

THE ROLE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION COORDINATION UNIT AS A MAIN ACTOR IN THE POVERTY ERADICATION PROGRAM IN TERENGGANU

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ABSTRACT

The Implementation, Coordination, and Evaluation Unit (ICU) was established under the New Economic Policy (NEP) of 1971. ICU developed as the main body in charge of managing the effort to eradicate poverty, generally referred to as the people's welfare program. ICU has also been expanded to the state and district levels under the name State Development Office (SDO). Therefore, the goal of this study was to ascertain the relationship between the effectiveness and role of SDO and the Terengganu poverty eradication program. In order to meet the aims of the study, a questionnaire was used to collect primary data and secondary sources were collected from government publications, books, journals, newspapers, research reports, and the Internet. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents from among the poor people in Terengganu. All things considered, this study can assist SDO in carrying out its responsibility as the principal organization in implementing policies aimed at eliminating poverty, which is consistent with the government's objective of attaining zero absolute poverty by 2025. Indeed, the percentage of Terengganu's hardcore poor can be decreased, and this study can offer recommendations for ways to address the problems of poverty eradication.

Keywords: Programs, policy, role and effectiveness, poverty, poverty eradication.

1. Introduction

Economic growth and poverty eradication are closely related because economic growth is a key tool for lowering poverty and raising living standards in developing nations like Malaysia. Therefore, whether the poverty rate can be lowered or not depends on the economic policies that the government has implemented. In Malaysia, since achieving independence until now, many efforts and policies have been implemented to eradicate poverty within the community, especially in the early 1970s. In other words, every development policy that has been introduced is aimed at poverty eradication efforts in Malaysia.

Regarding poverty eradication efforts in Malaysia, it was found that many studies have been conducted, each of which focuses differently in the focus and analysis carried out. For example, Wan Nurulasiah Wan Mustapa, Abdullah Al Mamun, & Mohamed Dahlan Ibrahim (2018) have studied the initiatives provided by the government to assist low-income households towards poverty eradication. In this study, the focus is on the role played by agencies such as Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM), Tabung Ekonomi Kumpulan

Usahawan Kebangsaan (TEKUN) and Fisheries Development Authority of Malaysia (LKIM). Meanwhile, Mohd Rodzi Embong, Roshaliza Taha & Mohd Nazli Mohd Nor (2015) conducted a study on the role played by the Zakat Center in eradicating poverty.

In addition to the agencies mentioned above, the government has established a special agency, the Implementation Coordination Unit (ICU), which acts as the main agency (actor) in implementing poverty eradication policies in Malaysia. The ICU and Economic Planning Unit (EPU)—both under the Prime Minister's Office—are responsible for preparing and updating the Poverty Line Income (PLI) assessment, which is monthly household income every two years (<https://ekasih.icu.gov.my>). Through the PLI assessment, the poverty rate of the community in Malaysia can be categorized as hardcore poor and poor, where it is different for residents in urban and rural areas.

In Malaysia, poverty rates are higher in rural than in urban regions. To fight poverty, especially in rural regions, the ICU established the State Development Office (SDO) at the state and district levels. SDO is responsible for carrying out the role that ICU as a whole play in implementing strategies to end poverty. This stance holds that SDO and ICU are the main entity or participant in organizing all government programs meant to end poverty.

However, the author's research found that no previous study has been conducted directly on the role of ICU or SDO in coordinating and implementing poverty eradication programs, especially in the state of Terengganu. So, this study was conducted to fill that gap in assessing the effectiveness of ICU or SDO in implementing poverty eradication programs in Terengganu.

2.0 Problem Statement

The issue of poverty is a common issue around the world. Therefore, the government has targeted to achieve a zero rate for the hardcore poor category in Malaysia by 2025 (Sinar Harian, 28 December 2021). Based on a study conducted by the United Nations (UN), the global poverty rate has increased dramatically from 2019 to 2020, from 8.3 percent (%) to 9.2% (<https://unstats.un.org>). This is because COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the Malaysian economy, causing an increase in the percentage of poor people.

To determine the poverty category in Malaysia, a measurement method using the Poverty Line Income (PLI) is used. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) (2022), the PLI value in Malaysia for the poor category has shown an increase from RM2,208 in 2019 to RM2,589 in 2022. Meanwhile, the PLI value in Malaysia for the hardcore poor category has shown an increase from RM1,169 in 2019 to RM 1,198 in 2022. For the state of Terengganu, the PLI value for the poor has also shown an increase from RM2,507 in 2019 to RM2,751 in 2022. Meanwhile, the PLI value in Terengganu for the hardcore poor category has shown an increase from RM1,312 in 2019 to RM1,367 in 2022 (DOSM, 2022).

