



***FACTORS INFLUENCING THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN FEDERAL  
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN MALAYSIA***

**SITHRA DEVI VELLASAMY**

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AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN MALAYSIA**

By

**SITHRA DEVI VELLASAMY**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**February 2019**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment  
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**February 2019**

**Chairman : Kenny Teoh Guan Cheng, PhD**  
**Faculty : Economic and Management**

Effective collaboration between public agencies is necessary for the delivery of goods and services to the people; and expanding knowledge in this area will benefit the society. Hence, this study sought to identify the factors that influence and improve the collaboration outcomes between the Federal and Local Government in Malaysia by empirically testing the Ansell & Gash Contingency Model of Collaborative Governance. Three broad based theories, namely Transformational Leadership, Resource Dependency and Theory of Collaborative Advantage were used to underpin the conceptual framework which had eight constructs namely Transformational Leadership (idealized influence, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation), Resource Dependency (funding, skills and expertise, geographical coverage), Collaborative Governance (planning, monitoring and feedback), Relational Capital (trust, commitment, communication) and Interdependence (task, goal, reward). This was a quantitative study conducted among Malaysian Federal Government and Local Government officers, in particular, the Ministry of Urban Well Being, Housing and Local Council. The data were analyzed using both SPSS and Smart PLS 3.0. The findings revealed that Transformational Leadership and Resource Dependency both had positive relations with Relational Capital and Interdependence; and all these constructs had positive influence towards improving the Star Rating and Inter-Organizational Learning of local councils. Contrary to the study prediction, Collaborative Governance did not moderate the relationships between the constructs. Instead, a *post-hoc* analysis found that Collaborative Monitoring and Feedback mediated the relationships of the independent (Relational Capital and Interdependence) and dependent (Collaboration Outcome) variables. The findings from this study provide new insights for managers and leaders on aspects that could improve the collaboration processes between the Federal and Local Government in Malaysia.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**FAKTOR – FAKTOR YANG MEMPENGARUHI KOLABORASI ANTARA  
ANTARA KERAJAAN PERSEKUTUAN DAN KERAJAAN TEMPATAN DI  
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Kolaborasi antara agensi-agensi awam adalah perlu untuk penyampaian produk yang baik dan perkhidmatan yang berkesan kepada rakyat dan akan memperluas pengetahuan di dalam bidang ini serta memberi manfaat kepada masyarakat. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi dan memperbaiki hasil kolaborasi antara Kerajaan Persekutuan dan Kerajaan Tempatan di Malaysia dengan menguji secara empirikal Model Kontinjensi Ansell & Gash mengenai tadbir urus kolaborasi. Tiga teori umum iaitu Kepimpinan Transformasi, Pergantungan Sumber dan Teori Kelebihan Kerjasama telah digunakan untuk menyokong rangka kerja konseptual yang mempunyai lapan konstruk iaitu Kepimpinan Transformasional (pengaruh ideal, pertimbangan individu, rangsangan intelektual, motivasi inspirasi), Ketergantungan Sumber, Tadbir Urus Kerjasama Untuk Perancangan, Pemantauan dan Maklum Balas, Modal Hubungan (kepercayaan, komitmen, komunikasi) dan Saling Ketergantungan (tugas, matlamat, ganjaran). Ini adalah kajian kuantitatif, berdasarkan tinjauan yang dijalankan di antara Kerajaan Persekutuan dan Kerajaan Tempatan Malaysia, khususnya, Kementerian Perumahan Bandar dan Majlis Tempatan. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan kedua-dua SPSS dan Smart PLS 3.0. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa Kepimpinan Transformasi dan Kebergantungan Sumber kedua-duanya mempunyai hubungan positif dengan Modal Hubungan dan Saling Ketergantungan dan semua konstruk ini mempunyai pengaruh positif ke arah meningkatkan Penarafan Bintang dan Pembelajaran Antara Organisasi. Bertentangan dengan ramalan kajian, Tadbir Urus Kerjasama tidak *moderate* hubungan antara konstruk. Sebaliknya, analisis pasca-hoc menemui pemantauan dan maklum balas kolaborasi *mediate* hubungan-hubungan awal. Penemuan dari kajian ini memberikan pandangan baru untuk pengurus dan pemimpin mengenai aspek yang boleh memberi kesan terhadap kolaborasi antara Kerajaan Persekutuan dan Majlis Tempatan.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of study

