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STRENGTHENING TRUST TO REINFORCE ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN MALAYSIA **Ahmad Fadzli Bin Ahmad Tajuddin ^(a) Hamdan Bin Mohd Salleh ^(b) Abul Bashar Bhuiyan ^(c)**^(a) Senior Fellow, Institute of Electoral Studies & The Advancement of Democracy, Universiti Selangor, Bestari Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia; E-mail: iesad@unisel.edu.my^(b) Associate Professor, Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, Universiti Selangor, Bestari Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia; E-mail: hamdan@unisel.edu.my^(c) Associate Professor, Faculty of Business and Accountancy, Universiti Selangor, Shah Alam, Malaysia; E-mail: bashariuk@gmail.com**ARTICLE INFO****Article History:**Received: 15th October 2023Reviewed & Revised: 16th October to 24th December 2023Accepted: 25th December 2023Published: 30th December 2023**Keywords:**

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the imperative of fostering Trust to enhance the organizational performance of local authorities in Malaysia. Recognizing Trust as a pivotal factor, the research delves into strategies for strengthening interpersonal relationships and institutional credibility. By addressing trust deficits, the study aims to provide actionable insights that can contribute to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of local governance in Malaysia. The primary focus of this research is to put into practice the idea of Trust, precisely honing in on the effectiveness of local authorities (LAs) in Malaysia. In this instance, the study employs the Community Integrity Building (CIB) concept, emphasizing the pivotal roles played by community monitors, contractors, and LAs in collectively navigating toward improved performance. It offers a continuous feedback mechanism that enhances understanding and improves Trust in services provided by the LAs. The paper objectively explores the measuring of Trust, therefore linking the vacuum between conceptualization and realization, which is hardly seen in LAs. Finally, it concludes by reflecting some insights on the potential of the CIB approach regarding the trust agenda towards building a more progressive and dynamic new public management ecosystem in a Malaysian organization setting.

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INTRODUCTION

It is significant to note that although the subject of Trust is essential in any organization (Zand, 1972; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Lane, 1998; Noteboom, 2002), it only received considerable attention throughout the era of the 1990s and 2000s (Oomsel & Bouckert, 2012). Similarly, though citizens regarded Trust as a means for effective administration and showed interest in this issue (Kenning, 2008), research on Trust within the ambit of public administration remained limited (Paliszkiwicz, 2010). Furthermore, within the public sector spectrum, the issue of Trust is very pertinent at the service delivery level in line with the New Public Management (NPM), which calls for reform, especially at the local authority level (Bovaird & Löffler, 2002). It has been mentioned that within an organizational context, Trust is illustrated as an essential driver of outcomes about several aspects, namely cooperative behavior (Zalabak et al., 2000), organizational citizenship behavior (Van Dyne, Vanderwell, Kostova, Latham, & Cummings; 2002), organizational commitment (Aryee et al., 2002), and employee loyalty (Costigan et al., 1998)

Within this research, we underscored the example of local authorities (LA) for several significant reasons. Firstly, as the third tier of the government, LAs are intricately engaged in providing services to the public under the purview of the Local Government Act 1976 (Act of 171), the Town and Country Planning Act (1976), and the Street, Drainage, and Building Act (1974) in Peninsular Malaysia. Likewise, LAs in Sabah and Sarawak adhere to Local Ordinance No. 11 and the Local Authority Bill (Amendment) 1977. Thus, in the context of NPM, delivering service is paramount for LA and essential for enhancing Trust because it illustrates the government's concerted effort to improve the residents' social lives.

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Secondly, LAs are heavily criticized for their poor performance, which contributed to the low ranking of the corruption index. At this juncture, Kenning (2008) argued that LAs could be more responsive, efficient, and friendly government agencies. Therefore, the study will investigate how Trust will be more prominent in promoting services delivered to residents.

Therefore, the central premise of this study is to investigate and explore the trust level and its influence on the performance of LAs by examining and exploring the following questions:

RQ1: What is the extent of Trust within the LAs in Malaysia?

RQ2: What is the relationship between Trust and the performance of LAs?

We hope that the study contributes in at least three ways remarkably:

Though the concept of Trust is familiar, measuring it within LAs will have some significance because, as far as we are concerned, this is the first study undertaken, particularly in the local context. On top of that, the study may serve as a benchmark for similar research to help understand LA's working culture, especially regarding Trust.

