

Validity of Quality Municipal Services Construct for Enhancing Customer Satisfaction in Batu Pahat Municipal Council, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Customer satisfaction has been perceived globally as a tool for public sector performance assessment. The services provided in many municipal councils within Malaysia has been categorized as satisfactorily. However, recent studies toward achieving Malaysian National Local Agenda 21 suggests that there is need for improvement in public service delivery at lower level of government. Thorough review on assessment approaches to quality municipal service, afford us the ability to identify a list of dimensions that represent quality municipal services at the municipal councils setting. To better understand the specificities of municipal councils and complete the list of dimensions collected from our literature review, a face to face discussion was conducted with Five (5) municipal council management staff. From the information collected, we identified 13 dimensions that specifically evaluates Batu pahat municipal council quality services. These dimensions were used to formulate the research questionnaire. Descriptive analysis was used to reveal skewness and kurtosis of the data collected, the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.76 which falls within the recommended value was obtained. the normality and factor loading of the measure items were evaluated via exploratory factor analysis (EFA), which revealed that the measurement items are perfectly loaded and consistence in the survey instrument. The research highlighted the importance of quality municipal services in enhancing citizen satisfaction within the study area. It also concluded that quality municipal services have significant role in enhancing citizen satisfaction in the study area. The recommendation of this research is government at grass root level should allow citizen participation in service delivery. Awareness campaign should be garnered to enable citizen know their roles in service delivery processes, citizen satisfaction index should be adopted. Further research can be developed to apply CFA to further analyzed this research instrument.

Keywords: customer satisfaction, municipal services, service delivery, municipal council,

INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction in Malaysian municipal councils is at satisfactorily level even though a lot of efforts need to be concerted to enhance the process citizen satisfaction. Association of different entities and academia resulted that quality municipal services need to be augmented to make the municipal councils (MCs) robust as a key player in providing social amenities to the populace. Providing citizen with services that principally would enhanced their condition of living has been recognized as critical factor of achievement and sources of citizen loyalty to the constituted authorities. The demand for social amenities by citizens are enormous and delivery challenges are accumulating day in day out due to population trends and advancement in technology. Functional MCs has its citizens in her apex level of concerned, many MCs were facing difficulties in managing the facilities provided for the purpose of citizen satisfactio. The problems encountered by the municipal councils in Malaysia is lack of synergy between citizens and administrators of municipals.

Customer satisfaction in Malaysian municipal councils are perceived mostly from service provider point of view, but recent investigations revealed that citizen plays important roles in assessing the performance of MCs. The processes of service delivery and citizen satisfaction are more complex in recent time due to many biological and humanitarian activities of both service users and providers. Citizens are perceived by most public administrators as customer that must be serve in a manner in which their complaints will be attend to. Provision and maintenance of municipal facilities by MCs.

Generally, Malaysian municipal councils are the second level of Local government in Malaysia, because there are city councils, municipal councils and district councils. City councils is local authority that has been upgraded from municipal councils which have achieved certain criteria among which its population exceed 500,000. Municipal councils are local authorities in urban or town centers that has population more than 150,000 an annual revenue exceeding RM 2,000, 000. Then district councils has population 150,0000 and annual revenue of less than RM2,000,000. In terms of peculiarities of service delivery of

these type of local authorities performs almost the same type of functions. More again,

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Public Service delivery

Service delivery in local level of government in many developing countries encounters many set back. Public service delivery is guided by principle of social exchange theory where materials resources are provided fundamentally for the benefit of citizens. There are perspectives on the public service delivery, first from MCs official and second from Service users. These services in questions are refuse collection, grass cutting, streetlight, street sweeping, road maintenance, town hall, markets etc. It is also acknowledging by scholars that services provided by government do not normally satisfied local community because their needs are not sort when providing it

Citizen as customer of public services

Investigations and literatures revealed that citizens are not considered as customer in most cases expect in recent time there is advocates for public private practice (PPP), for quality service provisioning. Customer perceptions may be different from citizen perceptions due to the nature of business and organisations and the products. Customer can have alternative choice from whom he chooses to buy from, but not with citizen. However, from the perceptions of service provider maximization of profit differentiate private from public entities. Due to that importance of citizen needs and wants to the municipal councils administrators which gives them chances to understand the level of services. Despite the efforts of Malaysian Municipal councils, the customer are experiencing low satisfaction of some goods and services. More again, Municipals Administrator perceived citizen as customer and custodian of MCs in Malaysia. As such MCs performance entails the living condition of the citizens which shows another dimension that is entirely different for assessment of private product by customers.

Concept of Quality Municipal Services

Quality municipal services connotes services delivered by municipal services which are based on the constitutional provision in Malaysia. Services provided are termed quality if citizens are satisfied, if the taxpayers need and wants are met unsatisfactorily as indicated by. Quality municipal service are essential for living standard and environmental management, even though, quality municipal services can be source of government revenue if citizen pays their tax and bills at when due. Generally, the municipal services provided by MC are: refuse collection and disposal, urban roads, cemeteries, street sweeping, grass cutting, business license, town halls, parking spaces, landscaping, public transport, public toilets, sewage disposal and streetlight. These are the services provided directly by BPMC to its citizens. However, there are others services under the MC but were provided indirectly because of federal government laws that mandated as revealed in.

