PUBLIC IMPACT FUNDAMENTALS (PIF) AS A METHOD TO MEASURE THE INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN KETENGAH, TERENGGANU

BY

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Abstract

This study investigates the feasibility of Public Impact Fundamentals (PIF) as a method in assessing rural policy that directly impacts the Integrated Rural Development (IRD) in the local context in KETENGAH, Terengganu. PIF is a method that is widely used in the global context in assessing the policy-making process and how the policy can give a maximum impact on the target group. PIF contains three (3) main indicators which are Legitimacy, Policy, and Action, whereby all indicators have their own clusters. This paper reveals two (2) indicators from PIF which is Legitimacy and Action as indicators in assessing rural policy towards IRD project in a traditional village in the District of Dungun, Terengganu, Malaysia. The concept of IRD promoted a continuous intervention and collaboration process that involved external parties such as government agencies to improve the rural local economy and quality of life. Three policymakers from the Ministry of Rural Development and one from Plan Malaysia were interviewed using open-ended questions to get their opinion regarding the feasibility of PIF as indicators in rural development in Malaysia and how the current policy impacts the IRD projects. Seven (7) themes and six (6) sub-themes emerge from the thematic analysis based on in-depth interviews with the policymakers. The main themes that have been discussed are 1) Bottoms-up approach, 2) Roles of the politician, 3) Extension of time, 4) Key Performance Indicators, 5) Check and balance meeting, 6) the Roles of action groups, and 7) Participation from policy makers. The findings were then discussed and a new framework that is compatible with Rural Development in Malaysia context was developed. The new framework proposed 'Observe' and 'Participate' as their main indicator to give higher impacts to the rural development project in enhancing the economy in traditional villages.

Keywords: Rural, Integrated Rural Development, Feasibility, Public Impact Fundamentals

INTRODUCTION

The policymakers, which is the government, face a big challenge in ensuring the policies that are formulated can achieve the goals that have been outlined. For example, in Malaysia, all the policies that are formulated must follow the Malaysian Plan (RMK) at the federal level to achieve the country's vision.

At the same time, our world today is experiencing a very rapid rate of transformation. For example, the average government has used sophisticated digital technology in areas such as infrastructure bill payments where people can avoid long queues at the counter.

The government has the biggest role in solving people's problems in every country. Towards building a better society, the government can have a great impact on people's lives. Every step that is taken by the government must achieve benefical results for the people; the impact of the decision is important because it puts people's lives and livelihood at risk. If a bad decision is implemented the effect will be the allocated funds are wasted. This in turn will reduce the

people's trust in the government. Therefore, it is clear that the government needs to increase its impact on the people.

However, according to the findings from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the population's trust in the government in OECD countries was only 41.8 percent in 2014 compared to 45.2 percent in 2007 (Helmut Anheier, et al., 2016) tells that society's expectations are not met. This is worrying because the community may not support public institutions through tax payments and the democratic process. Therefore, the government needs to do something about how something can have an impact on the community. As such, the 'Public Impact Fundamental' will help the government in improving achievements to meet the expectations of the community.

This paper examines the 'Public Impact Fundamentals' (PIF) to measure the impact of the policies that are issued on the Development of Rural Areas in Malaysia. This is a systematic approach to understand how a policy is successful and to explain the steps to maximise opportunities in achieving an impact on society.

As a result of the collaboration between experienced academics around the world together with experienced government officials around the world, a framework has been formed by academics and tested at the government level so that it can be used immediately. There are three important components in the impact of society, namely, Legitimacy, Policy, and Action. Each of these components has three elements that are important to measure the impact of a project on society.

Legitimacy

Community trust refers to the trust of the community as a whole towards the institutions that are directly involved in developing a policy; trust in the government helps in promoting social trust, which in turn helps in democracy. The belief in a government or institution is the most influential element in Legitimacy, whereby when it is not taken seriously the probability of a catastrophe can occur.

In the context of this study, the trust of the traditional village community towards the government that is directly involved in developing policies that affect them refers to the Ministry of Rural Development (KPLB) and PLANMalaysia. Apart from that, implementing institutions such as KETENGAH have the greatest influence in gaining the trust of the community.

Procedural steps that are taken by the decision-making authorities during the ongoing policy implementation process can affect the stakeholders' and society's perception of legitimacy. Cultivating the relationship between policymakers and stakeholders can improve the integrity between the policies that are enacted and the delivery of public services in addition to helping in obtaining good results.

Effective stakeholder relations begin with clear objectives for consultation purposes, followed by identifying organisations that have a clear interest in the initiative. This helps the policymakers to understand the role of the stakeholders. This cooperation can avoid coordination and organisational problems in achieving policy objectives. At this stage, it is important to draw parties with a high level of competence throughout the policy cycle. The relationship between KPLB and PLANMalaysia with institutions such as KETENGAH and other implementing agencies is important, starting from the beginning of policy formulation up to the level of monitoring projects that are ongoing or already underway. Significantly, having a clear relationship can help influence legitimacy.

