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The Study on People's Satisfaction towards Public Services of Viet Nam: Evidence of Tra Vinh Provincial Center of Public Administrative Services*

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Abstract

The paper aims to provide some recommendations to improve the operational capacity of the Tra Vinh Provincial Center of Public Administrative Services and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of management in the State administrative agencies. The study on people's satisfaction towards public services of Tra Vinh Provincial Center of Public Administrative Services was conducted by collecting primary data of 300 people who used public services provided by this Center from September 2018 to November 2018. By using the multivariate regression method, the author found that there were a number of factors affecting people's satisfaction towards public services at the Center, including procedures, service fee, and attitudes of the staff, empathy, staff capacity, and trust. These factors had an impact on people's satisfaction towards public administrative services performed by staff officers from Tra Vinh Provincial Center of Public Administrative Services. Since then, the study has proposed policy implications to improve people's satisfaction on service quality at the Center such as: Develop a flexible charge mechanism of public services; Enhance the sense of responsibility of staff officers; Pay attention to improving administrative procedures; Establish trustworthiness to people; Pay attention to professional improvement; and Build up a friendly and respectful team of staff.

Keywords: Public Service, Satisfaction, People, Public Administration, Tra Vinh Province.

JEL Classification Code: H10, O2, R10.

1. Introduction

Implementing Resolution 30c/NQ-CP dated on November 8, 2011 of the Government of Viet Nam (2011) promulgating the overall program of the State administrative reform in the period of 2011-2020 and Decision No. 817 / QD-UBND

dated May 16, 2012 of Tra Vinh Provincial People's Committee (2012) issuing the PAR Master Program of Tra Vinh Province in the period of 2011-2020, Tra Vinh Public Administration Center was established under the Decision 359 / QD-UBND dated on March 10, 2017 by the Chairman of Tra Vinh Provincial People's Committee. The aim of this Decision is to improve the operational capacity of the Administration Center, and continue to improve the responsibilities of cadres and civil servants with a focus on serving the people, creating a strong change in direction, and administration and implementing the coordination among sectors and levels effectively in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of management in the State administrative agencies.

The administrative reform activities have gradually been in order and basically solved administrative transactions with people and businesses. However, administrative reforms in the Center still encounter a number of difficulties. Using online public services in dealing with effective administrative procedures, for instance, is not highly effective due to people's low access to information. Furthermore, people are still familiar with the form of

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transaction at the one-door area of the administrative agencies, so they have to travel back and forth many times, generating costs. The quality of training for staff has been improved but the staff officers have been highly trained in terms of theory. Skills in general and problem solving skills have not been highly focused, especially communication skills and foreign language skills, which are helpful for controlling the settlement process.

2. Rationale

Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982) argued that service quality must be assessed in two aspects: (1) service delivery process and (2) results of service. Gronroos (1984) also recommended two areas of service quality, and of which are (1) technical quality and (2) functional quality. The technical quality is related to what is served and the functional quality shows how they are served (Nguyen, 2011).

Vo (2011) conducted the measurement of satisfaction towards public administrative services in the People's Committee of District 1 by predicting the independent variable people's satisfaction towards public administrative services at the People's Committee of District 1. This independent variable is influenced by four important factors (1) procedural process, (2) service capacity, (3) trustworthiness, and (4) facilities.

Nguyen (2014) did a study on people's satisfaction towards public administrative services in Dak Ha District People's Committee of Kon Tum province. The results of the research model show that there were six factors including (1) reliability, (2) procedures, (3) civil servants, (4) costs and time, (5) facilities, and (6) care and support for local people. The study shows that these factors had an impact on people's satisfaction towards public administrative services in Dak Ha District People's Committee of Kon Tum province. From the research findings, the authors recommended a number of effective solutions to improve the quality of public administrative services for Tra Vinh Provincial Center of Public Administration.

Nguyen and Quan (2015) conducted the research on the factors affecting the satisfaction level of people for the inter-agency one-door mechanism in Thot Not District of Can Tho City. The two authors also used the Cronbach's Alpha, the EFA exploratory factor analysis and multivariate linear regression with sample size $n = 130$. The study results showed that three factors affecting the level of satisfaction include (1) reflection and tangible means, (2) quality of human resources, and (3) process of document processing. Of these, the quality of human resources is the factor that has the strongest impact on people's satisfaction.

Ngo (2016) conducted a study on the assessment of people's satisfaction towards the quality of public administrative services at the People's Committee of Di An Town of Binh Duong Province. The research results of the model showed that there are six factors including (1) Facilities, (2) Reliability, (3) Staff capacity, (4) Service attitude, (5) Empathy, and (6) Procedures. The research findings help leaders of Di An Town People's Committee to understand which factors affect people's satisfaction towards the quality of public administrative services. Also, the results give the leaders an insight on the level of each factor for people's satisfaction towards the quality of public administrative services at the People's Committee of Di An Town. Through research findings, there should be a number of feasible solutions to improve people's satisfaction towards the quality of public administrative services.