A study from DOSM (2022) shows that among the three states that showed a significant increase in 2020 compared to 2019 were Sabah which was 25.3% from 12.4%, Kelantan which was 21.2% from 12.4%, and Terengganu which was 12.0% from 6.1%. However, DOSM statistics have shown a positive value when the poverty rate in Malaysia has decreased to 6.2% in 2022 compared to 2020. Meanwhile, the poverty rate in Terengganu in 2022 has decreased to 6.2% in 2022 compared to 2020 (DOSM, 2022). However, the poverty rate in 2022 is still high compared to the poverty rate before the COVID-19 pandemic hit and poverty eradication efforts still need to continue to reduce the poverty rate in Malaysia.

For the issue of poverty eradication in the state of Terengganu, the gross household income rate in 2022 showed an increase compared to 2019, which was RM7,248 from RM6,815 (DOSM, 2022). However, the average gross household income in urban and rural areas has a significant difference, which is RM7,939 in urban areas and RM5,980 in rural areas (DOSM, 2022). In addition, the high poverty in Terengganu is due to the average household size being higher than other states. The state of Terengganu has an average household size of 8 people and more, which is 8.3%, which is the highest compared to other states (DOSM, 2022). The issue of poverty, especially in the state of Terengganu, is usually examined from the perspective of current issues. Therefore, the relationship between poverty eradication and current issues can be assessed in terms of three main issues, namely economic recession, health and natural disasters.

First, the effects of inflation on large countries have begun to spread throughout the world, including Malaysia. Inflation is an increase in the price of goods and services over a certain period of time. Although the momentum of economic recovery continues slowly, the global economy is being tested by major problems such as disrupted global supply chains and high inflation (Ekonomi Rakyat, 2023). Statistics show that the average monthly household consumption expenditure in Malaysia has increased to RM5,150 in 2022 from RM4,609 in 2019 due to rising prices of goods (DOSM, 2022). Meanwhile, the average monthly household consumption expenditure in Terengganu has increased to RM4,796 in 2022 from RM4,345 in 2019 (DOSM, 2022). In addition, geopolitical tensions between Russia and Ukraine which caused a sharp increase in global oil prices have further worsened the situation, coupled with movement and economic restrictions in the world's second largest economy, China, which have further worsened the country's supply chain.

Secondly, health issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic that has occurred have left a certain impact on the population. The main effects of COVID-19 are the loss of income and affected health. When COVID-19 hit, 81% of the population was worried about losing their source of income (Fareez Azman, 2021). In fact, since COVID-19 hit, 800,000 people have lost their source of income (Mohd Nasaruddin & Luqman Arif, 2020). Furthermore, the use of income on health has also increased. Based on DOSM statistics (2022), the average monthly household expenditure on health showed an

increase from 7.8% in 2019 to 12.9% in 2022 because the pandemic era has changed the pattern of public spending directed towards health.

Third, the issue of natural disasters, especially floods, has had many negative effects, including having an impact on poverty. The issue of floods is no longer foreign to Malaysia. In fact, for the state of Terengganu, floods can be said to occur every year and usually the floods that occur are river floods (Noor Aznida, 2015). This is due to the geology of Terengganu which has many rivers and is a coastal state. When heavy rains occur continuously, the river water level will rise rapidly (Bernama, 09 December 2022). In fact, floods have occurred twice in 2022 such as those that befell the residents of Kampung La, Besut (Hafizi, 2022). In this regard, the floods that occurred in Terengganu in 2022 have recorded an estimated loss of RM38.2 million (Zaid, 2023).

In resolving these three issues, SDO, ICU has carried out several initiatives to assist KIRs in need. Among the initiatives taken is the Kasih Prihatin Program, which is cash vouchers and food basket donations given to selected head of household. In addition, exhibitions from agencies, talk sessions were also held to provide input to participants involved in terms of health, job opportunities and types of assistance offered as well as open interviews to fill vacancies by Social Security Organization (SOCSSO). This program was jointly organized by ICU, the Social Welfare Department (JKM), the Terengganu Islamic Religious and Malay Customs Council (MAIDAM), the Darul Iman Fund Secretariat, the Islamic Economic Development Foundation (YaPEIM) and several other agencies (ICU, 2023).

