THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION POLICY IN ADDRESSING THE WELL-BEING OF THE LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS IN MALAYSIA

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UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

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DEDICATION

By By Allah's grace, This thesis is dedicated to my husband, *Rizwan bin Mohamad* for his assistance, perseverance, devotion, and compassion. It is also dedicated to my parents, *Nasir Hassan* and *Timah Ariffin*, despite their disabilities, they taught me knowledge is everything. Special appreciation also goes to my children, *Aufa* and *Alif*, for their tolerance and understanding. Not to forget my KA brothers, *Khairul Anuar, Khairul Asfani, Khairul Azhar, Khairul Ashraf, Khairul Azwan* and all my sisters-in-law for their unconditional

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ABSTRACT

As an emerging economy, various policies have been introduced, and a range of policy measures have been undertaken by the Malaysian government to drive the nation's socio-economic development towards realising the high-income and advanced nation's status. Successfully reduced the inequality gap and poverty rate in the past few years, the government focus has expanded to address the low-income households' (LIHs) needs to ensure that this income group is elevated into the middleincome group by 2020. In line with the evolving needs resulting from the global changing socio-economic landscape where the LIHs are more prone to be adversely impacted, the role of science, technology and innovation (STI) has been recognised for its potential to cater to the needs of the LIHs. Several policy measures have been introduced in the STI policy, and programmes have been implemented consistent with the National Policy on Science, Technology and Innovation 2013 - 2020 towards achieving the nation's main goals. Despite the growing significance, there have been limited empirical studies undertaken in STI for social development, particularly in Malaysia's setting. Hence, underpinned by implementation theory and models of implementation, this study explored the implementation of the STI policy and its programmes that aimed to address the LIHs in Malaysia by delving into the potential challenges affecting the implementation process. This exploratory case study adopted a qualitative approach, where data were collected based on semi-structured interview and document analysis to illustrate the implementation of the STI policy and its programmes. Fifteen participants were selected based on the purposive sampling technique, and they consisted of policymakers, programme coordinators, programme implementers, and beneficiaries who were involved directly and indirectly in the STI policy formulation and implementation of the selected programmes. The data from interviews and documents were analysed into themes using Nvivo 12 software and reported in a narrative style. The findings revealed that several challenges influenced the implementation process occurred at the macro and micro-levels that need to be addressed. A policy implementation framework with a corresponding set of elements namely, leadership and commitment (internal), communication and coordination, priority setting, capacity building, support system, funding mechanism, data and information, and monitoring and evaluation (external) was proposed as a guide for future policy development and implementation analysis. This study concludes that clear policy direction, targeted commitment and strong leadership could facilitate effective implementation of the policy, alongside the provision of sufficient enabling environment. Despite several limitations, this empirical study contributes to the knowledge and practice in the field of STI policy, which currently almost limited studies have been carried out on this discourse in Malaysia.

ABSTRAK

Sebagai ekonomi yang baru muncul, pelbagai dasar telah diperkenalkan dan langkah telah diambil oleh kerajaan Malaysia untuk memacu pembangunan sosioekonomi negara ke arah merealisasikan status negara berpendapatan tinggi dan maju. Berjaya mengurangkan jurang ketidaksamaan dan kadar kemiskinan dalam beberapa tahun terakhir ini, tumpuan kerajaan telah berkembang untuk menangani keperluan isi rumah berpendapatan rendah (LIH) bagi memastikan kumpulan pendapatan ini meningkat menjadi golongan berpendapatan sederhana pada tahun 2020. Selaras dengan keperluan yang berkembang pesat akibat perubahan sosio-ekonomi global yang mana LIH akan memberikan impak buruk, peranan sains, teknologi dan inovasi (STI) telah diakui dapat menyelesaikan masalah yang dihadapi LIH. Beberapa langkah dasar telah diperkenalkan dalam dasar STI, dan program telah dilaksanakan selaras dengan Dasar Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi Negara 2013-2020 ke arah mencapai matlamat utama negara. Walaupun bidang STI untuk pembangunan sosial semakin penting, terdapat kajian empirikal yang terhad yang dilakukan di STI untuk pembangunan sosial, terutamanya dalam persekitaran Malaysia. Oleh itu, dengan disokong oleh teori pelaksanaan dan model pelaksanaan, kajian ini meneroka pelaksanaan dasar dan program STI yang bertujuan untuk menangani LIH di Malaysia dengan mengkaji cabaran yang berpotensi mempengaruhi proses pelaksanaannya. Kajian kes berbentuk penerokaan ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif dimana data diperoleh menerusi temu bual separa berstruktur dan analisis dokumen bagi menggambarkan keseluruhan proses pelaksanaan dasar dan program STI. Lima belas peserta dipilih berdasarkan teknik pensampelan bertujuan, dan mereka terdiri daripada pembuat dasar, penyelaras program, pelaksana program dan penerima manfaat yang terlibat secara langsung dan tidak langsung dalam pembuatan dasar dan pelaksanaan dari program terpilih. Data dari temu bual dan dokumen dianalisis secara tematik menggunakan perisian Nvivo 12, dan dilaporkan dalam bentuk naratif. Penemuan kajian menunjukkan bahawa proses pelaksanaan dasar dipengaruhi pelbagai cabaran yang berlaku diperingkat makro dan mikro yang perlu diatasi. Rangka kerja pelaksanaan berserta set elemen yang sesuai iaitu kepimpinan dan komitmen (dalaman), komunikasi dan koordinasi, penetapan keutamaan, pembinaan kapasiti, sistem sokongan, mekanisme pembiayaan, data dan informasi dan pemantauan dan penilaian (luaran) dicadangkan sebagai panduan untuk pembangunan dan analisis dasar pada masa akan datang. Kajian ini merumuskan bahawa hala tuju dasar yang jelas, komitmen yang tersasar dan kepimpinan yang kuat dapat membantu memudahkan pelaksanaan dasar yang lebih berkesan, di samping persekitaran yang mencukupi. Walaupun terdapat beberapa batasan, kajian empirikal ini menyumbang kepada bidang pengetahuan dan praktikal dalam bidang dasar STI, yang pada masa ini hampir tidak ada penyelidikan telah dijalankan pada wacana ini di Malaysia.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