Vo (2016) did the study on the assessment of satisfaction of taxpayers towards the quality of the supportive propaganda at Hau Giang Provincial Department of Taxation. The author uses EFA factor analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis. Research results show that seven factors, including (1) facilities, (2) transparency, (3) service capacity, (4) response, (5) trust, (6) equity, and (7) empathy, all affected taxpayers' satisfaction, of which the trustworthiness had the greatest impact on satisfaction.

3. Research Methodology

Based on previous studies, the authors formulated a model to study the factors affecting people's satisfaction towards public services at Tra Vinh Provincial Center of Public Administrative Services as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \beta_3 * X_3 + \beta_4 * X_4 + \beta_5 * X_5 + \beta_6 * X_6 + \beta_7 * X_7 + \varepsilon$$

Which, Y: is the dependent variable;

β_0 : is the regression constant;

Beta (β): is the regression coefficient (including $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5, \beta_6, \beta_7$);

ε : is the regression error; Independent variables include from X1 to X7.

The study was conducted with a survey of 300 people (Hair, 1998). These people are those who did public service transactions at Tra Vinh Provincial Center of Public Administration Services. The authors used the Likert Scale with a 5-point level, of which 1 means *completely disagree* and 5 *completely agree*. Also, the authors used the SPSS 20.0 software with reliability coefficient, EFA analysis and multivariate regression.

Table 1: A summary of previous studies

No.	Codes of variable	Names of variable	Basics of variable selection	Expectations of variable
1	X1	Trust	Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1998), Parasuraman (1988), Ngo (2016), Vo (2011)	+
2	X2	Facilities	Ngo (2016), Vo (2011)	+
3	X3	Serving capacity	Ngo (2016), Vo (2016)	+
4	X4	Serving attitudes	Ngo (2016), Vo (2011)	+
5	X5	Empathy	Cronin & Taylor (1992), Ngo (2016)	+
6	X6	Procedures	Nguyen (2014), and the surveys from experts	+
7	X7	Service costs	The surveys from experts	
8	Y	Satisfactions	Parasuraman et al. (1988), Ngo (2016)	

Table 2: Results from multivariate regression analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients ^a		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.424	.245		1.733	.084		
Trust	.171	.056	.140	3.025	.003***	.608	1.646
Facilities	.070	.052	.058	1.353	.177	.721	1.387
Serving capacity	-.147	.049	-.117	-3.005	.003***	.867	1.153
Serving attitudes	.232	.067	.197	3.456	.001***	.403	2.483
Empathy	.141	.048	.150	2.951	.003***	.509	1.966
Procedures	.187	.050	.192	3.776	.000***	.508	1.970
Service costs	.260	.041	.303	6.378	.000***	.577	1.733

Dependent Variable: Satisfactions (***) means level of significance at 99%

4. Results

The results in Table 2 show that six factors affecting the satisfaction level of the people include (1) Trust, (2) Serving capacity, (3) Serving attitudes, (4) Empathy, (5) Procedures, and (6) Service costs. The research findings also show that the level of importance for the factors affecting people's satisfaction is different, which is expressed through the importance of Beta coefficients in the regression equation:

$$\text{Satisfaction} = 0.424 + 0.171\text{Trust} - 0.147 \text{ Serving capacity} \\ + 0.232 \text{ Serving attitudes} + 0.141 \text{ Empathy} \\ + 0.187 \text{ Procedure} + 0.260 \text{ Service costs.}$$

The results in Table 2 show that the service cost factor is the most influential, followed by factors of serving attitude, procedures, trust, serving capacity and the empathy of staff officers (Pham, 2018). However, the *staff capacity* variable is counterproductive to the *satisfaction* variable, which can be explained in the scope of this research that people also do not focus on staff capacity when staff officers deal with people. The research findings showed that there were six factors affecting people's satisfaction, including trustworthiness, staff capacity, staff attitude, empathy, procedures, and service fees. In the study of assessing people's satisfaction towards the quality of public

administrative services at the People's Committee of Di An Town, Ngo (2016) claimed that there were five factors affecting people's satisfaction and these factors belong to the scale of service quality including service capacity, trust, procedures, empathy, and facilities. Also, in the study of people's satisfaction towards public administration services at the People's Committee of District 1, Vo (2011) found that there were four factors affecting people's satisfaction and these four factors belong to the scale of service quality, including procedures, service capacity, trustworthiness, and facilities.

