The Effects of Bureaucracy Internal Politics towards Citizen Satisfaction

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Abstract. The contradiction between the point of view of organization-internal political games in bureaucracy and professional behaviour of bureaucrats has been a general issue of public service in Indonesian local government. Some researchers, as Mintzberg, have viewed organization-internal politics games in a bureaucracy as a certainty. Organization-internal politics has naturally existed in an organization with its positive impacts. The political games phenomena in a government bureaucracy could be a mechanism of dynamic changes of a status-quo. Meanwhile, some researchers have viewed that professional bureaucracy should be free from political party interests and cliques. In other words, they should be neutral and fair toward citizen in their services. The problem is whether this organization-internal politics can be a significant influence as a drive or determinant factor for citizen satisfaction with local government service. This article tries to reveal the influence of internal politics bureaucracy towards citizen satisfaction, in an effort to test the two variables in providing the basic needs of citizens. Quantitative approach is used in this study. The findings of this study indicate that the two variables were negatively correlated. Therefore, organization-internal politics could be an absolute predictor that has to be considered to citizen satisfaction with local government service as an outcome of service and democratic accountability of local public service provider.

Keywords: bureaucracy, organizational-internal politics, citizen satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Subarsono (2006) states that the old habit of taking side with cronies and certain political groups is still common in public services in Indonesia. Civil servants, as political vehicles of the Golkar Party during the New Order era, still affect the quality of public services in Indonesia. Vigoda-Gadot (2006), in his study, includes such condition as variables of organization-internal politics: favouritism by insiders when providing service, service affected by political pressures from officials in power, and service provided to certain individuals only. Service, based on games in government bureaucracy, is easily seen in regency and municipal governments, for example procurement of various government aids, such as Small Business Loan and Identity Card administration (Subarsono 2006). Such games, as illustrated by Subarsono and Vigoda-Gadot, disturb the quality of our public services and causes complaints of various forms by the citizens (Yusof 2001).

Based on the above, the issue raised in this study is whether such organization-internal politics significantly influences citizen satisfaction. The objective of the study is to seek the influence of organization-internal politics as an independent variable toward citizen satisfaction as a dependent variable, with the expectation of being beneficial to public services management development at local governments.

According to Mintzberg (1983), there are five systems which operate within an organization: bureaucracy, supervisor/personnel, exchange, ideological, and political systems. The last three systems mentioned are informal, but nonetheless affects the organization. Organization-internal politics studied here also takes into account the systems mentioned by Mintzberg. A political system is a system of insider political games behaviour interaction which, informally, forms cliques and competes to affect organizational discretion for the interests of the cliques inside and outside the organization, such as political parties or lobby groups (which is affiliated with the insiders). As long as the insiders are faithful, their contributions to the needs (objectives) of the organization are significant. However, insiders are not always faithful as they seek to fulfil personal interests. A person who receives delegates of power or authority is able to make decisions, either in the levels of mid-managerial, techno-structure analysis, staff, or operator. Within the delegates, there is discretion, which allows for games. This is the main reasons of the emergence of a political system in internal bureaucracies and almost beyond the control of regulations. Organizations, according to Mintzberg (1983), are dominated by one of the five systems mentioned.
above; the other four systems accompany and complement it. Should the political system dominate; it tends to disallow other systems; a condition known as internal political coalition.

By virtue of the development of ideas of democratization of governments or public services, its accountability is not only for the organization or bureaucrats, but also for the public: the people, and in general, the citizens. Eckardt (2008) identifies accountability as a key variable capable of affecting the outcomes of a democratic decentralization reform. According to Heikkila and Isett (2007), direct participation of the citizens in the government, especially in public hearings, is the direct founding principle of a responsible and accountable democracy. Kelly (2005) firmly believes that “accountability for performance cannot be achieved through internal measures of service quality, but only through external assessment of customer satisfaction with the service.” Thus, a government which covets democratic and accountable public services in order to satisfy the needs of the citizens must shift its paradigm, from state-oriented to public-oriented; the former is a concept in which the administrator and civil servant serve their higher-ups, the state, and power; whereas in the latter the administrator and civil servant serve the citizens. The latter, in turn, ends in satisfaction, approval, and political participation (Vigoda-Gadot 2006, Kurniawan and Puspitosari 2007).

Citizen satisfaction, as an external accountability report of government bureaucracy, is determined by various factors. Fair treatment by service providers is one of the factors of citizen satisfaction. According to Perry & Thompson (2006), there are several public service dimensions, among which is commitment to the locals, which contributed to the local, national, and global community. Greenland, Coshall, and Combe (2006) found that of the thirteen components they study, only five components determine satisfaction in East African banks: professional, smart, good-looking, and well-mannered staffs. Vigoda-Gadot (2006) found that two factors which stimulate citizen satisfaction in public service are organizational-internal politics and ethics.

In a different study, Ryzin (2004) found that the variables of expectation, performance, and disconfirmation, as independent variables of citizen satisfaction, have significant influence. The study used the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) employed in New York City, which is then replicated throughout the United States and whose results proved that the three afore-mentioned variables are consistent and can be used as a citizen satisfaction variable predictor. A study in the United Kingdom showed that staff mannerism is one of the factors which can be used to predict citizen satisfaction growths (Thomson and Mori 2004). Vigoda-Gadot (2006) found that two factors which stimulate citizen satisfaction in public service are organization-internal politics and ethics. The approach used in their study is citizen perception. Vigoda-Gadot (2006), in justification of their approach, states that “this approach was based on the idea that these views are important for a better understanding of other perceptions and behaviours of citizen toward government and toward the wider political and democratic system.”

