COMMUNITY SATISFACTION TOWARDS POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES: EXPLAINING THE ROLE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE PRACTICES

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Abstract

This study was to investigate the role of good governance on the community's satisfaction with the legislative institution, i.e., the state assemblyman. Good governance is often perceived as political stability for the effectiveness of administration. Good governance serves as the core element in administration, including political representation in Malaysia. In previous elections, the political representation trend shows a new pattern of citizens' inclination. Citizens had removed some of the under-performed representatives in the past elections due to dissatisfaction with the political representatives' performance. This study looked at how good governance impacted transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in relation to community satisfaction with administrative services performed by political representatives. This study used a survey through a purposive sampling technique (n-396). In order to prove hypotheses, the regression analysis technique was applied. Based on the results, the relationships among all independent and dependent variables are positive and significant, implying good governance plays a positive and significant role in affecting the level of satisfaction. Therefore, it is important for political representatives in Malaysia to strive for good governance in order to build trust and confidence among citizens and promote a healthy and functioning democracy.

Keywords: Political Representatives, Good Governance, Satisfaction, Malaysian Politics

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INTRODUCTION

The study aims to probe the link between good governance practices and the constituents' satisfaction among respondents residing on the East Coast of Malaysia. In marketing theory, there is a link between an employer's performance and customer satisfaction (Grigoroudis, 2013). If adopted in the field of political science, an employer's performance refers to the leader's governance while customer satisfaction is interpreted as the satisfaction of the voters. Customer satisfaction measures the level of feeling after receiving the service or gauging a product's performance. It is founded on the customer's expectations. In terms of measuring satisfaction with political leaders or representatives, the level of satisfaction will rise when their expectation is met. Accordingly, when a decrease in the quality of life was seen, such as high employment, yet the quality of human rights was low, the satisfaction towards their leader, i.e., the political representative, also declined.

Good governance among political representatives is crucial. Citizens expect that their elected officials will respect their human and democratic rights and represent their interests. They also expect that their representatives will act honourably and responsibly and see to it that the needs of the people are satisfied. Over several decades, good governance has attracted researchers' and public policy organizations' interest, particularly in how it affects economic prosperity and good governance (Knack & Keefer, 1995; Ngobo & Fouda, 2012). Good governance also "leads to a transparent environment for conducting public affairs, thus, the representative become a promoter of free market policies, justice, and the rule of law" (Ngobo & Fouda, 2012). Society can tell when their community is ruled under good governance. The purpose of government activity is to serve the public's interests and promote the welfare of society. Several studies (for example, Bochel & Bochel, 2010; Chema, 2010) concerned with the importance of good governance in political leadership at all levels of government- federal, state and local government in order to create prosperity for the people.

Based on past empirical studies, countries with higher incomes often come from excellent good governance when compared to countries that practice unsatisfactory governance. This is acceptable since governance ensures that political leadership is held accountable for its actions and guarantees that the whole population is included in the development efforts. Given this situation, good governance is viewed by many academics (Cheema 2010, Salminen and Ikola-Norrbacka 2010) as one of the best approaches to address public needs and advance the interests of the entire community. Consequently, this study's idea of good governance was chosen.

This study is an attempt to extend our understanding of good governance. It concentrates on the view of community upon the practices of good governance among political representatives in their constituents.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Good Governance

Good governance is important both locally and internationally in the management of public administration. Governance can be observed in how a public administration manages its policies, from its inception through action, with the involvement of the public and private sectors. According to Griffin (2010), governance operates at every level and responds to the collective problem of citizens in order to fulfill their needs in an effective way. Thus, good governance is a broad concept. There is a diverse concept of good governance. When looking at a good governance concept, it relies on its usage purpose. Good governance has not one size fits all formulation. For example, financial institutions prioritize economic reform, whereas political organizations focus on human rights (Wouters & Ryngaert, 2005). Studies on good governance have been carried out in public health (Devancey, 2016), finance (Omri, 2020), bureaucratic agency (Abdou, 2021), and environmental management (Alias et al., 2023; Leong et al., 2009). Asmawi *et al* (2015) explained that the concept of good governance is "as essential element of coastal management that can make a substantial contribution in managing coastal land uses in Malaysia". This explanation displays the concept's viability. Good governance is also seen in how administration manage the economy through its social resources and how they adopt certain policies for the country's development (The World Bank, 2021) while curbing heinous practice like corruption. Also, good governance can be observed according to the situation by looking at the amicability among the citizens and between the citizens and their government agencies.

