

Impact of Professionalism and Accountability among Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) Staffs in Selangor, Malaysia

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Abstract

One of the biggest challenges in public sector is to make the customer satisfied. The service provider of public sector in Malaysia face greater challenge in making their customers happy due to the lame systems. This paper attempts to develop a general framework by examining the concepts of professionalism, accountability, work quality, and customer satisfaction. The main purpose of this study is to increase the customer satisfaction by focusing on effectiveness, efficiency and productivity of a RMP staff through professionalism and accountability. In this study, the convenience sampling is used for data collection. A total of 86 respondents were participated in this research. The data has been gathered from the respective employees of the front-line services to measure the customer satisfaction based on the employees. The attempt of this paper is to improve the Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Productivity for the service delivery in public sector.

Keywords: professionalism, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, productivity and customer satisfaction

1. Introduction

Public service delivery is viewed as an essential factor, in which it mirrors a country's image (Selvanathan, 2015). However, public services are often seen as a failure in many nations such as certain countries in Europe (Van de Walle, 2016), Taiwan (Kim & Jang, 2016), China (Xu & Wu, 2016), U.S. (Sachs, 2009), Malaysia (Selvanathan, Balasubramaniam, & Thanaraju, 2012), and so on. In Malaysia, public's impression towards the public services are generally poor. This can be seen through the complaints from the public towards the government agencies (Selvanathan, 2015). As shown in Public Complaints Bureau (2016) statistics, there are a total of 5,726 complaints made towards the government from January 2016 to October 2016.

Moreover, as stated by Mayne (2006) and Ingraham (2005b), public have expectations and the rights to know where and how the government utilizes their tax money.. In other words, government should satisfy the public's expectations as the public are duly contributing the building of the nation. According to the Public Complaints Bureau (2016) statistics, the public seemed to be displeased with the police the most, which can be seen whereby the Royal Malaysian Police was ranked at 1st place among government agencies polled. The statistics further showed some common complaints such as delays or action lack thereof, failure to implement as promised, unsatisfactory quality of services, unfair actions, misconduct of public servants, and so on. As a result, new concepts such as "Bersih, Cekap, dan Amanah", "Cemerlang, Gemilang, dan Terbilang", and "1 Malaysia" have been introduced since the 1990s, with the hope to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity of work among public servants (Hussain, 1998). Nevertheless, there are no empirical studies done to prove the effectiveness of the programs. In addition, as Van de Walle (2016) stated, most of the research articles focused on the factors that lead to policies or programs failure and less so on the factors that lead to service failure. Therefore, this study aims to examine attitude (professionalism and accountability among government agency staff) in Royal Malaysian Police, which could help improve the work quality of the government agency, while surveying on public's satisfaction towards Royal Malaysian Police.

Research Objective

- To find the relationship between professionalism and effectiveness.
- To find the relationship between professionalism and efficiency.

- To find the relationship between professionalism and productivity.
- To find the relationship between accountability and effectiveness.
- To find the relationship between accountability and efficiency.
- To find the relationship between accountability and productivity.
- To find the relationship between effectiveness and customer satisfaction.
- To find the relationship between efficiency and customer satisfaction.
- To find the relationship between productivity and customer satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

PROFESSIONALISM

Fournier (1999) indicated that professionalism encompasses a chain that forms links between clients, competency, loyalty or sincerity, as well as conduct of practitioner. Fournier further argued that a profession should employ their competence and craft into this “chain”. This statement was further supported by Frumento and Korenman (2013) who went on to say that clients will feel lost without help from the professionals, where they should be provided with the best and most sincere advice based on their proficiency. Country’s goals relating to national integrity is more likely to be achieved when the civil services are dedicated to professionalism and ethics (United Nations, 2000). Hence, professionalism is said to be crucial in the modern civil service. Barrilleauz, Feiock, and Crew (1992) also revealed the influence of “professionalism” in legislators’ decision, problem solving skills, and conducts.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is defined as a duty, whereby actions may be elucidated with transparency (Hawman, 1995). Gow (2001) went on to say that accountability does not denote to take on the responsibility only but also to bear with the outcomes. In the government sector, Ingraham (2005a) and Stanton (2009) further described accountability as one’s proficiency to manage public resources while accomplishing public purposes. In addition, on top of ethical reasons, accountability nowadays is also seen as one of the important factors for performance and governance (Apaza, 2012; Frederickson, Smith, Larimer & Licari, 2012; Zhao & Peters, 2009). Besides that, Zhao and Peters (2009) also suggested that public servants’ accountability can be validated through developing and broadening their social values and social network. This was supported by Khademian (2010) who further expressed the need for a more flexible, regionalized, and schmoozed approach, in order to speed up the accountability process while engaging and solving the issues effectively.