Public sector collaborations have been gaining traction in the research field in the wake of the much touted benefits realized in private sectors from collaboration (Siv & McGuire, 2015). This delayed interest in this sector is primarily due to the fact that governments always performed their role in collaboration with multiple stakeholder and functioned within the aspects of governance, administration, organizational autonomy, mutuality and norms (Thomson & Perry, 2006). Poister (2010) reviewed and found scholars and practitioners have been interested in strategic planning and management in the public sector for more than two decades. During this period, many articles and books have been published on these subjects, and strategic management awareness has become more prevalent in the public sector. Huxham et al. (1992) identified collaboration to be more commonly practised as a result of privatization; and Smith (1994) discovered that even though strategic management was more prevalent in the private sector, the interest in managing strategically in the public sector has increased tremendously since the 1980s. Today, there is a growing body of research specifically targeting improvement to collaborations outcomes in the public sector.

In their work, Ramadass et al., (2013) highlighted the Malaysian government's concerns about the public sector strategies and their desired outcomes. The Malaysian Government has implemented various initiatives and reform processes which are intended to transform the efficient delivery of the public services. Under the Government's Transformation Programme (GTP) 2010, the nation's priority areas known as National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) require collaboration among the public agencies to meet the demands of society (PMO, 2013). In other words, to achieve favourable outcomes of the key indicators, collaboration among public agencies is mandatory. According to Ramadass et al., (2013) collaboration is the lever for solving complex social problems to advance societal wellbeing. Numerous past studies have shown that inter-organizational collaboration is becoming increasingly common in both the public and the private sector (Huxham et al., 1992; Smith, 1994; Poister et al. 2010, Ramadass et al. 2013 and Proulx et al. 2014). Crotts & March (2000) postulated, the main reasons for this trend is rapid globalisation and the accelerating pace of technological innovation. Arsenault (1998) highlighted, an organization might choose to collaborate to increase or maintain its mission and Sowa (2009) explained, collaboration can help the organization improve the depth or quality of its services, and such collaboration might take the form of sharing financial resources or organizational expertise. Mulroy & Shay (1998) argued, if collaboration can help an organization achieve its mission in the short term, then the organization may be willing to collaborate in the longer term too. Hence, anticipated favourable outcomes are the main reason for organisations to collaborate. As such, due to the benefits resulting from collaborative arrangements, scholars have recognized strategic collaboration as



an important area for research. One such collaboration is strategic collaboration between the federal government and local government in Malaysia; i.e., collaborating in NKRAAs to achieve societal wellbeing.

Suarez & Hwang (2013) have reviewed some of the labels used to describe inter-organizational relationships: joint ventures, partnerships, networks, consortiums, and collaborations, among others. Thomson et al. (2007) put it best when he reported, inter-organizational collaboration to be a process that emerges as organizations interact with one another to create new organizational and social structures; or to achieve objectives between them. Accordingly, this research uses the term collaboration to mean “inter-organizational collaborative relationship”.

Certainly collaborations put big demands on participating organizations (Huxham et al., 1992); for example, collaboration requires organizations to interact in ways not required as when these organizations act independently (Proulx et al., 2014) and here lies the main challenge of collaboration i.e., the loss of autonomy (Proulx et al., 2014). Therefore, collaboration can threaten the identifiable boundary of any organization (Proulx et al., 2014). In carrying out collaborative activities organizations will seek to retain and manage boundaries (Tzasis 2009) because the loss of autonomy brings about a measure of risk (Proulx et al., 2014). Collaborating organizations risk their reputations and loss of control over their activities, and are often involved in unequal exchanges in terms of resources (Snaveley & Tracy, 2002). In fact, Bunker (2012) raised the concern that such unequal partnerships often result in one organization dominating the collaboration, perhaps to the detriment of the other organization; and this type of domination can take several forms, all of which may involve a violation of the partner organization’s trust (Proulx et al. 2014)

According to Proulx et al. (2014), the violation of trust can be due to the disruption caused by the differences between the goals of the individual organizations; and the goals of the collaboration. However, Zineldin & Bredenl w (2003) have found strategic collaboration to be attractive, but that it is not simple or easy to create, develop and support. In sum, collaboration success is mostly threatened by the loss of autonomy and boundary which eventually violate trust between the collaborating organizations.

