

Corruption Occurrences in the Public Sector Agency: Malaysia Evidence

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Abstract: This study analyses the perception of activities that lead to corruption occurrences that are strongly associated with the misuse of public resources, for example: accepting bribes and gifts; forgery of documents; preferential treatment; misuse or taking advantage of entrusted positions and power; and activities that speed up services for people without paying heed to proper processes. The objective of this study is to identify the type of corruption activities in Malaysia's public sector as perceived by officers. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to officers working in 25 federal-level ministries. The data analysis results based on 242 complete responses revealed an alarming situation where most respondents acknowledged the existence of corruption activities in the public sector agency. The findings from this study could be used by the public sector agency to develop, implement, and enforce rigorous policies that can effectively root out corruption activities. The study's limitations and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

Keywords: Corruption; Public Sector; Malaysia; Public Officers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Corruption is increasingly a white-collar crime (Fredericks, McComas and Weatherby, 2016) that is becoming widespread in many sectors of the economy and is defined as a non-violent crime committed by a respectable person of high social status during his/her occupation, attempting to obtain a financial advantage. In other words, corruption is defined as a scheme in which an employee misuses his or her influence in a business transaction in a way that violates one's duty to the employer in order to gain direct or indirect benefits (ACFE, 2018; Mujtaba, 2011). Corruption is widespread and Malaysia is simply one of many developing countries affected by it. It may exist in the form of accepting bribes and gifts in order to conduct official actions, forgery of documents, misuse of entrusted position and power, misuse of public resources for personal gain or need, activities to speed up preferential treatment in the workplace in return for a personal advantage or benefit. Abdullah, Sulong and Said (2014) noted that corruption, misappropriation of assets, abuse of power and wrongdoings are common in the Malaysian public sector where the objective is to get a personal benefit.

In 2016, Malaysians were shocked by the biggest confiscation in the 49 years of the history of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), when it recovered RM114

million from two (2) high ranking public officers. Of this amount, RM 53.7 million was in cash (The Star, 6 October 2016). In 2017, the Secretary General of one Ministry was remanded in custody based on the accusation of having a cash amount of RM6 million, gold bars and luxury items believed to originate from corruption activity (Malay Mail Online, 10 January 2017). These two cases are part of an overall trend where such incidents have led to a decline in the Malaysia Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) from 49 points in 2016 to 47 points for both 2017 and 2018. A recent incident involving public sector officers in a corruption case was reported on June 11, 2020. Specifically, three company directors were held by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) on suspicion of involvement in a Tourism Malaysia contract worth RM 99 million. Previously a former government agency chairman was detained by the MACC on allegations of abuse of power. A contract was said to have been approved in just one day without adhering to procurement regulations or procedures (Satar, 2020).

The public sector plays an important role in helping develop society and the economy, and transacting business with the general public. All public sector officers are obliged and expected to serve the public interest with transparency, integrity and accountability in order to efficiently and effectively deliver to citizens the best services (Johari, Ida Rosnidah, Ahmad Nasfy and Sayed Hussin, 2020; Ntayi, Ngoboka and Kakooza, 2013; Adam and Rachman-Moore, 2004). It is crucial that Malaysia's public sector officers are always conscientious and honest in managing and distributing government resources. To make this possible, similar to other coun-

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tries, the government of Malaysia has developed various programs, campaigns and training schemes (Hauser, 2019; Pelletier and Bligh, 2006). Such initiatives are designed and implemented so that public funds are managed efficiently, and to be done with a sense of integrity in order to counter the issues of public governance inefficiencies, fraud, corruption and poor internal control mechanisms. However, it seems that the battle against corruption is a never ending one. It is claimed that corruption and re-corruption are endemic to developing countries (Vaidya, 2019; Mehanna, 2003). More and more corruption issues in the public sector are being reported in the media, and this trend has greatly tarnished the reputation and image of the public sector's officials and indeed, that of the nation. The public more than ever is now concerned about corruption issues and the enormous amount of public funds that have been wasted, misused and to all intents and purposes, 'gone down the drain'.

