

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology being employed to complete this study. It covers four main areas: - research questions and hypotheses of the study, research instrument, and sampling and data collection procedures and data analytical techniques.

3.1 Research Questions and Hypotheses of Study

In line with the objectives of the study, the following research questions and hypotheses will be answered. It begins with any problems the building user raises with the Department through formal lodgment of complaints. This study will evaluate the existing complaint handling system. The flow and processes of received complaint to its resolution. Thus, determine its strengths and weaknesses.

Data collection of complaints is essential in any complaint handling systems. The complaint trend will alert the Department to problems that need prompt attention and correction. Thus, gives long-range opportunities for problem prevention. The writer shall examine the complaint database for the period of 1997 until 2000. Detailed examination shall be able to identify the complaint trend.

A five-year period annual operating budget and expenditures of the Department from 1996 until 2000 is to be analyzed. The relationship and

financial implication between the complaint received by each section of the Department and the expenditures are to be discussed.

There is a need of an effective complaint handling system especially for service-based organization such as this Department to enhance its reputation and build customer confidence. Due to that, the staff shall have a grasp of knowledge and accountability in the system they involve in. Since its establishment, less opportunity was being given to the staff especially the lower middle level for formal feedback. The writer shall analyze and evaluate the level of awareness of the staff towards the existing complaint handling system. Two null hypotheses have been established and to be tested.

First hypothesis, H_{01} , the Department staff does not aware and understands the existing complaint handling system. And, second hypothesis, H_{02} , the less experience staff tends to be more aware of the complaint handling system than the more experience staff, due to computerization of system.

3.2 Research Instrument

The research instruments being utilized in this study are personal interview and fixed-alternative questions. Personal interviews were performed with the respective administration and technical staff. This is done to obtained detailed information of the existing complaint handling system. The scope was concerned with the process from receiving complaint from various channels such as by filling standard complaint forms, telephone and e-mail until to the resolution.

Direct structured and close-ended questionnaires are being designed to obtain responses on major attributes and variables of a complaint handling system. The questions are adapted from the studies done by Consumer Affair

Office, Canada (1998). The questions cover six common variables, which are:- Policies and Procedures, Accessibility and Responsiveness of the System, Organization of the System, Staff and Training, Collection and Analysis of Complaint Data and Evaluation and Planning. A total of thirty-five statements are established related with these variables.

The questionnaire is divided into seven sections. Section A was designed to obtain the respondent's rating of the policy and procedure of the complaint handling system. This section is an aggregated variables comprising assessment of seven statements pertaining to policies and procedures such as guidelines in receiving and resolving complaint including time limits and the responsible staff, specifying the types of complaints, communication of procedures and level of commitment.

Section B was designed to rate the responses and feedback in handling the system. It is an aggregate measure of six statements, which includes level of performance in receiving complaint and feedback for status and unsolved complaints.

Section C requires the respondents to evaluate the competency of the staff handling the system. It comprises of two statements that are related to the selection and training of complaint handling staff.

Section D was designed to obtain the rating on the organization of the system. The system organization variables is a four statements measurement which covers level of monitoring of the Department in decision-making, coordination between staffs and sections and inputs of the staff in improving the system.

Section E was to rate the evaluation of data collection and analysis of the system. This section is an aggregated variable of six statements pertaining to the method, analysis and evaluation and utilization of data collection.

Section F was an assessment on evaluation and planning of the Department on the system. It is an aggregate measure of six statements assessing the analysis of resolved complaints, relationship of the system distribution i.e. the involved staff, their communication and formulating future planning based on the received complaint.

Finally, Section G of the questionnaire measured the demography profile of the respondents. The questions asked are: - sex, position held and years of service.

The responses were gauged by asking the respondents to rate Likert type scale of *1* to *5*. For Section A and C, *1* indicating 'Strongly Disagree' and *5* indicates 'Strongly Agree'. For Section B, D, E and F, *1* indicating 'Not Satisfy' and *5* indicates 'Very Satisfied'.

3.3 Reliability and Validity of Instrument

Since the complaint handling system of the Department is not documented or in written form, personal interview approach is considered the best research instrument to be performed. In addition, to measured attitudes of respondents concerning with their awareness on variables of complaint handling system, fixed-alternative question have been selected.

3.3.1 Personal Interview

According to Zikmund, William G. (1997), personal interview is a direct communications wherein interviewers in face-to-face situations asking respondents questions. Personal interview offers several advantages such as giving opportunity for direct feedback, capable to probe complex answers and provide high participation rate.

3.3.2 Fixed-Alternative Question

Zikmund, William G. (1997) defined fixed-alternative question as a question in which the respondent is given specific limited alternative responses and asked to choose the one closest to his or her own viewpoint. A questionnaire design is the formal construction of questionnaire to obtain data needed to solve research problems.

To obtained accurate answers, reliable and valid information, the questionnaires have been translated into Bahasa Malaysia. However, the English version questionnaire should be the main reference.

Once the questionnaire is completed in draft form, it have been 'tried out' on ten respondents of similar target group, which comprises of one office assistant, three clerks, three technicians and three technical assistants of the Department. Corrections based on the feedback were taken into consideration before the actual questionnaire being distributed.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

The study was confined to the internal environment of the Department organization. Due to that, the sampling and target group for this survey is on

87 staff out 190 of total staffs in the department. Most of the remaining 103 general staff are cleaners, who are full time attachment to various departments of the faculties, and to be neglected.

The selected sample comprises of 75 respondents from professional and management group, technical and clerical supporting group and other 12 respondents shall be the office assistants from the general staff group.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires were mainly self-administrated. However, some respondents preferred personal interview since they are unclear with some of the questions. The questionnaires are distributed throughout each section of the Department and lasted within two weeks. A total of 87 sets were distributed and only 74 were usable.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The information collected from the respondents were analyzed by descriptive analysis with the application of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

The measured variables selected are divided into two type i.e. dependent variable and independent variable. The dependent variable is the six major variables and its thirty-five statements, namely, Policies and Procedures, Accessibility and Responsiveness, Organization of System, Staffing and Training, Collection and Analyzing of Data and Evaluation and Planning. And, the independent variables are the position held by respondent and years of services of respondents.

The statement analyses performed in this study are equality of mean or t-test analysis, ANOVA and variables reliability analysis.