

## COMPARATIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA

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### ABSTRACT

*An administration is a collaborative process carried by a group of people to achieve goals together; meanwhile, a comparative is a process that involves systematic observation of similarities or dissimilarities between two or more branches or subjects. This article aims to study the differences between public administration in Malaysia and Indonesia regarding sociocultural and socioeconomic approaches, political and system approaches, and philosophical approaches. This article used A qualitative research method that applies secondary data. The study found that Similarities between these two countries can be seen in their climate and multicultural nature. The differences can mainly be seen in political, socioeconomic, and philosophical approaches. Therefore, comparative public administration is done to determine the different approaches and activities that an organization applies to the country to achieve national goals.*

### INTRODUCTION

A country is known as an organization within the territory that has the highest legal power and is recognized by its people; it is divided into a few elements, such as the existence of territory, the existence of government, the existence of people and the existence of sovereignty. An administration is a collaborative process carried by a group of people to achieve goals together; meanwhile, a comparative is a process that involves systematic observation of similarities or dissimilarities between two or more branches or subjects. Thus, comparative public administration is a study of administration across countries. Kumari (2021) argue that public administration is the process of putting government policies into action, and it is an academic field that analyzes the process and

prepares civil servants for careers in government. Meanwhile, in another article, public administration determines government policies and programs, particularly in planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling operations (Chapman et al., 2024)

As is well known, every country uses a different approach in public administration, thus allowing differences in views or judgement and comparisons to arise through these differences. Comparative public administration is done to determine the different approaches and activities an organization applies to the country to achieve national goals. In other words, the public administration of a country contains a collective meaning that encompasses the whole process of the organization and includes all present boards

or institutions that follow their respective function in a country, all of which are directed towards the achievement of the country's objective.

Public administration is said to have an ever-growing nature in applied social science; up to this day, it is still developing (Kumari, 2021). It is said that historically, changes or evolution of one nation's public administration activities are necessary to be in its ideal form. Alongside that, the practice of public administration must be directed to respond to the current demands in every nation's evolution (Uhaib & Djani, 2018). Uhaib & Djani (Uhaib & Djani, 2018) stated that public administration is necessary for a country to survive, especially in the current modernization of governance. Therefore, this article aims to study the differences between public administration in Malaysia and Indonesia regarding sociocultural and socioeconomic approaches, political and system approaches, and philosophical approaches.

## METHODS

This study applied qualitative research methods. We chose a qualitative approach, a qualitative approach has the advantage of using selected cases and focusing on specific individuals, events and contexts (Gerring, 2017). Qualitative research is a method where scientists keep learning and refining their understanding by studying things up close (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The secondary data was used. Relevant sources, such as articles from legal journals and reliable websites, were used to collect the data. In this study, all data were evaluated in detail using the content analysis approach.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Malaysia Vs Indonesia Public Administration

Both Malaysia and Indonesia are located in Southeast Asia. These two countries are close to each other geographically. Besides that, Malaysia and Indonesia are members of The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

In addition, Malaysia and Indonesia are establishing bilateral cooperation. (Rohani, et al., 2021). Before 1965, bilateral relations between Malaysia and Indonesia were mainly marred by conflict and hostility (Yazid, 2013). However, with the involvement of American power and Indonesian pro-democratic leaders at the time, Suharto, bilateral relations between these two countries turned into harmonious relations instead of conflict and hostilities, which became the reason for ASEAN formation in August 1967 (Yazid, 2013).

Wardhani (2009) stated that the bilateral relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia had its ups and downs, which is common as it represents the dynamics of the connection between neighbours. The people of Malaysia and Indonesia regard themselves as "blood-brothers" as both countries share the same language root, *Bahasa Melayu*. Besides that, Malaysia and Indonesia share the same culture and ethnicity, especially in Sumatra Island and Kalimantan, which has similarities with Malaysia. Therefore, due to the special relationship between these two countries, comparing both countries' public administration is interesting. Generally, these two countries evolved as independent nations; however, if we look at the system of governance, Malaysia adheres to a parliamentary system of government, while Indonesia adheres to a presidential system of government.

This writing will discuss a few approaches to determining the differences or similarities between these two countries, namely sociocultural and socioeconomic, political and system, and philosophical approaches.

