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Assessing Citizens' Demographic Attributes on Satisfaction and Confidence Level During Malaysian Movement Control Order

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Abstract

This study investigates the satisfaction and confidence level of Malaysian citizens through demographic characteristics. A cross-sectional survey of 346 Malaysian citizens uses snowball sampling until it reaches the appropriate sample size. For data analysis, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software, such as the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Normality and Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis for non-parametric data, to test the significant difference between the demographic groups for satisfaction and confidence level. Finally, the Mann-Whitney test was used for further analysis to test for a significant difference between all the possible pairs of groups. This study's finding revealed a significant median difference in citizens' satisfaction and confidence level in overall government performance during the COVID-19 outbreak based on marital status, level of education, and sector concurrently to each pair of the segments. Based on the findings, future studies might consider using probability sampling and thus be able to conduct parametric analysis.

***Keywords**: Demographic; Covid-19; Government; Satisfaction; Confidence Level*

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INTRODUCTION

The prior literature on citizen satisfaction, including citizen expectations, experiences, and past attitudes toward government, demonstrates that achieving public satisfaction is challenging. Consequently, diverse administrative reform agendas have directly linked the need to reform public services to become more client-oriented to boost citizen satisfaction with public services to the need to improve public services to become more client-oriented (Van de Walle, 2018). Over the past three decades, the Malaysian government has pursued a thorough reform program, which continues today. Contradictorily, service delivery performance has continued to fall short of public expectations (Faiez & Rao, 2019). Public service delivery failure attracts the attention of the media, the scrutiny of political leaders, and the general populace's disapproval (van den Bekerom et al., 2021). According to Fitch Solutions, the COVID-19 epidemic has elevated political risks in Malaysia as more residents become dissatisfied with the government's handling of the pandemic. This situation will negatively impact policymaking, policy continuity, and social stability (Mung, 2021, June 8). Prior researchers did not extensively explore the level of satisfaction in the

crisis context, and that additional research is necessary. Consequently, this research aims to examine the relationship between demographic characteristics of citizens and their levels of satisfaction and confidence during the first phase of the mobility control order imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Descriptive Data

This study population consisted of Malaysian citizens who volunteered to participate in this research. The respondents were from diverse backgrounds. This study surveyed 346 Malaysian citizens. A total of 345 samples were received and used for the analysis after data cleaning. The authors developed an online questionnaire using Google Forms. The authors sent the Google form to their contacts, and participants will be requested to roll out the online questionnaires to as many people as possible through the WhatsApp platform until it reaches the appropriate sample size. Data collection took place on June 15, 2020, and lasted for two weeks. The current study employed the non-probability sampling category, namely, the snowball sampling technique, to reach citizens due to the movement control order implemented by the Malaysian government during a pandemic. In this study, we selected public service users and non-users because both tend to have different views about public services (Van de Walle, 2017). Regarding sample size, several scholarly suggestions suggest some guidelines (Hair et al., 2018; Jackson, 2003; Kline, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). After considering their suggestions, we considered 300 samples.

Analysis of Different between the Medians of the Independent Groups

This study used variance analysis to assess the difference in satisfaction across overall government performance in delivering citizen-centric service during COVID-19 across several demographic variables. In addition, this study also uses it to evaluate the difference in confidence levels toward the government in providing citizen-centric services during COVID-19 among several demographic variables. Firstly, we need to conduct a normality test to determine the normal distribution of the data. By doing so, we can choose between parametric or non-parametric statistical tests. Therefore, this study used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine whether the data followed the specified distribution, including the normal distribution (Öztuna et al., 2006). The test's

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insignificant (p-value > 0.05) indicates that the null hypothesis was supported and concludes that the data follows a normal distribution.

For non-parametric statistical tests, if the level of measurement data is ordinal, interval, or ratio, the researcher can apply the Kruskal-Wallis One-way Analysis of Variance by Ranks to determine whether three or more independent groups are the same or different on some variable of interest (Israel, 2008). The Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance by ranks test does not require normality assumptions (Chan & Walmsley, 1997). This test was a more flexible, convenient, easy-to-use, and powerful technique similar to a parametric one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) (Israel, 2008).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents that contributed to this study were female, with 70.4 %, while only 29.6% were male. Most of the respondents were single, with 73.3%, 26.4% were married, and only 0.3% were others, such as widowed or divorced. Most respondents had STPM/Matriculation/Diploma as their education level with 58.6%, followed by SPM and Degree level with 17.1% and 16.8%, respectively. Lastly, most of the respondents, with 69.8%, came from the other sector, 18.3% public sector, 7.8% private sector, and 4.3% were self-employed.