5. Recommendations

5.1. Develop a Flexible Charge Mechanism of Public Services

It is important that the types of fees and charges for services at the Center of Public Administrative Services (the Center) be publicized at the document receiving and returning units. At the same time, the inspection and supervision of civil servants and staff officers performing their duties should be strengthened so that there will be no harassment of civil servants when performing tasks to meet the needs of the people and organizations when using the

public services at Tra Vinh provincial Center of Public Administrative Services. This will assist local people and organizations not to cost any other informal fees other than the prescribed amounts. Furthermore, the Center should cooperate with the Post Office of Tra Vinh to provide the file delivery and driving license to the address requested by the people through the public postal system in order to save costs and time for local people, contributing to the creation of satisfaction for the people when using the services at the Center.

5.2. Enhance the Sense of Responsibility of the Staff Officers

It is essential to improve the sense of responsibility of the civil servants and of the officials, working attitude, and serving the people, especially civil servants who perform tasks at the unit of result receiving and returning. Through regular or irregular inspection, observation and evaluation, there should be measures to rectify irresponsible or improper attitudes of civil servants towards people and organizations when they make contacts or use the services from the Center. At the same time, it should be better for leaders of the Center to have a plan for training professionalism, professional ethics, and communication skills for civil servants and officials, especially those who regularly deal with people and organizations in order to improve the capacity and service attitudes of civil servants and officials in giving clear and full explanations, and procedural guidance for people and organizations.

5.3. Pay Attention to Improving Administrative Procedures

It should be important for the administrative procedures under the jurisdiction of the Center of Public Administrative Services to be posted up publicly, fully and promptly at the reception and result returning section and posted up on the website of the Center. It is also essential for the administrative procedures to be regularly reviewed and checked. Through this activity, it should be necessary for the Center to make requests to the Provincial People's Committee to launch the announcement for abolition, amendment, and supplementation of administrative procedures, and shortening of the time for task handling under the jurisdiction of the Center, aiming at creating favorable conditions for people when coming to the transaction. At the same time, the time for people to travel many times to supplement their records on the date of appointment to get the results should be minimized. It is also important not to let people come to receive the results

on due date while their files of document have not been resolved yet. Information technology should be adopted in the process of carrying out work from receiving and processing requests or claims and returning results to people. Each process should have a record of time and date for processing requests and a notice to remind each stage of implementation. Furthermore, the implementation of online public services in dealing with public services at the Center of Public Administrative Services should be employed in order to help reduce the time and travel costs in sending documents and receiving the results of people and organizations.

5.4. Establish Trustworthiness to People

It should be necessary to build up civil servants and employees to meet the professional requirements and work skills in order for the tasks assigned to be efficiently resolved. At the same time, there should be rational reward policies, and civil servants who have negative attitudes towards people must be strictly penalized so that these problems would not be repeated. It is important to formulate work regulations and settlement procedures between the request-receiving unit and the result-returning one with other related units, and departments. Also, the request-receiving and result-returning units should be publicly informed to people and businesses. Information channels such as phone numbers of leaders, electronic information pages, addresses of agencies, units, suggestion boxes, and so forth should be published for people to make claims when they have pressing issues with the performance of the public administrative services from the Center of Public Administrative Services so that leaders would rectify the problems and deal with the claims in time in case unexpected things occur, creating trust for people and businesses. In addition, it is necessary to build a system to assess people's satisfaction towards staff and employees at the Department of request or claim receiving and result returning, thereby making civil servants and officials have a positive change on service attitude at work to create trust for people and businesses.

5.5. Attach Special Importance to Professional Improvement

In order for civil servants to deeply understand their tasks and fulfill the tasks well, apart from the trained professional level, improving professional qualifications, communication skills, and work ethics is very necessary for civil servants and officials in the Center of Public Administrative Services, especially in the department of receiving and returning

results. At the same time, improving staff's political knowledge makes them become self-disciplined and keep their sense of solidarity, which helps them work together to fulfill their tasks effectively.

5.6. Build Up a Friendly and Respectful Team of Staff

Civil servants should be aware of people they deal with in order to have appropriate and comprehensible instructions for the understanding of the people, guidance with polite attitudes, and enthusiastic and proper implementation of the rules and regulations of the Center. Staff officers should not absolutely cause any trouble for the people when they use the service of the Center. Staffs should learn how to listen, know how to control emotions, and know how to receive feedback effectively from people for two-way communication. This will assist civil servants to catch up information and handle matters flexibly. Furthermore, it is necessary to give good consultation to leaders to make improvements and best practices, and reduce unnecessary administrative procedures in transactions.

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