The commitment of political leaders in supporting policy objectives directly influences legitimacy. Political leaders can use their influence to gain consensus in decision-making to achieve policy objectives. If there is opposition to the policy, it will undermine the legitimacy of an initiative. The effect that will occur is a lack of trust in the policy and its delivery. This will make it difficult to achieve impact.

Action

Action is the most neglected important foundation. According to the assumptions that are made, "after the policy is drafted by the government, the policy will be implemented and the desired result is what the policymakers expected (Smith, 1973). The implementation process is considered a series of normal decisions and interactions that are not appropriate given the interaction. Most of the important policies seem to have been resolved in previous decisions from the executive, legislature, and judges (Bt Sani & Rahman Idris, 2018)

This gives the concept a different definition. Some see it as an action from private and public groups that are directly involved in the achievement of policy objectives (Bt Sani & Rahman Idris, 2018). Although action is important for public impact, it is important to draw the difference between these two opinions. A policy may be implemented effectively but fail to have an impact due to problematic content or other circumstances. Therefore, successful action is required, and the elements that have been identified for good action are management, measurement, and alignment.

Measurement is the main tool in implementation. It will provide a dramatic improvement in the service quality of public agencies (Najam, 1995). Public management needs to start by determining the management objectives that will contribute to performance first. After that, the determination of the set of performance measures should be selected according to the characteristics to help achieve the outlined objectives.

Actors have to ensure that change happens, thus, they need to share alignment so that they can achieve policy objectives. The coordination that has a shared mission is important in this stage of development (Basley, T., 2003). When actors cooperate effectively, and when they are held accountable for their tasks, implementation will be more successful. Thus, it is clear that alignment is important in contributing to successful actions.
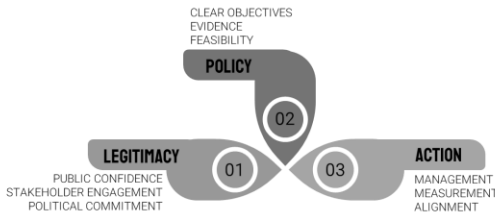
METHODOLOGY

Thematic analysis is an analysis that is used to identify, analyse, and report themes that emerge from the collected data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Thematic analysis should be learned by qualitative researchers because it provides useful skills for performing other qualitative analysis methods. It is also suggested that this method can produce in-depth analysis and facilitate the answering of research questions by capturing the main themes of the data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Therefore, this method can be used to analyse qualitative data that has been collected from the 'in-depth' interviews from policymakers of the Ministry of Rural Development (KPLB) and Plan Malaysia.

This study uses thematic analysis to analyse and identify thematic patterns regarding the research questions that emerge from the data that have been obtained. This study uses the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006) to explain the analysis process. Based on the interviews that have been conducted, 3 policymakers, i.e., 3 from the Ministry of Rural Development (KPLB) and one from PLANMalaysia have been successfully interviewed. The first step is to transcribe and familiarise oneself with the data. Google Meet recordings from interviews were transcribed several times and recorded manually using Microsoft Office programs. The interview transcription results were then uploaded to the Nvivo software to facilitate the researcher in identifying codes automatically. The Nvivo software helps to make the coding process more effective and transparent than if it were done manually and helps in in-depth interpretation (Brandão, 2015).

POLICYMAKERS

RESPONDENT 1	More than 20 years of experience	Ketua Penolong Setiausaha, Pejabat TKSU Dasar
RESPONDENT 2	More than 10 years of experience	Ketua Penolong Setiausaha Bahagian Kemajuan Tanah dan Wilayah, Kementerian Pembangunan Luar Bandar
RESPONDENT 3	More than 10 years of experience	Ketua Penolong Pengarah Bahagian Rancangan Fizikal Negara, PLANMalaysia
RESPONDENT 4	Less than 10 years of experience	Bahagian Pembangunan Ekonomi dan Komuniti

Table 1 Policy makers' position and experience.

The second step in the thematic analysis is generating initial codes. Here, only the level of data that is relevant to the research question is coded, whereby the code in this study is in the form of statements that have been discussed by the respondents. The transcripts are then revised several times with new or modified codes and are updated.

The third step is to identify the theme. All related codes are organised into different themes. The table is used to classify and display the relationship between themes and codes based on the three functional dimensions, structure, and culture, as adapted from (Tosun, 1999) in evaluating the effectiveness of community participation in the planning process. Each dimension includes several variables. Therefore, the table helps to study the level of themes that leads to the emergence of sub-themes. Also, the codes are linked to one or more themes.

