

The Customer Satisfaction Status towards Core Governmental Services in Malaysia

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Abstract

This present study examines the level of customer satisfaction of three government agencies Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), National Registration Department (NRD), and the Public Works Department (PWD) in Malaysia. Studies on these three government agencies were conducted in Selangor, Johor, Perak, and Pulau Pinang since these agencies in these states received the highest complaint from consumers. A total of 270 employees and 627 customers from these three agencies of the four states were the respondents of the present study. Results showed customers are not satisfied with the services given by the government agencies (RMP, NRD, and PWD). Therefore, efforts to improve employee's attitudes, and more reforms in the areas of work should be continued by the Government of Malaysia in government agencies in order to maintain the excellent work.

Keywords: work quality, customer satisfaction, effectiveness, efficiency, productivity

1. Introduction

According to traditional public administration, New Public Management (NPM) assists in demonstrating improvement in accountability performance and cooperation through efficiency, hierarchy of authority, professional institutional accountability, and competition. NPW emphasizes the relationship between a management strategy and the need for democratic accountability. The duties of public servants have to be taken into consideration to explain the democratic accountability (Dwivedi, 2002). Despite the existence of designated individuals (elected public representative) to carry out the accountability, sometimes public servants have to make their own decisions due to time constraint. Usually, the accountability process happens for the benefit of the public representative only, and as such the requests of the public could not be fulfilled (Dwideli, 2002).

The study is viewed as important to fill the gaps found in the past research works. Among the gaps existed in the previous studies are a non-holistic selection of the scope of the study, unfair selection of and very low number of respondents, and lack of practice of the three stages innovation theory (the theory which advocates the effect of simplification, or non-simplification of work quality; the direct and indirect effects of the attitude of the employees and upgrading of the field of work; and the expected and unexpected effects of customer satisfaction). All these issues will be avoided in this study.

The stipulated three effects from the Innovation Theory were not adhered to in the past research works (Al-Jabri & Sohail, 2012; Cheah, 1999; Gani, Siarap, & Mustafa, 2006; Jamaludin, 1995; Omar & Ahmad, 2009; Tricia, 1999; Zainal, 1998). The effects are the effect of simplification and non-simplification (which depends on the functionality or non-functionality of the effect of innovation in the social system); the direct and indirect effects (which depend on the immediate occurrence or non-occurrence of the change of innovation within an individuals or the social system); and the expected and unexpected effects (which depends on whether the members of the social system get to know the change and desire the occurrence of it, or not). However, only two of the effects had been utilized in the studies conducted by Al-Jabri and Sohail (2012), Cheah (1999), Gani et al. (2006), Jamaludin (1995), Omar and Ahmad (2009), Tricia (1999), and Zainal (1998). They have included the effects of simplification and non-simplification, and the direct and indirect effects, in their studies, but not the effects of expected and unexpected. This study aims to overcome these shortcomings by utilizing all the three types of the

effects.

The Innovation Theory has emphasized only two of the effects, instead of the stipulated three in most of the past studies. In this study, the authors applied all three types of the effects as theory proposes. No significant improvement has been done, although the service delivery problem had been raised frequently. The service delivery problem has led to the dissatisfaction of the public with the Malaysian government agencies. Whenever there are problems, finger pointing precedes any effort to solve them. Apparently, there are no solutions found despite many steps were taken by various parties. For instance, when questioned, many have responded that the service delivered by the Road Transport Department (RTD) is inconsistent, i.e., sometimes satisfactory, and sometimes unsatisfactory (Hock, 2005). This leads to the deterioration of the image of the government agency due to the inconsistent service quality.

The problem can only be tackled by the introducing some upgrading in the Malaysian government service delivery. According to Ahmad Sarji (1996), the changes that needs to be done must contain all the management and administrative dimensions, i.e., change in the structure, management practices, system and procedures, technology, and the last but not least, change in the mindset of the whole members' of the organization. The purpose of the change is to achieve the level of administration that is efficient, effective, flexible, and responsive. The chief executive, has outlined the changes, i.e., change in organization structure of the public services, change toward more customer-oriented management practices, change in the system and procedures, and change in the mindset of the members of public services (Ahmad Sarji, 1996).

