



## MUNICIPAL AWARENESS AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING CITIZEN SATISFACTION IN MUNICIPAL COUNCILS OF MALAYSIA

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### **Abstract:**

This research study critically analysed the existing literatures on municipal awareness relevancy of LAs service delivery for the purpose of enhancing citizen satisfaction. The purpose of the study is the investigation of citizen satisfaction level of municipal services; analysis of the existing literatures on relationship between municipal awareness and citizen satisfaction. The Material and methods were carried out using secondary data and were meticulously and critically analysed to come up with reliable results. The study shows the relevancy of the public awareness, citizen satisfaction and municipal council performance in Malaysia. It is evidence in the research that citizen consent is importance before municipal services should be provided in the local community. The research study highlighted many discrepancies in many literatures related to the existing research study, evidence based analysis were carried out to buttress importance and significance of the related study to the research work. The literatures were reviewed to ascertain the current happening in the area of local government service delivery. The study shows that many municipal councils in Malaysia provide adequate and satisfactory services to their citizens'. The study also revealed that municipal council plays important role on citizen awareness of municipal service delivery. The study concludes that municipal service delivery can be enhanced through citizen awareness campaign, to sensitize the local community on various

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aspects of service delivery including maintenance of the facilities provided. The study also concludes that LAs lack of awareness section affects their performance in service delivery process. The study recommends that LAs need to consults the citizen for their needs and wants; awareness campaign need to be regularly carried out to maintain cordial relationship between LAs and their citizen; it is also recommended that municipal services should be delivered the needed services by the local inhabitants' after duly consultation.

**Keywords:** municipal awareness, citizen satisfaction, municipal council, local government

## 1. Introduction

Citizen lack of awareness of the administration of local government is the major hindrance to the development of the local government areas and the inhabitants (Callahan, 2002; Ebdon, 2002; Unegbu, 2013). Responsiveness of citizen towards the local authorities' service delivery are determined by the level of citizen awareness (Almarshad, 2011; Barnes, 1999; Darison, 2011; Sandford, 2016), citizen satisfaction in Malaysian public sector were given attention especially in local authorities' (Khalid, 2010), local authorities inhabitants need and wants are attended unsatisfactorily Siddiquee, (2006) and Dewulf and van Meel, (2002). Awareness of citizen on the outcome of local authorities' performance outcome may foster cordial understanding.

Lack of government commitment towards satisfying local government inhabitants necessitated this study. Creation and establishment of required information can empower local authority with benefits of citizen compliance of their regulations (Almarshad, 2015; Zamzami, 2004) and (Borins, 2012; Wihlman, 2014), against this background awareness of citizen on the performance of local authorities in many countries of the world are based on the seriousness of the government official to enlighten their citizens. Thus, one of the exceptional issues of local authority in Malaysia is that there is no adequate information channel to the citizens. Furthermore, many interests of the citizens are not fully represented in the higher level of decision making of the local councils. In some cases, there is strong political interference in local authorities that affects their actions and decisions.

Many researches has shown that there are various factors impart in creating citizen awareness, satisfaction and sense of belongingness toward brands of any kind but sometimes customers themselves are unaware of the reasons for the brand preferences (Hanif, Muzammil. and Sehrish, 2010). In the contemporary time the only

constant agent is change. LAs positive change towards advancement of service delivery and information dissemination among the inhabitants enhance the LAs position in terms of provisioning of municipal services. Ofoeze, (1997) and (2003) assertion is that local government areas are created to solve rural developmental problems and to provide services at satisfactory level. Services such as street sweeping, grass cutting, parking space provisioning etc. are required to be provided and maintained by both the LAs and the citizens' Hilgers & Ihl, (2010) and (Group, 2011), With the marvelous increase in population connected a municipality (Almarshad, 2015), LAs are the bedrock of development of local people and monitoring wing of social justice (Amin & Isa, 2008; Andrews, Boyne, Law, & Walker, 2005; Antuono, Meeks, Miller, & Watchou, 2006; Khalid, 2010; Unegbu, 2013).

