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Influence of Internal Service Quality on Job Performance: A Case Study of Royal Police Department

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the influence of internal service quality (ISQ) on job performance in the public sector. Data was collected from 250 police personnels in PDRM in Kuching using survey method with questionnaire as the main tool. The instrument used to measure internal service quality was assessed via Kang et al.'s (2002) 22-item uni-dimensional measure of internal service quality battery (ISQB). Job performance was measured using an instrument developed by Borman & Motowidlo (1993). Results of the instrument's Cronbach Alpha measurement showed that the score of reliability is above 0.70 which indicates an acceptable level. The results indicate that internal service quality is positively correlated with job performance. This study provides insights on the relationship between internal service quality and job performance in the public sector. The findings of this study may help the public sector to enhance its internal service quality and its effect on job performance. Limitations and recommendations are also discussed.

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1. Introduction

In a dynamic environment, the public sector tries to compete by providing high quality service to its customers or stakeholders. Organizations operating in the public sector have also come to realise that they must ensure their services are soundly based on the needs and expectations of their stakeholders – i.e. communities, citizens and

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customers (Wisniewski, 2001). In Malaysia, the Royal Malaysian Police have embarked on a journey to enhance its public delivery system through empowering its employees in order to meet the expectations of its customers. Nowadays, organizations need to deal with both internal and external customers. Successful organizations need to emphasize the quality of services offered to both internal and external customers. Such organizations are astute enough to predict the changing needs of their customers, to concentrate on their organizational capability to offer high-quality services, and to see the quality of internal service as a tool to gain competitive advantage. Internal service quality in the public sector plays a critical role in fulfilling the expectations of its internal customers namely its employees. The study aims to explore how internal service quality would affect employee job performance in the public sector.

2. Literature review

2.1. Internal service quality

The concept of internal service – the idea that the whole organization must serve those who serve – has emerged as one of the most important principles of the service management approach (Farner et al. 2001). Put succinctly, internal service refers to services provided by distinctive organizational units or people working in these departments to other units or to the employees within an organization (Miguel et al. 2006). Azzolini and Shillaber (1998) define Internal Service as meeting the expectations and requirements for success of those people inside the company so they can delight customers in the marketplace. To Strauss (1995), internal service quality is characterized by the attitude that people have towards one another and the way people serve each other inside the organization and it is necessary to superior external service quality. Yet, Mawoli (2012) regards ISQ as meeting or exceeding the quality expectations and requirements of employees to enable them to provide superior services to the delight of external customers. Boshoff and Mels (1995) argued that every employee and unit is both a service provider and utilizer and that internal service quality greatly impacts the service quality to external customers. Internal service quality includes tangibles, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy. Tangibles refer to service tools, for example, facilities. Reliability is the ability to carry out the promised service reliably and correctly. Assurance refers to the fact that the provided service makes colleagues feel confident in being equipped with the required knowledge and courtesy. Responsiveness refers to an employee reacting swiftly to colleagues' demands and providing sincere and timely service. Empathy refers to understanding demand and providing convenient service to colleagues with communications catered to their needs.

The concept of internal service quality was first introduced by Sasser and Arbeit (1976) who considered the employees as internal customers. They contend that providing the external customers with quality services requires the provision of satisfaction and quality services to internal customers. Di Xie (2005) asserts that internal service quality is the degree to which an employee is contented with the services provided by internal providers. Moreover, internal service quality refers to what employees feel about the quality of services they receive from or offer their colleagues. Hallowel et al. (1998) contend that organizations need to improve the quality of their internal service so that they may provide external customers with better quality services.. ZhenYou (2003) asserts that an important aspect of internal service quality is to see how employees of a division provide their colleagues with services. Thus, the quality of internal services affects employee satisfaction. Meng Xia (2003) contends that internal high-quality services increase employee satisfaction, which results in external customers' satisfaction and increased organizational performance.

2.2. Job performance

In general, job performance is defined as actions or behaviours relevant to organizational goals (Campbell, 1990), which includes both productive and counterproductive employee behaviours that contribute to or detract from organizational goals (Hunt, 1996). Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) introduced a more recent definition of job performance as behaviour and outcomes that employees undertake which contribute to organizational goals. This means job performance refers to the effectiveness of individual behaviours that contribute to organisational objectives and should consist of task performance and contextual performance (Motowidlo, 2003). Both constructs are influenced by different factors, for instance job-related experience determines task performance while

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