In addition, SDO also conducted a mobile team visit program to selected head of household. Various appropriate assistance was provided to selected head of household, including: (i) child assistance; (ii) general monthly state assistance; (iii) assistance for the care of bedridden patients or the Disabled; (iv) assistance for workers with disabilities; (v) subsistence assistance; (vi) house rental assistance; (vii) love ray assistance; (viii) assistance for prosthetic devices/support devices (false legs); (ix) assistance for home repairs; and (x) new house building assistance (ICU, 2023). All these programs are collaborative programs between ICU, MAIDAM, JKM, YaPEIM, Tabung Darul Iman Secretariat, and several other agencies.

To help head of household affected by disasters such as fires, storms and floods, ICU has implemented the i-Care4U Program, which is a welfare and disaster relief contribution. This is one of the SDO initiatives to provide support and then deliver contributions to those in need, especially those affected by disasters. This program is also a collaborative program between ICU, the Malaysian Civil Defence Force (APM), District Offices, Malaysian Volunteer Department (RELA), Royal Malaysian Police and the Terengganu State Information Department (JaPenTerengganu).

However, the initiatives taken are not comprehensive initiatives. The programs carried out are assistance programs for selected head of household only. Therefore, not all hardcore poor head of household can benefit from the program. Furthermore, the activities carried out are activities in collaboration with other agencies which causes the poverty

eradication initiative by SDO to receive less attention from the people, where the initiatives carried out do not reveal the role and effectiveness of SDO.

In relation to the issues discussed above, this study is conducted as an effort to evaluate the current performance of ICU with a special focus on SDO in ensuring that the role of ICU is truly at the best level in poverty eradication in the state of Terengganu in particular. Next, this study is hoped to be able to unravel the problems of the study that have been discussed above towards evaluating the role and effectiveness of SDO as a main actor in the poverty eradication program and the issues that affect the poverty eradication program in the state of Terengganu. In this regard, this study specifically focuses in depth on the role and effectiveness of SDO as a poverty eradication actor in Terengganu, where this study is seen as an effort to fill the gaps left by previous researchers in the same subject although different in terms of location, scope and dimension.

Based on the research problems above, several research questions have been identified in an effort to study the role and effectiveness of SDO as a key actor in the poverty eradication program in Terengganu. The research questions are as follows:

- a) How does SDO play a role in implementing the poverty eradication program in Terengganu?
- b) What form of poverty eradication program has been implemented by SDO to eradicate poverty in Terengganu?
- c) To what extent has the poverty eradication program implemented by SDO been able to reduce the poverty rate in Terengganu?

3.0 Methodology

The procedure in conducting this study is based on a qualitative approach. In this qualitative method, in addition to researching documents including official government reports, agency or department annual reports, research reports, and relevant works, this study also used survey studies using questionnaires to obtain feedback from respondents and interview sessions with identified informants. In other words, the research of all secondary documents is more of a library study, where all the data or information needed in this study are already available. Therefore, all this secondary information is analyzed based on content analysis and for data obtained through a questionnaire, descriptive analysis using simple statistics such as frequency, percentage, and mean.

To achieve the objectives of the study, primary data was obtained using the questionnaire. Meanwhile, secondary sources are obtained through books, journals, newspapers, official reports, research reports, and resources from the internet. The purposive sampling method is used to select respondents among the poor and hardcore poor throughout Terengganu.

For this study, the units of analysis chosen are individuals, namely the poor and the extremely poor in Terengganu, as well as the organization, namely SDO. This unit of analysis was chosen because of the purpose and scope of the study to study the role and

effectiveness of the implementation coordination unit as the main actor in the poverty eradication program in Terengganu. Therefore, the poor and the extremely poor in Terengganu and SDO were chosen as the units of analysis to answer the study problems and questions of this study.

In addition, a survey study was conducted using a questionnaire that had been constructed to be distributed to identified respondents. For this purpose, the researcher used an online questionnaire, namely Google Form. To obtain feedback from respondents, the researcher used a telephone call directly to the respondent to answer the questions presented in the Google Form. In this process, the researcher acted to mark the answer choices given by the respondent. In addition, the researcher also sent a link to the respondent, especially through social media such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and others.

Then the data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistic methods. Data analyzed using SPSS version 28.0 software and summarized in a table form containing frequency, percentage, and mean values as a feedback indicator of respondents to each measured attribute. Next, percentage data is performed in the form of tables, charts, frequency distributions, and histograms.

