

Lessons from Malaysian Local Government: Does Resource Management Matter in Enforcement Actions?

Mohd Rezal Rasli*

PhD Candidate, School of Government, College of Law, Government and International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

Halimah Abdul Manaf

Associate Professor, School of Government, College of Law, Government and International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia

Mazlan Ismail

Associate Professor, School of Government, College of Law, Government and International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the barriers of the implementation of human resource management and information technology on enforcement actions in five local governments in Kedah, Malaysia that have been selected. By identifying the barriers that influences enforcement actions would lead to efficiency in managing organisational resources. This study employed semi-structured interview with 13 top management officers to gain insight on enforcement execution. The Nvivo application was used to identify the most relevant theme as informed by the data. The finding indicates that the internal resource management, specifically Human Resources and Information Technology greatly influences the effectiveness and successfulness of enforcement action in local governments. The study indicated that the lack of Human Resources and Information Technology are among the barriers to the effectiveness of the enforcement action in selected Malaysian local government.

Keywords: Enforcement; Human resource; Information technology; Local government.



CC BY: [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

1. Introduction

Many debates have risen in recent years on the capabilities of local government in executing enforcement responsibilities (Decker *et al.*, 2009; Lewis *et al.*, 2013). This is primarily due to the successful of service delivery that was assessed by the society are partly contributed by enforcement actions in local government. The issue of enforcement is worrying at the local government because the impact from the failure of the enforcement action taken in the implementation will affect the relationship between local government and the local community (Manalo, 2016; Swenson and Deller, 2001).

Beyond that, the failure of enforcement appropriate actions taken in the implementation also directly affects reputation and image of federal and state government administration. Therefore, the implementation of the enforcement actions needs to be taken seriously and given full attention at every level of government (Wagner, 2014). This is the prerequisite for government agencies to succeed in enforcing the law (Rousseau, 2010).

Numerous studies have been conducted to assess the services of the local governments in Malaysia (Halimah *et al.*, 2016; Phang, 1989). However, specific studies on the enforcement services of the local government are limited (Alterman, 2017). In reality, the local government services that are always given attention is the enforcement acts due to their roles as sources of income that provide financial assistance in developing facilities for the society (Kristiansen and Lambang, 2005).

According to Lo *et al.* (2012), the effectiveness of enforcement actions are influenced by two factors; external and internal factors. The internal factors often become the main factors contributing to the failure of an organisation in executing the enforcement; such as administrative autonomy. The failure of enforcement actions will affect the local government daily operations or delay actions of external agencies that involve together in enforcement team such as custom, immigration and police. Meanwhile, external factor for instance lies in the issue of the resource management involving human resources, equipment, financial allocation, courses, training, weak coordination between departments and confusing administrative orders. This is because Human Resources cover various fields and every excellent organisation (or otherwise) will be assessed through the effectiveness of the internal resource management (Schumaker, 2004).

At the present days, the critical factors lead to effectiveness of enforcement actions are influenced by two major issues identified within the resource management of organisation (Kamarudin *et al.*, 2011; Slack, 1991). Firstly, is in managing the information through the effective use of information technology and secondly; the shortage of staff in enforcement department (Brown and Thompson, 2011). The internal factors are very critical and often become the obstacle to the law enforcement implementation in an administrative area of local government. The external factor that often disturbs the administrative affairs is the involvement of political parties in the administration Calor and

Alterman (2017), particularly in local government as lowest level of government is easily being manipulated by others agencies at federal and state level (Siti, 2010).

However, if the resources are well managed, the internal and external issues can be gradually resolved, the number of complaints and dissatisfaction of the society towards enforcement in a local government administrative area can be eventually minimised. This requires the emphasis of intensive training and skills development among local governments' enforcer to transform and deliver with the best services to the society (Ammons, 1985; Zalinah *et al.*, 2007). Kamarudin *et al.* (2011) asserts that despite having developed the appropriate training and skills only are insufficient for efficiency of enforcement actions, the enforcers should also be equipped with the latest technology features and resources.

The current research emphasises on the barriers of the resource management that influences an effective of enforcement in local government. The internal issues should be overcome at an earlier stage for the sustainability development of the enforcement in the local government administrative. According to Baldwin *et al.* (2012), there are five main criteria that must be emphasised on enforcement actions namely; (i) the aspects of legislation, (ii) a sense of responsibility, (iii) a transparent process, (iv) skills in the particular field and (v) priority on work effectiveness. Thus, this study evaluates the aspect of resource management towards the enforcement in local government. Further the study argues that Human Resource Management which is the personnel factor and the use of Information Technology among the enforcers are main barriers that influence enforcement actions in local governments. This study has important implications for local government policies towards enforcements. In particular, in Malaysian local governments are shortages of human resources and faced with limited budget to recruit new enforcement teams. Therefore, local government policy makers should design training plans for enforcer to have multiskilling in performing duties. The enforcer talent should be continuously developed by integrating technology skills in their job description. Enforcement teams that have capabilities in running various duties assisted by technology leads to job empowerment and high productivity. Although local administrative policy towards enforcements may vary, however some standard practices can be focused on training that integrates Human Resource and Information Technology. Therefore, as limited previous studies were carried out the present research is undertaken to explore those barriers in Malaysian enforcement actions that are driven by Human Resource and Information Technology.

1.1. Local Government in Malaysia

The local government carries a great responsibility in ensuring that the services offered can fulfil the needs of the local community, consistent with the intention of the government to create quality public services. Local government is an agency established through the legislative constitutional that provide specific authorities, responsibilities, restricted power allocated by law (Hamzah and Habibah, 2009). In Malaysia, local government is the lowest rank in the government sector with great level of responsibilities associated with issues of the local community. Hamzah and Habibah (2009), asserted that the main function of local government is to ensure sustainability and wellbeing of the local community by executing the tasks of maintaining, planning and controlling including the commitment in providing equal and fair services. Local government has a close relationship with, and bears a responsibility to the local people, firms, industries, politicians as well as the federal and state government. Thus, the local governments needs to constantly improve the services offered, especially in the audit society where the people are always appraising the government services must at par with the taxes imposed to citizens (West and Berman, 1997).