This paper consists of five sections. First section is introduction to the study, section 2 reviews the relevant literature, section 3 describes the detailed methodology. The next two sections elaborate the result and discussion of the study, finally the conclusion as section 4 and 5.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Public Sector Corruption

Corruption is known as an abuse of entrusted power for a person or group's positive advantage. Most of the time, dishonest or unethical behavior is conducted by persons who are delegated with a position of authority and trust. Otherwise, public sector corruption is also referred as mistreatment or misuse of the public officer's assigned power for his/her own benefit and gain (Transparency International, 2015). There are four categories of corruption in the public sector namely grand corruption, petty corruption, and state capture/peddling of influence with a various form such as bribery, extortion, embezzlement, fraud, nepotism, patronage and conflict of interest (Grabosky & Lamour, 2000; Transparency International, 2015). Sari, Cahaya and Joseph (2020) conducted an empirical study on anti-corruption reporting in the ASEAN countries. It is claimed that corruption committed in government departments involving activities such as approvals of tenders, contracts and payments (Johari, Sayed Hussin, Wan Mohamed, Rashid, 2020). The claim has been made that the major issue with public sector spending is that it is at the mercy of the prospects of personal gain, especially when the processes of accountability are absent or ill-defined.

Goh, Chua, Lee, Moo and Tham (2015) noted that corruption often occurs to accelerate bureaucratic practices and avoid the problem of legal consequences. Excessive adherence to regulation and formalities or the proverbial 'red tape' of bureaucratic practices and trust deficit (Adelopoand Rufai, 2020) leads to corruption practices. Consequently, this may generate a perception of betrayal of trust by the public concerning what the government or its representatives are doing (Goh et al., 2015). The question of integrity is often brought up because public officers need to ensure that the delivery of services to the public is done in an ethical way. However, the lack of integrity among public officers contributes to loss of public trust in the government as well as in the pri-

vate sector (Achim, 2017; Halter, De Arruda and Halter, 2009). Corruption occurrences lead to insecurity and reduction in investment and government budget allocations, but also to favoritism, networking, and cliques.

Abdullah, Sulong and Said (2014) have indicated that in many countries there are issues concerning accountability, integrity, and ethical behavior in many public sector systems. Due to inadequate processes that govern risk management, accountability and transparency, there is much and rising public anxiety over financial mismanagement, wastage of public money and other resources, and insufficient enforcement of legislation and regulations, and/or punishment of corruption (Danilah and Nabiha, 2011). In another study, Tunggak, Salomon and Abu (2011) believed that bureaucratic practices and the slowness in getting things done drive corruption. Whitton (1994) regarded corruption as antithetical to the intention of public management, attributing it to a sense of failure and betrayal of the fundamental professional ethos where the public must be served with honesty and trust.

2.2. Malaysian Government Efforts and Public Sector Corruption Issues

The ability of the federal government to effectively manage large programs has become the subject of much public debate. Therefore, the core mission of today's government is eliminating corruption and enforcing the rule of law. In 2004, the Malaysian government launched its National Integrity Plan (NIP) as a guideline to all public sector officers to act accordingly to positive norms and values. The main purpose of NIP is to strengthen the system of national integrity so that Malaysia is in fact a nation of integrity.

Integrity has been considered essential to civil servants maintaining 'noble' values, and as part of their accountability and responsibility when they are discharging their official duties to the public. As in other countries, Transparency International was recognized by the Malaysian government as a non-governmental organization that continually reassesses public sector integrity and accountability. The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) was established with its business partner, Malaysia Institute Integrity (IIM) to handle awareness of applying integrity in the public sector. Both agencies are making continuous efforts to implement accountability and responsibility in the Malaysian public sector and the wider community.

The IIM which incorporated the NIP with the characteristics of transparency, unity, responsibility, resilience, truthfulness, trust and trustworthiness, legacy and ethics has also introduced a 'Turtle Model' that public sector officials should adhere to. These characteristics of the Turtle Model holistically support the NIP in eight (8) institutional entities, i.e., administration, economy, politics, civil society, community, family, social culture and religion. Prior to NIP, the government had over the years introduced several programs to promote good moral values and deter corruption in the public sector. These included: "Leadership by Example" in 1983; "Name Tags" in 1985; "Assimilation of Islamic Values" in 1985; "Clean, Efficient and Trustworthy Government" in 1989; and "Excellent Work Culture" in 1989 (Siddiquee, 2010). Then to improve the delivery of public sector

Table 1. Public Sector Officers Arrested for Corruption (2015 to 2022).

