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**SATISFACTION LEVEL OF MALAYSIANS TOWARDS  
GOVERNMENT'S CRISIS MANAGEMENT PRACTICE DURING  
COVID-19**



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### Abstract

The whole world is alerted with the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak as it is lethal and spread easily. The government have to take quick and effective action for the crisis management and Malaysia is not excluding in taking its own action to ensure the crisis is managed well. In Malaysia, Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, health director-general stated the international standards and World Health Organization (WHO) satisfied with the way of Malaysia's management and preparedness by enforcing the movement control order (MCO), identifying patients for testing, isolation and treatment in handling the Covid-19 outbreak. Therefore, this study is done to study on satisfaction level of Malaysians towards government's crisis management during Covid-19. This study was conducted by using random sampling technique where it involves 200 respondents from Malaysia. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire of the research were divided into 4 sections consists of demographic profile, daily press conference and enforcement of Movement Control Order. For the ordinal measurement questions, Likert Scale from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree were used. The questions, an online survey, were created in Google Forms and distributed through social media.

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## **1. Introduction**

Crisis management is the application of strategies design to help an organization deal with a sudden negative event. In crisis management, the threat is the potential damage on an organization, its stakeholders and an industry (Crisis Management & Communication, 2007). For example, West Africa Ebola Outbreak crisis that affected the whole country. According to Nieuwkerk (2019), WHO declared the current Ebola outbreak in the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) as a “public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC)”. Therefore, crisis management is important to handle this such crisis from worsen. According to Worldometers’ update (as of April 21, 2020), the data shows that there are 2497,177 total cases of Covid-19 and USA has the most cases out of the other country with a total case and death of 792,938 and 42,518 respectively. In Asean, as of April 19, 2020, Singapore has surpassed Philippines and Indonesia with most Covid-19 cases (Singapore overtakes Indonesia and Philippines with most Covid-19 cases in Asean, 2020). The country has a total of 6558 case in the country. This Covid-19 pandemic not only affected the whole country in terms of health, but also economic and many others.

### **1.1. Covid-19 History in Malaysia**

In Malaysia, Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, health director-general stated the international standards and World Health Organization (WHO) satisfied with the way of Malaysia’s management and preparedness by enforcing the movement control order (MCO), identifying patients for testing, isolation and treatment in handling the Covid-19 outbreak (Faiz, 2020). Although Malaysia action in fighting Covid-19 is satisfying, Malaysia is one of the countries that took no action at the beginning of the outbreak. When Malaysia Ministry of Health through the Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre (CPRC) received the first report of three cases that suspected to have been infected by Covid-19 on January 23, 2020, Malaysia did not take any cautious measures (Kronologi COVID-19 di Malaysia, 2020). According to Irwan (2020), Former Deputy of Prime Minister, Dr. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said that Malaysia are not following the decision that have been made by Singapore by increasing the warning and make a discussion with the republic regarding the issue. She added that they are worried about the viral issue that happen regarding the Covid-19, but as at that time most of the cases are from China, the thing was deemed as still under control.

### **1.2. Early cases in Malaysia**

After some time, Malaysia recorded a rise in Covid-19 cases and at one point, recorded the highest cases in Southeast Asia and the sign of the virus to slowing down shows no hint (Athira, 2020). A religious gathering which is started as harmless event soon become a regional manhunt for someone who was been suspected for carrying the virus. Tablighi Jama’at, Islamic missionary movement, hosted in Sri Petaling was joined by 16,000 people. After that, early in the February, the Hindus in Malaysia have made a gathering in temples for Thaipusam, but there were no cases that been detect at that time and Malaysia can still contain the virus even there are 50 cases that had been reported in February. However,

the cases show a rise from 99 cases to 200 cases in less than a week on 8th March 2020. Next, on 19th March, there are 900 cases with two death cases.

As of April 20, 2020, Malaysia situation seems to be under control given the MCO have been prolonged until further news. Outbreak.my (2020), a live update website on Covid-19 cases reported the recovered cases have showed a promising improvement with a total of 3295 have been discharged from hospital. With 5425 cumulative confirmed cases, the new cases recorded on the day was 36, the lowest since the declaration of pandemic started. Malaysia also ranks at 87 of country with the lowest fatality rate by 1.64% and as for the recovery rate, Malaysia ranks at 42 as the country with the highest recovery rate at 60.74%. Before, Malaysia used to rank first with the most recorded cases of Covid-19 in Southeast Asia. However, because of the government's consistent effort and citizen cooperation, Malaysia ranks successfully dropped lower.

## **2. Problem Statement**

On March 11, 2020, The World Health Organization (WHO) officially described the Covid-19 as a pandemic (Coronavirus confirmed as pandemic by World Health Organization, 2020). The announcement made by WHO Director General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus was because of the alarming number of cases outside China that increased 13-fold in two weeks. Pandemic is a term used to describe a disease that is spreading in multiple countries around the world at the same time. The use of pandemic word by WHO is to highlight the importance of countries worldwide to take urgent action to respond to their own outbreaks. This language change is an indicator on how serious the Covid-19 infections are.