METHODOLOGY

The study targeted Batu Pahat Municipal Council (BPMC) residents and those that have link with services provided by MC. The research instrument used for data collection is survey instrument. 400 Questionnaires was given to the MCs staff to administered to the respondents, through using simple random sampling. The distribution of the questionnaire was easy for the researcher because the staffs of BPMC partake in the administration, 365 questionnaires were retrieved. The Quality Municipal Service (QMS) construct of this study was based on public choice theory as buttressed by. The public choice theory view public goods and services as citizen stated the characteristics of citizen behavior towards public goods and services.

In this research study QMS construct was classified as independent latent construct for dependent latent construct of citizen satisfaction through Public choice theory. However, performance evaluation using such latent constructs necessitates identification of their factorability. As such, this study identifies measurement items for this constructs like parking spaces, public toilets, grass cutting, streetlights, refuse collection, town halls, street sweeping, public transport, sport facilities, drainage system, land scape, roads and sewage collection and disposal. A study by hypothesized that municipal services has significant relationship with service performance outcomes.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Respondent profile

Profile of the respondent shows that 52% of the citizen were female and 48% were male. Total of 56% of the respondents were married and 27% were single. Total number of questionnaire retrieved was 91%. As shown in the table 1 below:

Questionnaire Distribution	Respondents	
	Numbers	Percentages
Administered	400	-
Retrieved	365	91
Discarded	35	9

Table 1: Questionnaires Distribution

It was realized from table 1 above that total number of questionnaire retrieved was significant to draw conclusion on. Only 9% of the questionnaires was discarded due to some certain error that occur, this shows that large number of respondent were carry along during the research study.

Descriptive Analyses

After entering the data, missing data were checked using variable means as recommended by, data were observed to determine the normality of its distribution by Skewness and kurtosis as a criteria for exploratory factor analysis.

Nevertheless, a sample size of 365 can easily influenced outcome, and it was carried out to ascertain the recommended value. It was recommended by that the satisfactory values for standard univariate distribution are within ± 2 as shows in the table below which means that there is acceptably normal distribution of the citizens' responses among the alternative options in the questionnaire.

Constructs	Items Code	Items Name	Mean	Skewness	Kurtosis
Quality Municipal Services	QMS1	Refuse Collection	3.39	-.007	-.259
	QMS2	Town Halls	3.50	-.134	.786
	QMS3	Parking spaces	3.25	-.099	-.981
	QMS4	Roads	3.58	.028	-.492
	QMS5	Streetlight	3.50	-.386	-.509
	QMS6	Grass cutting	3.58	-.466	-.353
	QMS7	Sweeping of streets	3.61	-.352	-.527
	QMS8	Landscape	3.33	-.072	-.986
	QMS9	Recreational facilities	3.58	-.278	-.356
	QMS10	Drainage system	3.14	.394	-.970
	QMS11	Sewage collection & disposal	3.37	.267	-.206
	QMS12	Public transport terminal	3.31	-.477	.250
	QMS13	Public toilets	3.31	-.261	-.637

Table 2: Normality Test for Quality Municipal Service Construct

RESULTS OF EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Exploratory Factor Analysis was implemented to ascertain unidimensionality of the construct before carrying out the CFA later. These results indicated that the sample size of the study population is from population with identical variances. This means all correlations that are available within the correlation matrix have an overall significance level. The significant value of this analysis leads us to presume that there are enough relationships in study data-set that are suitable for factor analysis. Henceforth, the study analysis meets recommended value, which shows that there is sampling adequacy. In the similar vein, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measures of

sampling adequacy is greater than 0.50 which is Cronbach's Alpha .789, demonstrating factorability of the correlation matrix of the construct. Temporarily, the KMO measure of sampling adequacy meets the minimum criteria, there is no tricky that requires the examination of Anti-Image correlation matrix.

Items code	Items Name	Factor loadings	Cronbach's Alpha
QMS1	Refuse collection	.564	.789
QMS2	Town halls	.679	
QMS3	parking space	.560	
QMS6	Grass cutting	.617	
QMS7	Sweeping of streets	.559	
QMS10	Drainage system	.507	
QMS11	Sweeping collection & disposal	.550	
QMS13	Public toilets	.630	

Table 3: Factor Analysis and reliability test of Quality Municipal Service Construct

From table 3 above it was show clearly that all eight items have good loadings.

Cronbach's Alpha

The level of Cronbach's Alpha was .447 initially but when poor loaded items were removed gradually the results improved to acceptable of .789. the total items removed was three that is, QMS4, QMS5, QMS8, QMS9 and QMS12.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that refuse collection, town halls, parking spaces, streetlight, grass cutting, sweeping of streets, landscape, drainage system sewage collection and disposal public transport terminals and public toilets are quality municipal services construct. However, the three items that were removed from the thirteen list of the items due to their poor loading go against the findings of which shows their among municipal services. Even though, study of. All the municipal services mentioned in this research were adopted from different scholars. in various capacity of public service delivery. But in the municipal councils of Malaysia all the services mentioned in this research study were constitutionally vested on municipal councils. It has been gathered that quality municipal services generates citizen satisfaction. The recommendation of this research is government at grass root level should allow citizen participation in service delivery. Awareness campaign should be garnered to enable citizen know their roles in service delivery, citizen satisfaction index should be adopted. Further research can be developed to apply CFA to further analyzed this research instrument.

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