39.5%) out of 119 respondents opined that the implementation of NTP did not improve the quality of law in Malaysia. However, 43 (36.1%) respondents agreed and 29 (24.4%) respondents were neutral.

Similarly, the public is skeptical on the successful improvement of accountability and corruption with majority of respondents, 47 (39.5%) and 59 (49.6%), respectively expressed their disagreement on these two items. In contrast, a majority of respondents agreed that NTP has improved government effectiveness in service delivery with 51 (42.9%) agreed and inclusively catered demands from all races with 50 (42%) respondents who agreed. Apparently, the notion of good governance has been in the limelight on the national policy paper but such ideas not fully reflected in actual policy implementation. This explained the mixed opinions given by respondents on this construct. It would be wrong to completely deny the inclusion of good governance in the context of NTP, but the achievement is far from satisfactory.

To support the descriptive analysis, the study also measured the correlation between perceived NTP and perceived good governance. The

relationship between these variables would indicate the embodiment of good governance in the NTP. As shown in Table 1.7, there is high degree of association as these two variables are correlated at $r = 0.904$. Positive association implies that the formulation of NTP has incorporated the key features of good governance as claimed by former Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak. The notion has been inherently embedded in the transformational agenda, but the achievement of good governance through the implementation of NTP seems to be weak.

Table 1.7 Correlations

		comp_NTP	comp_GG
comp_NTP	Pearson Correlation	1	.917**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	119	119
comp_GG	Pearson Correlation	.917**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	119	119

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Conclusion

The National Transformation Policy (NTP) is a holistic national policy as it covers both political and economic dimensions. The ETP is strategically geared towards strengthening financial management and various sectors of the economy, while GTP meant for political and government transformation. Major spotlights have been given to selected policy areas particularly crime rate, public transportation, cost of living, fighting corruption, improving rural basic infrastructure. The NTP had been employed as a benchmark to measure BN’s performance through the establishment of NKRA and EKRA. On this ground, the performance of all ministries is objectively measured based on key performance indicators. Apparently, the government had devoted adequate attention to core public issues, with hopes that positive changes in these areas could be translated into greater support for the BN government.

The implementation of NTP has been perceived positively as fundamental issues were adequately addressed. This transformational agenda has been considered as the right moves by BN government.

The success was much evident in the annual reports by PEMANDU, substantiated with commendable improvement in HDIs, Gini Coefficient and Poverty rate. However, these extensive efforts are not well translated into public perception. The success of NTP was very much agreed in few policy dimensions including government effectiveness, public transportation and economic transformation to name a few. Nonetheless many perceived that the NTP has yet to fulfill its aspiration in the control of corruption, reduction of crime rate, rule of law and improvement of cost of living. Improvement of service delivery was very much notable with the implementation of KR1M, 1Malaysia Clinic, BR1M, etc but deficiency in policy implementation was apparent. This explains the major discrepancies between statistical reports and what truly felt and experienced by the member of public on the ground.

Likewise, varied responses have been gathered on the visibility of good governance practices in the context of NTP. The study reveals that, the BN government has undoubtedly managed to integrate the notion of good governance on policy formulation as the correlation analysis disclosed that the NTP and good governance are positively related. Greater emphasis on fundamental issues like cost of living, crime, public transformation, public service delivery largely indicate good governance principles in the context of NTP. However, it is pertinent to note that the elements of good governance were not truly felt in practice. The public, in general, acknowledges the incorporation of good governance principles, but those principles are not well grounded in practice.

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