Year	Public Sector Officers Arrested	Total Civilian and Public Sector Officers Arrested	Percentage of Total Public Sector Officers Arrested
2016	466	939	49.6%
2017	409	879	46.5%
2018	418	894	46.8%
2019	525	1101	47.7%
2020	467	998	46.8%
2021	411	851	48.3%
2022	323	909	35.5%

Source: MACC website (<http://www.sprm.gov.my/index.php/en/offenders-corruption-statistic>).

services, the Government Transformation Program (GTP) was introduced in 2010. The purpose of the GTP is to function as a tool that constantly improves the delivery of public sector services with high levels of integrity, accountability and transparency.

However, despite the government's efforts to implement efficient and effective public sector management, the number of public sector bureaucrats being arrested and convicted in corruption offences has increased (Kapeli and Mohamed, 2015; Cleveland, Favo, Frecka and Owens, 2009). It is reported that out of the total number of people arrested for corruption from 2016 to 2022, 41.6%, 40.4%, 46.5%, 36.2%, 44.1%, 46.8%, 48.3% and 35.5% were public sector officers, respectively. Table 1 summarizes the relevant data from the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Agency (MACC) website.

A series of corruption issues in the Malaysian public sector have caught the attention of the public and elsewhere in the world, and therefore the public at large is demanding that the government do something about it (Abdullah and Abdullah, 2016). Undoubtedly, corruption occurrences have tarnished the image of Malaysia politically, economical and socially. Clearly, corruption cases involve highly educated and high-ranking individuals who engaged in corrupt and criminal breaches of trust in order to gain a personal interest or advantage, and the power that comes with it, leading to compromised functioning of government and potential collapse of a civilization (Bernama, 12 December, 2016).

Additionally, corruption in the public sector impedes the competence of public services, weakens people's confidence in public institutions and accelerates the rising cost of public service transactions (OECD, 2016). It is also believed that the issues of corruption, accountability, transparency, integrity and cronyism in the Malaysian procurement system are the main concerns of the public, particularly malpractice resulting in massive unnecessary spending of public funds (Shu Hui et al., 2011). The occurrences of corruption may also undermine economic growth and investment (Rose-Ackerman, 1999), curtail and discourage true entrepreneurship and impair objective discrimination in business tender/contract negotiations (Sarkar and Hasan, 2001). It is hoped that this study would assist the government to identify the types of corruption activities that occur in the Malay-

sian public sector and encourage the government to formulate effective strategies to combat those activities in the public sector.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data Collection and Sampling

This study used a quantitative survey questionnaire to analyze Malaysian public sector officers' perceptions of corruption. In total there are 1.4 million public sector officers in Malaysia. The population of this study comprises officers at the federal level which consists of 25 ministries employing 1.34 million staff. The selected respondents for this study are those who are involved in preparing, validating, recommending, and approving any transactions as part of their jobs. This study applied the simple random sampling method and a total of 400 questionnaires was distributed evenly to all 25 ministries. Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, more than half (242) were collected, and used in the data analysis. Data for this study is collected through a survey method by distributing the questionnaires to the respective respondents through a contact person or/and by emailing or/and Google form.

3.2. Measurements of Variables

The participants were required to state their perceptions of corruption activities in the Malaysian public sector by utilizing a seven-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Table 2 indicates the items used in measuring the corruption occurrences, which was adapted from Gorta and Forell (1995). These measurements have been used elsewhere such as in studies by Walton and Peiffer (2015) and Bowman and Gilligan (2008).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Demographic Profiles

The respondents were asked to reveal certain aspects of their demographic profile including gender, race, age, highest academic qualifications, job position, job function, grade, and years of employment the current position. The demographic profile of 242 public sector officers showed that female re-

Table 2. Corruption Activities in Malaysia’s Public Sector.

Code	Item Description
C1	I believe that accepting bribes and gifts in kind to perform official actions is occurring in return for personal gain in Malaysia’s public sector
C2	I believe that there are document forgery activities in return for personal gain in Malaysia’s public sector
C3	I believe that there is misuse of entrusted position and power in return for personal gain in Malaysia’s public sector
C4	I believe that there is misuse of public resources for personal gain in Malaysia’s public sector
C5	I believe that there are corruption actions to speed up services in return for personal gain in Malaysia’s public sector
C6	I believe that there is preferential treatment in the recruitment process in return for personal gain in Malaysia’s public sector

spondents for this study accounted for 51.7% while male respondents were 48.3%. Most respondents were between the ages of 31 and 40 (59.5%) followed by those between the ages of 41 and 50 (29.8%), those between 20 and 30 (8.7%) and only 2.1% for respondents who were 50 and older. In terms of job position, there are three categories identified from the data, i.e. 85.5% are the professional and managerial group, 13.6% are the supporting staff and 0.8% comprise senior management.

