GOOD GOVERNANCE PRACTICES AND ITS RELATION TO PUBLIC TRUST AT IPOH CITY COUNCIL PERAK

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1. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is one of the countries that successfully developed its plans (Hafiz, Aziz & Said, 2015). According to Khotami (2017), a clear government in the country is important as a part of good governance practices. As highlighted by Khalid, Alam, and Said (2016) and Obiero (2018), good governance practices are very important to increase public trust. Most importantly, a study conducted by Mohamed, Aly Kalam, Othman, Omar, and Rahman (2017) mentioned that the integrity of illness remains critical and the level of trust among the public remains the same. Omar et al. (2017) stated that despite many initiatives taken by the government, but the integrity deficiency issue is still shackling the civil services and not showing any signs of reduction. According to Hafiz, Azizal, Farahwahida, and Jamaliah (2015), the major challenges for a government are to strengthen ethics and integrity to enhance positive feedback from the public which is the receiver. The issue of integrity is a significant problem in the Malaysian public sector. Since integrity is also one of the important pillars of good governance practices.

Besides, transparency is also one of the most important practices in good governance. According to Tahir (2018), transparency implies openness which allows the people to know about what happens in the country and allow people to know what has been done to the country. Moreover, the process will show that the work or job has been done with honesty and selflessness to ensure that the goals or objectives that have been made will be achieved (Tahir, 2018). However, Khor (2020) revealed that the Malaysian government does not have a good record on transparency, and he also added that the decreasing of public trust happens because of laws that offer the chances to hide data and bad news. The absence of transparency in the public sector will change the perception and level of trust among the public towards the public sector. Besides, accountability is another key requirement in good governance practices. Khotami, (2017) mentioned that creating a good governance activity is one of the important roles as well as part of increasing public trust in government strategy and performance. As stated by Khotami (2017), accountability includes the existence of mechanisms that make sure the public officials and political leaders will be responsible for any action that they made to the public. Not only that, but the failure of the public sector in also practicing accountability and managing the sources will result in a declining level of public trust. Referring to the World Bank (2020), the percentage indicator for voice and accountability in Malaysia is 43.35% out of 100% in 2019. Besides, the responsiveness in good governance practices is also important because it will increase the relationship between the people and the government (Wildan et al., 2018). People will trust the government to make a good decision in solving the problem that happens in the country (Wildan et al., 2018). Most importantly, responsiveness was found to be very significant in engaging public trust (Zaini, Kuppusamy & Azizan, 2018; Beshi & Kaur, 2020) and a prerequisite element in good governance to enhance public trust (Cheema, 2010;

Armstrong, 2005). Hence, based on the abovementioned discussion, this study attempts to achieve these three (3) objectives as follows: (1) to identify the level of public trust in good governance practices, (2) to examine the relationship between good governance practices namely i) integrity, (ii) transparency, (iii) accountability and (iv) responsiveness with public trust and (3) to determine the most influential predictors of good governance practices on public trust at Ipoh City Council.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative survey method through a cross-sectional study. The questionnaires were distributed to the individual public who received service experienced in dealing with Ipoh City Council, Perak. Referring to the official websites of Ipoh City Council, the total number of people that received services at Ipoh City Council is about 300,000 people in a year. Thus, based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the appropriate sample size in this study is 384 respondents, and only 214 respondents returned the questionnaires and were usable for further analysis. In this study, a purposive sampling technique was adopted to identify and select the targeted respondents. The measurement of good governance practices is measured based on four pillars' namely, (i) integrity, (ii) transparency, (iii) accountability, and (iv) responsiveness by using a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree (Beshi and Kaur, 2020). In terms of data analysis, descriptive analysis was carried out by looking at the mean score and standard deviation to identify the level of public trust. Then, followed by inferential statistics looking at Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to examine the relationship and the most influential factors between IV and DV. The data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, descriptive analysis was carried out by looking at the mean score and standard deviation to identify the level of public trust. Table 1 presents the results of the study as below:

Table 1: Level of Public Trust

Variable	Mean	SD	Level
Public Trust	3.50	2.70	Moderately high

Table 1 indicates that the overall level of public trust is moderately high with the mean score of public trust (M=3.50, SD=2.70). Therefore, by referring to the table of the interpretation level of means by Nunally (1978), the level of public trust in good governance practices at Ipoh City Council can be classified as moderately high.

To examine the relationship between good governance practices namely i) integrity, (ii) transparency, (iii) accountability, and (iv) responsiveness with public trust.