Zineldin & Bredenlow (2003) have pointed out, there are many implementation problems and the failure rate of strategic alliances is estimated to be as high as 70%. Dyer et al. (2001) have stated that alliances are fraught with risks, and almost half eventually fail. Similarly, a study conducted by Kale & Singh (2009) showed between 30% to 70% of alliances fail. According to Marek & Brock (2014), successful collaboration is difficult to achieve and failure is common. In the public sector too, there are many examples of failures in joined-up government initiatives. (Mitchell et al., 2015). Given this potential for failure, why would governments persist with strategic collaboration? The straight forward answer is because governments have no other choice? No government can possibly accomplish by itself the myriad of tasks

that will be required; and no single jurisdiction will have enough resources to accomplish its responsibilities by itself (Beaumont & McDowell, 2014)

Yet, in spite of all the bad news, strategic collaboration has become an essential element in the public sector. There is now more reliance on inter-organisational collaborations leading to public managers being entrapped in both vertical and horizontal structures (Agranoff, 2004). Bearing this in mind, and in order to achieve positive outcomes in strategic collaboration, it is therefore imperative that the different factors determinants influencing the success of strategic collaboration be identified and investigated.

In this research, the success of strategic collaboration between federal government, state government and local government are viewed as a path to achieve favourable outcomes. A survey conducted by O'Leary (2014) on local government officials revealed that 84% local government managers see collaboration as a highly effective approach to increase performance and a successful way of solving complex societal problems.

However, it is too broad to study the collaborative between the federal government, state government and local government together. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, collaboration between federal government and local government is focused. Certainly, future studies on state government and federal government collaboration; and local government and state government collaboration will contribute significantly to the body of research. Hence, this study will focus on federal government and local government collaboration.

## **1.2 Study Context**

This research centers on strategic management with a special focus on strategic collaboration in the public sector between the federal government and local government in Malaysia. In the Malaysian context, the Federal Government, State government and Local Authorities are responsible for providing services as well as implementing economic, social, physical and urban development within the gazetted authorities and boundaries. As such, the role of the Federal Government, State Governments and Local Authorities on economic development as well as political and social stability is undoubtedly critical to delivering more customer-oriented and higher standard services. As stated earlier on, state governments are not included in this study because their inclusion would make this research overly cumbersome. Therefore, this study is an effort to find the factors determinants that influence the success of collaboration between the Federal Government and Local Government. The findings are expected to offer insight that might have impact; and contribute to the successful adoption of strategic collaboration between the Federal Government and Local Government.

Although previous studies have explored the determinants of effective strategic collaboration, there is still a lack of knowledge in the area of an integrated theoretical approach to public sector collaboration, specifically the strategic collaboration between federal government and local government. This research has integrated the Theory of Collaborative Advantage, Stakeholder Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Personal Relationships Theory and Interdependence Theory into a unified framework to analyse the factors determinants influencing the success of Federal Government and Local Government collaboration.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

There is much interest in the public sector institutional determinants on strategic management but efforts to assess linkages between strategic planning processes and organizational outcomes or performance improvements remains sparse (Poister et al, 2010). The collaboration carried out by local government and their stakeholders were also found to be riddled with difficulties as the collaboration process impeded performance because it is time-consuming, stressful with conflicts between collaborating organizations and the public (Mitchell et al., 2015). Hoornbeek & Pascarella, (2015) suggested that future research on the success of local government should account for key influences such as the effect of trust, federal government mandates and grants and the combined presence of this variable and trust. According to Boyne (2003) there is extensive evidence of a positive relationship between planning and performance in private sector collaboration and the author encouraged scholars to study whether this also applied to public sector collaboration. Past studies have also identified other factors that inhibit the success of public sector collaboration, such as: (1) governance related issues; (2) difficulties related to Relational Capital; (3) lack of leadership among the collaborating partners and, (4) poor performance management by the collaborating partners (Milward, Provan, Fish, Isett, & Huang, 2009) (Ingraham & Getha-Taylor, 2004). Based on some of these knowledge gaps which is further explored and explained at para 1,8, this study sets out to determine those factors that will influence to improve the collaboration out by centering this research on the following thesis statement:

#### **The factors influencing the collaboration between the Federal and Local Government in Malaysia**

Federal Government and Local Government collaboration constitute the focus of this research because of their significant role in the government transformation plan (GTP, 2010). This study is expected to fill this knowledge gap and provide an overall picture of strategic collaboration success between the Federal Government and Local Government; and their relationships with factors determinants in the public sector of Malaysia. This study will be conducted in the Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government that are related to the National Key Results (NKRA's) in Malaysia.