Referring to the grade of a position, most respondents were in grade 47/48 – 51/52 (50%), grade 40/41 - 43/44 (33.1%), below grade 40/41 (13.7%), grade 53/54 and JUSA C (3.2%). It is also identified that the majority who answered the questionnaire are those who graduated with a master’s degree (42.6%) and followed with those with a Bachelor’s degree (35.1%). Our analysis also found that 61.2% of respondents have been working in the Malaysian public service for 5 years and more. It means they have much experience in the public sector and can answer questions about corruption occurrences.

4.2. Normality Test

Normality test is very important at this stage since the normal data assumption must be tested first before performing a parametric test. The normality test is measured based on the rule of thumb value, which is between -2 and +2. When the skewness and kurtosis values are in this range, the data distribution is normal. Nevertheless, in this study the skewness value is -1.1787 while the value of kurtosis is 1.889, which suggests that the data is normally distributed.

4.3. Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis

Factor analysis can be used to assimilate and reduce a few variables to a smaller number of underlying factors which contain all the important information. From Table 3, the test’s eigenvalues indicate that the factors utilized for corruption occurrences can explain 87.813 of the variances. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test reveals a value greater than 0.6, at 0.929. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square determines the value’s significance (Chi-Square = 1964.62, $p < 0.0000001$). Thus, the sample is sufficient for utilization in the factor analysis to measure staff members’ perceptions of corruption occurrences.

Table 3. Validity and reliability testing for factors of corruption occurrences.

Cronbach's Alpha	0.972
Eigenvalue	5.269
Eigen % variance	87.813
% of variance	87.813
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO)	0.929
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	1964.620
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Sig.	.000

The Cronbach’s alpha value on corruption occurrences (see Table 3) is 0.972 which is higher than the rule of thumb of 0.7. It is therefore evident that the variables did positively contribute to the reliability and excellence in measuring officers’ perceptions of corruption occurrences (George and Mallery, 2016).

4.4. Descriptive Analysis

4.4.1. Means for the Measured Factors based on the Job Function

Job function of the respondents is to provide information on the relevant public sector department in each ministry. Regardless of what the department is responsible for, all respondents are involved in preparing, validating, recommending, and approving any monetary transactions as part of their job. Based on all job function groups as depicted in Table 4, the average highest result for all factors measures was 5.5 which includes the perceptions by the two groups: firstly, Security Management, Law, and Enforcement; and secondly, Management Planning, Engineering and Infrastructure Development. The mean lowest score measures at 4.0, which includes the perceptions of those working in the General Administration Management group. In addition, all job function groups score more than the overall average at 5.0. The exceptions are Management Accounting (4.6), Human Resource Management and Organizational Development (4.5), and International Relations and Foreign Affairs (4.8). In

Table 4. Perceptions of Corruption Activities in the Malaysian Public Sector based on Job Function.

Job Function	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	All Average
General Administration Management	4.3	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.1	3.7	4.0
Management Accounting	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.5	4.6
Human Resource Management and Organizational Development	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.5
Audit Management	5.3	5.5	5.8	5.7	5.2	5.2	5.4
Financial Management	5.1	5.1	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.0	5.2
Security Management, Law and Enforcement	5.6	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.5	5.5
Information Technology Management	5.3	5.0	5.0	5.3	5.3	5.7	5.3
Administration and Regional Development / Municipal / Land / District / Local	5.4	5.0	5.0	5.6	5.4	4.6	5.2
Management Planning, Engineering and Infrastructure Development	6.0	5.3	5.8	5.3	5.5	5.0	5.5
International Relations and Foreign Affairs	4.8	5.0	4.8	4.8	4.5	4.8	4.8
Social Management, Health and Social	5.2	5.2	4.9	5.1	5.0	5.0	5.1
All Average	5.1	5.0	5.0	5.1	5.0	4.8	5.0

Table 5. Frequency Scores for Corruption Activities.