The final step focuses on examining the themes. At this stage, all themes, sub-themes, and codes are reviewed and modified into a coherent relationship, here, the real question is- does each relationship seem 'relevant'? The cut-and-paste function in Microsoft Office is used to rearrange the data in the transcript. Defining the theme is the fifth step in this framework. The main question in this stage is 'What are the relationships built between themes and sub-themes?' 'How can these relationships be achieved by the research question?' In contrast to Braun and Clarke (2006), the thematic map of this research has used a table to explain the variables that are related to the research question. The last step is that the findings are reported and discussed.

CATEGORY	VARIABLES	THEMES	SUB-THEMES	R1	R2	R3	R4
LEGITIMACY	Public Confidence	Bottoms-up approach	Ministry Strategic Plan	/	/		/
			Public Participation	/	/		/
ACTION	Management	Extensions of Time (EOT)	Annual expenditure according to the project phase	/			
	Measurement		Corporation from	/	/	/	/

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Theme	Sub-theme	Detail				
Alignment		Completion of project within the given timeframe	local			
	Key-Performance Indicators	Coordination meeting	/	/		/
	Check and balance meeting from project manager to technical staff	Internal audit	/		/	/
	Roles of local action group		/		/	/
	Direct participation by KPLB and PlanMalaysia		/		/	/

Table 2 Themes developed from in-depth interviews (IDI).

Table 2 shows the themes that have emerged throughout the analysis of the 'in-depth interview' for 4 respondents, consisting of the policy formulation section from KPLB and PLANMalaysia and the implementing agency from KETENGAH. A total of 6 sub-themes were obtained from the transcription results.

Results and Discussion

As a result of the in-depth interviews that were conducted, the majority of the respondents were informed about the connection between the community's confidence and the development approach or process that is used nowadays. The approach that has been discussed is a bottom-up approach. In the process of developing a policy nowadays, the most important thing that needs to be examined is the ministry's strategic plan. This process involves the public in order to gain the trust of the community. (R1, R2, R3, R4).

If according to the project, the original application is from the agency itself. The original application or the original planning based on the needs of the area itself is likely that the KETENGAH will look at something in that area, he has made a plan in accordance with whether he wants to plant or he wants to do a project according to the needs of the area and recommendations from the matter will be brought to the KETENGAH, approved and then raised to the Ministry and the proposal will be taken to the higher level at KPLB for approval.
(Respondent 1, IDI)

Apart from that, based on the results of the interviews, every policy formulation including the preparation of the latest RMK12, the preparation of the Rural Development Policy also involves the target groups in the ministry's strategic plan. This strategic plan will be reviewed every five years according to the current needs based on the input and feedback that are given by the target group during the meeting and Focus Group Discussion that is held at the initial stage.

Process of FGD is when we usually take people who are interested including the village head and MPKK. According to the state government, there are JPKK and JKKK. People really don't even go there. It is true that we have distribution, presentation of all the last process, and so on and then the last time the village is close to the landfill, right? That's when they want to protest. But at that time everything was published.
(Respondent 4, IDI)

Although there are lots of opportunities for the community to get involved in the policy-making process, there is an opinion from one of the respondents who state that the presence of the population's representatives is not very encouraging despite the distribution that has been done. The level of community awareness to engage in FGD sessions to gain their trust is still not at a satisfactory level. The community, especially representatives of the population such as MPKK, JPKK, and JKKK should take this opportunity to get involved in sessions such as FGD to voice their opinions so that all suggestions and views can be given attention at the Ministry level, which is the initial stage of policy-making. This is important because this is one of the approaches that can help in gaining the public's trust in policymaking.

Stakeholder Engagement

The stakeholder's engagement is one of the categories in the validity of policymaking. This is because the formulation of

policy does not focus on only one agency, it also involves stakeholders such as technical agencies, the JKKK and MPKK as the local community, as well as Local Action Groups such as KETENGAH.

Apart from the implementing agencies who are responsible for collecting data from the representatives of stakeholders to be brought to the Ministry, the agencies that are involved under the Ministry of Rural Development (KPLB) are also responsible for providing information regarding the areas that they are looking after to obtain input during the FGD session. This is important to ensure that they provide for the real needs of the people in the area. As such, the stakeholder's engagement is one of the legalities in policymaking.

