

## The Impact of Governance toward Ethnic Tolerance among Youth in the Manufacturing Area

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### Abstract

This paper is to examine the impact of governance toward ethnic tolerance among youth in the manufacturing area, Pasir Gudang, Johor. The expression about the federal and local governance and also their ethnic tolerance level was collected by a stratified sampling technique from 362 youth in Pasir Gudang by using a set of questionnaires. The relationship between governance and ethnic tolerance variables is analyzed by using structural equation modelling (SEM). The result found there is a significant impact of governance towards the ethnic tolerance among youth in Pasir Gudang, Johor. The finding may contribute to the policy maker to ensuring the governance is managed properly to preserve the ethnic tolerance among youth.

**Keywords:** Ethnic Tolerance, Governance, Digital Society, Youth.

### Introduction

The population of the world today has become so complex. Not only consists of the diversity of races that build a society in a country but also joined by people who migrate to other countries to find employment opportunities, especially in regions that are vibrant with industrial development and manufacturing. In a complex diverse population with such differences in language, culture, and religion, the role of government in managing and ensuring that each individual has an attitude of tolerance for each other is essential.

The act of exclusively in policy and resource distribution may harm the tolerance. The competition among ethnicity in the economy and politics need to identify and manage properly to reduce the tension of the groups. The equalities in all social dimensions need to balance according to ethnicity and the diverse society. Thus, good governance management is important to preserve ethnic tolerance. Injustices in governance management can have an

impact on ethnic dissatisfaction. These feelings of dissatisfaction will cause the people to act outside their ethnic sensitivities and thus lead to ethnic conflicts that threaten national security. Economic recession, slow economic development, and rising unemployment also may distribute to dissatisfaction, especially among youth (Dian & Zaidi, 2016).

Advances in modern communication networks tend to enhance ethnic group culture by making them more aware of those who share their identities with strangers to their ethnic group. There is the phenomenon of "The Paradox of Modernization" which said modernization further intensifies ethnic conflict (Connor, 1994). In Malaysia, ethnic tension may cause by inappropriate content being uploaded on social media and digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. In addition, youth has an unclear identity that may lead to the ethnic tension act. In 2019, ethnic tension happened when irresponsible youth upload a sensitive and disturbing statement about Islam. In the comment section, the netizen shows their anger and dissatisfaction by ignoring ethnic sensitivity to each other (Metro, 2019).

Varshney (2010) pointed out a list that should be taken attention to avoid ethnic conflict risk. According to Varshney (2010), a community in a territory that has ethnic conflict history, unstable socio-economy, and unbalanced governance management are open to the ethnic conflict risk. In 2007, ethnic tension has occurred at Pasir Gudang. It stemmed from fights between Malay youths and Indian youths resulting in death and serious injuries. Following the case, a text message stating that there will be a massive attack from the Indians against the Malays in the Pasir Gudang area will take place. This situation has led to tensions in relations between the multi-ethnic population in Pasir Gudang, especially between the Indians and Malays.

However, the tensions that existed among the people of Pasir Gudang at that time could be eased when the local government as well as the federal government played their role efficiently and quickly. The Prime Minister of Malaysia at the time, Tun Sri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, insisted that the impending attack was just a fake message and asked the people of Pasir Gudang to calm down through his speech which was published in local news reports. The police and army have also set up roadblocks on major roads in the Pasir Gudang area. Politicians and police chiefs in Pasir Gudang also held a briefing to control the panic situation among Pasir Gudang residents. The briefing was attended by almost 500 residents of Pasir Gudang, especially Malays and Indians. The briefing explained the real situation so that all prejudices between the multi-ethnic population can be alleviated. Although ethnic clashes did not occur on a large scale as spread, Pasir Gudang still experienced a tense situation among the multi-ethnic community in the area. At the same time, the people of Pasir Gudang at that time had high trust in the government and acted as recommended by the authorities.