4.0 Research Finding and Discussion

4.1 Evaluation of Poverty Eradication Assistance Policies and Programs

This study has assessed the poverty eradication policies and assistance programs implemented by SDO. There are several policies and assistance programs channeled to the community including: (i) building/repairing houses; (ii) building/repairing basic facilities; (iii) uKASIH program; (iv) Back to School program; (v) CAKNA Ramadan program; (vi) dKASIH program; (vii) Kasih Prihatin program; (viii) Mobile Team program; and (ix) i-care4u program. The analysis found that 130 (48.1%) respondents responded that they rarely received assistance, while 98 (36.3%) explained that they had never received assistance and the remaining 38 (14.1%) stated that they sometimes received assistance. Meanwhile, 4 (1.5%) reported that they always received assistance from SDO.

In relation to the above policies and assistance programs, the types of assistance that respondents had received for the house building/repair program, 245 (90.7%) had never received assistance for this purpose compared to 25 (9.3%) who had received it. Meanwhile, for the basic facilities building/repair program, only 19 (7.0%) chose to have received this assistance. For the uKASIH program, only 24 (8.9%) had received this assistance and the rest had never received it. Next, for the Back-to-School program assistance, only 81 (30.0%) had received this assistance. Similarly, through the CAKNA Ramadan program, only 6 people (2.2%) have ever received this assistance. For the dKASIH program, 253 people (93.7%) have never received it compared to only 17 people (6.3%) who have enjoyed this type of assistance. Meanwhile, for the Kasih Prihatin program, a total of 65 people (24.1%) has received this assistance. For the Mobile Team program, 105 people (38.9%) have received this assistance. Finally, for the i-care4u

program, only 17 people (6.3%) of respondents responded that they had received this assistance.

In addition, the analysis found that 180 (66.7%) respondents responded that the assistance did not ease the burden of life and solve their family problems. On the other hand, 90 (33.3%) explained that the assistance received greatly eased the burden of life and solved their family problems. In addition, regarding the assistance received, most respondents, namely 121 (44.8%), were not satisfied with the implementation of policies by the government. The rest, 74 (27.4%) respondents responded that they strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 42 (15.6%) respondents thought they disagreed and 23 (8.5%) respondents thought they strongly disagreed.

In the meantime, the analysis also focused on the goals of all assistance programs and policies from the SDO towards reducing poverty rates among the poor. The analysis showed that the majority of 117 (43.3%) respondents thought they disagreed. Meanwhile, 23 (8.5%) respondents strongly disagreed, 50 (18.5%) respondents somewhat disagreed, 65 (24.1%) respondents agreed, and 15 (5.6%) respondents strongly agreed.

Meanwhile, the majority of 118 (43.7%) and 23 (8.5%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that SDO is able to create more opportunities to enable the poor community to escape the cocoon of poverty. The rest, 66 (24.4%) and 13 (4.8%) respondents respectively agreed and strongly agreed that SDO is able to play its role as a main actor towards developing the community by creating many opportunities to enable the community to escape the cocoon of poverty.

4.2 *The role of SDO as the main actor of poverty eradication*

Regarding the role of SDO as a key actor in poverty eradication, this was revealed through the feedback received as shown in Table 1 below. There are 10 attributes related to the role of SDO as a key actor in poverty eradication. The first attribute is related to awareness of the existence of SDO agencies throughout the state and district where 88 people (32.6%) agreed and 19 (7%) respondents rated strongly agreed and agreed that they were aware of the existence of SDO agencies throughout the state and district in Terengganu. In addition, 88 people (32.6%) respondents agreed and 18 people (6.7%) respondents strongly agreed that they knew the real role played by SDO. However, when asked whether SDO services were easy to obtain or not, 112 people (41.5%) said they disagreed and 55 people (20.4%) respondents said they strongly disagreed.

Table 1: The Role of SDO as a Key Actor in Poverty Eradication

Attribute	Response				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Awareness of the existence of SDO agencies throughout the state and district.	19 (7%)	19 (7%)	88 (32.6%)	19 (7%)	135 (48.3%)
Knowing the real role played by SDO.	18 (6.7%)	18 (6.7%)	88 (32.6%)	19 (7%)	133 (48.0%)

services are easy to obtain.	.4%)))))
coordinate, manage, evaluate and monitor development project policies and implementation.	.3%)))))
prepare, evaluate and monitor the implementation of special allocations for the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers, Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives.	.3%)))))
develop, manage, evaluate, implement and monitor development project information systems.	.5%)))))
carry out programs based on the objectives of poverty eradication, social restructuring and rural economic development.	.4%)))))
effectively carry out responsibilities to help the poor community through various policies and programs implemented.	.3%)))))
be transparent in helping the poor community comprehensively.	.0%)))))
be open to receiving suggestions to improve the quality of services.	.6%)))))