In general, the concept of local government is defined as the authority that governs a smaller area and the power of the local government is confined under the legislative allocation from the higher government (Kamarudin and Jamaludin, 2013). Based on Table Nine Article Four Federal Constitution, the local government affairs are placed under the list of responsibilities and duties of the state government except in the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur, Labuan and Putrajaya. Local government is the third level government in the administrative system in Malaysia after the federal and state governments (Phang, 1989). However, the local government or better known as the *Pihak Berkuasa Tempatan* is a government institution that has close ties to the society, considering that the daily affairs of the society involvement and connects directly in its scope of administration (Norris, 1980).

Local government is a government that has the right or power to determine and implement administrative affairs in a particular area that has a limited jurisdiction (Barber, 1972). According to Abdullah (1978), the local government is an administration that is implemented by a body or council in a particular area, seeking to care for the welfare and harmony of the people in the administrative area. The Royal Investigating Commission Report (1970), explained that the concept of local government encompassed six aspects, including (i) local government which is responsible towards any affairs, represented by higher government be it the federal or state government, (ii) local government is lower than the federal or state government subject to the control of higher government, (iii) a local government possesses certain autonomous power granted by higher government for example the fiscal and administrative aspects, (iv) local government has a representative characteristic or non-representative characteristic if it is selected and can still be granted the autonomy in administration and finance, (v) local government is a separate body from the higher government or from the local government units by having the power to press charges and be charged, make contracts, possess assets and (vi) has the function to provide services to a society in an area.

Historically, at the early stage of development, the local government administration is divided into five sections namely (i) environment, (ii) public health and cleanliness, (iii) enforcement and licensing, (iv) public facilities, (v) social services and development (Phang, 1997). In 1987 for example in Kuala Lumpur Town Hall, there are 22 departments functioning to provide services to the society (Ahmad, 1997). These days, there are 147 local

government all over Malaysia comprising of 12 local governments with the status of Municipal Hall/Council, 38 Municipal Council and 97 local governments with the status of District Council and the differences of the criteria are determined in terms of the number of residents, the income obtained at the local government, the services provided, the development in the local areas and other facilities (Kamarudin and Jamaludin, 2013).

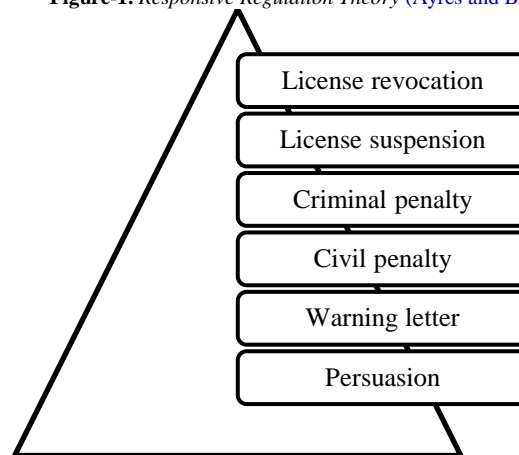
The Local Government Act 1976 (Act 171) is the main source of reference to the local government all over Malaysia. By referring to the Local Government Act 1976 (Act 171), the power and services provided by local government is stated clearly (Kamarudin and Jamaludin, 2013). For example, section 72 Local Government Act 1976 details the power of the local government in enforcing the law and section 73 Local Government Act 1976 is a by-law, the action of enforcing the law is more detailed and uniform throughout the local government in Malaysia. Section 104 Local Government Act 1976, on the other hand have clearly states that the penalty can be imposed towards any violation of the by-laws.

1.2. Responsive Regulation Theory

According to Ayres and Braithwaite (1992) and Baldwin *et al.* (2012) the Theory of Responsive Regulation is a theory that can be applied in enforcing the laws, either in public or private agencies. It is in the form of a pyramid and it is divided into six sections. The bottom part is the lightest action or the basic before heavier action is imposed. This is known as *persuasion*. This approach leans more to the advice given before heavier measures are imposed and the enforcers try their best not to take any action towards the mistakes committed.

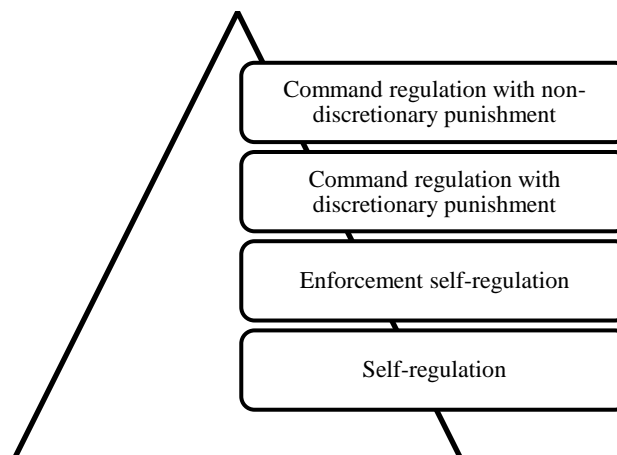
The next stage is the issue of a ‘warning letter’ where this serves as the first warning. After the first ‘warning letter’, if the firms or industries still committing the offence, they will be fined right to the final stage which is ‘licence revocation’. Legg (2011) debated that responsive regulation is based on the advice-based strategy and self-improvement, and this strategy can be seen to be able to reduce the cost whereby if the punishment is to be imposed with a certain cost for court trial, the evidencing processes will take time and incur high costs. Figure 1 shows the pyramid of enforcement introduced by Ayres and Braithwaite (1992).

Figure-1. Responsive Regulation Theory (Ayres and Braithwaite, 1992)



Baldwin *et al.* (2012) stated that there is another pyramid of enforcement namely ‘pyramid of regulatory strategies’ created to adapt to the needs at the time for all types of industry. This pyramid only has four levels and it can be referred in the Figure 2.

