

**THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF WAITING TIME ON THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICE QUALITY AND
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

By

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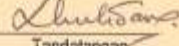
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ABSTRACT

The service delivery system of the public sector has been under constant criticisms from members of the public due to its inefficiency. Hence, the Malaysian government has implemented various administrative measures to upgrade the service delivery system of the public sector. One of the most important determinants contributing to satisfaction in the service delivery system is service quality. The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and determine the mediating effect of waiting time on the relationship. The study was conducted in the Royal Malaysian Customs Department (RMCD). Questionnaire was administered to 405 respondents, who were Customs agents. However, only 321 responses were received and the final data of 297 responses were used for analysis. Data were analyzed using SPSS Version 19.00 and structural equation modeling (SEM) by means of the “Analysis of Moment Structures” (AMOS 19.0). The findings indicate that service quality has a direct significant influence on customer satisfaction. The result also shows that responsiveness was rated as the most dominant dimension of service quality to influence customer satisfaction, followed by assurance, tangibles, empathy, and reliability. This study confirms that waiting time has a significant mediating effect on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The fundamental contribution of the study is the formulation of a structural model that can be used to understand the interaction between service quality, waiting time, and customer satisfaction. The model derived from this study can be used as a tool to improve customer satisfaction. Hence, based on the findings of this study, RMCD should emphasize the attributes of service quality to ensure customer satisfaction with the services they provide. Most importantly, RMCD should focus on reducing waiting time to receive service in order to enhance the service delivery system of the department. Recommendations for future studies and limitations of the present study are also discussed.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, Royal Malaysian Customs Department, Service quality, Structural equation modeling, Waiting time

ABSTRAK

Sistem penyampaian perkhidmatan sektor awam sering menerima kecaman hebat daripada masyarakat atas ketidakcekapannya. Oleh itu, Kerajaan Malaysia melaksanakan berbagai-bagai usaha bagi meningkatkan mutu sistem penyampaian sektor awam. Kualiti perkhidmatan dikenal pasti sebagai salah satu faktor penting yang menyumbang pada kepuasan pelanggan terhadap sistem perkhidmatan. Justeru, kajian ini dijalankan untuk meneliti hubungan antara kualiti perkhidmatan dan kepuasan pelanggan serta menilai kesan waktu menunggu dalam hubungan tersebut. Kajian ini dijalankan di Jabatan Kastam Diraja Malaysia. Sebanyak 405 borang soal selidik telah diedarkan kepada responden yang merupakan Agen Kastam. Walau bagaimanapun, hanya 321 borang soal selidik telah dikembalikan dan daripada jumlah tersebut, hanya 297 borang soal selidik dapat digunakan untuk dianalisis. Data telah dianalisis dengan menggunakan SPSS Versi 19.00 dan *structural equation modeling* (SEM) menggunakan *Analysis of Moment Structures* (AMOS 19.0). Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa kualiti perkhidmatan mempunyai hubungan terus dan signifikan dengan kepuasan pelanggan. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa *responsiveness* merupakan dimensi kualiti perkhidmatan paling menonjol yang mempengaruhi kepuasan pelanggan, diikuti oleh *assurance*, *tangibles*, *empathy*, dan *reliability*. Kajian ini mengesahkan bahawa waktu menunggu mempunyai kesan perantara yang signifikan dalam hubungan antara kualiti perkhidmatan dan kepuasan pelanggan. Kajian ini dapat merumuskan satu model struktur yang boleh digunakan untuk memahami interaksi antara kualiti perkhidmatan, waktu menunggu, dan kepuasan pelanggan. Model yang diperolehi daripada kajian ini boleh digunakan sebagai alat untuk meningkatkan kepuasan pelanggan. Berdasarkan hasil kajian ini, Jabatan Kastam Diraja Malaysia (JKDM) perlu memberi penekanan pada sifat-sifat kualiti perkhidmatan tersebut bagi memastikan kepuasan pelanggan terhadap kualiti perkhidmatan yang diberi. JKDM perlu juga memberi penekanan terhadap usaha bagi mengurangkan masa menunggu bagi meningkatkan sistem penyampaian Jabatan tersebut. Cadangan kajian akan datang serta limitasi kajian turut dibincangkan.

Kata Kunci: Kepuasan pelanggan, Jabatan Kastam Diraja Malaysia, Kualiti perkhidmatan, *Structural equation modeling*, Masa menunggu

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGFI	Adjusted Goodness-fit-index
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CIS	Customs Information System
CMIN	Chi Square
CR	Critical Ratio
DIR	Direct Interaction Research
DOR	Direct Observation Research
DF	Degree of Freedom
DV	Dependent Variables
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EPC	Expected Parameter Change
E-QUAL	Electronic Commerce Service Quality
FCFS	First-come, First-serve
FIFO	First In, First Out
FoS	Framework of Standards
FLEs	Front Line Employees
GFI	Goodness-of-fit Index
GTP	Government Transformation Program

HEdPERF	Higher Education Performance
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
IVs	Independent Variables
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
KLIA	Kuala Lumpur International Airport
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LISREL	Linear Structural Relations
MI	Modification Indices
MLI	Maximum Likelihood Indicators
NEM	New Economic Model
NFI	Normed Fit Index
NKRAs	National Key Result Areas
NVC	Non-verbal Communication
OGA	Other Government Agency
PCA	Principal Components Analysis
PCB	Public Complaints Bureau
PROB	Probability
PSD	Public Service Department
RMCD	Royal Malaysian Customs Department
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
RMSR	Root Mean Square Residual

SD	Standard Deviation
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SERVPERF	Service Performance
SERVQUAL	Service Quality
SMC	Squared Multiple Correlation
SMK	Customs Information System
SMS	Short Messaging System
SPSS	Statistical Packages for Social Science
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Index
TQM	Total Quality Management
WCO	World Customs Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research. It starts with a brief discussion on the background of the study, followed by deliberations on the problem statement, research questions, objectives of the study, and scope of the study. The significance of the study is also discussed. The chapter ends by outlining the organization of the thesis.

1.2 Background of the Study

It is said that today the public sector in Malaysia offers better quality services than it was ten years ago (Hamzah, 2007). As part of the continuous improvement initiatives in the public service delivery system, the government has recently adopted a holistic approach to streamline service delivery and has set in place the Government Transformation Program (GTP) comprising six National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The government has also instituted economic transformation program through the New Economic Model (NEM) and the Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011 – 2015). Both transformation programs advocate the strengthening of the public service delivery mechanism with a focus on human capital.

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