Satisfaction is one of the many outcomes, and not merely the output of public services provided by the government. In addition, satisfaction engenders trust in governance, and, on a larger scale, citizen welfare (Vigoda-Gadot 2006, Kurniawan and Puspitosari 2007). Moreover, Vigoda-Gadot (2006), in their study, defined satisfaction as a variable on detailed information on citizen perception of various public services. According to Aritonang (2005), should the expectation of the citizens is higher than the reality perceived, the citizens is not satisfied; should the expectation of the citizens is equal or lower than the reality perceived, the citizens are satisfied.

A theory which studies the disconfirmation between actual performance and expected performance is known as the disconfirmation theory; it has previously implemented in studies by La Tour (1977), Oliver (1980), and Santos & Boote (2003). The model used by Santos & Boote added a neutral zone, called Zone of Indifference (ZOI), which appear when the Performance (P) is equal to Expectation (E). The model was then employed once more by Ryzin (2005) to study public services provided by local governments (it was previously employed in 2004), and, as a result, the Expectancy Disconfirmation Model of Citizen Satisfaction with Local Government model was devised.

Vigoda-Gadot (2006) conducted a study on organization-internal politics and its relations to citizen satisfaction; the former is the independent variable and the latter is the dependent variable. They recommended “future studies try to create an even more reliable and robust scale of OP based on additional relevant items” in the methodology. The three additional items are obtained from studies by Mintzberg (1983), Dubrin (1990), and Yusof (2001). The items are clique competition-clandestine, deviation
of the organizational interests, and uncertain work allotments. Vigoda-Gadot (2006), on the other hand, uses three different items i.e. purposes of only to a few individuals, favouritism, and influence by political pressures. The improvement done by Vigoda-Gadot, by adding three additional variables, is an attempt to strengthen the already available variables of organization-internal politics.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study uses the quantitative approach and belongs to ex post-facto research. Data on citizen perception of independent and dependent variables are already present in the society, as practiced by the local government. Moreover, the Padangpanjang municipal government’s programs, currently running in the fields of education, healthcare, and social welfare, are considered as the best practice programs.

The dependent variable (Y) of the study is Citizen Satisfaction to Public Services, indicated by disconfirmation between real performance and expected performance, consisting of citizen satisfaction in primary and secondary education, health insurance, and social welfare insurance. The independent variable (X) is organization-internal politics, indicated by the purposes of only a few individuals, favouritism, influence by political pressures, clandestine clique competition, deviation of the organizational interests, and uncertain work allotments.

Organization-internal politics scores for services as a whole are given, in addition to scores for individual service; relations of the scores to citizen satisfaction are then calculated. Such calculation is carried out to provide an in-depth analysis and strengthen the conclusions of the study. Thus, each service is pegged as independent variables (x) relative to citizen satisfaction, divided into four analyses.

The study uses the proportional stratified random sampling method to collect samples. The formula, used to collect samples from the population so that the samples accurately represent families in Padangpanjang, is Slovin’s formula with a 3% margin of error (Husein 2005). Eventually, samples of 1,086 persons are considered fit from a population of 10,864 families (Padangpanjang Bureau of Statistics, 27th December 2007). To determine samples from each village, 10% of the samples are collected from the village population.

The instrument of the study is questionnaire based on indicators collected by means of content validity. Content validity is assessed by relevant experts and the indicators established are then reassessed by the same experts. To test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire in the field, trials are carried out on 70 respondents from Padangpanjang. Despite the use of the same questionnaire by previous researchers and proven validity and reliability, the questionnaire is analysed using product-moment and alpha formula, aided by SPSS software. The results show that the questionnaire has acceptable reliability and validity. Data is analysed by dint of statistics: percentage, correlation statistics, and regression fitting for the objective of the study. Analysis is aided by SPSS software and tested with relevant theories.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Citizen satisfaction, as an independent variable, is compared for disconfirmation between expectancy and performance of Padangpanjang municipal bureaucracy, which is then classified into five categories. The first two categories are positive disconfirmation (very satisfied and satisfied), the next two categories are negative disconfirmation (very unsatisfied and not satisfied), and the last category is neutral, which is a confirmation between expectancy and performance of the government. Citizen satisfaction states, according to the five categories, are shown in Table 1.

From the table, it is found that citizen satisfaction in Padangpanjang toward the municipal government, in general, is in the negative disconfirmation (very unsatisfied and unsatisfied), which is approximately 91.1%; only 0.6% are satisfied whereas those who are neutral (confirmation state) is 8.6%.

Data is inputted to the simple-regression mechanism to see the effects of organization-internal politics to citizen satisfaction and a summarized model displaying the values of R, R square, and Adjusted R Square is shown in Table 2.

From the table, the value of R is found to be 8.7%, R Square 0.8%, and Adjusted R Square 0.7%. As such, the independent variable organization-internal politics contributes to 0.7% of the dependent variable citizen satisfaction in relation to the public services provided by Padangpanjang municipal government. The value of Adjusted R Square is slightly lower than R Square (0.7% to 0.8%). Analysis results, should the value is tested using F, is shown in Table 3.

From the table, it is found the value of F with a df of 1/1084 (F 1.1084) is 8.205 and is significantly influential at a significance rate of 0.4%. Thus,