## **2. Literatures Review**

There are limited literatures on citizen awareness for enhancing citizen satisfaction of municipal service delivery. This study tries to highlight the important of citizen awareness in local government service delivery.

### **2.1 Citizen Awareness**

Citizen awareness is very important concepts because it involved understanding and participation of citizen (Almarshad, 2015; Sureshchandar, & Chandreskharan, 2002). Citizen awareness have been characterized as having ties to the need and wants to the developmental services within their local territory (Bache, 2013; Milinthajinda, 1999; Wang & Shieh, 2006). Citizen were concerned about their local community development and this give them a deep awareness of local government administration appreciation for services needed, and sense of responsibility and participation as stakeholder (Mccann, Elizabeth & Shannon, Donna, & Young, 1997). The awareness of this concept was expressed by mobilizations in favour of municipal service development (Mccann, Elizabeth, & Shannon *et al.*, 1997; Sayers, 2006). Meanwhile, the councils of local government, civil society organizations, political parties [and] donor agencies all participate in the preparation of village/district profiles, preparation of Periodic Plans, and determination of development priorities, an assessment of the people's present information literacy capabilities is crucial (Aagesen, 2012; Abe, Monisola, & State, 2014; Abid, 2004; UNESCO, 2006).

### **2.1.1 Political Awareness**

Political awareness are means of citizen understanding of political affairs of their locality, the headship of local government was charge to create resources of public enlightenment towards the municipal process of service delivery (Adeyemi, 2013; Agba, Akwara, & Idu, 2013; Aijaz, 2007; Filipe, Álvaro, Joaquim, Manuel, 2016). Management of local government expressively should be keen in obliging any policy that will improve the process of municipal service delivery (Kernaghan, 2015; Khalid, 2010). Creation of mechanism to enlighten the inhabitants on issues related to their life and wellbeing is the main function of local government officials. Political awareness by the nationals' and peoples enable them understand their condition and direction of the local council. Criticisms and grievances' can be channelled properly to the local government (Blaug, Horner, & Lekhi, 2006; Shafie, 2013). Many scholars linked citizens' satisfaction with the awareness of the local communities on the services delivered and their expectations on the performance of the local government (Mishler & Rose, 2001; Newton, 2001; Putnam, 1993; Stoner-Weiss, 1997).

### **2.1.2 Maintenance Awareness**

The bounteousness of 21<sup>st</sup> century industrial tycoons bestowed many of our finest cities with far-reaching formal and semi-formal facilities and uncountable parks, all of which require on-going maintenance (Aliyu & Abdu, 2015; Reynolds et al., 2011). Similar-Facilities provided by the local council need to be preserved and maintained by both the producers and the users (Lind & Muyingo, 2012; Reynolds et al., 2011), before this can be done properly mutual understanding must be sustained between the providers and the users. Municipal branding and the development of local community plays a significant role in urban development (Jusoh, 2009). Nevertheless, in particular these services also have a reverse side-effect in regard to urban sustainability in the absence of users' awareness.

## **2.2 Citizen Satisfaction**

Around 1989 Sweden became the first country in the world to established standardized cross company and cross industry methodology of measuring customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Sajid, 2013). This general and national measurement gadget for customer satisfaction and customer loyalty is called the Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer (SCSB). Satisfaction of municipal services is one of the major evaluation of LAs service delivery performance (Mohammad Anwer, Vatcharaporn, Mariam, Maria, 2016). LAs performance must commiserate with citizen satisfaction of municipal services provisioned by local council, satisfaction of citizenry should be main target of

local government officials. To makes a meaningful development within the demarcation of local council, the needs and wants of the inhabitants' fulfilment represents the activeness of the local councils. In Malaysia the position of local councils allow them to take the responsibility of providing services to the local community (Mansor & Razali, 2010; Rozilah, Musa, Bala, 2011; Samsudin, Haron, & Bakar, 2012; Subhan, Ghani, & Joarder, 2014). If the municipal services delivered by the local councils are perceived as poor, the future of good governance and professional images of this local councils will be at stake (Samsudin et al., 2012). Malaysian federal government set a side large sum of money for local community development services (Mohamed, Izzati, Bachok, & Zin Mohamed, 2015).