The World Bank also introduced the political concept of good governance. According to the World Bank (2021), good governance also refers to a governing system that is ideal for the management of the political, economic, and social development of the country. Good governance can be seen through the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration in managing their affair at all levels. In the political institution view, good governance demands a democratic practice that invites citizens and government bodies to participate in decision-making processes to guarantee human rights are protected and everyone is subjected to the rule of law. In the economic institution, good governance involves the creation of a conducive environment for sustainable economic growth and development, including the promotion of private sector development, investment and trade, as well as the efficient management of public resources and the reduction of corruption. In terms of social institutions, good governance requires the provision of basic services such as education, health care and social protection, as well as the promotion of gender equality, social inclusion and the protection of vulnerable groups. While recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the definition of good governance refers to the effectiveness of a country in

providing public goods to generate employment and growth during the current COVID-19 pandemic (The World Bank, 2021). Ideally, good governance has been described as the ability to formulate effective political, economic and social policies for the well-being of society. It is governance in achieving development and social justice.

Good governance is essential in politics to implement good policy decisions and produce favourable outcomes process (Farazmand, 2004). In addition, political representatives must be accessible and responsive to citizens in their constituency. Consequently, good governance of a constituency is vital because it is the centre of political participation and for the citizens to exercise their democratic rights. Based on Graham et al. (2003: 7), governance is defined as "the interactions among institutions, processes, and traditions that determine how power is exercised, how decisions are taken on issues of public and private concern, and how stakeholders have their say". This definition reflects power, relationships, and accountability. It displays how authorities maintain order, maximize the public interests, and develop a relationship with the citizens and other stakeholders to pursue their objectives.

There are many variations of principles of good governance. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) classified eight core characteristics of good governance, which include "participation, consensus-oriented, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, equity and inclusiveness, and the rule of law". When all characteristics are practiced, it should be able to curb corruption, promote people's equality, and ensure that the at-risk groups are heard, fostering decision-making processes. According to Beshi Khan (2019), the most important characteristics of good governance are transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. These characteristics of good governance are reflected in political representatives. In this article, the list of fundamental good governance, according to Beshi Khan (2019), is as follows:

i)Transparency
The government is open and transparent in its decision-making process, and citizens have access to information about government activities.

ii)Accountability
All institutions that are involved in good governance are held accountable for their actions and decisions, and there are mechanisms in place to investigate and punish corruption and abuse of power.

iii)Responsiveness

The government responsive to the needs and concerns of citizens, and there are mechanisms in place to ensure their grievances are addressed.

Political Representative

Political representative is a general term that incorporates other terms such as legislature. Political representation is often seen as a relationship between the Members of Parliment (MPs) or State Assemblyman and the voters. As citizen representatives, political representatives are highly crucial in the setting and lobbying of any agenda to establish state laws. The MPs and State Assemblyman are elected to represent the people. Part of their work as representatives are carried out inside the Parliament, and part of it is to liaise directly with the citizens. To establish the people's perception of political representatives, it is imperative to discuss the roles of political representatives. According to Rosyidah *et al.* (2021), the political representative has two major roles, i.e., as a legislator and constituent services. The roles also can be transformed into the formal role of a legislator (Akirav O., 2020) and the informal role of servicing the people (Abdul Rashid, 2009; Aziz, 2012).