## 1.4 Federal Government, State Government and Local Government Structure

Federal government refers to a group of political units, such as states and provinces joined together in a federation. In Malaysia, the federal government or national government authority is based in the federal territories of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan, with the federal executive based in Putrajaya. Malaysia is a federation of 13 states operating within a constitutional monarchy under the Westminster parliamentary system and is categorized as a representative democracy. The federal government of Malaysia adheres to, and is created by, the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, the supreme law of the land.

Each state government in Malaysia is created by the respective state constitution. Each state has a unicameral state legislative chamber whose members are elected from single-member constituencies. In states without hereditary rulers, State governments are led by Chief Ministers in Malay states, who represent state assembly members from the majority party in the State Assembly. In each of the states with a hereditary ruler, the Chief Minister is required to be Malay, appointed by the Sultan upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister. They advise their respective sultans or governors on matters of law and administration.

Local government refers to the entities with statutory powers to provide urban services to the residents and may serve as the local planning authority to assure consistency in urban development according to stipulated documents. In Malaysia, the Local Government is the third level of Government after the Federal Government and State Government. In addition to providing basic amenities, collecting and managing waste and garbage as well as planning and developing the area under its jurisdiction. Local government have the power to collect taxes (in the form of assessment tax), to create laws and rules (in the form of by-laws) and to grant licences and permits for any trade in its area of jurisdiction. Basically, local government is responsible for providing city services critical to ensure the well-being and prosperity of the population and contribute to their socio-economic development as a whole. The functions of local government in the country can be grouped into five categories, namely, protective, environmental, commercial, personal and recreational.

The relationship between state government and local government can be difficult at times, requiring intervention from the federal government (Phang, 2008). The local government is cloaked with the power accorded to it pursuant to the Local Government Act 1976 (LGA '76). The federal minister for Housing and Local Government is tasked to implement the laws pertaining to local government in Peninsula Malaysia (Phang, 2008). In accordance to S38 of LGA '76, there are four sources of revenue:-

- a) all taxes, rates, rents, licence fees, dues and other sums or charges payable to the local authority by virtue of the Act or other written law;

- b) all charges or profits arising from any trade, service or undertaking carried on by the local authority under the powers vested in it;
- c) all interest on any money invested by the local authority and all income arising from or out of the property of the local authority, movable and immovable; and
- d) all other revenue accruing to the local authority from the Government of the Federation or of any State or from any statutory body, other local authority or from any other sources as grants, contributions, endowments or otherwise.

Currently, local authorities receive grants from the Federal government at varying levels depending on their need basis as well as the amount of revenue raised from other sources from (a) to (c). Although the reliance on Federal Government funding has enabled the Federal Government to exert control over Local Governments (Phang, 2008), having control does not necessarily result in higher efficiency in the delivery of services to the local constituents. It is the collaboration between the Local Government and Federal Government that will improve the level of service delivery because both parties work together to achieve a shared vision of improving societal well-being.

### **1.5 Decentralization and Devolution to Local Government**

The existence of the Local Government in Peninsula Malaysia is by virtue of Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1976 (Act 171) which provides that "local authority" shall mean any City Council, Municipal Council or District Council, as the case maybe; and in relation to the Federal Territory, means the commissioner of the City of Kuala Lumpur appointed under Section 3 of the Federal Capital Act, 1960.

Decentralization is termed as the process of performing activities by units lower than the central government (Phang, 2008). On a wider context, decentralization refers to the process of discharging functions over wide areas by working closely with local and regional bodies, such as local authorities and field offices (Greenwood, J., Pyper, R. & Wilson, 2002). According to Jütting et al, (2005) decentralization leads to increases in efficiency and improved governance. For the purpose of this research, decentralization is defined as the sharing of part of the governmental power by a central ruling group (in this case the Federal Government) with other groups such as State Governments and Local Governments, each having authority within a specific area of the state (Prud'homme, 1995).

Devolution refers to the transfer of power of authority from a central government to a state or local government (Starling, 2005). Kurland & Kurland (2013) stated that devolution is the decentralisation of programme authority and responsibility to achieve greater administrative efficiency or program standards. Devolution witnesses the transfer of functions from central government, to regional and local government empowered by acts of parliament and constitution (Marcuccio & Steccolini, 2005). The functions of local government vary from country to country; in the United Kingdom, the functions are so wide that almost every service is at the local level



(David, Wilson & Chris, 2011). This, however, differs from the Malaysian context where education and health are not covered by the local government.