**Table 1:** Evidence Based Analysis Of Related Literatures On The Study

No	Author & Date	Title	Findings	Observation
1	Almarshad, (2015)	Municipal Awareness and Citizen Satisfaction : The Case of Northern Borders in Saudi Arabia	The results of the study revealed positive relationship between municipal awareness and citizen satisfaction.	The study is failed to assess the level of citizen satisfaction of municipal services provided by the local government.
2	Mohamed <i>et al</i> , (2012)	An Assessment of Local Authority Performance in Delivering Their Services: Case Study of Ipoh City Council	Issue identified were the lack of transparency, delays in services, lack of customer service courtesy and unaccountable practices that obstructs governmental effectiveness and creates numerous complaints among public and respondents.	The study is did not give emphasis on customer chance to participates on service delivery.
3	Mansor, <i>et al</i> , (2010)	Customers' Satisfaction towards Counter Service of Local Authority in Terengganu , Malaysia	Findings revealed that, there were significant relationships between the selected dimensions as to the main theme of the study.	The study is limited to counter service alone and did not treat other aspects of service delivery.
4	Donnelly, <i>et al</i> , (1995)	Measuring service quality in local government: the SERVQUAL approach.	Findings of the studies revealed that, service provider usually over- estimate service user expectation.	The research study is limited because it consider only the users' expectation not there attitude towards service provided.
5	Mokhlis, S., (2011)	Municipal Service Quality and Citizen Satisfaction in Southern Thailand	Findings of the study provide various important administrative implications for municipal councils by present them practical guidelines to improve quality services that would increase citizen satisfaction.	The research study is limited because is customers consent were not seek before service is provided.

**Source:** Authors' survey, 2016

The table 1 above shows different research on local government service delivery with different dimension of service delivery. The studies revealed different outcomes of the researches; study 1 revealed that there are a number of explicit uncertainties that affect service delivery, citizen satisfaction. Research 2,3,4 and 5 focused on citizen satisfaction of local government service delivery.

### **3. Material and Methods**

Data used in this research paper were extracted from secondary sources of data which comprised of textbooks, articles, thesis and statutory documents. The data were critically reviewed to ascertain the current happening in the area of local government service delivery. It must be emphasised here that the method adopted for data collection in this study is a literature review analysis. Upon extracting data from the review, inferences will be drawn on municipal awareness for enhancing citizen satisfaction of municipal services in local government in Malaysia.

### **4. Result and Discussion**

The result of the research study was revealed that municipal council in Malaysia provide adequate and satisfactory services to their citizens, but need additional efforts as it was evident in the work of (Kaliannan, Puteh, & Dorasamy, 2014; Mokhlis, 2011). The authenticity of this research work is verified thoroughly, and the results vindicated that similar research come to agree with the conclusion of the results of this research work in many respects. The work of (Almarshad, 2015) that indicate that awareness of citizen is integral part of process of assessing government performance, this also agree with the final result of this research work. Municipal services quality are determined by the quality of the inhabitants' life, the study of (Ireland, 2004) also agree with the finding of this research work. This particular study did not agree with the research of (Kugonza & Mukobi, 2015) that emphasised that community participation is only the key indicators for satisfactory service delivery.

### **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This research work concluded that municipal services delivery can be enhance through citizen awareness campaign, to sensitise the local community on various aspects of service delivery including maintenance of the facilities provided. It is also concluding that LAs lack of awareness section affects their performance in service delivery. The

study recommended that LAs need to consult the citizen for their needs and wants; awareness campaign need to be regularly carried out to maintain cordial relationship between LAs and their citizen; it is also recommended that municipal services should be delivered after duly consultation with the local communities.

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