The above case is a case that occurred in 2007. However, lately, residents in Pasir Gudang often face problems involving the management of local governance by the state government. Although Pasir Gudang has developed as an industrial and manufacturing area, 50 percent of its population is still in the B40 group (household with income below RM3000.00±). Besides, Pasir Gudang also has issues in their governance management regarding the air and water population in 2019 (Zulhisyam, 2019). The challenge of living in an industrial city with the rising cost of living as well as governance management problems will increase the risk of

population dissatisfaction with the government. This will allow youth in Pasir Gudang are open to the risk of an act that leads to ethnic tension if they have low ethnic tolerance due to dissatisfaction toward governance management. They could show their anger and insensitive word in real life or digital platform if ethnic tension happens. This act could harm ethnic harmony and lead to ethnic violence, especially in Pasir Gudang.

### Purpose of the Study

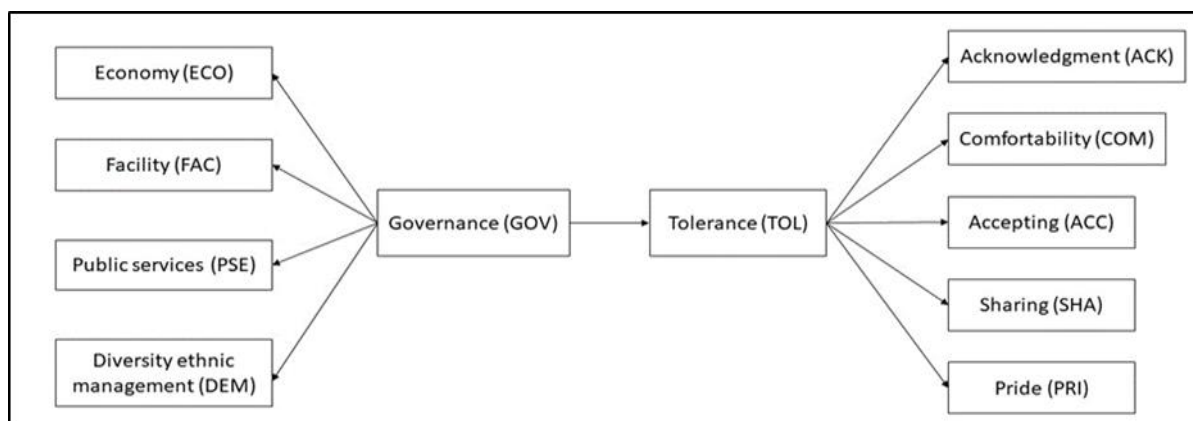


Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework

Today, good governance is one of the most talked-about concepts in the field of administration. It is a new form of management implementation that leads to effectiveness in the public sector. In addition, it is also seen as a form of performance criteria for a government (Sakinah, 2008). Good governance refers to a government that moves towards good and effective practices in administration. In this process, various important elements for creating efficiency and justice are practiced by the government. In general, good governance is a form of the mechanism of providing good services to the community (Khairol, 2014). In this study, governance is seen through the aspect of government management to the people in Pasir Gudang. It covers aspects of economic management, facilities management, public services, and also the management of ethnic diversity.

The principle of ethnic tolerance is a dynamic one. It needs to be understood in the context of relationships that cross ethnicities or groups within an area. Constraints of social understanding and incomplete governance management will make the competition of each individual more in favor of one's ethnicity or group (Sigelman et al., 1992). If this happens, the ethnic tolerance of the diverse population will also be affected. Therefore, economic, political, governance management, as well as the management of classes or social groups, need to be focused on to ensure that inter-ethnic competition and tolerance that occurs among multi-ethnic communities are in a stable state (Wagner, 1986). In this study, the ethnic tolerance level is focused in the aspect of acknowledgment, comfortability, acceptance, sharing, and pride.

Therefore, this paper is to seek what is the impact of governance on ethnic tolerance among youth in Pasir Gudang, Johor. This study may contribute data of ethnic tolerance among youth and the level of satisfaction to the governance among youth that can use to predict ethnic tension in Pasir Gudang, Johor.