### **2.1. Public interest on media**

Due to its seriousness, public have interest to keep up to date with the Covid-19 news. Therefore, Covid-19 news are highlighted everywhere not only on mass media, but also in social media. Public attention to the news keeps increasing as government decided to enforce Movement Control Order (MCO) started from March 18, 2020. However, almost as fast as the virus spread, the fake news and misinformation on Covid-19 and MCO are spreading too. In Malaysia, Ministry of Communications and Multimedia have to established KKMM Quick Response Team on March 16, 2020 to fight the infodemic that lead to public anxiety (Pasukan Respon Pantas, 2020).

This crisis is affecting everyone, causing from the lost of income due to MCO, to the fear of the possibility of being infected with Covid-19. That is why public always keep track to the latest update for the crisis. Therefore, public should have a credible source where they can feel assured that all the information received are verified. Having the government higher-ups to consistently give information and statement on the crisis can make the public feel safe, informed and not anxious.

### **2.2. Early Covid-19 cases in Malaysia**

Conducting a normal daily routine required public to deal with a lot of people in a day. Either riding public transport, attending classes or having lunch at restaurant, ones have to be in crowded condition. As stated by WHO, social distancing is vital in preventing the spreading of Covid-19. Being in

crowded spaces, social distancing can be said as impossible. The Tabligh gathering in Sri Petaling from Feb 27 to March 1, the largest Covid-19 cluster in Malaysia is an example on how crowded places could make Covid-19 spread easily (Veena & Nur, 2020). Therefore, how public supposed to avoid physical contact with others and at the same conducting their daily routines?

Health director-general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said that the possibility of the returned students and Malaysians working overseas carrying the Covid-19 is Health Ministry's main concern (Tang, 2020). As the second wave of Covid-19 in our country is related to imported cases, there could have been a surge in cases if not managed well. Imported cases that means anyone coming into our country may be carrying the virus, is threatening as they may not know that they are infected overseas and then infected their family members here.

### **3. Research Questions**

In Kuantan, a Covid-19 cluster had been detected, responsible for one death and at least 20 infections involving a group of patients and several staffs of a medical facility. According to the Health director-general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, index case for this cluster had travelled to Bali and later infected an elder brother who died (Kaos & Rashvinjeet, 2020). While in Sarawak, Health Ministry detected another imported cases' cluster related to the Malaysian that had travelled to Italy (Luqman, 2020).

All these problems or crisis required crisis management from not only Health Ministry, but the whole government. Therefore, this research will be conduct to study on how satisfy public are towards the government's crisis management during Covid-19. List of research questions below derive the researchers to explore:

- Does Malaysians satisfy with government's crisis management practise to keep updating about Malaysia's current situation on Covid-19 pandemic?
- What is Malaysians' position on the Movement Control Order (MCO) enforced by government to break the Covid-19 infection chain?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

To study the Malaysians' satisfaction with government's crisis management practice to keep updating about Malaysia's current situation on Covid-19 pandemic and also to study the Malaysians' position on the Movement Control Order (MCO) enforced by government to break the Covid-19 infection chain.

### **5. Research Methods**

This study is a quantitative research to study on satisfaction level of Malaysians towards government's crisis management during Covid-19. An online survey was created in Google Forms and distributed through social media such as Whatsapp Messenger, Instagram and Facebook.

## **5.1.Sampling Method**

This study was conducted by using random sampling technique where the respondents are Malaysians. The total number of samples is 200 respondents. The questionnaires of the research will be divided into into 4 sections consists of demographic profile, daily press conference, enforcement of Movement Control Order and mandatory quarantine. In the first stage, questions related to research objectives will be constructed. Then, the survey is distributed to 30 respondents for Pilot Test to check the reliability of the questions through SPSS. When test was a success, the survey was continued to be distributed until 200 total respondents are collected. In final stage, the complete data collection with 200 respondents was analysed for descriptive data analysis.

## **6. Findings**

### **6.1. Malaysians satisfaction level**

Table 01, shows about Malaysians satisfaction on government's crisis management in the Covid-19 crisis and as a result, 99.5% satisfied with daily press conference that was held by government during Covid-19 crisis. Majority of the respondents also are satisfied with the enforcement of Movement Control Order (MCO) and government action in making mandatory quarantine for those coming and returning to Malaysia with 97.5% and 98.5% respectively.

### **6.2. Satisfaction on daily Press Conference**

Based from Table 02, the belief that the ministry has been keeping the media and people updated through its daily live press conference ever since Covid-19 cases were reported in Malaysia is the highest mean (M=4.66) and followed by the acknowledgement that press conference is important for government during crisis together with there must be a single spokesperson, qualified and credible for press conference in crisis with both have M=4.65.