WORK QUALITY

As stated by Siddiquee (2007), the Malaysian Government have done a lot of improvement to improvise the quality of services provided to the general public in 1980s, such as the quality and productivity in providing their services to the general public. In other words, government was trying to achieve a clean, efficient, and effective public service, while hoping to build a nation that is capable of competing in the international markets. At the same time, Siddiquee also commented that the government’s effort in getting feedback from the customers/ public monthly is a thoughtful step to identify and to solve any issues. Constructive criticism received from the public provides feedbacks about the quality of counter services provided by the public servants. Sharma (2015) further revealed the importance of the service quality in determining publics’ readiness to use e-government services. In the research, public view “quality service” as a service that is reliable, secure, efficient, and responsive. Apart from that, basic expertise is also stated to be vital in ensuring that public servants’ are able to carry out their responsibilities efficiently and effectively (Frederickson et al., 2012; Ingraham, 2005a). Public programs and policies can be executed proficiently through a well-organized and skillfully operated administrative apparatus separated from politics and under the management of an influential executive (Frederickson et al., 2012). It further allows the executive to identify any failure reasons and act accordingly when things fail. As showed by Abdul Karim (1995) and Frederickson et al. (2012), the establishment and delivery of public administration not only influences the public’s perceptions towards Malaysia government, but also plays an important role in cultivating the effectiveness and transparency of government. Hence, the quality of services provided by the first line public servants who have direct contacts with the customers/ public are essential. Government should listen to the publics’ feedbacks and refine the services from time to time according to the public’s needs.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer satisfaction is viewed as customers' perception on the fulfillment of their needs and desires (Gerson, 1993; Oliver, 1997). Together with this era's globalization, people's quality of life is changing, which in turn, leads to an increasing demand for greater quality services. As a result, the idea of customer satisfaction and experience has increased essentially (Halvorsrud, Kvale, & Folstad, 2016). As noted by Wagenheim and Reurink (1991), organizations that provide customer service focuses on the goal to satisfy customers' needs and expectations effectively and efficiently, which shows the importance of identifying and understanding the customer's needs in service line. The importance of customer satisfaction in service line can be seen through the significant numbers of researches carried out in different industries (e.g., airline, telecommunication, bank, police, education, health, etc.) throughout the years (e.g., Hussain, 2016; Kaura, Durga Prasad, & Sharma, 2016; Keningham, Aksoy, Andreassen, Cooil, & Wahren, 2006; Munteanue, Ceobanu, Bobalca, & Anton, 2010; Sahoo & Ghosh, 2016).

Furthermore, numerous past researches have also revealed the relationships between customer satisfactions and factors such as significant brand loyalty (e.g., Choudhury, 2013; Torres-Moraga, Vasquez-Parraga, Zamora-Gonzalez, 2008; Veloutsou, 2015), improved employees and organization's performances in terms of productivity (e.g., Lee, Lee, Kim, & Lee, 2007; Mihelis, Grigoroudis, Siskos, Politis, & Malandrakis, 2001), higher profits (e.g., Morris, 1991; O'Sullivan & McCallig, 2012; Rust, Danaher, & Varki, 2000), and so on. In addition to the impacts on the organization in general as mentioned above, customer satisfactions were also found to have significant impact on employees' job satisfaction and retention, which in turn will also increase customers' satisfaction (Graham & Smith, 2005; Helton, 2010; Hur, Moon, & Jung, 2015; Pantouvakis & Bouranta, 2013).

In the public sector, as Van de Walle (2016), and Darling and Cunningham (2016) reported, public sector does not only need to answer to the public, but also deal with politicians and government's policies. Similar to what Ariely (2011) expressed, public services in Malaysia are perceived as a failure. Together with Malaysia's new vision, public sectors' strategy is changing gradually; treating the public as customers. As the public's expectations continue to rise (Hodgkinson, 2013), customer satisfaction becomes more crucial in improving and achieving Malaysia's new policy.

3. Methodology

The study selects the Royal Malaysian Police agency from the state of Selangor as the target respondents of the government front-line services. Out of 200 questionnaires distributed, 86 were returned completely. The convenience sampling is used to occupy the data. Two groups of respondents were differentiated, in order to explore the relationship between work attitude of professionalism as well as accountability towards work quality. Data has been gathered from the respective customers of the front-line services to measure the customer satisfaction based on the employees' work quality. The data were obtained from customers who deal with the front-liners. Unbiased statements of the variables measured by the 5-points Likert scales measurement ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree. Data analysis was been carried out using the SPSS of version 22.