Employees, including top and middle management in LAs, are only interested in achieving organizational output and outcome rather than what Trust has to do to influence organizational performance. Trust is perceived as less emphasized because it is an intangible element and is not structured in the input-process-output framework. Though there are various opinions, the study will investigate and explore the relationship between Trust and performance. The tenet of the discussion is to put the realization of the trust concept into practicality, which will be appreciated and visible in the eyes of the employees.

Community engagement is pivotal in improving LA's performance in tandem with Local Agenda 21. The study will center on how communities can make an impact by addressing suggestions and complaints from the community to improve negative perceptions of service delivery provided by LAs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Trust in a General Term

Literature highlights a multi-perspective definition of Trust, where most focus on Trust as a state, belief, or positive expectation perceived as a link between previous experience and the anticipated future (Paliszkievicz, 2010). Similarly, Nyhan and Marlowe (1997) and Nyhan (2000) look at Trust as the level of confidence one has in another person's competence and willingness to act ethically. However, Romano (2003) argued that confidence, credibility, risk, and trustworthiness are used interchangeably with Trust. In addition, Butler and Cantrell (1984) highlighted Integrity, competence, consistency, loyalty, and openness as significant elements that illustrated Trust. Studies on Trust cover a range of dimensions such as interpersonal Trust (Mikulincer, 1997; Davis, 1999), political Trust (Hetherington, 1998; Parker, 1989), peer trust in the workplace (McAllister, 1995; Ammeter, 2000) trust between superiors, and subordinates (Cherry, 2000; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Velez, 2000) and organizational Trust (Courtney, 1998; Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2000). On top of that, Trust is perceived as having two associated components, which include trusting beliefs (competence, benevolence, and vendor integrity) and trusting intentions (willingness to depend) Rousseau et al. (1998) defined Trust as an 'a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the purposes or behavior of another. This also aligns with scholars such as McKnight and Chervany (2001) and Morgan and Hunt (1994), who link Trust with the depth of assurance of feelings, which is inconclusive evidence and becomes a central element of the exchange relationship. Similarly, Snijders and Keren (2015) argued that whether we trust someone depends on who we are, the one to be trusted, and the specific situation. They also suggested that two concepts were perceived as identical: trustfulness (willingness to trust) and trustworthiness (willingness to honor a given trust).

Trustfulness and trustworthiness come hand in hand, which need not be accurate. This notion is also concurred by Mayer et al. (1995), who defined trustworthiness as a quality that the trustee has; meanwhile, Trust is something that the trustor does. This is somewhat true because trust scales such as Rotter's (1967) and Lazarus and Huston's (1980) only measure trustfulness. On the other hand, the literature also includes studies on distrust (Bigley & Pearce, 1998) and betrayal of Trust (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998). Understanding when and how Trust erodes would complement our knowledge of building, increasing, and maintaining Trust (Elangovan et al., 2007). Researchers use different concepts and indicators for measuring Trust (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), but surprisingly, marketing management can more likely influence trust (Kenning, 2008). In this spectrum, Trust is further divided into two parts, namely, (i) general Trust is defined as the ability to build up Trust in someone or something (Morrow et al., 2004), and (ii) specific Trust, which is influenced by marketing. In elaborating on this, Kenning (2008) postulated that the former is related to the characteristics of a personal trait. In contrast, the latter is a long-term relationship between a company and the buyer.

It is peculiar to note that within an organization setup, Trust is described as an essential predictor of outcome in the case of cooperative behavior (Zalabak et al., 2000) and organizational citizenship behavior (Van Dyne, Vandewalle, Kostova, Latham, and Cummings, 2000) organizational commitment (Aryee et al., 2002) and employee loyalty (Costigan et al., 1998). Reason why it is challenging to build Trust, some studies viewed it from 3 factors such as (i) trust building involves an interactive process for individuals to learn each other trustworthiness (Zand, 1972; Zucker, 1996), (ii) the underpinning systems of both Trust and distrust is related to positive feedbacks, reinforcing the initial behavior (Zand, 1972) but with essential asymmetry (iii) no complete certainty that Trust will be honored (Mollering, 2001).

