

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**COMBATING CORRUPTION: A
STUDY ON MALAYSIA'S ANTI-
CORRUPTION INITIATIVES**

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science
(Accountancy)

Faculty of Accountancy

November 2019

ABSTRACT

Corruption is a major threat to a country. If it is not properly treated, it can ruin the entire country. This incident urged country leaders to search for effective “prescription” to treat the threat. However, outcomes from such investment are nonetheless multifaceted. Some countries such as Singapore and Hong Kong are considered as being successful in reducing corruption, while other countries failed in such effort. Ironically, Malaysia is one of the failed countries in their fight against corruption. Despite various anti-corruption initiatives being implemented in Malaysia, there is a lack of evidence that these anti-corruption initiatives have been successful in reducing corruption in the country. Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine why the implemented anti-corruption initiatives are unable to reduce corruption in the country. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with relevant personnel from the National Key Result Areas (NKRA) Corruption Monitoring and Coordination Division, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, Malaysian Royal Custom Department, Immigration Department of Malaysia and the Malaysian Royal Police. In addition, related documents such as Government Transformation Programme Reports, Corruption Perception Index Reports, and Corruption Perception Index’s Sources Reports were also gathered for analysis. Results from this study showed that the lack of evidence that anti-corruption initiatives succeed in reducing corruption was caused by inadequate design of anti-corruption initiatives which refrained these initiatives from functioning effectively. This situation worsened with the absence of a Principal in the fight against corruption in Malaysia. The results of this study are beneficial to the literature related to fighting against corruption in Malaysia, which was said to be limited. In addition, these findings are also beneficial to policymakers and regulators that need to consider these findings to come out with effective anti-corruption initiatives to reduce corruption in Malaysia. However, this study only looks at the production and implementation of anti-corruption initiatives under GTP. Thus, this study proposes further studies on the same phenomenon by broadening the scope of the study or by using different theoretical framework or different research approaches in addressing the issue. With the recommendations made, it is hoped that it will contribute to the development of literature on the fight against corruption in Malaysia.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Firstly, I wish to thank Allah for allowing me to embark on my Master by Research, hence completing this long and challenging journey successfully. My gratitude and thanks go to my supervisor, Prof Dr. Nafsiah Mohamed. Thank you for the support, patience, and ideas in assisting me with this research. I also would like to express my gratitude to the Faculty of Accountancy and Accounting Research Institute for providing adequate facilities, knowledge, and assistance.

My appreciation goes to Bahagian Integriti dan Tadbir Urus, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, Immigration, Royal Custom Department, and Royal Malaysian Police, who had provided facilities and assistance during data`collection. Special thanks to my colleagues and friends for helping me with this research.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my family, especially to my loving and caring father and mother for their vision and determination to educate me. This piece of victory is dedicated to you. Alhamdulillah.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This chapter provides the background and motivation of the study. In addition, this chapter also describes issues that led to this research. Methodological approach, as well as the theoretical framework applied in this research, are also highlighted in general.

Corruption is not a new phenomenon, and it is a long-standing issue for the world community. For instance, corruption can be seen in Aristotle's work "The Politics", where Aristotle used the word "bribe" instead of "corruption" to describe a corrupt act, *"to protect the treasure from being defrauded, let all money be issued openly in the front of the whole city, and lets the copies of accounts be deposited in various wards"*. At that time, the word "corruption" was used as an adjective, which generally means "utterly broken." This word was first used by Aristotle, and later by Cicero, who added the terms bribe and abandonment of good habits (Llaca, 2005).

Corruption is generally defined as a misuse of public office for private gains and it has become a matter of growing concern all over the world due to increasing consensus within both academic and policy circles about negative impacts that are drawn by corruption towards socioeconomic development, which undermines good governance, and distort public policy, subsequently leading to misallocation of resources and negative impact to economic growth (Bjornkov, 2011; Dimant & Tosato, 2017; Dridi, 2013; Enste & Heldman, 2017; Hodge, Shankar, Rao, & Duhs, 2011; Lalountas, Manolas, & Vavouras, 2011a, 2011b; Otusanya, 2011; Pellegrini & Gerlagh, 2004; Shah & Schacter, 2004; Šumah, 2018). Due to these unpleasant feelings on corruption towards the development of a country, country leaders are actively searching for effective initiatives to fight corruption, thus leading to the creation of various initiatives to fight corruption around the world.