So, this research is very important not only to identify the factors which contribute to the work quality of the existing service delivery in a government agency, but also to recommend improvement or upgrading for the service delivery. Apart from this, the study will also demonstrate the success of the government's efforts in improving the service delivery. The study is also expected to assist the government and its agencies to further enhance its services. The society feels unhappy with the excuses given; instead, they want some concrete action from the government in the improvement of its service delivery. This issue has prompted for the study to be undertaken, with the aim of fulfilling the public's expectations. Thus, it is essential to find the relationship between work quality (effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity) towards customer satisfaction in Royal Police of Malaysian (RMP), National Registration Department (NRD), and Public Work Department (PWD).

2. Literature Review

In this study, effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity serve as independent variables. Meanwhile, the customer satisfaction had been selected as a dependent variable.

2.1 Work Quality

According to Hussain (1998), the development and upgrading, which can be referred to as work quality are the key determinants in improving a public sector in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. Hussain (1998) also mentioned that the upgrading is needed when the existing strategies of an organization are no longer functional. New strategies need to be identified in order to ensure that the organization could function better. World Public Sector Report (2005) identifies that work quality consists of the three dimensions of effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity. The merger of the work quality dimensions proposed by Hussain (1998), and World Public Sector Report (2005) had led to this study. In other words, the following detailed discussion is attributed to the utilization of the three work quality dimensions of effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity.

2.2 Effectiveness

The effectiveness of a group depends on the relationship between the leadership style and the influence of the group leader towards the group's situation, which in turn, would influence the output of the group ("doing the right job") (Anderson, Newland, & Stillman, 1983; Boyatzis, 1982; Drucker, 1967; Fiedler, 1967). Meanwhile, according to Luna (2006), effectiveness occurs when an employee acquires his/her character or attitude. Ayman, Chemers, and Fiedler (1995) explain "effectiveness" of a leader based on two key factors, i.e., the situation of the leader, as well as his/her attitude. Meanwhile, Mihaiu, Opreana, and Cristescu (2010) state that an organization needs to estimate the costs and outputs, and to differentiate between the two.

Effectiveness may determine the possibility of correctness of doing something (Goh, 2014; McCabe, 2010). Lane (2008) opines that effectiveness may measure the possibility of achieving the management's objectives. The research findings of Pina, Torres, and Bachiller (2013) also demonstrate the same phenomenon, i.e., an agency that operates effectively will be able to provide better quality services.

The study conducted by Costa, Frankema, and Jong (2009) consists of 315 masters degree level students,

whereby the data was collected in the beginning, halfway through, and at the end of the study. As a matter of fact, the study was about the belief in the development and dynamism of the project group, as well as to study the relationship between the group's achievement, observation, and cooperation. The findings of Hsieh, Chin, and Wu (2014) proves the relationship between the group's achievement, observation, and cooperation, as well as the promotion of effective services. Two groups, namely "low prior social-capital" and "high prior social-capital" had been identified in the study. Costa et. al. (2009) found that "high prior social-capital" groups have higher level of belief compared to "low prior social-capital". The difference of these groups also has its effect upon the level of the group's achievement, observation, and cooperation. Costa et al. (2009) also explains that the performance of a group will improve, if the members of the group cooperate, and have increased level of belief. This is what meant by Costa et al. (2009).

2.3 Efficiency

Efficiency is the capability of doing something speedily and perfectly (Al-Habil, 2011; Archmann, & Iglesias, 2010; Bayramov et al., 2011; Grandy, 2008; Hughes, 2003; Palmer, & Torgerson, 1999). This matter is supported by Luna (2006), whereby efficiency occurs when an agent acts rationally. Luna (2006), in the research on organizational efficiency, has identified six values of efficiency. The study had also assessed the feasibility of the six values in organizational decision making. The six values are "efficacious", "ecological", "effective", "adapted", "balanced" and "profitable".