## 1.6 Local Government in Peninsula Malaysia

Local Government forms the third tier of government in Malaysia, sitting below the Federal Government and State Government. Local Government systems and resource channelling systems vary across the states in Malaysia. In Malaysia, there are 149 local government authorities and they are categorized as City Council, Municipal and District Council (Ministry of Urban WellBeing, Housing and Local Government 2017). Table 1.1 shows the statistic for Local Governments of states and category.

**Table 1.1 : Statistic on Local Government**

State	City Council	Municipal	District Council
Johor	1	6	8
Kedah	1	3	7
Kelantan	0	1	11
Malacca	1	3	0
Negeri Sembilan	0	3	5
Pahang	0	3	8
Pulau Pinang	1	1	0
Perak	1	4	10
Perlis	0	1	0
Selangor	2	6	4
Terengganu	1	2	4
Sabah	1	2	21
Sarawak	3	3	20
W. Persekutuan	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>98</b>

The local governments are categorized to facilitate management and federal government funding. The following is a description and criteria for each category of local government (Ministry of Urban Well Being Housing and Local Government, 2017)

### 1.6.1 City Council

- Local Authority (Include the administrative centre in the state).
- Population not less than 500,000.
- Annual income from not less from RM100 million.
- Provision of services including revenue collection, approval of development orders and enforcement.
- Address municipal issues.
- Promotion of city identity.

- Own industrial centres, finance and facilitating institutions to conduct business and trade to attract investors.
- Complete educational institution centre with a university, college, museum and public library.
- Centre for cultural activity, sport and recreation events and convention at the national and international level.
- Adequate infrastructural facility.
- International recognition.

### **1.6.2 Municipal**

- Capital city or administrative centre for any State or district.
- Population not less than 150,000 persons.
- Annual income not less from RM20 million.
- Industrial activity, business, tourism and major housing present
- Space to promote growth in investment and commercial activity.
- Moderate level of infrastructure.
- Local community programmes.

### **1.6.3 District Council**

- Other areas apart from major towns.
- Inhabitants less than 150,000 persons.
- Total annual revenue less than RM20 million.
- Provide infrastructure facilities and public utilities.

## **1.7 Government Transformation Plan (GTP)**

Based on the Malaysian Government strategic roadmap, GTP is the overall engine of change (PMO, 2013). The GTP roadmap details the objectives, outcomes and the initial set of actions in areas identified as National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) and Ministerial Key Result Areas (MKRAs). The NKRAs cover 6 areas:

- Reducing crime.
- Fighting corruption.
- Improving student outcomes.
- Raising living standards of low-income households.
- Improving rural basic infrastructure.
- Improving urban public transport.

### 1.7.1 National Key Result Areas (NKRAs)

As GTP acts as the overall engine of change, the National Key Results Areas (NKRAs) are the pistons within. Each NKRA works individually, but through their complementary efforts, they generate a force of change that is greater than the sum of its parts. Each NKRA is deemed to have the greatest impact on the citizens. The NKRAs were not arbitrarily selected but rather they are the result of various surveys, opinion polls and dialogue conducted with the citizens (PEMANDU, 2014). According to PEMANDU (2014), the seven NKRA's are as listed below:

**Table 1.2 : National Key Result Area**

<b>NKRA's</b>	<b>HEADED BY</b>
Reducing Crime	Minister of Home Affairs
Fighting Corruption	Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, in charge of Law
Improving Student Outcomes	Minister of Education
Raising Living Standards of Low-Income Households	Minister of Women, Family and Community Development
Improving Rural Development	Minister of Rural and Regional Development
Improving Urban Public Transport	Minister of Transport
Addressing Cost of Living	Deputy Prime Minister