Another significant point is what the features of the concept of Trust are. About this, Paliszkievicz (2011) suggested several features, namely (i) it is interpersonal between specific individuals and connected with communication (ii) it depends on the particular situation rather than global, where Trust is placed in one specific individual (iii) voluntary-

where Trust must come from option and cannot be compulsory (iv)committed-each party depends on the other (v)conscious-each party is aware of the other party's Trust (vi)relevant-the result of breaching the Trust by one of the groups cannot be regarded insignificant by the other (vii)dynamic because it evolves (viii) action-oriented (ix)if damage occurs to the relationship thus Trust is probably to diminish (not a linear process). On top of that, Paliszkiwicz (2010) believes that Trust is a bridge between previous experiences and the projected future.

Service Delivery and Trust

It is pivotal to note that public service quality and citizen satisfaction have become the dominant mantras under new public management (NPM). In line with this, NPM disciples persistently urged better public engagement to enhance public satisfaction. In this regard, Kenning (2008) observed that service quality does not influence trust but governance practices are the ones that must be strengthened. Similarly, Paliszkiwicz (2011) highlighted the reasons for perceived low Trust, namely: (i) the government is not offering the services citizens want, and (ii) the government is offering services of low quality. Besides that, Covey (2009) noticed that influential leaders practice 13 behaviors to maintain and build Trust, which constitute talking straight, showing respect, creating transparency, righting wrongs, showing loyalty, delivering results, getting better, confronting reality, clarifying expectations, practicing accountability, listening first, keeping commitments, and extending Trust first. Nevertheless, those behaviors must be balanced, and if they are pushed to the extreme, they become a liability. Moreover, Heintzmen and Marson mooted the notion of a service value chain to enhance Trust, which includes three components such as (i) cultivating staff satisfaction and obligation, (ii) improving service quality, and (iii) restoring Trust and confidence in public institutions.

In elaborating on Trust in the public sector, Paliszkiwicz (2011) argued that the former correlates with types of institutions. Among the trusted institutions are schools, the health system, and the fire service. In this aspect, Raaphorst and Van de Welle (2016) pointed out that individuals within those services, specifically teachers, doctors, and firefighters, experience more Trust. On the other hand, the issue of low Trust should not be perceived from within public services per se but is likely to be just one aspect of broader social changes or the domino effect. Examples of institutions in which citizens have low Trust include public administration, civil servants, and bureaucrats (Van Dyne et al., 2000). However, opinions on the army are mixed: positive in some countries but negative in others (Raaphorst & Van de Welle, 2016).

Regarding the role of Trust in a citizen-government relationship, Levi (1998) mentioned that when people can trust the government, they are more likely to give their behavioral consent. In contrast, distrust in the government contributes to a low level of paying taxes and obeying the law (Tyler, 1990). Therefore, citizens will engage in exit behaviors if Trust and loyalty towards the public sector are low. This notion is supported by Oomsels and Bouckaert (2012), who cited that when citizens do not trust the public sector, its pride will suffer. The most general reason for the deteriorating public Trust is that the public sector is said to fail to perform. In explaining this, Van de Walle, Van Roosbroek, and Bouckert (2008) stated that outputs and outcomes are below target, efficiency, and effectiveness are declining, and governments must accomplish what was promised. On the contrary, Bok (1997, 2001) argued that government performance may not have declined, but citizens' perceptions may have; for instance, citizens probably use different standards to gauge performance, deeply influenced by ad hoc news and swayed by adverse media reports.

About different types of Trust, Lewicki and Bunker (1996) categorized them into three types, namely (i)calculus-based, which mainly relies on the expected consequences of trusting or not trusting (ii)knowledge-based Trust, which is based on information and probability, and (iii) identification-based trust-which appeared from shared values and goals; hence involve emotions. Nevertheless, citizens' Trust in the public sector is also revealed to fluctuate, thus rejecting the hypothesis of a universal decline of Trust in the public sector Van de Walle et al. (2008). At this spectrum, Van de Welle et al. (2008) noticed a positive attitude towards the civil service in Ireland and Norway compared to other European countries.