Figure-2. Pyramid of regulatory strategies (Baldwin *et al.*, 2012)



From the theories above there exist three more theories which includes ‘Smart Regulation’, ‘Problem-centred Regulation’ and ‘Really Responsive Regulation’ theories as improvement in carrying out the enforcement actions (Baldwin *et al.*, 2012).

This study uses the approach of *responsive regulation* theory as guideline. However, this study does not seek to test the theory and only focuses on the method introduced in ensuring that the enforcement actions does not reach towards the extreme level and the defaulting party the opportunity to remedy its breach.

1.3. Enforcement in Local Government

The issue of enforcement often becomes the topic of discussion not only in developing country like Malaysia but also in developed countries. Example, in Australia, the weakness of the government is transparent at the level of the local government and the failure branches from four factors (i) failure of administration, (ii) failure of enforcement, (iii) judiciary and (iv) the failure of the legislation (Byrnes and Dollery, 2002). Prior (2000), also agreed that issues involving the lack of resources, be it asset or equipment, have affected the enforcement actions. In Malaysia there are 50 problems divided into 11 areas that have restricted the law enforcement and one of them is inefficient resource management (Wan *et al.*, 2010). Zulnaidi (2008), affirmed that satisfactory service quality can be increased through good resource management. International Network for Environment Compliance and Enforcement INECE (2009), suggested that enforcement serves as the backbone to any implementation of the local government program. Without effective enforcement actions, any program related with enforcement implementation will not achieve the target.

Enforcement is an action to ensure that the society adheres with all the laws and regulation stipulated (Calor and Alterman, 2017; Prior, 2000), stated that enforcement actions by local government mean the action on specific attention in addressing an illegitimate development by law. This refers to the failure in adhering with the laws that lean more to the approval in a development project. Enforcement can also be seen as an action or a process of adhering with the laws, mandate of instruction or a confession or agreement (Khadijah, 2012). Mohd (2012), explained that enforcement is an act of enforcing the regulations and laws, power or the rights to perform order, manage a particular action. Nevertheless, to make something work, enforcement actions require a strategic approach seeing that the enforcement issue is common in the life of a society (Millichap, 1991).

The issue of the failure in the enforcement actions is also exposed in the media to gain attention of the related agencies to take drastic and consistent actions. However, enforcement actions by the local government are still conventional. For example, the case in Sepang involving Sepang Municipal Council (MP Sepang) on the *online gambling* premise administrator had underestimated the existing laws although they had been investigated a few times by the local government enforcers and the incident was repeated due to the limited role and allocation of power (Utusan Online, 2016). In a separate incident, there has been warnings from the ministry towards the local government for instance the Ministry of Health to the local government in Selangor where it was given a notice of fine leading to the failure in resolving the dengue cases in the area of enforcements (Utusan Online, 2015).

According to the Minister of Health, the failure of the enforcement and cleanliness campaign by the local government in the dengue-inflicted areas lead the effort to fight the dengue going rampant. Many complaints given by societal and the ministry also criticises the failure of the local government enforcement actions. Additionally, there are also some parties who criticise the enforcement actions, saying that they are too laid-back in addressing the issue of empowering the national language and this was also raised during the speech by the former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia during the launching of the National Language Month 2014 (Utusan Online, 2014). This shows that local governments reprimand is serious especially when involving enforcement actions.

1.4. Human Resource Management

The concept of human resource management is an approach related to individuals working in contributing ideas and skills to reach the target of an organisation (Aziz Y. A., 2014). According to Ali (2001), the scope of human resource management is encompasses aspects of planning, assessing employees' performance, preparing continuous training, developing career, motivating employees to the point that they can be punished for the wrongdoings and be rewarded.

Bhatia (2009), asserted that human resource management is related to the management process involving human development towards achieving the goals of the organisation. Banger (2013), opined that human is the main resource involving four main processes including recruitment, development, motivation and improvement or enhancement of the human resource management. The effectiveness in the human resource management is also related to the training given by the superior and at the same time the communication between employers and employees is also vital to ensure the success of an organisation (Schumaker, 2004). The current challenge of the human resource management does not only concentrate on the function but also organisational environment particularly the external and internal changes (Aziz Y. A., 2014).

Administration of the human resource management is said to be successful in a positive working environment that enable employee participation and engagement that leads employees' satisfaction by giving emphasis on employees' wellbeing (Ali, 2001). This shows that the human resource work capability can be maximised by providing the facilities and work environment that support and encourages employee productivity.

Baker (2002) explained that when the employees learns and develops their essential skills the benefits can be seen through the productivity; that resulted in quality output, able to mitigate damage, enhance work performance, ability to manage time effectively, multitasking skills, impromptu tasks are carried out and reduce cost of new recruits. However, there are also management officers who are strict, narrow-minded, less cautious on their works and careless that contributes to the inability to carry out the task for example the important tasks of enforcement actions.

1.5. Human Factor

In the aspect of resource management, it is undeniable that among the factors why the resource management fails is due to the factor of the staff themselves [Maher and El-Bedawy \(2015\)](#), opined that well planned training and good two-way communication can help curb the failure that is closely related to the human factor. [Millichap \(1991\)](#), asserted that there are four skills that a local government officer needs to have and without the skills, any planning will be particularly hard especially involving management affairs in the local government. The officers are expected able to develop interpersonal, communication, presentation and facilitation skills to serves customers and stakeholders.

Human resource training and development are vital in ensuring that an organisation continues to progress. The training implied is the efforts to increase skills and efficiency of employees in their daily duties because without adequate training, most probably it will lead to waste, the error committed has to be fixed or repaired to stay as closely to the benchmark or standards as possible ([Ali, 2001](#)). [Gilbert and Sia \(2001\)](#), stated that to stay competitive in the free market, human resource development has to be improved, other than having strong administrative management and dedicated employees.