### 1.7.2 Local Government Role in GTP

According to PEMANDU (2014), aspects not covered by the NKRAs but deemed important will receive attention from the federal government at the ministerial level. The areas deemed important include those services that have direct touch points with the citizens and many of these services are delivered through Local Government; hence, the need for close working relationships between the Federal Government and Local Government. The main function of local government is to provide the necessities for the tax payer; however, their roles are expanding and have become more challenging (ESCAP, 2012). According to Aminuddin et al, (2012) besides emphasizing financial control, local government in Malaysia now have performance measurements and monitoring which is a component in the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) Roadmap established by the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU, 2010). Aminuddin et al, (2012) further elaborated that Ministerial Key Result Areas (MKRAs) and Ministerial Key Performance Indicators (MKPIs) align to the National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) and they are further mapped to The Ministry of Urban Well Being, Housing and Local Government (KPKT) which governs all local government in Malaysia. KPKT governs with a clear focus the plan, coordination and implementation of the social agenda and housing for urban people through housing programmes, urban planning, landscape planning, city services and fire rescue services. Three focus areas have been identified: To increase the number of homes for low-income households in urban areas; to support the revival of existing licensed abandoned private residential projects; and to increase the efficiency of service delivery of local government. Among the MKPIs established



are additional numbers of Local Government (PBT) in Peninsular Malaysia administering online services such as ePBT/ e-local government and the number of local governments upgraded from their current ratings under the SSR-PBT Star Rating System (Government Transformation Programme (GTP) Roadmap, 2010). As the third tier of government in Malaysia, local government is closest to the community and expected to deliver key public services efficiently (Joseph, 2014). To this extent, the local governments collaborate with federal government to achieve the goals of the government transformation programs.

## 1.8 Research Gaps

Public sector collaboration is an important area for research because improvement in this field will bring about greater good benefiting the public at larger; but yet there is a general lack of studies in this area (Leland & Thurmaier, 2014) (Mala & Lesley, 2012) (Siv & McGuire, 2015). These works emphasized the importance of public administrators to create and manage collaborations between the different levels of government. Collaborative public management has become an issue of huge interest (Agranoff, 2007) and O'Flynn & Wanna (2011) found governments across the developed world are preaching the gospel of collaboration or alliances, having realized that the goals and objectives of government cannot be effectively achieved without collaborative effort of public-public, public-private and public-nongovernmental organizations.

Vangen & Huxham (2003) documented their concerns on how collaboration puts big demands on participating organizations. They further elaborated: Collaboration often requires organizations to interact in ways that are not required, when they act independently but yet this area of research remains under-explored in the public sector. Understanding how collaboration will improve the desired outcome is vital, since Kettl has (2006) pointed out that the critical challenge in public management today lies in developing the systems and personnel who are able to integrate and collaborate. Marek & Brock (2014) raised the concern that despite efforts by scholars to examine collaboration effectiveness, there is much to learn about how interaction between collaborative partners can lead to successful outcomes. Furthermore, the impact of inter-organizational collaboration on each phase of program implementation namely planning phase, execution and monitoring phase and evaluation and feedback phase in also under-researched as past studies had primarily explored the comprehensive outcome of inter-organizational collaboration (Palinkas et al., 2014). Clearly there is a need to consider the issues related to inter-organizational collaboration, in particular Federal Government and Local Government.

Mitchell et al., (2015) highlighted this gap in public administration where the authors found that inter-organizational collaboration studies were dominated by inter-agency, and non-profit and public collaboration. Moreover, prior research have only sparsely studied the linkages between collaboration and performance with no consideration of the inter-sectoral context (Mitchell et al., 2015). This lack of collaborative networks among Local Government was also noted by Agranoff (2007) . To address this gap

and improve the overall understanding of inter-organizational collaboration in the public sector, this research focuses on not one but two distinct organizational sectors: local government and federal government. The involvement of state government is deliberately excluded in this study for the sake of making the context specific; and to allow future studies to focus on State Government and Federal Government Collaboration.

In the general area of public sector inter-organizational collaboration, literature review has shown that there is a need to identify the various factors that will advance the collaborative effort between the partners. The majority of past studies focused on factors that contribute towards successful outcomes in the private sector (Kale & Singh, 2009). The authors also pointed out the lack of governance mechanisms related to collaboration and they recommended creating clear sets of mutual rights and obligations of partners, specifying each partner's expected inputs, governance structure, and expected outputs that could be useful to enhance outcomes, drawing particular attention to the fact that private sector governance differs from public sector governance. This difference is primarily due to their underpinning orientations where the private sector aims for profit maximization; whereas the public sector is motivated by societal wellbeing.