Table 1: *Respondent's Demographic Profile*

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	243	70.4
Marital Status	Single	253	73.3
	Married	91	26.4
	Others	1	0.3
Education Level	SPM	59	17.1
	STPM/Matriculation/Diploma	202	58.6
	Degree	58	16.8
	Master's Degree	24	7.0
	PhD	2	0.6

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Sector	Public	63	18.3
	Private	27	7.8
	Self-employed	15	4.3
	Others (includes those who are not working or those who are still studying	240	69.8

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality for Satisfaction Overall Government Performance

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and result of the normality test for variable satisfaction on overall government performance and confidence level toward government in delivering citizen-centric services during the COVID-19 outbreak using a 7-point Likert scale. On average, the respondent's level of satisfaction is 5.84, and 50% of the respondents rate more than 6.00 as their level of satisfaction, while another 50% rate less than 6.00. The minimum value of the level of satisfaction was 3.00, and the maximum value was 7.00.

On average, the respondent's confidence level is 5.84, and 50% of the respondents rate more than 6.00 as their level of confidence, while another 50% of respondents rate less than 6.00. The minimum value of the confidence was 2.00, and the maximum value was 7.00. Based on the results of the significant value in Table 2, the null hypothesis of normality is rejected as the p-value is less than 0.05. The finding indicates that the satisfaction variable is not normally distributed, and it should conduct non-parametric statistical testing for further analysis (Fitzgerald et al., 2001).

Table 2: *Result of Kolmogorov-Smirnov*

Variable	N	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Statistic	df	Sig.
Satisfaction	345	5.84	6.00	3.00	7.00	0.254	345	.000
Confidence	345	5.84	6.00	2.00	7.00	0.230	345	.000

Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance by Ranks

The Kruskal-Wallis test was a nonparametric alternative to the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) (Ghoodjani, 2016). It will tell us the differences between the groups were so large that they were unlikely to have occurred by chance. The variable of satisfaction level on overall government performance in delivering citizen-centric

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services during the COVID-19 outbreak tested if there was any significant median difference between the respondents' demographic characteristics such as marital status, education level, and working sector. Table 3 shows the result of the Kruskal-Wallis test of the median comparison for satisfaction between marital status, education level, and working sectors. The significant value for each comparison is less than 0.05, indicating a significant median difference between each group, thus rejecting the null hypothesis. Therefore, the median level of satisfaction with overall government performance was different between the respondents' marital status, education level, and working sectors.

Table 3: *Result of Kruskal-Wallis Test of Satisfaction*

Variable	Category	Frequency	Mean Rank	Chi-squared value	Degree of freedom	Significant value
Marital Status	Single	253	157.07	28.967	2	0.000
	Married	91	218.35			
	Others	1	77.00			
Education Level	SPM	59	169.18	11.749	4	0.019
	STPM/Matriculation/Diploma	202	162.59			
	Degree	58	198.47			
	Master's Degree	24	198.23			
	PhD	2	295.50			
Sector	Public	63	209.23	19.808	3	0.000
	Private	27	179.63			
	Self-employed	15	229.87			
	Others (includes those who are not working or those who are still studying	240	159.19			

Table 4 shows the variable of confidence level toward government in delivering citizen-centric services during the COVID-19 outbreak was tested if there was any significant median difference between the respondents' demographic characteristics such as marital status, education level, and working sector. Table 4 shows the result of the Kruskal-Wallis test of the median confidence level among marital status, education level, and working sectors. The significant value for each comparison is less than 0.05, indicating a significant median difference between each group, thus rejecting the null hypothesis. Therefore, the median confidence level toward the government differed among the respondents' marital status, education level, and working sectors.

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Table 4: *Result of Kruskal-Wallis Test of Confidence Level*

Variable	Category	Frequency	Mean Rank	Chi-squared value	Degree of freedom	Significant value
Marital Status	Single	253	154.72	40.479	2	0.000
	Married	91	225.73			
	Others	1	1.00			
Education Level	SPM	59	161.35	12.444	4	0.014
	STPM/Matriculation/Diploma	202	164.83			
	Degree	58	192.01			
	Master's Degree	24	214.40			
	PhD	2	294.00			
Sector	Public	63	210.20	23.392	3	0.000
	Private	27	180.94			
	Self-employed	15	241.23			
	Others (includes those who are not working or those who are still studying	240	158.08			

When the Kruskal-Wallis test rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that there was a difference in the groups, a further question arises about groups that were naturally different from others. The next step is the Mann-Whitney to test for a significant difference between all the possible pairs of groups (Daniel, 1990). A significant value of less than 0.05 indicates a median difference between the group pairs.