### Malaysia Public Administration

Malaysia is a federal state with a monarchy governance system; it consists of His Majesty, with the King as the Head of State and the Prime Minister as the Head of Government, appointed by His Majesty the King (Chin, 2010). Malaysia comprises thirteen major states and three different federal territories with an area of about 330,803 square kilometres. Malaysia's capital is

Kuala Lumpur, divided into two parts: Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia, and Brunei, Thailand, and Indonesia border it.

We will discuss further about Malaysia through the mentioned approaches as follows:

**a) Sociocultural and Socioeconomic Approach**

Malaysia's sociocultural diversity can be seen in race, religion, language and gender. (Jessica Ong, H. L. et al., 2020). The population of Malaysia will be more than 29.7 million in 2020, and the population growth will be rising from time to time (Department of Information, 2016). Population in Malaysia consists of 69.6 per cent people classified as Bumiputera, which includes Malay, Kadazan-Dusun, Dayak, Iban and many more; meanwhile, 22.6 per cent were classified as Chinese, and 6.9 per cent are classified as Indian (Department of Information, 2016). However, Malays and Bumiputera have been given more priority than other races in education, business, employment, and housing.

As for religious background, Islam is the official religion of Malaysia; however, because Malaysia is a multicultural and multi-racial country, the government of Malaysia has allowed other religions to be practised, such as Buddhism, Christianity, and Hinduism. Malaysia's economy has successfully diversified from its agricultural and commodity-based economy, which is now home to a strong manufacturing and service industry and has become one of the leading exporters of electrical appliances, parts and components (World Bank, 2024). Malaysia's economic system has been driven by natural resources such as oil palm fruit, rice, poultry, rubber, and many more, and it is currently showing growth in areas such as travel, medical tourism, science, and trade. Much evidence indicates that Malaysia has experienced strong economic growth in recent years.

Over the years, generally, Malaysia has been highly dependent on international trade,

and the economy has been highly dependent upon export commodities, mainly integrated circuits, refined petroleum, natural gas, semiconductors, and palm oil (Indexmundi, n.d.). At the same time, Malaysia's tourism sector has been growing positively; this is supported by the World Tourism Rank, which has ranked Malaysia as the 20th most visited country. The nature of Malaysia as a multicultural country has become the main attraction to overseas tourists, leading to a decreasing unemployment rate in Malaysia (Mosbah & Saleh, 2014). High demand for tourism has caused many new businesses, mainly tourism-based businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, and travel agencies, to result in the economy's high growth eventually.

However, in recent years, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the globe, Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) showed a drastic decrease after the first Movement Control Order (MCO) in 2020, where the economy dipped to -17.2% of the tourism sector the most affected economies during this period. (Rasidah, H. et al, 2021). A year and a half after the COVID-19 pandemic hit the global level, Malaysia's GDP increased by 3.0% in the first nine months of 2021 compared to 2020. This economic growth results from the continuing growth mainly in the manufacturing and service sectors. (Department of Information, 2016). As is known, the manufacturing sector is driven by petroleum, chemicals, rubber and plastics products, and electrical, electronic and optical products. Meanwhile, service sectors such as wholesale and retail trade sub-sector, finance and insurance, transportation and storage, food and beverage, and information and communications have contributed to the increase in economic growth in Malaysia (Department of Information, 2016).

The government of Malaysia has implemented numerous changes to improve the business environment (Hamizam et al., 2023; Musa & Chinniah, 2016). The government sahas

simplified regulations and administrative costs for enterprises and established competition authorities (OECD and Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, 2018). As stated by the Ministry of Finance Malaysia (MOF), Malaysia's economy recovery is supported by the high rate of vaccination, which will become an additional safeguard to the healthcare system in order to sustain the reopening of economic sectors and resumption of social activities, which have been closed for a year and a half due to the pandemic.

### **b) Political and System Approach**

In terms of political and system approach, Malaysia practices a system of Parliamentary Democracy under the administration of Constitutional Monarchy (Chin, 2010). Malaysia is chaired by His Majesty the King as the Head of State and the Prime Minister as the Head of Government, appointed by His Majesty the King. The Federal Constitution of Malaysia, enacted in 1957, has set up such conditions to enable the implementation of the system.

The Conference of Rulers will elect His Majesty according to the manner prescribed in the third schedule of the Constitution and Regulations of the Conference of Rulers, which normally will reign for five years. His Majesty is elected among the nine states of hereditary rulers. His Majesty holds the power to protect the Malay customs and traditions and each state's Islamic administrations while serving as the head of Islam for Penang, Sabah, Sarawak, and Federal Territories. (Azrae, 2020).

