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Home > News > Nation

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MAMPU, the binding agent between integrity and digital public service delivery

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YBhg. Dato' Dr. Mazlan Yusoff, Director General of Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU)

Introduction

As early as the dawn of time, the great, Plato, and his most promising student, Aristotle, have already explored the concept of universal values, one of them being, integrity. (Of course, back then,) However, during that time period, it was not known as integrity. (per se. Fascinatingly, they put it as) Instead, it is stated to be, "living in truth with one's self".

According to Plato's masterpiece, *Republic*, "both the state and individual must contain virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice in order to have a functional system or person." Interestingly, such an age-old concept is not foreign to the world today. This is due to the fact that we need wisdom to act on the right thing; courage to do the right thing even though it is painful; temperance to refrain from misconduct; and justice to guide one's behavior towards others.

Similarly, the great historian, Ibn Khaldun also claims that "habits are qualities of the soul", which resonates with Plato's idea. As mentioned above, in order to keep these virtues intact, integrity is essential. After all, our soul is fed by our actions, habits and above all, thoughts. Imagine a civil servant who feeds his or her soul with food that does not abide to those virtues. These concepts still bring warmth to us till this very day, simply because they are age-old but never outdated. In other words, these virtues are the universal values.

Coming back to the modern world, 1952 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Albert Schweitzer mentioned in his book, "The Philosophy of Civilisation", that the success of a nation state lies not in the grandeur of the country's landmarks or economy, but in the governance of the country, the process of decision making and how these decisions are implemented in every level of the government. What is evident here is that those three aspects are extremely vital for a government. To put it bluntly, they can be the deciding factors of a government, whether it will sink or swim.

MAMPU As The Weaver Of Integrity Into Digital Public Service Delivery

If we were to further investigate this subject, the word, "integrity" comes from the Latin word "*integer*" that literally bears the meaning of "whole" and "complete". As the saying "together we stand, divided we fall" describes this concept vividly, an organisation with integrity, is a complete and wholesome body, because of its imbued honesty. People with the same value will be able to withstand crisis because they are undivided, integrated by integrity. Is that not what the people want from the government?

Particularly in this digital era, when we are exposed to social media and digitalisation, our integrity can be challenged. It is inevitable to talk about integrity without branching out to the topic of integrity in data management. The Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) is the leading agency in spearheading government digital initiatives. As we are moving towards a, "*Digital First, Citizen Focused*" government, where inclusivity is of paramount importance, the maturity of the digital citizenry is crucial in facing the shift in the public sector's service paradigm. The maturity here also entails one's ability to discern what is right and what is wrong on digital platforms, especially when data is in abundance.

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MAMPU, THE BINDING AGENT BETWEEN INTEGRITY AND DIGITAL PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY



MAMPU, the binding agent between integrity and digital public service delivery infographic

Under constant bombardment waves of information, we must be guided by a strong sense of integrity to remain steadfast and relevant to the public. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), there are six areas for government to win trust from the public. These six areas are namely reliability, responsiveness, transparency, better regulation, integrity and fairness as well as inclusive policy making. As laid down in the 11th Malaysia Plan, Malaysia is in transition from a government-centric service (service delivery in silos) to a citizen-centric service (integrated service delivery). This transition upholds the six areas to win trust for the government, as without trust from the people, how else can a government function?

In fact, nowadays, people do not buy products, they buy experiences that give them values. It is the added values that interest people. After all, we want to get the most out of everything. Speaking of everything, as we mentioned earlier, the Malaysian government is striving for a more inclusive and integrated delivery service. On the 1st of May 2017, MAMPU has launched the Government Online Services Gateway, also known as MyGovernment Portal. It is an integrated platform that provides services from womb to tomb. This portal employs a life-event framework that is based on a citizen-centric design. With this in mind, each citizen is able to create their very own citizen persona while using this portal to access government online services. MyGovernment Portal itself is an effective tool that fosters trust from the users, where it focuses service by the people for the people.

In striving to increase transparency, one of the many ways that the public can deal directly with the government is via online services, which is of less bureaucracy, and hence, less human oversight. In Malaysia, about 90% of the government services are provided online. Nevertheless, only one fifth of the online services are end-to-end. Some of the few popular ones are e-filing for tax payment, eSila for human capital development and UPU online for tertiary education application. As "*melentur buluh, biarlah dari rebungnya*", which means strike while the iron is hot. It is extremely crucial that while we are on the journey to allow more end-to-end online government services, we have to ensure the integrity of data management and to instil integrity in the people who manages these data at this early stage, for charity begins at home, we have to lead by example and walk the talk.

Foregrounded in the Public Sector ICT Strategic Plan which was launched last year by MAMPU, one of the main strategic thrusts is to form a data driven government. Under this thrust, one of the main initiatives is Public Sector Open Data. With the introduction of the Public Sector Open Data initiative, MAMPU has developed a platform, called data.gov.my, for the people to publish data and benefit from these data. This initiative will increase the accountability and transparency of the government service delivery system through the use and sharing of data. We uphold the motto that "*data untuk kesejahteraan rakyat*", which translates to data is for the citizen's wellbeing. To dig deeper into it, by harnessing open data, people are empowered by this data available for them to create innovations for themselves, which directly benefit the whole society and enhance the citizen's wellbeing. In fact, they are spoilt with a myriad of ingredients that are free of charge. In other words, what they need to do is just mix and match and find the ideal combination to create a perfume that has the right notes, or a salad that has the best flavour, so to speak.

These examples are, of course, non-exhaustive. The main idea is the underpinning philosophy of these initiatives in promoting integrity as a culture in Malaysia. Once again, the importance of injecting the element of "integrity" into all these data that encapsulate our daily life could not be stressed enough. As the motto for the Southeast Asian Games 2017 goes, let us rise together in this path towards a society guided by integrity.

**This article was adapted from speech delivered by YBhg. Dato' Dr. Mazlan Yusoff, Director General of Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU), in conjunction with the ASEAN Integrity Dialogue (AID) 2017 at the Malaysian Institute of Integrity on 26 October 2017.*