In the meantime, the responses also showed that 112 people (41.5%) disagreed and 56 people (20.7%) respondents chose to agree with the statement that SDO coordinates, manages, monitors, evaluates policies and the implementation of development projects. In fact, 108 (40%) respondents disagreed and 59 (21.9%) respondents chose to agree with the statement that SDO manages, implements, monitors, evaluates special allocations for the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Meanwhile, respondents indicated that they disagreed with the statement that SDO develops, manages, implements, monitors and evaluates the national development project information system. In this attribute, 114 (42.2%) people rated disagree and 60 (22.2%) respondents rated agree. The questionnaire also analyzed the statement that SDO does not carry out activities/programs based on the objectives of poverty eradication, social restructuring and rural economic development. The analysis found that 108 (40%) people disagreed and 61 (22.6%) respondents agreed with the statement.

Regarding the next attribute, 109 (40.4%) people rated disagree and 53 (19.6%) people rated agree that SDO has effectively carried out its responsibility to help the poor community through various policies and programs that have been implemented. Along with that, 114 people (42.2%) disagreed and 50 people (18.5%) agreed with the statement that SDO is very transparent in helping the poor community as a whole. Finally, 111 people (41.1%) disagreed and 55 people (20.4%) agreed that SDO is open to receiving suggestions to improve the quality of services.

The mean value as shown in Table 1 above shows the mean value for the 10 attributes ranging from 2.46 to 2.78. The value of each mean indicates that the first and

second attributes show a mean value at a moderate level. Meanwhile, the third to tenth attributes show a mean value at a low level. Among these 10 attributes, only the second attribute recorded a mean value of 2.78 as the highest. On the other hand, the third and ninth attributes recorded a mean value of 2.46 as the lowest. In short, the mean value of each attribute shows that the level of effectiveness of the role of SDO as the main actor in poverty eradication is only at a moderate level.

4.3 The Role of SDO in the Framework of Malaysia Madani Policy

Apart from that, this study also assessed the role of SDO under the implementation of Malaysia Madani Policy (MMP). In line with the Prime Minister's goal of zeroing the hardcore poverty rate by 2025, the analysis of the study findings details the feedback received in relation to the extent to which the role of SDO is in line with the goal of establishing MMP. Therefore, Table 2 below shows 7 attributes tested in relation to the role of SDO under the goal of implementing MMP

Table 2: Role of SDO Under the Implementation of MMP

Attribute	Mean	Evaluation		
		1	2	3
Ability to ensuring efficient working processes, accurate and reliable outcome in response to changing circumstances and community needs.	36	16 (5.9%)	16 (5.9%)	16 (5.9%)
Role in monitoring the implementation of Federal policies at every level, gathering feedback and being responsive to the need for improvement.	36	16 (5.9%)	16 (5.9%)	16 (5.9%)
Role in coordinating interactions between sectors such as economic, legal, educational, and cultural in urban or rural areas to ensure effectiveness in national development.	36	18 (6.7%)	18 (6.7%)	18 (6.7%)
Role in ensuring the implementation of inclusive policies and programs in reducing poverty and	36	16 (5.9%)	16 (5.9%)	16 (5.9%)

committed to empowering the Bumiputera agenda.				
proactive in providing interactive communication channels to the people and positive collaboration between government agencies and private sector or NGOs.		19 (7%)		
determined to lead the monitoring and coordination of policies, projects and programs with the development of competent talent and leadership, integration of technology and ensuring that the welfare of citizens is prioritized.		15 (5.6%)		
taking into account the country's commitments in the MMP, SDG and Malaysia Five Year Plan to ensure that the outcome and national development are achieved.		18 (6.7%)		

The first attribute states that SDO is committed to ensuring an efficient monitoring process, accurate and flexible outcome assessment to changing conditions and current needs. The analysis shows that 115 (42.6%) respondents disagreed and 64 (23.7%) agreed with this statement. Meanwhile, 113 (41.9%) disagreed and 63 (23.3%) agreed with the statement that SDO focuses on monitoring the implementation of federal policies at every level, coordinating feedback and being responsive to changing needs.

In the next issue, the feedback received showed that 110 (40.7%) respondents disagreed and 62 (23%) respondents agreed that SDO is open in coordinating interactions between sectors such as economy, law, education, social, and culture whether in urban or rural areas to ensure inclusiveness in national development. The response also showed that 111 (41.1%) respondents disagreed and 62 (23%) respondents agreed regarding the statement that SDO is proactive in ensuring the implementation of inclusive policies and programs in eradicating poverty and is committed to empowering the Bumiputera agenda.