Dimension of Trust

Meanwhile, various studies on concepts and items measure Trust (Zaheer et al., 1998; Rampel et al.,1985). In this aspect, looking from a psychological perspective, scholars such as Lewis and Weigert (1985) differentiate between affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of Trust. In congruence with this, Mayer et al. (1995) proposed a dyadic trust model, which explains that Trust for the trustee is the function of the trustee's perceived ability, benevolence, and Integrity, and the trustor's propensity to trust. To simplify this, it is crystal clear that Trust in the leader is a product of the leader's behavior.

Another peculiar thing to discuss is regarding Trust from the political dimension domain where Schiffman, Thelen, and Sherman (2010) identified it from three viewpoints, namely (i)trust in government form where responses tend to vary depending on the nature of the specific aspect of politics trusting being investigated (ii)Political cynicism-appears to possess of many interrelated meanings, and (iii)incumbent trust-where it illustrates of how well (or poorly) the public perceives of the job that the officeholder is responsible to meet the citizens' expectation. In measuring conceptual definition of Trust, Dietz and Hartog (2006) reviewed different conceptual dimensions of Trust from several scholars such as McAllister (1995), Robinson (1996), Clark and Payne(1997), three separate measures from Brockner et al. (2000), Mayer and Davis(1999), Spreitzer and Mishra (1999), Shockley-Zalabak et al.(2000), Huff and Kelley (2003), Tyler (2003), Gillespie (2003) and Tzafrir and Dolan (2004).

Community Integrity Building

Community Integrity Building (CIB)

In our previous work, we discussed the importance of Community Integrity Building (CIB) in enhancing the performance of LAs. To recapitulate on this, the CIB engagement with the community is significant because the community can see the visibility and cost-effectiveness of project implementation near their community. This also serves well about contractors'

performance and becomes the check-and-balance mechanism in promoting good governance. The five phases of CIB remarkably (i) context sensitivity, (ii) joint learning, (iii) evidence base, (iv) constructive engagement, and (v) closing the loop had glued well in illustrating the CIB concept. At this point, it can further investigate and explain the relationship between Trust and performance because some literature discusses the concepts of Integrity and trust interchangeably.

Furthermore, Integrity and Trust are on the same continuum. Organizations with a high level of Integrity will have the Trust of the community and vice versa. More work could be embarked on this matter. If CIB can be used to improve the performance of LAs, then it can also be utilized to investigate Trust using the same paradigm, thus paving the way for this research.

Proposition Development

An exploratory approach is adopted within the framework of this investigation. Consequently, we propose specific assertions based on existing literature and observations about three distinct types of local authorities, specifically City Hall, Municipality, and District Council. These three entities generally represent urban, semi-urban, and rural areas in Peninsular, Sabah, or Sarawak. The categorization of those organizations is based on revenue collection, number of staff, and population (Saib, 2004). The main motive for doing this is to comprehend the dynamics of reality and academia to benefit academicians and professionals. Bridging the gap between theory and reality will always be an essential mantra for both worlds. Therefore, we suggested the following;

Proposition 1: Level of Trust influences the performance of LAs

Proposition 2: Trust level can be measured to benefit the organization

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants and Procedure

This paper employed two methodological approaches: pre-test and post-test evaluations and a straightforward technical methodology. Initially, we piloted the project with three distinct types of local authorities, specifically Melaka City Hall, Subang Jaya Municipal Council, and Hulu Terengganu District Council. Subsequently, these local authorities were enlisted to recommend and propose local community contributors for six months. Additionally, we traversed the five phases of the Community Integrity Building (CIB) process, involving numerous deliberations, discussions, and visits to secure community buy-in. Participants from each local authority were chosen as members of the Monitoring Committee and actively participated in the project. We also involved contractors responsible for garbage collection, drainage, and grass clearance, given their significance and priority from the community's perspective. Each local authority selected a specific zone for project implementation: Paya Rumput in Melaka, Zone 3 in Subang Jaya, and Zone A in Ajil, Terengganu. The project's beneficiaries include 71,000 residents residing near these local authorities (19,000 from Melaka City Hall, 40,000 from Subang Jaya Municipal Council, and 12,000 from Hulu Terengganu District Council).