[Phang \(1997\)](#) also found that in the resource management that involves local government, the failure in delivering services in the society drive from the lack of skilled labour other than financial issues and the political intervention in the management. Having a strong combination of clear course structure, good training coordination, evaluation after the training that drive employee to work on achieving the aims and goals of the organisation as set by the head of the department ([Couturier, 2008](#)). Despite that, the relationship and networking among employees in the same or involving other department needs to be developed. Close relationships between public servants and other departments enable integrated execution of actions, as to yield effective outcome, particularly with respect to enforcement ([Millichap, 1991](#)). The discussion of the cases above shows that up until today, local government still receives criticisms from the public in terms of their delivery of services ([Phang, 2011](#)).

[Mariana et al. \(2014\)](#), illustrate that an effective delivery system requires high commitment from public servants. This commitment can be produced through several approaches, the first is continuous training and the technique or method of conducting work is renewed consistent with the current development. For some of the training, the organisation is needed to produce high expenses especially when organised by the private sector. Secondly, practical implementation, knowledge and skills will develop during the training. Thirdly, always improving and updating information that provides the best decision can be obtained. The fourth is creating cooperation between other departments or agencies in integration. The fifth, that is more critical to lift the spirits of the employees, is through the reward system and certain award programs that can indirectly improve the delivery system to the society. All these methods can improve the work quality of public servants and directly can reduce the complaints from the public towards the services provided by the local government. Local government's capability in reducing the number of complaints will be reflected upon the improved image and confidence of the people towards government's service and the government function entirely.

1.6. Information Technology

The use of Information Technology in daily affairs especially in management has been proven able to help expedite the daily work. The use of Information Technology does not only serve as an equipment, but it is also a resource with the same significance as finance, power or staff ([Brown and Thompson, 2011](#)). Technology in Information consist of hardware and software including computer equipment, storage devices, data management and application software such as the monitor screen, keyboard, software that controls the running of the equipment in giving the order for implementation ([King, 1982](#)).

[Baum and Burack \(1969\)](#) opined that the success of an organisation is in line with the use of Information Technology and automatically it enhances employees' skills in managing or using Information Technology. The study by [French and Goodman \(2011\)](#), on the administrations of the federal, state and local government found that the weakness of the local government is more outstanding in terms of the resource management especially the management of Information Technology. [Rose et al. \(2015\)](#), also had the opinion that the lack of skilled workers to handle computers in the Information Technology management creates a serious problem to the local government that has a smaller area of administration.

[Kifayah and Zuraidah \(2002\)](#), found that the failure to prepare appropriate equipment to the employees, limited training, the insufficient financial allocation and the inefficiency in human resource management are the main factors that impede the success of the *total quality management* (TQM) of a department. [Aziz Y. A. \(2014\)](#), derived with the similar findings that the external factor like technological management influences the organisational performance. Effective and wide use of Information Technology can well increase the workers' productivity.

[Kimou \(2012\)](#), suggested that the resource can be increased in terms of the number of equipment that required with the current trend to carry out the daily tasks especially enforcement actions. From the legislative perspectives, several aspects are also emphasised, where the law practitioners should go by the Information Technology used in their daily work to ensure that they can gain benefits together with the current modern technology ([Shaun, 2007](#)). This is evident with the efficient level that is outstanding, compared to the previous time, which includes the clerical part of the operations. He also cited an example of the prosecutor and lawyer's offices that when the company starts expanding, the work system that prioritises the use of the computer and Information Technology has given a boost to their business from day to day. Indirectly, the business networking can be established fast and well, which is better than before.

Mariana *et al.* (2014), demonstrated that the best service delivery through the use of Information Technology needs to be widened and updated to keep abreast with the current development. Additionally, the use of Information Technology is help revise a work procedure that goes well with the current trend, and able to reduce bureaucracy. Technology facilities also shorten the work processes in relation to everyday affairs like licensing, permit granting and any endorsement and approval that can actually be eased. This shows that the use of Information Technology has become the catalyst to the implementation of effective daily tasks including enforcement tasks.

Previous studies, shown the importance of efficient human resource management and the use of Information Technology in enhancing enforcement especially the delivery system at local government. However, there are lacks of studies related to this aspect especially in developing countries like Malaysia or specifically in Kedah. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the barriers of the implementation of human resource management and Information Technology on enforcement actions in five local governments in Kedah that have been selected.

2. Method

The study design is qualitative as it uses the interview technique. The qualitative design was employed to obtain detailed information about the phenomenon studied compared to the quantitative method (Oakley, 1999). This study involves the method of semi-structured interview obtained detailed information from practitioners (Chua, 2012), thus the open-end questions were asked to the interviewed respondents. The questions were focused on the issues related to respondents' experiences and perspectives in handling the enforcement in their local government. From the respondents answer, it will be generate towards deep questions. This open-ends method is considered appropriate technique to use in this study, where the respondents are among the experience members in the local governments. Through the open-ends interview it will make this study possible to gain the insightful information from the respondents (Creswell, 2012). The process of interview started by making appointments with 13 officers identified as using the purposive sampling method. The purposive sampling was chosen that enabled researcher to gain information from the group of respondents identified as directly involved in the enforcement in the local government and who is able to give opinion based on their work experience and case analysis related to enforcement and local government services (Guest *et al.*, 2012).

Once the data obtained from the interview session; were arranged systematically and screened to follow appropriate themes of questions (Chua, 2011). The purpose of developing themes is to identify actual issues faced by the local government. The data that has be arranged systematically enable researcher to see clearly the information obtained from the respondents, and at the same time indirectly minimise the leakage of information during the interview process (Tracy, 2013).

The data obtained from interview was processed using data segregation that has undergone several processes namely identifying the data-screening and labelling the coding prior to the presentation (Taylor *et al.*, 2006; Zikmund *et al.*, 2013). The process implied is the data reduction where the data were selected based on their compatibility and that it is important to focus on the issue being studied. The data analysed will be presented in the form of elaboration and discussion, whereas other irrelevant data will be removed.