5MP	-	Fifth Malaysia Plan
6MP	-	Sixth Malaysia Plan
7MP	-	Seventh Malaysia Plan
8MP	-	Eighth Malaysia Plan
9MP	-	Ninth Malaysia Plan
10MP	-	Tenth Malaysia Plan
11 M P	-	Eleventh Malaysia Plan
AIM	-	Agensi Inovasi Malaysia - Malaysia Innovation Agency
ASM	-	Academy of Sciences Malaysia
B40	-	Bottom forty percent
DOSM	-	Department of Statistics Malaysia
DSTIN	-	Dasar Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi Nasional
EPU	-	Economic Planning Unit
ETP	-	Economic Transformation Programme
GTP	-	Government Transformation Programme
IMF	-	International Monetary Fund
IRPA		Intensification of Research in Priority Areas
KPI	-	Key Performance Indicator
LIH	-	Low-income household
M40	-	Middle forty percent
MASTIC	-	Malaysian Science and Technology Information Centre
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goal
MESTECC	-	Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change
MIGHT	-	Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology
MOSTE	_	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
MOSTI	_	Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
MP	_	Malaysia Plan
MSI	_	MOSTI Social Innovation

MySI	-	Malaysia Social Innovation
NDP	-	National Development Policy
NEM	-	New Economic Model
NEP	-	New Economic Policy
NGO	-	Non-governmental organisation
NIC	-	National Innovation Council
NKEA	-	National Key Economic Areas
NPSTI	-	National Policy on Science, Technology and Innovation
NSC	-	National Science Council
NSCRD	-	National Council for Scientific Research and Development
NSRC	-	National Science and Research Council
NSTP	-	National Science and Technology Policy
NSTP 2	-	Second National Science and Technology Policy
OECD	-	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
R&D	-	Research and Development
R&D&C&I	-	Research, Development, Commercialisation, and Innovation
RMA	-	Research Management Agency
S&T	-	Science and technology
SME	-	Small and Medium Enterprise
SDG	-	Sustainable Development Goal
ST	-	Strategic Thrust
STI	-	Science, Technology and Innovation
T20	-	Top twenty percent
UKM	-	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO		United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
UNESCO	-	Organisation
WEF	-	World Economic Forum
YIM	-	Yayasan Inovasi Malaysia – Malaysia Innovation Foundation

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with the elaboration of the research background in which it describes the science, technology, and innovation (STI) policy in Malaysia by concentrating on the policy implementation catering to social issues and challenges emerging from the global socio-economic changes. Subsequently, this chapter discusses the problem statement and the research questions as well as the objectives of the research in the following subsections. The research scope and significance are also explained in the corresponding sub-sections to provide a clear understanding of this study's orientation. Finally, the thesis structure is presented at the end of this chapter.

1.2 Background of the Study

Malaysia is a developing country that is progressing into a high income and advanced nation. During the early years, the country had concentrated on agriculture as its primary source for the economy. Agricultural and rural development strategies have played a notable role in reducing poverty in Malaysia during the period (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2005). As an open economy, the country is increasingly concentrating on knowledge-intensive services and high-technology manufacturing industries as its main economic pillars. Along the way, this country has achieved various important socio-economic milestones, including transforming the people's well-being via equitable access to services and opportunities. Nevertheless, the predicaments faced by the country are not on the economic development per se, but on the social stability as well (Abdul Gapar, 2010).

In the past, the country dealt with various socio-economic challenges, including poverty and inequality. The inception of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1971 and the following policies and programmes have successfully aided in lessening inequalities between the rich and poor, as well as decreased poverty rates. The country believes that everyone must benefit from development initiatives and that the inequality gaps would be reduced (Economic Planning Unit [EPU], 2015b). Following the success, the country has reoriented its attention to boost the bottom forty households (B40) (of the country's income distribution) or low-income households' (LIHs) well-being as the poverty rate and inequality gap have reduced. Access to necessities, such as healthcare, education systems and infrastructure, as well as the opportunities for the group of income to be in the economic circuits through entrepreneurship programmes, are among the measures targeting the LIHs. Such efforts support the government's mission to uplift the LIHs' income level, leading to a better living standard (EPU, 2010, 2015d).

As part of the contributors to socio-economic growth, STI is evolving with diverse STI products, processes and services being generated, benefitting many people across the society. The country has performed multiple efforts to ensure that every society member has access to technological infrastructures and services for better living standards. Access to STI has allowed people to be connected with information and knowledge, where it is much easier and cheaper now than ever for people to reach out to more recent sources of knowledge. The deep-rooted technological innovation divide, where technological innovation was only accessible to a particular group of people, has been narrowed down, accelerated by various technological breakthroughs and advanced infrastructures. Internet usage, for instance, has increased to 79 percent in 2016 compared to the year of the 1990s in Malaysia (Khazanah Research Institute [KRI], 2018).

