

Volume 3 (2025)



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Research Management Unit
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kedah

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Embracing New Horizons: A Fresh Start for 2025



As we stand at the threshold of a new year, I welcome you to RMU4U Third Edition (January 2025). The start of a new year symbolizes renewal, an opportunity to recalibrate our aspirations and refresh our collective commitment to academic excellence, research endeavours, and impactful scholarly contributions.

The year 2024 saw significant progress within our academic and research community. It was a testament to the passion, perseverance, and creativity of all members of the UiTM Kedah family. As we reflect on those accomplishments, let us also look ahead with determination to elevate our efforts in research, publication, and innovation. Let 2025 be the year we chart new pathways for discovery and collaboration, bringing our work to greater heights.

This year, I encourage all of us to reaffirm our scholarly goals by setting clear, measurable targets for research outputs, impactful writings, and knowledge sharing, aiming to contribute meaningfully to society both locally and globally. Let us strengthen research collaborations by building networks across disciplines, faculties, and institutions to foster cross-disciplinary solutions to real-world challenges. At the same time, we must focus on innovation by exploring new ideas, embracing digital tools, and pioneering creative solutions that align with global trends and local needs. Above all, let us support each other by sharing expertise, mentoring the next generation, and collaborating to overcome challenges, creating a thriving research ecosystem where everyone uplifts one another.

Let this be a year where we balance ambition with reflection, passion with purpose, and innovation with impact. The Research Management Unit (RMU) remains steadfast in supporting your research journey through resources, platforms, and opportunities for growth.

As we embark on this new chapter, I wish each of you the strength to pursue your aspirations and the resilience to overcome any obstacles. Together, let us make 2025 a year of breakthroughs, achievements, and shared successes.

Here's to a productive and inspiring year ahead.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Roshima Said

Acting Rector, UiTM Kedah



A Message from the Chief Editor

Dear Readers,

I am pleased to announce the return of the RMU4U Bulletin with Volume 3, showcasing a diverse array of academic inquiries and professional perspectives across multiple themes. This edition continues our commitment to facilitating intellectual exchange and presenting research that engages with contemporary issues.

In this volume, the Law & Policy theme stands out with the highest number of contributions, featuring 14 papers that explore significant aspects of governance, justice, and societal well-being. These papers highlight the role of legal frameworks and policies in addressing current challenges and contributing to societal development.

Highlighted works include topics such as "Enhancing Access to Justice: The Role, Challenges, and Future of Small Claims Courts in Malaysia" and "Environmental Public Interest Litigation: Broadening Locus Standi to Safeguard Collective Interests," which examine the evolving landscape of legal rights and public interest. Additional discussions, such as "Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Islamic Banking and Finance in Malaysia" and "Balancing Nature and Faith: Protection and Conservation of Water Resources from the Perspective of Islamic Law," shed light on the interplay between ethics, faith, and law in addressing societal challenges.

In addition to the focus on Law & Policy, this issue covers a range of topics that contribute to understanding innovation and societal change. Articles such as "AI-Driven Recommendations in Mobile Shopping Apps, Podcasts, Animations & Gen Z: Revamping Organizational Behavior Learning, and The Role of Social Media in Shaping Islamic Entrepreneurship" explore the intersections of technology, education, and culture in today's world.

This edition represents the collaborative work of our contributors, whose insights and expertise have shaped the content of this bulletin. We encourage readers to engage with these ideas and consider their implications for further research and practical applications.

I would like to thank the authors, reviewers, and editorial team members who made RMU4U Bulletin Volume 3 possible. We hope this publication serves as a resource for understanding key issues and inspires further exploration.

Thank you for being part of this endeavor. Let us continue to learn and exchange ideas

Warm regards,

Dr Azyyati Anuar
Chief Editor, RMU4U E-Bulletin



ADVANCING WORKERS' WELFARE: FLEXIBLE WORK, UNION GROWTH, AND INCLUSIVE POLICIES IN MALAYSIA

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Malaysia is witnessing transformative changes in its labour landscape, driven by progressive policies aimed at enhancing workers' welfare, union empowerment, and workplace inclusivity. These efforts reflect the government's commitment to fostering equitable and sustainable workforce practices, ensuring that Malaysia remains competitive in the global economy while addressing the needs of its diverse labour force.

