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RECTOR'S NOTE



Prof. Dr Roshima Said
Acting Rector

"Together we advance knowledge with integrity, creativity, and purpose—many voices united to shape a brighter, sustainable future."

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh,

Alhamdulillah, with gratitude to Allah SWT, I am pleased to welcome you to the fourth volume of RMU4U e-Bulletin. This publication continues to serve as a reflection of our vibrant intellectual community at UiTM Kedah, bringing together voices from diverse disciplines and perspectives. In this issue, with 42 insightful contributions, we witness not only the richness of research topics but also the strength of our shared purpose. While the papers range from sustainability in fashion and design, digital literacy, and artificial intelligence to law, economics, and cultural heritage, they are united by a common aspiration: to advance knowledge that is meaningful, ethical, and impactful for society.

Our academic journey is significant because of this harmony amid diversity. Whether addressing contemporary challenges in technology and governance or celebrating the timeless values of culture and tradition, our scholars demonstrate that knowledge is most powerful when it is connected, when different fields meet at the crossroads of innovation, integrity, and service to the community.

As Rector, I am profoundly inspired by the dedication, innovation, and scholarly excellence demonstrated by our academics and researchers. You are not only advancing knowledge within our university but are also fulfilling UiTM's noble mission, creating impactful ideas that serve the nation and uplift the ummah.

Your work reflects a deep commitment to relevance, integrity, and service. Let us continue to nurture a culture of collaboration, creativity, and excellence, ensuring that our contributions remain forward-looking, transformative, and rooted in the needs of society. Together, we are shaping a brighter, more sustainable future through education, research, and innovation.

Congratulations to all the dedicated contributors whose passion and perseverance have brought this volume to life. My heartfelt appreciation goes to the Research Management Unit for their steadfast leadership and solid commitment in making this achievement possible. May RMU4U continue to shine as a beacon of knowledge, uniting diverse voices in a shared mission of discovery and excellence. Together, may we be inspired to reach even greater heights in the pursuit of impactful research and innovation.

One purpose. One vision. Many voices, one future.

Sincerely,
Prof. Dr Roshima Said
Acting Rector,
Universiti Teknologi MARA Keda

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EDITOR



Dr Azyyati Anuar
Chief Editor,
RMU4U E-Bulletin

"RMU4U Volume 4 celebrates diverse scholarship, uniting research, innovation, and culture to inspire collaboration, sustainability, and inclusive growth."

We are pleased to present Volume 4 of RMU4U, a platform dedicated to showcasing research, innovation, and thought leadership across diverse academic disciplines. This issue reflects the dynamic intellectual ecosystem we strive to cultivate, highlighting contributions that bridge theory and practice while addressing pressing contemporary challenges. In the Business, Accounting, and Finance section, we feature 15 insightful papers that explore the evolving landscape of global markets, financial resilience, sustainable accounting practices, and digital transformation in business operations.

These works not only provide empirical findings but also propose actionable frameworks for industry adoption, underscoring the vital role of research in shaping competitive and ethical enterprises. The Designer Thoughts segment presents 6 stimulating papers that merge creativity with problem-solving. From design thinking methodologies to innovation in product aesthetics and usability, these contributions remind us that design is not merely about form but about crafting meaningful user experiences.

This section will be of particular interest to those who value the intersection of artistry, functionality, and human-centered solutions. Our IR 5.0 category brings together 6 pioneering papers examining the fusion of automation, artificial intelligence, and human capital development in the context of the Fifth Industrial Revolution. The authors challenge readers to consider how technology can be harmonized with ethical and inclusive practices, ensuring that digital progress translates into equitable societal benefits. In the Law and Policy section, 7 comprehensive papers analyze legal reforms, governance frameworks, and policy innovations that respond to shifting socio-economic realities.

The breadth of topics from regulatory compliance in emerging industries to community rights in a globalized economy reflects the critical role of law as both a safeguard and an enabler of change. The Literature and Culture segment enriches this volume with 8 thought-provoking papers that delve into narratives, identities, and cultural dialogues shaping societies today.

Whether revisiting classic literature through modern lenses or exploring contemporary cultural phenomena, these works invite readers to appreciate the role of the humanities in fostering empathy, critical thinking, and cultural continuity. Collectively, these 42 scholarly contributions affirm the breadth and depth of academic engagement within our community. They underscore our commitment to advancing knowledge that is relevant, impactful, and forward-looking. This volume is not only a testament to our contributors' dedication but also a resource for policymakers, practitioners, educators, and learners who seek informed perspectives and innovative solutions. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all authors, reviewers, and editorial team members whose collective efforts have made this publication possible. We hope that RMU4U Vol. 4 will spark dialogue, inspire collaboration, and contribute to the enrichment of both academic scholarship and practical application.