In this regard, feedback on the issue of whether SDO is responsive or not in providing interactive communication channels to the people and positive collaboration between government agencies and the private sector or NGOs showed that 108 (40%) respondents disagreed and 63 (23.3%) respondents agreed. Along with that, when asked whether SDO is determined to lead the monitoring and coordination of policies, projects

and programs through the development of competent talent and leadership, the adaptation of technology and ICT and ensuring that the welfare of citizens is prioritized, 111 (41.1%) respondents disagreed and 68 (25.2%) respondents agreed.

Finally, the questionnaire asked whether SDO takes into account the country's commitments in the MMP, SDG 2030 and Malaysia Five Year Plan or not to ensure that the country's development outcome targets and goals are achieved. Overall, 112 (41.5%) respondents stated that they disagreed with the statement while 63 (23.3%) respondents stated that they agreed with the statement. The mean value shown in Table 2 above is the mean value for 7 attributes where the mean value of this attribute is between 2.85 and 2.90. This mean value explains that these 7 attributes are at a moderate level. Among these 7 attributes, the sixth attribute recorded a mean value of 2.90 which is the highest mean value. On the other hand, the attribute that recorded the lowest value was the seventh attribute with a value of 2.85.

4.4 Recommendations Towards Strengthening Poverty Eradication Programs

This study also focuses on proposals towards strengthening poverty eradication programs. In this case, respondents assess themselves whether they agree or disagree with the proposals that have been stated. Therefore, the analysis of the findings of this study as shown in Table 3 describes 10 attributes related to proposals towards strengthening poverty eradication programs.

Table 3: Strengthening Poverty Eradication Programs

Attributes	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
Needs to go to the field to survey the poor groups.	2.85	0.05
Needs to update the status of aid recipients from time to time.	2.85	0.05
Coordination between SDO and other agencies needs to be further intensified to help groups of people who are eligible to receive assistance.	2.85	0.05
Needs to be transparent and rational to identify groups of aid recipients.	2.85	0.05
Needs to expand assistance to groups of recipients to those who are eligible.	2.85	0.05
Communication needs to be increased with community groups.	2.85	0.05
Needs to obtain feedback from recipients on the impact or benefits of the assistance received.	2.85	0.05
Follow-up actions must be carried out by SDO to assess the goals of the assistance received for transparency of the source received from the right party.	2.85	0.05
Needs to conduct days with customers and Quality Risk Assessment.	2.85	0.05

Information about aid programs needs to be provided in general so that the community knows that various assistance is available.	(%))
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First, this study suggests that SDO should go to the field to survey the poor group. Overall, 207 (76.7%) respondents strongly agreed and 56 (20.7%) respondents agreed with this proposal. Second, this study suggests that SDO update data or update the status of aid recipients from time to time. The majority of 204 (75.6%) respondents strongly agreed and 59 (21.9%) respondents agreed with this proposal. Third, this study suggests that cooperation between SDO and other agencies should be further intensified to identify groups of people who are eligible to receive assistance, where 203 (75.2%) respondents strongly agreed and 60 (22.2%) respondents agreed with this proposal.

Fourth, this study suggests that SDO needs to be transparent and rational in identifying groups of aid recipients where the majority of 205 (75.9%) respondents and 58 (21.5%) respondents each strongly agreed and agreed with this suggestion. In addition, this study suggests that SDO needs to expand the assistance of the recipient group to those who are eligible where 58 (21.5%) respondents and 205 (75.9%) respondents each agreed and strongly agreed with this suggestion.

Next, 59 (21.9%) respondents and 204 (75.6%) respondents each agreed and strongly agreed with the suggestion that SDO communication needs to be increased with community groups. In fact, 60 (22.2%) respondents and 203 (75.2%) respondents each agreed and strongly agreed that SDO needs to get feedback from recipients about the impact or benefits of the assistance received. In addition, 61 (22.6%) respondents and 202 (74.8%) respondents respectively agreed and strongly agreed that follow-up actions must be carried out by SDO to assess the objectives of the assistance received for the transparency of the source received from the right party.

This study also provides recommendations that SDO needs to conduct a day with customers and Quality Risk Assessment where 59 (21.9%) respondents and 204 (75.6%) respondents respectively agreed and strongly agreed with this recommendation. Finally, 60 (22.2%) respondents and 202 (74.8%) respondents respectively agreed and strongly agreed that information about assistance programs should be provided in general so that the community knows that various assistance is available.