Scores	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	All Average
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.00
2	22	22	22	22	22	22	22.00
3	12	12	12	12	12	17	12.83
4	8	17	11	7	11	25	13.17
5	74	65	63	64	71	59	66.00
6	121	125	133	136	125	118	126.33
7	4	0	0	0	0	0	0.67
Disagree (1-3)	35	35	35	35	35	40	35.83
Neutral (4)	8	17	11	7	11	25	13.17
Agree (5-7)	199	190	196	200	196	177	193.00
Disagree % (1-3)	14.46	14.46	14.46	14.46	14.46	16.53	14.81
Neutral % (4)	3.31	7.02	4.55	2.89	4.55	10.33	5.44
Agree % (5-7)	82.23	78.51	80.99	82.64	80.99	73.14	79.75
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	7	6	6	6	6	6	6
Std. Dev.	3	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	3

terms of average score for each activity that contributes to the corruption occurrences, only one activity, i.e. C6 scored 4.8. This is under the average score of 5.0. C1 and C4 scored 5.1 which is slightly above the average score and another activity, i.e. C2, C3 and C5 scored 5.0.

4.4.2. Factor-wise Evaluation

This study measures the perceptions of corruption activities in Malaysia's public sector using six (6) activities that contribute to these corruption occurrences. Based on the respondents as observed in Table 5, a total average of 79.75%

agreed on the perception of corruption activities in the Malaysian public sector, while 14.81% indicated otherwise. Furthermore 5.44% have a neutral perception about corruption activities.

82.23% of the respondents agreed that *accepting bribes and gifts in kind to perform official action* is occurring in return for personal gain in the Malaysian public sector (C1) as observed in Table 5. Officers working for Management Planning, Engineering, and Infrastructure Development (mean value of 6.0) had the most concerns about it, while those working for the General Administration Management perceived it the least (mean value of 4.3), as observed in Table 4. Based on the remaining job functions, the public officers working in Management Accounting, Human Resource Management and Organizational Development, and International Relations and Foreign Affairs (mean value of 4.6, 4.5 and 4.8, respectively) regarded it to be lower than the average (mean value of 5.1) value in terms of occurrence.

78.51% of the respondents stated that *document forging activities in return for personal gain* are occurring in the Malaysian public sector (C2) as observed in Table 5. The public officers in the Security Management, Law, and Enforcement (mean value of 5.5) accepted that it occurred the most, while the public officers of General Administration Management (mean value of 3.9) least perceived it as observed in Table 4. Based on the results, public officers of Management Accounting, and Human Resource Management and Organizational Development (mean value of 4.8 and 4.5, respectively) considered the activity to be less likely to occur compared to the average level (mean value of 5.0).

80.99% of the respondents agreed that *misuse of entrusted position and power in return for personal gain* is occurring in the Malaysian public sector (C3) as observed in Table 5. The public officers working for Audit Management (mean value of 5.8) regarded it as occurring the most while officials in General Administration Management perceived it the least (mean value of 3.9) as observed in Table 4. Based on these results, public officers of Financial Management, Security Management, Law and Enforcement, and Management Planning, Engineering, and Infrastructure Development (mean value of 5.3, 5.5 and 5.7, respectively) considered this activity to be occurring regularly compared to the average level (mean value of 5.0).

82.64% of the respondents concurred there is *misuse of public resources for personal needs* in the Malaysian public sector (C4) as observed in Table 5. The public officers of Audit Management (mean value of 5.7) regarded it as occurring the most while public officers of General Administration Management (mean value of 4.1) perceived it the least as observed in Table 4. It should be noted as well that public officers of Management Accounting, Human Resource Management and Organizational Development, and International Relations and Foreign Affairs (mean value of 4.7, 4.7 and 4.8, respectively) considered it to be occurring less compared to the average level (mean value of 5.1).

80.99% of the respondents agreed there are *corruption actions to speed up services in return for personal gain* in the Malaysian public sector (C5) as observed in Table 5. The public officers working for Management Planning, Engineer-

ing, and Infrastructure Development (mean value of 5.5) regarded it the most while the officials employed at General Administration Management (mean value of 4.1) perceived it the least to occur as observed in Table 4. Meanwhile, public officers of Management Accounting, Human Resource Management and Organizational Development, and International Relations and Foreign Affairs (mean value of 4.6, 4.5 and 4.5, respectively) considered this activity to be occurring less compared to the average level (mean value of 5.0).