With reference to the policy, policy on STI was not prominent before the 1980s. Science and technology (S&T) was first featured in the Fifth Malaysia Plan, 1986-1990 (5MP) as one of its chapters. The introduction of the S&T chapter in the 5MP served as a crucial step for institutionalising policy on STI (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2016a). In the same year, an

independent STI policy, namely the first National Policy on Science and Technology, 1986-1990 (NSTP), was also adopted to foster the application of S&T for both economic and social development. Before the 1990s, the S&T strategies centred on strengthening the institutional and scientific and educational infrastructures, as well as public awareness of S&T (Park & Kim, 2020). Later, in the 2000s onwards, the STI policy measures and strategies focused on enhancing the local capacities and capabilities, international partnerships, and governance. The most recent policy on STI, namely the National Policy on Science, Technology and Innovation, 2013-2020 (NPSTI), has been built on the basis of five foundations and six strategic thrusts (STs), as illustrated in Table 1.1.

Six strategic thrusts
ST 1: Advancing Scientific and Social
Research Development and
Commercialisation
ST 2: Developing, harnessing, and
intensifying talent
ST 3: Energising Industries
ST 4: Transforming STI governance
ST 5: Promoting and sensitising STI
ST 6: Enhancing strategic international
alliances

Table 1.1Five Foundations and Six Strategic Thrusts of NPSTI

(Source: Adapted from Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation [MOSTI], 2013, pp. 5-6)

Led by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), the implementation of STI policy in Malaysia is characterised by multiple institutional and actors' involvements. The key actors are the central agencies (e.g. Treasury, EPU and Public Service Department), sectoral ministries (e.g. Ministry of Education [MOE], Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries [MAFI], Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities [MPIC], Ministry of Human Resources [MOHR] and institutions of higher learning and research institutions under the ministries), councils (e.g. National Innovation Council [NIC], National Science and Resource Council [NSRC]), and other agencies and bodies (e.g. Malaysia Innovation Agency [*Agensi Inovasi Malaysia*]

- AIM], Academy of Sciences Malaysia [ASM], and Malaysia-Industry High Technology Group [MIGHT]) and the industry (Thiruchelvam, Chandran, Boon-Kwee, & Chan-Yuan, 2013). Multiple investments, including funding schemes and incentives, reflect the government's commitment to embracing STI in cross-cutting areas, including research and development (R&D) activities and high-technology and strategic sectors to drive the country's competitiveness. The government is committed to positioning Malaysia in the same position as the developed countries.

In accordance with the Agenda of Sustainable 2030, STI has been embedded as one of the key pillars in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), established on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs, adopted in 2015, aim to fulfil the Agenda of Sustainable Development 2030's central pledge of leaving no one behind. After it has successfully proven its record to become one of the fastest global economies to achieve the MDGs' first goal, i.e. reduced the number of people living in poverty by half, ahead of the deadline (EPU, 2015b), Malaysia also harmonises its Eleventh Malaysia Plan's (11MP) policy strategies with the SDGs to ascertain smooth implementation (EPU, 2017). The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) has been entrusted as the focal point to coordinate the SDGs indicators in Malaysia (DOSM, 2018). The policy on STI, namely the NPSTI, though it has no overt reference to MDGs (as it was developed two years before the SDGs), clearly portrays inclusiveness as part of the important policy outcomes, consistent with the spirit of SDGs.

Mounting literature has discussed the adverse effects of STI, especially on the marginalised, over the last years. Some studies have reported that modern STI has induced rising inequality in which the benefits are found to be unequally distributed (Chaminade & Pérez, 2014; Schwachula, Seoane, & Hornidge, 2014; Watkins & Ehst, 2008). Responding to this, several new innovation approaches have been introduced and implemented, which can be seen proliferating in many countries. The initiatives that are branded under the names of social innovation, grassroots innovation, frugal innovation, and inclusive innovation, inter alia, are geared towards resolving issues that arise in the current STI development. These initiatives are intended to ascertain that the STI benefits are fairly dispersed. Besides, such initiatives also promote the

participation of the people living in poverty, since, by benefiting but not participating in the growth process will widen the inequality gap (Vellala, Madala & Chhattopadhyay, 2014). In keeping with Bianco (2012), STI policy needs to meet the disadvantaged groups' needs as they are incapable and have a limited opportunity to escape poverty. Malaysia has also designed several policy measures seek to ensure that the lowest part of the population continues to benefit equally from the STI development, not only as passive users or consumers, but also as active participants in the STI ecosystem. The LIHs, nonetheless, have increasingly become part of the significant beneficiaries of the STI policy and programmes.