Parliamentary Democracy is the division of power into three parts of government :

1. The Legislature is responsible for making laws, policies, and amendments. There are two forms of Parliament: the Senate (Dewan Negara) and the Hall of the People (Dewan Rakyat). Bills must go through a few stages of consideration and discussion by both before getting assent from His Majesty.

2. The Judiciary - The highest judiciary authority in Malaysia is held by the Chief Justice of the Federal Court, which His Majesty of King elects. Responsible for protecting the supremacy of the Constitution and ensuring everyone complies with it. Interpretation of the Constitution can only be done by the Judiciary. Other than that, the Judiciary is responsible for determining whether a law passed by Parliament or the act of the Executive is constitutional and valid (Malaysia Bar- Badan Peguam Malaysia, 2010). Malaysia has two courts, the Superior Court and the Syariah Court, which are limited to Islamic jurisdiction.
3. The Executive, headed by a Prime Minister appointed by His Majesty the King, will then lead the government, known as the Cabinet, and also the party. Generally, the executive branch consists of conferences of rules, His Majesty the King, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, and public services.

### **c) Philosophical Approach**

As it is known, Malaysia is a multi-racial country. (Razaleigh & Abdul Ghafar, 2016). Therefore, it is important to create unity and harmony among the people of Malaysia. The government formed the National Principle (Rukun Negara) to overcome the differences in Malaysia's multi-racial society. National Principle was declared on August 31 1970; it was introduced after the May 13 incident, which undermined the racial unity in Malaysia (Department of Information, 2016). The National Principle (Rukun Negara) consist of five principles, which are:

1. Belief in God
2. Loyalty to the King and Country
3. Supremacy of the Constitution
4. Rules of Law
5. Courtesy and Morality

### Indonesia Public Administration

Indonesia's political system practices a unitary presidential constitutional republic; the President is the state's chief and the government's head (Hamzah, 2021). This country has the largest archipelago in the world, which consists of five major islands name as Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo), Sulawesi and New Guinea, also known as Papua, with Jakarta being the capital of Indonesia. Indonesia has a total of 17,508 islands, with 6000 of the islands being inhabited.

Geographically, Indonesia has many high mountains, the highest of which is over 4000 metres, namely the Carstensz Pyramid (Puncak Jaya); several are active volcanoes. In addition to mountains, tropical rainforests, jungles, and swamp mangrove habitats can be found in Indonesia, with Java Island being the most fertile land. As Indonesia is one of the largest archipelagos in the world (Kurnia et al., 2023), it has three different standard time zones: Sumatra, Java, West and Central Kalimantan are 7 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+7); Bali, Nusa Tenggara, South & East Kalimantan, and Sulawesi are 8 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+8); and finally, Papua and Maluku are 9 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+9).

We will discuss further about Indonesia through the mentioned approaches as follows:

#### a) Sociocultural and Socioeconomic Approach

Indonesia is the fourth most populated country in the world, with 87% of its population being Muslim. It is also the largest country with a Muslim majority. Other religions practised in Indonesia are 7% Protestant, 3% Roman Catholic, 1,7% Hindu, 0,7% Buddha, and 0,05% Confucian in 2020 (Izzat & Handaru, 2022). Being one of the world's top five most populated countries naturally implies significant diversity or differences in Indonesian culture, religion, language, and society (Ananda et al., 2023). Indonesia has approximately 1.300 ethnic

groups; 40% of the population is Javanese, while others include Sundanese, Malay, Batak, Madurese, Betawi, and many others (Indonesia baik.id, 2023). Additionally, there are four main languages spoken in Indonesia: Malay, Javanese, Sundanese, and Madurese. However, the official language of the country is Indonesian. Indonesia is a very diverse community; however, the cultures that have a major influence on the people are Chinese, Indian, and Arab. (Dewi, 2011).

Meanwhile, economically, Indonesia is a country with great economic potential. (Dara & Krishan, 2023). Indonesia's economy mostly relies on agriculture and oil; oil and gas have become Indonesia's main export earnings. Other than oil and gas, in the agricultural sector, Indonesia has become the main exporter of rubber, coffee, cocoa and palm oil to the world; in addition to that, other commodities such as sugar, tea, tobacco copra and spices are produced widely in Indonesia and being supply to the world (Indonesia Investments, n.d.). Indonesia has achieved rice self-sufficiency and no longer requires imports of this staple food (Pejabat Pengelola Informasi dan Dokumentasi (PPID) Kementerian Pertanian, 2022)

Similarly to Malaysia, Indonesia's main attraction to foreign tourists is its diversity. However, tourism in Indonesia is growing steadily compared to Malaysia. According to World Competitiveness Ranking 2019 Indonesia is ranked 32nd in the world and natural wealth become as a vital attraction (International Institute for Management Development, 2019). Indonesia has hundreds of national parks, one of the most popular being Komodo National Park.