According to the research done by Luna (2006), a social system can be regarded as efficient, if it is effective (efficacious) (Papadopoulos & Brooks, 2011) – (has achieved what has been desired); ecological – (has achieved an appropriate ratio of input or output); effective – (accepted by the social environment); adapted – (at least similar to efficacious, ecological and effective when compared with the environmental system); and balanced (if the variation in the level of achievement among the various departments is minimal). The evaluation of efficiency in an organization is also similar to the evaluation of a social system, except for profitability (Biloslavo, Bagnoli, & Figelj, 2013). Nevertheless, McCall (2009) thinks that the citizens need information on government's financial position and its performance in order to evaluate its level of efficiency. Obviously, the performance demonstrated by the government shall affect electoral result. It shows that the staff performance in government agencies will influence the quality of job rendered to the clients (Sharabi, 2013).

2.4 Productivity

Productivity is defined as the value or quantity of output that can be produced by one unit of input (Bassett, Cawston, Haldenby, & Parsons, 2010; Boyle, 2006; Houghton, & Gruen, 2012; Jurd, 2011; Murray, 1990; Safian, 2007; Sanchez, 2009). Productivity is also defined as the relationship between the product and the time taken to produce it (Safian, 2007). In this context, time is regarded as the denominator which can be used as a universal measurement. Therefore, if minimum time is utilized to produce a product, then the worker is considered more productive. Output is the production or service produced by an organization [Public Administration Progression, 1991 (Pekeliling Kemajuan Pentadbiran Awam, 1991)].

Ilhaamie and Suryati (2008) have studied the influence of attitude and demography upon Muslim lecturers' work productivity in University of Malaya. According to Ilhaamie and Suryati (2008) the attitude can be elaborated in three components, i.e., cognitive (thinking), affective (emotion), and behavior (manner). The three components are inter-related. Apart from this, the generation of an attitude is also dependent on several key factors, i.e., socialization factor, experience of life factor, and prolonged effect of exposure. The writer also explains that job satisfaction, involvement in work, and organizational commitment are the types of the attitudes which are related to work (Ilhaamie, & Suryati, 2008). According to the author, the explanation on the attitude is important because it would influence work productivity of an individual. There were 102 respondents in the study conducted by Ilhaamie and Suryati (2008). They have found that age, marital status, gender, and power can influence the work productivity of an individual. Besides, involvement in work, and the relationship with God also can influence the productivity of an individual.

2.5 Customer Satisfaction

Research analysis has presented two key variables as independent variables, i.e., the workers' attitude, and innovation in the job scope. The researcher hypothesized that work quality can be influenced by the work attitude, and the changes in the job scope. Furthermore, the researcher debates that the work quality will lead to the customer satisfaction.

Gerson (1993), in his book, concludes how to satisfy customer needs. This issue will assist in the utilization of the right technique to satisfy customer needs. Customer satisfaction is the perception of a customer whether

his/her expectation is fulfilled (Gerson, 1993). Gerson (1993) further states that customer satisfaction wholly depends on the seller's or service provider's effort to identify a suitable means, by which the customer will be satisfied with the service provided. One of the means of knowing whether the customer is satisfied with the service provided is by observing the frequency of the customer's repeated visits to get the service (Choudhury, 2013). If customer dislikes the service, he/she will not likely to return to the place anymore (Gerson, 1993).

Zairi (1996) opines that customer satisfaction can be attained through a few methods. Nevertheless, the type of customers has to be noted beforehand, prior to looking for a way to satisfy their needs. The author also provides six key aspects which are prioritized by the customers when receiving the service: the frequency of the delivery, the duration of delivery, reliability of delivery (Resnick & Griffiths, 2011), fulfilment of promised request (Hui, Zhang & Zheng, 2013), the accuracy in the information provided, and to offer what customer need (Zairi, 1996).