Nevertheless, implementing policy measures is not without difficulties. Malaysia's STI path is less satisfactory as compared to the developed countries (ASM, 2018), where the STI implementation has been linked with various issues found in a number of published reports. The heterogeneity or fragmentation of policies, actors and initiatives due to the involvement of multiple actors in the ecosystem (ASM, 2018; EPU, 2015d; OECD, 2016a; Park & Kim, 2020), found to be among the commonly cited issues impeding the optimisation of the STI development. International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2015) also observes that the establishment of innovation and research agencies faces a severe risk of duplication that could lead to inefficiency. As of 2017, ASM (2018) reported that Malaysia's national STI landscape consists of 268 actors, which include multiple ministries, state governments, federal and state agencies, councils, policies, universities, intermediaries, and economic corridors, as shown in Table 1.2. These explain that there are still gaps in the implementation at the national level amid the articulation of various STI policy measures. In addition, as stated by Thiruchelvam (2017), the STI policy in Malaysia has primarily been designed and implemented at the national level but lacking at the local level.

Table 1.2National STI Landscape

268 Actors		
23	Ministries	
157	Agencies under respective ministries	
27	STI-related councils	
27	- 1 international council	
	- 10 councils chaired by Prime Minister's Department	

268 Actors
- 16 national councils
Agencies under Prime Minister's Department
Active, STI-related National Policies
Public Universities
Intermediaries
State Government and Federal Territories
Economic Corridors

Table 1.2National STI Landscape (Continued)

(Source: Adapted from Academy of Sciences Malaysia, 2018, p. 7)

Given that the global aim on STI is no longer focused on STI for economic purposes per se, and the social development agenda has become a part of the important agenda for a balanced development, Malaysia's position on this issue needs to be well deliberated. This study, thereby, aimed at understanding the government's stance on STI, aligning with the SDGs and how the existing programmes have been put into practice. It concentrates on the policy implementation cycle, and factors arising from phases prior to implementation are also considered. This is because issues may occur due to improper planning and engagement. Past research on the topic related to STI for social development has generally shown that numerous factors influencing the implementation of the initiatives, including the lack of policy support or commitment and various constraining factors occur in the implementation process at the local level.

Instead of delving into the implementation outcome or impact, it is imperative to investigate the process where inputs are presented and what happens during implementation, mainly, the challenges faced by the actors involved. As the implementation process is the key to policymaking activities, comprehending the challenges and their outcomes is crucial (Rahmat, 2015). Besides, information on how to better execute plans or policy is vital for replicating previously effective programmes and is necessary for policy actors to enhance current or develop future programmes (Chen, 2012). Otherwise, the information gap can lead to complexity in replicating successful programmes (Backer, Liberman, & Kuehnel, 1986) and further affecting programme sustainability. Recognising that there have been limited studies undertaken in this area in Malaysia's setting since this topic is a relatively young research area, it serves as a potential area for further research.

1.3 Problem Statement

In cognisant of the paramount role of STI in enhancing social well-being and economic growth, the primary problem that the researcher seeks to address is relevant to the implementation of the STI policy for social development, particularly in addressing the well-being of the LIHs. STI is considered as one of the critical pillars in the SDG framework, where the important goals on STI are showcased in multiple goals such as 4 (education), 9 (innovation) and 17 (partnerships for the goals). In continuation of its success in the MDGs, Malaysia is committed to implementing the SGDs, with multiple efforts have been invested towards the development and implementation of policies. The adoption of the goals is showcased in the 11MP. The introduction of several policy measures and initiatives on STI aiming for social development outcomes signifies that the government strives to achieve the articulated policy goals for equal STI benefits to society.

Typically, implementing policies is considered a challenging phase as it entails various elements to ensure that policy statements can be translated into actions and produce outcomes intended. A closer look at the earlier works of the international scholars on this topic of study has concluded that significant issues linked to the ineffectual implementation of STI policy emerged from the central and local implementation levels. At the central level, STI aimed at social development was said to be inadequately and weakly supported (Dagnino, 2012; Daniels, 2015; Daniels, Ustuyuzhantsera, & Yao, 2017; Heeks et al., 2013). While at the local implementation level, several issues, such as inadequate funding, lack of grassroots innovators with technical skills, and insufficient information on customer needs for pro-inclusive innovators (Heeks et al., 2013; OECD, 2015b; Seyfang & Smith, 2007), to mention a few, have been identified.

Provided that Malaysia also recognises the STI's role as a tool in addressing the LIHs' needs, as outlined in policy measures and programmes, little is presently known about the implementation process of these government-funded programmes. As a matter of fact, the designed policy measures do not always automatically result in effective implementation (Egonmwan, 1991) as it does not work in a straightforward process, influenced by various factors. Several reports prepared and presented by ASM, MOSTI and the OECD suggested a myriad of gaps in translating the policy into the intended goals ascribed to various factors that emerged during the implementation. Furthermore, several studies have been undertaken on the topic relevant to the new innovation approaches. There have been limited efforts, nonetheless, to link the implementation of these approaches with the STI policy as an overarching policy on STI. These have inspired the researcher to investigate the STI policy for social development via the implementation lens, which remains unexplored to date.

Despite the significance of policy implementation topics under the policy analysis studies, most implementation studies focused on the Western hemisphere, with nearly 90 percent of all studies denoting ethnocentric bias (Saetren, 2005). According to Saetren (2005), the five most attended policy issues were in the fields of health, education, environmental, social and economic. In principle to the studies on the implementation of the STI policy in addressing the social issues, most of the previous studies performed in different countries, including Latin America, Africa, and several other countries, where the socio-economic conditions, issues and priorities might vary, and that the implementation of the policy is context dependent. Such countries, in particular the Latin American and African countries face multiple socio-economic with income inequality remain high (Alvaredo, Chancel, Piketty, Saez, & Zucman, 2018).