The mean value shown in Table 3 above is the mean value for 10 attributes where the mean value of this attribute is between 4.69 to 4.72. This mean value explains that these 10 attributes are at a very high level. Among these 10 attributes, the first attribute recorded a mean value of 4.72 which is the highest mean value. On the other hand, the attribute that recorded the lowest value was the tenth attribute with a value of 4.69. Overall, this shows that respondents are more likely to choose to strongly agree with the proposals towards strengthening the poverty eradication program stated in this study.

4.5 Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

Descriptive analysis was conducted to evaluate each item according to the variables on the data obtained. Table 4 below shows the interpretation of the scale, namely red (strongly ineffective), orange (ineffective), yellow (less effective), blue (effective), and green (strongly effective). In addition, descriptive analysis was conducted to determine the mean value for each variable studied in assessing the role and effectiveness of SDO as a main actor in the poverty eradication program in Terengganu, as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 4: Interpretation Scale

Nilai Min	Interpretation
ntil 1.80	ly ineffective
ntil 2.60	tive
ntil 3.40	ffective
ntil 4.20	ve
ntil 5.00	ly effective

(Sumber: Tschannen-Moran, M & Gareis, C. R., 2004)

Table 5: Level of Effectiveness of the Role of SDO

ptive tics	n	ean	ard Deviation	ffectiveness	
		and program evaluation	7321	1.02180	ffective
		le of SDO as a key actor in poverty tion	5596	1.12145	tive
		le of SDO under Malaysia Madani	8543	1.07611	ffective
		thening poverty eradication programs	7059	.57633	ly effective

Descriptive statistics for the four attributes above show varying levels of effectiveness. First, the effectiveness rate for policy and program evaluation recorded a mean of 2.7321, which is a moderate level of effectiveness. Second, the effectiveness rate for the role of SDO as the main actor in poverty eradication recorded a mean of 2.5596, which is a low level of effectiveness. Third, the effectiveness rate for the role of SDO under the Malaysia Madani Policy (MMP) recorded a mean of 2.8543, which is a moderate level of effectiveness. Finally, the effectiveness rate for the strengthening of poverty eradication programs recorded a mean of 4.7059, which is a very high level of effectiveness.

Since the effectiveness rate for SDO's role as the main player in eradicating poverty recorded the lowest mean when compared to other features, SDO needs to improve the efficacy of its function as a key player in the elimination of poverty. Because of this, SDO needs to give more consideration to the opinions of the poor and disadvantaged in Terengganu.

4.6 Discussion of Study Findings

To answer the research question regarding the role of SDO in implementing poverty eradication programs in Terengganu, the analysis of the study findings recorded that its level of effectiveness is low. This is because there are still hardcore poor people who are confused about the role played by SDO. According to Mr. Zaid, an officer for the poverty section at SDO Terengganu, SDO is not an aid-giving agency but rather a program or aid coordinator, except for cases that require immediate assistance (personal interview, 22 September 2024). Therefore, SDO is actively involved as a poverty eradication program coordinator by carrying out poverty eradication programs in collaboration with other agencies and NGOs that are also involved.

However, the analysis of the study findings found that the role of SDO under the MMP shows a moderate level of effectiveness. This situation occurs based on SDO's efforts in achieving the government's goal of zeroing out hardcore poverty. In this regard, he explained that SDO Terengganu has succeeded in achieving its goal of zeroing out hardcore poor even though the number of hardcore poor still exists, especially those who have just registered for e-kasih (personal interview, 22 September 2024).

In addition, programs under MMP such as BMTKM and Kampung Angkat Madani also received positive reactions from the general public, which is in line with the findings of this study, which showed a moderate level of effectiveness (results) regarding the role of SDO under MMP. According to Haji Abdul Kahar, Director of SDO Terengganu, MMP carries out many programs that mobilize residents and village communities, where all leadership, such as JP KK, village heads, and village chiefs, plays an important role so that these hardcore poor can move on their own and be independent without expecting continuous assistance from the government (personal interview, 24 September 2024).

Next, an analysis of the form of poverty eradication programs that have been implemented by SDO to eradicate poverty in Terengganu shows a moderate level of effectiveness. Based on Rolling Plan 1 to Rolling Plan 4 of the 12th RMK, the government has provided a large allocation to SDO. However, this allocation is more focused on physical development projects, and there is no specific allocation for poverty eradication programs. Poverty eradication programs carried out by SDO, such as house building/repair programs; building/repairing basic facilities; uKASIH programs; the Back-to-School program; the CAKNA Ramadan program; the dKASIH program; the Kasih Prihatin program; the Mobile Team program; and the i-care4u program, are not programs that are run monthly but are ad hoc programs that are run in collaboration with other government agencies.