Broadly, we embrace and tailor Integrity Action's methodology for gauging organizational Trust, utilizing the four dimensions of Integrity encompassing (i) accountability, (ii) competency, (iii) ethical behavior, and (iv) corruption control (v) Alignment. Moreover, we introduce an additional dimension, transparency, by revisiting and refining the competency component from the original integrity formula employed in our prior study. Consequently, these elements must converge towards fostering heightened Trust, each holding equal significance and value. Therefore, the absence of any of these elements precludes the existence of Trust. The specifics of these elements are as follows:

Accountability: Willingness to be open and transparent is crucial, allowing interested parties like stakeholders to scrutinize and verify if the organization's daily operations align with its vision and mission. Conversely, an organization needing more readiness for responsibility and transparency can assert a high level of Trust.

Competence: Possessing the competencies and abilities required to attain individual or organizational objectives is vital. This encompasses a well-rounded blend of both managerial and technical skills and qualities. Conversely, even if an individual or an organization exhibits ethical standards, remains accountable to stakeholders, and avoids Corruption but showcases incompetence, it cannot assert a high level of Trust.

Ethical behavior: Conducting oneself in alignment with a set of principles established to direct policy formulation and behavior involves an understanding of moral, legal, obligatory, and permissible considerations. However, an individual or organization must demonstrate accountability, competence, and a firm stance against Corruption while lacking ethical behavior. In that case, it cannot be deemed to possess a high level of Trust.

Corruption Control: Maintaining a staunch stance against Corruption and ensuring that an organizational framework is robust enough to mitigate the risk of Corruption is essential. Suppose an individual upholds strong values regarding accountability, competence, and ethics but succumbs to Corruption. In that case, asserting that they have achieved a high standard of Trust needs to be revised.

Alignment: Ensuring alignment between an organization's intentions and actions, exemplifying consistency and a shared purpose in applying trust-related elements and its conduct.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Pre-Test and Post-Test Approach

We adopted a pre-test and post-test methodology to examine changes in perceptions regarding the monitoring committee, local community, and contractors responsible for services like garbage collection, drainage, and grass clearance. The questionnaire items were formulated based on relevant literature, community discussions, and consultation with an expert. We employ the Likert Scale of (5) where '1-Highly Disagree', '2-Disagree', '3-Not sure', '4-Agree', and '5-Highly Agree'. The pre-test and post-test encompassed... questions/items, and we received feedback from 239 respondents. The demographic details of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The respondents' demographic profile

.No.	Name of LA	Monitoring Committee	Community	Contractor
1.	Melaka City Hall	12	54	10
2.	Subang Jaya Municipal Council	21	62	13
3.	Hulu Terengganu District Council	12	38	17
	Total	45	154	40

Assessment of Organizational Trust and Dependability Before and After the Implementation of the CIB Program. This part illustrates how the concept of Trust is measured before and after the implementation of the CIB to identify any change that took place as a result of the program's implementation. Generally, organizational Trust is 'calculated' by measuring the 'achievement/score' of the elements, which entails accountability (A), integrity (I), transparency (T), and Corruption (C). In this study, we suggest the equation of $T = a(AIT) - c$, where a represents alignment Organizational Trust (T)

The measure of organizational transparency, R , is the mean score for the relevant questions. To measure the pre-CIB perception for R among the community responses to questions B9-3, B9-5, and B9-6 were used. The value of R obtained was

$$R = \frac{1}{3}(2.41 + 4.12 + 2.00) = 2.84$$

Organizational Trust (T) is defined as

$$T_0 = g(A, I_0, R, C) = \omega_1(\beta_1.A + \beta_2.I_0 + \beta_3.R) - \omega_2.C$$

$$= 0.5(0.3A + 0.4I + 0.3R) - 0.5C = 0.15A + 0.2I_0 + 0.15R - 0.5C$$

Where $\omega_1, \omega_2, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ are weights that enable the adoption of a measurement range T_0 between -2 and 2? To achieve a range between 0 to 100, the following transformation was done:

$$T = 25(T_0 + 2) = 25(2 + 0.15A + 0.2I_0 + 0.15R - 0.5C)$$

Usage of the formula for T yields

$$T = 25(2 + 0.15A + 0.2I_0 + 0.15R - 0.5C)$$

$$= 25[2 + 0.15(2.04) + 0.2(2.10) + 0.15(2.84) - 0.5(3.85)] = 30.67$$

This suggests that before implementing the CIB program, the community's perceived level of organizational Trust was 30.67 on a scale ranging from 0 (low organizational Trust) to 100 (high organizational Trust). Similar computations using a post-CIB survey yielded $T = 46.57$ an indication that there has been an improvement in organizational Trust after CIB.