**Method**

This is a causal study to identify the impact of governance on ethnic tolerance. G Power program is used to determine the number of respondents as it was able to identify the minimum number of respondents required based on the number of constructs and variables used in this study (Hair et al, 2017). Respondent selection is randomly chosen by using a stratified sampling technique involving 10 youth from 45 Pasir Gudang Neighbourhood Association. All the 45 Pasir Gudang Neighbourhood is located in the Pasir Gudang's manufacturing area. The inclusion criteria for this stratified sample are the respondent must be between 15 to 30 years old. 450 youth in Pasir Gudang received the questionnaire and the return rate is 80.4 percent. 362 respondent multi-ethnic youth (Malay 60%, Chinese 25%, Indian 15%).

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Part A was a section of questions related to respondents' demographic info such as age, religion, ethnicity, and gender. Part B is a section that contains 12 statements about respondents' consent to governance, both local and federal. Part C is a section that contains 15 items about ethnic tolerance. The instrument for the governance section was adopted from (Khairol, 2014). The instrument for the ethnic tolerance section was adopted from (Nazri & Mansor, 2014). The conceptual framework of this study is shown in figure 1. The analysis of the data is by using the Partial Least Square Structural Modeling (PLS-SEM).

**Finding and Discussion***Respondent Profile*

Survey profiles of the 362 respondents such as gender, ethnicities, age, and religion were shown in table 1. Frequency and percentage used to present the data. Among 362 respondents of youth in Pasir Gudang, 49.2 percent of respondents were male while the remaining 50.8 percent were female. Both percentages of males and females are almost the same. As regards ethnicities, 59.4% of respondents are Malays, 24.6% are Chinese and 16% are Indians. Age indicates that 84.5 percent of the youth in this sample were aged 15 to 18, 3.6 percent were aged 25 to 30 and the remaining 11.9 percent were aged 19 to 24. According to the respondents' religious cluster, 59.1 percent of respondents were Muslim, 20.7 percent were Buddhist, 14.6 percent were Hindu and 5 percent were Christian.

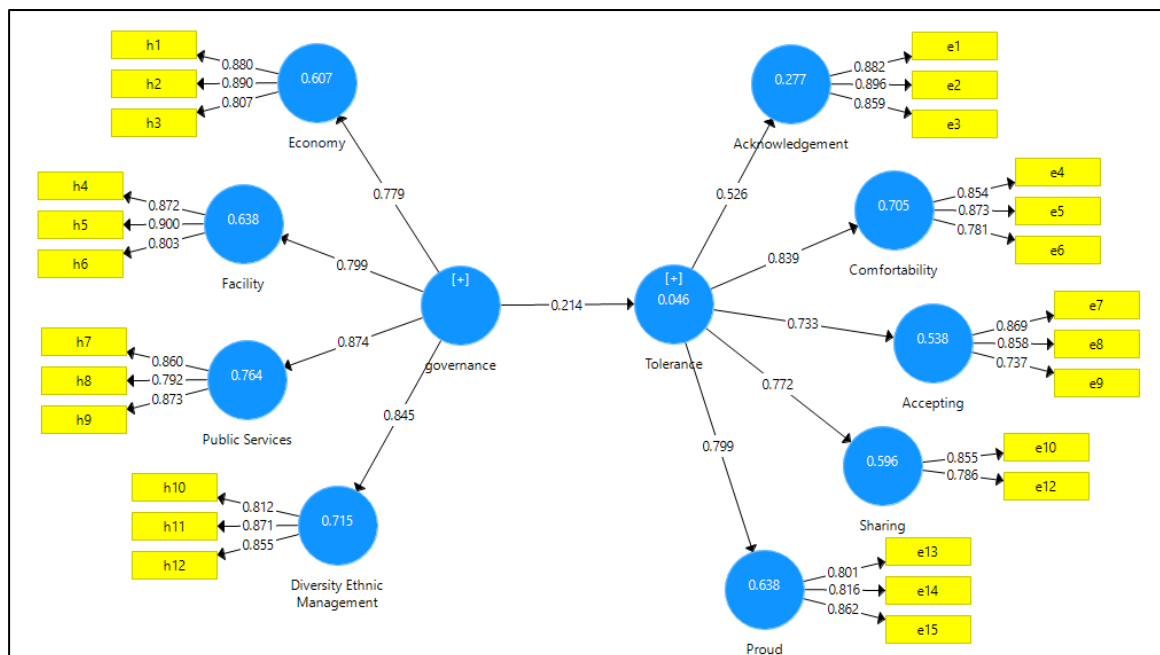


Figure 2: The impact of governance toward ethnic tolerance among youth in Pasir Gudang