The selection of five local governments in Kedah is based on the achievement as the top performer and at the lower rank, according to the Star Rating System or *Sistem Penarafan Bintang* (SSR-LA) (KPKT Policy and Inspectorate Department, 2014). The selection of these five local government represents other local governments in Kedah based on level of local government including one of the City Council; two of the Municipal Council and two of the District Council. The assessment of the SSR-LA is chosen as the benchmark because the evaluation of the assessment on various criteria, including customer management, management, core services, community participation and residents' views on service provided by local government. All assessment by a panel of evaluators led by the Inspectorate Department, Ministry of City Development, Housing and Local Government (Ministry of Housing and Local government, 2008).

The respondents involved in this study are the top officers who formulate the policy and instruct the implementation of the policy. The concentration on the respondents comprised of officers at the top management of the local government identified as the Mayor, Chairman, Head of Legislative Division and Head of Enforcement Division in five local governments, in Kedah. The local governments involved are Alor Setar City Council, Kulim Municipal Council, Langkawi Municipal Council, Baling District Council and Yan District Council. The top management officers sample were gained from interview allowed for the information to be discussed in detail and views of policy makers considered as sufficient (Chua, 2012). Apart from that, no one specific determination has been established for a sufficient number of respondents for a qualitative study (Baker S. E. and Edwards, 2012), but it needs to be assured that all respondents involved can give the whole picture to the phenomenon being studied.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Respondents' Profiles

Table 1 shows the list of local government and the respondents interviewed concerning two main issues covering two main resources; the failure to implement the use of Information Technology and the human factor among public servants with regard to the enforcement actions of the law in a local government.

Table-1. Respondents' Profiles

Resp.	Gender	Age (year)	Academic Qualification	Position	Work Experience	Grade Position	Tenure in current LG
R1	Male	58	Master degree	Mayor	32	JUSA C	6
R2	Female	36	Master degree	K.J.P	8	L44	7
R3	Male	42	Diploma	K.J.PN	6	N41	6
R4	Male	56	Master degree	President	30	N54	3
R5	Female	44	Bachelor	K.B.P	12	L44	10
R6	Male	52	Master degree	President	25	N54	3
R7	Male	51	Bachelor	K.B.PN	29	N41	15
R8	Male	58	Master degree	President	32	N54	5
R9	Male	41	Bachelor	K.B.P	12	L32	10
R10	Male	55	Certificate	K.B.PN	30	N27	8
R11	Male	53	Master degree	Presidents	27	N54	3
R12	Female	37	Diploma	K.B.P	12	L29	8
R13	Male	54	Certificate	K.B.PN	29	N22	7

This study involved 13 top officers of the local government. These 13 officers consist of one Mayor, four as President, eight as Head of Division who are experienced in their respective position. In general, all officers as stated have served in local government for more than five years and some have reached 32 years of service in the public sector. From the 13 respondents selected, three of them are female and the remaining respondents are male. In term of level of the education, majority of the respondents possess a degree in relevant fields. Table 1 illustrates that the profile of the respondents are widely experienced in the issues of enforcement and they are capable in responding to the questions confidently, considering that the officers have taken the trouble in facing challenges of the enforcement actions whether before, during or after the enforcement actions.

This section also discussed the data obtained from the respondents as top management officers regards to the issue of the resource management barriers in local government. The barriers of management are from two main resources; the failure to implement the use of Information Technology and the human factor among public servants.

The findings revealed that the 13 respondents interviewed, all respondents agreed and aware of the use of Information Technology greatly helped in daily tasks, although local government is having a shortage of labour. However, the use of Information Technology in local government in Kedah is different in terms of how it is used and location. For example, comparatively, the Information Technology system is more complete in terms of the equipment and existing system in urban area if compared to the local government in the suburban especially in Baling and Yan Municipal Councils. In terms of the equipment, software and maintenance, normally the City Council is seen as one of the local governments that is stronger from the financial aspect and the fact that more staffed in this council.

For example, for the City Council of Alor Setar, the Information Technology officers according to the number of positions approved by the Finance Ministry totalling 11 occupations, where one for grade F44, grade F41 and grade FA32; six grade FA29 and two grade FT19 of the administrative assistant (Letter of Appointment, 2015).

For Yan District Council, the numbers of position approved are only two which is for grade F29 and grade FT17. It means that there is only two staff assigned to develop and manage the usage of Information Technology at this local government. Not just the issue of occupation but the aspects of equipment, software and maintenance need to be accounted for when implementing daily administrative affairs.

The opinion given by R1 was quite different:

"For me, local government still has some position needed to be filled in, but it can still accommodate daily tasks but unfortunately it depends on the individual himself or herself as they are not serious in their work" (Respondent 1, 2015).

Based on this opinion, although at local government the position is not fully filled in, the existing staffs fail to carry out their duties consistently all the time. The statement above is also supported by respondent who opined:

"The problem is to maintain consistency is quite difficult in the department although observation has done by the Head of Division" (Respondent 4, 2016).

On the issue of equipment and software, most of the respondents agreed that the equipment and software provided were not enough. Example, respondent 13 stated:

"The equipment is limited and has to be shared among other staff – this does not include the software requirements" (Respondent 13, 2016).

The statement above illustrated that most of local government in Kedah faces with similar problem; inadequate equipment, especially in the sector of Information Technology, and it's obviously noticed within the district council of local government. Issues related to Information Technology management involve two main problems; (i) insufficient supply of equipment, (ii) software and maintenance. This issue involves the insufficient financial allocation in local government to be channelled towards Information Technology equipment department. Phang (1997) explained that local government would not be able function competently without stable financial position. This finding also supported by Ahmad (1997) and Mariana *et al.* (2014).