The primary role of the political representative is law-making. This is the main and most visible role of the MPs, especially in the age of technology where the media can carry not just words but also images in Parliament. Unfortunately, according to Rosyidah *et al.* (2021), the legislative function is one of the most challenging responsibilities that MPs are ill-equipped to carry. As a legislature, MPs should be knowledgeable about many things, including aiming to influence issues of local and regional relevance. They should be experts in drafting proposals and amendments. Parliament is the forum for the MPs to play their fundamental formal and official role as legislators They make and draft proposals and amendments. The secondary role of the political representative is constituency services. MPs have come to devote major portions of their time to aiding their constituencies. According to Searing (1985), Westminster MPs are devoted primarily in terms of their constituency: they listen carefully to their constituencies' problems, sort out the problem of individual constituents, and also be an advocate for the constituency. They receive more complaints from their constituents, report an ever-increasing amount of constituency casework, and spend more time in their constituencies (Lusoli & Ward, 2004).

Good Governance in Malaysia

The Malaysian government has undergone a transformation from traditional public management to new public management over the past few decades. This transformation was mainly to improve the management of a state in order to serve people better. In new public management, the function of the government

function is to serve, not to rule the people. The Malaysian governance shifted towards market-oriented administration with a customer-centric approach that places a strong emphasis on meeting the needs and wants of customers through quality products and services and continuous product improvement. Efforts were made to increase efficiency in managing resources, increasing government effectiveness and practising accountability and responsiveness among all service providers. However, Siddiquee (2020) reported that these efforts bore no fruit, as little impact was observed based on a good governance perspective, particularly in the mode of governance. Siddiquee (2020) stated that the government has failed to make a fundamental change in the mode of governance given that the larger context in which the public sector operates has remained unaltered. There were also no attempts have been made simultaneously to reform the political and governmental of the country.

Yet, in previous elections, for instance, GE 2018 has signified a new voting pattern in Malaysia which affects the political representation in Malaysia. The citizens were more sceptical about the government. The sentiments mostly concentrate on the ineffectiveness of the government in managing the socioeconomics, in particular human well-being, as well as taxes and spending. One of the factors is that the political representations were tarnished with a bad reputation. Local and international political analysts and observers have attributed the swing in votes to public demands for a more open and accountable government. According to Nazri (2018), the swing in the voting pattern was due to the mismanagement and corruption of the political leaders.

Citizens Satisfaction
Citizens' satisfaction in this article refers to their satisfaction with their representatives and the administration. The Political representative or State Assemblyman is of big importance to the community. They are elected by the citizens, thus, are also accountable to them. The citizens firmly believed that political representatives must follow the best interest of the citizens (Griffith, 2010). How will the good governance of the political representative influence the citizens' satisfaction? The concept of satisfaction refers to a feeling of pleasure or contentment that comes from fulfilling a need or desire. Satisfaction also occurs when expectation meets or exceeds the performance, and then there is satisfaction. Otherwise, if performance does not meet the expectation, there will be dissatisfaction. This is similar to management theory. According to Kotler and Keller (2012), dissatisfaction is when a person feels unhappy after the experience of a product as it has not met the expected results. In correspondence, political science shows that citizens are disappointed if their elected political representative does not perform or is not in accordance with good governance.

When citizens receive the services they need in a timely and efficient manner, they are more likely to feel that their government is responsive and effective. This also includes the accessibility and approachability of the government. These practices ensure that the citizen's voices and concerns are heard and addressed. This can contribute to a sense of trust and confidence in their representatives and can lead to increase engagement and participation in the community.

However, it is important to note that different citizens may have different needs and expectations, and it can be challenging to provide services that are universally satisfied (Aberbach & Rockman, 2000). Governments that are able to adapt to changing needs and preferences and that prioritize ongoing communication and engagement with their stakeholders are more likely to be successful in meeting the needs of their citizens.

The Effect of Good Governance on Citizens' Satisfaction
Good governance enhances democratic practices that lead to people's contentment (Christmann, 2018), fortifying lives and happiness (Ibrahim et al., 2023; Helliwell et al., 2014), and has positively impacted community satisfaction (Beshi & Kaur, 2020). Good governance brings satisfaction and encourages public trust in the government (Bouckaert & Walle, 2003). Not only does it increase happiness levels, but it also lessens happiness disparities among the populace (Ott, 2011).