Like other countries, in the early year of 2020, Indonesia's economy is also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. (Astuti & Mahardhika, 2020). According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Country Director for Indonesia, Jiro Timonaga, Indonesia faced a comparatively minor economic decline. It is due to the government's initiative to provide fiscal

stimulus and social aid to their people to avoid long-term economic damage; in the first half of 2021, Indonesia's economy is recovering due to the strong export commodities (Asian Development Bank, 2021). As of July 2021, Indonesia, originally an upper-middle income, went to lower-middle income status due to the Covid-19 pandemic (World Bank, 2021).

In order to sustain Indonesia's economy, the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) assists the Indonesia government in achieving long-term economic growth by engaging in four areas:

1. Strengthening economic competitiveness and resilience
2. Improving infrastructure
3. Nurturing human capital
4. Sustaining management of natural assets, natural resources-based livelihoods, and disaster resilience.

#### **b) Political and System Approach**

Since 1945, Indonesia has experienced changes in its government system; both presidential and parliamentary governance systems have been practiced in this country (Lestari et al., 2022). To this day, the governing system practiced by Indonesia is a government of presidential, where the power of the government falls in the hands of the President, and the people of Indonesia have the right to elect their President, serving for a maximum of two consecutive five-year terms in a row. The presidential system in Indonesia is similar to that of the United States, in which the President serves as head of state and head of government (Russell, 2020). According to Russell (2020), the President of Indonesia possesses the right or power to pick government ministers, approve legislation adopted by Parliament, and serve as the supreme commander of the armed forces.

Indonesia has a bicameral parliament known as the People's Consultative Assembly

(Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, MPR), which is divided into two:

1. The upper house is the Council of Representatives of the Regions (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah, DPD). DPD is responsible for regional matters, presenting bills on regional matters to the DPR. However, DPD still needs to adopt the legislation itself.
2. The Lower house is known as House of Representatives (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, DPR). DPR oversees the approval of bills, budgets, and international agreements. DPR holds important roles compared to DPD (Russell, 2020).

The judiciary system in Indonesia has a Supreme Court (Mahkamah Agung) as the highest court and a Constitutional Court (Mahkamah Konstitusi), which analyses the decisions made by MPR are aligned with the Indonesian Constitution (Indonesia Investments, n.d.). Meanwhile, Indonesian judges' honour, dignity, and behaviour are overseen by the Judicial Commission (Indonesia Investments, n.d.).

#### **c) Philosophical Approach**

Indonesia's government's official philosophy is known as Pancasila, which was formulated by the country's former nationalist leader, Soekarno. There are five principles of Pancasila, which are:

1. Belief in the Almighty God
2. Fair and civilized humanity
3. The unity of Indonesia
4. Democracy is guided by inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations among representatives.
5. Social justice for all of the people of Indonesia

In detail of the implementation of Indonesian and Malaysian governments can be seen in the Comparative Matrix of Indonesian and Malaysian Governments below.

**Table 1.** The differences between Indonesia and Malaysia Government

Differences	Malaysia	Indonesia
Government System	Parliament	Presidential
Executive Branch	Prime Minister as Head of Government	President as the Chief of State and Head of Government
Legislative Branch	Senate (Dewan Negara) and House of Representative (Dewan Rakyat). Both hold the right to adopt legislation.	MPR consists of the DPD and DPR, with the DPR holding the right to adopt legislation.
Judicial Branch	Supreme Court and Constitutional Court hold judicial authority.	Judicial authority is held by the Chief Justice, who is elected by His Majesty the King on the advice of the Prime Minister.
Chief of State	His Majesty of King	President
Philosophical	Rukun Negara	Pancasila
Form of State	Federal state with a monarchy system	Unitary country

## CONCLUSION

As discussed above, although Indonesia and Malaysia share some similarities, there are also obvious differences. Similarities between these two countries can be seen in their climate and multicultural nature. Differences between the two countries mainly can be seen in their political, socioeconomic, and philosophical approaches.

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