Figure 2 shows that the governance gives 4.6% ( $r^2=0.046$ ) a significant impact on the ethnic tolerance among youth through the factor of public services, economy, facility, and diversity ethnic management. The highest impact is given by the public services element that has 76% ( $r^2=0.764$ ) of influence towards governance. This influence is contributed by the excellent quality of services at public institutions and the continuous effort shown by the governance to fight corruption in the country. The second element is the diversity ethnic management element that has a 72% ( $r^2=0.715$ ) influence on governance. These influences contribute by a successful diversity ethnic management, the democracy factor, and fair and equitable service to all ethnicities. The third element is the facility services that have 64% ( $r^2=0.638$ ) influences on governance through good public transportation, facility and governance program is given to the youth.

In addition, ethnic tolerance has a 70.5 % ( $r^2=0.705$ ) influence on the comfortability element among youth through the presence of other ethnicities around youth, visiting other ethnic homes, and eating at other ethnicities' restaurants. Next, ethnic tolerance has 64% ( $r^2=0.638$ ) influences on the proud element through feeling proud of the ethnic diversity in Malaysia, eager to learn another ethnic language in national school, and love to watch other ethnic cultural performances on the formal event. Ethnic tolerance also gives 60% ( $r^2=0.596$ ) influence on the sharing element through the activity of watching and participating in other ethnic cultural performances.

## Discussion

Based on the result, the findings show that there is a positive relation of governance towards ethnic tolerance among youth in Pasir Gudang, Johor. The ethnic tolerance attitude is significant can be predicted by the governance in Pasir Gudang, Johor. All the dimensions used to picture governance variables, which are economy management, facility management, public services, and diversity ethnic management, were also found to be significant to express the governance variable in this study. All the dimensions used to picture the ethnic tolerance

variable also found to be significant can express the ethnic tolerance variable in this study. The dimension of ethnic tolerance is acknowledgment, comfortability, acceptance, sharing, and proud.

The result is in line with Janmaat & Keating (2019) that also found that youth in the industrial area can build ethnic tolerance as long as their federal or local governance gives them the necessary support for them to face economic crisis and resource access competition between ethnicities, immigrant and others. Youth can become more accepting to develop ethnic tolerance among them is influenced by globalization, modernization, and open border policy in their local area. The Pasir Gudang, Johor Bahru, Johor is a rapidly growing industrial area with a population density of over 220 000 people (Bharian, 2019). Its role as a heavy industrial center with the main port of Johor has made Pasir Gudang the focus of various local and foreign communities and countries to find employment opportunities there. High-tech factories involving the production of petrochemical, oil, and polymers are operating in the Pasir Gudang area. This has allowed Pasir Gudang to experience the impact of globalization and modernization as well as accept the influx of people to find employment opportunities there.

Van Staveren & Pervaiz (2017) also state that tolerance is determined by social inclusion in the societal process. The local and federal governments must control social exclusion to build a tolerance attitude in society. The stronger impact on tolerance is contributed by the inclusion in the policy by the governance rather than the increase of economic growth itself. The diversity of society in the industrial or manufacturing area is likely to give some side effects for a while. Therefore, the governance in such an area must be properly managed for positive benefit. The inequalities cause by diversity such as rights, opportunities, voice, and capabilities can harm society's ethnic tolerance.

### **Conclusion**

This paper is to examine the impact of governance toward ethnic tolerance among youth in Pasir Gudang, Johor. The globalization and modernization area cause economic competition among youth to survive. The inequalities that occur will give a negative impact on ethnic tolerance development and disrupt a peaceful and harmonious society. Good governance that manages to control the inequalities address the inclusion in social and economic growth can contribute a positive impact in the long term of social development. This study finds out that governance significantly has the predicted power to the ethnic tolerance attitude among youth. This study has proved the crucially of just and fair policy in growth and development and resource allocation among the ethnic group in this country. This finding may give benefit to the policy marker in ensuring the inclusion policy when dealing with diverse society to preserve the ethnic tolerance attitude and maintain our peaceful country.

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