This finding can be supported as Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah stated that the dissemination of accurate and trusted information amid the country's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic was a result of a good communication plan, as well as systematic and scheduled engagements as proposed by the Communications and Multimedia Ministry to the National Security Council under the #Komunikasikita initiative (Good communication plan in place during pandemic, 2020). He also added that since March 19, the ministry set up a Covid-19 "war room" and produced 82 media reports for the NSC's consideration when drafting its strategies to tackle the pandemic.

### **6.3. Satisfaction level on MCO**

Based from Table 03., majority of the respondent believe government closes the schools & universities and cancelling the UPSR & PT3 protect students from exposed to the Covid-19 infection (M=4.675) and followed by business and premises were closed in MCO to avoid close contact among people (M=4.66).

The finding is supported as according to Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, as he aware that parents are concerned for their children's safety, there is possibility to postpone the school session

and reopening of schools until the situation is fully under control and in the meantime the students still need to study at home (Sandhya & Lee, 2020). Mak Chee Kin, Melaka Action Group for Parents in Education chairman also welcoming the postponement of the school by government, justifying that the students' and teachers' lives are more important.

**Table 1.** Satisfaction on government's crisis management

Issues	Frequency, <i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
I am satisfied with daily press conference held by government during Covid-19 crisis	199	99.5%
Yes	1	0.5%
No		
Total	200	100.0
I am satisfied with the enforcement of Movement Control Order (MCO) by the government	195	97.5
Yes	5	2.5
No		
Total	200	100.0
I am satisfied with government action in making mandatory quarantine for those coming and returning to Malaysia	197	98.5
Yes	3	1.5
No		
Total	200	100.0

Table 02 indicate satisfaction level on daily press conference.

**Table 2.** Satisfaction level on daily press conference

Satisfaction	Mean	S.d
I believe the ministry has been keeping the media and people updated through its daily live press conference ever since Covid-19 cases were reported in Malaysia	<b>4.66</b>	<b>0.606</b>
I believe press conference is important for government during crisis to put cross key messages, emphasizing the human interest and acknowledging the shared misery	<b>4.65</b>	<b>0.557</b>
I agree for press conference in crisis, there must be a single spokesperson, qualified and credible. E.g: Dr Noor Hisham only talks on the medical Covid-19 update & DS Ismail Sabri on the security	<b>4.65</b>	<b>0.574</b>

SOPs

I believe government have been transparent in disclosing the latest updates of the country with regard to facts and figures in its daily press conference	4.59	0.628
I believe the same spokesperson during daily press conference build trust and credibility for the government in my eye	4.59	0.652
I agree that the government spokesperson remove the psychological barriers within the audience. E.g: Prime Minister image reduce the formality in his speech	4.58	0.621
I believe I have a good perception towards the spokesperson of government press conference for the consistent update	4.57	0.638
I believe government can resolve speculation that become public attention in daily press conference. E.g: the hauling of illegal migrants issue that criticized by social activists	4.57	0.622
Overall	4.61	

Table 03 reflects satisfaction level on MCO.

**Table 3.** Satisfaction level on MCO

Satisfaction	Mean	S.d
I believe government closes the schools & universities and cancelling the UPSR & PT3 protect students from exposed to the Covid-19 infection	4.675	0.567
I believe that business and premises were closed in MCO to avoid close contact among people	4.66	0.572
I believe the enforcement of MCO by government could break the chain of Covid-19 infection	4.65	0.582
I agree interstate and inter-district travel ban should be imposed and the right to conduct interstate travel will not be issued simply to anyone who requests one	4.63	0.605
I believe the roadblocks and patrols by authorities supervise	4.61	0.583

the MCO implementation		
I agree although it is big festival day such as Aidilfitri and Hari Gawai, no interstate and inter-district travel should be made by the public	4.575	0.683
I believe the enforcement of Conditional MCO help Malaysia to overcome the economy pressure	4.55	0.640
I believe with the closing of study institutions, virtual learning ensure the learning syllabus can be delivered well and the education process will not be postponed any longer	4.37	0.858
I believe the cancellation of UPSR & PT3 examination not affecting the observation of the students' level of understanding towards the study as there are many ways for them to be observed	4.32	0.830
Overall	4.56	

## 7. Conclusion

From the results of this study, it shows that government crisis management during Covid-19 have impact the satisfaction levels of Malaysians. It can be seen from daily press conferences, Movement Control Order (MCO). From the findings, Malaysians are fully satisfied on government effort on handling the crisis. All of the variables have a high positive feedbacks from the Malaysians. In the future we were supposed experience a other national or global crisis that, the government can use the similar method or approach to handle the crisis. Using the same spoke person for every daily press conference not only will increase the credibility of the spoke person itself but also can build the trust among people.

Other than using the same spoke person for daily press conference, the government also needs to evaluate or plan the crisis using contingency lens. This is to foresee the possible outcome for every decision that will be made. Thus, it will create a proper action plan for every crisis. This are important in terms of preparing the people for the crisis. This important in order to avoid the people from panic. When the people are feeling safe the satisfaction level of government's crisis management are also increase.

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