Since the studies are mostly carried out in different countries, STI policies are not equal. The policies may work in one country, but fail in another (Chaminade & Pérez, 2014). In the opinion of Tödtling and Trippl (2005), it is too common that the inefficient policy on innovation is the result of "one-size-fits-all" solutions being implemented. According to the scholars, no ideal model exists for policy on innovation (Tödtling & Trippl, 2005). When such demands vary, the solutions proposed might be limited or inapplicable from one country to another. Consequently, the studies may not be able to be extrapolated directly into the context of Malaysia. Moreover, in Malaysia, where the numbers of people living in poverty are far less than decades before, recorded at 5.6 percent absolute poverty, and the inequality gap stood at 0.407 in 2019 (DOSM, 2020), suggest that the efforts to eradicate such issues is on the right track. However, some issues related to the capacity of LIHs to cope with economic shocks and emergencies can inevitably push many of them back into poverty (EPU, 2015d; KRI, 2018). Thus, including the LIHs in such initiatives may require different approaches and priorities in the STI policy design and implementation.

In this respect, this calls for a review of the STI policy and the implementation of its programmes. Hill and Hupe (2002) state that context should be specified at the very beginning to the end of a study to understand the relationship between practice and theory. Consequently, this research aims to explore the implementation of the STI policy and its programmes aimed at addressing the LIHs' well-being in Malaysia. It seeks to define the STI landscape and scenario and establish a connection between STI policy and social development at the macro-level. In the meantime, the micro-level implementation is evaluated based on selected programmes designed to address the LIHs' well-being on how they are implemented, and the challenges faced by the actors involved. A policy framework to address the lacunas found in this study serves as the output of the study.

1.4 Research Objectives

To achieve the above-mentioned research aim, the following research objectives are outlined:

- (a) To investigate the landscape and scenario of the STI policy implementation in Malaysia.
- (b) To delve into the implementation process of the STI programmes that aim to address the well-being of the LIHs.

- (c) To identify significant challenges in implementing the STI programmes aimed at addressing the well-being of the LIHs.
- (d) To propose an implementation framework to facilitate the improvement of the STI policy implementation to address social development.

1.5 Research Questions

In achieving the objectives as mentioned earlier, the research questions are outlined as follows:

- (a) What is the landscape and scenario of the STI policy implementation in Malaysia?
- (b) How do the STI programmes that are aimed at addressing the well-being of the LIHs are implemented?
- (c) What are the challenges faced by the actors involved in implementing the STI programmes that aim to address the well-being of the LIHs?

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study's interest lies in the area of STI policy for social development in Malaysia. The exploration of this topic relates to the STI landscape, policy focus and programmes via the implementation lens, particularly the programmes aimed at addressing the LIHs' well-being. This exploratory case study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the policy focus, linking it with social development and the key challenges occurring during the policy and programmes implementation towards achieving the policy objectives. It is the first research attempt to uncover this area in Malaysia, where it would help yield valuable information about the country's stance regarding STI for social development. Different groups of participants were engaged to obtain their valuable insights via in-depth interviews alongside the written documents.

This study focuses on the implementation phase of the policy cycle, where the policy intentions are turned into actions (Barrett, 2004). However, considering that factors affecting the implementation process may surface due to how policy is being developed and its content, the challenges that arise from the phases prior to the implementation phase are also considered. This is because each phase of the policy cycle is interdependent. Issues that arise during the implementation process might be the results of ineffective problem framing and identification during the agenda-setting and policy formulation process. Therefore, in-depth inquiries into the overall implementation at the macro-level and the two chosen programmes at the micro-level were performed. The interaction between these levels is necessary to ensure consistency and coherence (Velasco, 2015).

At the macro-level, interviews were conducted, and several policy documents on STI, namely the STI policies (NSTP, the Second National Science and Technology Policy [NSTP 2] and NPSTI) and specific chapters and section on STI in Malaysia Plans documents, were reviewed and supported by relevant documents. The purpose of the interviews and policy documents review is to understand the landscape and the STI policy development and implementation scenario. Eventually, it seeks to grasp the STI policy focus in connection with the social development outcomes. At the microlevel, both programmes are at the programme level with several projects under them, and they are government-funded. The two programmes are identified as Programme A and Programme B. Programme A is targeting the B40 as the key beneficiaries. This programme focuses on the technological innovation developed by the government agencies to help the local communities. Programme B, which also focuses on benefitting the B40, seeks to address the group via the innovation projects from individuals who benefit the B40 group. These two programmes target to benefit the significant numbers of beneficiaries from the low-income segments of the population.

In a nutshell, the programmes share the characteristics of, (i) using new innovation approaches concepts; (ii) both are innovation programmes that are aimed

at addressing the marginalised; (iii) projects chosen were projects that attended to help the LIHs; (iv) projects have been completed; and (v) government-funded. The programmes fit the definition of new innovation approaches that are aimed at addressing the marginalised. The micro-level implementation analysis could offer an understanding of the critical elements addressed and unaddressed at the local level.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Continuous efforts to enhance the implementation of policies pursuant to the national goals are in the right direction in positioning Malaysia into a developed economy that is both inclusive and sustainable. Nonetheless, the government needs to fulfil its mandate to invest its limited resources and simultaneously generate a significant impact on society. It also needs to contemplate the long-term cost associated with the growing population demands and the changing socio-economic climate. The world is now in the age of doing more to solve emerging socio-economic problems by maximising and leveraging the available resources innovatively. While the social sector remains a second major consumer of government spending with an increased allocation at Ringgit Malaysia (RM) 24.2 billion in 2020 (Ministry of Finance [MOF], 2020) for subsidies and social assistance, aimed at addressing the socio-economic issues, for sustainability, the government also contemplates new directions and priorities in tackling multiple socio-economic issues.