Analysis of the study findings also shows that the frequency of receiving assistance based on respondent feedback is rare. This is because SDO focuses more on the hardcore poor who receive less assistance and the assistance they need. According to Mr. Zaid, SDO will cross-check with other aid-giving agencies, where the hardcore poor who have received assistance from other agencies are given less attention. On the contrary, they

focus more on the hardcore poor who have not received assistance from any government agency (personal interview, 22 September 2024). For that reason, even though they are categorized as the hardcore poor, it does not mean that they are eligible to receive all assistance or poverty programs from SDO.

Finally, the study findings also answer the third study question, namely the extent to which the poverty eradication program is able to reduce poverty rates in Terengganu. Analysis shows that the effectiveness and performance of the poverty eradication program recorded a moderate level of effectiveness. However, the study findings show that the majority of respondents agree that the policy or program can be improved and given more attention.

In this regard, the study findings also show that the effectiveness rate for strengthening the poverty eradication program recorded a very high level of effectiveness. This is evident when respondents are more likely to choose to strongly agree with the suggestions towards strengthening the poverty eradication program that has been carried out. Based on this analysis, the level of effectiveness of this poverty eradication program is still at a moderate level. However, this eradication program can be further strengthened so that it can further reduce the poverty rate in Terengganu.

In summary, based on the analysis of the study findings discussed, it proves that the findings of this study have achieved all three study objectives. Although the role of SDO and the level of effectiveness of the poverty eradication program are still at a moderate level, the analysis shows that there is still room for SDO to improve their effectiveness and performance in terms of either their role as an official actor or the effectiveness of the poverty eradication program itself.

5.0 Conclusion

This study has certain gaps, as previous studies have. One of the gaps in this study requires a longer timeline. This is because a longer timeline allows a wider scope of the research. For instance, the impoverished in Terengganu were the sole subject of this study; a more thorough and comprehensive investigation would take more time, particularly if it included the vast majority of Malaysia's extreme poor.

According to poverty status statistics as of December 2024, among the three states that recorded the highest hardcore poverty values are Sabah with 72,036 people, Kelantan with 58,874 people, and Sarawak with 58,055 people (www.icu.gov.my). Thus, further research is required that can encompass the extreme poor across Malaysia or that concentrates on Malaysia's rural areas.

Furthermore, the function of SDO under the MMP is barely mentioned in passing in this paper. There is no comprehensive data on the impact or output of the programs or support carried out under the MMP since the MMP and the programs and assistance carried out under it are still in the early stages of implementation. Therefore, further research is required to determine whether or not the MMP's initiatives and support can lower poverty rates.

SDO has been mentioned in this report as a key player in Terengganu's efforts to eradicate poverty. However, further research may be done on the numerous other elements that affect Terengganu's efforts to eradicate poverty. The value of education and skills in reducing poverty among Terengganu residents is one of the other topics that might be discussed in future studies. According to Haji Abdul Kahar, there are instances of impoverished individuals in Terengganu who are unable to receive the proper aid because they lack the necessary abilities (personal interview, 24 September 2024).

Therefore, efforts such as the Terengganu Student Carnival Program Zero Dropout to IPT 2023 by the Yayasan Terengganu in 2023 were launched to ensure that students in Terengganu can continue their studies to a higher level without any obstacles (TRDI, 25 September 2023). In addition, in line with the country's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Policy, the current government also prioritizes skills such as TVET.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has prioritized several things, such as increasing cooperation with industry; providing training opportunities for vulnerable youth, including those from the urban poor, marginalized, rural, and Orang Asli groups and bringing TVET services for the benefit of the community (Wilayahku, 18 October 2024). Therefore, further research can touch on the issue of the importance of education and skills in enabling a person to escape the cocoon of poverty.

Finally, this study was conducted based on a questionnaire from respondents and used hybrid theory and institutionalism theory only. Although the instruments and theories used are still relevant, there are still other instruments and theories that can be applied in future studies. Therefore, this study requires broader instruments and theories so that the issue of poverty eradication is not seen in the SDO policy alone. In fact, increasing instruments and theories that allow broader objectives to be achieved. Therefore, there are a lot of research gaps that need to be filled in the future.

Overall, the researcher feels that this study is still important and should be carried out based on its findings in relation to the function and efficacy of programs aimed at eradicating poverty. As a result, the study's conclusions effectively addressed the posed research questions. To further enhance the efficacy of SDO's function and the program and aid in eradicating poverty, a number of factors must be taken into account, as mentioned above. Lastly, there are still a lot of unanswered questions that require more research to fully understand the function of SDO and the efficacy of initiatives aimed at eradicating poverty.

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