When there is a mismatch between the citizen's expectations and government institutions' performances, the citizen might lean to judge public employees as inept, profligate, corrupt, and dishonest. The public sector possesses the power, abilities and resources to steer society in its favor. The perception among the citizen of their public sector performance can influence the institution's ability, goodness, and integrity dimensions of trustworthiness of government institution (Porumbescu, 2013). As a result, improving public opinion of government services is considered as a means of re-establishing popular confidence in the institution of government, and it can be challenging for government to meet all of these expectations and needs in a consistent and equitable way. Figure 1 shows the research model base on the discussion of the study.
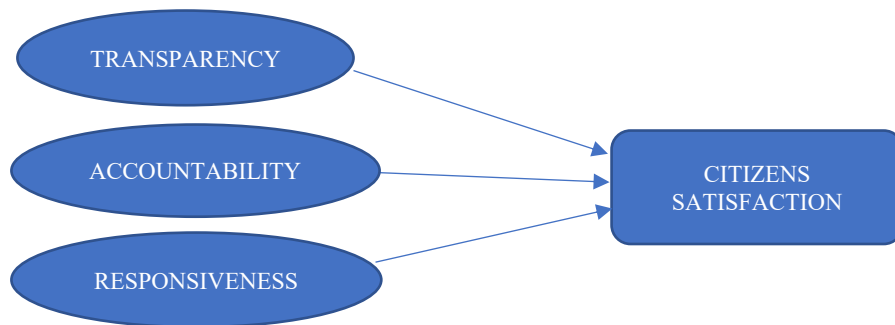
Figure 1: Research model base on the discussion of the study

The hypotheses which based on the research model are as the following:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). Transparency among political representatives has a positive and significant impact on citizens' satisfaction.
Hypothesis 2 (H2). Accountability among political representatives has positive and significant impacts on citizens' satisfaction.
Hypothesis 3 (H3). Responsiveness among political representatives has a positive and significant impact on citizens' satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
The study design adopts quantitative methods. It is explanatory and investigates the relationship between variables. The study population was 450 respondents, based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size formulation, which was sufficient for a population of registered voters in Kuala Terengganu- 103, 611 (SPR). The questionnaire was randomly distributed in four different legislative state assemblies in Kuala Terengganu.

The population that has been chosen for the current study is the voters in Kuala Terengganu; Terengganu is located on the East Coast of Malaysia. The population was determined based on purposive sampling. Kuala Terengganu is suitable for this case study based on the wavering election records. In the four series of elections in Kuala Terengganu in 1999, 2004, 2008, and 2013, the results were inconsistent. The political party-United Malay National Organization (UMNO) is no longer dominant in Terengganu. Both parties, UMNO and Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS)– the opposition, shared equal odds to clinch the election. Therefore, the population of registered voters in Kuala Terengganu is an interesting and suitable case study- to test and validate the dimensions of good governance of political representatives.

The respondents were allowed to ask any questions so as to avoid any confusion during the actual data collection. The data collection was conducted

for two months, from November to December 2019. The permission to collect data was obtained from the Village Community Management Council (MPKK). The enumerators approached the participants to participate voluntarily in the study. Participants were instructed to complete the questionnaire and were provided with a specific reference code number to ensure the participants' anonymity.

The participants involved 247 males (54.9%) and 203 females (45.1%), mostly aged between 18-29 years old (40.9%), followed by 30-49 years old (32.4%), and 26.7% were 50 years and above. Around 53.8% of the participants had a bachelor's degree, 28% had secondary school qualifications, 11.6% had a certificate, 4.4% had primary school qualifications, and 2.2% had not attended school. Additionally, most of the participants were Malay (93.6%), followed by Chinese (6.2%) and Indian (0.2%). Most of the participants were self-employed (35.3%), followed by participants who were working in the private sector (22.4%), the government sector (20.7%), students (17.1%), and those who were unemployed (4.4%).