Mann-Whitney Test for Comparison each Group

The study conducted a Mann-Whitney test for each pair for each category of the variables to get further findings, which led to the conclusion that there is a median difference in satisfaction and confidence level on overall government performance. Table 5 shows the summary of results for the Mann-Whitney test, which is only for a significant comparison between each pair of the variables. A significant value less than 0.05 indicates a significant median difference in satisfaction level between single status

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and married only. Besides that, there was a significant median difference in satisfaction level between STPM/Matriculation/diploma and degree level of education. In addition, there was a significant median difference in satisfaction level between others in the public sector and others in the private sector.

Table 5: *Result of Mann-Whitney Test of Satisfaction*

Variable	Category 1	Category 2	Z-value	Significant value (2-tailed)
Marital Status	Single	Married	-5.284	0.000
Education Level	STPM/Matriculation/ Diploma	Degree	-2.622	0.009
Sector	Public	Others (includes those who are not working or those who are still studying	-2.729	0.000
	Private	Others (includes those who are not working or those who are still studying	-3.696	0.000

Table 6 shows the results for the Mann-Whitney test, which is only for a significant comparison between each pair of the variables for confidence level toward government. A significant value that less than 0.05 indicates a significant median difference in confidence level between single status and married only. Besides that, there was a significant median difference in confidence level between STPM/Matriculation/diploma with a degree and the Master's degree level. There was also a significant median difference in confidence level between the Master's degree and SPM levels. In addition, there was a significant median difference in confidence level between public sector and self-employed sector, as well as in private sector with self-employed.

Table 6: *Result of Mann-Whitney Test of Confidence Level*

Variable	Category 1	Category 2	Z-value	Significant value (2-tailed)
Marital Status	Single	Married	-6.120	0.000
Education Level	STPM/Matriculation/ Diploma	Degree	-1.972	0.049
	STPM/Matriculation/ Diploma	Master Degree	-2.417	0.016
	Master Degree	SPM	-2.103	0.035
Sector	Public	Others (includes those	-3.857	0.000

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		who are not working or those who are still studying		
	Self-employed	Others (includes those who are not working or those who are still studying	-3.189	0.001
	Private	Self-employed	-2.150	0.032

This study compares the impact of demographic attributes on citizen satisfaction during the first wave of the COVID-19 catastrophe. There have been increasing calls for citizen satisfaction in crisis contexts (Venetoklis, 2021). The result shows a significant difference among citizen backgrounds, which aligns with past studies (Psomas et al., 2020; Song et al., 2020). This study indicates that single and married respondents tend to differ in satisfaction significantly. Meanwhile, those who have tertiary education have a significant difference in satisfaction. In addition, these differences are apparent to the one who worked in the public and private sectors. While these effects are not significant when focusing on respondents from other categories in demographic profiles, they significantly impact citizens' satisfaction during COVID-19. This paper offers empirical results from the citizens' satisfaction during the first movement control order implemented by the Malaysian government during the pandemic outbreak. Besides, this study enables researchers, public managers, and others to better understand citizen satisfaction in this situation and continuously improve governance, public information provision, and service delivery.

CONCLUSION

The study's main aim was to compare the level of satisfaction with overall government performance and the confidence level towards the government for several demographic profiles of the respondents. This study discovered a significant median difference in satisfaction with overall government performance during the COVID-19 outbreak according to respondents' marital status, level of education, and sector. Concurrently, there was also a significant median difference in confidence levels toward the government during the COVID-19 outbreak according to respondents' marital status, level of education, and sector.

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It has known that a satisfied citizen is essential for the long-term stability of any political system in which it operates (Wu et al., 2021). It indicates the quality of governance; citizens' satisfaction with their government is also a good indicator of its approval. Citizen's assessment can aid in improving government performance and public services. Furthermore, when citizens are satisfied with the performance of public service delivery, they become more confident with the government.

However, the value of this relationship in supporting the government's decision to combat pandemic outbreaks is unclear. We believe that gaining a better knowledge of this process will provide greater and more detailed insights into a citizen evaluation process. The result of this study cannot be generalized because it used a non-parametric sampling technique; thus, the sample was limited and did not represent the whole Malaysian population. As a recommendation, future studies might consider using probability sampling to extend the result to the population. As the sample size increases, future studies can conduct more parametric analyses.

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