Let us continue to explore, innovate, and contribute, together shaping a future where knowledge serves as the foundation for sustainable and inclusive growth.

Warm regards,
Dr Azyyati Anuar
Chief Editor,
RMU4U E-Bulletin

ENHANCING PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGH OMBUDSMAN SYSTEMS IN MALAYSIA

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Public service delivery is a critical issue in many developing countries like Malaysia. Complaints about slow, corrupt, or bureaucratic service have become common discussions. As a result, public service accountability is now a significant concern for all. Moving forward, efficient and effective public service delivery has become a shared goal of both the Malaysian government and its citizens.

An effective complaint handling system is essential for good governance and accountability in public administration. A structured grievance redress mechanism is crucial for efficient public service provision. It safeguards citizens against delays, harassment, and official incompetence. This mechanism fosters accountability among services and officials, encouraging active citizen engagement. Ultimately, it enhances service delivery, addresses grievances effectively, and deters substandard governance in the public sector. Thus, the Ombudsman can be considered as one of the effective complaint handling systems.



Understanding the Ombudsman System

The term "Ombudsman," derived from the Swedish for "representative," safeguards public interests against power abuses. Acting as a mediator, the Ombudsman manages complaints about government actions and oversees official investigations. This official operates independently of the government, but it is often referred to as "the agent of the government." The main figure is typically the Parliamentary Ombudsman, with specialized roles like the Tax Ombudsman for specific oversight areas. Established in Sweden in 1809, the Ombudsman has been functioning in England since 1967, serving as a "watchdog of the executive." As a quasi-judicial body, it addresses complaints about maladministration through private investigations but lacks the authority to compel witnesses or documents. Consumers rely on various service agencies yet often face issues from inadequate oversight, leading to misleading practices and bureaucratic inefficiencies that hinder the grievance-redress system, resulting in unresolved problems.

The Ombudsman mostly serves the public by investigating complaints about alleged maladministration on the part of designated public agencies. In Malaysia, the institution was established in 1973, initially to cover the Malaysian Police Force along with the Royal Commission of Police. The Office of Ombudsman of Malaysia was established in 1999. This office is known as the Public Complaints Bureau (PCB). PCB investigates complaints on public service delivery under the purview of the Malaysian Public in contrast to statutes-based agencies for the previously established statutes of Ombudsman. Hence, PCB and the Ombudsman are also distinguished by public service delivery in Malaysia's government.

Legal Framework Supporting Ombudsman Systems

Ombudsman systems based on the Scandinavian model proliferated due to reforms at the end of the last century. Many states adopted the ombudsman concept, transitioning from complaints-based systems with commissioners to a statutory framework supported by the legislature. This era saw the creation of new regimes for independently addressing complaints against police, prison officers, and armed forces. Malaysia's ombudsman systems, though more recent, benefit from insights gained in other jurisdictions. By establishing a legal framework, Malaysia is poised for an ombudsman system aimed at ensuring effective public service delivery.

An independent watchdog bureau for public service delivery is essential. The Public Complaints Bureau mainly serves as a complaints-taker and lacks active investigation of officials. An independent bureau should investigate complaints, gather evidence, and access information from authorities while conducting public hearings. The ombudsman's office must have a cosmopolitan outlook, overseen by an independent commissioner without political ties and with a strong administrative background to recommend improvements. Its constitutional independence should ensure removal requires a two-thirds parliamentary vote.



Conclusion

There are various factors that hinder the establishment of a credible ombudsman system in Malaysia, yet if developed properly, it could enhance governmental accountability. This system would complement existing accountability measures, as current redress avenues are inadequate. The lack of accountability negatively impacts social justice and the country's development, leading to issues like budget mismanagement, nepotism, and corruption. Moreover, ineffective regulatory instruments add to these challenges. The absence of external accountability makes it difficult for citizens to engage with the public sector, further diminishing the assembly's ability to tackle maladministration effectively.

Nonetheless, despite complaints of bureaucratic abuse during Malaysia's social transitions, there remains support for a credible ombudsman system. However, constitutional and legislative guarantees are essential for its establishment. Achievable benchmarks, justified discretion in investigatory procedures, and proper training for the ombudsman are crucial to align expectations with political realities in enhancing accountability mechanisms.



Biodata of author

Irma Kamarudin is currently a senior lecturer at the Law Department UiTM Kedah Branch. She obtained her Bachelor of Laws (LL.B Hons) from the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) in 2004. Then, in 2006 she completed her Master of Comparative Laws (MCL) at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Her expertise covers Business & Commercial Law and Administrative Law while her research interests include child law, business law and administrative law.



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