The focus of STI policy in the past has been more myopically on competitiveness and economic imperatives (Bryden & Gezelius, 2017; Schwachula et al., 2014) and inclined towards high technology (Cozzens et al., 2007). Likewise, a plethora of previous research showed that STI focused on the economic aspect of technology and innovation as well as R&D, but little importance went to its critical role for social development. In the past years, STI has been recognised as a tool to tackle rising social challenges, leading to the emergence of new approaches to innovation. There has been an increased awareness that greater concentration needs to be paid to this area, with many countries worldwide have incorporated such approaches into their policies and programmes, including Malaysia. Such strategies

have been incorporated into various policies, including the national STI policy, namely the NPSTI, supporting the national development agenda for socio-economic development. However, research in this field in Malaysia remains relatively new and evolving.

In this regard, this study would provide multi-fold contributions to knowledge and practical perspectives. It adds to the understanding of the challenges that hinder the smooth implementation of the STI policy and the programmes aimed at addressing the well-being of the LIHs. This empirical evidence would also add to the current body of literature on STI policy, particularly on STI for social development, as there are limited empirical works done on this subject in Malaysia in the face of its increasing importance. This research also offers a deeper comprehension of different actors' knowledge and experiences engaged directly and indirectly in policy development and implementation in real-life situations. It also uncovers the relationships between theory and reality via the implementation lens from a theoretical perspective. Complementing the existing studies, the present study bids a comparatively new research direction, in line with the country's socio-economic, cultural, and political differences.

In practice, in a wider context, this study focuses on Malaysia's policy implementation scenario. This may provide an understanding of the challenges facing the policy implementation in Malaysia, which may be applicable to other policies available in the country. On STI policy specifically, this study would provide a better picture of the country's stance and gaps regarding the STI for social development as it highlights the crucial elements required for better implementation of STI policy measures targeting the lower-income population. The NPSTI and 11MP end in the year 2020, and the newly launched STI policy is taking place for future directions, covering measures and strategies starting from 2021 onwards. The documented findings and framework developed as the results of this study would provide a new perspective on this subject and enable policymakers to gain deeper insight into the essential elements required to establish and strengthen policy measures or programmes. It would also facilitate policy implementers to implement the policy consistently and efficiently. Subsequently, it promotes better opportunities and equitable outcomes across the board.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

It is necessary to comprehend that policy implementation is complex and involves a dynamic process. Since the implementation performance is often affected by central and local factors (Goggin et al., 1990), this study concentrates on two main scopes: macro-level and micro-level implementation. According to Matland (1995, p. 149), policy implementation occurs at two levels: at the macro-level, where the actors at the central level formulate the government programmes, and at the micro-level, where the local organisations or individuals responded to the macro-level plans. Hence, the consistency and coherency between both levels are important for effective implementation. Therefore, this study's conceptual framework is constructed, dictated by the top-down and bottom-up models of implementation to guide the exploration and analysis of the present study, as depicted in Figure 1.1.

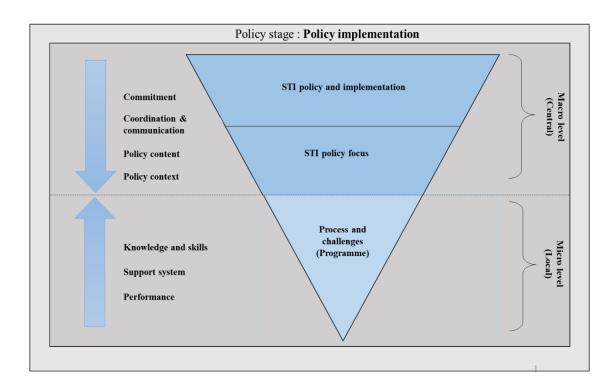


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

The framework presented above illustrates the two levels of implementation, namely, the macro and micro-level. The upside-down triangle illuminates that the understanding at the broader context (macro-level) is crucial to see the general picture of STI policy before it zooms into a narrower perspective of implementation, namely at the local (micro-level) implementation. At the macro-level, recent works support the notion that there is a lack of policy support for such innovation initiatives aiming at addressing the LIHs. The lack of policy support clarified the government's stance in recognising the LIHs as part of the significant direct beneficiaries of STI. The policy content or the statements, which explicitly focus on the economic trajectory of STI, would influence how the government invests its efforts and commitment to drive the policy, including the provisions of environment needed for programmes to thrive.

Note that the clarity of policy content is important for effective policy implementation (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). The clarity of policy facilitates the understanding of diverse actors involved in the implementation. In addition to policy clarity, commitment is also imperative in ensuring a well-written policy could be translated into outcomes intended. Besides, despite its importance, commitment is hard to secure, mainly when the outcome is unknown, intangible and requires a longer-term to materialise, primarily related to STI for social development (Hernandez & Cormican, 2016; Tucker, 2014). Nevertheless, it must reach all the actors involved for implementation success (Brynard, 2009). Coordination and communication are also key in policy implementation as they facilitate alignment of efforts in implementing policy, in which Giacchino and Kakabadse (2003) argue that commitment is directly dependent upon the coordination of all actors involved. The policy context where a policy is undertaken or operates also serves as an important influencing factor to policy uscess (Schofield & Sausman, 2004; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975).