Drawing inspiration from the work of Ansell & Gash (2007) and after reviewing past studies, this research will focus on the leadership aspects that bring forth effective collaborations; as well as the situational factors that are best suited for successful collaborative outcomes. Ansell & Gash (2007)'s contingency model on collaborative governance have highlighted a number of factors which will be considered in this study. In sum, this study seeks to contribute knowledge to the field of public-public inter-organizational collaboration and close the gaps on the factors determinants to successful collaboration outcomes.

## **1.9 Research Questions**

The research questions for this study are;

- RQ1. Do resource dependence and transformational leadership influence the collaboration outcome between Federal Government and Local Government?
- RQ2. Do higher level of the relational capital and inter-dependence improve the collaboration outcome between Federal Government and Local Government?
- RQ3. Does collaborative governance play a moderating role towards improving the collaboration outcome between Federal Government and Local Government?

## **1.10 Research Objectives**

In general, the research on federal and local government collaboration is not extensive although the relationship between these government bodies is a common occurrence in all government (Poister, 2010). Therefore, the main objective of this research is to ascertain the collaboration between Federal Government and Local Government and their relationships with factors determinants towards collaboration. In doing so, the study will examine:

- a. Influence of transformational leadership and resource dependence for improving the outcome in Federal Government and Local Government collaboration;
- b. The effectiveness of Relational Capital and Interdependence towards improving the collaborative outcome between Federal Government and Local Government collaboration;
- c. The role of Collaborative Governance as a moderator between Transformational Leadership, Relational Capital and Interdependence to achieve successful outcomes in Federal Government and Local Government collaboration.

## **1.11 Significance of the Study**

Findings of this research will add to the knowledge and understanding of the subject of strategic management and its application by the federal government and local government. This study is significant for the following reason:

- a. Identify the strategic management concepts in terms of Strategic Collaboration, Factors Determinants and Outcomes in terms of public service transformation and the linkages between them.
- b. Support and enrich theories and models of strategic collaboration in the public sector especially the collaboration between federal government and local government;
- c. Generate a prescription for success in terms of strategic collaboration between federal and local government by focusing on the importance of having a proper and practical strategic collaboration framework to enhance effective collaborative relationships.
- d. Provide useful knowledge on determinants that might impact and contribute to the successful adoption of strategic collaboration between federal and local government.

### 1.12 Assumptions and Scope of Study

The research will be confined to the Federal Government (Ministry of Urban Well Being, Housing and Local Government) and the local authorities in Malaysia. It focuses on strategic collaboration between federal government and local government in terms of the factors that influence successful collaborations. Other researched areas such as the exploration and understanding of collaboration development, collaborative process and types of collaboration are excluded from this study as these areas are already well-served by previous studies. This research sets out to test the Collaborative Advantage Theory propounded by Huxham & Vangen (2005) by applying it to identify the factors influencing the success of strategic collaboration between federal government and local government in the Malaysian public sector as any improvement to inter-government initiatives and programs outcomes contribute towards nation building.

### 1.13 Definitions

According to Hammersley (2016), definitions are critical to achieve precise understanding of key concepts; or the meaning of commonly used terms in a particular study. Following are definitions of key terms used in the research:

	<b>Definition</b>
Collaboration	The Oxford Dictionary (2014) defines the word collaborate to mean: work together.
Transformational Leadership	The style of leadership that heightens consciousness of collective interest among the organization's members and helps them to achieve their collective goals (Avolio et al, 1999).
Relational Capital	Relational Capital is the sum of all the relationship of all people in the organization (Cousins et al, 2006).
Collaborative Governance	Collaborative governance refers to ways to jointly make decisions about rules that will govern collaboration partners' behaviour and relationships (Thomson et al, 2007).
Interdependence	Interdependence is the mutual reliance between two or more groups (Mcnamara, 2012).
Resource Dependence	A process of partners seeking resources from each other to achieve common goals (Mitsubishi & Greve, 2008).
Outcome of Collaboration	Outcome of collaboration is the achievement of the goals of the collaboration (Chen, 2010).

#### **1.14 Organisation of This Study**

The dissertation of this study is organized in five chapters. The first chapter outlines the general introduction to the study, the statement of the research problems, objectives and significance of the study. The Chapter 2 presents the review of theories, models and past research relating to this study. Chapter Three presents the theoretical framework by integrating the theories in this research, the development of research hypotheses followed by the description of the methodology adopted in this research. Chapter Four reports the results of this research. This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the research findings derived from collected data. Chapter Five discusses the summary with the conclusion, interpretations, implications and recommendations for future research.



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