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Table 2: Pearson Correlation between Integrity and Public Trust

Variables	r value	p-value	Decision
The relationship between integrity and public trust.	0.871	0.000 P<0.05 (sig)	There is a significant and high correlation between integrity and public trust. Accept Ha, Reject Ho

As shown in Table 2, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r was carried out to examine the relationship between integrity and public trust. The findings reveal that integrity and public trust possessed a high relationship ($r = 0.871$) and the significance value is less than 0.01, ($p<.01$). Thus, about this study finding, prior studies also have shown that integrity is one of the most important practices in the Malaysian public sector (Said et al., 2015; Said, Alam, & Khalid, 2016; Sajari, Haron, & Ismail, 2017; Alam, Johari, & Said, 2018). In addition. this statement was also supported by Said, Alam, and Khalid (2016) highlighted that integrity has a significant impact on public trust in the public sector.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation between Transparency and Public Trust

Variables	r value	p-value	Decision
The relationship between transparency and public trust.	0.894	0.000 $p<0.05$ (sig)	There is a significant and high correlation between transparency and public trust. Accept Ha, Reject Ho

As shown in Table 3, the result for correlation analysis found that both variables namely transparency and public trust possessed a high relationship with the r-value of ($r = 0.894$) and the significance value is less than 0.01, ($p<.01$). From the analysis, transparency has statistically possessed a high and positive significant relationship on public trust, particularly at Ipoh City Council. About this study finding, prior studies also proved that transparency in good governance practices is positively influenced the public trust in the public sector organization (Schmidthuber et al., 2020).

Table 4: Pearson Correlation between Accountability and Public Trust

Variables	r value	p-value	Decision
The relationship between accountability and public trust.	0.886	0.000 P<0.05 (sig)	There is a significant and high correlation between accountability and public trust. Accept Ha, Reject Ho

As shown in Table 4, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r was carried out to examine the relationship between accountability and public trust. The findings reveal that accountability and public trust possessed a high relationship ($r = 0.886$) and the significance value is less than 0.01 ($p<.01$). Thus, about this study finding, prior studies show that there is a positive relationship between accountability and public trust (Garoupa & Pedro, 2020).

Table 5: Pearson Correlation between Responsiveness and Public Trust

Variables	r value	p-value	Decision
The relationship between responsiveness and public trust.	0.876	0.000 p<0.05 (sig)	There is a significant and high correlation between responsiveness and public trust Accept Ha, Reject Ho

As shown in Table 5, the result for correlation analysis found that both variables namely responsiveness and public trust possessed a high relationship with the r-value of ($r = 0.876$) and the significance value is less than 0.01 ($p<.01$). From the study finding, it can be concluded that responsiveness has a statistically high and positive significant relationship with public trust at Ipoh City Council. About the study findings, a prior study also proved that there is a strong relationship between responsiveness and public trust (Craen & Skogan, 2014; Abidin, Kuppusamy & Azizan, 2018).

To determine the most significant predictor of good governance practices on public trust at Ipoh City Council.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable		Beta (Sig.)	Sig.
The influential predictors of good governance practices towards public trust.	Integrity	0.012	0.910
	Transparency	**0.408**	**0.000**
	Accountability	0.268	0.007
	Responsiveness	0.252	0.003
R			0.913
R Square			0.833
Adjusted R Square			0.830

Table 6 indicates the determination of the coefficient value of independent variables towards dependent variable is about 83.3% which shows that the relationship between good governance practices and public trust is high relationship. Apparently, in this study IVs contribute almost 83% in determining the level of public trust particularly at Ipoh City Council, Perak. Meanwhile, the above analysis indicates that the most significant predictor of good governance practices on public trust is transparency with the highest beta (β) value of .408 and it has a significant influence on public trust with a p-value of 0.000 (p < 0.01).

4. CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings from this study demonstrated that the level of public trust about good governance practices particularly at Ipoh City Council, Perak is high with the mean value within the range of 3.61 to 4.12. Meanwhile, for correlation analysis, the study findings show that all good governance practices namely i) integrity, (ii) transparency, (iii) accountability, and (iv) responsiveness have a positive and significant relationship towards public trust. This study shows that all the good governance practices at Ipoh City Council contribute to the level of public trust. This can be seen by looking at the result of the relationship between independent

and dependent variables of the study. Besides, the study finding also revealed that transparency is the most influential factor towards public trust. Thus, the current study finding seems to highlight that there is strong support received between good governance practices and public trust, particularly at the local government. With this regard, the study finding provides an important indicator and attention especially to the top management about the importance of good governance practices to achieve the maximum level of public trust.

5.   ACKNOWLEDGMENT

6.   REFERENCES

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