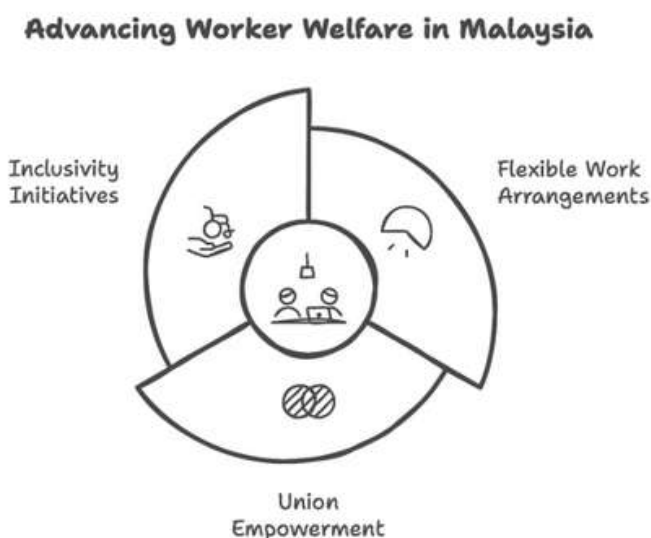


Figure 1: Advancing Worker Welfare in Malaysia Framework
Sources: Author's data

Flexible work arrangements (FWA) represent a significant milestone in Malaysia's labour policies. Introduced through Sections 60P and 60Q of the Employment Act 1955 in January 2023, FWA allows employees to request adjustments to their work hours, days, or location. Employers are obligated to respond to these requests within 60 days, providing an avenue for better work-life balance. This initiative positions Malaysia ahead of its regional peers, including Singapore, which is set to implement a similar policy later. FWAs have proven effective in enhancing employee satisfaction and productivity (Eshak, 2021; Yamin & Pusparini, 2022). However, challenges such as employer resistance and a lack of awareness among workers remain (Daniarsyah & Rahayu, 2020). Strengthening enforcement mechanisms and promoting dialogue between stakeholders will be crucial to ensuring the policy's success.

Labour unions are critical in advocating for workers' rights and promoting industrial harmony. Despite their importance, Malaysia's unionisation rate stands at a mere 6%, far below the government's ambitious target of 50% by 2030 (The Star, 2024). The low rate is attributed to structural barriers, such as the multiplicity of unions within workplaces. This provision, which allows the formation of rival unions, often leads to prolonged disputes over representation rights, delaying collective bargaining processes. Reforming trade union laws and streamlining the recognition process are essential steps towards empowering unions (Rogers, 2018). The benefits of unionisation are clear. Unionised workers typically enjoy better wages, improved welfare, and enhanced job security (Chen & Islam, 2023). Additionally, unions foster collaborative relationships between employees and employers, contributing to workplace stability and productivity. By addressing legal and institutional challenges, Malaysia can harness the full potential of unions to advance workers' welfare.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) have become central to Malaysia's workforce policies. The Life at Work Awards (Lawa) 2024, themed "Celebrating Excellence in DEI for a Sustainable Work, Workplace, and Workforce," highlighted the growing emphasis on inclusive practices (The Star, 2024). Government initiatives, such as the Madani Economy framework, aim to increase women's workforce participation to 60%, addressing longstanding gender disparities. Anti-discrimination protections and policies to close income gaps are also gaining traction. Corporate leaders in Malaysia have set benchmarks for inclusive practices (The Star, 2024). These companies demonstrate that prioritising DEI not only promotes fairness but also enhances organisational performance, reducing turnover and boosting employee engagement.



While these advancements are commendable, implementation challenges persist. Employers' reluctance to embrace reforms, inadequate awareness among workers, and gaps in enforcement mechanisms hinder progress. To overcome these hurdles, the government must enhance stakeholder engagement, ensuring that policies are effectively communicated and implemented. Public-private partnerships can further drive innovation in workforce development, while targeted training programmes can equip workers with the skills needed for an evolving labour market.

Malaysia's focus on flexible work, union growth, and inclusivity marks a significant shift towards a more equitable and sustainable labour environment. By addressing challenges and fostering collaboration, the nation is poised to become a regional leader in advancing workers' welfare, setting a precedent for others to follow.

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