Firstly, the study executed the multivariate general linear model to assess the influence of the predictors under work attitude towards the three dissections of work quality: effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity. Later, the multiple regression analysis is done to examine the effect of the work quality predictors on customer satisfaction.

4. Analysis and Findings

In succession to the multivariate general linear model and the multiple regression analysis, the assumptions of normality distribution and independence of random errors are being evaluated. The result output is discussed as follows:

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is used to verify the normal distribution of work quality and customer satisfaction. Significant value indicates the data does not follow normal distributions. Therefore, based on Table 1. The variables mentioned are not normally distributed.

Table 1. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistics	df	Sig.
Effectiveness	.159	85	.000
Efficiency	.183	85	.000
Productivity	.139	85	.000
Customer Satisfaction	.165	85	.000

Nonetheless, Figure 1 (a), (b), (c), and (d) show the normal Q-Q plots that have been exercised to assess the evidence of normal distribution assumptions.

Based on the graphs, the plots of the expected normal against the observed values of effectiveness, efficiency, productivity and customer satisfaction, fall along the lines, thus it follows the normal distribution. The histogram with normal curve in Figure 1 (e) depicts customer satisfaction, the curve is slightly symmetrical, and therefore the data follows normal distribution.

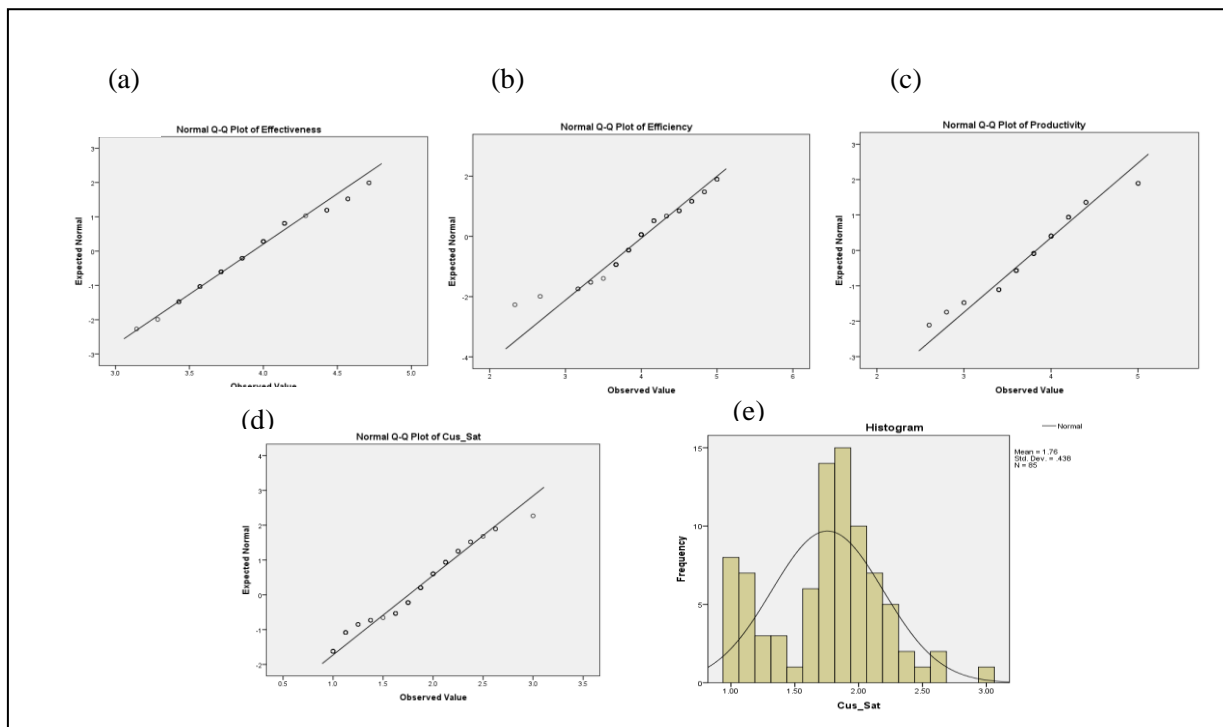


Figure 1. Normal Q-Q plots and histogram with normal curve

WORK ATTITUDE AND WORK QUALITY

Under the work attitude variable, the effects of professionalism and accountability on work quality are being examined using the multivariate general linear model analysis. The findings are showed in Table 2.