Meanwhile, respondents 1, 4, 6, 8 and 11 agreed that the financial position in local government is unsatisfactory and this gives a direct impact to the task and services by public servants to public or clients. Respondent 11 pointed that:

“If we talk about financial issues in local government for instance at the District Council, the budget is limited unlike other stronger local government for instance Alor Setar City Council” (Respondent 11, 2016).

The second issue that concerns with the failure of the resource management which is about the human factor, study by Ali (2001) stated that the success of an organisation depends on the main resource which is human resource. Aziz Y. A. (2014), viewed the concept of human resource management should focus on individuals in an organisation as the most valuable assets and they need to be developed by creating the supportive working environment and strategy to achieve the aim of the organisation. This clearly illustrates that the acts of satisfying, making employees enjoy working and taking care of their welfare are vital and becomes the priority to all the directors or managers in an organisation regardless of organisation type or even the position held.

The issues related to the human factor are very wide and a norm where working in the same place, going through the same routine without being rewarded or even punished, can easily make people feel alienated at the workplace. It will be more complicated if the lack of equipment and the absence of skills to handle the equipment provided. Respondent 7 voiced his opinion:

“besides the equipment, the needs of qualified officers has to be considered including the aspects of continuous learning and sensitivity to the current needs and development” (Respondent 7, 2016).

Brereton (1961), asserted that the career as an enforcer can be enhanced through detailed knowledge in the relevant field and the exposure of important training before facing the real-life situations. By having specific knowledge and information, it will increase the skills and experience when facing with any kind of situations (Kitamura, 2000). Thus, good resource management through intensive training is vital in achieving the aims of the organisation (Gerxhi, 2010).

The issue of reward is also raised by several respondents. Respondent 10 pointed on the issues of reward and punishments need to be practised at the department to elevate the work spirit and enthusiasm. He justified this:

“to instil the spirit of motivation among the staff, there should be some kind of incentives” (Respondent 10, 2016).

These indicate clearly that the issues of reward and punishment are important to be practised because it is a motivating factor and inculcation of spirit local government staff to be more competitive. Although there is Excellent Service Award (APC) in place within the local government it does not seem to be adequate because those who are rewarded are staffs that demonstrate self-interest and initiative and the rest of the staff will be left behind. According to Russell and Bernardin (1998), and Aziz Y. A. (2014) the reward system can be seen in three perspectives; (i) it is a reward system that gives motivation to the employees, (ii) as a communicative tool where the organisation can increase the value of an employee and (iii) to achieve the aims and targets of an organisation. This reward issue is vital in giving a conducive working environment and develop spirit for one to keep progressing (Aziz Y., A. et al., 2008; Banger, 2013; Steen et al., 2016).

Conclusively, human resource management is very vital in managing local governments' services, particularly it's provide basic needs and well-being of society such as enforcement actions. Local governments are being evaluate based on their basic functions providing to the society, but until today the human resource management in the local government still receives criticisms over the inefficiency including failure to enforce a regulation and automatically affects the service delivery to the society (Cheema and Hussein, 1978; Hazman, 1992; Phang, 1989; Siti, 2010; Zalinah et al., 2007; Zulnadi, 2008).

4. Conclusion and Implications

This study aims to examine the barriers contributes to the failure of enforcement actions in local government. Two main contributing factors behind the failure are the issues of management of Information Technology and the human factor. This study found that, the uses of Information Technology within the local government are insufficient in terms of number of equipment and also updated software for their daily usage. For instance, the study revealed Langkawi Municipal Council, Kulim Municipal Council, Yan District Council and Baling District Council, the number of equipment is not matching with the number of employees within the department. However, this is not the case for Alor Setar City Council, the equipment supplied is sufficient in terms of the number of employees but the issue is incapability of the officers to handle the tasks consistently leading to the second factor which is the attitude of the officers themselves.

This second factor is human factor, where similar human issues are being faced across the local governments not only by the City Council. This contributes to the fact that the organisation's system stays at a moderate level. To overcome these two factors; local government should ensure that all local government are supplied with equal number of equipment based on the number of employees and to be upgraded with the recent and required software. In addition, it is also essential for all employees to be given intensive training and skill development to use the equipment and software with respective handbook. Employee morale and wellbeing is also vital to be considered therefore it is recommended to provide local government employees with some sense of motivation and rewarding incentives and to have increase productivity and motivation level. However, for those who are not performing and making mistakes and lack of motivation can be put on continuous development plan. Besides that, internal department exchange can also be done enhance and learn new skills and to curb monotonous of repetitive of same task over the years. Employees that are highly-performing has to be rewarded appropriately with a bonus or allowance to increase their spirit and sense of belonging within the organisation and to continue to serve well. This would reflect on positive and healthy working organisation and it would lead to organisation progression towards the targeted aim and goals.

The present study has revealed some insights on key areas of improvement needed for the local government to consider. Most of the previous studies has been carried out on the financial aspect, the service delivery system, limited power resource and political intervention in the administration. However, there are limited studies on the aspect of human resource management and usage of Information Technology at local government. The findings provide further information with regard to the enforcement action scenario at the local government especially in developing countries such as Malaysia. This study also contributes to the practical aspect to the higher management at local government how enforcement actions are faced and the significance of these two main factors if they are not well managed. These two aspects are crucial to increase capabilities of enforcement team and also directly will increase the quality of services to the local society. It is also consistent with the government agenda to transform the delivery of service through the use of Information Technology effectively and competence human resource.