The computation of Organizational Trust among the three evaluators, the community, observers, and contractors are exhibited in Table Com1 to Table Com 3.

The summary result of the trust level based on the three LAs is illustrated as follows:

Hulu Terengganu District Council

Based on the given data for Resident Perception in the Hulu Terengganu District Council, The highest score after CIB implementation, with an increase from 43.79 to 72.37. This indicates that residents perceive a significant improvement in the council's transparency in their operations and decision-making processes. The increase suggests that the commission has tried providing more transparent and more accessible information to the residents. The second-highest score after CIB implementation, with a rise from 33.05 to 71.38. This suggests that residents perceive a significant improvement in the

council's accountability for their actions and responsibilities. The increase indicates that the commission has taken steps to be more answerable to the residents and to address their concerns. The third-highest score after CIB implementation, with an increase from 64.66 to 72.37. This suggests that residents perceive a reduction in Corruption within the council. The increase indicates that the council has taken measures to combat Corruption and improve the Integrity of its operations.

The fourth-highest score after CIB implementation, with a decrease from 34.51 to 47.12. This suggests that residents perceive a decline in the council's Integrity, although it is still relatively high. The decrease indicates that there may be some concerns regarding the council's ethical behavior and adherence to principles. The lowest score after CIB implementation, with a reduction from 36.10 to 44.75. This indicates that residents have a relatively low level of Trust in the council's actions and decisions. The decrease suggests that there is a need for the council to work on building Trust with the residents and improving their confidence in the council's abilities.

Table 2. Resident Perception (Scale: 0-100)

Before CIB	Score	After CIB	Score
Accountability	33.05	Accountability	71.38
Integrity	34.51	Integrity	47.12
Transparency	43.79	Transparency	72.37
Corruption	64.66	Corruption	72.37
TRUST	36.10	TRUST	44.75

Implementing CIB has had a mixed impact on residents' perception of the Hulu Terengganu District Council. While there have been significant improvements in Transparency, Accountability, and Corruption, there have been slight declines in Integrity and TRUST. The council should focus on addressing the concerns related to Integrity and trust to enhance resident perception and confidence in the council's operations further.

Table 3. Monitoring Committee Perception (Scale:0-100)

Before CIB	Score	After CIB	Score
Accountability	35.00	Accountability	73.96
Integrity	51.92	Integrity	78.38
Transparency	37.50	Transparency	74.58
Corruption	30.00	Corruption	19.79
TRUST	56.26	TRUST	78.03

Based on the given data for Monitoring Committee Perception in the Hulu Terengganu District Council, the implementation of CIB has positively impacted the perception of the monitoring committee in the Hulu Terengganu District Council. There have been significant improvements in Integrity, TRUST, Accountability, and Transparency, while Corruption has decreased. These changes indicate that the monitoring committee has a more positive perception of the council's actions, Integrity, and transparency after implementing CIB.

Table 4. Contractor Perception (Scale: 1-100)

Before CIB	Score	After CIB	Score
Accountability	46.32	Accountability	73.53
Integrity	48.28	Integrity	71.29
Transparency	48.04	Transparency	73.53
Corruption	48.53	Corruption	30.15
TRUST	49.55	TRUST	71.24

Based on the given data for Contractor Perception in the Hulu Terengganu District Council, implementing CIB has positively impacted the perception of contractors in the Hulu Terengganu District Council. There have been significant improvements in Accountability, Transparency, and TRUST, while Corruption has significantly decreased. Although there is a slight decline in Integrity, it remains relatively high. These changes indicate that contractors have a more positive perception of the council's actions and Integrity after implementing CIB.