A pilot study was undertaken to test the reliability and validity of the instrument by analyzing the responses. For pilot study, 120 participants were chosen. After collecting the pilot data, a basic statistical analysis was made using SPSS version 22. After adjustment was made, the final field survey data collection was carried out on November 1st 2019. Four hundred and twenty questionnaires were passed to the sample respondents, and the 120 participants from the pilot test were excluded. From the 420 questionnaires, 411 questionnaires were sent back, a response rate of 90.5% of the original sample. However, after inspection, 15 responses were forced to be thrown out due to unengaged responses (respondents selected the same options on all the Likert scale items), and some respondents did not complete the questionnaires.

Therefore, additional data analysis was performed using the remaining 396 surveys. The ultimate useable response rate for this study was 81.1% as a result. The independent and dependent variables' dimensions and indicators are displayed in Table 1. Accordingly, perceptions of accountability and transparency had each been put to the test using four questions, while perceptions of responsiveness were put to the test using five questions. Five questions were used to examine the dependent variable, which is the general public's happiness with their political representation. A 5-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree, was used to gauge the respondents' level of agreement.

Profile Respondent	N	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	208	52.5
FemalePerempuan	188	47.5
Age		
18 - 29	113	28.5
30 -49	134	33.8
50 and above	149	37.6
Ethnic		
Malay	376	94.9
Chinese	19	4.8
Indian	1	0.3
Education Level		
Not schooling	22	5.6
Primary School	49	12.4
High School (Lower)	36	9.1
High School (Upper)	141	35.6
Technical Certificate	28	7.1
Degree	120	30.3
Job		
Government	45	11.4
Private	65	16.4
Student	35	8.8
Unemployed	67	16.9
Self-Working	184	46.5
Income		
Below than RM2,500	251	63.4
RM2,501 - RM3,169	46	11.6
RM3,170 - RM3,969	41	10.4
RM3,970 - RM4,849	25	6.3
RM4,850 - RM5,879	14	6.5
RM5,880 - RM7,099	12	6.0
RM7,110 - RM8,699	3	0.8
RM8,700 - RM10,959	3	0.8
RM10,961 - RM15,039	0	0.0
RM15,040 and above	1	0.3
Political Party Membership		
Yes	81	20.5
No	315	79.5

Research Instrument

This study adapted a questionnaire by Salmien and Norrbacka (2010) on "Trust, good governance and unethical action in Finnish public administration". The questionnaire has three parts: parts A, B and C. Part A was dedicated to compiling the respondent's demographics, including the level of education, age, and income. For part B, the questionnaire examines the principles of good governance, founded on the three aspects of transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. This part consists of 12 items according to a five-point Likert Scale- '1' is used

for strongly disagree while '5' is for strongly agree. Part C addresses the satisfaction towards the political representatives. Part C contains four 4 items that use a five-point Likert Scale – '1' is used for strongly disagree while '5' is for strongly agree. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed to finalized the suitable indicators for good governance and the constituents' satisfaction. The wording of the survey was also kept simple for the people to answer.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to measure the factorial validity of good governance principles and community satisfaction. The CFA results of factor loadings are shown in Table 1. Based on the CFA values, all criteria for adequacy of fit were met. Factor loadings indicated the strength of the relationship factors with their respective constructs. Factor loadings maximum value is 1, and in this study, the highest factor loading value in this model is 0.97, while the lowest value is 0.54. Through analyzing the item loadings and reliability, the construct validity in this study was established.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Variables	Items	α	M	SD
Transparency	4	0.94	3.83	0.80
Accountability	4	0.92	4.02	0.65
Responsiveness	4	0.97	4.5	0.54
Satisfaction	4	0.95	3.79	0.68

RESULT
Good Governance of Political Representative

This study proceeded to run multiple regression analyses to address the voters' perception of good governance practices. The multiple regression analysis tested the predictors of citizens' satisfaction with good governance - transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. The result of multiple regression demonstrated a significant relationship between transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in the citizens' satisfaction towards their assemblyman.