References

- Abdullah, A. (1978). *Cara pemerintahan tanah melayu, 1957-1963*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur.
- Ahmad, A., H. (1997). *Pihak berkuasa tempatan. Teori dan peranan di Malaysia*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur.
- Ali, E. M. (2001). *Pendekatan pengurusan sumber manusia masa kini*. Utusan Publications & Distributors: Kuala Lumpur.
- Alterman, I. C. R. (2017). When enforcement fails, Comparative analysis of the legal and planning responses to non-compliant development in two advanced-economy countries. *International Journal of Law in the Built Environment*, 9(3): 207-39.
- Ammons, D. N. (1985). Common barriers to productivity improvement in local government. *Public Productivity Review*, 9(4): 293-310.
- Ayres, I. and Braithwaite, J. (1992). *Responsive regulation, Transcending the deregulation debate*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Aziz, Y., A., Mohd, S. T. and Muhammad, I. (2008). *Human resource management, A holistic approach*. Arah Pendidikan Sdn.Bhd: Shah Alam.
- Aziz, Y. A. (2014). *The human side of human resource management*. Penerbit Universiti Utara Malaysia: Sintok.
- Baker (2002). Market timing and capital structure. *The Journal of Finance*, 57(1): 1-32.
- Baker, S. E. and Edwards, R. (2012). How many qualitative interviews is enough? *National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper*: Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903>
- Baldwin, R., Cave, M. and Lodge, M. (2012). *Understanding regulation, Theory, Strategy, and practice*. 2nd edn: Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Banger, V. (2013). *Human resource management, Global trends and essence*. Emkay Publishing House: New Delhi.
- Barber, M. P. (1972). *Local Government*. 2nd edn: Macdonald & Evans Ltd: United Kingdom.
- Baum, B. and Burack, E. (1969). Information technology, Manpower development and organizational performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 12(3): 279-91.
- Bhatia, S. K. (2009). *Hrm in global scenario, Practices and strategies for competitive success*. Deep & Deep Publications Pvt.Ltd: New Delhi.
- Brereton, G. H. (1961). The importance of training and education on the professionalization of law enforcement. *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*, 52(1): 111-21.
- Brown, D. H. and Thompson, S. (2011). Priorities, policies and practice of e-government in a developing country context: Ict infrastructure and diffusion in Jamaica. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 20(3): 329-42.
- Byrnes, J. and Dollery, B. (2002). Local government failure in australia? An empirical analysis of New South Wales. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 61(3): 54-64.
- Calor, I. and Alterman, R. (2017). When enforcement fails, Comparative analysis of the legal and planning responses to non-compliant development in two advanced-economy countries. *International Journal of Law in the Built Environment*, 9(3): 207-39.
- Cheema, G. S. and Hussein, S. A. (1978). Local government reform in Malaysia. *Asian Survey*, 18(6): 577-91.
- Chua, Y. P. (2011). *Kaedah dan statistik penyelidikan buku 1, Kaedah penyelidikan*. Mc Graw Hill Education: Kuala Lumpur.
- Chua, Y. P. (2012). *Kaedah dan statistik penyelidikan buku 2, Asas statistik penyelidikan*. Mc Graw Hill Education: Kuala Lumpur.
- Couturier, D., 2008. "Prioritised staff skills for an environmental enforcement training program." In *In INECE 8th International Conference on Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Proceedings*.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research, Planning, Conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. 4th edn: Pearson Education Inc: Boston.
- Decker, S. H., Paul, G. L., Doris, M. P. and Monica, W. V. (2009). *On the frontier of local law enforcement: Local police and federal immigration law*. In w. F. Mcdonald (ed.), *immigration, crime, and justice*. Emerald: Bingley, UK. 263-78.
- French, P. E. and Goodman, D. (2011). An assessment of the current and future state of human resource management at the local government level. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 32(1): 62-74.
- Gerxhi, J. (2010). The management of human resource in the local government through the presentation of the status of application of civil service in the republic of Albania. *Academicus International Scientific Journal*, (1): 80-89.