Subang Jaya Municipal Council

Table 5. Resident Perception (Scale: 0-100)

Before CIB	Score	After CIB	Score
Accountability	37.80	Accountability	73.72
Integrity	37.29	Integrity	49.52
Transparency	45.29	Transparency	71.82
Corruption	62.50	Corruption	69.07
TRUST	38.67	TRUST	47.30

Based on the data given for resident perception in the Subang Jaya Municipal Council, the implementation of CIB has had mixed effects on residents' perceptions in the Subang Jaya Municipal Council. While there have been improvements

in Accountability, Transparency, and Corruption, there has been a decline in Integrity and TRUST. These changes indicate that there is still room for improvement in maintaining Integrity and building Trust among residents despite progress in accountability, transparency, and corruption reduction.

Table 6. Monitoring Committee Perception (Scale: 0-100)

Before CIB	Score	After CIB	Score
Accountability	27.78	Accountability	85.17
Integrity	26.53	Integrity	78.27
Transparency	31.25	Transparency	78.06
Corruption	77.08	Corruption	24.31
TRUST	25.62	TRUST	78.34

Based on the given data for Monitoring Committee Perception in the Subang Jaya Municipal Council, the implementation of CIB has positively impacted the perception of the monitoring committee in the Subang Jaya Municipal Council. There have been significant improvements in Accountability, Integrity, Transparency, and TRUST, while Corruption has significantly decreased. These changes indicate that the monitoring committee has a more positive perception of the council's actions and Integrity after implementing CIB.

Table 7. Contractor Perception (Scale: 0-100)

Before CIB	Score	After CIB	Score
Accountability	41.35	Accountability	67.31
Integrity	42.47	Integrity	51.06
Transparency	49.36	Transparency	67.31
Corruption	50.96	Corruption	65.38
TRUST	46.62	TRUST	47.71

Based on the given data for Contractor Perception in the Subang Jaya Municipal Council, the implementation of CIB has had mixed effects on the perception of contractors in the Subang Jaya Municipal Council. While there have been improvements in Accountability, Transparency, and Corruption, there has been a decline in Integrity and TRUST. These changes indicate that there is still room for improvement in maintaining Integrity and building Trust among contractors despite progress in accountability, transparency, and corruption reduction.

Melaka City Council

Table 8. Resident Perception (Scale: 0-100)

Before CIB	Score	After CIB	Score
Accountability	25.93	Accountability	75.12
Integrity	27.62	Integrity	49.05
Transparency	46.02	Transparency	71.53
Corruption	71.30	Corruption	70.83
TRUST	30.67	TRUST	46.57

Based on the given data for Resident Perception in Melaka City Council, implementing CIB has had mixed effects on the residents' perception in Melaka City Council. While there have been improvements in Accountability and Transparency, there has been a decline in Integrity and TRUST. The Corruption score remains relatively stable. These changes indicate that there is still room for improvement in maintaining Integrity and building Trust among residents despite progress in accountability and transparency.

Table 9. Monitoring Committee Perception (Scale: 0-100)

Before CIB	Score	After CIB	Score
Accountability	7.58	Accountability	80.56
Integrity	8.33	Integrity	81.93
Transparency	10.61	Transparency	85.83
Corruption	90.91	Corruption	17.71
TRUST	8.94	TRUST	82.23

Based on the given data for Monitoring Committee Perception in Melaka City Council, the highest score after CIB implementation, with a significant increase from 10.61 to 85.83. This suggests the monitoring committee has improved transparency in their operations and decision-making processes. The second-highest score after CIB implementation, with a notable increase from 8.33 to 81.93. This indicates that the committee has significantly improved in maintaining Integrity and ethical standards. Moreover, the third-highest score after CIB implementation, with an increase from 8.94 to 82.23. This suggests the committee has gained more stakeholder trust due to its improved performance and actions. The fourth-highest score after CIB implementation, with a substantial increase from 7.58 to 80.56. This indicates that the committee has become more accountable for its actions and responsibilities.

In the same way, the lowest score after CIB implementation, with a significant decrease from 90.91 to 17.71. This suggests that the committee has made considerable efforts to combat Corruption within its operations. Implementing CIB has had a transformative effect on the perception of the monitoring committee in Melaka City Council. There have been significant improvements in Transparency, Integrity, TRUST, and Accountability, while the score for Corruption has decreased significantly. These changes indicate a positive shift towards a more transparent, accountable, and trustworthy committee with reduced Corruption.