Accordingly, the researcher analysed the selected programmes implementation at the micro-level, including the mechanisms and identified issues during the implementation process. In particular, the analysis under this level was undertaken based on the two selected programmes aimed to address the well-being of the LIHs in Malaysia. Past studies have shown that the STI initiatives faced several implementation problems at the local level. This reflects that the local implementers' experiences in implementing the initiatives under the condition where the implementation occurs, have implications towards implementation success (Stofile, 2008). As per Lipsky (1980), the conditions and constraints that occur during the implementation process by the implementers at the local level, in principle, can give rise to the failure to achieve policy outcomes. Such challenges, hence, demand autonomy or discretion in making decisions. The common influencing factors at the local level linked to the implementation of policy and programmes are related to the skills and knowledge (Brynard, 2009; Elmore, 1979; Rahmat, 2015; Smit, 2003; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975); support system (Elmore, 1979; Hill & Hupe, 2002; Lipsky, 1980; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975); and performance (Lipsky, 1969, 1980; Van Meter &Van Horn, 1975). In sum, both levels are analysed to thoroughly understand the significant elements contributing to the implementation gaps, emerging from both the top-down and the bottom-up.

1.9 Theoretical Underpinnings

Given that this is a policy implementation study, it is imperative to contemplate the theory of implementation in theoretical knowledge as the key theory for this research. The theory of implementation focuses primarily on the success and failure of policy implementation. This theory underpins this study because it seeks to understand the crucial elements affecting STI policy via the implementation lens. It is a widely used theory that explains policy implementation and the factors influencing its effectiveness. In particular, this theory suggests appropriate implementation methods by finding ways of controlling the implementation (Hill & Hupe, 2009). Several models of top-down and bottom-up approaches to implementation theory are incorporated to provide a better comprehension of the factors affecting the implementation process.

Several essential elements characterised top-down approaches. The scholars remark policy implementation as entailing a hierarchical structure of authority where the process moves downward from the top. The top-down scholars believe that policymakers are the main actors and rely on the variables manipulable at the central level (Matland, 1995). This approach mainly concentrates on producing understandable policy objectives and controlling the implementation stage (Pülzl & Treib, 2007). Hence, the scholars place a priority on clear policies (Matland, 1995),

and with that assumption in mind, they simply delve into "what happens after a bill becomes a law" rather than looking into the entire policy process (Bardach, 1977). Accordingly, a policy is successful when the implementers comply with the policy standard and objectives. The top-down models served to understand this study are by Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), Sabatier and Mazmanian (1979, 1980), and Mazmanian and Sabatier's (1983) models of implementation. In general, the models help the researcher analyses the role of policy content, commitment, coordination, and context at the macro-level implementation. These elements would have an influence on implementation success.

On the other hand, the bottom-uppers perceive policy implementers or the local bureaucrats as the key policy players (Pülzl & Treib, 2007) and argue that policy is to be made locally (Matland, 1995). Attention is also given to the target groups, where their participation in the policymaking process is beheld as necessary (Pülzl & Treib, 2007). The bottom-uppers examine policies with more significant uncertainty, which could cause problems in achieving policy goals (Matland, 1995). Instead of ensuring that formulated policies are transparent and can be implemented appropriately (Pülzl & Treib, 2007), the scholars focus on comprehending "and explanation on the basis that it is not possible to prescribe without understanding" (Barrett, 2004, p. 255) and the role of discretion at the policy implementation level affects the translation of policy priorities. The entire cycle of "how policies are defined, shaped, implemented, and redefined" (Pülzl & Treib, 2007, p. 94) with the unavoidable and required involvement of other stakeholders at the later stages of the policy cycle is also given more prominence (Hill & Hupe, 2002). The implementers' role herein is regarded as the most important actor in ensuring policy success as they deal with dynamic issues occurring at the local level and, therefore, should not be ignored. One of the wellknown traditional bottom-up models of implementation is street-level bureaucrats by Lipsky (1980) is also referred to reinforce the literature of this study.

1.10 Definition of Terms

The relevant terms used in this study are explained in the following:

Policy: A policy is defined as "a set of actions taken to control the system, to help solve problems within it or caused by it, or to help obtain benefits from it" (Walker & Marchau, 2017, p. 3). Firme, Letichevsky and Dannemann (2009) establish that a policy is "a deliberate plan of action that guides decisions and achieves rational outcomes" (p. 172). In general, the policy can be interpreted as plans or guidelines that guide the actors involved in executing the stipulated plans.

Policy implementation: Policy implementation can be understood as "carrying out, accomplishing, fulfilling, producing or completing a given task" (Paudel, 2009, p. 36). Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) unequivocally termed policy implementation as "those actions by public or private individuals (or groups) that are directed at the achievement of objectives outlined in the prior policy decisions" (p. 447). Succinctly, the principle of policy implementation is to carry out policy measures and initiatives to accomplish the policy objectives.

Implementation process: As per Rahmat (2015), the implementation process refers to policies that are put into effect and the key features of the process are "the timely and satisfactory performance of certain necessary tasks related to carrying out the intent of the law" (Paudel, 2009, p. 38). During the process, inputs, including resources, are placed into the programmes to ensure that activities could be carried out throughout the process to achieve the programmes' objectives.