Table 2. Multivariate Test of Variable Effects

Effect		Value	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.377	16.110 ^b	.000	.377
	Wilks' Lambda	.623	16.110 ^b	.000	.377
	Hotelling's Trace	.604	16.110 ^b	.000	.377
Professionalism	Pillai's Trace	.149	4.686 ^b	.005	.149
	Wilks' Lambda	.851	4.686 ^b	.005	.149
	Hotelling's Trace	.176	4.686 ^b	.005	.149
Accountability	Pillai's Trace	.128	3.912 ^b	.012	.128
	Wilks' Lambda	.872	3.912 ^b	.012	.128
	Hotelling's Trace	.147	3.912 ^b	.012	.128

The multivariate general linear model also known as the multivariate multiple regression is a statistical test that evaluates the connotation of each independent variables towards a set of dependent variables (Garson, 2015). In Table 2, professionalism and accountability of the employees both has significant effects on at least one of the three dependent variables, the effectiveness, efficiency and productivity.

Table 3. Test of between-subject effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	Effectiveness	4.147 ^a	2	2.074	30.186	.000	.424
	Efficiency	9.673 ^b	2	4.836	38.783	.000	.486
	Productivity	6.274 ^c	2	3.137	20.388	.000	.332
Intercept	Effectiveness	2.714	1	2.714	39.503	.000	.325
	Efficiency	.487	1	.487	3.905	.051	.045
	Productivity	1.681	1	1.681	10.921	.001	.118
Professionalism	Effectiveness	.523	1	.523	7.619	.007	.085
	Efficiency	1.121	1	1.121	8.993	.004	.099
	Productivity	.061	1	.061	.394	.532	.005
Accountability	Effectiveness	.254	1	.254	3.697	.058	.043
	Efficiency	.667	1	.667	5.352	.023	.061
	Productivity	1.521	1	1.521	9.884	.002	.108
Error	Effectiveness	5.633	82	.069			
	Efficiency	10.226	82	.125			
	Productivity	12.618	82	.154			
Total	Effectiveness	1322.204	85				
	Efficiency	1399.972	85				
	Productivity	1264.600	85				
Corrected Total	Effectiveness	9.781	84				
	Efficiency	19.899	84				
	Productivity	18.892	84				

The study investigates the significance of model overall using the test of between subject effects. From Table 3, the corrected model shows that the multivariate general linear model is found to be significant overall for effectiveness, efficiency and productivity of the work quality. Professionalism and accountability of the employees are significant predictors on efficiency, controlling for other effects in the model. However, based on partial eta squared criterion, professionalism is the most important predictor for efficiency. In productivity of the staff, only accountability is found to be a significant predictor while for effectiveness of the staff's work, it can be predicted significantly by professionalism, controlling for other effects in the model (Garson, 2015).

WORK QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Multiple regression analysis is used to measure the association between the three components of work quality: effectiveness, efficiency and productivity towards customer satisfaction.

INDEPENDENCE OF ERRORS ASSUMPTIONS

First of all, the assumption of independence of random error is being evaluated by the Durbin-Watson value in Table 4. 1.38 falls near 2 indicates the random error is independent (Taylor, 2011). Hence, no autocorrelation problem exist in the data.

Table 4. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Durbin-Watson
1	.107 ^a	.011	-.025	1.380

From Table 4, the R-square value is 0.11 means that, only 1.1% of the total variation in customer satisfaction can be explained by the work quality, with other effect remain constant. This absolute small value of R-square is been investigated further under the analysis of variance, ANOVA.

Table 5. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Regression	3	.184	.061	.312	.817
Residual	81	15.907	.196		
Total	84	16.091			

The insignificant value of the model indicates that the model is not fit. Therefore, further analysis is not appropriate. This matter can be treated by increasing the sample size to get a significant model (Taylor, 2011).

Table 6. Coefficient Analysis

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	2.092	.583		3.589	.001		
Effectiveness	-.177	.185	-.138	-.960	.340	.588	1.701
Efficiency	.084	.175	.094	.481	.632	.322	3.110
Productivity	.006	.155	.006	.036	.971	.432	2.314

All of the variable components under work quality are not significant. Then, there is no significant relationship existing between effectiveness, efficiency, productivity of the front liners towards customer satisfaction. However, the data exhibits no multicollinearity problem due to tolerance value less than 10 and the variance inflation factors, VIF close to 1 (Taylor, 2011).

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

In a nutshell, in terms of the work attitude; professionalism, and accountability are both found to be significant predictors towards the efficiency of the employees' work quality. However, in control with other effect in the model, only accountability is found to be of a significant predictor in productivity with regards to work quality, while professionalism has a more significant effect towards effectiveness. Nevertheless, effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity of the employees' work quality show insignificant effect on customer satisfaction. Finally, the study concluded that professionalism among front-liners in government service significantly predicts the efficiency in working but work quality is not related to customer satisfaction.

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