But in KPLB it usually starts from the development of the project itself. Usually, we will get input from agencies in the field for example LKW, JAKOA, FELDA, FELCRA to see the real needs of villagers or rural residents.
(Respondent 3, IDI)

Political Commitment

Based on the interviews conducted, one of the respondents states that political commitment depends on the wisdom of the politicians who are appointed in an area to seize opportunities in developing their government area. This matter is also seen as important in developing a rural area. There are various forms of opportunities in the form of programs and grants that an area can enter and apply to develop its economy. However, since publicity about these programs and opportunities only applies to the people's representatives, it is expected that they convey all this information to the villagers. If this information is not communicated to the villagers they will not have the opportunity to participate in the development programs that have the potential to develop their village's economy. This is what the respondents have meant regarding the wisdom of politicians in seizing opportunities in developing their areas: if they are smart, many opportunities will be obtained, on the other hand, if they do not convey news to the villagers, the government's desire to develop the village's economy will not be achieved.

One of the ways to solve this problem is to ensure that the politicians in charge of an area use all available mediums such as attending meetings and gatherings together with the villagers to update them on new information that is received. In addition, this information can also be extended by uploading it onto existing social sites and groups of social sites according to the suitability of the existing platform. To ensure that this happens, it is important to put this measure as one of the KPIs for politicians so that the commitment that is given can be evaluated over time.

Management

Management allows policymakers to assess whether the existing systems are appropriate, people with qualifications and skills are assigned the right tasks in project implementation, and interventions are structured in an effective way. This process involves measurement, analysis, feedback, evaluation, measurement, and coordination.

Successful implementation depends on risk identification and management that promotes accurate and informed judgment.

That was a very problematic project. The project is actually ready. The project in Bukit Besi he just wants to make some sort of museum. So, the project has a problem, but we have done all the intervention and we have solved the problem. One of the factors is the weather problem. That's a common problem. Then raw materials then politicians have interference is also a problem. The contractor's finances are also one of the problems when he is unable to roll money. Then another one in terms of EOT (Extension of Time). That will also cause project delays. The current MCO also causes a delay of the project.
(Respondent 2, IDI)

Measurement

Measurement is a key tool of implementation. It can drastically improve the quality of service in government agencies, and it is also able to provide answers to the feedback that is given in project implementation to facilitate successful implementation. Civil servants should start by making decisions regarding strategies to achieve objectives. Subsequently, they can choose a set of performance measures with the necessary characteristics to help them achieve those goals.

The majority of respondents gave their opinion regarding the KPI, which was used as the main measurement tool in measuring the achievement of a project. The discussion about KPI is also closely related to the timeline of a project and how each project can follow the set timeline. Each project that is carried out will have work targets and criteria that need to be achieved within a certain period. If the project can be completed without interruption, it can be categorised as successful. This KPI also involves several layers where different layers have different KPIs according to needs. The determination of this KPI within the Ministry is determined by the Implementation Status Coordination Meeting. According to one respondent, this meeting will be held four times a year. As for the top management meeting, there is a strategic direction meeting involving agencies that will discuss the programs that will be placed in the KPI and how to implement the strategy.

Alignment

The local action group together with the economic players, for example, the villagers need to make changes and share with the policy makers pertaining to any changes for coordination in ensuring that the policy objectives are achieved. For this purpose, coordination is fundamental to the development of a joint mission. When the implementing agencies together with the economic players cooperate effectively, and they are innovative and highly motivated in carrying out their tasks, the implementation will tend to be more successful. It is therefore clear that coordination is an important contributing factor to the success of the action.

One of the respondents has stated that for each project that is carried out regular meetings are held to evaluate the reports

that are sent and presented by the project manager. Apart from the periodic meetings that are held to coordinate the project in line to achieve the objective, another measure is an internal audit that will be carried out at the agency level which will look at the overall project down to the details of the project. The internal audit that is conducted will help to ensure that the objectives that are outlined in the policy can be achieved and that the frequency of internal audits that are carried out in the annual period concerned can also help the ministry and implementing agencies to identify early on if there are obstacles and challenges in the project implementation process. According to the respondent, the establishment of departments within the implementing agency and the ministry takes the concept of 'mirroring' where every department in the ministry is the same department that has been created in the implementing agency. Therefore, all reporting will be done according to their respective departments to facilitate management.

Conclusion

The development and feasibility of the project are placed under the 'observe' cluster because the project that is being carried out needs to be verified so that the implementation runs smoothly until the project is completed. Effective project monitoring does not only depend on one agency, it needs to be coordinated with all parties who are involved and cooperation between all parties needs to be emphasised to enable effective monitoring to occur.

Figure 2 Observation framework to improve rural development in Malaysia.

An effective observation process will help in the success of a project because a continuous process is needed to guide and give guidance not only to the agency but it can motivate the villagers who are directly involved with the economic development project in their place. Without effective observation, it will have a bad impact and the main objective of the project cannot be achieved; consequently, a good impact on the economy cannot happen.

In this observation cluster, there are three main elements, namely, an easy access monitoring system, the appointment of experienced monitoring agencies, and project coordination meetings. These three elements are the results of data triangulation between IDI with the policymakers and implementing agencies.

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