Table 2: Multiple regression analysis

	Unstandardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		
(*Constant*)	3.712	.067	55.558	.000
Perceived Transparency	1.291	.303	-4.262	.000***
Perceived Accountability	1.410	.324	-4.345	.004***
Perceived Responsiveness	1.059	.258	-4.106	.000***

Notes: Dependent Variable: Community Satisfaction

*   *Significant at the level of 0.10*
 **   *Significant at the level of 0.05*
  ***   *Significant at the level of 0.01*

Based on the result, hypothesis H1 is accepted, meaning that transparency among the political representatives has a positive and significant impact on community satisfaction. This shows that the citizens in Kuala Terengganu believe that their representative is transparent in terms of the information that has been provided to them. The representative was also able to openly share information, especially on the work or project that had been done. Citizens are also able to obtain information from the representatives as the sources of information- specifically, on government action, especially on how decisions are being made, the budget of the projects, and the impact of the project. Their constituents were also satisfied with the information about the project that had been done. The representative also informed them regarding the financial allocation of the project. Although a few studies reported that Malaysia has low transparency, this study proved otherwise. The impact of transparency on citizens' satisfaction is significant, i.e., a regression coefficient $\beta = 1.29$.

Second, the result shows that hypothesis H2 is accepted, which means that accountability has a positive and significant impact on the citizens' satisfaction. This result shows that the citizens in Kuala Terengganu believe that their political representative has been accountable to them and accepted his or her responsibility as a political representative. In particular, their representative was more responsible in terms of the development of the constituency. Their representative also utilized the development budget well; the development project also had a positive impact on the people, and their representative also managed the development budget in the proper way. This result also proves that the representative has made a significant reform giving a meaningful impact on citizens' satisfaction. Compared to other variables, accountability is the highest, with a regression coefficient of $\beta = 1.41$

Third, the result shows that H3 is accepted. This shows that responsiveness among the political representatives has a positive impact on the citizens' satisfaction significantly. The citizens believed that their representative was responsive to their complaints, was very kind and readily available. They also believed that their representative gave equal treatment to all the voters in the constituent. In fact, their representative also accepted the ideas of the voters before making any decision. Although all variables of good governance - transparency, accountability and responsiveness are significant and positively impact citizen satisfaction, responsiveness scored the lowest score when linked with constituent satisfaction. The regression coefficient score ($\beta = 1.059$) was significantly lower than the remaining factors. This also shows that the representative's response towards their community is still low. It is imperative to formulate better method of response in the future. For example, the representative may create a feedback loop so that the citizen is able to provide input and also respond to the input by integrating it into action.

CONCLUSION

The finding of this study provided data on the satisfaction of the constituents towards their political representatives regarding the practices of good governance. Good governance among political representatives is essential for building trust and confidence in government institutions, promoting democracy, and ensuring that public resources are used effectively and efficiently to benefit society as a whole. The study shows that the satisfaction of constituents towards their political representative's good governance is good. However, improvement is still needed. Based on the principles of good governance, responsiveness is the aspect that needs significant attention from the political representatives. To address low satisfaction levels among citizens towards their representatives, it is important for representatives to listen to and respond to the concerns and needs of their constituents. The representatives also should be transparent and accountable in their actions and decision-making processes and work to build trust and confidence among citizens. This can be achieved through effective communication, engagement with the community, and a commitment to good governance and ethical behaviour.

At the same time, it is also important for citizens to actively participate in the political process, engage with their representatives, and also make sure the political representative accountable for their actions. This can help to ensure that the needs and interests of citizens are effectively represented and that government institutions are functioning in the best interests of the public. Mutual understanding is also needed between the constituents and their political representative; sometimes, constituents are unrealistic in terms of expectations, i.e., what the political representative can do for them. Therefore, the

representative should educate the constituents on the role of a representative for effective community engagement.

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In accordance with international publication guidelines and our duty to uphold research ethics, we declare that we have no conflicts of interest.

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