



**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC
AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ON THE LOCAL
PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT IN
THE ISKANDAR MALAYSIA DEVELOPMENT
REGION**

BY

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the research is to investigate the local people's perception on the social, economic and environmental impacts of the Iskandar Malaysia development region. The Iskandar Malaysia development region was established in 2006 with the introduction of a new single authority known as the Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA). This authority is governed by the statutory IRDA Act of 2007 with a new proposed master plan named Comprehensive Development Plan and Iskandar Malaysia development blueprints for the region. The literature review highlighted that the implementation of regional economic strategies in Malaysia has been successful in achieving development and economic growth objectives. However, there exists doubts that most regional developments shaped by this top-down approach may be susceptible to the conflict of wealth distribution between the urban and rural areas. Data from 916 respondents was gathered through a structured questionnaire to help answer the research questions. Additionally, content analysis from literature review was used to confirm and validate the findings derived from the questionnaire survey. Simultaneously, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the local authorities and development agencies involved in the planning and development of the Iskandar Malaysia Development region. These triangulation methods aimed at enriching and providing a thick description of the data. In essence, the study found that socio-economic backgrounds such as age, gender and income explained the variation in respondents' perception towards the development impact in the Iskandar Malaysia Development region. Findings also showed that respondents lacked the necessary awareness about, and active participations in Iskandar Malaysia's organisational background and development implementation schemes. This is needed in order to quantify any impact and feed the perceptions' estimators into the Structural Equation Modelling, an important knowledge contribution of this work. This study concluded that although public participation has been long inculcated in the development of planning practices since the establishment of the Town and Country Planning Act 172 (Act 1976), the development of Iskandar Malaysia in 2006 has not been fully realized as propagated by the Act 172. Essentially, the findings are in line with the practices of Malaysian top-down government directive approach. Hence, public participation is imperative to the success of national and regional planning and development in Malaysia.

خلاصة البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى التحقق من معرفة تصور المواطنين المحليين للآثار الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والبيئية لمنطقة إسكندر ماليزيا التنموية. حيث أنشئت هذه المنطقة عام 2006م مع تكوين هيئة مستقلة جديدة تعرف باسم الهيئة العامة للتنمية الإقليمية إسكندر (IRDA). وتخضع هذه الهيئة لقانون التشريعي بموجب قانون IRDA لعام 2007م مع خطة رئيسة جديدة مقترحة باسم الخطة التنموية الشاملة ومخططات منطقة إسكندر ماليزيا التنموية. أشارت مراجعة الإنتاج الفكري أن تنفيذ الإستراتيجيات الاقتصادية الإقليمية في ماليزيا كان ناجحا في تحقيق الأهداف التنموية والنمو الاقتصادي. ومع ذلك، فقد ظهرت شكوك محتواها أن العديد من مشاريع التنمية الإقليمية التي شكّلت بأسلوب تنازلي قد تكون سبب الاختلافات والصراعات في توزيع الثروات بين المناطق الحضرية والريفية. تمّ جمع البيانات من 916 مستطلع بواسطة الاستبانة لغرض المساعدة في الإجابة عن أسئلة البحث. إضافة إلى ذلك، أستخدم تحليل المحتوى من مرجعية الإنتاج الفكري للتأكد والتحقق من صحة النتائج المستنتجة من الاستبانة. وفي نفس الوقت أجريت مقابلات شبه منظمة مع السلطات المحلية ووكالات التنمية المشاركة في تخطيط منطقة إسكندر ماليزيا وتطويرها. هدفت أساليب التثليث إلى إثراء البيانات، وتقديم صورة وافية وواضحة عن جوهر البيانات، وقد وجدت الدراسة أيضا أن الخلفيات الاجتماعية، والاقتصادية، مثل: العمر، والجنس، والدخل كانت سبب اختلاف تصور المستجيبين في الآثار التنموية بمنطقة إسكندر ماليزيا. أظهرت النتائج أن المستجيبين قد افتقروا إلى الوعي اللازم، وكذلك المشاركة الفعالة في الخطط الأساسية لتنفيذ التطوير التنظيمي لإسكندر ماليزيا. ويُعد هذا مطلوب من أجل تحديد الأثر، وتزويد مقدرات التصورات في معادلة النمذجة الهيكلية، والإسهام في إعطاء المعرفة المهمة لهذا العمل. خلصت الدراسة، بالرغم من مشاركة عامة الناس لزمن طويل في تطوير أساليب التخطيط وذلك منذ تأسيس القانون التشريعي لتخطيط المدن والريف 172 (عام 1976)، وتطوير منطقة إسكندر ماليزيا التنموية عام 2006م، غير أنها لم تتحقق بشكل كامل. في الأساس، نجد أن النتائج تتماشى مع النهج التوجهي التنازلي للحكومة الماليزية وبالتالي، فإن مشاركة عامة الناس أمر حتمي في نجاح التخطيط والتنمية الوطنية والإقليمية بماليزيا.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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This thesis is dedicated to my beloved family and friends...

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The involvement of stakeholders in government planning and development strategies is significant in enhancing the outcomes of development activities. After all, planning and development is a process that intends to fulfill the population needs and complement their social wellbeing. However, the process of planning developments towards achieving economic wealth and social prosperity often overlooks the essential needs of the population. Hence, there are various studies that have been conducted to explore the impacts of development to the population through a range of methods including perception study.

Perception study usually involved the assessments on the impacts, costs, values and quality of the related subject and the studies on the perception of development impacts are often associated with individuals' attitude, observation, awareness and benefits received from the economic, social and environmental aspects of the development, as mentioned in Nguyen and Nguyen (2012), Chindo (2011) Bashir and Flint (2010) Aref and et al. (2009). Furthermore, Brosch and et al. (2013) has mentioned in the decision making process, individuals' perceived impacts are normally affected by complex human emotions and the cognition of the brain. Additionally, individual personal traits such as age, educational, sex, ethnicity and income level, as well as the types of occupation also influenced peoples' perception