Programme: A programme is what the government does (Rose, 1984, Chapter 1), translated from the policy (May & Wildavsky, 1978). It involves a mixture of multiple ways of the government's resources and tools, including laws, civil servant, government expenditure, and tax incentives, are utilised (Hood, 2009; Howlett, 2010). The government plays a role to chalk out programmes as part of the actions aligning with the policy decisions.

Implementation gap: The implementation gap refers to the differences between what is seen and what is anticipated (Hill & Hupe, 2009). It can be either non-implementation or inaction where policy intends are not put into effect as planned (Hill & Hupe, 2009; Hogwood & Gunn, 1984) or unsuccessful implementation where the

policy strategies are implemented but not favourable (Fox, Bayat & Ferreira, 2007). The implementation gaps can be attributed to multiple factors that emerge throughout the policy cycle.

Policy content: As per Brynard and De Coning (2006), the content of the policy refers to the intention or the policy objective, its relation to the problems and the methods to be applied to solve the problems. It serves as the core element for a policy because it is the government statements of intent in the form of policy documents. Thus, it should be explicit and not conflicting to be understood by those affected by the policy.

Policy focus: The term focus is defined by Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (n.d.) as "the thing or person that people are most interested in; the act of paying special attention to something and making people interested in it." Hence, policy focus denotes the government's stance reflected in the policy statements in the policy documents. The focus of the policy can result in how inputs required for the policy implementation process are put in place.

Leadership: It refers to individuals' internal values that can lead to changes by their influence and commitment towards changes. On the word of Jacobs and Jaques, 1990, p. 281), "leadership is a process of giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort, and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve purpose." For innovation, a leader's capacity to adapt the organisation to changing environments and create a favourable climate for changes is fundamental towards effective innovation (Ricard, Klijn, Lewis, & Ysa, 2017).

Commitment: It refers to the extent of an individual's conduct over the tasks and responsibilities assigned to them to support or implement a policy. Commitment, as per Brynard (2009), is the "ability to maintain the focus on an initiative from its inception through to its delivery" (p. 561). The commitment must be extended to as many stakeholders as possible for implementation success (Brynard, 2009).

Coordination: It involves a certain extent of working together to accomplish the same policy aims (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 2007). The alignment of efforts and initiatives

between various actors is imperative in ensuring the optimisation of policy impact. Hence, coordination between actors is aimed at aligning efforts and mitigating the overlapping or redundancy of implementation. In achieving this, policies must generate collective knowledge that everyone will undertake the desired action (World Bank, 2017).

Communication: Briefly, Katz and Kahn (1978) describe communication as the process of swapping information and imparting meaning within an organisation. In implementing a policy, communication must be effectively enforced between implementers and target groups (Rahmat, 2015). This activity would reduce the risk of misinterpretation of policy that will cause a redundancy of efforts. Hence, for effective communication of policy, plain language should efficiently convey information to different policy audiences (Mackay & Shaxton, 2005).

Priority setting: It is one of the mechanisms where focus areas are set up based on existing capacities, capabilities, and future potentials. This mechanism prevents unnecessary expenses for the government as a result of a lack of planning and direction. In policy implementation, priority setting helps to define or make available tools and skills (knowledge, networks and money) to implement the prioritised policy objectives (OECD, 2012a).

Enabling environment: Cahill (2010) defines the term enabling environment as a context that permits a vast array of programmes, services, investments, and support that cultivate and encourage innovation. Such context also can result in smooth and effective implementation. In accordance with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) (2016), STI's success relies on an enabling environment that embraces the actors involved and supports the actors to participate in the STI activities continuously and effectively.

1.11 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured into five chapters. Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter, where it provides the context or background of the study, including the identification of the problems statement, research questions, objectives, and the research scope. The orientation of the study and its significance are also explained in this chapter. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on concepts, theoretical perspectives and past studies that inform this study's investigation. The discussion of the research gap is also carried out in this chapter to justify this study's feasibility. Chapter 3 describes the methodology applied in the research. It discusses the design and strategies adopted in the study. A comprehensive explanation is also given on data collection and data analysis techniques in this chapter. Furthermore, it presented the ethical consideration as well as reliability and validity of the empirical research. Chapter 4 presents the analysis and findings based on the data obtained from the interviews carried out and written documents. The findings are arranged according to the research questions. At the end of this chapter, it interprets and explores the results and the connections with the theoretical perspectives and previous studies. The policy implementation framework to resolve gaps based on the study findings is addressed in Chapter 5 simultaneously. Summary, conclusion, and implications of the findings, as well as the study limitations and recommendations for future studies, are also presented in Chapter 5.

1.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter offered a summary of the overall content of this study. It offered a brief overview of the study's background, research questions, objectives, and study scopes. It also discussed why this study is of interest and sought to shed light on the topic that has not previously been offered, particularly in Malaysia's setting. Based on the premise, the researcher aims to explore the implementation of the STI policy and its programmes aimed at addressing the LIHs' well-being in Malaysia. It is envisaged that this study could fill the gaps in the implementation of STI policy and its programmes, which are frequently linked with various challenges identified by previous scholars. Within the following chapter, the literature review discusses the concepts used in this analysis within the greater depth and elaborates on the study's theoretical foundations. Past research undertaken both locally and internationally offers a basis for an understanding and identifying gaps to be addressed.

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