73.14% of the respondents agreed there is *preferential treatment in the recruitment process in return for personal gain* in Malaysia's public sector (C6) as observed in Table 5. The public officers at Information Technology Management (mean value of 5.7) regarded it the most and the public officers of General Administration Management (mean value of 3.7) perceived it the least as observed in Table 4. Based on these results, public officers of Audit Management, Financial Management, Security Management, Law and Enforcement, Management Planning, Engineering and Infrastructure Development, and Social Management, Health and Social (mean value of 5.2, 5.0, 5.5, 5.0 and 5.0, respectively) considered it to have high occurrence compared to the average level (mean value of 4.8).

5. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This study endeavored to measure the level of perceptions of corruption activities in the Malaysian public sector by evaluating the above-mentioned six measurement items. The outcome indicates that most respondents acknowledged the existence of corruption activities in Malaysia's public sector. Overall, the six activities reflect the perception that more than half of the respondents believe the presence of corruption activities. Specifically, two activities indicate the highest score for corruption occurrences: firstly, misuse of public resources for personal need; and secondly, accepting bribes and gifts to perform an official action. The other four variables in this study - forgery of documents, preferential treatment in the recruitment process, misuse of entrusted position and power, and corruption actions to speed up a service in return for a personal gain - also signified the perception these situations are likely to occur. This is an alarming scenario that requires a proactive response and ensure that all public sector officials act with integrity in the best interests of the nation. The establishment of agencies such as the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and Malaysia Institute Integrity (IIM) as well as various programs and activities such as the Government Transformation Program (GTP) in 2010, National Integrity Plan (NIP) in 2004, "Leadership by Example" in 1983, "Assimilation of Islamic Values" in 1985, and "Clean, Efficient and Trustworthy Government" in 1989. They clearly demonstrate the government's efforts to create a free and fair environment in the public sector.

However, despite these efforts, it is anticipated that the government and relevant authorities still need to explore the root causes of this deep-seated problem and devise more rigorous and enforceable policies to stop corruption activities. For instance, the public sector may construct a framework and undertake a risk analysis that can limit the possibility of corruption activities occurring. More im-

portantly, it is essential to change the public's perception about the efforts being made by the government in combating this offence. Although this paper focuses on the officers working in the Malaysian public sector and their perceptions of corruption, it does not necessarily mean that corruption activities are confined to the government alone and public sector officials are more corrupt than others. In a broader sense, corruption can happen anywhere at all levels.

6. CONCLUSION

It is vital that the issue of corruption involving the public sector in Malaysia be addressed effectively so that government services run fairly and honestly and improve the reputation of the government. This type of crime is attracting much interest throughout the world and many efforts have been implemented to prevent such occurrences, but to no avail. Although corruption is not new, it is an undesirable activity and should be eradicated, especially since it is now very difficult to detect and even until long after it has occurred. Since the public sector is the institution responsible for administering the nation as entrusted by the public, what is at stake is Malaysia's economic growth and good reputation.

One of the big challenges in combating corruption is to strengthen ethics and integrity among all nations. A society with integrity shows that its people have strong moral principles, and this includes employees in an organizational setting. Integrity can be regarded as a personal and organizational characteristic that combines honesty and dependability (Siddiquee, 2010). When an individual or organization instill high integrity in their practices, ethical behaviors will automatically flow from it. Managers with a high level of integrity will ensure their workforce and organization are functioning properly in an ethical environment and accountable when decisions are being made.

Since the present study focuses on Malaysian federal government officers as the respondents, the findings documented here cannot be generalized to all the public sector. To overcome this limitation, a larger sample that can include all levels of public sector entities is needed to provide more detailed data that can incorporate the whole Malaysian public sector. Furthermore, while this paper highlights the perception of corruption occurrences based on the said six activities, it is recommended that future research investigate several influential factors that make corruption activities in the public sector possible, such as behavioral or cultural issues.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Faculty of Accountancy, Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Malaysia for all supports and resources.

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Received: Apr 12, 2023

Revised: Apr 20, 2023

Accepted: Sep 04, 2023

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