- Gilbert, L.-P. T. and Sia, L.-T. (2001). The answer for total quality management implementation? The Malaysian case. *Total Quality Management*, 12(2): 223–29.
- Guest, G., Namey, E. E. and Mitchell, M. L. (2012). *Collecting qualitative data: A field manual for applied research*. Sage Publication: Thousand Oaks.
- Halimah, A. M., Ahmad, M., M. and Lawton, A. (2016). Assessing public participation initiatives in local government decision-making in Malaysia. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 39(11): 812–20.
- Hamzah, J. and Habibah, A. (2009). Keefisienan perkhidmatan pihak berkuasa tempatan di wilayah bandaraya kuala lumpur., Perspektif komuniti. *Geografia - Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 5(1): 54–68.
- Hazman, S. A. (1992). *Pentadbiran kewangan pihak berkuasa tempatan di semenanjung Malaysia*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur.
- International Network for Environment Compliance and Enforcement INECE (2009). *Principles of environmental compliance and enforcement handbook*. INICE: Washington DC.
- Kamarudin, N. and Jamaludin, M. (2013). *Ahli majlis dan kerajaan tempatan*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur.
- Kamarudin, N., Zaherawati, Z., Nazni, N., Mahazril, 'Aini, Y., Jamaludin, M., Mohd, Z. and Hilmie, M. S. (2011). The future challenges of local authorities in Malaysia, A case study in seberang perai, Penang. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(26): 10841–45.
- Khadijah, M. (2012). *Trademark counterfeiting, Comparative legal analysis on enforcement within malaysia and the united kingdom and at their borders*. University of Newcastle.
- Kifayah, A. and Zuraidah, M. Z. (2002). Barriers to implementing TQM in Indonesian manufacturing organizations. *The TQM Magazine*, 14(6): 367–72.
- Kimou, J. C. A. (2012). Economic conditions, Enforcement, And criminal activities in the district of Abidjan. *International Tax and Public Finance*, 19(6): 913–41.
- King, J. L. (1982). Local government use of information technology. *The Next Decade. Public Administration Review*, 42(1): 25–36.
- Kitamura, Y. (2000). Regulatory enforcement in local government in Japan. *Law & Policy*, 22(3-4): 305–18.
- KPKT Policy and Inspectorate Department (2014). *The Star Rating System*.
- Kristiansen, S. and Lambang, T. (2005). Authority and law enforcement, Local government reforms and security systems in indonesia. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 27(2): 236-54.
- Legg, M. (2011). *Regulation, Litigation and enforcement*. Thomson Reuters: Sydney Australia.
- Letter of Appointment (2015). Letter of appointment. .P51.
- Lewis, P. G., Provine, D. M., Varsanyi, M. W. and Decker, S. H. (2013). Why do (some) city police departments enforce federal immigration law? Political, demographic, and organizational influences on local choices. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 23(1): 1–25.
- Lo, C. W. H., Fryxell, G. E., Van, R. B., Wang, W. and Honying, L. P. (2012). Explaining the enforcement gap in China, Local government support and internal agency obstacles as predictors of enforcement actions in Guangzhou. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 111: 227–35.
- Maher, A. and El-Bedawy, R. (2015). Human resources management in southeastern asia's local government case study, Philippine and Thailand. *International Journal of Business and Management Review*, 3(2): 61-71.
- Manalo, V. (2016). Engaging local government through neighborhoods and communities. *Social Work, United States*, 62(2): 163–64.
- Mariana, M. O., Syahriah, B., Nurul, I. B. M. and Nor, Z. H. (2014). Government delivery system, Effectiveness of local authorities in Perak, Malaysia. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 153: 452–62.
- Millichap, D. (1991). *The effective enforcement of planning controls*. Lexisnexis UK: United Kingdom.
- Ministry of Housing and Local government (2008). Circular from the Head of Secretary.
- Mohd, A. A. (2012). *Peruntukan dan penguatkuasaan terhadap kesalahan kesusilaan dibawah bidang kuasa kerajaan tempatan: Kajian menurut undang-undang kecil, Majlis perbandaran kota baru*. Bandar Raya Islam: Universiti Malaya.
- Norris, M. W. (1980). *Local government in peninsular Malaysia*. Gower: Hants, England.
- Oakley, A. (1999). *People's way of knowing, Gender and methodology. Critical issues in social research (hood, s., mayall, b., oliver, s., eds.)*. Open University Press: Buckingham.
- Phang, S. N. (1989). *Local government system di Malaysia*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur.
- Phang, S. N. (1997). *Financing local government in Malaysia*. University of Malaya Press: Kuala Lumpur.
- Phang, S. N., 2011. "Decentralisation, Transformation and the Drive to Sustain Local Government – China and Selected ASEAN Countries." In *China-ASEAN Cooperation in the 21st Century, Challenge and Prospect Xiamen University*.
- Prior, A. (2000). Problems in the theory and practice of planning enforcement. *Planning Theory and Practice*, 1(1): 53–69.
- Rose, J., Persson, J. S., Heeager, L. T. and Irani, Z. (2015). Managing e-government: Value positions and relationships. *Information Systems Journal*, 25(5): 531–71.
- Rousseau, S. (2010). Evidence of a filtered approach to environmental monitoring. *European Journal of Law and Economics*, 29(2): 195–209.
- Russell, A. J. and Bernardin, H. J. (1998). *Human resource management, An experiential approach*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

- Schumaker, A. M. (2004). Predicting effectiveness of training in local government, A study of a municipal clerks training program. *Public Performance & Management Review*, 27(3): 51–59.
- Shaun, G. (2007). Pessimism, computer failure, and information systems development in the public sector. *Public Administration Review*, 61(5): 917-29.
- Siti, N. A. K. (2010). Improving the service delivery , A case study of local authority in Malaysia. *Global Business Review*, 11(1): 65–77.
- Slack, J. D. (1991). Local government training and education needs for the twenty-first century. *Public Productivity & Management Review*, 13(4): 397–404.
- Steen, S. L., Noe, R. A., Hollenbeck, J. R., Gerhart, B. A. and Wright, P. M. (2016). *Human resource management*. McGraw-Hill Education: New York.
- Swenson, D. and Deller, S. (2001). Devolution or convolution? The changing relationship between federal, state and local governments. *The Journal of Regional Analysis and Policy*, 31(1): 49-75.
- Taylor, B., Simha, G. and Goshal, T. (2006). *Research methodology, A guide for researchers in management and social sciences*. Prentice Hall: New Delhi.
- The Royal Investigating Commission Report (1970). 'Report of the royal commission of inquiry to investigate into the workings of local authorities in west Malaysia', (Kuala Lumpur).
- Tracy, S. J. (2013). *Qualitative research methods*. Wiley-Blackwell: United Kingdom.
- Utusan Online (2014). Mana ada kelas pakai nama Melayu. Available: http://ww1.utusan.com.my/utusan/Rencana/20141018/re_02/Mana-ada-kelas-pakai-nama-Melayu
- Utusan Online (2015). Demam denggi serius. Available: <http://www.utusan.com.my/berita/nasional/demam-denggi-serius-1.113863>
- Utusan Online (2016). Pengendali premis judi online tidak gentar pihak berkuasa. Available: <http://www.utusan.com.my/berita/jenayah/pengendali-premis-judi-online-tidak-gentar-pihak-berkuasa-1.425681>
- Wagner, G. (2014). Private law enforcement through adr, Wonder drug or snake oil? *Common Market Law Review*, 51(1): 165–94.
- Wan, Z. W. Y., Maziah, I. and Azlan, S. A. (2010). Understanding the service provider perspective towards better service quality in local authorities. *Journal of Facilities Management*, 8(3): 226–38.
- West, J. P. and Berman, E. M. (1997). Administrative Creativity in local government. *Public Productivity & Management Review*, 20(4): 446–58.
- Zalinah, A., Ahmad, M. M., Halimah, A. M., Fazilah, M. O. and Rozita, A. M. (2007). *Pengurusan perubahan organisasi di pihak berkuasa tempatan negeri (la) negeri kedah*. Universiti Utara Malaysia: Sintok.
- Zikmund, W. G., Babin, B. J., Carr, J. C. and Griffin, M. (2013). *Business research methods*. Cengage Learning: South-Western.
- Zulnaidi, Y. (2008). Kesan pengurusan kualiti terhadap prestasi perkhidmatan pihak berkuasa tempatan. *Jurnal Kemanusiaan*, 12(2): 1–13.