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Editorial Correspondence should be addressed to

Editor-in-Chief,
Journal Statistics Malaysia,
Department of Statistics, Malaysia,
Level 8, Block C6, Complex C,
Federal Government Administrative Centre,
62514 Putrajaya, Malaysia.

Business Correspondence for subscriptions should be addressed to

The Secretariat,
Journal Statistics Malaysia,
Methodology & Research Division,
Department of Statistics, Malaysia,
Level 7, Block C6, Complex C,
Federal Government Administrative Centre,
62514 Putrajaya, Malaysia.

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FOREWORD

The wellbeing of a country resides on the competency of the population particularly of the workforce, the balanced welfare of the community as well the good performance of the economy. These three factors were usually discussed at the higher level in regional and global forums and at country specific. Economic Organisations at the international level regularly plan and construct programmes in boosting these factors to strive for balanced developments among regions and among countries. Thus, the data on these areas are widely estimated and gathered by countries as well as organisations at international level for monitoring and assessments.

This issue presents articles related to area concerned, particularly at developing competent personnel in the Department of Statistics, Malaysia, through 360° Feedback, Small Area Estimation for poverty level in the state of Johor as a tool to monitor balanced wellbeing of community and Malaysia's Trade Performance with its major trading partners as an indicator of economic performance.

In developing competent workforce especially in the statistical organisations relevant trainings and courses are the mandatory requirements for establishing technical capabilities. In providing soft skills and personal assessments, 360° feedback is viewed as one of the appropriate evaluations in bringing personnel with a wholesome personality. Pilot assessment was undertaken for selected divisions and officers in the Department of Statistics. The article discussed results of the pilot in terms of outcome and viability of this method.

In line with the Government Transformation Program (GTP) which is targeted to reduce the extreme hardcore poor households to zero and also to halve the number of the poor households, the third article outlines the most suitable technique to estimate the poverty rate at small area levels such as at districts level. A pilot study for the state of Johor was undertaken to identify the pockets of poverty in Johor with the implementation of Poverty Mapping through Small Area Estimation (SAE) technique.

Malaysia's Trade Performance with its major trading partners for the period 1997 to 2007 is reviewed in the second article. Malaysia practices open economy and trade performance has a significant impact on the external sectors. The growth rate of exports and imports as compared to our major trading partners gives insight on Malaysia's expansion in terms of goods or commodities traded. It also provides normalized trade balance and exports/imports coverage in Malaysia.

Starting from 2011, the first volume of the Journal Statistics Malaysia will be published at the end of June and the second volume in December. The publication of the journal is identified as one of the division's Key Performance Indicator. Hence, the divisions and state offices of the Department are obliged to contribute articles as per scheduled.

The Chief Statistician Malaysia emphasized that 'Statisticians not only collect the data, they need to interpret it and tell the stories behind the figures more.' Hence, this journal is one of the platform and officers of DOSM should take the opportunity to contribute quality articles be it on their own or in collaboration with fellow statisticians or researchers in related fields. This will further enhance the spectrum of the topics analysed as well as the knowledge shared with users of statistics.

OMI KELSOM ELIAS,
Editor-in-Chief,
Journal of the Department of Statistics, Malaysia

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