Table 10. Contractor Perception (Scale: 0-100)

Before CIB	Score	After CIB	Score
Accountability	56.25	Accountability	57.50
Integrity	56.04	Integrity	57.13
Transparency	54.17	Transparency	53.75
Corruption	43.75	Corruption	43.75
TRUST	55.90	TRUST	56.43

Based on the given data for Contractor Perception in Melaka City Council, here are the before and after CIB: There was an improvement in the scores for Accountability, Integrity, and TRUST among contractors in Melaka City Council. However, there was a slight decrease in the Transparency score, while the Corruption score remained the same. These changes suggest that there has been progress in enhancing accountability, Integrity, and trust in the council, but there may be room for improvement in transparency.

CONCLUSIONS

The paper delineated the correlation between Trust and Local Authorities (LAs) performance, particularly in garbage collection, drainage, and grass clearance. Within this context, the significance of service delivery is paramount, given the community's sensitivity in these LAs toward the cleanliness and environmental conditions of their areas. Consequently, Trust emerges as a foundational element, wielding a direct impact on both service delivery and the overall performance of LAs.

The active participation and engagement of the monitoring committee, local community, and contractors underscore the critical necessity for LAs to consider multiple stakeholders, thereby consolidating Trust and portraying a positive image of the LAs. Moreover, LAs must integrate the trust agenda into their core operations to lead transformative change and cultural shifts from the community's perspective. It is not merely a superficial display but needs to be ingrained in the corporate culture of LAs.

While acknowledging the exploratory nature of the study, it contributes distinctly in several aspects: (i) challenging the notion that Trust is merely theoretical and generic, demonstrating its quantifiability through both reality and perception as evident in the three samples of LAs, though premature for definitive conclusions, it merits further examination, (ii) the study operationalizes the concept of Trust, transforming it from an abstract idea into a tangible reality, (Saib, 2004); providing a defined meaning from both professional and academic perspectives, and (iii) emphasizes the imperative need for a revamped approach and culture within LAs, emphasizing a people-centric community focus as a prerequisite for delivering responsive and trustworthy services, promoting Trust, and instigating administrative reform.

In summary, our propositions warrant further discussion. Specifically, regarding Proposition 1, we are firm in our conviction that there is a positive correlation between Trust and the performance of Local Authorities (LAs). Our hesitation in unequivocally asserting this relationship stems from the limited body of research on Trust within the public administration domain, as previously emphasized by Klijin et al. (2010) and the multidimensional concept of Trust (McAllister, 1995; Mayer & Davis, 1999; Hossain et al., 2021; Gillespie, 2003; Tzafirir & Dolan, 2004; Asheq et al., 2021). Nevertheless, we hold a positive outlook on Proposition 2. We regard Trust as a distinctive product/service differentiation strategy in this context. Here, Local Authorities (LAs) can actively cultivate positive values and Trust within the community, thereby contributing significantly to the long-term success of the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP).

Limitations

The findings of this research have at least two areas for improvement. First and foremost- the sample size of 3 LAs restricts the generalization of the results to be extended to other public entities vertically or horizontally (Ministry et al. or other LAs not only in Peninsular but also in Sabah and Sarawak). If we are to make generalizations, structural and policy differences need to be considered, as well as cultural perspectives. This is fundamental due to the different trust practices in LAs. Making inferences and generalizations will be more appropriate if the sample is more significant.

Secondly, it is essential to note that this study captures only a momentary perspective, relevant at a specific time and contingent upon the ongoing nature of the exploratory project. The aspiration is that this study prompts a heightened sense of proactivity and responsiveness, emphasizing the importance of Trust at both individual and organizational levels.

Implications

In summary, this study serves as a vital connection between theoretical concepts and practical applications, delving into the discourse and operationalization of Trust within the context of Local Authorities (LAs). The examination encompasses elements such as accountability, Integrity, transparency, and Corruption to define the concept of Trust in this paper. They anticipate that the findings will offer valuable insights for practitioners and professionals in assessing contractor

performance and the responsiveness of local communities. Furthermore, for LA managers, prioritizing Trust in their daily activities can enhance service delivery and overall organizational performance. Additionally, the research provides researchers with insights into quantifying Trust and its positive influence on organizational performance.

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