3. Method

This study is deductive in nature with a quantitative approach. The key respondents were selected based on their knowledge and expertise on the issues raised. These data were later analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.0. Four dimensions in social research, as shown in Figure 1, drawn from the work of Bauer (2000), are utilized in this research. This process is employed separately in both qualitative and quantitative parts of this chapter.

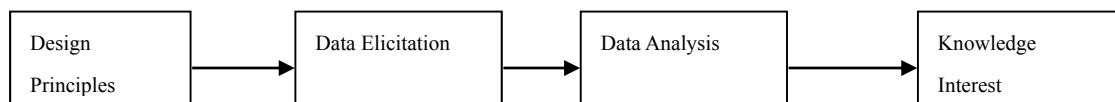


Figure 1. Four dimensions in social research (Bauer, 2000)

Descriptive analysis was used to understand the perception of the respondents by measuring the mean values. The sampling design that was used for this research was a simple random sampling method by selecting 270 employees and 627 customers from the three agencies of the four states in Malaysia. This number was derived after calculation of 95% Confidence Level and Margin of Error of 5%. The size of sample was small because the size of population was small. Raosoft sample size calculator was referred, to estimate the number of respondents required to obtain valid results (Raosoft, 2012).

4. Analysis and Interpretation

The objective of this study is to find the relationship between work quality (effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity) towards customer satisfaction in Royal Police of Malaysian (RMP), National Registration Department (NRD), and Public Work Department (PWD).

Table 1. Mean values for RMP, NRD, and JKR from the customer satisfaction point of view

Dependent variable	RMP	NRD	PWD
Customer satisfaction	1.92	2.08	1.97

*The value in the table is the mean value.

This result refers to the main objective of this research, the relationship between effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity (work quality) towards customer satisfaction in three government agencies (RMP, NRD, and PWD). The likert scale used for the customer satisfaction questionnaire is 1 to 4. Table 2 demonstrates the mean values for customer satisfaction in the three government agencies (RMP, NRD, and PWD). All the three agencies have scored less than the average mean value of 2.5. The mean values are 1.92, 2.08, and 1.97 for RMP, NRD, and PWD respectively. This means the customers are not satisfied with the service delivery from these three government agencies. Results shows that it is very much related to the Innovation Theory which explains about three main dimension (Rogers, 1971). In terms of Innovation theory, very few previous research have talked about the main three dimension, which is covered in the current study. As known, there are three stages in Innovation Theory. In this study, effects of direct and indirect (depending on whether the innovation is happening on an individual or a social system have an immediate impact), and the effects of expected and unexpected (depending on the changes taking place and known by members of the social system) are used. The effect of directly and indirectly refers to the work quality, while the impact of expected and unexpected refers to customer

satisfaction in this study. It can be concluded that the effectiveness of the dimensions of quality of work is essential in improving customer satisfaction.

With this study, it is shown that there is relationship between the effects of direct and indirect, and the expected and unexpected effects of innovation theory. This study proved the need for a third party (expected and unexpected effects) of customer satisfaction in examining the achievement of the first impression and the impression both in theoretical innovation. In recent studies, it is known whether every dimension of work quality is at a satisfactory level or not. Earlier studies (Al-Jabri & Sohail, 2012; Cheah, 1999; Jamaludin, 1995; Omar & Ahmad, 2009; Richard et al., 2006; Tricia, 1999; Zainal, 1998) did not see the effects of drought, which further proved that what is stated by the internal workers is completely reliable. Thus, recent studies have taken the initiative to prove that it is not necessarily what the internal workers said is entirely true and it will be better if this have been reviewed by a third party (client/customer).

5. Conclusion

Results showed that customers are not satisfied with the services given by the government agencies (RMP, NRD, and PWD). Therefore, efforts to improve employee attitudes, and more reforms in the areas of work should be continued by the Government of Malaysian in government agencies in order to maintain the excellent work. The effort would further upgrade and maintain the “work quality”, as well as assist in achieving customer satisfaction.

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